



Scoil Náisiúnta Baile Uí Chárthaigh,
Ballycar, Newmarket-on-Fergus, Co.Clare

185260

SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION REPORT

Evaluation Period: September 2015 to May 2017

Report Issue Date: 8th June 2017

School Self Evaluation Report

1. Introduction

1.1 The Focus of the evaluation

A school self-evaluation of teaching and learning in Ballycar NS was undertaken during the period 1/9/2015 - 30/5/2017. During the evaluation, teaching and learning in the following areas were evaluated:

- Literacy
- Numeracy
- Gaeilge

This is a report on the finding of the evaluation.

1.2 School Context:

Ballycar National School is a two- teacher, Catholic, co-educational primary school situated in the south east of County Clare. The school is under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Killaloe. Its catchment area includes Ballycar, Rathlaheen, Rathlaheen South, Fenloe, Maus Quin, Muckanagh and Newmarket-On-Fergus. This is a vertical primary school. There are currently 31 pupils on roll. There are 3 teachers including 2 mainstream classroom teachers. From September 2017, there will be one SET teacher based in Ballycar NS, shared with St. Aiden's School and St. John's School, Shannon. The principal is a teaching principal. The school has received several awards for participation in the Discover Primary Maths and Science Initiative, Intel Mini-Scientist Competition, All Aboard Digital Badge and Greenschool Programme. Recently the children have been awarded an Active School Flag, Healthy Ireland Flag, and an Amber Award for Mental Health Awareness Initiative. One of the most special achievements for our team has been the CARA National Inclusion Award (second place, all Ireland 2016).

Recently the school has set up a Twitter account and Facebook Page to communicate good news to the community. The school has a website with links to Pinterest and Literacy and Numeracy games and resources.

The children participate in many local and national competitions and initiatives including Primary School Debating, Bizworld, Easons Spelling Bee, Cumann na mBunscol Hurling and Gaelic games, FAI primary schools competition, Marion Keane Basketball games, Texaco Art, INTO Handwriting, Credit Union Table Quiz, Credit Union Art Competition, as well as the Community Games programme.

In 2016-2017, the Aistear Programme commenced in Ballycar NS.

The school administers Micra-T and Sigma-T standardised tests in Mathematics and English reading from 1st-6th class every year. In 2015, the school began utilising the Drumcondra Gaeilge Test.

There is strong parental support for teaching and learning in the school, a factor which has a positive effect on pupil attainment levels and on pupils' attitudes to their learning.

The Findings:

Pupils are eager to learn and become involved in learning. The learning environment is visually stimulating and supportive of learning especially in the areas of Literacy and Numeracy. Pupils are encouraged to monitor their own work and to reflect on their learning. The use of Assessment for Learning tools as per NCCA Assessment Guidelines fosters self- assessment and reflection among pupils.

From September 2017, the teachers and children will use the “Three Stars and a Wish” approach once a term to encourage children to monitor and celebrate their own progress in terms of Spelling and Comprehension strategies. Pupils will utilize checklists based on curriculum objectives to record their progress in Numeracy. This will be completed mid-term and end of term. Writing portfolios are kept in pupils’ assessment folders in the office, and writing samples are displayed in the learning environment. The Accelerated Reader programme is a direct home-school link which tracks the children’s reading levels, books read and comprehension scores.

Both long and short term plans are prepared by teachers and a monthly record of work completed is also kept. Plans are guided by the strands of the revised curriculum, by the Whole School Curriculum Plans and indicate expected learning outcomes. These outcomes are clear, curriculum based and differentiated for children with learning difficulties and for children with different abilities within the class. Class teachers meet on a scheduled and regular basis to plan for their teaching. Teachers are undertaking continuous professional development.

Our school has strengths in the following areas:

Theme 1: Attainment of curricular objectives:

- Standardised test scores for numeracy attainment are at or above the national norms. Pupils at risk of underachieving are attaining well and make good progress from their prior levels of achievement.

Theme 2: 2.1 Learning Environment:

- A safe, stimulating learning environment is provided for the pupils in this school. Each classroom is equipped with desktops, and overhead projector/interactive whiteboard. All classrooms/learning settings are appropriately laid out, well-resourced and orderly. Teachers are aware of and follow the Child Protection Guidelines. A copy of the school’s Child Protection Guidelines is readily accessible in every classroom.

Theme 2: 2.2 Pupils’ engagement in learning:

- Pupils are given purposeful and frequent opportunities to engage in collaborative, cooperative as well as independent learning. Pupils are suitably challenged in their learning and given additional support as needed.

Theme 2: 2.3 Learning to Learn:

- The pupils are involved in monitoring their own progress in learning. The teachers focus on developing the pupils’ abilities to communicate, work with others, engage in research, investigate/enquire, experiment, analyse and problem-solve. The pupils are provided with

frequent, well-guided access to ICT and are enabled to use it to present and illustrate their work, access and retrieve information, organise and produce information.

Theme 3: 3.1 Preparation for Teaching:

- Teachers are prepared in terms of practical and written planning for the delivery of the curriculum. Necessary and relevant resources and materials are identified and sourced in advance of lessons. Teachers provide monthly progress records of pupil's learning in curricular areas.

Literacy 2:

Pupils are performing at the national norms in Irish standardised tests and are making progress at a level which is consistent with their stage of development.

Children's attitude towards Gaeilge is very positive in all the classes. All of the infants surveyed reported that they love Gaeilge. Most of the children in the senior class reported that they like or love Gaeilge, with only one child acknowledging that they found it to be a more challenging subject.

Most older children surveyed reported that cluichí Gaeilge was their favourite activity. Three senior children reported that learning verbs were their favourite activity.

The children celebrate Seachtain na Gaeilge each year.

Through interviews with pupils and staff, it was agreed that oral Irish continues to be an area for further development.

A focussed effort has been made to display print in Irish as well as samples of pupils' written work throughout the school.

The WSE Report in 2009 was positive in terms of the overall standard of teaching Irish. Some classes were commended for opportunities given for language games, paired dialogues and dramas.

Since the WSE report, recitation of verbs has been emphasised more in the senior classes. Language games, puppets, drama, role play and the Interactive Whiteboards are used in all classrooms to help foster a love of the Irish language.

Literacy 1:

Teachers reported that children are generally able to express themselves in the classroom. However, with the introduction of the new Primary Language Curriculum, and in response to changing needs of the pupils in the school, the staff have decided to implement a number of changes to current Oral Language policy.

The Aistear programme has commenced in Ballycar NS and Special Education teaching will continue to be utilised to assist in the development and progression of oral language skills. For the senior class, Drama and Oral Language games and activities will continue to be part of the team teaching

programme in 2017-2018. Every second year, the children in the senior class will focus and participate in the Primary School Debating Competition.

In terms of assessing progress, the BPVS (British Picture Vocabulary Scale) and New Primary Language curriculum Drumcondra Pupil Profile checklists, were used in April 2017 with two target groups; senior infants and fourth class. The tests will be repeated in April 2018 and 2019 in order to provide a general indication of attainment of pupils in the school in oral language skills.

After conducting the Drumcondra Spelling Test (March 2017) and Micra T tests (May 2017), it was agreed that reading comprehension and spelling would be the main areas to focus on in 2017. The staff agree that extra emphasis on reading comprehension skills will further aid pupils in their approach to Word Problems in Maths and Numeracy.

From September 2017, the Bridges of Understanding Programme will be utilised to further develop the pupils' comprehension strategies.

Spell Well Book and programme will be implemented from Senior Infants to 6th class. There will be a Spelling Award at the end of each month. As spelling is a spatial-visual exercise, tangram puzzles will be available in class to help develop visual-spatial skills.

Numeracy:

Since 2014, emphasis has been placed on developing problem solving skills, both written and oral. There was a greater emphasis on providing high quality maths displays in the classroom and the pupils also participated in Maths Week, Engineers Week, World Maths Day, Discover Primary Science and Maths Programme.

Findings from SIGMA T show that pupils are achieving higher in the area of problem solving this year.

Discussion with classes showed that pupil's confidence had increased. They were all familiar with the RUCSAC rule and utilised the approach comfortably.

It was agreed that, through prioritising L 1 comprehension skills, confidence and ability in problem-solving would be positively affected.

It was decided that there could be a greater focus on the language of measures and the practical aspects of Time and Money.

There is now a link to Numeracy games on the website, as well as "PDST Supporting My Child" and information sheets provided for parents.

Resources and activities from the PDST site have been accessed and are now being utilised to help children with the Measurements Strands of the Maths Curriculum.

Progress made on previously identified targets in the current SIP:

- See 3-Year Plan attached

Priorities for development in 2017-2018:

- Continue Policy Review in line with schedule attached.
- Special Education Policy September 2017
- Assessment Policy 2017
- Professional Development – Aistear, Specials Needs
- Cuntas Míosiula and record keeping – continue with progress and consistency
- English Plan Review: Spelling, Reading and Oral Language
- Aistear Programme to be rolled out, integrating drama, English and SESE.
- Building Bridges Programme for Senior Class
- Spelling Scheme – Spell Well, Spelling Awards and weekly proofreading practice activity
- Handwriting – Consistent cursive scheme throughout school.
- Plean Gaeilge: Language Checklists / cuspoirí do gach páiste
- Numeracy: Resources and games from PDST to be added to Math Boxes, Favourite IT games to be updated
- IT plan to be developed, including typing lessons for senior class.

4.3 The following legislative and regulatory requirements need to be addressed:

See checklist attached.

Signed: _____

Chairperson

Board of Management