

Gallen Community School Ferbane



School Improvement Plan 2018/2019

STEP 1: Context and Focus

School Improvement is the continued focus of our SSE . The Action Plan for 2018/2019 encompasses

1. Embedding the practices started in 2017/18 SIP for improvement in student engagement . Our focus on student engagement is a scaffold for a whole school focus for improvement and attainment.
2. Implementing strategies of best practice around homework better preparing all students to attain higher results in term and state examinations.
3. Use analysis of examinations results as evidence of strengths and areas for improvement to maximise participation rates in students taking higher level papers and to increase attainment grades.
4. We will continue to monitor the progress of our targeted group as they move into third year. We will focus on the available data for this group and set targets with them.

- This Report takes account of the implementation and review of the targets from 2017/2018 using the six step school evaluation process.
- In September 2018, we have appointed five new teachers . We are facilitating newly qualified teachers in the Droichead programme but this also promotes staff collaboration and peer review which feeds into whole school targets.
- 2018/19 will see the continued implementation of other MLL recommendations in conjunction with the requirements of SSE 2016-2020.
- SSE is about improving teaching and learner outcomes and current SSE is based on the models in “Looking at our School” and “School Self Evaluation Guidelines 2016-2020” along with JCT Framework .

STEP 2 : Gather evidence

We continue to use the feedback in the MLL document as our focus for school improvement.

To evaluate the specific targets of last years SIP we surveyed the same cohort of students in May 2018 and first years also. This survey on questioning identified some homework practices as another area to be targeted which concurred with SSE team feedback during the last academic year.

We conducted a focus group with some students from our targeted second year group .

Experiential feedback from the SSE team and data from a teachers questionnaire was also used.

Some feedback from second year parents was taken by the principal and deputy .

Analysis of examination results also give us important data.

Second year responses in May 2018 : Similar questions to May 2017 on their experience of Learning and Teaching explored ‘what’s good, what’s difficult, and what helps’ them to learn.

When asked if over the last year they took the opportunity to answer questions out loud in class 91% said a lot, 9% said sometimes.

When asked if over the last year they had increased the amount of time they answered in class 72% said a lot, 26 % sometimes .

95% of students said their teachers often begin class with a question.

96% of students surveyed feels their teachers listen to them and helps them learn.

59% said they do homework as quickly as possible and 38% they like to make a good effort. 3% said they do both.

74% said they would like their teachers to show them how to do homework better

56% see homework as important to help their learning and prepare for exams, 44% said it is not important.

15% of students said somebody checks their homework at home with 82% said nobody checks it.

Data from second year focus group :

Enjoy group work and active methodologies in class – information is more memorable and relevant than learning from pages in a book

Like pair work and problem solving

CBAs – teacher gave them good direction this year

Enjoyed doing the work and generally positive about school.

Data from Staff questionnaire and discussion May 2018 :

On Questioning:

94 % of teachers said the percentage of students who answered in class had greatly increased. (this corroborates well with the 91 % of students who said they answered well in class)

92% of teachers said they consciously targeted some students to engage more in class all year. (this corroborates well with 96% of students who say teachers listen to them and helps them learn. Previous figure in May 2017 indicated this was 70:30)

When asked about questioning , teachers stated the advantages included : gets students focused and engaged from the start of class, settles them into a positive learning environment, access to prior knowledge, facilitates differentiation, aids decision making, links to learning intention and self- assessment for students

When asked about questioning , teachers stated the disadvantages included : careful planning so questions are meaningful and can engage all students, difficult to apply to some subjects and /or new topics. Most effective when written on the board but can be time consuming.

Regarding teaching methodologies used to enable students to think creatively and divergently teachers included: questioning , keywords , keyword board and copies, vary the stimulus, video, practical application, fishbone, kahoot, group discussion, think pair share, random selection when questioning , targeted higher order questioning , ticket to leave, traffic lights.

On Homework :

Homework can be neglected by some (78%)

Poor quality at times handed up (63%)

Teachers feedback (comments etc) not integrated in student improvement (80%)

When asked about Strategies used for Homework, teachers included : exemplars, checklists (e.g. FEED, PIE) verbally explain to students what the homework is, demonstration of how homework should be presented—you should...you have to....you could. Traffic lights..

Data from State Exams /CAT :

- Analysis of attainment in state exams have highlighted the subjects where we are strong in participation and attainment and the subjects that need some or a lot of improvement.
- Our results must also be read in the context of the students general ability as indicated by their CAT scores on entry to second level which we also have.

STEP 3: Analyse and make judgements

Strengths:

- There has been an excellent increase over the year in the number of students that engage more in questioning in class. Figures have improved well from May 2017(50% said they rarely answer questions in class % 50% sometimes) to May 2018 when 91% of students said they answer a lot, 9% said sometimes.

- When asked if over the last year they had increased the amount of time they answered in class 72% said a lot, 26% sometimes .
- When asked about questioning , teachers stated the advantages included : gets students focused and engaged from the start of class, settles them into a positive learning environment, access to prior knowledge, facilitates differentiation, aids decision making, links to learning intention and self- assessment for students
- Second year students were very pleased that teachers used different methods in classes to engage students in their learning – group work, projects, self appraisal. Oral presentations, quizzes, activities as evidenced in the student focus group.
- There was positive feedback on the Classroom Based Assessments by the group of second years in the focus group.

Action Plan for school improvement - Areas for Development 2018-2019:

- While consolidating work on student engagement in class, teachers said that students need support on the quality of and attitude to homework. Data from student questionnaires supports this view.
- To support the students to take ownership of and produce quality homework. { The aim here is to encourage independent learning and improve students understanding and delivery of information across all subjects leading to improved outcomes}.
- To use available data to inform target setting with third year students to afford every student the opportunity to take a HL paper in line with national norms and achieve their potential.
- To embed student engagement through the continuance of higher order questioning and using active teaching methodologies on a whole-school basis .
- To continue to focus on the whole school agreed strategies for Literacy and Numeracy.

Target No 1				
Improvement Target	Required Actions	Persons Responsible	Success Criteria/Measurable Outcomes	Timeframe for Actions
<p>To met the target of 74% of students in first and second year who would like their teachers to show them how to do homework better.</p> <p>To decrease the percentage of 59% students in first and second year who said they do homework as quickly as possible and increase the number from 38% who like to make a good effort.</p>	<p>Teachers to take time to instruct classes regularly/topic by topic to show students how to complete a piece of homework that may also include an exemplar given to each student.</p>	<p>Principal</p> <p>Teachers</p>	<p>Evidence of visual supports ie exemplars, rubrics in classrooms that teacher use with students.</p> <p>Feedback from students, teachers and parents . Third years will be present at PT meeting.</p>	<p>Sep onwards</p> <p>Dec 2018 :Third year Parent Teacher meeting</p>
	<p>Teachers to explain how the Checklist on page 15 of students journal can be a rubric for best practice in their subject.</p>	<p>Teachers</p>	<p>Significant improvement in the quality of homework handed up to teachers.</p>	<p>September to May</p>
	<p>Teachers to refer to the Homework Checklist when giving written feedback to and include one/two ways they can improve on their assignment.</p>	<p>Teachers</p>	<p>Evidence of written formative feedback to students on homework in their copies.</p> <p>Evidence of students redrafting material in response to formative assessment</p>	
	<p>SEE team will work on differentiation homework strategies and give feedback at planning meetings</p>	<p>SSE</p>	<p>Differentiation homework strategies will be the topic of a planning meeting</p>	<p>Nov 2018</p>

<p>To increase the percentage of time parents of third years check on homework throughout the year using Page 15 as their guide. (currently 15 %).</p>	<p>To implement the guidelines of teachers when completing homework.</p> <p>Taking ownership of their homework using their journal to record work in class and use the Homework Checklist on page 15 as their standard.</p> <p>To follow through on the teachers suggested targets for improvement with homework.</p> <p>Parents of all Junior Cycle students will get a letter home re: whole school targets on homework and advise on what they can do to help their son/daughter</p> <p>Third year parents will also be asked to regularly check that their child is doing homework and they may use the checklist on page 15 which will be sent home too.</p>	<p>Students</p> <p>Students</p> <p>Students</p> <p>Parents of Third year in particular</p>	<p>Significant improvement in the quality of homework handed up to teachers.</p> <p>Evidence of written formative feedback to students on homework in their copies.</p> <p>Feedback from students, teachers and parents surveys – May 2019</p>	<p>Sep – May 2019</p> <p>Surveys of students, teachers and parents May 2019</p>
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Target No 2

Improvement Targets	Required Actions	Persons Responsible	Success Criteria/Measurable Outcomes	Timeframe for Actions
<p>To use available data to inform target setting with third year students to afford every student the opportunity to take a HL paper in line with national norms and achieve their potential</p>	Principal presents analysis and CAT 4 data to all staff .	Principal	Presentation that focus' on alignment of expectations with ability.	Aug 2018
	Academic monitor and principal meet students to set targets .	Principal Academic Monitor	Each student will have an understanding from first term about their targets and how to study for success.	First term 2018
	Third year students to get some guidance on study techniques	Principal/ Guidance Counsellor	Parents will discuss these targets with students at home and with teachers at the Dec Parent teacher meeting which students will attend	Dec. 2018
	Communicate with parents about target setting	Principal Teachers		
	Staff will use their subject department meetings to examine results data to inform their department/ class plans in order to put in targets and plans for enabling the each student in third year maximise their potential.	Teachers	Percentage of students sitting the higher level more reflective of national norms e.g, increase GCS % in Irish from 50 % to 58% , English from 68% to 79% , maths from 45% to 57% and so on.	Ongoing Sep – June 2019
	School principal and deputy will meet with each subject department to look at their targets			

Target No 3

Improvement Targets	Required Actions	Persons Responsible	Success Criteria/Measurable Outcomes	Timeframe for Actions
<p>To embed student engagement through the continuance of questioning and using active teaching methodologies on a whole-school basis to encourage engagement in independent thinking.</p>	<p>Staff will continue to focus on questioning strategies devised to give every student opportunities to be more engaged in their classes</p>	<p>Teachers</p>	<p>Teachers to report on students engagement through CBA oral presentations and Group tasks and quality of answering</p>	<p>Nov 2018</p>
	<p>Teachers will continue to pose a relevant question at the beginning of class where appropriate and use the <i>LETS</i> strategy to help students develop /be cognisant of higher order thinking skills</p>	<p>Teachers</p>	<p>Visual evidence of ATMs in classrooms.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
	<p>The SSE team will meet in Sep 2018 and evaluate progress from last year re: school improvement and continue to explore ways to support whole school targets as listed in the SIP.</p>	<p>SSE team</p>	<p>Teachers will observe students developing higher order thinking skills.</p>	
	<p>SSE team and senior management will model active teaching strategies to all teachers formally at planning meetings throughout the year and informally through collaboration</p>	<p>SSE team D Principal</p>	<p>Focus teacher and student groups reporting to principal and deputy</p>	<p>Easter 2019</p>

Target No 1

Improvement Targets	Required Actions	Persons Responsible	Success Criteria/Measurable Outcomes	Timeframe for Actions
<p>Literacy Strategy : Continued focus on Keywords and for 2018/19 a DEAR initiative starting with first years in September 2018.</p> <p>Numeracy Strategy: Continued focus on “Estimate calculate and check” and reinforcement of problem solving skills /independent thinking aligning with <i>LETS</i> for 2018/19</p>	<p>Staff to continue the identified literacy strategies- using Keywords First year English teachers to incorporate one reading class a week .</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>Teachers</p> <p>First year English Teachers</p> <p>Teachers</p> <p>School Principal</p>	<p>Students classify notes and material using keywords as student aids.</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 journey</p> <p>School Library is being used for the purpose of enjoyment of literature and students getting the time and space to read for pleasure.</p> <p>Principal’s observations of use of identified strategies in both literacy and numeracy.</p>	<p>Sep . 17 – May 2018</p>

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

- School Self-evaluation is on the agenda for all BOM meetings.
- The analysis of exam results will be given to Board members when complete in Sep/Oct 2018.
- The TY team and SEN team are now up and running one year and will continue to develop priorities for their teams.
- As a Droichead school, staff in Gallen CS will collaborate with newly qualified teachers to enable peer review and enrich discussion about pedagogy and practice among staff members.
- All teachers will work towards implementation all the targets outlined in our SIP.
- 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 2017/18 year we had 167 school days, from August 2017 to June 2018. 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*.

The Child Safety Statement was reviewed and updated in line with new legislation. All staff completed the online TUSLA child protection training.

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**

