Woodbrook College
Bray, Co. Wicklow

School Self-Evaluation Summary Document

Strand 1: Literacy (2014 – 2017)
Strand 2: Numeracy (2015 – 2018)
Strand 3: Assessment *for* Learning (2016 – 2019)

Report Issue Date: September 18th, 2017

1. Introduction

1.1 Focus of the Evaluation

A school self-evaluation of teaching and learning in Woodbrook College, Bray, Co. Wicklow, was undertaken during April & May 2017. The purpose of the evaluation was to ascertain our progress in the areas of Literacy (Year 3), Numeracy (Year 2) and Assessment *for* Learning (Year 1).

Four data tools were utilised:
- A survey of all teaching staff.
- A survey of the entire student body.
- An analysis of student work.
- Focus group of 7 senior students.

1.2 School Context

Currently, Woodbrook College is a co-educational voluntary secondary school under the trusteeship of the Edmund Rice Schools Trust. Situated on the outskirts of the large urban town of Bray, there are 361 students including a number of students with EAL and other specific learning needs. The school receives an allocation of 127.6 hours to cater for these needs in a variety of programmes and formats. There is a Transition Year containing 48 students and an LCA2 class containing 6 students. The LCVP programme is also well established in the school and is offered in both 5th and 6th year each year.

2. The Findings

Surveys were designed and distributed to students and staff members and the results of these were analysed along with existing data including STen scores for reading and samples of students' written work across all subject areas (current 3rd Year group). The findings were analysed under the three headings – Learner Outcomes, Learner Experiences and Teachers' Practice.

Learner Outcomes

- The 1st year students' standardised test results and report cards from their primary school were analysed by the SSE Co-ordinator and Career Guidance Counsellor and a comparison made with the national norms. There has been a noticeable increase in the academic potential of our student intake in the past three years with a discernible increase in the high average intake. As a whole, the verbal reasoning of our intake is well above the national norm. Similarly, there has been an increase in students with 'very high' levels of numerical ability in recent years. This is reflected in the increased attainment at Junior Cert Higher Level in recent years.

- All subject departments used the PDST tool for analysing results in the Leaving Certificate and Junior Certificate exams. The results were compared to national trends. The majority of subjects are comparable with the national norms, with some exceeding national norms. The results of this analysis as well as targets for the future were recorded and filed with the relevant subject plan.

Learning Experience

Surveys were conducted with the teaching staff and whole student body. The purpose of the study was to evaluate progress on Literacy, Numeracy & A*f*L practices within the school. Staff were also asked to suggest an area of focus for Strand 4. Direct questions were asked and language was kept

deliberately accessible to ensure the experience was not daunting for junior students. The last question allowed each student to make an open comment on their learning experience in Woodbrook College. Students were reminded not to mention the names of staff or fellow pupils.

In order to gain further insight, a student focus group was convened. The group comprised of 7 senior students of varying academic abilities and mixed ethnic backgrounds. Two EAL students were also invited to take part as EAL students are an integral part of the school community. The focus group allowed for a qualitative analysis which greatly enriched the baseline data gathered. The 30 minute session was videotaped. Written parental consent for the participation and recording was received from each student's parent/guardian.

Student Findings
- Overall school enjoyment rate is high. 67% state that they enjoy learning.
- 92% of students state that they are usually aware of the learning intention in the lesson.
- 87% of students enjoy working in pairs or small groups.
- 86% of students felt that their teachers enjoy Mathematics (i.e., all staff). This represents a marked improvement in attitude perception from last year.
- 71% of students regularly make a second attempt at a Maths problem.
- 79% state that their teacher tells them how to get a good grade in a task (success criteria).
- Staff questioning practices remain well developed. 93% of staff regularly differentiate questions. 69% of students stated that staff regularly allow a wait time when questioning.

Teachers' Practice
Current teacher practice and familiarity with A*f*L strategies was investigated through the staff and student survey conducted in May 2017. This data was then triangulated using the responses from the student Focus Group.

Staff Findings
- 89% of staff display learning outcomes on the board at the beginning of the lesson.
- All staff use pair & group work. 73% of staff use this regularly. 87% of students report that they enjoy pair and group work.
- 73% of staff regularly give students the opportunity to create their own notes.
- 77% of staff regularly give students the opportunity to use investigative/self-directed learning.
- 90% regularly use technology in their classes.
- 93% of staff encourage students to persist with tasks that they have difficulty with.
- 87% of staff display a positive attitude towards Mathematics in their classes.
- Staff report that they distribute questions evenly amongst their pupils.
- 93% of staff differentiate questions either 'always' or 'regularly'.
- 96% of staff use higher order questions either 'always' or 'regularly'.
- The majority of staff allow a wait time. 97% of staff do this 'always' or 'regularly'.
- 70% of staff report that they include Assessment *for* Learning approaches to evaluate students' understanding, progress and achievement of expected learning outcomes.
- 87% of staff report that student written work is regularly monitored and corrected while 86% report that student non-written work is regularly monitored and corrected.

3.   Progress made on previously identified targets in the current SIPs

Literacy

Target 1 –   'to increase the number of students reading for pleasure for more than one hour per week' has not yet been met. Work continues on this target. The Book in Bag initiative will be prioritised next year as well as a refocus on DEAR.

Target 2 –   'to increase the standard of written work across the curriculum' has been partially met. There has been an improvement in the areas of spelling, vocabulary, punctuation and development of answer. The cohort have not yet met the targeted improvement in grammar. Work will continue on written work standards next academic year.

Target 3 –   'to increase number of students given regular opportunities for independent learning. This target has been far exceeded.

'to increase the number of students who enjoy pair/group work.'
This target has been met.

Target 4 –   'To increase the percentage of teachers displaying and discussing learning outcomes to 100%.' This target has almost been met; 96% of staff display learning outcomes and keywords at the beginning of each class. Work continues to ensure *all* teachers do this every lesson.

Numeracy

Target 1 –   'to increase the uptake at Junior Certificate Higher Level by 4%' has been met. The Mathematics Department continues to prioritise this Higher Level uptake at both Junior & Senior level.

Target 2 -   'to increase attainment of honours grades at Junior Certificate Higher Level grades by 4%' has been far exceeded. Junior Certificate honours grades have increased by 10%. This is especially commendable considering the increased uptake at Higher Level.

Assessment *for* Learning

Target 1 –   'to increase the number of students who regularly edit their own work from 32% in May 2016 to 50% in May 2019' has been partially met.

Target 2 -   'to increase task focussed feedback to reduce the number of students confused by teachers' feedback from 37% in May 2016 to 22% in May 2019' has been met. There has been a dramatic improvement in this area. 85% of pupils now feel that they can improve their work as a direct result of teacher feedback.

4.   Summary of School Self-Evaluation Findings

4.1   Strengths
Our school has strengths in the following areas:
- Student enjoyment rate is high. The Focus Group students attributed this to the positive relationship between staff and students.
- A large percentage of students indicated they liked learning in pairs and small groups. All staff use pair/group work on occasion with 75% of staff regularly engaging in the practice.
- The technology infrastructure in the school has greatly improved with the move to the new building. 90% of staff regularly use technology in their classes. A large percentage of students suggested that they like using technology to learn.
- All teachers currently share syllabus-linked learning outcomes with their students on some occasion. 92% of students reported that they are usually aware of the learning intention of the lesson.
- Staff questioning practices are well developed with 93% of staff regularly differentiating questions and 96% of staff regularly use higher order questions. 96% of staff regularly allow a 'wait time'. 69% of students confirmed this.

4.2   Areas for Improvement
Our school has identified the following areas for improvement:

- Considering the improved ICT infrastructure in the new building, staff Continuous Professional Development (CPD) would be beneficial to assist staff in maximising this resource.
- The percentage of teachers who display the objectives and keywords of each lesson on the whiteboard or on a student hand-out has increased, though 67% of teachers report that they only do this 'sometimes'. This needs to improve.
- Increased expectations and standards in writing across the curriculum. We need to revisit the common correction code to further improve spelling, grammar and punctuation. Furthermore, all students should be aware of what a 'good' piece of work ought to look like. Work should be carried out on this early on in this academic year.
- Some students are still unfamiliar with the school's Common Correction Code.
- Feedback practices could be further improved. 85% of students feel that they can improve their work directly as a result of teacher feedback which is very positive in terms of student autonomy in the learning process. However, when a teacher corrects their work, 32% remain unsure of how to improve. Consistent & effective feedback should be prioritised this year.

5.   Legislative and Regulatory Requirements
The following legislative and regulatory requirements need to be addressed:

- The school's Legislative and Regulatory checklist is attached to this report.

Appendix to School Self-evaluation Report
Legislative and regulatory checklist

Issue	Relevant legislation, rule or circular	Is the school fully meeting the requirements of the relevant legislation, rule or circular?	If no, indicate to be developed
Valid enrolment of students	M51/93	Yes	
Time in school - Length of school year (minimum of 167 days for all year groups) - Length of school week (minimum of 28 hours for all year groups)	Circular M29/95	Yes Yes	
Standardisation of school year	Circular 034/2011	Yes	
Arrangements for parent/teacher and staff meetings	Circular M58/04	Yes	
Implementation of national literacy strategy	Circular 25/12	Yes	
Implementation of Croke Park agreement regarding additional time requirement	Circular 025/2011	Yes	
Development of school plan	Section 21 Education Act 1998	Yes	
Guidance provision in secondary schools	Circular PPT12/05, Education Act 1998 (section 9(c))	Yes	
Whole-school guidance plan	Section 21 Education Act 1998	No	Work ongoing.
Delivery of CSPE to all junior cycle classes	Circular M12/01 Circular M13/05	Yes	
Exemption from the study of Irish	Circular M1 0/94	Yes	
Implementation of revised in-school management structures	Circular M29/02, Circular 21/98, Circular 30/97, Circular 29/97	Yes	
Limited alleviation on filling posts of responsibility for school year 2013/14	Circular 53/11	Yes	
Public service (Croke Park) agreement - special needs assistants	Circular 71/11	Yes	
Parents as partners in education	Circular M27/91	Yes	

Issue	Relevant legislation, rule or circular	Is the school fully meeting the requirements of the relevant legislation, rule or circular?	If no, indicate aspects to be developed
Implementation of child protection procedures	Circular 65/11	Yes	
	Please provide the following information in relation to child protection		
	• Number of cases where a report involving a child in the school was submitted by the DLP to the HSE	0	
	• Number of cases where a report involving a child in the school was submitted by the DLP to the HSE and the school board of management informed	0	
	• Number of cases where the DLP sought advice from the HSE and as a result of this advice, no report was made	0	
	• Number of cases where the DLP sought advice from the HSE and as a result of this advice, no report was made and the school board of management informed	0	
Implementation of complaints procedure as appropriate	Section 28 Education Act 1998	Yes	
	Please provide the following information in relation to complaints made by parents during this school year		
	• Number of formal parental complaints received • Number of formal complaints processed • Number of formal complaints not fully processed by the end of this school year	0	
Refusal to enrol	Section 29 Education Act 1998		
	Please provide the following information in relation to appeals taken in accordance with Section 29 against the school during this school year		
	• Number of section 29 cases taken against the school	0	
	• Number of cases processed at informal stage • Number of cases heard • Number of appeals upheld • Number of appeals dismissed	0	

Issue	Relevant legislation, rule or circular	Is the school fully meeting the requirements of the relevant legislation, rule or circular?	If no, indicate aspects to be developed
Suspension of students	Section 29 Education Act 1998	0	
	Please provide the following information in relation to appeals taken in accordance with Section 29 against the school during this school year N/A		
	• Number of section 29 cases taken against the school • Number of cases processed at informal stage • Number of cases heard • Number of appeals upheld • Number of appeals dismissed		
Expulsion of students	Section 29 Education Act 1998	0	
	Please provide the following information in relation to appeals taken in accordance with Section 29 against the school during this school year		
	• Number of section 29 cases taken against the school • Number of cases processed at informal stage • Number of cases heard • Number of appeals upheld • Number of appeals dismissed		