

St Paul's Senior National School

School Self Evaluation

Rationale

As part of our school self-evaluation we decided to focus on Reading which would facilitate the introduction of the Primary Language Curriculum. Through the process of evaluation we reflected on and reviewed our day to day practices and our policies, with a particular focus on teaching and learning. We believed that it could provide the school with an internal process for developing and progressing action planning for improvement.

We agreed to try and target the 3rd class children (2018) with Standard Age Scores in the range 82 – 99 on their Micra T test. The bell curve showed the distribution of SAS for these pupils was below normal. Using this evidence we identified meaningful and specific targets for improvement that focused on teaching and learning practices and outcomes. We had hoped to see an improvement in the SAS of the children identified within this range over their four years in St Paul's School.

From analysis of the Micra T results given to this cohort at the end of 2nd class.

- 18 pupils out of 53 fell within the SAS range (82 – 99) 34% at the end of 2nd class.
- 22 pupils out of 53 fell within the SAS range (82 – 99) 40% at the end of 3rd class.
- 25 pupils out of 53 fell within the SAS range (82 – 99) 49% at the end of 5th class.
- 22 pupils out of 52 fell within the SAS range (82 – 99) 43% at the end of 6th class.

These pupils did not qualify for Learning Support and it was from identifying our focus, gathering evidence and analysis of this evidence that we set our initial target. We made use of quantitative evidence (Micra T) and pupil/parent surveys to determine what the evidence was telling us in order to make valued judgements. We wrote and shared our plan with the staff. The plan was put into action in the academic year 2019/20 and included.

- Third and fourth class book club to meet every month to discuss their favourite books.
- Fifth and sixth class book club to meet every month to discuss a novel that had been chosen by the teacher and group.
- We actively encouraged pupils from the said SAS group to participate and join.
- In 2019 pupils from fourth class had commenced paired reading with the junior school pupils on a weekly basis.

- Both Mr. Malone and Ms. Hackett were scheduling a meeting to guide parents on how best to support their child with reading at home.
- We had planned to make a visit to Raheny Library in the last term of 2020.

By March 2020 it had become clear that we were facing a global pandemic of Covid 19. The school was shut on March 12th 2020 and was closed for the remainder of the academic year. We were unable to administer the Micra T test at the end of fourth class.

Using a SCOT Analysis to identify focus

Strengths

- i. Excellent and passionate staff.
- ii. Strong community links.
- iii. Excellent library with a rich and varied selection of books to suit all levels of readers.
- iv. Accurate and reliable test results from Micra T test.

Challenges

- i. A growing negative attitude towards reading. Threats from phones, gaming and social media.
- ii. Covid 19 has had a major impact on the level of Micra T scores. For Ms. Moriarty's class there has been a 62.5% drop in those pupils identified within the 82 – 99 SAS range from the end of 2nd class to the end of 5th class. For Ms. Hackett there has been a 100% drop in those pupils identified within the 82 -99 SAS range from the end of 2nd class to the end of 5th.

Opportunities

- i. The Covid Learning and Support Scheme.
- ii. Return of the book club for all classes from 3rd to 6th.

Threats

- i. Continuing disruption caused by Covid 19 on teaching and learning
- ii. Disengagement from learning and school caused by two periods of school closures 2020 and 2021.
- iii. Threats from computers, gaming and social media.

Looking at our school

Learner Outcomes

Pupils at St Paul's have a positive learning experience and they are motivated by teachers to reach their full potential. Teachers endeavour to give pupils the subject knowledge, skills and understanding required by the primary curriculum. Teachers and pupils work to achieve the stated learning objectives for the term and year.

Learner Experiences

Pupils at St Paul's engage positively with meaningful learning activities. They learn from their experiences and are asked by teachers to reflect on their work and to take responsibility for their learning. Pupils experience opportunities to develop the skills necessary for lifelong learning.

Teachers' Individual practice

The teachers at St Paul's work within the Quality Framework displaying the requisite subject knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and classroom management skills. Teachers plan, prepare and assess to ensure pupils continued learning. Teachers select appropriate teaching approaches and differentiate according to pupil individual needs.

Teachers' Collective/Collaborative Practice

The teachers at St Paul's actively engage in their own professional development sharing ideas and resources in a collaborative manner.

Looking at our school to refine focus

Pupils engage purposefully in meaningful learning activities. To what extent is this evident in St Paul's?

In certain cases pupils do engage, but as with many students with SAS between 82 – 99 this would prove to be most challenging as they do not have the levels of literacy necessary to participate in learning both independently and collaboratively. What the purpose of learning tasks are largely depends on the individual pupils own abilities. This in turn will be reflected in their ability to report, present and explain.

Pupils grow as learners through respectful interactions and experiences that are challenging and supportive.

Pupil/Teacher relations are positive and conducive to well-being. St Paul's fosters a positive learning environment which is evident in our discipline for learning. Discipline for learning allows and facilitates good classroom practice, allowing pupils to contribute to classroom discussion and debate. Pupils are encouraged to answer questions safe in the knowledge that making mistakes are merely learning opportunities. Persistence to see a task through to completion is always of the utmost importance to teachers.

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Our Self-Evaluation Report and Improvement Plan

1. Introduction

This document records the outcomes of our last improvement plan, the findings of this self – evaluation and our current improvement plan, including targets and the actions we will implement to meet the targets.

- 1.1 Outcomes of our last improvement plan from September 2018 to June 2022.
- 1.2 The focus of this evaluation was on reading in order to facilitate the introduction of the Primary Language Curriculum. We evaluated and monitored the SAS scores of pupils within the range 82 – 99 over a four year period using the Micra T test results.

2. Findings of this evaluation

- 2.1 This is effective/very effective practice in our school. From analysis of the data it is evident that Covid had a negative impact on teaching and learning. The quantitative evidence shows us that over the four year period 2018 – 2022 the cohort within the SAS range grew from 34% to a peak of 49% at the end of 5th class. The Covid pandemic coupled with school closures attributed to these figures. With no opportunity to hold book clubs, paired reading, library visits or parental supportive reading, effective or very effective practice in our school proved difficult. However the academic year 2021 – 2022 saw an improvement in the figures with a 6% decrease of pupils within the SAS range (82 – 99) from 49% to 43%. This decrease may be attributed to very effective teaching by class teachers, learning support and the CLASS support scheme.

List the main strengths of the school in teaching and learning.

- Dedicated professional teachers and Special Needs Assistants.
 - A supportive wider school community.
 - Engagement by staff with the new Primary Language Curriculum.
 - Reflection by staff on their practices and teaching.
- 2.2 This is how we know (list the evidence sources. Refer to pupil attainment, knowledge and skills.)
 - The improvement in Micra T results from 6th class pupils.
 - Class of 2022 Room 12 Writing Anthology.
 - Open displays of written work in a print rich environment using Word walls, Bookflick display board showing recommended book titles and top 10 books for children.

- Novels read by pupils are *Wonder, Holes, Reaching the Heights, King of the Cloud Forest, The Witches, The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas and Warhorse.*
- Classroom debate and discussion.

2.3 This is what we are going to focus on to improve our practice further (specify the aspects of teaching and learning the school has identified and prioritised for further improvement.)

- We shall repeat the process of focusing on reading with 3rd class children (2022). This is to improve the reading outcomes for children within the SAS range 82 – 99. A survey on English reading for pleasure will be undertaken by 3rd class pupils and parents. Standardised English test results will be monitored over the four year period.
- Genres of writing from persuasive, descriptive, narrative, expository, journal or letter writing.
- The learning and implementation of Gaeilge in our English – medium school. A survey will be undertaken by 3rd class pupils and parents on their attitudes and outlook towards Gaeilge (2023). A standardised test in Gaeilge will be taken by 3rd class pupils to ascertain where we as a school rank nationally. Results will then enable us to alter our scheme to reflect the standards of our pupils.

3. Our improvement plan

We have recorded:

- The targets for improvement we have set are to focus on reading, genres of writing and the learning and implementation of Gaeilge in our school (2023).
- The actions we will implement to achieve these. Monitoring standardised test results, classroom environment and practice which fosters a love of language through reading and writing.
- Who is responsible for implementing monitoring and reviewing our improvement plan. Mr. Brian Malone.
- How we will measure progress and check outcomes (criteria for success). The pupils attainment, knowledge and skills will reflect on how effective/very effective our practice has been.

As we implement our improvement plan we will record:

- The progress and adjustments made.
- Achievement of targets (original and modified).