



EQI – The Centre for Evaluation Quality and Inspection



**Sharing the Impact of Shaped Professional Learning
Networks**
in Challenging Times

FORWARD

This compendium features Action Based School Evaluation Projects by all school types throughout Northern Ireland - primary and post-primary, controlled and maintained across the religious divide, as well as integrated and shared education schools. It is evident that the significant impact of what the authors describe as a shaped facilitated professional learning network has been achieved through a series of school-based action research sessions, with accompanying and ongoing in-service and support, all of which was done in a voluntary capacity.

In these challenging times for schools, this has involved the network of schools taking ownership of Evaluation for Improvement in their own school communities, by developing and initiating a series of innovative school evaluation measures with data-informed evidence of impact in core areas of education such as Leadership, Assessment and Health and Wellbeing.

It is an excellent example of the power of education and how a shaped professional learning network can dissolve some of the boundaries that exist in society as well as providing the best conditions in which schools at all levels can learn from each other in the best interests of their communities.

I hope and recommend that this network will expand and commend Dr Shevlin, Dr Brown, other members of EQI and most significantly, those schools listed in this report on this groundbreaking initiative.

Professor Peter Finn KSG
St Mary's University College Belfast

About (EQI) Centre for Evaluation, Quality and Inspection

The Centre for Evaluation, Quality and Inspection (EQI) is a multidisciplinary research group based at DCU Institute of Education. It brings together evaluators, policy analysts, and economists and explores the thematic areas of School Evaluation and Inspection and Culturally Responsive Evaluation and Assessment (CREA). It also hosts the Irish Evaluation Network (IEN) – the national database for evaluators working on the island of Ireland.

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CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

6.15 pm – 7.00 pm

Registration and Refreshments

7.00 pm – 7.50 pm

Introductions and Setting the Scene

Dr Paddy Shevlin, EQI, DCU Institute of Education

Key Note Address

Professor Anne Looney, Dean of Education, DCU Institute of Education

Lessons to be Learned from Shared Learning and Evaluation across Northern Ireland and Beyond

Dr Martin Brown, EQI, School of Policy and Practice, DCU Institute of Education

7.50 pm - 8.30 pm

Lessons to be Learned from Holy Cross Boys School

Chris Donnelly and Eimear Bennett

Lessons to be learned from Malone Integrated College

Francine Magill

Lessons to be Learned from Cedar Integrated Primary School

Margaret Martelli

Lessons to be Learned from West Winds Primary School

Jim Todd

Lessons to be Learned from Regent House Grammar School

Peter Lowry

Lessons to be Learned from Cregagh Primary School

Martin Larmour

Lessons to be Learned from St Gerard's School and Support Services

Noeleen Hawkins

Lessons to be Learned from Roe Valley Integrated Primary School

Joanne O'Donnell

8.30 pm – 9.00 pm

Looking Back to Move Forward

Paddy McCabe, Dr Martin Brown

Closure

Dr Paddy Shevlin

**Sharing the Impact of Shaped Professional
Learning Networks**
in Challenging Times



EQI

**Centre for Evaluation,
Quality & Inspection**

Feb. 28, 2018 6:15 PM - 9:00 PM

Long Gallery

Parliament Buildings, Stormont Castle

#SPLN

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abbreviations	vii
Acknowledgements	viii
Speaker Biographies	ix
Executive Summary	xiii
School Evaluations in Practice	
<i>Towards improvement for young for year pupils at Holy Cross Primary School</i> C.Donnelly, Holy Cross Boys' Primary School, Belfast	1
<i>Evaluating the Impact of Strategies to Improve Outcomes in Literacy and Numeracy</i> P.McCabe and T.McBride, St.Oliver Plunkett Primary School, Belfast	4
<i>Evaluation of Assessment for Learning Strategies at Cedar Integrated Primary School and Nursery Unit</i> R.Bennett and M.Martelli, Cedar Integrated Primary School and Nursery Unit	13
<i>Evaluating the Impact of Targeted Marketing to Improve Pupil Attendance at Crumlin Integrated College</i> L.McGarry and J.Acheson, Crumlin Integrated College	16
<i>Evaluating the Impact of Targeted Pastoral and Curriculum Interventions to Improve Overall GCSE Outcomes</i> U.Walters, Lagan College	19
<i>Developing an Interconnected Approach to Supporting Pupils in Their Study Skills</i> P.Lowry, Regent House Grammar School	22
<i>Enhancing Pupil Feedback When Marking for Improvements in Literacy</i> M.Larmour, Cregagh Primary School	27
<i>Evaluating Problem Solving Strategies in Numeracy</i> C.Maguire and A.McCrystal, St. John the Baptist Primary School	30
<i>Evaluating Assessment Procedures and Tracking of Pupil Progress</i> N.Hawkins, St. Gerard's School and Support Service	35
<i>Benchmarking using Data Boards</i> E.Crilly and A.George, West Winds Primary School, Newtownards	39
<i>Evaluating Authorial Technique in Key Stage Two</i> M.Torbitt and C.White, Holy Trinity Primary School	41
<i>Evaluating the Impact of Thinking Skills Strategies at Key Stage 4</i> J.O'Neill and L.Corbett, Oakgrove Integrated College	45
<i>Effective Questioning at Malone College</i> F.Magill, Malone Integrated College	47
<i>Evaluating the Impact of a Differentiated Approach to the Planning and Delivery of Support Classes in Literacy and Numeracy</i> G.O'Connor, St. Mary's Christian Brothers' Grammar School	50
<i>Evaluating the Impact of strategies to improve Mental Maths at Braniel Primary School</i> G.Miller, Braniel Primary School	53

<i>Active Based Research in Literacy with a Focus on Comprehension Skills</i> C.Murphy, Holy Family Primary School	56
<i>The Implementation and Achievement of the UNICEF Rights Respecting School Silver Award</i> L.McBride, Strangford College, Newtownards	57
<i>Supporting Parents with Their Child’s Use of Electronic Devices</i> É.Bennett, Holy Cross Boys’ Primary School, Belfast	62
<i>A Report on Self Evaluation and School Improvement in Reading</i> J.McComb, St. Kevin’s Primary School, Belfast	65
<i>Improving the Use of Punctuation at Oakgrove Integrated Primary School</i> N.Gill, Oakgrove Integrated Primary and Nursery School	68
<i>Evaluating School Improvement Strategies to Raise Mathematics Standards at Roe Valley Integrated Primary School</i> J.O’Donnell, Roe Valley Integrated Primary School	70
<i>Critical Thinking and Problem Solving - A Review of Current Practice</i> G.McCotter, St.Paul’s Primary School and Nursery, Belfast	73
<i>Developing Leadership for Learning at St.Dominic’s Grammar School for Girls</i> N.McConville, St.Dominic’s Grammar School for Girls	77
<i>Improving Bi-literacy Independent Writing at Key Stage 2</i> O.Uí Dhaibhín, Bunscoil Mhic Reachtain	80
<i>Improving Mental Maths at Saint Vincent de Paul Primary</i> M.McLaughlin, St. Vincent de Paul Primary School, Belfast	83
<i>Improving GCSE Biology Results at Glenlola Collegiate School</i> L. Monroe, Glenlola Collegiate School	86
<i>The Impact of a Whole-school Literacy Withdrawal Pilot Programme on the Learning Outcomes of Selected Children</i> S Ó Tuama, Bunscoil Phobal Feirste	88
<i>The Impact of Focussed Literacy Strategies in Key Stage 3 Science</i> C.Greer, Bloomfield Collegiate School, Belfast	93
<i>An Evaluation of Digital Learning in St. Mary’s Primary School</i> S.McVeigh, St. Mary’s Primary School, Belfast	98
<i>Evaluating the Impact of a Key Stage 3 Pupil Intervention Programme to Support Improvements in Literacy and Numeracy</i> D.Coyle, CBS, Belfast	100
Bibliography	102

ABBREVIATIONS

BOM	Board of Management
CAT	Cognitive Assessment Tests
CBD	Collegiate Book Discussion
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
DAI	Data plus Action plus Improvement
DENI	Department of Education (Northern Ireland)
DJ	Data plus Judgement
EA	Education Authority
ETI	Education and Training Inspectorate (Northern Ireland)
FSM	Free School Meals
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
HOD	Head of Department
KS	Key Stage
LLW	Learning for Life and Work
LS	Learning Support
NIC	Northern Ireland Curriculum
NICIE	Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education
PERI	Peripatetic Educational Support
PRSD	Performance Review and Staff Development
PTE	Progress Through English
PTM	Progress Through Mathematics
SAER	Summary of Annual Examination Results
SDP	School Development Plan
SENCO	Special Education Needs Co-ordinator
SET	Self-Evaluative Timeline
SLT	Senior Leadership Team
SPLD	Specific learning Difficulties
STEM	Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics
TCN	Trusted Colleague Networking
VAI	Voice plus Action plus Improvement
VJ	Voice plus Judgement
VP	Vice Principal
WBPB	West Belfast Partnership Board

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- Principals of all 52 schools involved in the EQI Dublin City University school based action research network.
- Staff in all 30 schools who supported the authors of the case studies.
- Members of EQI – The Centre for Evaluation Quality and Inspection, DCU Institute of Education.
- Members of the School of Policy and Practice, DCU Institute of Education.
- Paddy McCabe, Principal of Oliver Plunket Primary School Belfast, the hub school for the DCU network of schools, and Chair of a West Belfast cross-phase cluster of schools involved in innovative self-evaluative practices.
- Chris Donnelly Vice-Principal of Holy Cross Boys Primary School.
- Dr Bernadette Ní Áingléis and Marie Conroy Johnson, DCU Institute of Education for advice and depth of shared knowledge on school-university partnerships, educational policy, and communities of practice throughout the course of the project.
- Roisin Marshall Chief Executive NICIE Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education.
- Clíodhna Scott-Willis Senior Development Officer NICIE Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education.
- Diane Dawson, Principal of Braniel Primary School and Chair of a Castlereagh cluster of primary schools.

Speaker Biographies



Professor Anne Looney is the founding Executive Dean of DCU Institute of Education at Dublin City University. Before taking up her role, she was the interim CEO at the Higher Education Authority in Dublin. From 2001 until 2016 she was the CEO of the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, the agency responsible for curriculum and assessment for early-years, primary and post-primary education in Ireland. A former teacher, she completed her doctoral studies at the Institute of Education in University College London. In 2014/2015 she was Professorial Research Fellow at the Learning Science Institute Australia, based at the Australian Catholic University in Brisbane.



Anne's research interests include assessment policy and practice, curriculum, initial teacher education and professional standards for teachers and teaching. She has also published on religious, moral and civic education, and education policy.

Dr Patrick Shevlin is the President of the Association for Science Education (Northern Ireland) and a research fellow at EQI, DCU Institute of Education. He is an educational consultant with the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE), the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) and the Controlled Schools Sectoral Council (CSSQ). Before taking up these roles, he had been an Inspector with the Education Training Inspectorate (ETI) Northern Ireland for 26 years. Within this role, he had a variety of positions, including that of Education Area Board Coordinator, which involved managing the work of a group of district inspectors within these education support services. A former teacher, he completed his doctoral studies at Queens University, Belfast.



Patrick's research interests include School Inspection, Continuing Professional Learning, Self-Evaluation, and Leadership and Management.

Dr Martin Brown research director at EQI, School of Policy and Practice, DCU Institute of Education. Prior to joining DCU he has worked for the Department of Education (Ireland) and the United Arab Emirates Government. He is an advisor to the Teaching Council of Ireland and is presently the Project coordinator and principal investigator for the following research projects: Erasmus+ Aiding Culturally Responsive Assessment in Schools (ACRAS); Erasmus+ Distributed Evaluation and Planning in Schools (DEAPS); Erasmus+ Supervising schools in the 21st century; and (SCOTENS) ITE Students' Readiness to teach in a Digital World.



Martin's research interests include Comparative Education, Culturally Responsive Evaluation and Assessment, School Evaluation, and Professional Learning. Further details at: selfevaluation.eu

Chris Donnelly is Vice Principal of Holy Cross Boys' PS in Belfast. He has been a teacher for 20 years and served as Assessment Co-ordinator and Mathematicss Co-ordinator in the school before becoming Vice Principal. Chris is currently working for CCEA producing a "Shared Heritage through Sports" teaching and learning resource for use in schools across Northern Ireland. He has served as chair of the North Belfast Vice Principal cluster group, encouraging the dissemination of best practice across all primary school sectors.



Chris's research interests include educational underachievement, academic selection and the impact of children's date of birth on their educational attainment prospects.

Paddy McCabe is Principal of St. Oliver Plunkett Primary School, Belfast. The school is co-educational and has a current enrolment of 675 pupils. While Principal of St. Oliver Plunkett he has overseen the school attaining a wide range of recognitions, including the first primary school on the island of Ireland to attain Apple Distinguished School status, Digital School of Distinction, Social School status, 360-degree E-Safety, and UNICEF RRSA amongst others.



Paddy was previously the Vice Principal in Christ the Redeemer Primary School, Belfast and before that had taught in Our Lady Queen of Peace and St. Luke's Primary Schools. He has also been involved in the delivery of newly appointed Vice-Principals and Principals courses for RTUNI. He was part of the Primary team at CCEA for the development of the World Around Us area of study.

He is currently part of the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) Teacher Employment Models Work Stream Group.

St. Oliver Plunkett Primary School is the designated hub School for this DCU EQI project.

Eimear Bennett is a teacher in Holy Cross Boys' Primary School. After completing her training in Glasgow in 2006, she taught in a school in Glasgow for five years before returning home to work in Holy Cross in 2011. She has been Mathematics Coordinator for over five years and is currently undertaking the Senior Pathways leadership course. Eimear is also a member of the Board of Governors of a West Belfast primary school.



Eimear's research interests include raising attainment in Mathematics, developing effective home-school relationships for children and the impact of Accelerated Reader resources on pupils' comprehension skills.

Francine Magill is a senior teacher in charge of Learning and Teaching and Head of Religious Education at Malone Integrated College Belfast. Francine has taught in this school for over 20 years, and before this, she taught in Larne High School.

Francine has published a number of textbooks in the area of Religious Education that are used at Key Stage Three throughout Northern Ireland. She has recently established the School Pastors initiative into Malone College, which is the first school to adopt this programme in Ireland.



Margaret Martelli is a teacher in Cedar Integrated Primary School and Nursery Unit in Crossgar. She is currently the Literacy co-ordinator and is part of the Senior Leadership team. She was previously the Special Needs Co-ordinator and has been trained in Reading Recovery. She completed the SEN CPD Literacy project and delivered training on dyslexia to teachers and classroom assistants.

She is a member of the very successful NICIE Vice Principal self evaluative cluster group/network, and is keen to develop literacy and STEM across the curriculum in her own school and further afield.



Jim Todd is Principal of West Winds Primary School in Newtownards. Graduating from Queen's University, he went on to complete a PGCE and has since completed a Master's degree and PQH. Jim is passionate about raising standards through self-evaluation practices and is enthusiastic about developing staff expertise. At West Winds Primary, he has led the development of an innovative tracking system, linking pastoral and academic first-hand evidence to classroom learning. A recent inspection report highlighted very positively the new tracking system as well as noting the confidence of middle and senior leaders at the school. The school was recently awarded the Marjorie Boxall Award for excellence in Nurture.

The majority of his teaching career was spent working in Carr's Glen Primary school in North Belfast.

Peter Lowry is a Senior Teacher at Regent House School, a co-educational Grammar School in Newtownards with an enrolment of 1450 pupils. In this role, his main areas of responsibility include leadership of whole school self-evaluation; teaching and learning improvement strategies; the extra-curricular programme; and public relations. He has 25 years teaching experience, during which he has been Head of Physical Education at both Regent House School and Wellington College Belfast. Before this, he taught at Grosvenor Grammar School and Garvagh High School. Outside of teaching, he was employed as a Development Officer with the Irish Rugby Football Union.

He completed a Master of Education in Educational Management in 2007 at Queens University Belfast and attained a Professional Qualification in Headship in 2011 with the Regional Training Unit in Northern Ireland.



Martin Larmour has been a primary teacher at Cregagh Primary school since 2009. He is a member of the school's Senior Leadership Team, the coordinator for ICT, and the coordinator of the Shared Education Programme which is currently in its fourth year. He also sits on the Board of Governors at Cregagh PS. He is a graduate of Stranmillis University College with a B.Ed in Geography with Primary Education.



Martin's research interests include self-evaluation and leadership.

Noeleen Hawkins is the Vice Principal of St Gerard's School and Support Services in Belfast which caters for pupils from the ages of 3 to 19 years old with a range of additional needs. Before taking up this role, she was a teacher in the Learning Support Unit teaching pupils with Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD). She was also a tutor on the Stranmillis University College and St Mary's University College joint Continued Professional Development (CPD) Literacy Project, one of the largest CPD projects ever undertaken in Northern Ireland.



She holds a range of accreditations including Approved Teacher Status (ATS) and Professional Qualification in Headship (PQH). She is also an Associate Member of the British Dyslexia Association (AMBDA). She is currently involved in the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) Special Educational Needs (SEN) Work Stream Group researching best practice in SEN.

Joanne O'Donnell is the Vice Principal of Roe Valley Integrated Primary School, Limavady. A graduate of St Mary's University College Belfast she has taught for the past 11 years in her current post as Designated Teacher for Safeguarding and Child Protection, as well as coordinator of Key Stage 2, Using Mathematics, P.E., Extended Schools provision. She completed the RTU Steps into Leadership and Senior Leadership Pathways Programmes before being appointed Vice Principal in 2015. She is a member of the NICIE Vice Principal self-evaluative cluster group/network.



Joanne's research interests include promoting effective use of data, development of the whole child through PE and Sport.



Executive Summary

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents twenty-nine school-based action research projects developed within a network of over fifty schools in Northern Ireland that was established by researchers at EQI – The Centre for Evaluation Quality and Inspection at Dublin City University. All those schools and researchers involved in this network have voluntarily engaged in this work, and at their own cost, with a *Hearts and Minds* mentality whose ultimate purpose is to improve the life chances of learners from all school types in Northern Ireland.

The work of the network has been greatly influenced by recommendations derived from a previous EQI project titled *Polycentric Inspection of Networked Schools (PINS)*. It is based on the belief that schools often encounter barriers to improve when working in isolation, and so the idea of linking schools in networks regardless of their geographical location seemed like a logical progression to further understanding the conditions necessary for effective professional learning by both individual and networked schools.

The work was also grounded in the reality that there is a great resistance by many schools to become actively engaged with self-evaluation. Indeed, many research studies have provided plausible explanations as to why teachers do not engage with self-evaluation such as capacity deficits in Data Informed Decision Making, worries about judgements on teaching practice and the overly bureaucratic nature of the process. Whether perceived or true, one theme that has always remained constant within the discourse of the school evaluation literature is that some teachers do not view self-evaluation as being particularly relevant or useful to ensuring the best possible outcomes for their students. However, the critical evidence emerging from this research is that the model of professional learning that was used with this network has resulted in changing positive attitudes towards self-evaluation.

Those who were involved in the network do not see self-evaluation as being that of another initiative that has been bolted onto their increasingly heavy workload. Instead, self-evaluation is now viewed as a powerful and continuous process to improving the quality of teaching and learning in their schools. A clear but rigorous focus on quality learning as distinct from an undue focus on teaching was a key factor in the willingness of teachers to engage in the work of this network, often at their own expense and in their own time. In addition, school management released teachers from school to engage in the work, providing cover within their own schools and from their own school budget. There are clear messages therefore for the dissemination of this network practice to schools throughout Northern Ireland and indeed further afield.

A very effective way of professional learning has emerged in the production of these case studies which we characterize as a *Shaped Network*. On the one hand, those involved in the network could operate with a great deal of autonomy to choose their own focus for school improvement and associated school-based action research. On the other hand, they were also required to operate with a clearly defined focus using the school development plan as the foundations for the research and the rigorous use of first-hand evidence to measure impact.

A number of other interesting findings from this research have emerged. Firstly, it has a *Hearts and Minds* driving force that is centered on the ethical use of first-hand evidence to drive school improvement and associated action research.

Secondly, it is underpinned by the existence and support from external agencies, in this case, researchers at EQI. All parties emphasised the central importance of regular contact with and follow-up by members of EQI. This was perceived as vital in growing the network and guided schools to focus on using available first-hand

evidence including statistics to examine issues around teaching and learning and teacher professional learning related to the action research topic chosen in their individual schools.

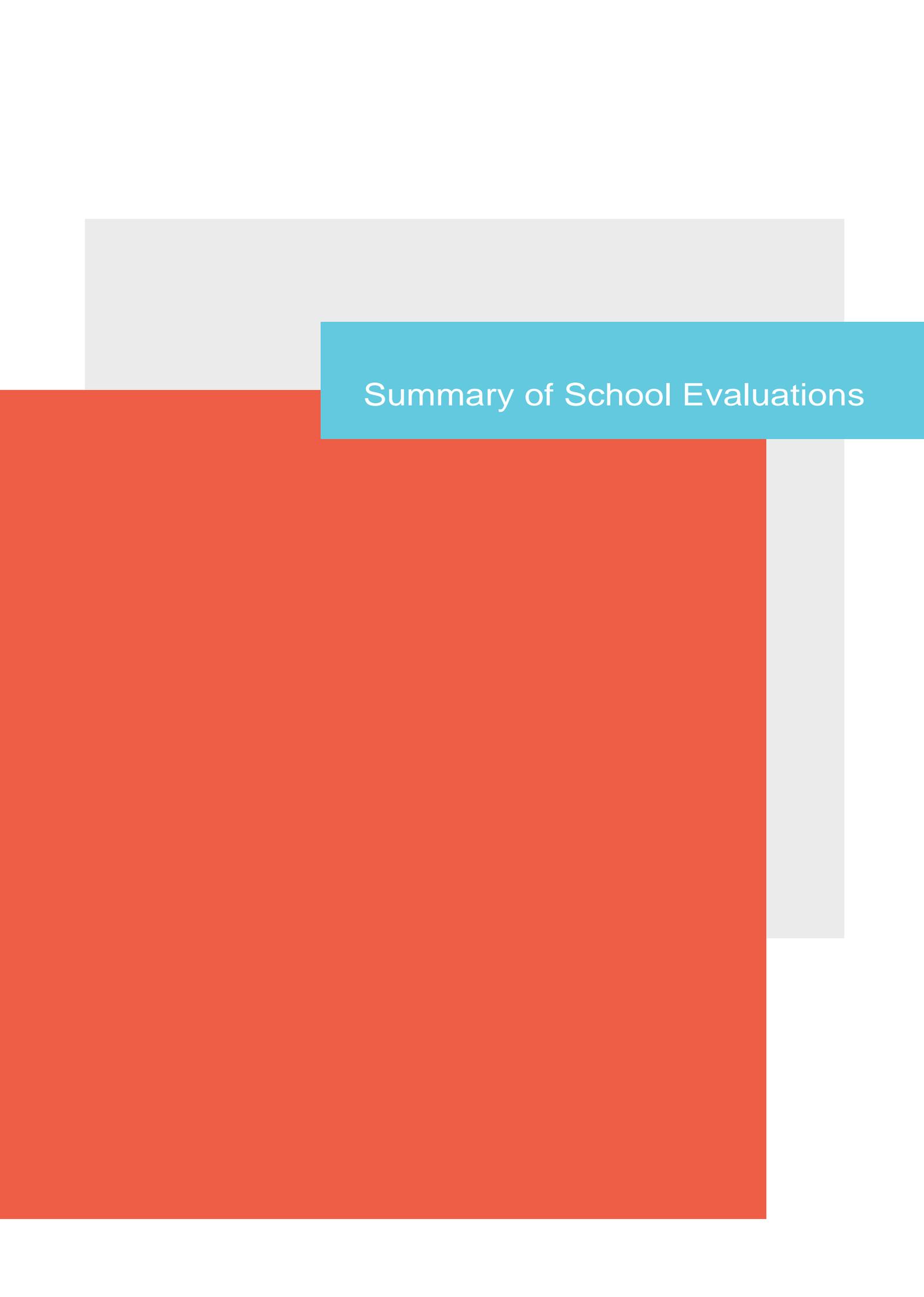
An important question, of course, is whether it can be shown that activities such as the case studies undertaken here, which improve cooperation and provide professional development opportunities for teachers do lead to the most important outcome of all, improved learning for children. It is always hard to establish such related effects in educational research. However, there was substantial agreement by participants in schools that the professional development provided during the study, particularly the ongoing discussions of best practice emerging, and subsequent adjustments by participants and advisors if needed, enabled the case study work to have a direct ongoing positive impact on improving the actual quality of learning in individual schools.

A key learning point that also emerged was the gradual transfer of responsibility for professional learning provision from the EQI researchers to the leaders and teachers involved in the network/cluster. The staff involved from the various schools reported that because they were able to take the advice given and contextualize the advice given to their school situations, including a strong link with their school development plans, this empowered not just the staff attending the professional learning sessions but also those back in participants individual schools to take ownership of their own professional learning throughout the period of the action research. All participants reported this building of confidence in their professional capacity for school-based action research at the school level as ensuring that the good practice in school-based action research and school improvement is sustained beyond the three years of this present cycle of work. A key strategic point worth making here is that, if this model of professional learning was adopted more generally, then the appropriate role of professional development support becomes one of facilitation and enablement as opposed to any generic or disconnected support that might be offered to schools.

Finally, an important aspect of this research to be considered is how to take this successful network's results regarding the use of school-based action research to effect school improvement in other schools and other jurisdictions. This is a difficult question to answer. The participants in the network would say, that the key is to convince teachers to use non-bureaucratic techniques to look at First-hand Evidence of how good learning is in the classroom but to do this where possible and predominantly in a nonjudgmental and collegiate manner. We call this horizontal self-evaluation. The work in these case studies suggests that there is also a place for vertical or judgmental self-evaluation, if we focus on the quality of learning, and not have a fixation on teaching performance. However, there is an ethical need to be clear as to which technique is being used for self-evaluation and more particularly for what purpose.

In conclusion, many issues still need to be resolved before horizontal and vertical self-evaluation become a genuinely accepted tool for continuous school improvement. These issues relate not so much to the methods used in the techniques themselves but the balance between horizontal and vertical self-evaluation and the purposes for which they are used. If these issues can be resolved, self-evaluation can become a powerful tool for continuous school improvement in Northern Ireland and elsewhere.

Dr.Paddy Shevlin and Dr. Martin Brown
Project Co-ordinators – EQI Shaped Professional Learning Networks (Northern Ireland)



Summary of School Evaluations



Towards Improvement for Young for Year Pupils at Holy Cross Primary School

C.Donnelly

Abstract

The purpose of this action research initiative was to put in place a series of actionable measures to enhance the academic achievement of pupils who are termed as young for year (born in April, May, June or on July 1st). The genesis for this research was brought about from an analysis of issues relating to young for years pupils such as the harsh reality that young for year pupils are less likely than their old for year peers to secure places in grammar schools in Northern Ireland and less likely to obtain five good GCSEs (A-C). To counteract this deficit in academic achievement, a series of initiatives were implemented at Holy Cross Primary School to enhance teaching and learning with young for year pupils.*

Evidence derived from this research cycle indicates that these initiatives have positively addressed issues concerning young for year pupils in a manner that has decisively narrowed the gap in terms of the status of pupil learning groups, both in regard to the composition of the most advanced and least advanced learning groups.

Key Words: Differentiation, Teacher Consciousness, Young for Year, Old for Year

School Profile

Holy Cross Boys' PS is an all-boys primary school based in the Ardoyne area of north Belfast. The school has a pupil enrolment in excess of 430 pupils. Holy Cross Boys' is one of only two all-boys primary schools still in existence today in the north of Ireland. Three-quarters of the pupils are entitled to free school meals. The school received an Outstanding grade in its last ETI Primary Inspection (January 2014). A subsequent Sustaining Improvement Inspection conducted by the ETI (May 2017) concluded that the school "continues to demonstrate a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the learners".

Area for Improvement

To increase the academic performance of pupils who are young for year in each year group by improving consciousness amongst the teaching staff of the difficulties these pupils face as a consequence of relative age, maturity and differentiation within the primary school classroom.

Baseline Position

In autumn 2012, an audit of learning groups was conducted throughout the school in order to establish a baseline position regarding the age profile of the most and least advanced learning groups (Tables 1 and 2).

	Jul-Sept	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-June
October 2012	72.7%	54.4%	40%	32.2%

Table 1: Composition of Most Advanced Learning Groups by Relative Age Bands (P1-P5)

	Jul-Sept	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-June
October 2012	9.0%	13.2%	29.0%	43.5%

Table 2: Composition of Least Advanced Learning Groups by Relative Age Bands (P1-P5)

The results led to a decision by the school leadership to raise awareness of the issue and put in place a series of measures with the aim of effectively remediating the problem.

Success Criteria

To increase the numbers and percentage of young for year pupils populating the most advanced learning groups and a corresponding reduction in the numbers and percentage of young for year pupils in the weakest learning groups.

Establishing an advanced culture of learning group mobility reflecting an enhanced level of teacher understanding and awareness of the issue in the modern differentiated classroom. This is measured by the frequency of teacher-initiated decisions to move pupils between learning groups.

Actions Taken

Awareness raising was identified as a priority issue, and staff training for teachers, school leadership, the Board of Governors and classroom assistants was organised to professionally develop consciousness of the issue and highlight the strategies that would be adopted to counteract it as part of our normal professional practice.

This included initiating a regular monthly monitor of pupil mobility between learning groups, encouraging teachers to remain vigilant in this regard. It has also involved incorporating relative age as a key indicator when evaluating pupil performance in assessments in collaborative discussions and when determining remedial actions following assessment-based discussions. Relative age is also a factor when determining which pupils will receive additional literacy support from Primary 2 upwards within the school and is a key consideration when determining the composition of Primary 1 classes.

Progress

The annual audit of pupil learning group composition throughout the school has highlighted a trend in improvement, reflecting on how the change in professional culture has positively addressed the issue in a manner that has decisively narrowed the gap in terms of the status of pupil learning groups, both in regard to the composition of the most advanced and least advanced learning groups (Tables 3 and 4).

	Jul-Sept	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-June
Oct '17	62.1%	59.5%	56%	47.3%
Oct '16	65.1%	60.2%	57.5%	49.2%
Oct '15	63.7%	63.4%	56%	48.6%
Oct '14	63.0%	60.8%	53.5%	48.5%
Oct '12	72.7%	54.4%	40%	32.2%

Table 3: Date of Birth Analysis - Top Groups by Relative Age Bands (P1-P5)

	Jul-Sept	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-June
Oct '17	15.8%	15.4%	20%	17.5%
Oct '16	10.4%	12.0%	18.7%	23.9%
Oct '15	15.3%	12.9%	14.6%	22.2%
Oct '14	14.1%	11.3%	15.4%	25.7%
Oct '12	9.0%	13.2%	29.0%	43.5%

Table 4: Date of Birth Analysis - Lower Groups by Relative Age Bands (P1-P5)

The culture of learning group mobility has been well established within the school as evidenced by the volume of teacher-initiated decisions tracked on a monthly basis over a period of years.

Sources of Evidence

Evidence has been gathered in the form of data on the learning group status of pupils. The percentage of pupils by month of birth transferring to grammar schools has also been used as a means of monitoring progress at addressing the issue, with positive results throughout the years.

Tracking of the extent of learning group mobility has also proven to be a useful means of monitoring progress concerning both teacher consciousness and actions (Table 5).

Month of Birth	6-Year Totals (2012/13-2017/18)	
	Promoted	Relegated
May-June	70	18
March-April	56	17
January-February	59	14
November-December	58	27
September-October	46	20
July-August	45	30
Totals	334	126

Table 5: 6 Year Total Figures for Promotion/ Relegation in 2-month groups (2013 – 2018)

Over the course of six academic years in Holy Cross Boys' PS, 334 pupils were promoted in learning groups throughout the year, as a consequence of teacher observation and as a result of assessment performance. In the same period, 126 pupils were relegated in learning groups.

The highest number of pupils promoted were born in the months of May and June (70), with the highest number of boys being relegated from learning groups being born in July and August (30), indicating that increased teacher consciousness of the issue of Young for Year pupils at Holy Cross Boys' PS has had a significant impact in this area over that period of time.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Using a clearly defined data-informed school evaluation process has been crucial to raising academic achievement, teacher consciousness and understanding of the needs of young for year children at Holy Cross Primary School. In a broader sense, the measurable actions introduced in support of achieving this objective has also proven to be beneficial towards enhanced reflection, professional collaboration and self-evaluation among staff.

However, objective data at both a national and international level illustrates that young for year pupils on average perform less well in comparison to their year group peers; a fact that should compel schools and education authorities to act decisively.

In conclusion, as was the case with Holy Cross Primary School, raising awareness of the potentially negative implications of classroom-based differentiation upon the learning experiences of young for year pupils, coupled with the implementation of monitoring processes that encourage teachers to continuously evaluate the composition of learning groups are critical steps that need be taken by all schools in order to begin addressing what is a generally underappreciated cause of educational underachievement.

Evaluating the Impact of Strategies to Improve Outcomes in Literacy and Numeracy

P.McCabe and T. McBride

Abstract

This report is a commentary of the self-evaluative journey that we as a school have undertaken to improve standards in literacy and numeracy and how that evaluative process led to continuous self-improvement in both process and outcomes in the learning and teaching within our school.

This journey began in 2014/15 when the school appointed a new principal. As a school, we undertook an audit of teaching and learning, and from this, we implemented a new Teaching and Learning Policy and employed new monitoring procedures that reflected a new planning structure. There was a new process of target setting based on intensive analysis of data. This process was carefully managed to ensure whole staff compliance, buy-in and effectiveness on the teaching and learning.

The journey evolved and indeed continues to do so, the monitoring process more so than any other. We initially had a rigid vertical monitoring process of four Book Lifts per subject per academic year. While it had its place, the new process incorporates horizontal Collegial Book monitoring, Trusted Colleague Networking with a Vertical Baseline. Continuous Re-Evaluation of the process at the start and end of the year has also allowed for increased staff ownership and by way of association, real impact on teaching and learning.

Key Words: Growth, Sustainability, Community Confidence, Ten Point Plan, integration

School Profile

St. Oliver Plunkett Primary School is a co-educational primary school situated on the outskirts of West Belfast. We opened in 1998 because of the amalgamation of St. Oliver Plunkett Boys' and Girls' schools. We have a current enrolment of 674, and approximately 18% of our children are on the SEN register.

We are aware of the realities of our environment and its ramifications. More than 60% of our children are FSM., 94% are from a Neighbourhood Renewal Area, and we exist within the 47th of 890 Super Output Areas based on N.I. Measures of social deprivation.

Furthermore, we exist within the Parliamentary Constituency that is rated second highest in Northern Ireland concerning levels of children in poverty; Foyle 34.38%, Belfast West 33.91%. Furthermore, the Collin Glen ward from which a high percentage of our pupils come has 49.19%* of children existing in poverty; that is the highest negative percentage of all wards within the West Belfast constituency.

Nonetheless, we take heart in the findings of the 'Investigating Links in Achievement and Deprivation' undertaken by Queen's University Belfast and the subsequent findings that children from socially deprived areas can outperform the expectations.

We face the results of these harsh statistics daily and it was this reality that was a major contributing factor to our self-evaluative journey beginning and indeed continuing.

Area for Improvement

We analysed the data streams that we had and collectively as a school concluded that we needed to bring about improvements in both literacy and numeracy. Table 6 shows our starting position in both literacy and numeracy as well as the National Expected in this area.

KS1 & 2 START POSITION SDP 1	Stanines	School % LIT.	School Stanine Band LIT.	School % NUM.	School Stanine Band NUM.	National	National Stanine Band
<74	1	2.32%		7.46%		4	
74-81	2	6.51%		14.41%		7	
82-88	3	14.73%	23.56%	18.98%	40.85%	12	23.00%
89-96	4	25.25%		25.67%		17	
97-103	5	21.19%		18.09%		20	
104-111	6	16.27%	62.71%	8.85%	52.61%	17	54.00%
112-118	7	7.41%		3.47%		12	
119-126	8	5.46%		3.08%		7	
>126	9	0.66%	13.53%	0.00%	6.55%	4	23.00%

Table 6: KS1 and 2 Stanine Scores

As can be seen in Table 6, there was a clear and obvious difference in literacy and numeracy performance. There was an underperformance of nearly 18% for pupils in the Below Average grouping in Numeracy as compared to the National expected. There was a discrepancy of 17.29% compared with literacy performance in the same grouping. There was a similar pattern in the children in the Above Average grouping with a deficit of 16.45% in comparison to the National Expected and a drop of 6.98% as opposed to literacy performance.

When looking at the literacy performance, several noted positives stood out; those in the Below Average Stanines were within 0.56% of the National Expected. While there was an obvious shortfall in the children in the Above Average Stanines of 9.47%, there was still a positive in comparison to both numeracy and in comparison, to those in the CAT Verbal aptitude categories.

However, what was quite surprising, was that despite the noted discrepancy in performances and the perception that literacy was notably stronger than numeracy, was the fact that the SDP focus on those in Stanines 3-5 was shared by both areas and upon analysis there were 61.17% populating those stanines in literacy and 62.74% in the same grouping in numeracy. The target groupings developed independently, matched and the percentages in those groupings were nearly identical.

In summary, we needed to ensure consolidation and then progression. We needed to act, to act courageously, to act with clarity of purpose and to act with an immediacy that needed the whole staff team to comprehend, to have ownership, to mould and to create a new direction for the teaching of numeracy and literacy in our school.

Baseline Position

The target for the duration of this School Development Plan is focussed on the number of children in Stanines three to five combined 61.17% as opposed to the expected National average of 49%. We aim to reduce that figure to 55%.

The target for the duration of this School Development Plan is focused on the number of children in Stanines three to five combined 62.74% as opposed to the expected National average of 49%. We will aim to reduce that figure to 55%.

Quality Indicators / Success Criteria

Planning

Planning was to be completed in weekly collegial meetings. The new seven weekly cycle was to be evaluated by the class teacher and issued to the principal at the end of the seven weeks. There was full cooperation on this process.

Monitoring

As stated previously monitoring was initially a vertical model of termly principal class observations and Book Scoops. There was full cooperation on this process.

Target Setting and Review

The new annual target setting structure included whole school, key stage, year band, class and individual pupil targets for those deemed underachieving or indeed low attaining. Again, the whole staff cooperated fully in this matter.

Lesson Observation

Initially, a vertical model of Principal observation but this process has evolved into a more effective TCN model that does lead to genuine professional dialogue and impact on classroom practice. There was full cooperation on this issue.

Actions Taken

Literacy and Numeracy

Although there was a push on the use of new initiatives, the management of the school did not want to detract from any of the existing very good/outstanding practice by overloading staff with an unmanageable array of resources and ideas. There was a big focus and clear model on the gradual introduction of initiatives in order to embed within practice.

- Piloted within a Classroom
- Trusted Colleague Networking within Year Band to discuss effectiveness.
- Piloted within Year Band.
- Consultation with numeracy coordinators/management.
- Discussion and training with staff from across Key Stage.
- Initiative embedded throughout the Key Stage.

New Initiatives and resources brought into the school to develop literacy. The Cornerstones scheme was initiated to develop our writing process and outcomes. The Treetops Reading Scheme, Accelerated Reader and Bug Club were introduced to develop not only the development and fluency of reading but to develop a love of reading.

The Collins Comprehension Scheme and The Literacy Box Prim-Ed were introduced to develop the understanding of reading and a focus on Bloom's Taxonomy in the classroom enhanced this initiative further.

In Numeracy our objective and subjective data pointed us towards improving problem-solving through the development of mathematical language across the school. We did this by introducing the following resources and initiatives; RUCSAC, Problem Solving in KS1, Pitch and Expectations, Basic Skills and IZAK 9. These initiatives were used to develop and improve problem-solving. Number Talk was also introduced to Foundation Stage in order to enhance the development of mathematical language.

These were the bricks that we used to build our practice; the cement was the introduction and development of the Trusted Colleague Networking and Collegial Book Discussions

These initiatives have been central to the introduction of any new scheme throughout the school. ETI in, *'Self Evaluation Framework,'* highlight the ideas that evaluation is; *"ongoing and*

not a one-off event,” and should *“inform and influence classroom practice.”* This idea of ongoing reflection, improvement and action is evidenced and promoted through the collaborative ideas of trusted colleague networking (TCN) and collegial book discussions (CBD). It allows for good practice to be promoted, any areas for development to be discussed and ideas for improvement to be suggested.

Progress

The targets that the school set was to reduce those pupils in Stanines 3-5 from 61.17% as opposed to the expected National average of 49%. We aim to reduce that figure to 55% in Literacy and from 62.74% to 55% in Numeracy. The results are detailed below.

Literacy

The progress made to date can be assessed in both summative and formative terms. We can see improvements in the standards of writing across the genres and clear evidence of progression across the year groups; we can also see steady improvements in the literacy profile across the school. If we look at the data for last year’s P7’s and compare it with their scores in P6 we can see an improved bell curve for these scores (Table 7).

YEAR SEVEN				YEAR SIX			
		PTE RAW	PTE %			PTE RAW	PTE %
STANINE ONE	69-73	0	0%	STANINE ONE	69-73	0	0%
STANINE TWO	74-81	4	5%	STANINE TWO	74-81	4	5%
STANINE THREE	82-88	8	11%	STANINE THREE	82-88	11	15%
STANINE FOUR	89-96	8	11%	STANINE FOUR	89-96	12	16%
STANINE FIVE	97-103	17	23%	STANINE FIVE	97-103	17	23%
STANINE SIX	104-111	18	24%	STANINE SIX	104-111	13	17%
STANINE SEVEN	112-118	12	16%	STANINE SEVEN	112-118	14	19%
STANINE EIGHT	119-126	5	7%	STANINE EIGHT	119-126	2	3%
STANINE NINE	127-141	2	3%	STANINE NINE	127-141	2	3%
		74	100%			75	100%

Table 7: P6/P7 Stanine Scores - Literacy

- Throughout the last SDP, there was a 7% increase in the number of children within stanines 7-9 and a 1% decrease in those children within stanines 1-3.
- In the Above Average Stanines, we had 26% (3% over the national expected) and an increase of 1%.
- The pupils populating those Below Average Stanines was reduced further from 20% to 16%, a significant improvement given that the norm expected in this category is 23%. Furthermore, given that 7% percentage points below the national expected is impressive when our socio-economic reality is taken into consideration then it is truly noteworthy.

Table 8 also shows evidence of continued improvement throughout the three-year cycle of the last SDP and since we were inspected in May 2015.

LITERACY	STANINES	School % YR.1	School % YR.3	SCH. STANINE BAND YR. 1	SCH. STANINE BAND YR. 3
<74	1	2%	1%		
74-81	2	6%	4%		
82-88	3	15%	13%	23%	18%
89-96	4	25%	17%		
97-103	5	21%	18%		
104-111	6	16%	21%	62%	56%
112-118	7	7%	14%		
119-126	8	5%	5%		
>126	9	1%	6%	13%	25%

Table 8: Stanine Scores – Years 1-3

The SDP Literacy Target to reduce those pupils in Stanines 3 to 5 from 61% to 55% was exceeded as we finished with 48% of the school population in that category. However, that is only a part of the story as we reduced those in the Below Average Stanine category to 18% from the National Expected of 23%.

Another success story was the positive migration into the Above Average Stanine category from 13% to 25%. This increase of 12% again means that we are outperforming the National expected of 23% and for a school in our socio-economic reality, this outstanding performance is reflective of the aspirations and tireless work of our teaching team to improve outcomes for our pupils.

Table 9 also shows the outcomes for our Key Stage Two pupils in 2016/17. There is a lot to celebrate. 20% of pupils have aptitude scores in the Below Average category with 18% in the same attainment performance category, outperforming expectations by 2% and 5% of National Expected.

As for the Above Average Category we have 16% in the CAT IV aptitude stanines, the attainment figure is 25%, 9% above performance expectations and 2% above National Expected.

STANINE									
	One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six	Seven	Eight	Nine
CAT %	1%	6%	13%	25%	20%	18%	9%	4%	3%
PTE %	1%	4%	13%	17%	18%	21%	14%	5%	6%
National Expected %	4%	7%	12%	17%	20%	17%	12%	7%	4%

Table 9: KS2 – PTE, CAT and National Expected Comparator Stanine Scores

The Key Stage One data is equally impressive, and we believe it is as a result of those initiatives that were brought in over the last SDP (Table 10). Indeed, we hope that the new “Plunkett” way that these children have grown with from when they came into our Foundation Stage has developed a cohort of children that we can cultivate during their time in our school.

STANINE									
	One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six	Seven	Eight	Nine
CAT %	3%	19%	25%	22%	18%	6%	6%	1%	0%
PTE %	2%	8%	15%	14%	13%	18%	13%	12%	6%
National Expected %	4%	7%	12%	17%	20%	17%	12%	7%	4%

Table 10: KS1 – PTE, CAT and National Expected Comparate Stanine Scores - Literacy

Below Average Stanines show aptitude scores of 47% of the entire cohort. However, we only have 25% of our pupils scoring in that grouping. We will aim to reduce that to the National Expected of 23%.

Pupils in the Above Average classification numbered as 7% for aptitude against attainment of 31%, a positive differential of 24% and 7% points above the National Expected.

STANINE								
One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six	Seven	Eight	Nine
2.1%	6.4%	15%	16.5%	15.7%	18.8%	12.6%	7.5%	5.4%

Table 11: Whole School Literacy Performance

All of these tables show a high level of ascending performance in literacy and we aim to build upon this over the life of the next SDP. Furthermore, we can also see the development of Literacy across the school as a whole which shows longitudinal growth for each year band in the academic year 2016/17 (Table 12).

	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7
P1	94.28						
P2	86.72	102.53					
P3		103.15	102.18				
P4		104.05	102	103.04			
P5		88.02	93.32	99.29	109.27		
P6			90.62	102	99.87	96.34	
P7				99.78	104.96	101.2	103.32

Table 12: Literacy Longitudinal Study

This Longitudinal Study shows the performance path of each of the Year Bands in our school at the end of June 2017. It tracks the performance of the Year Band as a whole. For example, the Year Seven Band started with a standardised Mean Score of 99.78 that improved to 103.32. While that improvement measures at 3.54 standardised points over the course of four years and may look insignificant, knowledge of these tests and data indicates a very strong performance line.

Numeracy

Analysis of data for last year's P7's compared with scores in P6 reveals an increase in their scores (Table 13).

YEAR SEVEN		PTE RAW	PTE %	YEAR SIX		PTE RAW	PTE %
STANINE ONE	69-73	4	5%	STANINE ONE	69-73	4	6%
STANINE TWO	74-81	6	8%	STANINE TWO	74-81	10	14%
STANINE THREE	82-88	9	12%	STANINE THREE	82-88	10	14%
STANINE FOUR	89-96	9	12%	STANINE FOUR	89-96	17	24%
STANINE FIVE	97-103	19	26%	STANINE FIVE	97-103	9	13%
STANINE SIX	104-111	15	20%	STANINE SIX	104-111	4	6%
STANINE SEVEN	112-118	10	14%	STANINE SEVEN	112-118	0	0%
STANINE EIGHT	119-126	0	0%	STANINE EIGHT	119-126	1	1%
STANINE NINE	127-141	2	3%	STANINE NINE	127-141	72	100%

Table 13: P6/P7 Stanine Scores - Literacy

There has been a 10% increase in the number of children within stanines 7-9 and a 9% decrease in those children within stanines 1-3. This improvement is typical of most year groups

throughout the Key Stage and reflects the impact that the numeracy initiatives and school development plan are having in tackling this deficit.

This improvement has not been isolated to one particular year band in one particular year. This is best illustrated in Table 14 which shows the difference in stanine population from the beginning and end of the last SDP cycle.

NUMERACY	STANINES	School % Year 1	School % Year 3	School Stanine Band - Year 1	School Stanine Band – Year 3
<74	1	6%	3%		
74-81	2	12%	8%		
82-88	3	18%	13%	36%	24%
89-96	4	29%	17%		
97-103	5	15%	22%		
104-111	6	12%	20%	56%	59%
112-118	7	6%	11%		
119-126	8	1%	2%		
>126	9	0%	5%	7%	18%

Table 14: Difference in Stanine Scores (Years 1 – 3)

NUMERACY	Stanines	School Raw	School %	School Stanine Band	National Stanine Band	National
<74	1	15	6.41%			4
74-81	2	28	11.96%			7
82-88	3	41	17.52%	35.89%	23.00%	12
89-96	4	69	29.48%			17
97-103	5	35	14.95%			20
104-111	6	29	12.39%	56.82%	54.00%	17
112-118	7	14	5.98%			12
119-126	8	3	1.28%			7
>126	9	0	0.00%	7.26%	23.00%	4

Table 15: School Stanine Band – National Stanine Band

The figures in the previous table from 2014 shows an apparent disparity between the national average in terms of stanine groupings. With 12.89% more children in the lower stanines of 1-3 than expected of the national average and – 15.74% appearing in the top stanines 7-9. There was an apparent gap in the school’s performance and the national average. (It should be noted that given the schools socio-economic background and % of FSM this would be expected)

NUMERACY	Stanines	School Raw	School %	School Stanine Band	National Stanine Band	National
<74	1	8	3%			4
74-81	2	22	8%			7
82-88	3	33	12%	23.00%	23.00%	12
89-96	4	46	17%			17
97-103	5	57	21%			20
104-111	6	53	20%	56.00%	54.00%	17
112-118	7	29	11%			12
119-126	8	4	1%			7
>126	9	12	4%	18.00%	23.00%	4

Table 16: School Stanine Band – National Stanine Band

We can also see that the KS data has improved. Below Average Stanine Grouping has been reduced from 35.89% to 23% which is a reduction of 12.89% and is now commensurate to the National Expected as opposed to a starting point which was 12.89% above the expected. In addition, we can see that the Above Average Stanines grouping has grown from 7.26% to 18%. While we acknowledge the success of a 10.74% growth, we further accept that this is still 5% below the national expected (Tables 17, 18 and 19).

	STANINE								
	One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six	Seven	Eight	Nine
CAT %	2%	6%	10%	20%	24%	21%	10%	4%	2%
PTE %	3%	8%	13%	17%	22%	20%	11%	2%	5%
National Expected %	4%	7%	12%	17%	20%	17%	12%	7%	4%

Table 17: KS1 – PTE, CAT and National Expected Compare Stanine Scores - Numeracy

	STANINE								
	One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six	Seven	Eight	Nine
CAT %	7%	15%	16%	24%	21%	12%	4%	1%	1%
PTE %	4%	4%	7%	14%	19%	19%	20%	10%	4%
National Expected %	4%	7%	12%	17%	20%	17%	12%	7%	4%

Table 18: KS1 –CAT QUAN, PTM & National Expected - Numeracy

STANINE								
One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six	Seven	Eight	Nine
3.2%	6.5%	11.3%	17.2%	18.7%	19.0%	14.8%	5.6%	3.7%

Table 19: Whole School Numeracy Performance

All of the above tables show a high level of ascending performance in numeracy of which we aim to build upon this over the life of the next SDP. Furthermore, we can see the development of Maths across the school as a whole which shows longitudinal growth for each year band in the academic year 2016/17 (Table 20).

	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7
P1	100.58						
P2	89.87	103.38					
P3		102.96	104.17				
P4		104.65	106.86	103.12			
P5		96.66	90.68	97.1	101.49		
P6			87.59	96.6	94.44	97.34	
P7				92.36	101.21	93.76	98.43

Table 20: Numeracy Longitudinal Study

There is a clear indication that the numeracy interventions and strategies that were added throughout the last SDP tell a positive story but none more so in those we can track longest.

Year Six has seen a Mean score improvement of 9.75 standardised points. Year Seven improved by 6.07 points over the same timeframe. Additionally, we hope that the scores in FS and KS1 are not only evidence of a positive impact of the new approach to maths but is a solid foundation to move the profile forward in the coming years.

These changes to the way we teach maths include the following which while a comprehensive list is not the whole picture. We have a greater focus and emphasis on practical mathematics, a focus on mental mathematics that has seen a new scheme (New Wave Mental Maths) being introduced to the school, a new RUCSAC strategy being implemented across the school, Pitch and Expectation being embedded from Year Three upwards, the introduction of the NHM scheme. The impact of these, as well as CPD for staff, is perfectly illustrated in the fact that gaps are closing, it can be seen in the fact that FS and KS1 Maths performance is now outstripping literacy performance.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the whole school community have made measurable strides forward and far exceeded the targets set throughout the self-evaluative timescale. This is in no small measure to the processes that we journeyed through together particularly the embracing of the new vertical and horizontal monitoring model incorporating CBD and the TCN that was developed.

Evaluation of Assessment for Learning Strategies at Cedar Integrated Primary School and Nursery Unit

R.Bennett and M.Martelli

Abstract

The purpose of this research was to examine and put in place strategies to enhance Assessment for Learning (AfL) at Cedar Integrated Primary School and Nursery Unit. The results indicate that, as a result of carefully planned actionable plans for improvement, there has been an improvement in the quality of AFL strategies that are used at the school.

Key Words: AfL, Collegiate Book Discussion, Cross Curricular links, First-hand Evidence

School Profile

Cedar Integrated Primary School is located in Crossgar. It opened in September 1995 with an intake of 25 pupils and several mobile buildings. Its foundations are based on the vision and determination of a group of local parents who wanted their children to be educated in an atmosphere where children would learn and grow together as friends and equals irrespective of religion, race or cultural identity.

The school has grown steadily and now has an enrolment of approximately 201 pupils and a Nursery Unit with 26 places. Our seven-acre greenfield site has been extensively planted and developed to include a willow walk, a friendship garden, a pond and sports field to enhance learning in a safe, stimulating rural setting.

As a school, we believe that we would be in the 'Very Good' category in most areas of school life. However, we also believe that Cedar has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all learners.

Area for Improvement

- Assessment for Learning in Writing
- Assessment for Learning and Cross-Curricular links in Maths.

Baseline Position

The key coordinators for Literacy and Numeracy observed lessons, carried out 'book scoops' and monitored school planners (2016-2017) noting that:

- Different writing types were being taught throughout the school. However, there was very little evidence of AfL being used.
- Maths is mostly taught as a separate subject and opportunities for Cross-Curricular links are not being developed.

Baseline assessment data also identified a lack of confidence in using AfL amongst staff.

Quality Indicators / Success Criteria

- One writing type will be developed each term in all classes. There will be evidence of children using some form of AfL strategies.
- Three pieces of Maths with Cross-curricular links will be made for each topic.

Actions Taken

- Training on AfL and Growth Mindset was delivered to all staff
- A pupil survey was completed in September 2017.
- Five classes agreed to take part in Collegiate Book Discussions (P2, P3, P4, P6 and P7).
- The First Collegiate Book Discussions for Literacy and Maths was carried out between November and December 2017. Within this action, areas of strength and areas for improvement were agreed for both Literacy and Maths.
- A line of progression for AfL across the school was developed and agreed with the staff.
- In March 2018, a dissolving cluster was organised with All Children's Integrated Primary Schools and Drumlin's IPS to share good practice in AFL.
- A Marking for Improvement policy written was written with AFL embedded throughout the policy.

Progress

- The second Collegiate Book Discussion for Literacy was carried out in April 2018.
- There was clear evidence in children's books and folders that the agreed line progression for AfL was being implemented.
- A different writing type was introduced each half term.
- Children in P2 are adding traffic lights as a way of assessing their own work.
- Children in P3, P4, P6 and P7 are assessing their work against success criteria.
- Children in P4, P6 and P7 are carrying out peer reviews using WWW /WMG (What went well? / What makes good?) and EBI (Even better if)
- Children in P6 and P7 are beginning to *up-level* work as a result of the AFL strategies being used.
- A Second Collegiate Book Discussion for Maths was carried out in May 2018.
- At least three pieces of cross-curricular work were evidenced for each topic in children's books and folders.
- There was clear evidence that the agreed line progression for AfL was being implemented.
- There was good progression in the skills being taught across the school

Sources of evidence gathered

- The first Collegiate Book Discussions resulted in the development of a plan in order to acknowledge strengths and areas for improvement.
- Progress made was noted at second Collegiate Book Discussions.
- Discussions with all staff about shared AfL strategies and required training.

A pupil survey was also carried out in order to ascertain progress made in AFL between September 2017 and June 2018. Analysis of data derived from the survey indicates that Actionable plans for improvement have resulted in more frequent use of AFL strategies in KS2 (Table 21).

	September 2017	June 2018
Answer Choice	%	%
Always	8%	12%
Often	20%	44%
Sometimes	44%	44%
Never	28%	0%

Table 21: Pupil Audit - Frequency of AFL Strategies used by Pupils in KS2 (n = 25)

Data derived from CAT vs PTE Scores also shows a diagonal trend from year to year with more children moving across the stanine bands (Table 22).

	CAT Mean Score	2016/17 Mean Score	2017/18 Mean Score
P4	100	102	112
P5	107	107	112
P6	100	103	103
P7	103	107	117

Table 22: CAT vs PTE Mean Scores (2016/2017 – 2017/2018)

Conclusions and Recommendations

As a school, we are still in the ‘Very Good’ category. However, we have still made good progress this year in terms of improvement for each learner. In order to maintain continuous improvement, the recommendations for next year are as follows:

- Continued inclusion in the School Development Plan
- Create a specific two-year AFL Action Plan
- Using an internal shaped professional learning network, train and consequently share good practice among staff to focus on specific areas within the Action Plan (Learning Intentions and Success Criteria, Feedback, Effective Questioning, and Peer and Self-Assessment).
- Introduce ‘Trusted Colleague Network’ (TCN) to help share good practice and raise teacher confidence.

Evaluating the Impact of Targeted Marketing to Improve Pupil Attendance at Crumlin Integrated College

L.McGarry and J.Acheson

Abstract

In 2010 the ETI reported that serious challenges were facing Crumlin Integrated College. Pupil enrolment rapidly declined as the school lost community confidence and it was evident that this issue had to be urgently addressed. The school faced closure in 2014 and 2016 adversely affecting numbers. In 2015, Minister John O'Dowd, also reported that a post-primary integrated school in Crumlin must remain and he appealed to the Crumlin community to support their school so that it would become sustainable.

The College made it a priority to promote the growth and development of integrated education in Crumlin. As such, during this action research cycle, a number of actions were undertaken. As a result of these actions, there was a 25% increase in Year 8 enrolments from September 2017.

Key Words: Growth, Sustainability, Community Confidence, Ten Point Plan, integration

School Profile

Crumlin Integrated College was the first Controlled, Integrated College in the North Eastern region of Northern Ireland. It has a wide enrolment area including Crumlin, Glenavy and the surrounding areas. Approximately 130 pupils are attending the college. In the Sustaining Improvement Inspection of December 2016, the ETI confirmed that the college had the "ability to self-evaluate in the interests of its learners."

Area for Improvement

- To promote the growth and development of Integrated education in Crumlin.
- To develop a new Ten Point Plan to provide focus for the School Development Plan detailing community confidence - impact/outcomes to be monitored, evaluated and reported to all stakeholders.

Baseline Position

- Thirty pupils enrolled in year 8 in 2017/18.
- The current website is eight years old and in need of revamping.
- Limited marketing strategies are available - only website and newsletter.
- Prospectus out of date.
- Very negative publicity on Social media.

Quality Indicators / Success Criteria

- To increase the number of pupils enrolments from 30 to more than 50 pupils in 2018/19
- To Increase the number of primary schools in Antrim to send pupils to CIC.
- To mitigate negative results on social media
- To develop a new school website.
- To gain positive publicity in the media.
- To meet agreed targets in GCSE examinations.

Actions Taken

- The rebranding of the school for a more positive/corporate image, for example, the new school logo/badge and uniform.
- Replacement of existing mission statement with one which is more relevant to the needs of the school community.
- Introduction and use of social media – Twitter.
- Launch of Ten Point Plan for Decade of Growth on 28th February.
- Collaboration with a professional web designer to create a new website template.
- Increase number of primary schools invited to attend STEM and Creativity Days.
- CSIE - Organisation of community events.
- Engagement in Extended Schools Programme and Shared Education Project.
- Effective benchmarking of Year 11 and 12 pupils.

Progress

- Pupils are consistently achieving targets in GCSE examinations (5A*-C) over the last three years.
- To date, nearly 40 pupils have expressed an interest in enrolling.
- Politicians, community members and guests attended the launch of the Decade of Growth event. Keynote speakers were Dr Fitzgerald (Founder of Radox) and Graham Keddie (Managing Director of Belfast International Airport).
- STEM and creativity days have broadened to STEAM and Creativity resulting in additional school attendance.
- The rebranding of the school has been very successful with 100% of pupils opting to wear the new school uniform.
- CIC events including a Quiz have been attended by over 100 people from the Crumlin Area.
- Extended Schools – e.g. adults attended ‘Mindfulness’, healthy eating programmes and pupils engaged in a Personal Growth initiative.
- Building of new youth mobile – ‘Home of Youth’ (Education Authority).

Evidence

- Creation of a new school logo and updated uniform.
- New mission statement created.
- New website created.
- Articles publicising the launch of Decade of Growth in Irish News, Belfast Telegraph and other local publications – see Appendix.
- Thirty-five pupils have expressed an interest in attending CIC.
- Over 100 followers on Twitter.
- Positive stories in Irish News have pushed negative articles down on search engines.
- The number of adults and pupils attending the launch of Ten Point Plan was more than 250.
- EA and NICIE representatives have endorsed the Ten Point Plan.
- The School newsletter is widely distributed in the community including local primary schools.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The school has been successful in increasing pupil enrolment. Although the target number has not yet been achieved, the latest figures suggest that this is possible with continued school promotion and improvements in teaching and learning. This will ensure the sustainability of an integrated school in the Crumlin community. However, to ensure the positive outcomes to date, it is recommended that CIC:

- continue with current marketing strategies;
- Engage the IEF to do an audit of the wider community in order to gauge the level of support for integrated education.
- request additional funding from DENI in support of our Ten Point Plan and IEF in support of raising enrolment/growth for 2018/19 and 2019/20.
- have regular meetings with EA Directors/Area Based Planning coordinators and the CEO of NICIE to discuss progress.
- has regular meetings with staff and governors to provide updates on progress.
- review the School Development Plan to include progress to date.

Evaluating the Impact of Targeted Pastoral and Curriculum Interventions to Improve Overall GCSE Outcomes

U.Walters

Abstract

This action-based research focused on raising GCSE attainment based on the effective use of data to inform a range of interventions including; pastoral small group supports and data-informed issues relating to underachievement with a specific focus on students predicted D grade in their Year 12 assessment tracking.

The data for Year 12 student 2016-17 at risk of not achieving a C grade or above in each GCSE subject, tracked against predicted GCSE outcomes indicates the positive impact of interventions on this cohort. A significant minority (32%) of students raised their predicted D grade to a C grade. Furthermore. the data evidencing predicted grade data for the Year 12 cohort 2017-18 at risk of not achieving a C grade or above in each GCSE subject, tracked against predicted GCSE outcomes also indicates the positive impact of interventions on this cohort. A significant minority (31%) of students also raised their predicted D grade to a C grade.

Key Words: GCSE interventions, Impact on Learning, Intervention Strategies, Pastoral Support

School Profile

Lagan College was founded in 1981 as Northern Ireland's first planned integrated school and draws its pupils from a wide geographical area. Enrolment in the school is presently 1370, with just over 200 pupils in the sixth form. Approximately 35% of the pupils enter the school through a process of academic selection.

Area for Improvement

To improve students' GCSE and equivalent qualifications A* - C outcomes over the lifetime of the School Improvement Plan 2016-19.

Baseline Position

The baseline position for GCSE outcomes in August 2016 is indicated in Table 23.

% of pupils GCSE achievements	2016
Achieved 5 or more A* - C	61%
5 or more including English and Mathematics	50.7%

Table 23: Baseline position for GCSE outcome in August 2016

Quality Indicators / Success Criteria

Improvement to be measured in terms of the Whole School Improvement Plan (2016-19). Identified GCSE targeted success criteria to be benchmarked against Northern Ireland averages for non-selective Post-Primary Schools:

1. for the Year.12 cohort to achieve an 89% GCSE /equivalent 5-10 A*-C outcome over the lifetime of the School Improvement Plan.
2. for the Year.12 cohort to achieve a 75% GCSE/equivalent 5-10 A* - C outcome to include English & Mathematics over the lifetime of the School Improvement Plan (2016-19).

Actions Taken

The agreed actions taken by the school are indicated in Table 24.

Target	Action/ Learning	First Hand Evidence of Improvement/Impact
<p>Over the lifetime of the current School Improvement Plan (2016-19) to improve GCSE outcomes target: 89% achievement (A* - C) and 75% achievement (A* - C including English and Mathematics).</p> <p>To accurately target at risk 'D' grade attainment at subject and class level to improve upon the predicted outcome.</p>	<p>1. Introduction of a Key Stage Four three strand pathway format to signpost and accommodate the range of qualifications at GCSE to best match the all ability nature of the school's annual Yr.12 two hundred and twenty student cohort.</p> <p>2. Introduction of Minimum Expected Grade as an internal data tracking processes to identify 'at risk' D GCSE subject predicted grades/students for targeted curriculum actions for improvement.</p> <p>At each of the three assessment points data analysis identified:</p> <p>a. those students predicted not on track to achieve 5+ GCSE grades</p> <p>b. those students predicted not achieving 5+ (including English and Mathematics)</p> <p>3. Curriculum interventions at department and subject class level then focused on delivering bespoke learning interventions targeting specifically those predicted D grade students for improvement. Subject-based interventions were collated and shared as good practice across all subject areas. Student-specific interventions evidenced at departmental level through collaborative collegiate book discussion shared and cascaded at whole school level in a collated good practice intervention strategies resource format and Inset format.</p> <p>4. Pastoral Senior Leadership Learning Team Intervention whereby each Senior Leader Team is connected with a cohort of (12-15 students) Yr.12 students in a mentoring capacity. In the June of Yr 11, after final predicted grades are analysed pupils are placed in Learning Teams</p> <p>a. 5 GCSEs excluding English or Mathematics</p> <p>b. less than 5 GCSEs or equivalent qualifications).</p>	<p><i>(Data)</i></p> <p>Year 1 - 2016-17: Overall GCSE A* - C outcomes 61% to 69% improvement – 8% increase. A* - C including English and Mathematics outcomes 50.7% to 56% improvement – a 5.3 % increase.</p> <p><i>(Data)</i></p> <p>Year 2 - 2017-18: Overall GCSE A* - C outcomes 69% to 89.4% improvement – 20% increase. A* - C including English and Mathematics outcomes 56% to 68% improvement – 12 % increase.</p> <p><i>(Pupil Voice)</i></p> <p>Pupil Exit Evaluations</p>

Table 24: Summary of agreed Actions to improve overall GCSE Outcomes

Progress

During the School Improvement Cycle (2016-19), each year on year cohort have sustained and improved an overall 8% increase (A* - C or more) in achievement at GCSE level including seven students who increased from a predicted D to B grade outcome at GCSE level.

Also, the number of students with increased predicted D to C grades has been sustained and improved with an overall 5.3% increase in achievement of 5 or more A* to C (including English & Mathematics) at GCSE level.

In the academic year 2016-17, of those students identified as being at risk of D grade subject attainment who were subsequently in receipt of focused pastoral and curriculum interventions; a significant minority of those identified as D grades in each subject went on to achieve a C grade or above success at GCSE in 2016-17 (32%) and subsequently again in 2017-18 (31%).

	June 2016	June 2017	June 2018
5 or more A* to C	61%	69%	89%
5 or more A* to C (including English & Mathematics)	50.7%	56%	68%

Table 25: % of pupils GCSE achievements – June 2016 to June 2018

Evidence to Evaluate Progress

Data analysis of GCSE outcomes in August 2017 illustrated the positive impact of both pastoral and curriculum interventions on student achievement. Of the 384 predicted D GCSE attainment grades identified in this cohort across all subjects, a significant minority (32%) exceeded the predicted D grade (Table 26).

Number of predicted D grades (all subjects) – January 2017	384
Number of predicted D grades to C grade achievement or above (all subjects) – August 2017	124
% improvement targeted D predicted going on to achieving C grade and above – August 2017	32%

Table 26: 2016-17 GCSE Targeted Interventions

Data analysis of the GCSE outcomes in August 2018 also illustrates the continued positive impact of both pastoral and curriculum interventions (Table 27).

Number predicted D grades (all subjects) – March 2017	336
Number of predicted D grades to C grade achievement or above (all subjects) – August 2018	105
% improvement targeted D predicted going on to achieving C grade and above – August 2018	31%

Table 27: 2017-18 GCSE Targeted Predicted D Interventions

Conclusion and Recommendations

The data evidencing predicted grade data for the Year 12 cohort 2016-17 at risk of not achieving C grade or above in each GCSE subject, tracked against predicted GCSE outcomes indicates the positive impact of interventions on this cohort. A significant minority (32%) of students raised their predicted D grade to a C grade. Again, the data evidencing predicted grade data for Year 12 cohort 2017-18 at risk of not achieving C grade or above in each GCSE subject, tracked against predicted GCSE outcomes indicates the positive impact of interventions on this cohort. A significant minority (31%) of students raised their predicted D grade to a C grade.

Finally, it is recommended that the following actions are deemed essential to continued improvement at Lagan College.

- The Continued delivery of a broad curriculum offer at GCSE with profiled pathway choices for each student informed through effective individual pupil profiling data.
- Sharing good practice across departments of the interventions which have had the most significant impact on outcomes through departmental collating of interventions which are evidenced as having an impact on the learner.
- Extending and embedding collegiate book discussion (Learning Looks) with a focus on D/C, C/B and B/A predicted grade interventions across all subjects.
- To continue to use data effectively to identify students at risk of not achieving D to C grades specifically.
- Continued consistent Senior Leadership Learning Team support for targeted cohorts based on data, teacher feedback and close parental contact and communication.

Developing an Interconnected Approach to Supporting Pupils in Their Study Skills

P.Lowry

Abstract

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) concluded in December 2016 that whilst “Regent House School demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners” they further identified the need to focus on sustaining and improving further “the overall standards attained by the pupils in public examinations, particularly in a significant minority of individual subjects at GCE A level”. In this regard, as part of the whole-school improvement strategy to raise standards in public examination outcomes and sustain such improvement, the senior leadership team (SLT) identified a more focused approach to the guidance provided to pupils on Study Skills in order to promote a culture of independent learning. In doing so, this has engaged both pastoral and academic teams in the delivery of specialist training on Study Skills to pupils, teachers and parents. This programme of education and support was launched in September 2017 and continues to progress and develop.

Key Words: Study skills; independent learning; spacing, retrieval, meta-cognition

School Profile

Regent House is a controlled and co-educational Grammar School with 1450 pupils and is situated in Newtownards, Co Down. The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) inspected the School, in November 2015 when the quality of education was evaluated as “Satisfactory”. The follow-up inspection in December 2016 noted a significant change in the identified areas for improvement leading to an increased grading of “Good”. At key stage 4, the improved outcomes are now well above the corresponding Northern Ireland (NI) averages. In 2017, 95% of students achieved at least seven grades at A*-C at GCSE. At post-16, the improved outcomes are broadly in line with the corresponding NI averages with, 84% of students achieving at least 3 A*-C grades at A level in 2017. This improvement was sustained in 2018 with 94% of students achieving at least 7 grades at A*-C at GCSE and 86% of students achieving at least 3 A*-C grades at A level.

Focus of the Evaluation

To promote Study Skills with pupils, teachers and parents to develop a culture of independent learning among pupils.

Baseline Position

- In previous years, Study Skills has been delivered by the school’s pastoral team to pupils in all Years groups through the Learning for Life and Work (LLW) programme.
- An Educational consultancy company has delivered isolated / discreet guidance sessions to year 8 & year 11 pupils. However, no strategic connection has existed between the pastoral and academic teams in the delivery of this programme. Furthermore, whole school teaching staff have not been involved in the delivery of this programme; therefore the application of this learning has not been consistently addressed across subject departments.
- While revision and study skills information has been addressed at parent curriculum information evenings, and pupil intervention meetings, no formal training on study skills has ever been delivered to parents.

Quality Indicators / Success Criteria

- All teaching staff receive annual specialist Study Skills training
- All pupils receive annual specialist Study Skills training
- All parents have access to annual specialist Study Skills training
- Co-ordinated delivery of Study Skills between pastoral and academic teams
- Current and future best practice strategies shared across subject departments
- Production of Key Stage 3 (KS3) revision help/guideline documents through the Personal Development and pastoral curriculum for pupils and parents.

Actions Taken

- Whole school focus through Performance Review and Staff Development (PRSD) programme and departmental actions plans.
- Eye for Education to provide Study Skills training for all teachers and classroom assistants.
- Annual staff training to be timetabled for a relevant staff development day.
- Focus on retrieval and spacing strategies across school by all teaching staff.
- Assemblies run for all year groups by Vice Principal Curriculum focused on Study Skills.
- Department meetings focused on subject-specific Study Skills strategies.
- Sharing best practice of Study Skills strategies amongst Curriculum leaders.
- Eye for Education to provide Study Skills training for Parents of pupils in KS3.
- Annual parent training to be timetabled in the whole school calendar.
- Deliver Study Skills training by Young Enterprise for pupils in year 8 and year 11.
- Heads of Departments meetings followed by Department meetings to discuss revision at KS3.
- Subject departments to develop revision help/guidelines for KS3 pupils aligned to Study Skills strategies.
- Continued focus on Study Skills training within Pastoral curriculum – including completing timetables.
- Study Skills to be delivered within a new KS3 pastoral period.
- LLW and pastoral period schemes of work shared with staff and parents.

Progress made on Priorities

- May 2017 – Study skills focus agreed by SLT as School Development Plan target.
- August 2017 – Whole school staff informed of the plan to focus on Study Skills with the reasons behind this focus identified. Whole school focus agreed as PRSD and departmental actions plan targets.
- October 2017 - Study Skills training delivered by Eye 4 Education to all teachers and classroom assistants; current practice identified within department discussions.
- October 2017 - Feedback received from Eye 4 Education and shared with Heads of Departments to progress teacher education and develop further department Study Skills strategies.
- November 2017 - Agreement by SLT to focus on retrieval and spacing. Directive on this disseminated to staff at Thursday morning staff briefings.
- November 2017 – Study Skills follow up in department meetings focused on developing a departmental strategy for Study Skills. These meetings involved the sharing of best practice amongst the department. An overview/summary document was returned to curriculum leaders for strategic alignment.
- November 2017 – 70 Parents attended study skills training led by Eye 4 Education.
- Throughout the last two academic years, the VP Curriculum has led assemblies for all year groups on study skills with a focus on retrieval and spacing.

- Study Skills training has been introduced within the Pastoral curriculum, including a focus on completing study timetables.
- The LLW and pastoral period schemes of work have been shared with staff and parents.
- Revision and Study Skills information has been delivered at all parent curriculum information evenings across the past 2 academic years.
- Revision and Study Skills information has been addressed throughout pupil intervention meetings; related more specifically to study timetables and pupil aspirations.
- In-house study provision made available to all Yr12 pupils and pupils identified as in need of study support during June 2017 and June 2018 study leave. These sessions have focused on the use of past paper questions for study purposes.
- June 2018 – Curriculum VP and a Senior Teacher participated in the Northern Ireland Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) webinars on Growth Mind-Set and Metacognition.
- November 2018 - Year 8 Study Skills delivered by Young Enterprise: Study skills for all other year groups led by the school’s pastoral team during the 2018/19 LLW programme.
- December 2018 – Metacognition webinar cascaded by Curriculum VP to whole school staff during a staff development day.
- Curriculum VP has led pupil assemblies on Growth Mind-Set to all year groups during the first term of 2018.
- The school’s Teaching and Learning Team have included Study Skills development, most specifically in the areas of metacognition and growth mindset, as planned actions in the current School Development Plan within the “Outcomes, Curriculum Provision and Teaching and Learning” action plan.

Sources of Evidence

Parents and Teachers understanding of study skills (pre and post training) are shown in tables 28-33.

Answer Choice	Pre Learning Development		Post Learning Development	
	%	Count	%	Count
Excellent	0%	0	24%	17
Good	14%	10	51%	36
Average	23%	16	21%	15
Fair	15%	11	3%	2
Poor	48%	34	1%	1

TABLE 28: Teachers Understanding of Memory Curve and its impact on retention of information

Answer Choice	Pre Learning Development		Post Learning Development	
	%	Count	%	Count
Excellent	4%	3	15%	11
Good	7%	5	55%	39
Average	13%	9	18%	13
Fair	23%	16	10%	7
Poor	54%	38	1%	1

TABLE 29: Teachers Understanding of self-study SWOT analysis

Answer Choice	Pre Learning Development		Post Learning Development	
	%	Count	%	Count
Excellent	0%	0	10%	7
Good	7%	5	51%	36
Average	15%	11	30%	21
Fair	27%	19	8%	6
Poor	51%	36	1%	1

TABLE 30: Teachers Understanding of concentration and retention

Answer Choice	Pre Learning Development		Post Learning Development	
	%	Count	%	Count
Excellent	0%	0	24%	17
Good	14%	10	51%	36
Average	23%	16	21%	15
Fair	15%	11	3%	2
Poor	48%	34	1%	1

TABLE 31: Parents Understanding of Memory Curve and its impact on retention of information

Answer Choice	Pre Learning Development		Post Learning Development	
	%	Count	%	Count
Excellent	4%	3	15%	11
Good	7%	5	55%	39
Average	13%	9	18%	13
Fair	23%	16	10%	7
Poor	54%	38	1%	1

TABLE 32: Parents Understanding of self-study SWOT analysis

Answer Choice	Pre Learning Development		Post Learning Development	
	%	Count	%	Count
Excellent	0%	0	10%	7
Good	7%	5	51%	36
Average	15%	11	30%	21
Fair	27%	19	8%	6
Poor	51%	36	1%	1

TABLE 33: Parents Understanding of concentration and retention

Discussion and Conclusion

This development strategy was launched in September 2017 and continues to progress and develop through the current academic year. The rationale to justify these developments centred on the desire to promote and nurture a culture of independent learning amongst all pupils. While pupils have received Study Skills information for several years through the school's pastoral programme; it was identified that there existed limited linkage between this guidance and the academic departments. That is, pupils received study skills information, but the class teacher did not. This restricted a coherent and consistent approach to developing study skills across the school and led to variability across departments in the application of study skills.

The work to date has addressed this variability through teacher education on study skills and through the process of sharing good practice across departments on their application in the classroom. Beyond this, it was agreed that such information on study skills should be reinforced at home which led to a study skills training evening being provided to key stage 3 parents in November 2017.

This focused on creating a 3-way approach to the development of independent learners: pupils educated in study skills; informed teachers with the skill set to apply within the classroom; and informed parents reinforcing good study practice at home.

The progress made to date has been successful. However, the strategy is only in its first cycle. In this regard and moving forward with the following initiatives are planned for the academic year 2018/2019.

- Revision help/guidelines to be developed for KS3.
- HOD then Department meeting to discuss revision at KS3.
- Revision help/guidelines developed for KS4 and KS5.
- Staff training planned and delivered annually.
- In-house parent training planned bi-annually.

Enhancing Pupil Feedback When Marking for Improvements in Literacy

M.Larmour

Abstract

This report focusses on teachers giving pupils the opportunity to think carefully about their written work and how this work can be improved during the next linked activity. The pupils have experimented with commenting on their work based on the advice given by their teacher to continue to make progress.

Key Words: Literacy, Peer-Assessment, Self-Assessment, Marking for Improvement, Feedback

School Profile

Cregagh is a controlled, co-educational, all-inclusive primary school situated in the Cregagh suburb of East Belfast. The school opened in 1939 and has a current enrolment of approximately 172 pupils. All pupils in attendance at the school are of compulsory school age.

Area for Improvement

Cregagh Primary's School Development Plan (2015-18) describes the importance of raising attainment in Literacy and Numeracy with a significant focus on improving performance in Key Stage results in Literacy. To achieve this, it was felt that one way the pupils could improve the outputs of their work was to engage them with 'purposeful thinking' following feedback from both their peers and their teacher.

Our Marking Policy, (2018) which forms part of our School Development Plan, states that Cregagh Primary School wishes to *'benefit our pupils' learning and assist them in becoming reflective about the quality of their work and how they can improve it'*.

The Marking Policy sets out its aims to:

- Inform the pupil what they have done well and what they need to do to improve;
- Support pupil confidence and self-esteem in learning;
- Assess progress and inform future planning;
- Allow the pupils to develop the ability to evaluate their own learning and to take responsibility for their own improvement;
- Help parents' understanding of strengths and weaknesses in children's work.

At Cregagh Primary School, we recognise that marking needs to be manageable and time efficient but focussed on moving the children's learning forward. Our priority for improvement is to give pupils the opportunity to become reflective upon their work and to examine their strengths and areas for improvement in a manner that allows them to be highly self-evaluative, independent learners.

Baseline Position

Our baseline position is identified by the fact that our Marking Policy has already been in place for several years with a variety of marking approaches having been adopted throughout all key stages. As already mentioned, the staff felt that it was important to make marking more manageable and time efficient but ensuring that it focused on allowing the pupils to make continued progress.

The staff also felt that that pupils should be able to effectively examine the work they are producing in order to identify and improve on their strengths as well as being aware of the areas for development.

Quality Indicators / Success Criteria

- By the end of the academic year 2018-19 all pupils will have written and responded to feedback given by the teacher using the '2 Stars and a Wish' scheme.
- Most pupils need to show evidence of improvement on the following linked activity (usually Literacy or Numeracy) based on comments made previously.
- All pupils need to reflect on what they did to be successful in small groups – How did they achieve their goals? What did they do differently this time around?

Teachers also consulted ETIs '*Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework*', (January 2017) to ensure that the 'Outcomes for Learners' are identified as being 'outstanding' or 'very good'. The following outcomes are included in our Success Criteria:

- The children set high expectations for themselves concerning personal and academic standards, including the quality of the presentation of their work
- Children can work independently and with others; demonstrate effective personal and social skills; think critically and creatively; and, show perseverance in their learning.
- Children plan and evaluate their work.
- The children act on high-quality feedback to improve their work.
- Children are confident to plan, review and evaluate and know how to improve the quality of their own work

Actions Taken

Target Marking Groups

- Mixed ability groups were created across Literacy and Numeracy groups in each class. Books were labelled with red, yellow, blue or green stickers. Each marking group was comprised of children of mixed ability to ensure that the teacher sees a representative cross-section of work across different ability levels.
- Each group will take their weekly turn in having its Literacy and Numeracy marked in a particularly focussed way, while the rest of the class will still have their work marked carefully but with less depth.
- The marking group that is being targeted each week is set out on our school's online *iCalendar* for the entire academic year.

Collegiate Book Discussions

The teaching staff held a series of Collegiate Book Discussions to discuss the targets that they wished to focus on.

- Collegiate Book Discussions sessions ensured that there were scaffolded questions under the 2 stars and a wish marking strategy for the pupils to respond to, thus ensuring there was clarity and thought in their responses.
- Teachers also felt that the comments that pupils wrote in their books were often rushed and not purposeful which is why the smaller focussed groups were necessary to give pupils space and time to think about the positives (2 stars) as well as the area for improvement (1 wish).

Progress

At first, the comments made by pupils did not show any great thought or detail and required the teachers to talk to the pupils about their work. This was particularly the case in lower Key Stage 1. However, as the pupils became more accustomed to considering how they could improve, the progress was evident to see. Pupils were thinking about what they were doing and taking the comments provided by the teacher on board. By referring to the ISEF Framework, the staff were also able to ensure that the Success Criteria for this initiative was being met during Collegiate Book Discussions.

The Literacy Co-Ordinator also visited groups in each class to assess the learning and discuss how the pupils felt about their comments and whether or not they enjoyed the enhancing pupil feedback initiative.

Evidence

Data: PTE scores have risen throughout 2017-18 with regards to spelling, grammar and punctuation. End of Key Stage Two results in Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation highlight that the sample tested were 5% (Spelling) and 12% (G&P) above the National % average.

Lesson observations: The Literacy Co-Ordinator observed classes during class sessions when small marking groups were responding to comments in their books.

Books: Collegiate Book Discussions were implemented to discuss priorities across the school, and to highlight what the pupils were doing well and what needed improving for the next lesson.

Voice: Pupils provided feedback on the initiative as well as the progress that they have made to date.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Overall, this has been a very worthwhile initiative and has resulted in evidential improvements in pupils work; pupils taking greater pride in their work; pupils appreciate appreciating how constructive feedback can improve their work; improvements in talking and listening skills among pupils as they discuss work in peer/target groups. There are, however, areas for further development such as:

- Continuing to use this approach throughout the school for both Numeracy as well as Literacy
- Development of a simplified approach for pupils' feedback at Foundation Stage level

Evaluating Problem Solving Strategies in Numeracy

C. Maguire and A. McCrystal

Abstract

This report is a summary of how the self-evaluative process was used to improve outcomes for pupils and share good practice in Numeracy, with a focus on the development of problem-solving strategies. Following initial data analysis, a programme of external staff development in Numeracy problem solving was provided by the EA. This was followed up with a timeline of horizontal and vertical self-evaluation including CDMD, TCN and Lesson Observations. Programmes of targeted support were also put in place for selected pupils. To date, the school has made good progress against set success criteria and will continue to develop this work over the next two years as one of the key priorities in the School Development Plan.

Key Words: Collegiate Book Marking, Visualisation, Problem Solving, Numeracy

School Profile

St. John the Baptist Primary School is a co-educational primary school in the Parish of St Michael the Archangel and is situated on Finaghy Road North in Andersonstown. The school opened in September 2011 as an amalgamation of St John the Baptist Boys' School and St John the Baptist Girls' School. Currently, the school has an enrolment of 377 pupils with approximately 41% of the children entitled to free school meals and 20 % on the Special Needs Register. In St. John the Baptist Primary School we strive to enable pupils to become confident, self-motivated learners who have the skills and confidence to adapt to the demands of an ever-changing society.

Our Mission statement is: 'Inspired by St. John the Baptist, we work together in love, play together in harmony, pray together in faith. Aspiring to happiness and achievement for all.'

Area for Improvement

- Develop the ability of pupils to interpret Mathematical language and tackle problem-solving in Numeracy.
- Improvement in the teaching of Problem Solving strategies throughout the school with a focus on Visualisation/Bar Modelling.
- Reduction in Underachievement in Numeracy P.4-7 PTM V CAT 4.

Baseline Position

- The school historically has had a greater percentage of underachievement (PTM V NNRIT) and low achievement St 1-3 in Numeracy.
- In 2016-2017 CAT 4 was administered to pupils Years 3-7 providing a baseline for Underachievement.
- In June 2017, a significant majority (70.8%) of P.4-7 pupils were in line with their ability or above expectation (Good).
- 29.2% of Years 4-7 pupils were below target (underachieving in Numeracy, lower than expected and much lower than expected LE/MLE).
- Only 25% of Year Groups (P.4-7 2017) were above the National Average in Routine Problem Solving (GL PTM N.I. Standardisation).
- Following a Collegiate Book Marking discussion in December 2017 it was found that there was good use of Bar Modelling/Visualisation in pupil books. 53% - A majority of books showed the desired improvement. (Good)

Quality Indicators / Success Criteria

- Principal Book Audit- A Majority (66%) of pupil books to show evidence of explicit problem-solving strategies – focus bar modelling/visualisation.
- A majority of Principal observed lessons (60%) to demonstrate evidence of good use of mathematical language/open-ended questions to develop pupil confidence and use of appropriate strategies including visualisation to solve problems.
- Reduction of 3% in underachievement in Numeracy (Whole School -P.4-7 2018)
- 31% of pupils currently underachieving P.4-7 2017 targeted by class teachers to reduce levels of underachievement (2018).
- 50% of Year Group to be in line with or above National Average in Routine Problem Solving (PTM) P.4-7 2018.
- Reduction in underachievement in pupils targeted to receive SIF- WBPB Support.

Actions Taken

- Self- Evaluation Timeline drafted and communicated to staff.
- Staff Development – Problem Solving (4 sessions) -EA Support (Jan- Feb 2018).
- KS2 Pupils targeted for SIF Project Support and Problem Solving (6 weekly cycles 5 groups) - Use of ALTA as a teaching/assessment tool.
- P.3-6 pupils targeted via “Solas Back on Track Support” in Numeracy
- Pupils targeted by teacher supported using ALTA by volunteers
- CBMD organised on Problem-solving strategies with a focus on Bar Modelling and visualisation – all year groups. (Feb/May 2018)
- Principal Book Audit (March 2018)
- TCN volunteers – focus on Numeracy Problem solving lessons 2 cycles (Feb/May 2018).
- Principal Observations- Problem Solving Lessons- Focus Visualisation (June 2018).

Progress

Primary

- 28.2% of pupils underachieving in Numeracy (Reduction of 1%) – **Success criteria Not Met.** (A Majority 71.8% of pupils achieving in line with their ability or above expectation in Numeracy - May 2018 PTM v CAT LE/MLE - Good).
- 53 % of pupils targeted by class teachers now achieving in line with ability or above expectation - **Success criteria met**
- 75% of Year Groups (P.4-7) Routine Problem Solving Category are now in line with or above National Average- NI standardisation May 2018- **Success criteria met.**

KS2 SIF (WBPB) Support Review P.5-7 2018 (PTM v CAT 4)

- 53% of P.5-7 pupils targeted for SIF support were achieving in line with their ability at the commencement of support Numeracy (June 2017).
- On review, this was increased to 71% achieving in line with or above expectation June 2018.
- 60% of pupils targeted for SIF support improved Standardised Scores in Numeracy- (June 2018).

Collegiate Book Monitoring Discussions and Book Audit (P.1-7)

- Good use of a range of problem-solving strategies including bar modelling explicitly evident in pupil books. A majority of books showed the desired improvement. (66% Good). **Success criteria met.**

Principal Book Audit March 2018

Good use of a range of problem-solving strategies including bar modelling explicitly evident in pupil books. A majority of books showed the desired improvement. (67% Good). **Success criteria met.**

CBMD 3 May 2018

-Good use of Visualisation Strategy including Bar Modelling evident in pupil books. Most books showed the desired improvement (80% Very Good). **Success criteria met.**

Trusted Colleague Network - February 2018

53% of staff members (FS, KS1, and KS2) participated in TCN within their year groups.

Staff observed Numeracy Problem Solving lessons using a range of problem-solving strategies within their year groups

As a result of observations staff reflected and identified a number of strategies/ approaches to develop.

- Greater use of peer assessment as plenary among pupils in groups and pairs as a progression of group work.
- Devoting more time throughout the lesson to allow pupils to explain their learning and reasoning.
- Allowing children more independence to select the resources required for a task and identify the strategies required.
- Developing pupil listening in FS and opportunities for pupils to record.

TCN May 2018

53% of staff members (FS, KS1, and KS2) participated in TCN both within and across year groups. Staff reflections and approaches to develop included the following:

- Ongoing assessment through good use of questioning (clarifying and assessing understanding) to be used throughout the lesson (Mini- plenaries).
- Effective use of praise to motivate pupils.
- Develop more opportunities to use ICT/Interactive resources, e.g. HAM.
- Greater use of concrete resources(kinaesthetic) in KS2 as an aid to visualisation
- Develop good pace in lesson and effective differentiation to maximise pupil involvement.
- Allow pupils freedom in arriving at strategies or recording different visualisation techniques.

Principal Lesson Observations June 2018

In lessons observed:

- 33% were outstanding;
- 41% were very good;
- 16% were good;
- 8% were satisfactory.
- **Almost all** the teaching was good or better. The quality of the problem-solving strategy development in maths is good. In a minority of the classes, differentiation was not used effectively to benefit learning taking place in the class. All of the teachers observed used a 'have a go' ethos when problem-solving and encouraged children to use the problem-solving strategies taught.
- During the lesson observations, almost all of the teaching observed was good or better. In the most effective practice, there were positive working relationships between the teachers, classroom assistants and children which engendered enthusiasm for problem-solving and active maths; teachers outlined clearly the intended learning; and, questions

and plenary sessions were used effectively to check the children's understanding of the strategy used and extend their thinking. In the less effective practice, in a minority of lessons observed, the activities were overly focused on completing low-level tasks rather than on developing the problem-solving strategies.

- **Almost all the learning** was well focused on the use of a particular visualisation strategy to consolidate the children's previous learning and to develop confidence in problem-solving.

Sources of Evidence

- Data Analysis- Baseline (PTM V CAT 4) – Underachievement in Numeracy P.4-7 May 2017- Reviewed June 2018 Numeracy P.4-7.
- Ongoing baselining and review of KS2 Numeracy Support (SIF) groups – 6 weekly using ALTA.
- TCN 2 cycles - (February /May 2018) – Teacher reflection sheets completed and submitted to –Assessment Coordinator.
- CBMD – half termly three cycles (December 2017, February 2018, May 2018) -Numeracy Coordinator. Discussions informed next steps. Staff shared books, photographs of activities and videos of pupils explaining their learning.
- Principal Book Audit P.1-7 (March 2018).
- Principal Lesson Observations – Numeracy Problem Solving – (June 2018).
- Teaching staff were audited following EA Problem Solving Support (March 2018)-79% of staff indicated that they found the training useful or very useful. 86% Identified strategies they were developing with the pupils and adjustments to their teaching to develop problem-solving.
- Pupil Voice was audited for P.5 & 7 SIF Support Groups (March 2018) to gauge pupil response to the programme. 95% of pupils stated that the programme helped them with Maths and 80% indicated that they felt more confident about doing school work following the programme.

Conclusions and Recommendations

On evaluation, the school has made Good Progress. There has been an improvement in the evidence of problem-solving work in pupil books and staff are cooperating through TCN to share good practice. This was confirmed through the principal book audit (March 2018) and lesson observations (June 2018). While we were effective in reducing underachievement in targeted group of pupils, we did not meet our wider underachievement targets as new pupils fell into the underachievement category – (June 2018 PTM V CAT). In this regard, work will continue to address levels of underachievement in Numeracy.

Moving forward, the following actions are also proposed:

- Maintain Numeracy focus in line with the School Development Plan.
- Clearer and more focused success criteria: In lessons, in half termly Numeracy Plans and for CBMD.
- Expand the use of multisensory resources to help pupils grasp and consolidate new concepts. This will initially include the purchase of Numicon (2018-2019) for pupils throughout the school as well as staff development for teaching staff and classroom assistants in Maths Mastery techniques.
- To follow up on analysis of SEN Attendance.
- Pastoral system to more effectively address barriers to learning and put appropriate provisions in place for pupils.

- In June 2018 it was found that 62% of pupils underachieving in Numeracy were pupils on the SEN register. In this regard, the school will make more effective use of classroom assistants and parent volunteers to support individuals and small groups in Numeracy.
- Early intervention strategies will be devised for children who have poor attendance as well as raising awareness among parents of the link between attendance and attainment.
- Establishment of a programme of Parent Numeracy Workshops led by experienced classroom assistants and funded by the Extended Schools initiative.
- Celebration of pupil achievement in Numeracy and organised events including a Maths Week.

Evaluating Assessment Procedures and Tracking of Pupil Progress

N.Hawkins

Abstract

The purpose of this action research was to evaluate and review current assessment procedures at St Gerard's. Special school. The impact of this research is that we now have a universal, coherent approach to assessment throughout all the stages of St Gerard's. As a result of the new assessment procedures, there is now appropriate accountability at all levels of the school community, with a focus on pupil progress and outstanding classroom practice.

Key Words: Assessment, Data, Tracking, First Hand Evidence

School Profile

St Gerard's is a Catholic co-educational special school that caters for pupils from the ages of 3-19 with a range of additional needs. Our current enrolment is 284 pupils. All students are referred to the school by the Education Authority in the Belfast region and have a Statement of Special Educational Need.

We provide small class settings with highly skilled and experienced Teaching and Learning Assistant support staff. We work as part of a multidisciplinary team. Allied Health Professionals such as Speech and Language therapists and Occupational therapists are also an integral part of our school team. The team works closely with education staff, other professionals, parents and carers to facilitate each child's development and maximise their potential. We also link with some other outside agencies to support the students.

Area for Improvement

- To embed high-quality Learning and teaching through Literacy, Numeracy, Wider Skills and ICT for all pupils irrespective of need in St Gerard's.
- To develop, implement and evaluate an Assessment Profile to meet the holistic needs of all pupils.

Baseline Position

Voice and Data were the main sources of evidence used to collate the evidence for our baseline position.

Voice

St Gerard's is a special school historically meeting the needs of pupils with moderate learning difficulties. However, due to the changing nature of special schools, this profile began to change. Teachers were regularly reporting in departmental and whole school minuted meetings that there was a broad spectrum of need within each class which required specific curricula and assessments. Overall, the staff reported that they felt the needs of all pupils were not being met.

The wide spectrum of need within each class ranged from Q Skill 1 to Level 3 of the Levels of Progression and in addition, there were often additional barriers to learning including Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Social Emotional Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD). None of these factors were conducive to an effective learning environment.

Data

There was no formalised tracking and monitoring of data. The assessment tools being used were not 'fit for purpose', and teachers were relying on their own diagnostic tests as the assessments and standardisations used were outdated.

Therefore, it was essential that a whole school review of assessments was a major priority that would allow staff to monitor and track pupil progress. This would allow the school to have a robust and reliable assessment tool which could lead to us devising an effective tracking and monitoring system to ensure pupil progress.

Quality Indicators / Success Criteria

- Fully embedded reliable and robust assessment procedures
- All teachers will be confident in the administration and analysis of summative assessments
- Teachers will understand how to improve pupil's attainment
- Teachers will make effective use of data to establish pupils' starting points (baseline) and modify teaching so that all pupils' achieve to their potential by the end of the year
- An effective MER mechanism will be in place to effectively track pupil progress

Actions and Progress

Action 1: To Identify and implement new testing materials

There has been outstanding progress made on this action. The school now uses a wide range of assessment strategies, and they are used to guide planning and support learning (Table 34). Staff were also up-skilled in the administration and analysis of these assessments.

Assessment Instrument	Group
Single Word Reading Test (SWRT)	P4-Year 12
Single Word Spelling Test (SWSPT)	P4-Year 12
Numeracy Progress Test (NPT)	All Year groups
Key Transition assessments	Years 4,7 and 10
Wide Range Intelligence Test (WRIT)	Years 4,7 and 10
Sandwell Numeracy Test	All Year groups
Diagnostic Reading Analysis (DRA)	Years 7 and 10
Psychoeducational Profile-Third Edition	Proportionate use
TEACCH Transition Assessment Profile (TTAP)	Proportionate use
Boxall	Proportionate use

Table 34: Whole School Assessment Instruments used at St Gerard's Special School

Action 2: To develop a tracking system

A tracking system is now in place; data is collected, analysed and used effectively to review pupil progress and to set targets for improvement. The tracking system has been developed using SIMS. All summative assessments are recorded in SIMS bi-annually in the months of October and May and analysed by class teachers at an individual pupil level. The Vice Principal also compiles a whole school report for the Principal and Board of Governors. This is for the purpose of ensuring that there is appropriate accountability at all levels for the performance of our school.

Action 3: To implement Q Skills & Levels of Progression

There has been very good progress made with this action. Data and key performance indicators are used effectively to monitor and track the progress and attainments of all pupils. All teaching staff were trained using the CCEA online Level of Progression and Q skills training. Workshops

and standardisation seminars were conducted at a whole school and individual school level. All pupils are assessed and recorded on SIMS from P1 to Y10 in Q skills and Levels of progression.

Data Action Impact (DAI) now indicates that there is no longer a wide spectrum of levels within each classroom.

Action 4: To Establish a Learning Support Unit

There has been very good progress on this action. The school now provides accurately targeted support that is well matched to the additional needs of pupils.

At present pupils with an identified need have access to learning support staff. The focus for the year 2017-2018 is pupils who have been identified through the analysis of data and professional dialogue (who may have potential) to move to a mainstream setting. Decisions in this regard are also in consultation with other staff and external agencies such as the Educational Psychology Service.

Action 5: To Stream classes based on need

There has been very good progress made on this action. Learning and Teaching strategies now match the needs of the pupils ensuring activities are differentiated, motivating, appropriately challenging and well-paced.

Due to the diverse range of need, data was analysed, and meetings conducted with staff and pupils were streamed based on their needs. Within each department, we have an SLD, ASD, MLD and MLD and specific classes. This allows for a bespoke and meaningful curriculum to be delivered allowing for maximum pupil progress. There is also an opportunity for cross phase dialogue and the sharing of high-quality learning and teaching through an effective TCN system.

Action 6: To develop appropriate KS4 and Post 16 Pathways

There has been excellent progress made on this action. There is effective and impartial careers education, information, advice and guidance available to pupils informed by local knowledge relating to employment opportunities.

There is also a bespoke and individualised curriculum offered in the Senior school. All pupils are streamed through data analysis at the end of KS3 (Y10) and in consultation with parents, the EA transitions officer, the Careers Advisor and the pupil. In this regard, pupils are placed in a pathway that meets their individual needs, with a focus on functional literacy, numeracy, vocational courses and life and independent living.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Due to the systematic and robust mechanisms that have been put in place by the school, data and key performance indicators are used effectively to monitor and track the progress and attainment of all pupils. These actions have led to evidential improvements and are focused on improving the quality of learning and teaching. Indeed, since this initiative started, 19 pupils have now moved out of the SEN sector and back into the mainstream sector (Table 35).

Junior	2	Learning Support Unit (LSU) in Mainstream
Middle	5	Mainstream
	1	Specialist Placement
Senior	12	Further Education Colleges

Table 35: Number of students returning to Mainstream Education

Finally, although this evaluation and planning cycle has been a success, it is also recommended that mechanisms are put in place to ensure that:

- By June 2019 the school will be able to complete a statistical analysis of pupil data and set realistic whole school targets for improvement;
- The majority of lessons observed will be deemed very good or outstanding;
- An SLD specific curriculum is further developed from years 3-19;
- That St. Gerard's shares their, framework, outcomes, lessons learned and successes with other schools and the EA to foster continued improvements within the SEN sector.

Benchmarking using Data Boards

E.Crilly and A.George

Abstract

At West Winds Primary, we have been developing ways to track individual pupil progress throughout the year based on PTE/PTM data. We introduced data boards and benchmarking targets to allow teachers to track each child in their class based on a specific target from both literacy and numeracy. The process takes a term to complete and then targets can be changed or continued based on the progress made. At the beginning of each cycle, pupils are positioned on the data boards in relation to the benchmarking target. They can be far from benchmark, close to benchmark, at benchmark or above benchmark. Teachers then choose 3 or 4 individual pupils to focus on and collect pupil work to show progress made. At the end of the cycle, the teachers rearrange their boards reflecting the progress that the children in their class have made. Finally, teachers from each Key Stage come together to share what they have been doing and discuss the evidence collected.

We have found that the creation and development of this process allows the school community to gain a wider picture of pupil ability and not just rely on PTE/PTM data as a method of tracking children.

Key Words: Benchmarking, Data, Tracking, Data Boards

School Profile

The school was opened in 1972. There are seven classes (P1-P7) and a nursery unit. West Winds also has a unit for children with moderate learning difficulties. The current enrolment is 186 pupils, and there are ten full-time and three part-time teachers plus the Principal. The Principal, Vice-Principal and the caring and dedicated teaching staff work closely with the classroom assistants and ancillary staff to provide a happy and secure learning environment, in which all children can reach their full potential and have the opportunity to succeed. It is a central aim of the school to acknowledge each child's talents and encourage his/ her self-respect and self-confidence. The children are encouraged to evaluate their learning just as teachers are continuously evaluating and improving their practice. Staff also enjoy good relations with parents and the wider community and are always striving to promote this

Area for Improvement

Development of a whole school approach to benchmarking of individual pupils in each class.

Baseline Position

In the school year, 2016/17 data boards were introduced as a method of tracking individual pupils in each class. However, first-hand evidence suggests that there was not a lot of progress made in their use.

Evidence showing progress in pupil work varied in quantity across classes.

Changes in testing arrangements from PIE/PIM to PTE/PTM also meant that results could not be tracked to ascertain progress in pupil learning.

Success Criteria

- Teachers can plan for improvement in a specific area with an increased understanding of individual pupil attainment.
- Targeted children make good progress in line with their ability for the given target.
- Co-ordinators and staff work collaboratively to share ideas and progressions.

Actions Taken

- The Literacy and numeracy co-ordinators used PTE/PTM data to identify priority areas and create a first cycle of benchmarking targets.
- Staff organised and recorded benchmarking boards. Using the schemes of work for their year group, they positioned children at far from the benchmark, close to benchmark, benchmark or above benchmark in relation to the class target.
- Teachers selected 3-4 children to specifically target and track progress made.
- Teachers used evidence to rearrange benchmarking boards to show progress made for the whole class.
- Foundation Stage/Key Stage One and Key Stage Two meetings were held to discuss evidence collected, progress made and share reflections on the process using a target evidence sheet.

Conclusion and Recommendations

We have made good progress on developing a whole school approach to benchmarking of individual pupils in each class. The process has become more efficient than it was in the first year of trialing benchmarking. Expectations for evidence collection are clearer for staff. We are looking at a more rounded picture of pupil ability and progress made due to the process as our focus is moving away from the end of year test marks. However, it is also recommended that: the process starts at the very beginning of the first term; that Trusted Colleague Networking and Collegiate Book Discussions are further developed as a process for evidence collection.

Evaluating Authorial Technique in Key Stage Two

M.Torbitt and C.White

Abstract

The purpose of this action research project was to improve our provision for the teaching of authorial technique in Key Stage Two. Analysis of Progress Test English data for Primary Six (PTE 10) highlighted authorial technique as an area which required development. After researching what constitutes authorial technique in Key Stage Two a scheme of work was produced. This initially concentrated on developing children's understanding of and response to authorial techniques, before focusing upon improving the children's use of authorial techniques (also known as literary devices) within their own creative writing.

We specifically worked with one Primary Seven class to trial these changes to the Literacy curriculum. It was found that the actions taken had a positive impact on the children's learning, as evidenced by PTE data and the improved quality of the children's creative written work. The findings from our research have been shared with the Principal and the Literacy Co-ordinator and will be rolled out across Key Stage Two during the academic year 2019/2020.

Key Words: Authorial technique, Literacy Devices, Northern Ireland Curriculum

School Profile

Holy Trinity Primary School is a maintained primary school situated in the neighbourhood renewal area of Upper Springfield in West Belfast. In addition to the mainstream classes, the school has an integrated learning support centre (LSC) with four classes and a nurture unit. Approximately half of the children attending the school come from the immediate area and the rest from the surrounding area. The enrolment is steady, and the school operates at a maximum capacity of approximately 650 pupils. 73% of the children are entitled to free school meals, and 35% of the pupils are on the SEN register. The school holds three ICT awards (The NAACE ICT Mark, The Third Millennium Learning Award and The Digital Schools Award), the Eco-Schools Green Flag and the Marjorie Boxall Award in recognition of the school's positive and nurturing ethos and practice. The school is involved in a Shared Education e-learning partnership with a controlled school and has numerous links with local and global education partners; these links have enabled the school to achieve the International Schools Award.

Area for Improvement

- Teacher knowledge of what constitutes authorial technique in Key Stage Two.
- Pupils' ability to explain and respond to an author's use of language.
- Pupils' implementation of authorial techniques to improve the quality of their creative writing.

Baseline Position

- Following analysis of the class's Primary Six PTE 10 results, the authorial technique was identified as an area in need of development.
- In June 2017 the class participating in this study were found to be 12% below the national average in the category of authorial technique (Table 36).

Reading Comprehension Category	Number of Questions	% Group Correct	National % Correct	Group/National Difference
Authorial Technique	6	41%	53%	-12%
Table 36: PTE 10 Group Report (June 2017)				

- Through teacher discussions, it also became apparent that there was a lack of clarity as to what constitutes authorial technique and consequently an inconsistent approach to the planning and delivery of this aspect of the Literacy curriculum.
- Analysis of the children's creative writing in Primary Six also revealed a narrow vocabulary and little evidence of the implementation of authorial techniques, or literary devices, such as similes, metaphors and idioms

Quality Indicators / Success Criteria

- There is a clear understanding of what authorial techniques should be taught in Key Stage Two.
- When reading, children can identify and respond to the following literary devices: alliteration, simile, metaphor, onomatopoeia, personification, idioms as well as other descriptive and emotive language.
- Primary Seven PTE 11 results will show that most of the children have developed a good understanding of the various literary devices used by an author.
- Children will demonstrate effective use of literary devices in their creative writing.

Actions Taken

- Following analysis of PTE 10 results, a meeting was arranged with the Principal and Literacy Co-ordinator to discuss PTE results and address the provision for authorial technique in the current Primary Six and Primary Seven Schemes of Work.
- It was established that this project would be driven by the Vice-Principal and a Primary Seven teacher with responsibility for Literacy.
- An action plan was produced as part of the School Development Plan.
- The 'Northern Ireland Curriculum', 'Levels of Progression in Communication' and the 'Expansion of the Levels of Progression in Communication across the Curriculum: Primary' were examined to identify what specific references are made to authorial techniques/literary devices.
- Given that we were unable to find any information about authorial technique on the GL Assessment website, an email was sent to GL to inquire about their understanding of what constitutes authorial technique.
- Progress Test English was analysed to clarify which aspects of authorial technique are assessed in Primary Five, Six and Seven.
- Up-to-date resources were sourced (e.g.: PowerPoints, novel extracts, comprehension activities etc) and a bank of lesson plans were created to facilitate the exploration of descriptive and emotive language and teach specific elements of authorial technique: alliteration, simile, metaphor, onomatopoeia, personification, idioms.
- A bank of question stems was produced to act as prompts when exploring literary devices during guided reading lessons and novel work, to ensure that the authorial technique was consistently targeted and learning opportunities were plentiful.
- A series of creative writing lessons were planned to provide children with the opportunity to implement literary devices within their written work.

Progress

Objective 1: Response to Reading

- The initial objective was to improve the children’s ability to identify and respond to literary devices used by an author while reading.
- We explored the writing styles of various authors including Roald Dahl, C. S. Lewis, David Walliams, Marita Conlon-McKenna, Andy Stanton etc.
- Lessons produced as a result of the research were delivered from the beginning of September 2017 and PTE 11 was completed in early February 2018.
- The data produced from PTE 11 indicates that the children made good progress with regards their understanding of authorial technique.

Objective 2: Use of Literary Devices in Creative Writing

- Following PTE 11 assessments in February, the focus shifted to enabling the pupils to incorporate their new learning regarding literary devices into their written work.
- Children had opportunities to demonstrate their understanding of selected authorial techniques when producing character sketches, diary entries, comic strips, etc.
- Children also had opportunities to implement various aspects of the authorial technique in their own creative writing.
- Children enthusiastically engaged in learning activities and made good progress in terms of their ability to use a variety of literary devices to good effect when writing creatively.

Evidence

Data Action Impact

The data from PTE 11 regarding authorial technique was analysed and compared to the results from PTE 10 is shown in Table 37.

PTE	Reading Comprehension Category	Number of Questions	% Group Correct	National % Correct	Group/National Difference
PTE 10	Authorial Technique	6	41%	53%	-12%
PTE 11	Authorial Technique	6	40%	45%	-5%

Table 37: Authorial Technique (PTE 10 / PTE 11)

- In this period of approximately five months, the same cohort of children is currently 5% below the ‘National Percentage Correct’, which is an increase of 7% from the previous year’s results.
- It should also be noted that for PTE 11, the ‘National Percentage Correct’ is 45% compared to 53% in the previous year, indicating the increasing difficulty of this aspect of the test.

Voice Action Impact

- The pupils were asked for their feedback, self-assessments and peer assessments at regular intervals during this project to indicate how they viewed their understanding of literary devices was progressing.
- Pupil responses were very favourable. As the project progressed, the children developed a greater love of reading and came to thoroughly enjoy reading whole novels. They were much more engaged with their reading material and actively searched for examples of literary devices with independence while reading aloud to each other. Through exploring the author’s use of language, pupils found a greater appreciation of what they were reading in terms of their understanding of an author’s use of humour and

demonstrated great empathy with the characters. They enjoyed working cooperatively in pairs and groups when responding to the material that they had read.

- In terms of their writing, pupils recognised that their ideas were more focused and that their ability to express themselves had greatly improved as a result of an increasingly varied vocabulary gained through exploring the language and techniques of other writers. When carrying out self-assessment, pupils were able to identify the progress they had made, which motivated them to achieve further. Through peer assessment, the children were able to acknowledge and celebrate improvements made by others.

Collegiate Book Discussion

- In September pupils produced a piece of independent writing to act as a baseline for this aspect of the research.
- A sample group of children were then selected to enable progress to be monitored at a variety of ability levels.
- Samples of work gathered showed that at all ability levels pupils had made very good progress in terms of their ability to express themselves with greater clarity. They had also developed a more extensive vocabulary and could more effectively incorporate literary devices into their written work.
- The core steering group (Principal, Literacy Coordinator and authors) for this action research project met to evaluate the impact of this programme of work. All members of the group agreed that the pupils made substantial progress, evidenced by both PTE data and the quality of the independent writing produced.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The NIC and associated documentation for Key Stage Two does not make any specific reference to authorial technique, whereas at Key Stage Three specific references are made. As a result, schools are taking their lead from a standardised test rather than the NIC. None the less, this action research has had a positive impact on the children's ability to identify and respond to literary devices used by authors, thereby improving their inferential reading skills. The research has also had a positive impact upon the standard of the children's creative writing with pupils extending their vocabulary and making effective use of literary devices including simile, alliteration, metaphor etc. There are, however, recommendations to continue improvements in this area. In particular:

- For the Scheme of Work for Primary Seven to be updated in light of this research;
- For the authors of this report to provide professional development for Key Stage 2 staff;
- To disseminate our findings and recommendations and ensure that authorial techniques are being taught and explored appropriately throughout this Key Stage;
- To examine the Primary Five and Primary Six Literacy Schemes of Work and make the necessary adjustments to ensure authorial technique and literary devices;
- To develop a portfolio of resources that will be made available to staff which will include teacher annotated texts, question prompts, ideas for activities, samples of work, etc;
- To introduce 'Trusted Colleague Network' in order to disseminate good practice and develop teacher confidence within this area of Literacy.

Evaluating the Impact of Thinking Skills Strategies at Key Stage 4

J.O'Neill and L.Corbett

Abstract

This research aimed to investigate the impact that the development of thinking skills has had on the performance of our Key Stage 4 students as they progress through the two-year GCSE course. The impact of the development of thinking skills on the acquisition and development of literacy skills development at KS4 is also described. Data was gathered and judged at Assessment Points throughout each year, with pupil voice, trusted colleague network and collegiate book discussions feedback being generated by departments.

Key Words: Action Research, Thinking Skills. Trusted Colleague Network, Collegiate Book Discussions

School Profile

Oakgrove Integrated College is situated within the grounds of Stradreagh Park, Derry~ L'Derry, on a 37-acre rural site. We moved into the new building in 2004. The current enrolment is 674 pupils, 548 in Key Stages 3 and 4 and 127 at Post 16 who follow a range of academic and vocational courses. Derry and Strabane District Council area has been designated as per the multiple deprivation measure 2017 to hold 5 of the top 10 areas for social deprivation, with the most deprived area in Northern Ireland being East within Derry and Strabane council area. The college is all-inclusive, all ability in nature. The socio-economic demographic of the student population is such that 54% have entitlement to FSM. Of the 674 pupils currently enrolled, 241 (36%) are on the SEN register, 72 of whom hold a formal statement of Special Educational needs. Key stage 4 students account for 101 of the students on the school's SEN register, distributed evenly between years 11 and 12. Approximately 18% of year 11 pupils and 26% of year 12 are on the SEN register on account of Dyslexia / SpLD.

At the time of writing, the religious balance of the college is 441 of pupils from the Catholic tradition, 155 from the Protestant and 79 from other traditions. The ethnic and cultural mix greatly enriches the college, we have embraced the need to welcome and ease the transition for pupils for whom English is not their first language and so have employed a teacher part time with responsibility for working with these pupils and their parents. The pupils come from 28 different feeder primary schools and travel from a wide catchment area which includes Strabane to the West and Limavady to the East.

Area for Improvement

To develop thinking skills as part of the Quality of Provision area for the school development plan, with a view to improving pupil outcomes at Keys Stage 4 and upskilling pupils to be better thinkers, therefore producing more capable AS/A2 pupils.

Given that formal statements of SEN and additional adult support / Learning Support Teaching are no longer provided (externally funded) for students with a diagnosis of SpLD/ Dyslexia, greater responsibility lies with the school and classroom teacher to ensure that the needs of these learners are met through utilisation of existing school-based resources. The contribution made by the use of the Thinking Skills Programme to literacy development, a key outcome which underpins academic achievement and student retention at KS5, is a specific area of interest which may have implications for SEN provision for SpLD / Dyslexia learners at KS4.

Baseline Position

The baseline position will be ascertained from Year 8 standardised test results (of the year 11 cohort) and year 11 standardised test results. Standardised test scores for the current year 11 and 12 SpLD / Dyslexia pupils, recorded over the last academic year, indicate literacy development, in the absence of the Thinking Skills Programme, for these pupils over an academic year of three terms. Baseline literacy scores for the same pupils for the current academic year are also available. Currently, only a significant minority of staff specifically address thinking skills through Skills and Personal Capabilities at KS4.

Quality Indicators / Success Criteria

- The majority of pupils at Key Stage 4 will use thinking skills regularly to improve their learning and understanding.
- In comparison to the 2017-2018 academic year (in which students were not using the Thinking Skills Programme), a greater increase in literacy-related standardised test scores will be observed for KS4 SpLD / Dyslexia students for the current academic year during which the students are actively engaged in the use of Thinking Tools across all subject areas.

Actions Taken

- A number of staff who expressed an interest in being part of a drive team were giving an introduction to the techniques in June 2018. They trialled what they had been taught and then shared their experiences with the whole staff at the beginning of the school year (2018/2019).
- All staff were given training on thinking skills at the end of September 2018.
- All Departments started to use the techniques in their teaching, specifically targeting Key Stage 4.
- Standardised scores were analysed to determine the change in standardised scores for literacy for the current KS4 pupils over the 2017-2018 academic year.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Progress will be monitored by:

- analysing assessment data over the two years.
- Pupils will have four Assessment Points throughout the year two of which will be year 11 Christmas and summer exams; one will be year 12 mocks, GCSE module results and final GCSE exam results at the end of two years.

Results of standardised tests of literacy will also be examined at the end of the 2018-2019 academic year, and the change for each KS4 SpLD / Dyslexia learner will be determined. The change in literacy scores will be compared to that obtained for each pupil during the 2017-2018 academic year. This will be used in part to determine the contribution made by the Thinking Skills Programme to literacy development at KS4.

Pupil feedback will also be gathered over the two years through a series of pupil questionnaires and focus groups. KS4 SEN pupils (for SpLD / Dyslexia) will also provide feedback through questionnaires and focus groups on how they considered their engagement with the Thinking Skills programme contributed to their literacy development.

Collegiate book discussions will take place during the two-year cycle within departments. All departments will specifically look for evidence of thinking skills being delivered to and used by pupils.

Effective Questioning at Malone College

Francine Magill

Abstract

Effective questioning is one of the keys to providing high-quality teaching and learning within the classroom. This Action based research allowed teachers time to reflect upon their questioning techniques, to establish a questioning routine within their classroom and plan within their lessons higher order questions.

Key Words: Effective Questioning, Blooms Taxonomy, Higher Order Thinking Skills

School Profile

Malone College is a vibrant learning community which places quality education and pupil well-being at the heart of all activities. Our aim is for all of our students to achieve their potential and to prepare them to thrive in a rapidly changing world. At the heart of our school are our students. Our curriculum and extensive range of extra-curricular activities offer every student the opportunity to flourish, to develop existing talents and to discover new ones. We are committed to excellence and have an unrelenting determination for everyone to succeed. We also encourage and expect all of our pupils to become independent learners and to develop their leadership skills, so they can fully participate in our rich extra-curricular programme. This facilitates a sense of belonging, a sense of pride both in our school and themselves, and supports them in achieving their full potential. Developing excellent attitudes to learning in its widest sense and fostering respect, courtesy, consideration and friendship are central to our ethos and our school community. We also have excellent partnerships with parents and our local community and greatly value their contributions. All students are valued, and their loyalty and desire to succeed is reflected in the high number of students returning to undertake Post 16 study. We are delighted with our recent academic and pastoral achievements.

Area for Improvement

To develop questioning skills within the classroom and to establish an effective and consistent questioning routine throughout the school.

Baseline Position

The area for improvement was identified in the following way: -

- Malone College had completed an action-based research cycle entitled 'The Four Phase Lesson'. Connected to each phase were indicators of excellence that gauged the standard of the teaching. These were used as a self-evaluation tool by the staff, through which they were required to rate themselves out of 10 against each indicator.
- The actions taken during that three-year cycle improved all the indicators of excellence
- At the end of the three-year cycle, the data from the indicators of excellence were analysed to ascertain areas for development. The data indicated that effective questioning was an area from improvement
- Staff and pupils were also asked to complete a baseline questionnaire in June 2017. This created staff and pupil voice data. [VAI]

Quality Indicators / Success Criteria

- Teachers will use effective questioning skills within the classroom which will allow the majority of pupils to improve their thinking skills.
- An effective and consistent questioning routine will be established throughout the school which will allow the majority of pupils to improve their thinking skills.
- The baseline survey will improve by a minimum of 2%.

Actions Taken

- Research conducted on effective questioning by QTL leader.
- A questionnaire was distributed to pupils and staff in June 2017.
- Four areas of development identified within questioning:
 1. Agree, build, challenge
 2. Cold calling
 3. Wait time
 4. No calling out
- Poster designed and displayed in every classroom as a memory aid for staff.
- Action plan developed.
- Term one - Pose, Pause, pounce, bounce [PPPB] strategy to be used.
- Term two – No opt-out technique introduced. Four areas of questioning and PPPB embedded.
- Term three – Introduction of higher cognitive questions using Bloom’s taxonomy.
- Keyring resource with question prompts, based on Bloom’s taxonomy, given to all staff
- August 2017 - Effective questioning workshop 1 - outlining the plan for the year and introducing the four areas for questioning and PPPB. The results of the questionnaire were shared with the staff.
- Trusted colleague observations in November and December 2017.
- January 2018: Effective questioning workshop 2 – Where are we now? No opt out
- March 2018: Effective questioning workshop 3 – Sharing good practice, introduction to Bloom's taxonomy, higher cognitive questioning what these are and how to use them in the classroom

Progress

- By the end of term 1, through the use of Trusted colleague networks [TCN], it was evident that teachers still needed time to embed the strategies that were introduced.
- Staff had also raised the concerns about pupils who opted out of answering questions by stating they did not know the answer or shrugging their shoulders. Consequently, the action plan was amended and during workshop 2, in January, the no opt-out technique was introduced to the staff.
- At this stage, the staff had made satisfactory progress towards meeting the success criteria.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Questioning skills and a questioning routine is now well established throughout the school. Through conversations with staff, many of them believe that a lot of pupils thinking skills have improved. The VAI has increased by at least 2% or more. However, the on-going Industrial action has inhibited a whole school overview because class observations, outside of the Trusted Colleague Network, have not occurred. Moving forward: Blooms taxonomy language will be introduced to the pupils; Bloom's posters will be displayed within all classrooms as a memory aid. Pupils will also be encouraged to think about: the type of question they have been asked; the type of questions they are asking; the type of question that is missing from the lesson. Assessments will also contain the full range of Bloom's taxonomy questions.

Evaluating the Impact of a Differentiated Approach to the Planning and Delivery of Support Classes in Literacy and Numeracy

G.O'Connor

Abstract

This report describes a differentiated approach to the planning and delivery of support lessons in Literacy and Numeracy for Year 9 and 10 pupils. The delivery of these support lessons followed a cycle of five sessions alternating between Literacy and Numeracy, culminating in a joint Literacy and Numeracy project that improved the quality of literacy and numeracy among these year groups.

Key Words: Growth, Sustainability, Community Confidence, Ten Point Plan, integration

School Profile

The Irish Christian Brothers founded Mary's grammar school in 1866. The original school was on Divis St in the lower Falls Road area of Belfast. In 1929, a new secondary school was built in the nearby Barrack Street. The students were drawn mainly from the surrounding district but also began to attract some from across Belfast and wider afield.

Due to the growing student population, it was decided in the 1960s to build a new school. This opened in a site off the Glen Road in 1968. The Barrack Street campus remained in use until 1998 when all students were accommodated in the greatly extended school on the Glen Road.

The school was originally entirely run by the Irish Christian Brothers, but in the late twentieth century their numbers declined, and the school is now entirely staffed by lay teachers. It is now under the trusteeship of the Edmund Rice Schools Trust (NI).

Area for Improvement

- To test pupils using PTM/PTE in order to identify specific areas of Literacy and Numeracy that require intervention and support - Literacy: English Skills, Reading Comprehension, Spelling, Punctuation, Grammar, Comprehension Narrative and Comprehension Non-Narrative; Numeracy: Number, Algebra, Shape and Space & Handling Data).
- To train staff on the interpretation of detailed information depicted in class profiles. These profiles identify areas of strength and weakness in Literacy and Numeracy and will be produced and provided to all staff.
- To develop tailored programmes of study for each form class to allow pupils in that class to improve on their pre-identified areas of weakness as identified from PTM/PTE.
- To support classes to best suit the overall needs of individual classes. Group classes accordingly and provide pupils with additional support using subject mentors from the senior school.

Baseline Position

- No differentiated approach to the planning and delivery of support lessons in Literacy and Numeracy.
- Class profiles produced from data taken from PTE/PTM testing showed variation in the ability levels across form classes in each of the identified areas under Literacy and Numeracy.
- Evaluation of current Learning Support (LS) Programme (via Pupil and Staff Voice) highlighted that teachers of LS found that the delivery of a 'one size fits all' programme of study in Numeracy to form classes was not ideal as these classes are set for Maths and not for LS.

- This evaluation also highlighted the need for additional classroom support, especially for those pupils who displayed more significant difficulties in areas of Literacy and Numeracy.

Quality Indicators / Success Criteria

- All Programmes of Study completed which are designed to meet the needs of individual Year 9 and 10 form classes.
- Evidence that areas identified as weak through testing of PTE/PTM improved in follow up testing in June 2018.
- The majority of pupil and staff feedback concerning the enhanced level of pupil support is positive.
- The majority of feedback from senior mentors concerning their involvement in supporting pupils during LS classes is positive.

Actions Taken

May/June 2017

- Completion of online PTE/PTM and Cat4 assessments in May 2017.
- Training for staff on interpreting the skills-based data for PTE/PTM in June 2017.
- LS-Team (Year 9 and 10 LS teachers, Literacy and Numeracy Co-ordinators, HODs for English and Maths, LS Tutors and Curriculum VP) met in June 2017 to examine data, set targets, identify pupil learning groups within classes, agree teaching timetable and devise resources for Term 1.

August 2017

- Lesson materials distributed to LS teachers for discussion and review.
- Year 13 student mentors recruited and trained as part of the induction programme.
- Year 13s assigned LS classes.

October 2017

- Core LS team met and reviewed lessons from the first half term and shared resources for the second half term as there was a change of focus - Year 9s changed from Numeracy to Literacy and Year 10s from Literacy to Numeracy. Subject specialists/LS Tutors supported non-specialists.

December 2017

- An interim review of LS Programme via Staff and Pupil Voice exercises carried out by Literacy and Numeracy Co-ordinators.
- Core LS team met and planned the delivery of Term 2 lessons.

March 2018

- Core LS team were due to meet and agree on the Term 3 programme, a joint Literacy/Numeracy project.

June 2018

- Evaluation of LS Programme for Years 9 and 10 with follow-up action to be taken to refine and improve for 2018/19.
- Analysis of new PTE/PTM and Cat 4 data to track improvements in target skill areas.

Ongoing

- Principal/Curriculum VP monitor LS classes through classroom visits and book looks.

Progress

Good progress has been made on the priorities identified. These outcomes are based on the following evidence:

- Book looks were used to assess the quality of work being produced. This showed that all Programmes of Study were adequately designed to meet the need of the classes. The work produced by the pupils was of a good standard and feedback, and support had clearly been provided where necessary.
- Due to industrial action and the resulting lack of opportunity for staff to meet, there was insufficient time available to plan and prepare for the joint literacy and numeracy project at the end of the cycle. This will be addressed in the next year of the programme.
- Minutes from meetings with LS staff showed how their feedback was sought. It was evident that ideas were shared on how the programme could be effectively delivered and support best utilised for the students.
- Results from PTM/PTE showed overall improvement in the areas of weakness as identified through the initial testing phase.
- Feedback from the pupils, including the senior mentors, showed that pupils felt they were making progress on the areas of weakness initially highlighted in the PTM/PTE data.

First-hand evidence gathered to evaluate the progress made

- PTE/PTM results - comparison of standard age scores in the various areas of PTE/PTM from initial testing to the final testing phase.
- Book looks – assessing the quality of pupil work produced against the objectives set out in the Programmes of Study.
- Samples of the programmes used to check their suitability for the different form classes.
- Feedback from staff and pupils, including senior pupils used as mentors, about pupil progress and to suggest further adaptations that could be made to improve the programme.

Conclusions and Recommendations

We will ensure that adequate time is set aside to plan for and properly deliver the joint literacy and numeracy project at the end of the teaching cycle. All programmes of study will be reviewed in light of the new data from PTE/PTM June 2018. The programme will be rolled out to Year 8 for 2018-19. We also plan to create a forum where subject mentors and LS staff may meet to discuss and share strategies for supporting students.

Evaluating the Impact of strategies to improve Mental Maths at Braniel Primary School

G.Miller

Abstract

Self-evaluation tools were used to improve the performance of children in Mental Maths. Following initial data analysis, a timeline for self-evaluation was drawn up with a focus on Mental Maths including Trusted Colleague Networking, Collegiate Book Discussions, Staff Development in the teaching of Mental Maths strategies and Mental Maths Classroom Learning Evaluations. To date, the school has made good progress and will continue to develop this area.

Key Words: Mental Maths, Data, Improvement, Collegiate Book Discussion, Trusted Colleague Networking

School Profile

Braniel Primary School is situated on a large site on the edge of Braniel estate. The children come from both the immediate surroundings and from further afield. The enrolment of the school currently stands at 467 children within the primary school; the enrolment in the Nursery Unit stands at 78. In the Monitoring Inspection, March 2017, key findings were that 'Self-evaluation is a high priority for all of the staff with a clear self-evaluation time-line written into the school development plan. The board of governors has established a self-evaluation sub-committee to whom the literacy co-ordinator has presented the findings of the recent collegiate book discussion which focused on the children's reading journals across all the key stages. Furthermore, classroom observations carried out by coordinators and teachers, with resultant feedback, also inform well teachers' self-reflection and professional development.

Area for Improvement

The area for improvement identified is Mental Maths, the aim of which was to develop the children's quick recall of maths facts and develop their mental calculation strategies in order for the children to improve their Mental Maths Standardised Test Score Stanine Position between April 2017 and April 2018.

Baseline Position

In April 2017 76.8% of children in years 4 – 7 were scoring in Stanine 5 or above.

Quality Indicators / Success Criteria

- All teaching staff will participate in Mental Maths training led by the Numeracy Co-ordinator.
- Numeracy co-ordinator Classroom Learning Evaluations will demonstrate evidence of good teaching of Mental Maths strategies and a good level of active participation of the pupils in Mental Maths lessons.
- All teaching staff will participate in Trusted Colleague Networking in Mental Maths.
- All teaching staff will participate in Collegiate Book Discussions on Mental Maths.
- All classes will improve the number of pupils scoring in Stanine position 5 or above by 4% by April 2018.

Actions Taken

- The Self-Evaluative Timeline (SET) was drawn up and shared with Teaching Staff.
- Mental Maths standardised tests were carried out for each child in Years 4-7 in April 2017.
- In October 2017, The Numeracy co-ordinator led staff training on the areas of 'Quick Recall' and 'Mental Calculation Strategies' with all teaching staff.
- In October 2017, all staff took part in the Trusted Colleague Network initiative with their partner teacher with a focus on Mental Maths strategies. The Quality Indicators included;
 - The Pupils will use age-appropriate mathematical language to discuss their thinking.
 - The Pupils will participate in a whole class Mental Maths session with confidence and enjoyment.
 - The Pupils will be able to suggest a range of strategies to solve mental calculations at an age-appropriate level.
- In November 2017, a Collegiate Book Discussion was held with all of the teaching staff.
- In January 2018, further staff training on the use of Maths Recovery Strategies was led by the Numeracy Co-ordinator with all teaching staff.
- In February 2018, a Collegiate Book Discussion was held with all of the teaching staff. The quality indicators included:
 - The children can use a range of appropriate mathematical language.
 - Children are experiencing opportunities to engage in collaborative learning.
 - Children have opportunities to make connections with their learning in different areas.
- In March 2018, the Numeracy co-ordinator carried out Mental Maths Learning Evaluations to assess the improvement in the teaching of Mental Maths.

Progress made on Priorities

- Since October 2017, 100% of staff members in FS, KS1 and KS2 have participated in TCN within their year groups. As a result of this networking, staff reflected and identified a number of strategies and areas within Mental Maths to develop, including; greater use of a range of questioning styles. Allowing time for children to explain their methods and strategies. The range of individual, paired, group activities.
- Since October 2017, 100% of staff members in FS, KS1 and KS2 participated in the CBD. The success criteria – Children are participating in a daily 10-minute Mental Maths session.
 - Children have opportunities to use a range of Mental Maths equipment.
 - Children can use a range of Mental Maths strategies to solve problems.
 - Children experience a variety of 'settings' for developing Mental Maths skills.The success criteria were met.
- Since February 2018, 100% of staff members in FS, KS1 and KS2 have participated in the CBD. The success criteria – children, are involved in a range of open-ended mathematical activities which develop a variety of thinking skills and personal capabilities.
 - The children can use a range of appropriate mathematical language.
 - Children are experiencing opportunities to engage in collaborative learning.
 - Children have opportunities to make connections with their learning in different areas.The success criteria were met.
- Since March 2018, 75% of staff members in FS, KS1 and KS2 participated in observations. The Numeracy co-ordinator found that the pupils were very engaged during Mental Maths sessions. The pupils used a range of Mental Maths resources, demonstrating familiarity, confidence and enjoyment when doing so. Two-thirds of the lessons

observed drew upon Maths Recovery ideas introduced during staff training sessions, meaning children were provided with a range of settings to reinforce key mathematical skills or quick recall of facts. There was an emphasis on the development and exploration of Mental Maths strategies with good use of open-ended questioning.

Between April 2017 and April 2018 there has been a noticeable improvement in Stanine test scores except for the Year 7 Classes (Table 38).

Class	% in Stanine 5 or Above April 2017	% in Stanine 5 or above April 2018	Difference
Year 4a	82.1	85.7	3.6%
Year 4b	86.7	93.3	6.6%
Year 5a	72.0	72.0	0%
Year 5b	73.1	80.8	7.7%
Year 6a	75.0%	79.2%	4.2%
Year 6b	83.3	83.3	0%
Year 7a	56.6	56.6	0%
Year 7b	78.9	68.4	-10.5%

Table 38: Stanine Test Scores (2017-2018)

Conclusions and Recommendations

In conclusion, the school has made good progress. All staff have participated in TCN and CBD to share good practice of Mental Maths. The Learning Evaluations confirmed this good practice. While we were effective in increasing the children scoring in Stanine 5 or above across Year 4 to Year 7 by an overall improvement of 2.1%, some of the individual classes and year groups made a greater improvement than others.

Numeracy will continue to be identified as a priority on the School Development Plan. Areas of Numeracy will continue to be a focus for TCN and CBD. Further work in the attainment of classes and year groups highlighted by the assessments that declined or showed no improvement will be undertaken.

Active Based Research in Literacy with a Focus on Comprehension Skills

C.Murphy

Abstract

Following a survey that was administered to the school community, there was a desire for greater pupil independence in Literacy tasks. Although the school has achieved above the national average in all areas in Literacy, the lowest areas over the last number years have been traditionally tied in with comprehension (Inference and Authorial Technique areas of PTE). In this regard, it was decided to put in place actionable plans to enhance comprehension strategies throughout the school.

Key Words: Authorial Technique, Literacy, Comprehension, Pupil Independence

School Profile

Holy Family is a rural Catholic primary school with 209 pupils. The school was found to be outstanding in its last general inspection in 2009. The school undertook the first new format sustaining improvement inspection in December 2016 and was found that it 'continues to demonstrate a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interests of all the learners. The ETI will continue to monitor how the school sustains improvement.' The teaching and Learning in Literacy was the area of focus and assessment procedures were commented as being 'outstanding.' The inspectorate agreed with the area of focus for Literacy and felt it could be expanded to allow another year of development. The areas of achievement were already high, so the percentage of improvement was set low (+1%) and was felt that building comprehension skills could be a means of promoting diversity of tasks in Literacy and other topics such as World Around Us. Against national benchmarking the school achieving higher than average. 96.87% of pupils achieve level 2 or above in Communication in KS1, whereas 100% achieved Level 4 or above for KS2. Stanine bandings also show clear improvement throughout the school.

Area for Improvement

- Comprehension skills in with a focus on Authorial Techniques and Complex Inference.
- An improvement of 1% in PTE 2017/2018.

Baseline Position

Classes are appearing above the national average in all aspects of Literacy so looking at the lowest area of overachievement rather than underachievement in Literacy, thus, the level of improvement set low (+1%).

Quality Indicators / Success Criteria

- Complex Inference – 56.23% (+1%)
- Monitoring through book scoops, CBD and TCN.

Actions Taken

- Develop last years teaching by showing examples of good practice gathered by the coordinator (including task from last inspection and examples of levelling).
- Develop understanding by moving onto further comprehension strategies (Clarifying, Questioning, etc.).

- Distribution of comprehension skills workbooks for Primary 1, 2 and three teachers (Providing examples of format).
- New Library books purchased and to be arranged in Library for Key Stages.
- Digital library system rolled out for all classes in the school to allow monitoring of reading books, extended beyond Primary 7 from last year).
- New class reading novels purchased for Primary 4, 5, 6 and 7 to be used by pupils. Other readers and books to be purchased for remaining classes in 2017/18 through Scholastic book fair funds.

Evidence

- The sources of evidence included Trusted Colleague Networking between KS1 and KS2 teachers and the Literacy coordinator sharing his techniques with three other teachers.
- CBD occurred in term one looking at improving comprehension by developing a breadth of comprehension skills.
- In term 3 CBD occurred looking at the development of comprehension.
- Samples were taken from teachers, and a good practice folder was created for the staffroom to exhibit work and share with other members of staff.
- Data from PTE 2017-2018 was used in comparison with the results from 2016-2017.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Analysis of 2017-2018 data showed that the level achieved was 59.82%, 2.59% above target. Moving forward using CBD, TCN and discussion with ETI it has been agreed that strong standards in Literacy could be used to develop quality in World Around Us. A future focus will be to look at writing to develop topics and Science experiments in WAU by looking at procedural and instructional writing initially. Accompanying this will be classes having individual class targets relating to their own data.

The Implementation and Achievement of the UNICEF Rights Respecting School Silver Award

L.McBride

Abstract

Our vision is to take Strangford College to outstanding performance in all areas. We want to create a world-class, community-connected 21st century School. Participation in this case study/school improvement work has contributed to delivering measurable outcomes for the pupils, including improved outcomes in key skills, GCSE results and pupil attendance. Additionally, we have identified appropriate priorities for future work and developed and used innovative self-evaluative techniques.

Key Words: Rights Respecting School Award, United Nations, Rights Aware

School Profile

Strangford Integrated College offers students of different abilities, religions, and cultural backgrounds, the opportunity to be educated together in a caring, trusting, and inclusive community, which seeks to maximise their full potential and celebrate their achievement.

Area for Improvement

- To continue to participate in the Shared Education Ards Peninsula Hub and continue to increase the number of students involved in the Shared Education Programme.
- The College has achieved the Recognition of Commitment and will now begin to implement the action plan to achieve Silver status.

Baseline Position

The College entered into a Shared Education partnership with Glastry and St. Columba's is on the Ards Peninsula. Shared Education is the vehicle to help us achieve the RRSA in our schools. Glastry is working towards their Silver award, like ourselves. St. Columba's, on the other hand, are a Gold College and are acting in a mentoring role to help them keep their current Gold accreditation. The College has an active Student Council, a good standard of Pastoral Care and a relevant and informing Citizenship and Personal Development Programme. The College sees the RRSA as an opportunity to further the best practice that we are already engaged in and allow the students and staff to have recognition for the work that they are doing.

Quality Indicators / Success Criteria

- The school uses RRSA to underpin its vision for school improvement.
- Becoming a sustainable Rights Respecting School is included in the school's strategic planning.
- Policies and practice are reviewed with reference to the Convention.
- The school effectively promotes the values and principles of the Convention.
- Most staff and young people are aware of some of the articles of the Convention.
- Assemblies displays and at least two curriculum areas provide effective opportunities for learning about the Convention.
- Charters or agreements based on the Convention, which help everyone to understand rights, are introduced into all classrooms and the wider school.
- Most young people hold clear views about their learning and wellbeing. They are encouraged and supported to express their views appropriately and are involved in decisions that affect their lives in school.

Progress

The school uses RRSA to underpin its vision for school improvement

The Principal and senior leaders describe the school's vision in terms of rights-respecting values. [Becoming a sustainable Rights Respecting School is included in the school's strategic planning.](#) [Policies and practice are reviewed with reference to the Convention](#)

RRSA is in the school development plan (SDP) as a clear priority with allocated personnel and time. Alternatively, the SDP specifically references development towards being a Rights Respecting School. There are some links to the Convention in other areas of the SDP. Policies and practice are reviewed with reference to the Convention.

The school effectively promotes the values and principles of the Convention

The Principal and senior leaders demonstrate a good understanding of the Convention and have taken steps to ensure all adults, children and young people learn about it.

Most staff and young people are aware of some of the articles of the Convention

The school can show that the majority of pupils and staff interviewed can briefly describe some of the Convention's articles and how these affect children's lives, as well as understand that the Convention applies to every child, everywhere, all the time.

Assemblies, displays and at least two curriculum areas provide effective opportunities for learning about the Convention

Some assemblies show a focus on the Convention. Displays about RRSA and the Convention are prominent. Lesson plans covering the Convention are available for at least two curriculum areas. [Charters or agreements based on the Convention, which help everyone to understand rights, are introduced into all classrooms and the wider school](#)

Charters or agreements based upon the Convention are in the majority of all classrooms visited and in public areas. Children and young people interviewed can explain how they were created, show ownership of them, and demonstrate what their importance is. Staff and pupils interviewed can explain how the charter is used in school.

Most young people hold clear views about their learning and wellbeing. They are encouraged and supported to express their views appropriately and are involved in decisions that affect their lives in school

The large majority of pupils and staff interviewed can give examples of how young people can express their opinions, have been involved in decisions about their learning and wellbeing, and understand this to be a right and not a "permission".

Evidence

- Improvement of results with any 5 GCSE rising to 97% (2017) from 69% (2015). SESP funding of Prince's Trust and OCN RE continues to surmount educational outcomes.
- RRS has improved attendance steadily from 2014 (92.6%)/ to 2015 (92.5%), 2016 (92.9%), 2017 (93%) and 2018 (94%).
- Use of CRC articles to inform Departmental Development Planning and Pastoral Planning (Sept 2018 onwards).
- A new charter was drawn up in consultation with staff, students, parents and stakeholder; embracing Articles 3 & 29.
- A Whole-school Literacy and Numeracy policies ratified by the Board of Governors.
- ROC is displayed, achieved and promoted to all stakeholders.
- The Behaviour for Learning policy & cycle has been developed with consideration of Articles 3, 12 & 28.
- Policies continue to be structured around the CRC articles and their attitudes. Evident through: SEN Policy (Articles 28 & 29), Homework Policy Yr 8 -14 (Article 28) & Child Protection (Article 3). Such practice is implemented upon ratified policies since commencing with RRSA.
- Joint Anti-Bullying Policy with Shared Education partner schools.

- Embed and develop RRS and value of SESP through staff training (SDD, INSETs & Twilights – annually). Staff actively value RRS through Shared Education planning, shared class and evaluations.
- TPL (28/8/18) for all staff embraces RRS attitudes and values: Developing Middle Management, SEN and Behaviour Management, Controversial Issues & Thinking Classroom.
- School Council, act as the Steering Group facilitated by JFY and regularly inform their form class of RRS and CRC conventions.
- Assemblies (whole-school & year group) focus on CRC values/ attitudes. Visual communication through noticeboards, UNICEF poster. Social media and website ensure all stakeholders are aware
- The launch of a new school website – to go live in August 2018 and will include a tab for RRSA.
- Classroom charter ensures ethos in all classrooms is consistently in line with 2U and 3Is as well as reflecting whole-school values & 6 focus rights.
- Subjects are embracing CRC and RRS: LLW, PD, Learning to Learn, English & MFL.
- Increase in student council from 14 representatives (2015) to 24 representatives providing a greater platform for student voice in the development of College.
- Continue to tailor our curriculum to our students’ needs and avail of SESP funding for Prince’s Trust and OCN RE (Silver/ Burgundy pathways – both at KS4/ KS5).
- Whole-school literacy levels and reading levels are enhanced through our Accelerated Reader programme.
- Some funding for the above programmes is being supplied through the Shared Education Fund.
- Whole-school numeracy levels and skills have developed from the implementation of My Maths – student data showed a strong correlation between consistent engagement with My Maths task and a C+ grade.
- All staff, pupils and governors went through the process of identifying articles, with particular relevance to our College (September 2015).
- Staff and students have been actively involved in the drawing up of a classroom charter, in consultation with the School Council.
- INSET SDD day training provided to all staff on RRS and SESP.
- Minutes of Board of Governor meetings demonstrate that RRS is a regular item on the agenda; with discussion and expressed interest from all members.
- Anne Lyner has been appointed as an RRS and SESP coordinator; taking a keen interest in the role with attendance at beach cleans and aiding policy and procedures.
- RRS has featured on SLT agenda regularly.
- 6th form residentials to Lorne and Corrymeela allow students to explore integrated ethos and discussing RRS; facilitating students’ awareness and voice.
- A £3000 grant has been secured through IEF for building up our Ethos awareness during the next academic year. Ethos and RRSA days will be provided for Yr 8, 10, 12, 13 & 14.
- De-escalation training organised for all staff for August 2018.
- SLT Ethos and Well-being facilitated a Voice Workshop to empower well-being of staff (May 2018). The use of incentives, staff luncheon, SDD day for well-being and staff draws modelling Rights Respecting language and attitudes to cascade to students.
- Two sessions with Inspire Care Call delivered to staff.
- We are working towards the ‘Excellence in Integration Award’ which is closely aligned with RRS and enhances the integrated ethos and position of the College in the local community.
- Charters in all classrooms, public areas and on college social media platforms.
- Responses from students regarding the charters have informed the Behaviour for Learning policy and cycle which practitioners and support staff model.

- Responses from student and staff questionnaires indicated such. e.g. Y8 students stated 'they enjoyed learning about their rights (80%)' / 'feel safe at the college (87%) & 'they feel adults in the school treat them with respect (97%).'.
- Primary school students are transferring to our College to ensure that they feel safe and comfortable.
- Individual welcome meeting for parents and students transferring introduced this year in addition to induction evening.
- Anti-bullying ambassadors (April 2018) established a pupil-led initiative that believes, 'young people should be celebrated for their contribution to society and given the opportunity to grow and develop and to engage in social action as early in-life as possible.' Ambassadors are led by our lead Pastoral Care and a team of ambassadors.
- Adoption UK delivered training to all staff (August 2017) raising profile of LAC children within the College. Fundraising activity followed.

Conclusions and Recommendations

- Continue to look for ways to incorporate an explicit commitment to education for global citizenship and sustainable development into the heart of the College mission and purpose.
- Continue to review school policies to ensure that most are explicitly cross-referenced to appropriate rights from the UNCRC.
- Find creative ways of making the articles more visible and high profile on the new College website.
- Build upon the work already started to promote the UNCRC within the curriculum.
- Continue to interrogate data, looking at the improved outcomes for students of the RRSA and the impact of a rights-based approach across the College.
- Continue to develop work and engage in local networks and other Rights Respecting Schools through the Shared Education partnership.
- Aim to engage in RRSA training for Gold to allow us to progress in our journey further.

Supporting Parents with Their Child's Use of Electronic Devices

É.Bennett

Abstract

This initiative came about after parent/teacher meetings at the start of February 2018, when an overwhelming number of parents expressed their concern about the length of time their sons spent focused on an electronic device and/or a computer game. Many felt that it was interfering with their homework, bedtime routine, willingness to take part in other activities and there was an overall concern about the negative impact that these games were having on their child's mood and behaviour within the home.

Key Words: Guidance, Screen-Time, Teacher Involvement

School Profile

Holy Cross Boys' PS is an all-boys primary school based in the Ardoyne area of north Belfast. The school has a pupil enrolment in excess of 430 pupils. Holy Cross Boys' is one of only two all-boys primary schools still in existence today in the north of Ireland. Three-quarters of the pupils are entitled to free school meals. The school received an Outstanding grade in its last ETI Primary Inspection (January 2014). A subsequent Sustaining Improvement Inspection conducted by the ETI (May 2017) concluded that the school "continues to demonstrate a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the learners."

There is a strong culture within the school of pro-actively engaging with parents and the local community through a range of initiatives and programmes established over many years. These have focused on both pastoral and academic matters, recognising the range of factors and influences upon children which can either support or hinder their ability to realise their full potential.

Area for Improvement

Provide support and guidance for parents who are struggling to control and limit the amount of time their children were spending playing online games; a very real problem of modern society.

Baseline Position

An initial survey of parents revealed the following:

- 100% of parents found that overuse of the device impacted negatively on their son's mood.
- 80% of parents found that overuse of the device impacted negatively on their son's attitude to homework.
- 90% of parents found that overuse of the device impacted negatively on their son's general attitude at home.
- 70% of parents found that overuse of the device impacted negatively on their son's willingness to become involved in other activities.
- 60% of parents found that overuse of the device impacted on their son's ability to 'switch off'.
- 70% of parents found that overuse of the device impacted negatively on their son's bedtime routine.

Also, the overwhelming majority of parents were finding that when they tried to curb the time spent on devices by their children, they were facing tantrums, tears and arguments, which was ruining precious family time each day.

Quality Indicators / Success Criteria

The parents completed an initial baseline survey at the start of the programme, and an evaluative survey was completed after a 6-week trial. The surveys compared several specific areas before and after the implementation of the trial.

The improvement was measured against similar questions asked before and after and the success criteria were as follows:

- There will be an improvement in their child's mood in the home.
- There will be an improvement in their child's general attitude towards homework.
- Their child will display more willingness to become involved in other activities.
- Their child will show an improvement in their ability to 'switch off' after using their device.
- Their child's bedtime routine will improve, as their devices have less of an impact.

Actions Taken

After consultation with the parents, a plan was agreed that could be adapted to their home and family life:

- Parents would declare Saturday OR Sunday as a 'Tech Day' at home. This meant that the children were allowed free rein on their device or games console, obviously at the discretion of their parents.
- At the start of each new week, the children were provided with 12 'Golden Tech Passes', each one allowing 30 minutes of play on a device or console. The parents had to ensure that these time limits were adhered to. This effectively meant that the children had up to 6 hours of free screen time across the six remaining days, with the aim being that they would hopefully begin to learn the skill of time management as the weeks progress.
- The children had to ensure that all homework, chores and other obligations were completed before using their passes each night.
- Children had the opportunity to earn additional 'Golden Tech Passes', or lose them, at the parents' discretion – based on their focus on homework, attitude in the home or bedtime routines etc.
- The children also got a weekly chart, which monitored their 'Golden Tech Pass' usage, homework focus and general attitude concerning screen time at home. Parents had to be honest when giving their son a score out of five on three areas (attitude to homework, attitude to device and bedtime routine). Those who cooperated well throughout the week were recognised in school and had opportunities to be rewarded with additional 'Golden Tech Passes', break of their choice, other prizes or extra play.
- At the start of a four-week trial, the parents each received a pack with laminated passes, rules, weekly charts and a contract to sign with their son to show commitment to the plan.

Progress

Feedback from the first week showed that the majority of the boys had adapted quite well to their new routine and there was great excitement from the first Friday, and each Friday after, when the boys returned their charts. This gave me a weekly opportunity to praise the boys who had committed to the scheme and to also try to incentivise those who were still struggling with limiting their time. There was much positive feedback from the parents throughout the four weeks, and the evaluation completed at the end of the trial showed the following:

- 80% found that there had been an improvement in their son's mood.
- 88% found that there had been an improvement in their son's attitude toward homework.
- 72% found that there had been an improvement in their son's general attitude at home.
- 72% found that there had been an improvement in their son's willingness to become involved in other activities.
- 88% found that there had been an improvement in their son's ability to 'switch off'.
- 80% found that there had been an improvement in their son's bedtime routine.

Overall, this was an outstanding initiative, and the above evidence shows the very positive impact that it made on the children's lives. Oral and written feedback from the parents and children throughout the pilot, and since, has only been encouraging. Both parents and children feel that family life, in general, is improved due to their son's displaying better moods, a more focused attitude towards homework and an increased willingness to switch off their devices and become engaged in other activities.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The critical success of this improvement strategy was the children's awareness of the school's involvement, as a partner with parents, in not only devising the strategy but in monitoring children's adherence to the rules, with built-in incentives in the form of a variety of rewards that the children were involved in agreeing. The children speak with one another freely about the initiative and in a positive manner, and parents have universally reported that it has positively impacted upon relationships in the family home- so much so that, as each week has progressed, more and more parents want to become involved in the initiative. The parents unanimously requested that the four-week trial is extended indefinitely, as this home-school link was having such a significant impact at home. This initiative was subsequently taken on board by the following Primary 6 classes, primarily because the parents had heard of its positive impact and requested the support of the teachers and school.

A Report on Self Evaluation and School Improvement in Reading

J.McComb

Abstract

Under the leadership of the school's SLT and our Literacy Coordinator, St Kevin's PS embarked on the journey of sustaining and or extending improvement in reading in term one of the 2017/2018 academic year. As a consequence, it was hoped that such an improvement would be enjoyed across the curriculum. Funding was provided by the West Belfast Partnership Board to deliver the Accelerated Reader programme to our P4 – P7 children.

The programme added a new dimension to our efforts to bring about improvement in reading standards as we strive to do each year. Improvements to the whole school average standardised score in communication and to the average reading age have been realised (June 2018).

Key Words: Sustaining Reading Improvement, Accelerated Reader, Literacy

School Profile

St Kevin's PS enrolment has increased steadily from 522 to 595 children over the last three years. Approximately one-quarter of the children are identified as having special educational needs, and the proportion of children with free school meals entitlement has remained steady at around two-thirds of the enrolment. In the same period, the school has attained many awards, including recognition of the innovative and inclusive breakfast club provision; and, engagement with international schools helping the children develop as responsible global citizens and preparing them for life and work in a global society.

Area for Improvement

- To improve our children's average reading age in Primary 4, Primary 5, Primary 6 and Primary 7 by an average of nine months through the use of various initiatives and strategies including the introduction of the Accelerated Reading Programme.
- To improve the overall school standardised score for communication by one standardised point.

Quality Indicators / Success Criteria

- P4-P7 reading ages will improve by at least nine months on average (Gross improvement) or at least one month as a net improvement.
- Whole school standardised score in communication will increase by one standardised point.

Actions Taken

- The Accelerated Reader Programme has been launched and implemented in P4-P7 classes. Our literacy coordinator is coordinating it and all teaching staff in P4-P7 classes have received training in the programme's implementation.
- Implementation of whole school communication reading policy in order to improve the consistency of learning and teaching.
- Class visits to Whiterock Library in term 1 in order to improve fluency and enjoyment.
- Analysis of data and use of outcomes in planning for improvement.

Progress and evidence of improvements

Accelerated Reader

The progress enjoyed by individual children, class groups of children and the school group participating (P4-P7) have been monitored, reported and rewarded for their efforts. Participants have become competitive in their enthusiasm for the programme at an individual and class level. Regular and generous reward and the displaying of participants' progress and achievement are central to ongoing progress. Feedback from the children has been very positive so far. Interim Pupil Voice was completed in February 2018.

Teachers regard the programme as efficiently run and have also noted how much the children enjoy their reading now. They are excited about the quizzing and reaching their targets. The profile of reading has now been raised within the school and subsequently the importance of it.

Implementation of Reading Policy

With greater clarity came greater confidence among teachers and with greater confidence will come greater success for everyone.

Partnership with the local library

Children were encouraged to use the library, and over 40 children joined Whiterock Library as a result. Feedback from teachers (Voice) is that the children are reading more for pleasure.

Analysis of data in planning for improvement

- Improved attainment through half term tests and in general classwork was assessed through observations, questioning, understanding and content in books.
- With the emergence of identifying whole school, year group, class issues and target groups, teachers are more aware of the children in their class and the ones they need to target. This is evident from an analysis of half term assessments and tracking grids that identified children are on target.
- Children identified for SEN support indicates improvement in targeted skills as well as improvement in attitude to learning (IEP)

English scores have risen in 3 out of 4-year groups (P4 – P7) and overall by an average of +2.1 standardised points (Table 39).

Year Group	Average Reading Age September 2017	Average Reading Age June 2018	Gross Impact	Net Impact
Year 4	7y 5m	8y 3m	+10m	+1m
Year 5	8y 1m	9y 1m	+12m	+3m
Year 6	9y 2m	10y 1m	+11m	+2m
Year 7	9y 9m	10y 4m	+7m	-2m
Whole School (Average)			+10m	+1m

Table 39: Changes to Reading Age Data (September 2017 to June 2018)

Voice

Analysis of Accelerated Reader Parent Questionnaires reveals that:

- 100% of parents are aware of the programme.
- 85% of parents have noticed an improvement in their child's willingness to read; 15% are not aware of any difference.
- 77% of parents stated that their child reads their AR book every night.
- 94% of parents have noticed an improvement in their child's reading ability since beginning the Accelerated Reader programme.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Our SDP illustrates that Accelerated Reader will be employed again in the upcoming academic year and as far into the future as funding allows, or until a better alternative appears. If funding ceases, permission will be sought from the Board of Governors to extend the license ourselves – such has been the very positive impact of the programme among the children involved. Consideration has also been given as to whether P4 will participate in the AR programme, or at least until term three of their P4 year. Teacher feedback stated that the level of difficulty and level of independence required to use the programme effectively are beyond the children. Management is also of the opinion that p4s should be encouraged to embrace the programme from the beginning of the year; we are aware of its positive impact among P3 children in other schools.

Improving the Use of Punctuation at Oakgrove Integrated Primary School

N.Gill

Abstract

The purpose of this line of enquiry was to examine and improve the use of punctuation across all writing P1-7 and to see if we could develop this in order to improve the quality of the children's learning. To help bring this about we; had staff training, held CBD's and looked at the previous year's data. The results show that this initiative had a positive impact across the school.

Key Words: Growth, Sustainability, Community Confidence, Ten Point Plan, integration

School Profile

Oakgrove Integrated Primary School & Nursery is situated on the Limavady Road in Derry/Londonderry. Most of the children who attend the school come from the city and the remaining from the surrounding rural areas. Oakgrove IPSN is a modern, well planned and attractive building. The outdoor facilities include a beautiful wooded nature area and science garden with an outdoor classroom, mud kitchen and outdoor play equipment to promote creative, physical and exploratory play.

The school was set up by a group of Protestant and Catholic parents and others who wanted to see children educated together and not separately given the divided context of N Ireland which was still very sectarian in 1990. The primary school opened with 68 children on the 4 September 199. The current intake in September 2018 stands at 455.

Area for Improvement

Improved use of punctuation across all writing.

Baseline Position

End of year assessment using PTE (May 2017)

Percentage of questions answered correctly in grammar & Punctuation

Yr 4 – 74%. Yr 5 – 54%. Yr 6 – 61%. Yr 7 – 61%

Books: (KS1)

- Most children are using capital letters at the beginning of the sentence.
- Nearly all are aware of the need for the use of a capital letter.
- Some children use a full stop at the end of a sentence.
- Most children are aware of the need for the use of a full stop at the end of a sentence.

Books: (KS2)

- Most children are using capital letters accurately at the beginning of the sentence
- Nearly all comprehensions beginning with capital letters
- Most are ending comprehension with full stops

Quality Indicators / Success Criteria

- KS1 1. Use a capital letter at the start of a sentence.
- Use a full stop at the end of a sentence.
- KS2 1. Use capital letters & full stops.
- Use commas.
- Use speech marks.

Actions Taken

- KS1: Specific lesson raising awareness of and usage of full stops when writing independently
- KS2: More evidence of speech mark across the curriculum using a variety of writing forms

Progress

End of year assessment using PTE (May 2018)

Percentage of questions answered correctly in grammar & Punctuation

Yr 4 – 75%. Yr 5 – 63%. Yr 6 – 65%. Yr 7 – 67%

Books: (KS1)

- The majority of KS1 are always using capital letters.
- A minority of KS1 don't use capital letters.
- The majority of KS1 are always using full stops.
- A minority of KS1 sometimes use full stops.

Books: (KS2)

- Nearly all children are using capital letters and full stops.
- Most children are using commas in a list.
- A minority of children are using commas independently and with accuracy.
- A majority of children using speech marks in the appropriate context.
- Clear evidence of commas across a variety of writing tasks
- Increased evidence of speech marks across the curriculum

Conclusions and Recommendations

As a school, we are still in the very good category. However, we have refined our thinking to understand that "very good" is still a continuum and we have attained very good by our exacting expectations but at the top end of the continuum, verging on outstanding which we hope to attain very soon. In conclusion, we have made good progress this year in terms of improvement for each learner, but we still have more to do. In order to maintain continued improvement, the recommendations for next year are as follows:

- Training/sharing good practice to focus in on specific areas within the Action Plan.
- Introduce 'Trusted Colleague Network' (TCN) to help share good practice and raise teacher confidence.
- Use of ICT programs and apps to support minority group in KS1.
- Focus on the accuracy of speech marks in the context in KS2 (level 4 focus).

Evaluating School Improvement Strategies to Raise Mathematics Standards at Roe Valley Integrated Primary School

J.O'Donnell

Abstract

Actions were taken to implement improvements in learning and teaching approaches, techniques and resources within Using Mathematics, targeting specific elements of knowledge/understanding and processing in order to raise standards and reduce deficits with the national average.

Key Words: Mathematics, Targets, Collegiate Book Discussion

School Profile

Roe Valley Integrated Primary School is located on the Roemill Road in Limavady and has grown from an intake of 14 Primary 1 pupils in 2004 to a current role of 199 pupils across P1-P7. Our school was set up in 2004 by a group of local parents and individuals who believe parents should have the right to choose to have their children educated together in an integrated environment. We are a growing, thriving school with lots of support from very enthusiastic parents who are delighted with their children's progress and their happy, positive attitude to learning. Exciting times lie ahead as we embark our New School Build project which is currently at the planning stage when we will relocate to the Ballyquin Road, Limavady.

Area for Improvement

To reduce Roe Valley Integrated Primary School's National Difference deficits of PTM in Curriculum and Processes categories to within 5% by May 2017.

Baseline Position

Areas of both knowledge and understanding and processes within Using Mathematics were identified as below national average on a class level (Table 40).

	2015-2016 Curricular area	2015-2016 National Average Comparison	2015-2016 Processes Category	2015-2016 National Average comparison
Set 1	Measures Handling Data	-4% -4%	Fluency in facts and procedures Reasoning	-7% -3%
Set 2	Number Shape and Space	-9% -20%	Fluency in facts and procedures Reasoning	-12% -11%
Set 3	Number Measures	-2% -8%	Conceptual understanding Problem-solving	-3% -7%
Set 4	Number Measures	-4% -6%	Fluency in facts and procedures Reasoning	-4% -7%

Table 40: Knowledge and Understanding of Processes (2015/2016)

Quality Indicators / Success Criteria

- Attainment Target(s) and Process Categories with a minus value National difference (2015/2016) will have a comparatively reduced deficit within 5% for the school year 2016/2017.
- Monthly planning, reflecting extensive focus identified area - Evidence of resources, language, questioning and practical elements modified and focussing on deficit areas.
- Book based tasks and activities will evidence of improved practice within specific attainment targets.

Actions Taken

- Inset-training staff to identify priority area(s) using 15/16 data.
- Support staff in collegial groups to 'plan for change' in planning and learning and teaching of attainment target(s) and process categories with a minus value national difference.
- Sharing good practice within key stage groups.
- Monitor and evaluate through classroom observations with a focus on these areas and collaborating on long/medium- and short-term planning.
- Support of staff individually to identify key language, develop approaches, questioning and tasks.
- Pre and post topic testing to ascertain knowledge and plan for 'revisiting' target topics to consolidate.

Progress and Evidence

The progress achieved to date is illustrated in Table 25.

	2015-16 Curricular Area	2015-16 National Average Comparison	2016-17 National Average Comparison (NI Std.)	2015-16 Processes Category	2015-16 National Average Comparison	2016-17 National Average Comparison (NI Std.)
Set 1	Measures Handling Data	-4% -4%	-2% -10%	Fluency in facts/procedures Reasoning	-7% -3%	-12% -8%
Set 2	Number Shape & Space	-9% -20%	-9% -17%	Fluency in facts and procedures Reasoning	-12% -11%	-9% -11%
Set 3	Number Measures	-2% -8%	-6% -8%	Conceptual understanding Problem solving	-3% -7%	-8% -6%
Set 4	Number Measures	-4% -6%	-1% -6%	Fluency in facts and procedures Reasoning	-4% -7%	+1% -2%

Table 41: Knowledge and Understanding of Processes (2015/2016 – 2016-2017)

Conclusions and Recommendations

Excellent progress made in terms of staff development within learning and teaching techniques and classroom strategies, staff knowledge/understanding of effective use of data and specific processes targets within UM. CBD was introduced through this activity successfully. However, targets were not fully achieved even though some specific areas were reduced within the -5% deficit, however. In this regard, it is recommended that:

- There is a termly review with a collegiate group and informal 1-to-1 teacher support/coaching. Monitoring and evaluation activities should also include observations, planner monitoring, topic assessments as well as summative standardised tests.
- Specific targets for curriculum and processes are set using NI standardisation given that staff are now familiar with the system and have benefitted from the process in 2016-2017.
- Learning is targeted towards specific curricular areas and planning is reflective of pupil need.
- Monitoring and Evaluation of processes category should be more practical.

Critical Thinking and Problem Solving

A Review of Current Practice

G.McCotter

Abstract

In our most recent inspection, February 2017, ETI made the following overall evaluation of the school: St Paul's Primary School and Nursery Unit has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the learners. The purpose of this research was to review Critical thinking and Problem Solving using both qualitative and quantitative data and from this to devise and implement actionable plans for improvement. This resulted in, among other milestones, an increase in the complex inference category.

Key Words: Self-Evaluation, standards, Problem Solving, Critical Thinking, Engagement

School Profile

St Paul's Primary School and Nursery Unit is situated in the Beechmount area of West Belfast which is an area of high economic and social deprivation; consequently, over three-quarters of the children are entitled to free school meals. The nursery unit is located off-site, a short distance from the primary school. Since the last inspection, there has been significant staffing changes, including the appointment of a new principal and vice principal. Both the school and the nursery unit have an inclusive ethos and welcome children from a wide variety of backgrounds. Almost all of the children attending the school and come from the local area.

.Area for Improvement

Development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Baseline Position and Actions Taken

- Whole school targets were identified in Literacy and Numeracy through PTE and PTM data in June 2017
- Underachievers and low achievers for each class/ year were identified, with the aid of CAT4, and teachers used these to aid groupings and for SEN and underachieving support groups in P4-P7. SENCOs have also used this data.
- In terms of whole school analysis, the percentage of children in each stanine has been collated, and a report identifying those on target or below has been produced.
- All staff are made aware of those children who are on target or above. This helps us provide a more focussed approach to the setting of class targets. All plans from each class have clear targets based on PTE and PTM, and which are evident in their planning and referenced in their half termly evaluations.
- A comprehensive timetable of assessments has been updated to best suit the needs of our children.
- GL online testing was conducted again in the summer term by primary 3 to primary 7 children.
- The NRIT test was conducted in the Autumn term for P3 only.
- This year saw the CAT4 test for P4 and P6.
- FSCN/SIF have also made use of the data to identify underachievement and develop targeted programmes of work to support these children.
- As part of our ongoing assessment in Numeracy and Literacy teachers provide a levelled, half termly task.
- In order to maximise support PPDs (Pupil Progress Discussions) were timetabled for late November and would coincide with coordinators 3-year review meetings.

Based on full analysis of all available evidence, in Literacy, 84.8% of pupils are on target or above their ability level compared to 74.4% last year (an increase of 10.4%). In Numeracy, 74.8% are on target or above compared to 67.3% last year (an increase of 7.5%).

More detailed analysis of the quantitative data for Literacy showed that in June 2017 the weakest process category was Simple Inference. In Numeracy, one of the weakest strands was Mathematical Reasoning. While performance in Problem Solving had increased on the previous year, it was still an area for concern.

Newcomer language acquisition proved problematic in identifying levels of ability. Also, spoken language for some was much better than written language. We felt that their ability to participate and engage in thinking/problem solving/practical activities would allow them to show their potential and provide us with another form of evidence-based, qualitative 'assessment data'.

Quality Indicators / Success Criteria

- Raising teacher awareness of the importance and effectiveness of Thinking Skills and Problem Solving will ensure integration of these skills into classroom practice.
- Exposure to a range of strategies for TS & PS to develop greater capacity among pupils
- More extensive experience of using TS & PS to enable pupils to transfer these skills into the completion of classroom-based, and real-life tasks.
- Use of learned skills during standardised assessments will allow for increased levels of attainment in standardised tests.
- The use of TS & PS in real life situations to allow pupils to improve interpersonal skills and develop better relationships with peers, thus facilitating a more rewarding educational experience.
- The use of TS & PS will help pupils empathise with others and help diffuse difficult situations, thus facilitating a more rewarding educational experience.

Actions Taken

Based on the evidence we decided to develop the area of Critical Thinking and Problem Solving. We contacted The British Council and registered for their Connecting Classrooms programme, addressing the core component of 'Critical Thinking and Problem Solving'.

We delivered the programme to the whole staff over one whole staff development day, followed by two twilight sessions and one directed time session. The programme allowed us to evaluate the importance of teaching critical thinking and problem solving, identify ways in which we were already teaching these core skills, identifying areas which could be adapted to a more critical thinking/problem-solving approach and also identifying current good practice and sharing it with colleagues.

We also examined ways in which we could be more inclusive of our high percentage of Newcomer pupils by identifying activities which would allow them to engage more and demonstrate their true potential.

Progress

Very good progress has been made to the inclusion of thinking skills and problem-solving in a range of cross-curricular learning experiences for pupils. This is evidenced through the 6-weekly planning cycle, evaluations of planning, TCN, CBD and lesson observations by the school principal have also proved to be effective.

Feedback from teaching staff indicates that pupils have and continue to develop a repertoire of thinking tools which they can use independently in a range of situations.

Students are growing in confidence in thinking for themselves and monitoring their own learning. Mathematical processes are strengthened when students think critically about their maths.

Evidence

In comparing the inference skills through PTE analysis of data, the % group correct increased by 1% in the complex inference category. In comparing the problem-solving strand of PTM, analysis showed that the % group correct has dipped by 4% (Tables 42 and 43).

Literacy 2016-17: Simple and Complex inference - % of group correct		
	Simple Inference	Complex Inference
P4A	68%	68%
P4B	58%	38%
P5A	52%	56%
P5B	42%	41%
P6A	59%	36%
P6B	52%	33%
TOTAL	55%	45%
Literacy 2017-18: Simple and Complex inference - % of group correct		
	Simple Inference	Complex Inference
P4A	58%	48%
P4B	42%	42%
P5A	59%	64%
P5B	40%	44%
P6A	77%	43%
P6B	52%	35%
TOTAL	55%	46%

Table 42: Simple and Complex Inference (2016/2017 – 2017/2018)

Numeracy 2016-17 Problem-Solving % of group correct	
P4A	56%
P4B	20%
P5A	38%
P5B	25%
P6A	32%
P6B	44%
TOTAL	36%
Numeracy 2017-18 Problem-Solving % of group correct	
P4A	38%
P4B	18%
P5A	54%
P5B	22%
P6A	41%
P6B	18%
TOTAL	32%

Table 43: Numeracy Scores (2016/2017 – 2017/2018)

Conclusions and Recommendations

In conclusion, a range of data has been employed to analyse our progress in the area of critical thinking both qualitative and quantitative. The training enabled teachers to gain a clear understanding of what critical thinking and problem-solving skills are and why they are essential for today's pupils. As seen through our CBD and shared through our TCN this has undoubtedly impacted on the children's learning. Strategies for embedding these essential skills are highly evident and have had a positive impact on the learning environment. Recommendations are to continue to make problem-solving skills and strategies a high priority for next year and to continue to develop our complex inference skills.

Developing Leadership for Learning at St.Dominic's Grammar School for Girls

N.McConville

Abstract

The focus of our self-evaluative project was on the continued development of Heads of Department/Subject Co-ordinators as leaders of learning in their subject area and improved communication with these middle leaders to ensure the continued success of pupils in all subject areas in the context of changing syllabi, focusing on the promotion of independent learning, literacy, numeracy and subject-specific skills.

Key Words: Leadership, Growth, Literacy, Numeracy

School Profile

St Dominic's Grammar School for Girls (Irish: Scoil Ghramadaí Naomh Dominic do Chailíní), formerly St Dominic's High School (Irish: Ardscoil Naomh Dominic), is a Catholic grammar school for girls aged 11–18 (Years 8-14), in Belfast, Northern Ireland.

Area for Improvement

The area identified was the continued development of Heads of Department/Subject Co-ordinators as leaders of learning in their subject area and improved communication with these middle leaders to ensure the continued success of pupils in all subject areas in the context of changing syllabi, focusing on the promotion of independent learning, literacy, numeracy and subject-specific skills.

This has been a focus in our school for a number of years, and the over-riding rationale is to encourage HoDs to be leaders of their departments/subject area. This incorporates:

- the climate within their department;
- development opportunities for members of the department;
- all forms of assessment;
- the subject-specific skills which the pupils need to develop at KS3 to be successful at GCSE and A-level;
- discussion about pedagogy;
- how the focus of the school development plan relates to their subject area;
- honest conversations around what is working well, and what is not, and how to move the department forward.

Baseline Position

The explanation of pedagogy and departmental action planning with HoDs occurred in meetings where there were many staff present. As a result of this, the departmental action planning process was too vague and not tailored to each department. Too many departmental action plans contained the areas of focus for the preceding years, with any new areas of focus not receiving the attention they required for the continual development of each department in the context of educational change. The previous approach of a one-size-fits-all was too generic, and the subject leaders did not have the opportunity to discuss: skills development, literacy or numeracy in their subject, how each of the key areas from the yearly school development plan could be tailored to their specific subject area, how to avail of professional development opportunities, and how to lead their department.

Quality Indicators / Success Criteria

- Each subject leader would have a designated member of SLT to work with throughout the year.
- A draft calendar of meetings for the year would be sent to each HoD at the beginning of the academic year.
- The meeting agenda would be sent two weeks in advance of the meeting to allow the HoD to prepare adequately for the meeting and so derive the most significant benefit.
- Each subject leader would have protected individual time to meet with their SLT link to enable discussion about the focus of the departmental action plans, how they would be monitored and ultimately, evaluated.

Actions Taken

- Regular timetabled meetings between each HoD and their SLT link with the agenda provided in advance.
- Streamlining of the action planning process through engagement with the District Inspector.
- In each meeting, any pupils who were underachieving or underperforming were identified and discussed, along with the departmental strategies in place to assist these pupils.
- Development of personalised departmental action plans, focusing on the main areas of the school development plan:
 1. **2016-17**- independent learning, TCN, data analysis and CBD.
 2. **2017-18**- effective self-evaluation (focusing on Together Towards Improvement indicators and Every School a Good School- both ETI documents), oracy, Bloom's taxonomy, subject enrichment, praise and reward, and literacy.
 3. **2018-19**- FFT data analysis, CCEA analytics, Google Apps for Education, FLIP classroom (independent learning) and subject-specific literacy skills.
- Regular conversations evaluating the progress of the current departmental action plans.
- Regular monitoring of the departmental action plans.
- Schemes of work were updated to reflect the change in focus of the skills, literacy and numeracy necessary in each subject for pupil success.
- Honest conversations about what is working well, what is not, and how to move things forward.

Progress

Progress has been **very good**. A number of the Heads of Department have reported that they have found the individual timetabled meetings to be very helpful because it allows for a full discussion, and reassurances that they are on the right track. A number of the departments have provided the following feedback following staff-communication focus groups:

- Departmental action planning processes are more streamlined and tailored to their departments. Targets in the action plans are clear, and there are fewer of them.
- Honest conversations about pedagogy have taken place at the departmental level, with a focus on the new skills that pupils need to develop in each subject in order to achieve
- Schemes of work now include skills and are outcomes-focused, rather than a list of tasks and content to cover.
- Assessments across all key-stages have been revamped and focus on more than recall of knowledge.
- Staff have the time to ensure they understand the data being presented to them, specifically the FFT data and the CCEA analytics. This has been affirming for some

because, in the past, they were not entirely comfortable explaining the data, and thus it was not distributed across the department.

- An assessment and reporting group was established with representatives from some departments. This allowed honest discussion about the quality, nature and timing of the assessments, to include the quality of feedback given to the pupils and the parents. This ultimately led to the creation and implementation of a new assessment and reporting policy.
- A best practice group was established in September 2018 which has been meeting every two weeks, with a view to leading a sharing best practice in January 2019.
- CBD has occurred within some departments and by SLT.
- TCN- development of a best practice work-group which has organised a staff training day in January 2019.
- Data analysis to include GCSE, AS and A2 performance, FFT analysis for whole-school and departments, and CCEA analytics.
- Staff voice- HoDs have been asked to evaluate this programme, and the results have been overwhelmingly positive. All members of staff have the opportunity to join a communication work-shop to have their views heard.
- Pupil voice- questionnaires were used by some departments to identify key areas of focus and to evaluate some of the newly introduced strategies and approaches.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This has been a very worthwhile and ongoing process which has been of great benefit to all, both the subject leaders and members of SLT.

Improving Bi-literacy Independent Writing at Key Stage 2

O. Uí Dhaibhín

Abstract

Our focus was to improve the standard of Biliteracy, specifically Independent Writing at Key stage 2. Our success criteria were that most children would be able to plan narrative, fiction and non-fiction texts using writing frames as a planning tool and that most children would use a bi-literacy writing checklist to proofread for spelling and punctuation. In summary, good progress has been made and is evident through an increase in most Year 5 PiE scores, improvement in the standard of the children's work and displays of increased interest during literacy lessons.

Key Words: Irish-medium Education, Bi-literacy, KS2 independent writing, story-writing

School Profile

Bunscoil Mhic Reachtain is a small Irish-medium primary school situated in North Belfast in a disadvantaged area, which is documented as the third most disadvantaged area regarding socio-economic status in the North of Ireland. We currently have 100 pupils enrolled in the school and four composite classes.

Area for Improvement

struggling to complete independent writing tasks within a given timeframe. Key stage 2 pupils were finding it difficult to extend their writing ideas to a satisfactory standard in both English and Irish. We found that it would be more manageable to focus on one year group. Therefore it was agreed that Year 5 pupils would take part in the school-based action research. Therefore, our overall aim, which is linked to the School Development Plan and Literacy Action and Outcome Plan, is to improve the standard of Biliteracy, specifically Independent Writing in Year 5.

Baseline Position

It was found during the initial line of enquiry that involved observing lessons and trusted colleague networking, that when pupils were working on independent writing more support was needed during these specific lessons with regards to planning, drafting, evaluating and presenting independent writing work.

Another factor in identifying this as an area for improvement became apparent through staff meetings and collegial book discussions. This source of evidence revealed the amount of unfinished and inaccurate work in the pupils' books and the practical time needed to complete these written tasks (recorded by teacher/assistant). Therefore, the baseline position of independent writing emerged at Grade 4 (Areas for improvement) on ETI scale.

Success Criteria

- Most children will be able to plan narrative, fiction and non-fiction texts using writing frames as a planning tool.
- Most children will use a bi-literacy writing checklist to proofread for spelling and punctuation errors.

Actions Taken

- The use of a varied range of writing frames as a planning tool was implemented to improve independent writing in Year 5, while adopting different teaching strategies and techniques during literacy lessons.
- Bi-literacy writing checklists were incorporated to assist Year 5 pupils in editing, evaluating and proofreading their work.
- A bi-literacy writing checklist was used with Year 5, from basic to more advanced to suit pupils of different abilities.

Progress

- Improvement can be seen in the standard of the children’s work since the frequent use of bi-literacy writing checklists, e.g. presentation, spelling and punctuation.
- Most children also display an increased interest during literacy lessons and are keen to use writing frames in various ways such as ICT, Peer/Paired writing activities.
- Throughout the research, PiE Assessment scores were used to gauge the pupils working ability and understanding of independent writing and reflected an increase in most scores by 5% from last year.

Sources of Evidence	Timeline
CBD Meetings which promoted TCN	January 2018 – Baseline Year 5 independent writing samples (CBD)
Staff meetings and minutes recorded	February 2018- Lesson observations (TCN) & Staff meeting KS 2 Teachers & Principal.
Assessment data- PiE scores in comparison to last year (DAE)	February 2018 – Planning meeting KS 2 Teachers: 6-week independent writing plan, lessons and assessment plan
Samples of Year 5 pupils’ independent writing work (CBD)	March 2018 - Action in place – various forms of writing frames, adaptable teaching strategies, various levels of writing checklist
Pupil voice – informal discussions with pupils (VAE)	April 2018 - Feedback meetings (what worked? What was not successful?)
	Pupil feedback through informal discussions, on independent writing activities and tasks
	Lesson observations (2) to compare with initial lessons observations
	May 2018 – PiE Assessment data analysis Year 5
INSET days used for sharing good practice/teaching strategies focused on independent writing	June 2018 – Sharing findings and good practice with staff

Table 44: Sources of Evidence in SDP Cycle

Conclusions and Recommendations

Good progress has been made and is evident through an increase in most Year 5 PiE scores. An improvement in the standard of the children's independent writing work can also be seen along with displays of increased interest during Year 5 literacy lessons. We plan to implement the writing frameworks and checklists with all Key stage 2 pupils and to continue gathering evidence from the above sources to inform future practice and enhance continuous improvement. Our school will also focus on prioritising assessment data and incorporating the use of questionnaires to record and use pupil voice for future planning. We also aim to introduce basic writing frames and checklists to the remainder of Key Stage 2 pupils and Key stage 1 pupils in order to encourage a sense of fluency throughout the school, regarding teaching and learning in the area of independent writing.

Improving Mental Maths at Saint Vincent de Paul Primary

M. McLaughlin

Abstract

This report outlines the self-evaluative approach taken to the development of mental maths and maths recovery strategies to aid problem-solving in numeracy. The focus was developed over two years and will continue into the next academic year in keeping with priorities identified on the School Development Plan.

Key Words: Mental Maths Strategies, Mental Maths Wall, Active Learning, Maths Recovery

School Profile

Saint Vincent de Paul Primary School is a co-educational school situated on the Ligoniel Road in North Belfast. It is placed within the heart of the Parish which it serves, and its elevated site provides some stunning views over Belfast and beyond. The school opened in on its current site in 1970. However a new school build has been approved, and a Project Board appointed to oversee the development of the new build. Enrolment has grown significantly over the last number of years, and the school is operating at almost full capacity. Currently, 305 children are attending the school, which includes a nursery unit catering for 26 children, 69.5% are entitled to Free School Meals, 41.96% of children are on the SEN Register with 15 statements, 13 children are newcomers, and the average attendance is currently 92.8%. Our staff understand and value the importance of creating a secure and happy environment for all within our school and strive to create this atmosphere in partnership with our parents, parish and the Board of Governors to ensure that our whole school community can learn and develop together.

Area for Improvement

End of KS2 Assessment outcomes had improved on previous year's attainment. However, they were still below the Northern Ireland Average. FSME remains high at 77%. Analysis of data MaLT (P2 – P3) and PTM (P4 –P7) indicated a deficit in attainment within the Curriculum Content Category of Number and the Process Categories of Fluency in facts and procedures and Fluency in conceptual understanding.

Teachers completed Staff Questionnaires: Mental Maths Survey and Better Numeracy Survey, which highlighted a number of areas for development.

Baseline Position

Mental Maths Survey (Baseline Survey)

- Clear whole school progression for mental mathematics facts calculations and strategies.
- Mental maths learning intentions, knowledge skills and strategies identified in planning.
- Learning intentions are linked with a wide variety of activities which ensure an appropriate challenge for all.
- The teacher has an appropriate range of mental maths resources.
- Children recall appropriate number facts quickly and accurately.
- Children show flexibility in their thinking.
- Children select and use a range of mental maths strategies.
- Children show a clear understanding of key mathematical thinking.
- Children explain their thinking using accurate mathematical language.

Better Numeracy Survey (Baseline Survey)

- Practical approaches used in maths lessons.
- Use of open-ended questions, problem-solving tasks and investigative activities.
- Appropriate time is given for children to communicate and explain their mathematical thinking.
- The children's mathematical knowledge and skills are developed systematically across the school.
- The children can draw effectively on a range of mental maths strategies.
- The children engage actively in their learning and are confident in working independently and in applying their knowledge skills and understanding.
- The children talk confidently about their thinking and learning.
- The quality of 15 Minute Mental Maths is presently Good at Foundation / Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.
- The quality of maths activities/tasks is presently Good at Key Stage 1 and Satisfactory at Key Stage 2.
- The quality of Layout and Presentation in Children's Books is presently Satisfactory At Foundation / Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.

Quality Indicators / Success Criteria

- Visible, accessible, consistent child-friendly Mental Maths Wall.
- Components of a maths lesson evident in classroom practice.
- Continuity and progression evident in Mental Maths – clear strategies range and variety of activity to support and consolidate learning.
- Children engage actively in their learning and show confidence in working individually and in groups in applying knowledge, skills and understanding. Greater emphasis on 'Number Talk'.
- Children present their work in a neat and organised way that clearly shows working methods.

Actions Taken

- Overview of Self Evaluation for continuous improvement drawn up and communicated to staff.
- Review Whole School Mental Maths overview.
- CPD Use and Range of Mental Maths Strategies.
- Identify clear mental maths strategies in planning.
- Use of 15-minute Mental Maths Wall.
- Use a range of active learning activities/tasks in numeracy lessons.
- CPD Teachers and Classroom Assistants Use of Maths Recovery Strategies in Classroom and small group settings.
- Focus on correct number formation – modelled, shared and guided approach to the presentation of work.
- Audit and review mathematical resources.
- Opportunities to share and observe each other's practice, to highlight Best Practice.

Progress

- We have made good progress on the quality of maths activities/tasks.
- We have made good progress on the quality of Layout and Presentation in Children's Books

Comparison (Between Baseline and now)

Experiences across a range of activities within FS KS1 and KS2

Best Practice Strengths observed:

- Numeracy within the learning environment was very visible.
- Maths walls contain key areas of learning, and obvious current teaching / some included differentiated content teachers, and children reference the wall during lessons.
- Maths wall displayed a good range of mathematical language that the children were familiar with and could use as they talked about their work.
- Practical tasks / active learning was observed in lessons – children showed enjoyment and engagement in their learning.
- Children were able to feedback at the end of the lesson. Positive feedback from teachers helped children to engage the majority of children stayed on task and were able to achieve.
- Some effective use of additional adult support was managed well to help lower ability children to complete set tasks and advance their learning.
- Most lessons were fast paced and posed a challenge to the children.
- Effective use of Numeracy Task Board was evident in some classrooms.
- Number formation and overall presentation show improvement.
- Clear focus on presentation – Date / Walt.
- Some evidence of children showing working methods.
- Evidence of differentiated activities in books – some reference of the level of support given /positive feedback.
- Some evidence of photographs to indicate active learning.

First-Hand Evidence Gathered

- Classroom Observation both Principal feedback and TCNI (Staff Folder)
- **Books:** Use of WALT, Evidence of a variety of activity.
- Improvement in presentation and number formation / better use of showing working methods (Summary of CBD)
- Voice-TCNI -Trusted Colleague Summary saved to Staff Folder/ Classroom Assistant feedback from Maths Recovery training (Questionnaire)
- **DATA:** Tracking Grids / Class Progress Reviews / End of year Data Analysis / Benchmarking

Conclusion

- The quality of 15 Minute Mental Maths has risen to Very Good at Foundation / Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2
- The quality of maths activities/tasks has risen to Good at Foundation / Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.
- The quality of Layout and Presentation in Children's Books has risen to Good at Foundation / Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.

Recommendations

- Develop effective intervention strategies for Early Years, KS1.
- Shared Education – Joint Professional Development (JPD)focused Maths Development focused on Early Years Intervention Programme.

Improving GCSE Biology Results at Glenlola Collegiate School

L. Monroe

Abstract

To purpose of this Action Research cycle was to increase the percentage of A-B grades in CCEA GCSE Biology. Actions taken included the identification of command words and modelling essay writing. The success criteria set for pupils has been met. The improvement in GCSE results is also occurring at most grade boundaries, and this is a continuing target for improvement.*

Key Words: GCSE, Improvement, Literacy, Numeracy

School Profile

Glenlola Collegiate School is an all-girls' grammar school in Bangor, County Down, Northern Ireland. The school was founded as a school for girls in approximately 1880.

Areas for Improvement

To increase the percentage of A*-B grades in CCEA GCSE Biology, as identified by ETI (Table 45)

GCSE Grades	DEPT TARGETS 16/17	GCSE Results 16/17	Difference DEPT TARGETS	JCQ NI 16/17 (Girls only)	Difference JCQ	CCEA NI (Girls only)	Difference CCEA
A*-A	44.9	39.6	-5.3	47.5	-7.9	54.5	-14.9
A*-B	73.5	70.8	-2.7	75.8	-5.0	85.6	-14.8
A*-C	100	97.9	-2.1	92.1	+5.8	98.1	-0.2

Table 45: GCSE Results

Baseline Position

- CCEA Analysis indicated that pupils underachieve in 6-mark questions compared to other girls schools.
- Correct use of grammar but not including the key terms, answering the questions (use of command words), logical order.

Success Criteria

- Increase the percentage of A*-B grades to within 1% of the CCEA NI average for girls.
- Pupils to gain a minimum of 4 marks in extended responses to 6-mark questions.
- Pupils to recognise command words and use them correctly in responses.
- Responses to include the correct use of key terminology.
- Responses to be written in logical paragraphs.

Actions

- There will be at least two 6-mark questions on both examination papers at GCSE.
- In addition, the revised GCSE Biology examinations will include an increased examination of extended writing to include 4- and 5-mark questions.
- Use of 'BUSY' strategy to write essays.
- Practice identifying command words for all questions answered throughout the year.
- Modeling essay writing.

Progress

GCSE Grades	DEPT TARGETS 17/18	GCSE Results 17/18	Difference DEPT TARGETS	JCQ NI 17/18 (Girls only)	Difference JCQ	CCEA NI 17/18 (Girls only)	Difference CCEA
A*-A	44.0	45.9	+1.9	51.6	-5.7	56.6	-10.7
A*-B	84.0	91.1	+7.1	83.3	+7.8	89.4	+1.7
A*-C	100	99.3	-0.7	94.8	+4.5	99.2	+0.1

Table 46: GCSE Results 2017/2018

Conclusions and Recommendations

- Command words have improved answers to all questions, not just 6 marks.
- Pupils unwilling to commit answers to paper: the use of whiteboards to trial and organise their thoughts has resulted in improved confidence in writing extended responses.
- Cascade to Y10 Biology. Build up skill at a much earlier stage and consolidate throughout GCSE.
- Continue to build up banks of model answers from across the various examination boards.
- Use of the Google classroom to put up responses for limited time periods.

The Impact of a Whole-school Literacy Withdrawal Pilot Programme on the Learning Outcomes of Selected Children

S Ó Tuama

Abstract

This report is a summary of how whole-school self-evaluation was used to develop provision and improve outcomes within the school for children with SEN. Baseline evaluations were gathered using a range of methods, such as the 'Together Towards Improvement' self-evaluation tool; focus group discussions; data analysis; and, online evaluations, at a whole-school level. From the responses, target areas were chosen to inform the 2016-2019 School Development Plan cycle. One such target was 'developing further the school's provision for children who require additional support with aspects of their learning'.

Key Words: Learning Support, School Evaluation, Data Analysis

School Profile

Bunscoil Phobal Feirste is a co-educational primary school situated in the Shaws Road Gaeltacht area of Andersonstown in West Belfast. The school was established in 1971 as the first ever Gaelscoil in the north of Ireland by a pioneering group of parents who wished Irish-medium Education for their children. The school started with nine children and no government funding. Enrolment increased year on year, and the school intake will be at 400+ in 2020. The school also operates with a double nursery unit. The school survived without state recognition and funding until 1984 through the efforts of dedicated staff and families. In 2012/13 the Education and Training Inspectorate deemed the school to be 'Outstanding' following a whole-school inspection. With over 95 Irish-medium settings currently established in the north, the school prides itself as being the first ever Gaelscoil and largest Irish-medium primary school currently operating.

Area for Improvement

As part of our 2016-2019 School Development Plan preparations, the school leadership carried out baseline evaluations using a range of method, such as: with staff via TTI audit; with parents and children via online questionnaires and as focus group discussions; data analysis; SENCO report; and Governor discussions. An agreed target area for development was for an increased provision for those children who require additional support with aspects of their learning. Children's needs were broad and varied and included: social, emotional and behavioural difficulties; cognitive and learning difficulties; and additional medical needs. There had been an increase in the number of children in recent years who had been placed on school SEN register, which was projected to continue to increase along with the growing school intake in the coming years. PIE and PIM analysis also showed that a number of SEN registered children were performing below ability as they progressed through school.

There is a severe lack of bespoke Irish-medium PERI support from EA; a gap noted by the staff of Bunscoil Phobal Feriste and also a gap in external provision that all Irish-medium schools have to contend with. In order to address and to bridge the gap in EA provision, internal CPD and middle leadership development priorities became integral elements in the cycle of the school development plan. Within budget constraints, the plan aimed to be as creative as possible with the approach. The aim was also to develop and build further capacity for future SEN provision within the school as well as helping with sustainability and development of SEN within the wider Irish-medium sector, through: upskilling classroom assistants, university students and volunteer workers in the area of SEN provision; and establishing and building upon links with other schools and organisations who cater well for children who require additional support with aspects of their learning.

Quality Indicators / Success Criteria

- To develop further the provision for learning for children who require additional support with aspects of learning by providing additional in-class support through increasing adult: child ratio within target classes.
- To improve the social, emotional and behavioural well-being of targetted children and to meet their needs better through the provision of nurture-based support at the small group level and the development of a whole-school environment guided by nurture-specific principles.
- To improve further the learning experiences and outcomes of children on SEN register through providing capacity building opportunities for staff in target SEN areas via targetted in-service training and external courses as well as dissemination of good practice with other organisations.
- To Improve the outcomes for children experiencing literacy difficulties via the provision of adequate and high-quality withdrawal support.

Actions Taken

- Contact with 3rd level institutions, volunteer workers and potential PGCE applicants to offer an opportunity of gaining experience and 'added value' to their CV 's.
- Nurture CPD- Visit schools with Nurture Provision. Development of VP Office as Nurture space and timetabled use of the facility throughout the week with carefully selected children who would benefit from this provision.
- Partnership established with the Glasgow Psychological Service for staff training and policy Development for nurture at the group and whole-school level.
- CPD in-service training from Harberton & Glasgow Psychological Service around Nurture provision at the group and whole-school level. Behaviour Support Team EA Training- Supporting a Child in Crisis & Positive Behaviour Management. EA Learning Support training. SENCO & In-house CPD- Nurture Provision, Positive Behaviour Development incorporating the 'Pivotal Education' key pillars for policy review and development. Dyslexia Support. Withdrawal support. IEP development. Visits to schools of very good and outstanding practice around areas of Nurture and withdrawal support.
- Establish a part-time withdrawal support teacher initially. Carry out whole-school audit around potential children who would best benefit from support. Find a suitable space within the school to base withdrawal sessions. Recruit a member of staff or new teacher to carry out 2 ½ days a week programme. Manage financial impact upon school budget.

How did we select?

Withdrawal teacher selected who had SENCO qualification and experience of working with individuals and small groups of children via existing internal support programmes such as Maths Recovery, Speech & Language, Reading Partnerships, Literacy & Numeracy group support.

Meetings between withdrawal support teacher, SENCO and teachers. Evaluations of IEP's, data, SEN register. SENCO and Withdrawal teacher met and evaluated teacher suggestions from feedback sheets and selected priority children after this. Low achievers mostly but with certain classes where good support was already being provided- P5 for example- underachievers were selected for 'booster' work. Fifty-two children were selected from the school, and some children who were not selected received support already via classroom assistance of external agencies such as Harberton and St Gerards. Nursery children were also provided for via small group work (4 children per session) involving social skills development via the 'together time' social skills programme.

What was the approach?

Continuous support as opposed to 6-week booster work for example and mainly based around Literacy with some Numeracy support. 'Nurture'/Support room was being used for those with SEBD as best as possible - breakfasts, activities, chill-out area during melt-down if needed. Withdrawal sessions (25 minutes) based in VP office but following a mid-point evaluation, the stigma of withdrawal for children from P5 onwards resulted in a re-think in terms of going into classes during certain lessons to support (children already used to in-class additional adult support in the form of 3rd level students, CA's, volunteers etc.). Children were withdrawn during the same time slots each week- efforts made to avoid missing out on areas such as PE, ICT etc. This was reviewed at the midway point on a staff day (16th March) where staff evaluated the impact of this, the possibility of streamlining support with in-class work and looking at how children have been re-integrating to class following sessions. Each class had two slots per week- which consisted of either two sessions with the same group or 2 different groups - this was at the teacher's discretion and depending on the severity of need for particular groups or individuals.

Planning & Evaluating

Session plans were based around IEP targets as well as literacy/numeracy targets following consultation with teachers. Sessions were planned and evaluated and kept in safe storage. Planning was done in partnership with the class teacher and SENCO. Early years and P3 sessions built upon work being done in class. P1 & 2 in particular and P3 sessions taking backward steps to help consolidate and build towards work being done in classes where children were in danger of or showing early signs of falling behind. For example, going back to steps 1 and 2 with phonics when the class were on steps 3 & 4.

Role of the SENCO

The SENCO worked in partnership with the withdrawal teacher to review class teacher evaluations on 'potential' target children and played a central role in the selection process. The SENCO also carried out 'IEP's in action' days to see selected children in the class and get information from teachers to update progress. The SENCO looked at teacher planning to ensure that there was differentiation and grouping and that evaluations reflected children performance.

Teacher covering for withdrawal teacher

Experience with the class from last year. Good rapport with children. Parents aware and supportive/understanding. Monitored by withdrawal teacher via meetings twice a week to plan and evaluate. Daily informal updates during break and lunch also. Withdrawal teacher looked at children's work and observation file as well as any evaluative notes written by covering teacher from Monday to Wednesday when she (withdrawal teacher) returned to class (Wednesday afternoon-Friday).

Home-School Relationship

Parents of job share class made aware of the scheme. Parents of selected children informed of support (letter). Updates sent home following 16th March evaluation day and end of year outcomes communicated to parents following May assessments.

Evidence

Early/Midway Review

Staff and parents responded positively via informal discussions during the school day. SENCO spent days going round classes, 'IEP's in action' days. Teachers spoke positively about how things seemed to be progressing. Outreach support groups such as Harberton spoke positively of the atmosphere within the school and behaviour appeared to have improved. There was a more formal evaluation during a staff day on the 16th March. Written notes by withdrawal teacher during post-session evaluations showed progress around IEP target areas. Internal assessments (PIE, PIM, Vernon as well as early year assessments) gave us a more formal measure of the impact of the programme at the end of the year when compared to baseline data and information collected from teachers pre Christmas.

End of Withdrawal Pilot Programme Review

Following evaluation and data analysis we found an increase in children's confidence (outside of P6/7-stigma of being withdrawn) as well as evident progress in reading, early sounds, phonics work at P2/3. P1 Improvements in behaviour, focus & listening. Our data analysis following May assessments showed an improvement in outcomes for almost all children who availed of the withdrawal scheme (48 out of 52).

Timetable worked well. Teachers minimised the impact of withdrawal by simultaneously focussing, as much as possible, on same topics being covered in withdrawal sessions. Some P1's missed periods of play time. Some P2's missing nurture session. Children were re-integrating well to class after sessions.

Teachers wanted more slots and time allocated. Teachers were asking about 'target groups' of children - Low v Underachieving. Teachers want more time to meet with withdrawal teacher for feedback and updates (more formal). Concern over future provision due to budget cuts.

Conclusions and Recommendations

There was an increase in volunteer workers and 3rd level PGCE students: 3 in the third term; 2 in the first term, as well as three volunteer workers for reading and numeracy; classroom assistant support has had a very positive impact upon our provision. This was evidenced via children, staff & parental feedback. Our CPD on Nurture with Harberton also enabled Classroom Assistants to work with individual and small groups of children in our 'Nurture' space. Glasgow CPD has enabled the development of whole-school Nurture policy & approaches. Extra time for reading groups with volunteer workers was also very beneficial. Volunteer workers and classroom assistants also benefitted from in-service training which has had a positive impact upon the capacity building of the non-teaching staff also.

The positive impact of Nurture type withdrawal provision for 20 children has been felt by staff and parents alike following evaluation. Support from Glasgow & Harberton with teachers and classroom assistants training has also impacted upon the capacity building of staff. The desire to further increase provision. The positive impact is felt by staff and children via building upon CPD and developing provision.

The CPD focus on Learning Support has enabled teaching and non-teaching staff to assist with capacity building within the school to cater for the increase in children who are presenting with learning and SEBD issues.

Training from expert organisations such as Glasgow Psychological Service, Harberton, Oakwood, EA Behaviour support, CIDS as well as visiting schools where quality practice in the areas of learning support and nurture provision already exists, has enabled the school to internally capacity build, increase awareness, develop skills and capabilities as well as form links and partnerships

Following our evaluation and data analysis, we found an increase in children's confidence (outside of P6/7-stigma of being withdrawn). Clear progress in reading, early sounds, phonics work at P2/3. P1 Improvements in behaviour, focus & listening. Our data analysis following May assessments showed an improvement in outcomes for almost all children who availed of the withdrawal scheme.

The Impact of Focussed Literacy Strategies in Key Stage 3 Science

C.Greer

Abstract

Analysis of science assessment data for Year 8 pupils showed a poor progression of individual pupils across the academic year and significant in-school variation of residuals for the year group. Also, a Collegial Book Discussion identified inconsistencies in the quality of pupils' written work.

Further, analysis of responses of GCSE candidates to extended answer questions, assessing the quality of written communication, showed that pupils were frequently failing to secure a full award of 6 marks. Hence, the purpose of this action research was to improve scientific literacy skills by focussing on the explicit learning of key terminology at Key Stage 3, to build a secure knowledge and skill base to raise attainment. The research was carried out with Year 8 Physics pupils. Analysis of the first-hand evidence collected, Collegial Book Discussions, Pupil Voice questionnaires and the tracking assessment data, showed that the action research had a wholly positive impact on attitudes, confidence and learning. The range of strategies used, and the consistency of the approach was critical to the successful outcomes of this initiative.

Key Words: Literacy, Attainment, Improvement, Oracy, Meta-Cognition

School Profile

Bloomfield Collegiate School is a controlled girls' grammar school in East Belfast with an enrolment of 710 pupils. The pupils come from broad geographical and socio-economic backgrounds. The school is consistently oversubscribed, and selection data shows a typical profile of pupil achieving a score of between 90 and 120 in the AQE transfer assessment. Approximately 10% of the pupils are identified with special educational needs, and 15% are entitled to free school meals. All pupils are required to study at least one science subject at GCSE level, and most pupils study science at Advanced Level. The Education and Training Inspectorate concluded in 2015 that the quality of education provided by the school is good. In the inspection report one of the areas of provision identified as requiring improvement was the development of literacy across the curriculum. The school has a considerable number of feeder primary schools, and as a consequence Year 8 pupils start the school with a significant variation in prior experiences of science learning.

Area for Improvement

Through self-evaluation, the priority area for improvement was identified as Key Stage 3 literacy skills in science, specifically the correct use of scientific terminology in written work and speaking. Shanahan and Shanahan (2008) describe how the development of literacy must evolve as students progress and require higher-order specialised skills. They describe how their learning, and particularly their skills to utilise texts, must develop from basic to specialised 'disciplinary literacy'. Thus, subject attainment at GCSE and Advanced Level rely upon the development of scientific literacy in Key Stage 3 and in moving from literacy as a cross-curricular consideration to being a content driver embedded within schemes of learning. Wellington & Osborne support an explicit emphasis on literacy development as they hypothesise that language is a major barrier to most pupils in learning science and that every science lesson should be a language lesson. Science has an abundance of a large range and variety of unfamiliar technical vocabulary which must be used confidently and effectively by pupils to access higher order thinking and learning and to maximise their attainment. Also, there are many familiar terms used incorrectly in everyday life (for example, mass and weight, field, normal) and it is vital for pupil progression to rebuild the pupils' schemas and address misconceptions where necessary. Central to this area of school improvement is to raise the awareness of pupils to the

importance of careful, accurate and deliberate use of key terms. Pupils deepen their learning and raise their prospects through an understanding of their learning mechanisms, and so meta-cognition is an underpinning principle in this research. By using a range of learning strategies, pupils will be facilitated to master scientific terminology. Even with the increasing use of emerging technologies, the competent and confident use of textbooks remains a key disposition for successful students at all levels of science education, and this is a crucial aspect of the literacy strategy.

Baseline Position

Analysis of SIMS Assessment Manager Tracking Data for Year 8 Physics classes 2016/2017 showed inconsistent progression across the year. Consideration was given to the order, type and consistency of assessment but progress for a significant majority of the pupils was uneven, spikey and in some cases there was a regression. Pupil voice analysis also indicated faltering confidence in some areas of the programmes of study and a lack of engagement. A collegial book discussion revealed several potential areas for improvement in the accuracy and presentation of pupils' work, addressed poorly by the pupils following feedback. Item-level analysis of GCSE data shows variation across the school in questions designed to assess candidates' quality of written communication and which are awarded six marks. An initial science baseline test was given to Year 8 2017/2018 to assess their baseline knowledge and understanding at the start of Key Stage 3 based on GL Assessment Progress Through Science tests to inform planning.

Quality Indicators / Success Criteria

- All pupils will routinely assess their prior knowledge of key terminology at the start of every topic.
- All pupils will complete a wide range of learning strategies to enhance the development of their scientific literacy peculiar to each topic and general to core scientific principles.
- All pupils will learn strategies that they can use independently to enhance their learning of scientific terminology.
- A retrieval calendar will be used by all pupils to facilitate periodic, spaced, engaging revision of key terminology.
- There will be consistent progression across assessments for all Year 8 Physics pupils in the focus group.
- Most pupils will achieve their targets and have positive residuals.
- All pupils will be facilitated to construct their own learning journey.
- Most pupil laboratory notebooks will show accurate use of key terminology for each topic and clear evidence of literacy driven success criteria used by the pupil to assess their progress.
- All pupils will use the textbook independently for preparation and will be able to use the reference and glossary sections.
- All pupils' confidence and engagement will have increased throughout the course.
- All approaches are meta-cognitive, being explicit about learning literacy, so pupils are understanding and synthesising their own learning.

Actions Taken

Topics start and end with explicit learning of new scientific terminology including:

- Sheet at the start of topic – pupils, use emojis to indicate the familiar words and suggest or predict meaning;
- Spelling strategies/tests;

- Analysis of stems, prefixes, suffixes, roots, link words and the building blocks of words – predicting meaning;
- Deconstruction of composite and complex words (such as photosynthesis) and associated words;
- Highlighting and assessment of hinge words;
- Lesson starters – word puzzles, correct the incorrect spellings etc.;
- Think pair share and mini whiteboards.

Throughout the learning, there are multiple opportunities for frequent use, application and periodic retrieval including:

- Writing scaffolds;
- Comprehension;
- Extended writing;
- DART activities, underlining, summarising, reconstructing, extending;
- Developing scientific writing;
- Concept Cartoons – oracy work;
- Super-summaries of key terms.

Constant exposure to the correct form, use and association of terminology:

- Picture word wall;
- Science dictionary and Jargon Jotter – glossary with diagrams;
- Display boards – labelled apparatus –unit freeze;
- Model answers;
- Reading and recording strategies, summarise and present;
- Wall friezes;
- Word of the week board.

Textbook exercises including:

- Flipped learning;
- Accessing and summarising information;
- Pre-, post-, and active reading activities;
- Learning to navigate a textbook – use of glossary;
- Exposure and use of multimodal texts.

Word Games used as Assessment for Learning:

- Question loops, Taboo, Articulate, connecting hexagons, crosswords, differentiated word searches, Pictionary, Bingo, Jeopardy, Guess what? Connect 4, Gold Rings.

Opportunities for extended writing

- Experimental descriptions
- Drawing a conclusion with scientific justification
- Report writing
- Research activities
- Presentation opportunities
- Talking graphs.

Progress

- Very good progress has been made against the success criteria.
- The standard of pupils' written work improved in terms of presentation, accuracy and content. A depository of learning strategies has been used and evaluated for effectiveness.

- The retrieval schedule was successful in developing pupils independent study habits.
- Pupils use literacy and subject-specific success criteria to construct their own learning journey.
- Pupils' awareness of the importance of learning scientific language increased exponentially.
- The learning environment reflects a literacy-rich setting.
- Tracking data showed progression for all pupils against their individual targets and resulted in wholly positive residuals.
- Most books showed accurate use of key terminology for each topic and clear evidence of literacy driven success criteria used by the pupil to assess their progress.
- The presentation and evidence of learning improved in pupil work.
- Pupils' confidence and skill in the use of the textbook improved.
- Pupils can explain the importance of focussing on key terminology to accelerate their learning.
- Pupils' enjoyment of science increased.

Evidence

Tracking Data for one class of Year 8 Physics pupils indicates clear progression across the academic year and positive residuals. Attainment data is compared to individualised pupil targets.

Pupil	Tracking Assessment 1		Tracking Assessment 2		Tracking Assessment 3		Tracking Assessment 4		Residual
	Target %	Result %							
Pupil 1	70	72	70	76	75	78	75	82	+5
Pupil 2	60	69	70	78	75	80	75	84	+8
Pupil 3	65	63	65	66	65	69	65	69	+3
Pupil 4	70	69	70	77	75	82	75	79	+4
Pupil 5	70	74	75	82	75	79	80	82	+4
Pupil 6	65	61	65	69	65	72	70	72	+4
Pupil 7	55	59	60	64	65	64	65	66	+3
Pupil 8	70	68	70	79	75	72	75	83	+6
Pupil 9	65	65	65	63	65	73	65	69	+4
Pupil 10	60	62	65	70	65	67	65	69	+3
Pupil 11	60	69	65	68	65	66	65	72	+5
Pupil 12	60	59	60	66	65	69	65	67	+3
Pupil 13	60	54	60	67	65	64	65	69	+1
Pupil 14	70	79	75	74	75	77	75	82	+4
Pupil 15	75	72	75	79	75	78	75	74	+2
Pupil 16	70	68	70	74	70	74	75	79	+3
Pupil 17	60	64	65	66	65	62	65	68	+1
Pupil 18	60	62	60	59	60	66	65	71	+3
Pupil 19	55	52	55	59	60	62	60	60	+2
Pupil 20	65	66	65	67	65	62	65	71	+2

Table 47: Tracking Data for Year Physics Pupils

Collegial Book Discussion

Pupil laboratory notebooks were analysed for improvements in literacy and the learning journey. All books included clear interactive success criteria with a specific literacy focus that the pupils use to judge their progress. Nearly all books showed consistent use of correct nomenclature. All books demonstrated that the pupils made a consistent effort to maintain their Laboratory notebooks as a personal pride high standard of presentation. Most of the books showed evidence of pupils' responses to teacher feedback.

Pupil Voice

A self-report questionnaire with a 1-5 Likert scale was administered at the start of Year 8 and at the end of the academic year 2017/2018. Ten questions assessed attitudinal changes due to the learning strategies. A further questionnaire was used for pupils with specific literacy barriers to learning.

All pupils indicated that their confidence in science had increased and their skill at using a textbook had also increased. Most pupils showed an increased level of awareness at the importance of specialist language for their attainment (those that did not show an increase had stayed constant at the top of the scale). For pupils with literacy difficulties, they reported clear progression in their understanding of keywords.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This active research on purposefully developing literacy in science demonstrated that learning aptitude and attainment improved for all pupils. However, to improve literacy strategies further, the literacy strategy will be extended to Year 9 and Year 10 learning plans. GL Assessment Progress Through Science assessments will also be used to track progression in addition to tracking data. A longitudinal study will also monitor pupils to assess the impact on GCSE performance.

An Evaluation of Digital Learning at St. Mary's Primary School

S.McVeigh

Abstract

This action-based research has focused on raising the standards in ICT based on the first-hand evidence produced by the children through their body of work throughout the school.

Key Words: ICT, Digital Media, First Hand Evidence

School Profile

St.Mary's Primary School is located in Divis Street, close to Belfast city centre, in the historic parish of St. Mary's, Chapel Lane. The school caters for children from the parish and surrounding neighbourhood. However, the majority of our pupils travel to our school from across Belfast and beyond. We are proud to be a genuinely intercultural school community with pupils from a wide range of ethnic communities, and we believe this cultural diversity helps us create a caring and welcoming school which sees each pupil as a unique individual and part of a unique learning community.

Area for Improvement

Presentation within the area of ICT. Other key areas of ICT are good, but exchange and Presentation are areas for development.

Baseline Position

- From FHE (In centrally stored areas), ICT is good in the school.
- No Central Visual Learning Environment established (VLE)
- No Public Forums to further develop 'Express' and 'Exchange' 'E's.
- Students are producing ICT work which is stored on ipads or OneDrive but are not displaying the work elsewhere.

Quality Indicators / Success Criteria

- Children will gain a sense of achievement by having their work displayed in the school. (Presentation, from 5 E's)
- To have News-desk successfully embedded in teaching and learning.
- Children will be using a range of ICT skills successfully.
- Children will have a clear focus for development based on the first-hand evidence produced in children's work. (FHE in centrally stored locations, Public Folder, One-drives, Dropbox, etc.).

Actions Taken

- Action agreed for teaching and learning
- Teaching Strategies to be used consistently.
- Quality of Learning expected to meet the success criteria.
- Pupils submitting 'articles' online to the School Reporter Section of News-desk.
- Teachers will display pupils work throughout school using the most suitable medium.
- First hand evidence produced in children's work based on Trusted Colleague Networking and Collegiate Work Discussion.
- Set criterion for focus for development in next term/half term.

- Have a central stored area of Good Practice ICT work showing the various levels in classes, 'Top', 'Middle' and 'Bottom'.

Progress

- Staff have been trained on the use of News-desk. Two out of seven teachers are using News-desk on a regular basis. Time restrictions and busy timetable were given as reasons.
- Some teachers are displaying work on walls and other ways, but there is still a great deal of room for improvement.
- The QR codes are popular and are proving a great way to showcase videos and presentations.
- FHE is shown on One Drive and Public Folders with a range of abilities, 'Top', 'Middle' and 'Bottom'.

Evidence

- Samples of children's ICT work in centrally stored locations.
- Data published regarding completed ICT Tasks in each year group to maintain consistency across the classes.
- The evidence is shown in children's folders in the Public Folder, Dropbox and One-drive accounts.
- The First hand Evidence Folder where the teachers keep memos, children's work samples and feedback forms.
- Review sheets which show termly tasks and where the work produced is stored.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Presentation is still an area for development next year. The ICT co-ordinator will encourage and view children presenting and reviewing their work. There is also a need to examine the area of Exchange to make sure that the appropriate classes are covering this area successfully.

Evaluating the Impact of a Key Stage 3 Pupil Intervention Programme to Support Improvements in Literacy and Numeracy

D.Coyle

Abstract

The purpose of this research was to create an individual pupil profile that would allow the school to record attainment data (PTE/PTM) across KS3 concerning literacy and numeracy. Attainment data was cross-referenced with data derived through diagnostic assessments (CAT4) of developed ability and likely academic performance. Where there was a significant gap, we were able to identify potential underachievement. Curricular strengths concerning literacy and numeracy then allowed the school to implement a precision intervention with the pupil as opposed to general literacy and numeracy support.

Key Words: Attainment, Potential, Underachievement, Precision Intervention

School Profile

CBS Glen Road is a post-primary school situated on the Glen Road in West Belfast. The school currently has an enrolment of 500 pupils. The entire male enrolment KS3 &4 and Post 16 is a co-ed provision. Over 60% of pupils are entitled to free school meals. The school has strong links with the community and is used extensively by a range of sporting, cultural and community groups. During the last ETI Inspection, it was reported that the school had an outstanding understanding of self-evaluation and capacity for sustained improvement.

Baseline Position

- All Key Stage 3 pupils tested for attainment in literacy and numeracy using PTM/PTM standardised testing.
- All Key Stage 3 pupils tested for verbal, non-verbal, spatial and quantitative reasoning using CAT 4 to provide a profile of pupil ability.
- All Key Stage 3 pupils complete PASS psychometric assessment designed to identify attitudinal or emotional issues which could present as barriers to learning.

Success Criteria

- Pupil need for support identified and appropriate intervention strategy implemented.
- Closing the gap between higher CAT 4 data and lower pupil attainment data.
- Teacher and pupil confidence that intervention has supported improvement.
- Use of completed pupil profiles to inform classroom learning and teaching strategies.

Actions Taken

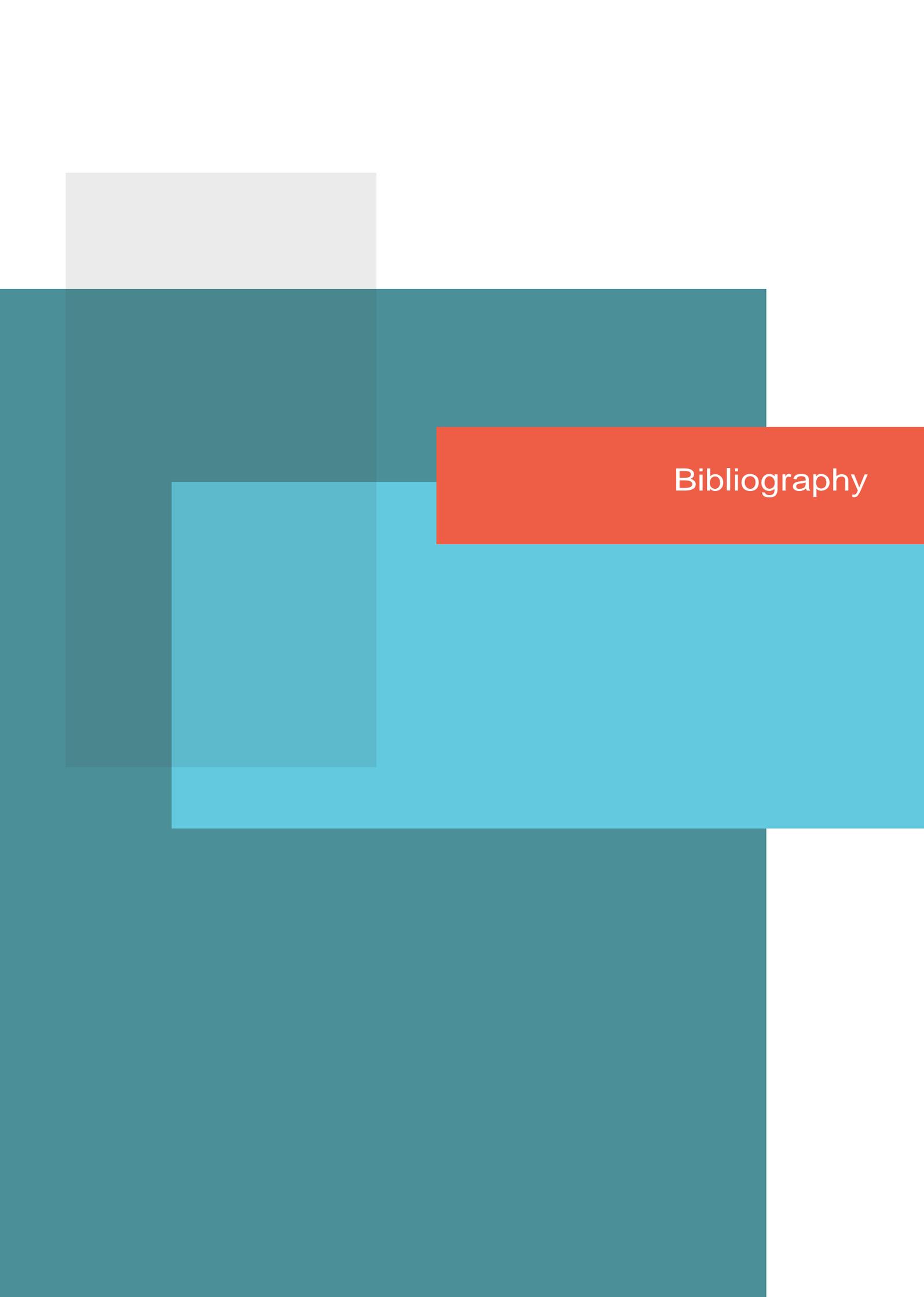
- A Year 8 pilot targeting underachievement.
- Use of CAT 4 data and attainment data using PTM/PTE to identify gaps.
- Criteria was a discrepancy of 10 or more between CAT4/PTM/PTE.
- A Pilot group of pupils selected.
- Meeting with parents to outline the strategy.
- Small group withdrawal once a week focused on the identified area of weakness, spelling, fractions etc.
- All support timetabled with a subject specialist.

Progress

- Thirty-three pupils made progress. Four pupils remained the same.
- Pupil voice (through a questionnaire). All pupils believed that the support offered helped them in improving literacy/numeracy.
- Pupils liked the small groups.
- Reflections from meetings indicated other improvements. Pupils more confident / peer friendship groups formed from small intervention groups. Pupils displayed more confidence in class and were willing to take risks.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Although this initiative was successful, there is a need to adopt a more 'joined up approach'. Evidence showed that poor school attendance was a major factor with pupils who made little or no progress. PASS data that indicates a poor attitude to school/learning must be addressed alongside academic interventions.



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