

School Self Evaluation Report June 2015

# **Scoil Muire Bannrón**

**Gilroy Avenue, Edenderry, Co.Offaly**

**18364 O**



**School Self-Evaluation Report Literacy**

**Evaluation period: September 2014 -June 2015**

**Report issue date: 20<sup>th</sup> June 2015**

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 The focus of the evaluation

A school self-evaluation of teaching and learning in Scoil Muire Bannrion was undertaken during the period September 2014 to June 2015. During the evaluation, teaching and learning in the following curriculum areas was evaluated:

Literacy: This is a report on the findings of the evaluation.

### 1.2 School context

Scoil Muire Bannrion is an all boys senior primary school under the patronage of the Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin. It is a 13 teacher school, there are 8 class teachers, 4 support teachers (EAL, GAM & Resource) and 1 administrative principal, catering for 197 pupils from Edenderry town and the surrounding area. Due to the opening of another co-educational school in the town six years ago numbers have declined in the school. Due to demographic changes in recent years, pupils of various nationalities and Religious denominations and none, have been welcomed into the school. Currently we have pupils from 12 different nationalities, for whom English is not their first language. This accounts for 28% of our school population. The school is part of the School Completion Programme and operates after school support groups Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings. The school participates in the An Taisce Green Flag Programme, the Discover Primary Science Awards for Science and Maths Excellence and also the Active schools programme. The school would also have a strong tradition in sports. The school has also very close community links with clubs and organisations. The school administers standardised tests in Mathematics (Sigma-T) and Micra T (English reading) from 2<sup>nd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> Class in May of each year. The school also administers the NRIT to all pupils in 2<sup>nd</sup> class in term 1 of each year. A whole school inspection was carried out in December 2011 and a report of the evaluation was published by the Department in June 2012. This report along with the results of standardised tests and was used as a starting point for the current school self-evaluation process.

## 2. The findings

### Testing Results and Support for pupils:

- Pupils overall attainment in literacy is improving, however we are scoring below national norms in recent Micra-T analysis (May 2014) it showed that 58.7 % of children are performing at or below the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile. (Nationally it is 50 %) In May 2013 63.6% of pupils were under the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile; in May 2012 65.8 % were under the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile.

- There has been a year on year improvement on the number of children scoring between the 51<sup>st</sup> and the 84<sup>th</sup> percentile, with the move improving towards national norms. The national norm distribution is 34%. In May 2012 our school distribution was 22.4% and in May 2015 this was up to 28.7%. Staff agree that this improvement is due to the implementation of the graded reading system and the organization of in class support for all classes, which targets support for all children.
- Results of the PSAK conducted in February 2014 indicate that 55 pupils are not achieving a B1.3 level proficiency in English.
- Results of the PSAK are used to inform class and support teachers on areas of literacy where children are experiencing success and challenges. The results of the PSAK are used to further inform support teachers planning and to group children according to their needs and abilities.
- EAL support is working very well for students in receipt of language support.
- Standardised test results are used to plan for individual children's support, group support and classroom support.
- Standardised test results along with reading benchmarks are used to inform class and support teachers planning for differentiated tasks and programmes.
- The results of standardized tests are communicated to parents in a timely fashion.
- The staged approach to identify pupils in need of support is working well.
- Support teachers administer a variety of tests including the Non Verbal Reasoning Tests to identify those children who may have specific learning needs in literacy and may require further supports. Such children are identified where large discrepancies arise between the teachers' observations of the pupil's ability and results of standardized tests/school tests.
- Pupils with SEN needs are supported in all areas of literacy through various models of support.
- In class support is allowing all children access to additional supports.
- Teachers also reported that there is very good regular liaison and a collaborative approach between learning support and mainstream teachers.
- Teachers reported that there is very good teacher knowledge of the curriculum.

### **Reading:**

- The grouping of pupils for reading according to ability was highlighted as an area of strength in the WSE, this has been further developed with the use of a graded reading system which has been phased in and implemented from the junior classes since September 2013.
- Children are all tested using the PM benchmarking kit and children are grouped according to their ability. Records of children's progress in reading are kept.
- Teachers and parents also observed a huge increase in the interest, enjoyment and motivation levels of the children in reading since the introduction of the programme.
- The school has invested heavily in resourcing the PM reading books in the school, further investment in non-fiction books and novels ( graded ) for the older classes is planned for the coming year.
- While the school acknowledges the need to withdraw certain children to meet their needs all staff agree that the alternative models of support (in-class and guided reading) now being implemented are of huge benefit to the pupils. In class support and station teaching is working very well in classes where this scheme is in place. Teachers have attended CPD in this area. Teachers also highlighted the positive impact it has had on teachers own professional development and a much more collaborative consistent approach is now in use. Sharing of good practice is facilitated in the school.
- The graded reading scheme will be implemented in all classes during the school year 2015-2016.
- In the WSE of 2011, through the pupil questionnaires, most pupils reported that they are doing well at reading.

### **Writing:**

- In relation to writing results of teachers questionnaires highlighted that all teachers prepare the topic of choice with the class prior to writing.
- Narrative writing is an area covered particularly well across all class levels.
- The children also said that they found it easier to write stories when they had brainstormed the idea with the teacher and when they had a " sheet" ( framework) to help them organize their ideas.
- They also reported in the questionnaires that when they had difficulty writing they took

help/ inspiration from past experiences/books that they had read/ cartoons/films or areas that are of particular interest to them.

- The children also indicated that they loved to read/ write about factual information.
- Teachers reported that when the children were given a real life purpose for their writing ( eg being presented to the class) that was when the highest standard of writing was observed.
- The children also indicated in the questionnaires that they liked to read out their stories for other people but that this rarely happened. They indicated that they loved when the teacher made " a book" of their writing.
- The results of the childrens' focus groups were that children had a positive disposition to writing and in cases where free writing was in use in the class they thoroughly enjoyed this because among other reasons "spelling didn't matter". The children also indicated that they felt they were good at spelling and had nice handwriting.
- Results of the teachers' questionnaires indicated that not all genres of writing are explicitly taught to the children.
- Writing frameworks are used occasionally but not for all genres of writing.
- In the focus groups the children were presented with various writing genres, although they could talk about the piece presented they had difficulty correctly identifying and naming some the writing genres. The teachers conducting the focus groups observed that when the children talked about writing they almost always associated it with the narrative genre.
- Results from the teachers' questionnaires also showed that the gradual release of responsibility is not used on a consistent basis and is only used occasionally.
- In relation to the teaching of writing teachers acknowledged that some children may have difficulty in completing all stages but most particularly the independent stage of the writing process. It was agreed that differentiation of outcome would need to be in place for these children so that all children would experience success.
- Teachers indicated in the questionnaires and discussions that pupils only sometimes edit and redraft their own work. Children also indicated in both the questionnaires and in the focus groups that they rarely edit their own work or reread it for mistakes.
- Through observation of writing indicators, for tracker children, there was a high standard of handwriting evident, however this was not consistent. This was an issue that was also highlighted in the WSE of 2011.

- In relation to assessment of writing the pupils indicated that they rarely have an opportunity to self assess and reflect on their own writing. Teachers also indicated on a checklist that they rarely use before and after samples to assess pupil's progress with writing. Following on from this , it was agreed that although teachers engage in assessment on an ongoing and daily basis for all areas of literacy, a more detailed plan needs to be drawn up to provide clarity around how we assess.

### Oral Language:

- Oral Language is taught and developed across all areas of the curriculum by teachers. Teachers engage in language development in maths, science, history, geography, art as well as in English on both a formal and informal basis.
- Teachers' discussion highlighted the added responsibility we as teachers now have in relation to developing the communication and oral language skills of our pupils.
- Teachers highlighted the need for developing a whole school programme for discrete oral language. It was also agreed that developing such a plan would be very challenging. Staff would need to attend CPD in this area in order to begin to develop such a plan.
- The children in receipt of language support ( EAL) has been of huge benefit to the pupils, however the appeal for a language support teacher for the school year 15-16 has been turned down. Considering the very high percentage of EAL pupils for the school year 15-16 and the number of children scoring below the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile in English, teachers highlighted huge concern in relation to developing and implementing a programme for children with English as an additional language without the support of a permanent EAL teacher.

### General Observations

- Time is dedicated at every staff meeting to discuss progress to date on school self - evaluation and to discuss any successes and challenges encountered. This allows time for personal and school reflection and for professional dialogue.
- The teacher's discussion also highlighted the need for a whole school plan outlining the relevant topics in grammar/punctuation for each class level.

### **3. Progress made on previously identified improvement targets**

- Not applicable for year one of the literacy plan (2015-2016) as S. I. P. not in place.
- A parent as Partners Policy was developed in relation to School Improvement Plan for Numeracy.

#### 4. Summary of school self-evaluation findings

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

- ***Learner Outcomes- Attainment of Curricular Objectives:*** The pupils have a positive attitude to learning and dispositions as set out for their class level. The pupils also enjoy literacy and are motivated to learn. Children feel they are doing well at reading and writing. The majority of pupils are achieving well in literacy. Pupil's attainment in comparison to national norms is improving.
- ***Learning Experiences- Learning Environment:*** Classrooms are appropriately laid out, well maintained and orderly. Bright print rich environments provide supportive learning environments throughout. Classrooms are well resourced and pupils have access to ICT during lessons with an interactive whiteboard in each class used to support their learning. Resources are also suitably selected and used. The school has heavily invested in providing graded reading material and novels which will be use in all classes by 2015-2016. The school and classroom environment supports, encourages and celebrates pupils' learning and achievement. There are print rich displays in the school which promotes the development of literacy. Classroom learning environments provide for the needs of all pupils.
- ***Learning Experiences- Pupil's engagement in Learning:*** Pupils at all class levels are enabled to engage with their learning and the level of pupil interest and participation is high. Pupils are given purposeful and frequent opportunities to engage in independent learning. Pupils are also suitably challenged in activities organized for them. Pupils are also supported in their learning. All pupils are encouraged to equally participate in lessons.
- ***Learning Experiences- Pupil's learning to Learn.*** The teachers prepare lessons that develop the children's skills and attitudes to learning and children are encouraged to communicate and work with others. The pupils are also guided to develop skills to plan and organize homework and study.
- ***Teachers' practice- teaching approaches:*** Differentiation is used to cater for the varying needs and abilities of pupils through the course of the lessons. Teachers also vary methodologies and resources to meet individual pupils learning needs. There is a very good use of ICT to support the children's learning. Various models of support are in use in the school and vary from in class support to withdrawal of groups to cater for the needs of all pupils and to provide support to a higher number of pupils.

- **Teachers' practice-preparation for learning& teachers approaches:** Plans long term and short term are prepared and available; the outcomes are clear and curriculum based, and are differentiated to cater for learning needs of the pupils in the class.
- **Teachers' Practice: Management of pupils:** The management of pupils during learning and other activities is very effective. There is a targeted focus on the children's pastoral care. A positive Code of Behaviour is implemented in a fair and consistent way. Teacher-pupil, pupil-pupil and pupil- teacher interactions are respectful. The teachers have high but realistic expectations of the pupils in relation to their behaviour and learning and they communicate these to them. Pupils contributions and questions are encouraged and respected in all classrooms and special educational settings. The school is inclusive and treats all pupils fairly. Pupils with special educational needs are treated in an inclusive and equitable way.
- **Teachers' Practice: Assessment: Assessment in Practice:** Standardised tests are administered at specific points of the primary cycle in accordance with Department guidelines.
- **Teachers' Practice: Assessment: Analysis and use of assessment information:** Standardised Tests Assessment information is analysed and used to inform the school when organising supports for whole classes, individual pupils and groups. Teachers use the results to inform planning and activities for individual pupils and groups. They are also used to inform the school improvement plan.

#### 4.2 Areas for improvement to be linked under the following sub headings:

The following areas are prioritised for improvement:

- **Teachers Practice: Teaching approaches: Focus of learning:** There is to be progression in pupils' learning in the strands/strand units as they move from class level to class level. Attention is to be given to the systematic development and application of knowledge and skills in the area of literacy with a particular focus on writing. There is to be a focus on the development of positive dispositions and attitudes towards learning. This will be achieved by developing the teaching and learning of the writing process to be further throughout the school, developing oral language as a pre-requisite to the writing process and developing a whole school approach to the teaching of specific grammar and punctuation. In relation to handwriting, a consistent approach is needed throughout the whole school.
- **Teachers' Practice: Assessment: Whole School Policy/Assessment in Practice.** Relevant assessment practices and procedures need to be identified for literacy. A more

detailed plan needs to be drawn up to provide clarity to teachers around assessment in the area of writing. Pupils are also to be involved in monitoring their own progress in learning and are to be involved in assessing their learning especially in literacy through self assessment and/or peer assessment.

With all of the above in place and implemented there will be an improvement in the

- **Learner outcomes: Attainment of curriculum objectives in literacy. Attainment Trends.** The overall attainment of the pupils with regard to literacy is improving or remains at a high standard in accordance with the learning outcomes of the Primary School Curriculum. Pupils at risk of underachieving are attaining well, in accordance with their ability and make very good progress from their prior levels of achievement.

**4.3** The following legislative and regulatory requirements need to be addressed:

- Circular 0056/11: Initial Steps in the Implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy. Ensure that all timetables reflect the changes outlined in the circular and times are being kept. Ensure that standardised test results for 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> classes are reported to the Department of Education at the end of each school year.

**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 aspects to be developed
Time in school -Length of school year- minimum of 183 days -Length of school day 5 hours 40 minutes 2 <sup>nd</sup> -6 <sup>th</sup> classes)	Circular 11/95	Yes	
Arrangements for parent/teacher and staff meetings	Circular 14/04	Yes	
Implementation of Croke Park Agreement regarding additional time requirement	Circular 0008/2011	Yes	
Standardisation of school year	Circular 0034/2011	Yes	
Valid enrolment of pupils	Section 9(1), 15(2) and 23 Education Act 1998 Sections 20 and 21, Education (Welfare) Act 2000 Rules 55, 64, 108 and 123, Rules for National Schools Circular P24/02 Staffing Schedule for current school year	Yes	
Retention of pupils	Rule 64 for National Schools Circular 11/01 Circular 32/03	Yes	
Development of school plan	Section 21, Education Act 1998	Yes	
Appointment to posts of responsibility	Circular 07/03 Circular 053/2011	Yes	

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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
Time for literacy and numeracy - assessing and reporting literacy and numeracy achievement	Circular 0056/11 Initial Steps in the Implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy	Yes	
Exemption from Irish	Circular 12/96	Yes	
Implementation of child protection procedures	<p>Circular 0065/2011</p> <hr/> <p>Please consider the following in relation to child protection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Number of cases where a report involving a child in the school was submitted by the DLP to the HSE</li> <li>▪ 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</li> <li>▪ Number of cases where the DLP sought advice from the HSE and as a result of this advice, no report was made</li> <li>▪ 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</li> </ul>	Yes	
Implementation of complaints procedure as appropriate	<p>Complaints Procedures, Section 28 Education Act Primary Boards of Management Information Manual November 2007</p> <hr/> <p><i>Please consider the following in relation to complaints:-</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Number of formal parental complaints received</li> <li>▪ Number of formal complaints processed</li> <li>▪ Number of formal complaints not fully processed by the end of this school year</li> </ul>	Yes	
Refusal to enroll	<p>Section 29 Education Act 1998</p> <p><i>Please consider the following in relation to appeals:-</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of section 29 cases taken against the school</li> <li>Number of cases processed at informal stage</li> <li>Number of cases heard</li> <li>Number of appeals upheld</li> <li>Number of appeals dismissed</li> </ul>	Yes	



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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	<p>Section 29 Education Act 1998</p> <p><i>Please provide the following information in relation to appeals taken in accordance with section 29 against the school during this school year</i></p> <hr/> <p>No. of section 29 cases taken against the school -</p> <p>Number of cases processed at informal stage</p> <p>Number of cases heard</p> <p>Number of appeals upheld</p> <p>Number of appeals dismissed</p>	Yes	
Expulsion of students	<p>Section 29 Education Act 1998</p> <p><i>Please provide the following information in relation to appeals taken in accordance with Section 29 against the school during this school year</i></p> <hr/> <p>Number of section 29 cases taken against the school - NIL</p> <p>Number of cases processed at informal stage - NIL</p> <p>Number of cases heard - NIL</p> <p>Number of appeals upheld -NIL</p> <p>Number of appeals dismissed - NIL</p>	Yes	

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APPENDIX TO SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION REPORT: POLICY CHECKLIST

Policy	Source	Has policy been approved by the Board of Management?	If no, indicate aspects to be developed
Enrolment policy	Section (15)(2)(d) Education Act 1998	Yes	
Code of behaviour including anti-bullying policy	Circular 20/90 DES Guidelines on Countering Bullying Behaviour 1993 NEWB Guidelines Section 23, Education Welfare Act 2000	Yes	
Attendance and participation strategy	Section 22 Education Welfare Act 2000 Equal Status Acts 2000-2011	Yes	
Health and safety statement	Section 20 Health and Safety Act 2005	Yes	
Data protection	Data Protection Act 1988 Data Protection (Amendment Act) 2003	Yes	
Special education needs policy	Education Act 1998 Equal Status Acts 2000-2011 Education (Welfare) Act 2000 Education for Persons with Special Education Needs Act (EPSEN) 2004 Disability Act 2005	Yes	
Relationships and sexuality education (RSE) policy	Relationships and Sexuality Education: Policy Guidelines (1997)	Yes	
Child protection policy	Circular 0065/2011	Yes	
Parents as partners	Circular 24/91	Yes	<i>Formal policy developed as part of SSE in numeracy.</i>
Public service (Croke Park) agreement - special needs assistants	Circular 71/11	Yes	
Other			

