



ST AIDAN'S COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL
COOTEHILL
CO CAVAN
81005Q

School Self-Evaluation Report

Evaluation period: **April 2014 to April 2015**

Report issue date: *April 2014*

School Self-Evaluation Report

1. Introduction

1.1 The focus of the evaluation

A school self-evaluation of teaching and learning in St Aidan's Comprehensive School was undertaken during the period April 2013 to April 2014. During the evaluation, teaching and learning in the following subjects and programmes were evaluated:

- Literacy in L1 English

This is a report on the findings of the evaluation.

1.2 School context

St Aidan's Comprehensive was officially opened in 1966. It was one for the first three Comprehensive Schools opened in Ireland.

These new Comprehensive Schools were to be co-educational and open to all classes and abilities and were to offer a broad curriculum to match the aptitudes of their students. The curriculum consisted of both academic and practical subjects and every student was to take at least one practical subject.

The aim of St Aidan's Comprehensive school is to provide a nurturing and enriching environment for the academic, moral, spiritual and social education of all students. The ethos is Christian and each individual is respected regardless of religious persuasion.

The school is located in the town of Cootehill and serves two town schools St Michael's and the Darley. It has some 16 feeder schools within its rural catchment area. The school has a student population of 500 students approx. and this is almost evenly divided between boys and girls. The curriculum on offer has developed over the years. The school offers a three year Junior Cycle programme with subject sampling in 1st year. A Transition Year programme is offered with a 70% - 75% take up rate. The school then offers the:

- Traditional 2 year Leaving Certificate Programme (LC)
- The Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP)
- The Leaving Certificate Applied Programme (LCA)

The school has at its core a very strong Pastoral Care policy and every year group has a Year Head and every class is assigned a Tutor. The school has an active student council and Parent's Association. There is a full time school Chaplain, Guidance Counsellor and Learning Support team available to students.

The school has a very strong tradition of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities including sport, debating, school trips, home and abroad, Young Scientist, YSI, Youth for Justice etc. Participation is promoted and encouraged to help develop student's confidence, self-esteem and social skills. These activities are central to our pastoral care policy and to our goal of developing leadership qualities within our students. The school is very community based and receives a great deal of support for all its activities from the local business community.

The school has a reputation for leading and responding to change in the field of education. There is a very strong tradition of School Development Planning (SDP) and the school is actively involved in and embedding change and new initiatives such as the Literacy and Numeracy Strategy, anti-bullying and the Well-being policy documents. The school is also one of 48 pilot schools for the development of the new Junior Cycle Framework.

2. The findings

Learner outcomes

The student's standardised test results and report cards from the primary school were gathered by the SEN and the School's Self Evaluation Co-ordinator and analysed. It was noted that the reading ages attained in their entrance tests are below the chronological reading levels.

Leaving Cert and Junior Cert results analysis

There are three first year classes and analysis of their written work would suggest they use limited vocabulary and do not understand the importance of proof-reading their work.

Learning experience

The school Self Evaluation Co-Ordinator and the Specials Educational Needs Co-ordinator prepared a student questionnaire on attitudes to literacy. This was conducted as an online questionnaire using Survey Monkey and administered to all students. By using an online tool results were instantly collated and analysis began immediately.

50% of girls and 45% of boys read for enjoyment.

Boys tend to read a greater variety of material while girls are more likely to read books.

Students who say they never find reading difficult are more likely to read for a few hours per week.

Students who find reading difficult are less likely to say they read at home

56% per cent of girls compared to 48% of boys never find reading difficult.

58% of boys compared to 38% of girls find reading difficult sometimes.

Approximately 60% of both boys and girls suggest they have difficulty sometimes or always with spelling words.

Majority of both boys and girls state they do take remedial action when they get spellings wrong.

Girls suggest they find it more difficult to learn subject words (45%) compared to 25% of boys.

Majority want help to improve their spelling.

Teachers' Practice

Teachers use a variety of methods to improve literacy in their teaching.

Majority state that they want to improve spelling and proof-reading.

Reading levels, inability to spell and writing at length are identified as concerns

95% of us say reading for enjoyment is important to improve literacy

Leading strategy was to give reading for homework

Parents' views

Over 50% of students never or only sometimes read at home so 51% would like students to bring a book home to read and would like reading set for homework

72% of parents would like school to encourage reading at home

62% of parents would like school to encourage students to proof-read their work.

61% want teachers to mark errors across the curriculum

Parents say of their children

33% need some additional help with their reading.

56% would like teachers to mark errors across the curriculum.

79% go the computer often or always at home

Approximately 35% of students will talk about what their have written or read

Approximately 25% of students will ask for help to check their work

3. Progress made on previously-identified targets improvement targets

Section 3

Target set was to increase the reading age of our 1st year students by at least 6 months.

Progress after the 1st year – 72% of students improved their chronological reading age by 6 months or more.

4. Summary of school self-evaluation findings

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

- Attainment in the majority of subjects at both JC and LC is above the national norm with attainment at LC a real strength.
- School has a very good reputation for improving the outcomes of students with SEN.
- There is a willingness to share good practice.
- Students want to improve their spelling.

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

(Specify the aspects of teaching and learning that need to be improved)

- Improve the standard of spelling among our students.
- Develop the vocabulary of students.
- Encourage students to read for enjoyment.
- Development of proofreading skills among students.
- Teachers to focus on the development of literacy as well as knowledge and skills.
- Improve the reading age of our students but focusing on our first years so we can analyse progress.

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

(Specify the aspects that need to be addressed)

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**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
Valid enrolment of students	M51/93	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
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	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Standardisation of school year	Circular 034/2011	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Arrangements for parent/teacher and staff meetings	Circular M58/04	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Implementation of national literacy strategy	Circular 25/12	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Implementation of Croke Park agreement regarding additional time requirement	Circular 025/2011	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Development of school plan	Section 21 Education Act 1998	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Guidance provision in secondary schools	Circular PPT12/05, Education Act 1998 (section 9(c))	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Whole-school guidance plan	Section 21 Education Act 1998	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Delivery of CSPE to all junior cycle classes	Circular M12/01 Circular M13/05	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Exemption from the study of Irish	Circular M10/94	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Implementation of revised in-school management structures	Circular M29/02, Circular 21/98, Circular 30/97, Circular 29/97	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Limited alleviation on filling posts of	Circular 53/11	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

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								
responsibility for school year 2011/12											
Parents as partners in education	Circular M27/91										
Implementation of child protection procedures	<p>Circular 65/11</p> <p>Please provide the following information in relation to child protection</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="438 638 890 1189"> <tr> <td data-bbox="438 638 890 750">▪ Number of cases where a report involving a child in the school was submitted by the DLP to the HSE</td> <td data-bbox="890 638 1072 750"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="438 750 890 884">▪ 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</td> <td data-bbox="890 750 1072 884"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="438 884 890 1019">▪ Number of cases where the DLP sought advice from the HSE and as a result of this advice, no report was made</td> <td data-bbox="890 884 1072 1019"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="438 1019 890 1189">▪ 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</td> <td data-bbox="890 1019 1072 1189"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>	▪ Number of cases where a report involving a child in the school was submitted by the DLP to the HSE	<input type="checkbox"/>	▪ 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	<input type="checkbox"/>	▪ Number of cases where the DLP sought advice from the HSE and as a result of this advice, no report was made	<input type="checkbox"/>	▪ 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	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
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Implementation of complaints procedure as appropriate	<p>Section 28 Education Act 1998</p> <p>Please provide the following information in relation to complaints made by parents during this school year</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="438 1344 890 1624"> <tr> <td data-bbox="438 1344 890 1422">▪ Number of formal parental complaints received</td> <td data-bbox="890 1344 1072 1422"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="438 1422 890 1500">▪ Number of formal complaints processed</td> <td data-bbox="890 1422 1072 1500"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="438 1500 890 1624">▪ Number of formal complaints not fully processed by the end of this school year</td> <td data-bbox="890 1500 1072 1624"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>	▪ Number of formal parental complaints received	<input type="checkbox"/>	▪ Number of formal complaints processed	<input type="checkbox"/>	▪ Number of formal complaints not fully processed by the end of this school year	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			
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▪ Number of formal complaints not fully processed by the end of this school year	<input type="checkbox"/>										
Refusal to enrol	<p>Section 29 Education Act 1998</p> <p>Please provide the following information in relation to appeals taken in accordance with Section 29 against the school during this school year</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="438 1792 890 2040"> <tr> <td data-bbox="438 1792 890 1870">Number of section 29 cases taken against the school</td> <td data-bbox="890 1792 1072 1870"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="438 1870 890 1948">Number of cases processed at informal stage</td> <td data-bbox="890 1870 1072 1948"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="438 1948 890 2027">Number of cases heard</td> <td data-bbox="890 1948 1072 2027"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="438 2027 890 2040">Number of appeals upheld</td> <td data-bbox="890 2027 1072 2040"></td> </tr> </table>	Number of section 29 cases taken against the school	<input type="checkbox"/>	Number of cases processed at informal stage	<input type="checkbox"/>	Number of cases heard	<input type="checkbox"/>	Number of appeals upheld		N/A	
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Number of cases heard	<input type="checkbox"/>										
Number of appeals upheld											

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
	Number of appeals dismissed	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>		
Suspension of students	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		N/A	
	Number of section 29 cases taken against the school	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	Number of cases processed at informal stage	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	Number of cases heard	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	Number of appeals upheld	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Expulsion of students	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		N/A	
	Number of section 29 cases taken against the school	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	Number of cases processed at informal stage	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	Number of cases heard	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	Number of appeals upheld	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	Number of appeals dismissed	<input type="checkbox"/>		

Appendix to School Self-Evaluation report: policy checklist

Policy	Source	Has the policy been approved by the Board of Management ?	If no, indicate aspects to be developed
Enrolment policy	Section 15(2)(d) of Education Act Equal Status Acts 2000-2011	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Code of behaviour, including anti-bullying policy ¹	Circular M33/91 NEWB guidelines Section 23, Education Welfare Act 2000 Guidelines on Countering Bullying Behaviour, 1993, Circular M33/91 Equal Status Acts 2000-2011	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Attendance and participation strategy ²	Circular M51/93 Section 22, Education Welfare Act 2000	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Health and Safety Statement	Health and Safety Act 2005 Section 20	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Data protection	Data Protection Act 1988 Data Protection (Amendment Act) 2003	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Special education needs policy ³	Education Act (1998) Equal Status Acts (2000 to 2011), Education (Welfare) Act (2000), Education for Persons with Special Education Needs Act (EPSEN) ⁴ (2004) Disability Act (2005))	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Social, personal and health education (SPHE)/Relationships and sexuality education (RSE) policy	Circulars 37/2010, 23/2010, M27/08, M11/03, M22/00, M20/96, M4/95	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Substance use policy	Department of Education and Skills Directive; guidelines issued to schools in 2002	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Internet acceptable use policy	Department of Education and Skills Directive	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Child Protection Policy	Circular 0065/2011	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

¹ Under the provisions of the Education (Welfare) Act (2000) (section 23) the school's code of behaviour should conform to the specifications stated.

² Under the provisions of the Education (Welfare) Act (2000) (section 22) the school's attendance strategy should conform with the provisions stipulated.

³ Section 9 of the Education Act (1998) requires a school to "use its available resources" to identify and provide for the educational needs of those "with a disability or other special educational needs."

⁴ The EPSEN Act requires that schools be inclusive of and provide an appropriate education for students with special educational needs.