

Gallen Community School Ferbane



SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

2017/2018

STEP 1: Context and Focus

- The Inspectors MLL report June 2017 is a key document which highlights what we are doing well and what we could do better.
- Staff acknowledge that school self-evaluation is about improving teaching and learning in school and current SSE is based on the models in “Looking at our School” and “School Self Evaluation Guidelines 2016-2020” along with JCT Framework.

We have looked at teaching and learning in our school and a WSE MLL in Dec. 2016 afforded us the opportunity to find out what we are doing well. This is what we discovered:

- In the best lessons the Inspectors observed, the learning intentions were referred to and used to monitor progress and to consolidate learning at the end.
- In the best lessons that the Inspectors observed, teachers’ expectations of students were high, but appropriate, and they strategically selected and used approaches such as questioning strategies, co-operative learning activities and visual supports to engage and meet students’ learning needs.
- The best examples of group work were characterised by carefully planned activities, clear instructions, defined roles for students and an identified timeframe for task completion.

- Lessons were conducted in an atmosphere of mutual respect and students' contributions were affirmed.
- Some good examples of the development of independent learning skills were noted, including enquiry-based research, the use of e-dictionaries and of ICT platforms to share information and work.
- Global low-cognitive questioning was used to good effect to check for understanding and in-class monitoring of homework.
- Homework was set and monitored in the majority of lessons. A number of good examples of formative feedback on written work was observed.
- The school engages in some very good self-evaluation processes, including the participation of all stakeholders in identifying areas for improvement, devising and agreeing improvement plans.
- In addition to literacy and numeracy plans, the school has in this academic year commenced implementation of an improvement plan for student engagement. This evaluation confirms that this third area is appropriately identified as an area for improvement.
- The SMT has been strategic in identifying and supporting teacher engagement with third-level led initiatives that espouse actions related to the school's improvement plan for student engagement. The SSE team is representative of teachers from across the curriculum and the regular discussion of pedagogy which has been initiated as part of this work is highly commendable. Management and staff are well placed to build on progress and improve learner experiences and attainment across the curriculum.
- 93.3 % of parents strongly agree or agree that their child is doing well at school.
- 95 % of parents strongly agree or agree that school report gives them a good picture of how their child is doing in school
- 85% of parents strongly agree or agree with the homework their child get.
- 80.9% of students strongly agree or agree that teachers encourage them to do the best they can
- 60% of students strongly agree or agree that classes are interesting.
- 61.%% of students strongly agree or agree that teachers listen to them and pay attention to what they say.
- 66.4% of students strongly agree or agree that teachers talk to them about how to improve their learning.

This is what we did to find out what we were doing well, and what we could do better:

We had gathered a lot of data in previous years and the Inspectorate recommended the importance of gathering a manageable amount of relevant evidence

- The Inspectors MML report is a key document which highlights what we are doing well and what we could do better.
- The feedback from the anonymous parents, students and teacher's surveys give us data to highlight what we are doing well and what we could do better.

- Data from student profile of learning questionnaires ‘what’s good, what’s difficult, and what helps’ them to learn.
- Subject Department analysis of results .
- Feedback from staff discussion and school self-evaluation team during the year.

This is what we are now going to work on:

- Teachers to identify and address students in their classes who feel their learning needs are not being addressed to increase their engagement, participation and attainment.
- To increase students’ engagement in classes by a focus on more targeted questioning in classes. The development of higher-order questioning on a whole-school basis so that students are challenged and encouraged to think divergently and creatively
- To facilitate teacher CPD and sharing of practice vis a vis “learning to learn strategies “with their students and so enhancing the learning experiences, to improve homework and student attainment.
- The SSE team to focus on school improvement and develop an action plan.
- Refocus our efforts on the implementation of Keywords as a strategy in Literacy and “Estimate calculate and check/problem solving “in Numeracy. Some teachers have clear visual supports of these in their classrooms and this is best practice as it ensures that as students and teachers we are all on the same teaching and learning journey.

Target No 1

Improvement Targets	Required Actions	Persons Responsible	Success Criteria/Measurable Outcomes	Timeframe for Actions
<p>To increase the percentage of students in second year who answer questions from 50% to 100% and to reduce the “hardly ever” from 50% to 0%.</p> <p>To hear every students voice in class</p> <p>This focus on questioning strategies is devised to give every student opportunities to be more engaged in their classes and also avoid chorus answering.</p>	<p>Teachers will implement the agreed strategy of posing a relevant question at the beginning of the lesson and state that they will select students to answer it before or at the end of the lesson to avoid chorus answering.</p> <p>They must aim to ask different students each day and try to involve all students in their classes by differentiating their questions.</p> <p>Tools used may from a range of resources i.e., Kahoot, Ranking ladder, Random selection Tool, KWL, etc.</p> <p>Teachers to monitor student voice and be cognisant of encouraging the development of oral competency, particularly with second years.</p> <p>The SSE team will prioritise questioning in the first term to examine best ways of targeting questioning to include all students in learning and engaging in class. They will agree to explore these strategies and discuss their efficacy with all staff</p>	<p>Senior Management</p> <p>Teachers</p> <p>Teachers</p> <p>Teachers</p> <p>SSE team in the school</p>	<p>Over time students will expect the question to be asked by their teacher at the start of class and will observe uniformity across all subject areas.</p> <p>Different students to be selected each day to answer questions.</p> <p>Elimination of chorus answering in all classes</p> <p>Increase in confidence and participation of student voice in class.</p> <p>The SSE team will share their findings with all the staff. Subject departments will discuss ways they can implement the questioning strategy in their subjects and support each other with resources</p>	<p>Sep 2017 onwards</p> <p>Reviewed at November planning meeting</p> <p>Staff and second year students questionnaire May 2018 .</p>

Target No 2

Improvement Targets	Required Actions	Persons Responsible	Success Criteria/Measurable Outcomes	Timeframe for Actions
<p>The development of higher-order questioning on a whole-school basis so that students are challenged and encouraged to think divergently and creatively.</p>	<p>Teachers will implement Target 1</p> <p>Teachers to use Blooms Taxonomy as one tool to assist them in framing higher order questions for their students .</p> <p>Staff CPD</p>	<p>Teachers</p> <p>Teachers</p> <p>Senior Management</p> <p>PDST team and all teachers</p>	<p>Teachers ask more higher order questions in all their classes.</p> <p>Blooms Taxonomy on teacher's desks to assist teachers in using higher order questions.</p> <p>Resources from CPD being implemented in classes to challenge students in their learning by more higher order and creative questioning and active teaching strategies.</p> <p>All staff and students will be asked to give feedback in May 2018</p>	<p>Sep 2017 – May 2018</p> <p>Reviewed at November planning meeting</p> <p>Staff and second year students questionnaire May 2018 .</p>

Target No 3				
Improvement Targets	Required Actions	Persons Responsible	Success Criteria/Measurable Outcomes	Timeframe for Actions
Teachers to identify the 30% of students in their classes in the current second year group who need to feel their learning difficulties are being addressed.	<p>Staff in-service August '17: how to engage students in their learning using mind maps, web diagrams etc</p> <p>Teachers to identify and target the 30% of students in their classes who need help in their learning</p> <p>School management to purchase text resources in addition to resources available on Staff Data folder for staff to use to have ideas on differentiated learners in our classes</p>	<p>External facilitator Teachers</p> <p>Teachers</p> <p>School Principal</p> <p>All teachers</p>	<p>Teachers more confident in using learning to learn strategies.</p> <p>Teachers demonstrate how to do a mind map for their students or a notes page for their class.</p> <p>Teachers to use an appropriate strategy to increase the participation and engagement of the identified students in their classes e.g, formative assessment, differentiated worksheets, quality of homework, results.</p> <p>Term results</p>	<p>August 2017 onwards</p> <p>Staff and second year students questionnaire May 2018 .</p>

Target No 4

Improvement Targets	Required Actions	Persons Responsible	Success Criteria/Measurable Outcomes	Timeframe for Actions
<p>Student Attainment</p> <p>The SSE team to develop an action plan that combines SEE targets with the aim of overall school improvement in participation and attainment.</p>	<p>Presentation of MLL recommendations</p> <p>Invitation to more teachers to join the SSE team</p> <p>Exploration of resources on Questioning and practice them in classes</p> <p>Identify strategies with proven success to support and monitor whole school targets.</p> <p>Subject Department Analysis of results</p>	<p>Principal and Deputy</p> <p>SSE team & deputy principal</p> <p>SSE team Deputy Principal Principal</p>	<p>All staff clear on school targets</p> <p>SSE team to meet with the deputy principal as lead facilitator.</p> <p>Sharing feedback of questioning strategies to whole staff</p> <p>Action plan to increase participation and attainment in our school 2018/2019</p>	<p>Aug 2017</p> <p>Oct/Nov 2017</p> <p>Spring 2018.</p>

Target No 5

Improvement Targets	Required Actions	Persons Responsible	Success Criteria/Measurable Outcomes	Timeframe for Actions
<p>Re focus our efforts on the implementation of Keywords as a strategy in Literacy and “Estimate calculate and check/problem solving” in Numeracy.</p>	<p>Feedback to all staff on MLL findings on implementation of literacy and numeracy strategies.</p> <p>Staff to continue the identified literacy strategies- using Keywords: keywords on board, keyword notebooks, keyword bank</p> <p>Staff to continue to use the identified numeracy strategies- “Estimate calculate, check”. All teachers to encourage students to “guestimate”, have a go to develop independent thinking before they find the answer.</p> <p>Monitoring by principal of literacy and numeracy strategies</p>	<p>School Principal</p> <p>Teachers</p> <p>Teachers</p> <p>School Principal</p>	<p>August 2017 – staff meeting</p> <p>Teachers have clear visual supports of these in their classrooms and this is best practice as it ensures that as students and teachers we are all on the same teaching and learning jour</p> <p>Principal observations of use of identified strategies in both literacy and numeracy.</p>	<p>Sep . 17 – May 2018</p>

Target No 6				
Improvement Targets	Required Actions	Persons Responsible	Success Criteria/Measurable Outcomes	Timeframe for Actions
Students in third and sixth year will be invited to attend the Parent teacher meeting with their parents to discuss their engagement in their learning both in class and at home.	Staff discussion of this suggestion.	Principal and staff		Aug 2017
	Principal to discuss this idea with the Parents Association also	Principal	A high number of students to attend the meeting with their parents	Oct/ Nov 2017
	Senior management will write to parents of third and sixth year students.		Positive feedback from parents	Nov/ Dec 2018
	We will give them i.e., students/parents the option.		Positive feedback from students	
Staff to put the student at the centre of the parent teacher meeting re: personal targets, participation in HL subjects and attainment			Positive feedback from students	

Other initiatives to enable implementation of these targets and MLL recommendations:

- The BOM of Gallen CS is involved in School Self-evaluation and looking at the MLL recommendations and progressing them and their own priorities.
- Gallen C.S. is now a Droichead School and this year some peer review and collaboration will take place among the staff which we hope will enrich and broaden the discussions about pedagogy and positively impact on student learner experiences and outcomes.
- In keeping up with our efforts to implement all MLL recommendations, Subject Department Plans will act as ‘living documents’ and include reflection on summative data and target setting for their class groups.
- A TY team and an SEN team is in place.
- Increased opportunities for student leadership in our school have been implemented by establishing the Fuinneamh TY mentors and a senior prefects system in Gallen CS.
- We will take views of staff and students as to the effectiveness of these targets towards the end of the year by asking similar questions of students to the previous year and comparing results. We may also conduct a focus group with some students.

In this document we believe the targets and actions of our SIP are now more specific, measurable and informed by data.

The staff will work hard to implement these targets supported by senior management and the BOM.

As parents/guardians this is what you can do to help:

- Talk to your child about their classes and how they are engaging with their classwork.
- Please check their journals at least once a week and sign it.
- Use the highlighted section in the student journal to discuss the type of learner your child is.
- Keep in contact with the class teachers/year head if necessary
- Attend all information meetings in the school
- Discuss class test and term test results with them
- Check has your son/daughter has completed the monthly Evaluation page in their journal and discuss their answers with them.
- Support your son/daughter to be on time and attend school every single day.

Our school self- evaluation report and all school polices are available on request from the school.

Here is some information about how we are carrying out our work and about what the Department of Education and Skills requires us to do.

School time and holidays

The Department requires all post-primary schools to have **167 school days** each year, and a **28-hour school week**.

In 2016/17 year we had 167 school days, from August 2016 to June 2017. Our school week is 28 hours.

The Department sets out a **standardised school year and school holidays**.

This year we took all our school holidays within the permitted time. **YES**

The Department sets out arrangements for **parent/teacher meetings and staff meetings**. This year we have 4 parent/teacher meetings and 3 staff meetings, all in line with the Department's regulations.

Looking after the children in our school

The Department requires schools to follow the *Child Protection Procedures* it has set down. Our board of management has agreed in writing to do this. **YES**

All teachers know about the *Procedures*.

These *Procedures* are on our website and will be updated in line with the new changes in Dec 2017/March 11th, 2018

YES

Our Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is Mrs Ursula Finnegan, Principal.

and our Deputy DLP is Mrs Frances Scully, Deputy Principal

Enrolment and attendance

The Department requires schools to have and publish an admissions policy, to record and report attendance accurately, and to encourage high attendance and participation.

We have an admissions policy and it is published. **YES**

We reviewed (and updated) our admissions policy on: **Jan. 2017**

We keep accurate attendance records and report them as required. **YES**

We encourage high attendance in the following ways:

1. Take attendance every day and before every class
2. Send home a text message to parents of their son/daughter is absent
3. Encourage students to fill in their attendance page in their journal
4. Give end of year awards for excellent attendance
- 5 Contact parents frequently if we have concerns
- 6 A teacher is appointed as an Attendance officer who monitors attendance on a regular basis and contacts parents/ TUSLA etc as needed.
7. The principal actively engages with the Educational Welfare Office to ensure concerns are addressed.
- 7.The school sends complies with TUSLA regarding an Attendance Strategy and sends in annual returns.

This is how you as parent/guardian can help:

1. Please ensure your son/daughter comes to school every day and in time
2. Fill in relevant section of Journal for unavoidable absences
3. Limit all non- urgent appointments for outside school hours
4. Comply with school rules on not signing your child out sports games etc.

Positive behaviour for a happy school

The Department requires schools to have a code of behaviour and asks us to consult parents and students about it. We do this.

YES

Our code of behaviour describes and supports positive behaviour. **YES**

We have a very clear and high-profile anti-bullying policy in our school. **YES**

