

Summary of School Self Evaluation

A school self-evaluation of teaching and learning in literacy was undertaken during the period 1/09/12 to 22/03/2013. This is a summary on the findings of the evaluation.

School Context

- This is a rural co-educational primary school.
- There are currently 55 pupils.
- There are four teachers including a teaching principal and a shared learning support teacher based in the school. We also have a part-time resource teacher.
- Classes currently are grouped as follows, Junior and Senior Infants,(14 pupils) 1st, 2nd and 3rd, (18 pupils) ,4th, 5th and 6th (23 pupils)
- The school administers Drumcondra (reading) and Sigma (maths) standardised tests from 1st to 6th class
- The school uses the M.I.S.T. and Quest tests in Senior Infants.
- The DFL system in place in the school creates an excellent learning environment.
- Pupils are motivated to learn and very keen to succeed.
- Parental involvement and support is very high.

The Findings from **Parent Questionnaires, Pupil Questionnaires and Teachers**

- Pupil standardised test results in literacy show that STen scores for reading are above the national norms. Similarly for Maths.
- Throughout all classes students display a reasonable grasp of grammar, and can write in neat legible handwriting.
- Responses from our parent questionnaire show that parents are positive or very positive about their child's performance in literacy especially in reading. The introduction of the Jolly Phonics programme was highly praised. However, they also raised concerns about their children's ability to identify and self-correct errors in their own writing.
- Another concern was the inability of pupils to independently plan a story with a beginning, a middle and an ending.
- A majority of parents from 1st to 6th class feel that more help with punctuation – commas, apostrophes and speech marks- would be beneficial to the children.
- Suggestions from parents included the compilation of a recommended reading list based on the age and ability of the child, the introduction of writing competitions within the school and homework based on weekly spelling lists. Some parents felt the weekly spelling lists were too easy.
- In relation to Maths, it was suggested that parents could be invited into the school on a couple of occasions throughout the year to explain how we are teaching Maths topics. Other suggestions were to make Maths more fun by the use of puzzles, brain teasers etc. and games with money. More problem-solving was advocated.

- Homework is generally of a high standard and signed daily by parents. The majority of parents were very happy that the amount of homework given is appropriate and it is consistently and fairly corrected.
- Across all classes, students have a positive attitude toward reading and writing. Students stated that they prefer to work independently or in pairs as opposed to group work.
- Teachers Literacy lessons catered for different learning styles and incorporate a variety of teaching methodologies. Teachers feel that most students are motivated and confident in their learning. Assessment for learning is used to guide teaching.

Our school has **strengths** in the following areas:

- 20% of our children scored above the 85th percentile in their standardised tests for reading
- 62% of our pupils scored above the 50th percentile in standardised reading tests.
- Children are generally able to recite, recall and sequence stories orally.
- Children are able to speak confidently about a topic of personal interest.
- Children write in a variety of genres, have a good grasp of grammar and neat handwriting
- Pupils are aware that self-editing improves the standard of their written work.

Engagement in learning:

- Parents reported that most children like to write and read at home.
- Parents reported listening often to their children reading aloud .
- The pupil questionnaire also reflected a very positive attitude to reading and writing.
- Teachers report that children are confident and motivated regardless of their ability level.

The following areas are **prioritised for improvement**

- Writing in all genres.
 - Emphasis on grammar and punctuation.
 - Independent editing to be encouraged.
 - Planning before writing.
- Co-operative group work with designated roles given.
- Enabling students to write in various genres independently and use the skills they have learned.
- WALT (We Are Learning To.....) and WILF (What I'm Looking For) with clear feedback, will be used by teachers to implement literacy targets.