

School Self-Evaluation Report Numeracy for Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed, Thurles

1. Introduction

1.1 The Focus of the Evaluation

A school self-evaluation of teaching and learning in this school was undertaken during the school year 2015/16. Learning and teaching, especially in first year, was reviewed.

This is the report on the findings of the evaluation

2. School Context

Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed is a co-educational post-primary school under the patronage of Tipperary Education and Training Board (ETB). The original school was founded in 1948 and it moved to its current site in 1989. Including Post-Leaving Certificate (PLC) students it has an enrolment of 355 students. It serves a large rural and urban catchment area. The school is a participant in the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) action plan for educational inclusion and as such benefits from the Home-School-Community Liaison (HSCL) scheme and the School Completion Programme (SCP).

The school is characterised by an open enrolment policy and an ethos of respect, effort, honesty and co-operation. In its mission statement, Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed aspires to develop a caring and inclusive learning community that optimises the potential of each person. In keeping with its commitment to meeting the needs of the whole student population, the school offers the Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate programmes, the Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP), the Transition Year (TY) programme, the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) programme and the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP).

The SSE team meet regularly as part of the timetable.

School Year 2014/15 and 15/16

Over the last two years the school has worked on various teaching methodologies including Cooperative Learning, integration of ICT into the curriculum and numeracy and literacy strategies in line with School improvement plans in those areas. The school has also, with the support of the NBSS developed whole school approaches to dealing with challenging behaviour and continues to improve the schools positive merit system.

As part of our commitment to improving learning and teaching the school has been involved in 3 TL21 projects

- 2011-2013 Improving homework
- 2013-2015 Using e-portfolio in the junior classroom
- 2015-2016 Harnessing assessment to improve attainment.

This report was compiled by the SSE team but the whole staff were consulted on an ongoing basis throughout 2016.

2. The Findings

Learner Outcomes

An analysis of Junior Cert results and leaving cert for 3 years was carried out and showed that the majority of students were attaining at an appropriate level and the encouragement to sit Higher level was noticeable in the numbers of students sitting papers at that level.

Teachers' Practice

A teacher attitudinal survey regarding numeracy was carried out during the autumn term of 2015/16.

- All staff said they use group work and gave a rich tapestry of examples including round robin, peer tutoring, peer assessment, think pair share and research projects.
- 78% of teachers report that they use reciprocal teaching and gave examples of where students supported each other.
- 90% of staff report to using AFL
- 100% of teachers say they differentiate their teaching and again provided many examples of differentiation by support, outcome and resources.
- 91% of teachers say they use ICT in the classroom.

In a further survey to more thoroughly tease out assessment 2 teachers reported that they always use AFL.

To look at formative assessment techniques teachers were asked which formative assessment methodologies they use and they report varying use of sharing learning intentions and success criteria, use of traffic lights and questioning as AFL techniques. A small number of teachers use comment only marking.

The use of feedback was also surveyed and 30% of teachers reported that the feedback they gave students was constructive and effective enough that students easily understand how to improve their learning. And 35% reported that they use feedback to amend their teaching and the learning in their classes.

Learner Experience

We carried out an attitudinal survey during September of 2014

43% of students feel that the feedback they receive regularly helps them to improve their work

42% of students report that teachers regularly check their understanding during class

28% of students say that teachers regularly use traffic lights to check understanding. 62% say they sometimes use them. 9% say they teachers never use them.

14% of students say that teachers regularly share the learning intentions, 77% say they sometimes share learning intentions, 9% say they never share learning intentions.

20% of students say that teachers give comments instead of grades, 70% say this sometimes happens. 10% say this never happens.

In a parental attitudinal survey which was carried out in the spring term of the academic year 2015/16

- 91% of parents felt their child was doing well in the school
- 96% of parents felt that teaching was very good in the school
- 92% felt that the school reports gave them a good indication of how their child was doing in school.
- 98% felt that the academic monitoring system was keeping them informed about how their child was progressing.

- 12% of parents did not feel that the amount of homework was appropriate, but some of those parents felt students were getting too much homework, while others felt they were not getting enough.

Findings

Summary of school self-evaluation findings

State examination results

- The overall pass rates in the school are consistently very good.
- The number of students taking higher level papers is increasing
- Over the last number of years fewer students are obtaining As and Bs in Ordinary and foundation level papers and are being encouraged to take papers appropriate to their ability.
- The pass rate at LCA is 100%

Student and Parental Attitudes

- Results from the student survey show that some teachers are using Assessment for learning and using a variety of formative assessment techniques to improve learning.
- The parental survey was overwhelmingly positive and clearly shows parental satisfaction with learning and teaching in the school.

Teacher practice

- 100% of staff say they differentiate their teachers
- 91% of staff say they use ICT in their classroom
- 78% of teachers report that they use reciprocal teaching
- 90% of staff report that they use AFL

- 11% of teachers always use AFL, 83% say they sometimes use AFL
- 22% of teachers always share learning intentions, 72% say they sometimes share learning intentions
- 66% of teachers use traffic lights to monitor progress (sometimes), 33% of teachers never use traffic lights
- 44% of teachers are conscious of using questioning to improve the quality of learning and the remainder say they are sometimes conscious of this.
- 16% of teachers use comment only marking regularly; 44% never use it.
- 70% of teachers feel that their feedback sometimes helps students to understand how to improve their learning and 35% say they always amend teaching in light of feedback.

The following areas are prioritised for improvement

No1: Continue to encourage and promote papers to be taken at higher level.

We hope to do this by:

- Continuing to use change of level forms in English/Irish/Maths
- Report on effort as well as attainment 4 times per year
- Embed the practice of negotiated target grades
- Use academic tracking to monitor progress and facilitate meetings with parents.

No2: Encourage teachers to use and embed AFL into their practice.

- Introduce teacher led in-service on AFL techniques
- Encourage use of AFL techniques amongst teachers
- Ask that teachers identify AFL on schemes on work
- Teach all first years AFL techniques so that there is a shared understanding of how they work
- Use the TL21 group as a vehicle to investigate feedback and propose a way of best utilising it in this schools context.