



Coláiste Chiaráin
Leixlip Community School
Celbridge Road
Leixlip
Co. Kildare

School Self-Evaluation Report

Evaluation period: 2013-14

Report issue date: August 2014

School Self-Evaluation Report

1. Introduction

1.1 The focus of the evaluation

A school self-evaluation of teaching and learning in Coláiste Chiaráin was undertaken during the period November 2013 to May 2014. During the evaluation, teaching and learning in the following area were evaluated:

Literacy – An evaluation of 3 pilot schemes running in the school to promote and raise awareness/enjoyment of reading and increase student confidence in dealing with texts. The pilot schemes were:

- One Book Project
- Paired Reading Programme
- Building Bridges Programme – an attempt to adapt a primary school initiative for teaching comprehension strategies in post primary school.

This is a report on the findings of the evaluation.

1.2 School context

Coláiste Chiaráin was established as Leixlip Community School in 1980 under Deeds of Trust.

- *Trustees: Presentation Order, Archbishop of Dublin and Kildare VEC.*
- *Board operates under provisions of the Education Act and other relevant legislation.*
- *Mixed school, inclusive in intake.*
- *Non Fee Paying*
- *The school serves the community.*
- *Community has good employment rates.*
- *Current enrolment: 689*
- *Projected enrolment 2014-12: 719.*
- *New Deputy Principal August 2010 & 2014*
- *Developed Autism Unit*
- *Culturally diverse*
- *Reduced in-school management structure due to government cutbacks*
- *Reduced teaching allocation due to government cutbacks*

2. The findings

The focus of the evaluation was the 3 pilot programmes listed above.

One Book Project

- 2012-13: 20 first year students and their parents as well as other members of the school community agreed to read the same book and complete various paired exercises. Local Library donated copies of the book so that each home could have 2 copies. Having surveyed the group it was found that 65% of students and 70% of parents enjoyed the exercise citing that they would like to continue, it increased enthusiasm and discussion around books.
- 2013-14: Project developed to include all first year students. This time the families had to buy the second copy of the book. At the end of the project 3

random students from each class (5) representing 10% of the cohort completed a survey. The results were:

- 100% enjoyed the book
- 66% reported it enjoyable to have a reading buddy
- 86% completed oral and/or written assignments with their buddy
- 100% would like to be involved again.

Parents were asked to complete an online survey. There was 10 respondents (66%). All reported enjoying the project and found it helpful in increasing student's engagement with reading.

Teachers who responded to the survey reported the project as worthwhile but felt that more planning and cohesion was needed to maximise impact.

Paired Reading Programme

Transition year students volunteered to act as tutors to 23 first year students. The TY students received tutor training. The students selected averaged a reading age of 10 or less in our standardised reading test administered in December 2013.

Programme ran for 7 weeks over 3 sessions - 2 class periods and one lunch time.

A survey of Tutors and Tutees was conducted on completion.

Key Findings

Tutors report; 65% their tutee is reading more

48% tutees understanding is better

91% tutee is a more confident reader

70% tutee reads with a steadier flow

All tutors were happy to tutor again - areas of spelling and math suggested.

Tutee survey; 94% enjoyed programme

83% felt they were a more confident reader

83% felt next year's first years would benefit

67% preferred the Library as a venue

Based on the evidence it is considered that this would be a very positive programme to run again with more detailed planning. It would be possible to develop a Numeracy strand (see teacher evaluation) perhaps in 2015.

Building Bridges Programme

This programme was run in 2 class periods a week with 2 teachers in the classroom. It ran for the academic year. No students were withdrawn for a learning support class as the key concept is team teaching and peer support for a more inclusive classroom or school experience. A detailed teacher pack is available and once again the local library was on board in supporting our resources.

The project involves teaching key comprehension skills to enable students to engage on a deeper level with texts. The more and less able student can benefit. Paired work and group work are key components to teaching and developing the skills. This promotes collaborative and interactive teaching and learning.

A survey of students and teachers involved was conducted at end of the academic year.

Student exam results were also analysed - on average students did 10% better in the question where they were asked to apply learned skills.

However these skills were not transferred to rest of the paper.

Key Findings.

Student survey:

- 69% felt the project had helped with reading and writing (*reasons given very interesting and signal high levels of engagement. See full survey)
- 85% felt next year's first years would benefit.

Skills that were seen as having been of most benefit included

- Visualisation 35%
- Declunking 27%
- Questioning 15%
- Determining Importance 8%

Teacher's survey

Both teachers were very positive about the project but there were concerns over resourcing and staffing if programme is to be continued.

A short course could be further developed based on skills students felt were of most benefit.

Further staff training and awareness would need to be prioritised.

Further ways of evaluating and measuring achievement could be developed.

Also a more explicit focus on enabling the students to transfer the skills from English to other subjects would be beneficial.

Continuous Assessment

Continuous Assessment was introduced as a formal programme of assessment for one of the school's trimester assessment periods for the 2012-13 academic year. Surveys were completed by teachers and students of 5th and 2nd year in March of 2013 to evaluate their experiences.

Summary of Findings

Teachers (42% respondents)

- 18% of respondents were negative towards continuing this format.
- Positive feedback included comments
 - helped focus and improve results
 - reinforced course work
 - excellent for motivation

Concerns were raised regarding the experience of first years - do we need to introduce this for them in November also?

5th Year Students

- 61% felt it was beneficial
- 39% did not
- The majority experienced continuous assessment through class tests - few mentioned projects/presentations.
- There were some clashes with deadlines - tests on the same day etc.
- All aware it made them work harder.

2nd Year Students

- 31% felt it was beneficial
- 69% did not
- Reasons for the majority saying no were level of continuous work and pressure.

- They mentioned they felt it was not as organised as November Tests so not as important.

Continuous Assessment needs to be reviewed by the staff. These surveys were not undertaken again in March 2014.

A focus on formative assessment procedures would be beneficial and the development of an assessment policy by each subject department.

3. Progress made on previously-identified improvement targets

Not applicable this year.

4. Summary of school self-evaluation findings

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

- A caring and professional staff committed to promoting Literacy
- Student interest in self improvement
- Strong student interest in reading for leisure
- A new, well stocked Library
- A print rich environment
- Excellent support from the learning support department
- Excellent ICT facilities
- Strong link with local library

4.2 The following areas **are prioritised for improvement:**

- Further promotion of reading for enjoyment in junior cycle students
- Promotion of literacy in all subject areas
- Increased used of group and paired work in class
- Increased used of student self-reflection/self-correction
- For November assessment the 1st years will be given a grade based on continuous assessment. This will increase the likelihood of a positive experience for the new students of their first assessment in post primary school, the first formal exams falling in February 2015.

4.3 The following legislative and regulatory requirements need to be addressed.

- Develop Data Protection Policy by March 2015