

**Marymount GNS Ballsgrove Drogheda.**

**School Self Evaluation Report.**

**Evaluation Period:**

**September 2014– June 2015**

**Report: June 2015**

## INTRODUCTION

SSE of teaching and learning is part of the ongoing work of Marymount National School. The reflective and critical approach to self evaluation was commented on as a “noteworthy” strength in the recent Deis Evaluation of 2011.

The focus of SSE for 2014/2015 has been Gaeilge with an ongoing focus on Literacy and Numeracy targets as laid out in our School Improvement Plan following on from previous Deis /SSE Reviews

During the evaluation, teaching and learning in the areas of Gaeilge were reviewed. This is a report on

1. The findings of the evaluation.
2. Progress in relation to the School Improvement Plan for Literacy and Numeracy.

## SCHOOL CONTEXT: Urban

Marymount is a Deis Band 1 Catholic Girls vertical primary School. Enrolment is currently 316. The school participates in the School Meals programme and implements the following programmes- Maths Recovery, Reading Recovery, First Steps Reading, Writing , Speaking and Listening, Incredible Years and Friends For Life. The school enjoys a very strong relationship with parents and the local community.

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

- The overall attainments of pupils in literacy and numeracy is of a high standard.
- A safe stimulating environment is provided for the students. Staff collaborates very well to provide a positive multi –sensory focussed approach to learning.
- Pupils at all levels are enabled to engage actively in their learning and the level of pupil interest and participation is high.
- A range of assessment approaches is used to evaluate pupil’s progress. Pupils are helped to reflect on their work and are involved in monitoring their own progress in learning.
- Teachers are well prepared in terms of practical and written planning for lessons.
- Teachers plan effectively for how they are going to assess the pupils learning.
- A positive code of behaviour including an anti-bullying policy which complies with the requirements of the equal status act (2000-2011) is implemented.
- Staff have high but realistic expectations of the pupils in relation to behaviour and learning and communicate these to them.

### Classroom Management:

The Incredible Years Behaviour Management Programme is central to the code of behaviour for Marymount School and is used on a whole school basis.

## **GAEILGE:**

### **PROCESS**

Data was gathered on the basis of qualitative and quantitative inquiry from three main sources.

**Staff:** Whole staff and group discussions of areas requiring attention based on school context and best practice.

SWOT analysis of and reflection on Gaeilge.

**Parents:** Informal discussions with parents.

**Children:** Informal discussions and survey.

### **FINDINGS**

#### **Learning Environment:**

The school employs a whole –school approach to many aspects of learning and the staff collaborates very well to share good practice. Teachers have a positive attitude to Irish and a good level of competency. There is a genuine openness to change and development. The standard of Gaeilge was commented on positively in our recent Deis report.

In recent years, the celebrations of Seachtain na Gaeilge demonstrated a good level of positivity and enthusiasm towards Gaeilge, particularly in the use of Gaeilge Neamhfhoirmiuil in the classroom and around the school. However staff report that there are not enough opportunities for pupils to use the language in a meaningful way.

Staff have access to good ICT resources and are happy with the commitment of school management to investment in resources when requested.

Bua na Cainte has been introduced in the infant classes and is working very well.

Children in the school speak a range of different languages which may support positive attitudes to language learning.

Marymount participates in the Campa Samhraidh scheme and hosts an Irish Summer Camp annually.

#### **Pupils Engagement in Learning:**

A pupil questionnaire indicated that Pupils have a positive attitude in general to Gaeilge. They view Gaeilge as an important subject and they report liking Gaeilge at school. The majority of children reported being good at reading, writing and speaking Irish. However as children progress to senior classes, teachers and parents report that maintaining

positive attitudes is a challenge. Less senior children reported liking Irish or being good at Irish. Parents also report not being able to help their child with Irish at home.

### Planning.

Preparation for teaching is evident at class level and through group planning. Class and support teachers liaise to serve individual needs and strive to enable a consistent whole school approach. Teachers plan for a variety of approaches to Gaeilge including drama , group work, pair work, and differentiation. They avail of good IT resources including IWBs and visualisers.

Challenges include a certain lack of continuity as regards scheme being used and low expectations towards the language in the wider community.

Priorities for the future.

The findings of the gathered data were reported to staff and following further discussions, the following areas of Gaeilge have been prioritised for improvement.

- Maintaining and developing positive attitudes to Gaeilge for all pupils.
- Placing a greater emphasis on the learning of Gaeilge and improving expectations around achievement.
- Developing a consistent whole school approach to the delivery of Gaeilge.
- Providing more opportunities for the use of and celebration of Gaeilge in the school.

The following actions are planned.

Developing an agreed Grammar and Vocabulary bank for senior pupils.

Organising a regular opportunity for staff and pupils to speak Irish.

Extending the Bua na Cainte Scheme to 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> classes.

Exploring the possibility of Irish language classes for parents.

## **PROGRESS IN LITERACY AND NUMERACY:**

### **Numeracy /Maths :**

During the 2013/2014 SSE, the following areas were prioritised for improvement.

- Implementation of strategies to support differentiation in maths.
- Updating and implementing whole school maths language and methodology.

The following strategies have been implemented to date to support these areas.

- Use of Croke Park Time to review current language and methodologies and amend/ update same if needed.
- Explicit modelling by all teachers throughout the year.
- Link with SET teachers to ensure fidelity.
- Posters, checklists, charts for children displayed for children, teachers and parents to refer to.
- Information sheets for parents to be disseminated at PT meetings.
- Maths Language workshops for interested parents.
- Parents involved as Maths Games Leaders to promote maths and use of Mathematical language.
- Parent Focus group

Pupils' use of agreed maths language was assessed at the beginning and the end of the 2014/2015 school year and improvement was noted.

Further assessment will be carried out to ensure continuity over the coming years. Teachers observations included that the agreed Maths Language plan should be further developed to include language relating to shape. This will be organised for the school year 2015/2016.

A parent focus group and a student focus group will be organised to gather feedback.

### **Literacy:**

During the 2013/2014 SSE, the following areas were prioritised for improvement.

- Development of literacy skills of pupils capable of scoring in the upper ranges, focussing on (1) Higher order questioning, (2) Fluency,( 3) vocabulary development.
- Maintaining positive attitudes to reading for all of the pupils.
- Consolidation of whole school cursive writing programme.

The following strategies have been implemented to date to support these areas.

- DEAR Time regularly as a whole school approach.
- Book Week Activities: Readathon. Author visit. Creating images Art competition. Incentives.
- Sharing of ideas between teachers.
- Allowing the children to have an input into purchase of new library books.
- Reading buddies and Peer- Tutoring.
- Model and teach higher order questioning, fluency and expression explicitly throughout the year.
- Mini lessons focussing on aspects such as punctuation marks, speech marks, tone of voice, pace etc.
- PDST Support / Resource pack and a copy of "Focus on Fluency" for each teacher.
- Introduction of Big Box Reading Scheme at Senior Cycle.
- Each teacher to be offered an opportunity to view a Reading Recovery Lesson.
- Cursive writing implementation workshop for teachers

Pupil's reading fluency and ability to compose Higher Order Questions was assessed at the beginning and end of school year 2014 /2015 and improvement was noted.

Further assessment will be carried out over the coming years to ensure continuity and continued progress.

Teacher observation noted very positive attitudes of pupils to reading.

Teacher observation also noted that although immense work has taken place in relation to literacy in the school and improving outcomes for the pupils this may not be fully reflected in the scores of the children with higher ability. It is planned to include cloze activities linked directly to the First Steps Programme to consolidate the link with standardised Literacy assessment methods.

Cursive writing scheme "All Write Now" to be introduced from September 2015 in 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> classes. Classes from 1st to 6<sup>th</sup> will use handwriting copies with samples to model from.

A parent's focus group and survey of literacy will be held in 2015/2016 school year.