

School Self-Evaluation (SSE) Report

Gorey Educate Together N.S.
School roll number: 20214H
Evaluation period: 2013-2014 school year
Report issue date: 8th December 2014

1. Introduction

1.1 The focus of the evaluation

Curriculum area: **Numeracy** [Ref: Department of Education Circular 39/'12]

Evaluation theme: **Teachers' practice** [Ref: Inspectorate Guidelines]
Sub-Theme: **Teaching approaches** (Sub theme 3.2 in Inspectorate Guidelines)

1.2 School context (September 2013)

- A multi-denominational school, delivering the national Primary School Curriculum & the Educate Together ethical education curriculum.
- A primary school of choice for families from across north-Wexford and south-Wicklow.
- A *developing/rapidly-developing* school since foundation, with a 1440% increase in enrolment in the period 2005-2013.
- An inclusive school community, where pupils thrive on the support and dedication of many individuals and groups, including (at present): fourteen mainstream classteachers, 13.66 special needs assistants, three learning support & EAL teachers, three special class teachers, 4.8 resource teachers, administrative principal, secretaries, cleaners, caretaker, parent & staff volunteers, Board of Management and Parent Teacher Association.
- A school already committed to continuous improvement, where the *school development planning process* was supplemented by external inspection. E.g. To date, 50% of our teaching staff have had their work evaluated by the Inspectorate of the Department of Education and Skills while working at this school* (and a further 27% were evaluated in the 12 months before they joined Gorey Educate Together.**)
* *Inspection of Probationary Teachers + Incident (unannounced) Inspection*
** *Inspection of Probationary Teachers*
- Standardised maths attainment test results show our pupils performing somewhat above the national norm. [Ref: *Sigma-T* results June 2013.]

2. Evaluation approach/methods

Reflection sheets were completed by teachers (individually & in groups) following:

- Seminar for teachers & special needs assistants on 'Maths Difficulties,' delivered at the school by educational psychologist (NEPS), January 2014
- Presentation for teachers on 'Mata sa Rang' (ref: *Maths Recovery*), delivered at the school by staff member trained in the approach, February 2014
- Summary for teachers on the resources for teaching maths developed by the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST,) delivered at the school by the principal (following attendance at PDST seminars), February 2014

3. Findings

Main findings

- Good use is made of resources to support pupils in their learning. Teacher reflection indicates a significant focus on active learning during maths lessons, and on practical experience (play & games; manipulating and using objects & equipment; interactions with the environment/with 'everyday situations.')
- Provision for varying needs and abilities ('differentiation') is enhanced in some classrooms by the collaboration of classteachers and SEN teachers on the general development of all pupils' numeracy skills.

Other findings

- Many teachers already skilfully apply the approaches recommended in the maths curriculum. Creating further opportunities to share best practice would be advantageous. (E.g. sharing successful lessons on particular topics, modelling effective use of certain resources.)
Likewise, creating further opportunities to share experience of the methodologies associated with 'Mata sa Rang' and/or 'Maths Recovery' and/or 'the *Aistear* early childhood curriculum framework' would be beneficial.
- Catering for the varying needs and abilities of pupils in the course of maths lessons remains challenging, (along with the on-going assessment of those needs and abilities.)
- Further CPD re: numeracy skills for pupils with moderate general learning difficulties and/or pupils with significant communication difficulties would be advantageous.
- The teaching of *Number* is identified as a relative strength. (Additional strategies & activities to support learning of basic number facts and arithmetical skills would be useful.)
- *Problem Solving* (and the language of problem solving) remains somewhat challenging. The PDST materials on this area are of interest, as is the possibility of a whole-school initiative to promote the skill. (E.g. Problems of the week.)
- There is effective use of ICT in many mainstream classrooms. There is scope for further development with regard to using ICT to support maths teaching & learning in our special classes for children with autism and in our special pre-school class for children with autism.
- Shared maths programmes (that include the involvement of parents, such as 'Maths Olympics') are viewed as effective and should be continued and developed.
- The range of assessment tools available within the school is somewhat limited. (Additional diagnostic tools and/or assessments relevant to the principles of 'Maths Recovery' should be made available.)
- Some aspects of the school environment support the development of numeracy skills (e.g. playground clock and hopscotch, the school's maths trails.)
- Increased focus on cooperative learning would be advantageous.
- There is a need to clarify the (minor) role of 'the maths textbook' to parents of Infants.
- There is a need for continued cooperation with regard to the organisation and maintenance of the school's wide range of resources/equipment.

4. Progress made on previously-identified improvement targets

[Not applicable in year 1.]

5. Summary of school self-evaluation findings

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

- Good use is made of resources to support pupils in their learning. Teacher reflection indicates a significant focus on active learning during maths lessons, and on practical experience (play & games; manipulating and using objects & equipment; interactions with the environment/with 'every-day situations.')
- Provision for varying needs and abilities ('differentiation') is enhanced in some classrooms by the collaboration of classteachers and SEN teachers on the general development of all pupils' numeracy skills.

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

- The development of further opportunities to share best practice, i.e. structured provision for in-house sharing of knowledge and skills in relation to maths teaching.
- Further CPD for teachers re: numeracy skills for pupils with moderate general learning difficulties and/or pupils with significant communication difficulties.
- Further provision for varying needs and abilities ('differentiation') in *all* mainstream classrooms through implementation of existing *Plean Scoile* for Learning Support and Resource Teaching in relation to numeracy as well as literacy.
- The reintroduction of a substantial Shared Maths programme during the 2014-2015 school year.

5.3 The following legislative and regulatory requirements need to be addressed, (see checklist at Appendix overleaf):

- 'Croke Park Agreement:' New Circular 0043/2014 to be addressed during the 2014-2015 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 4 hours 40 minutes (infants); 5 hour 40 minutes (1 st -6 th 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	<i>New Circular 0043/2014 to be addressed during the 2014-2015 school year.</i>
Standardisation of school year	Circular 034/2011	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 Rules for National Schools Circular 11/01 Circular 32/03	Yes	
Development of school plan	Section 21, Education Act 1998	Yes	<i>[On-going development and redevelopment]</i>

Appointments to posts of responsibility	Circular 07/03 Circular 053/2011	Yes	
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	Circular 0065/2011 Please ensure the following in relation to child protection	Yes	<i>[Ref: confidential minutes of Board of Management meetings]</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of cases where a report involving a child in the school was submitted by the DLP to the HSE _____ ▪ 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 _____ ▪ Number of cases where the DLP sought advice from the HSE and as a result of this advice, no report was made _____ ▪ 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 _____ 		
Implementation of complaints procedure as appropriate	Complaints Procedures, Section 28 Education Act Primary Boards of Management Information Manual November 2007 Please consider the following in relation to complaints	Yes	<i>[Ref: confidential minutes of Board of Management meetings]</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 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 _____ 		

Refusal to enrol	Section 29 Education Act 1998		Yes	
	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	Nil		
	Number of cases processed at informal stage	N/A		
	Number of cases heard	N/A		
	Number of appeals upheld	N/A		
	Number of appeals dismissed	N/A		
Suspension of students	Section 29 Education Act 1998		Yes	
	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	Nil		
	Number of cases processed at informal stage	N/A		
	Number of cases heard	N/A		
	Number of appeals upheld	N/A		
	Number of appeals dismissed	N/A		
Expulsion of students	Section 29 Education Act 1998		Yes	
	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	Nil		
	Number of cases processed at informal stage	N/A		
	Number of cases heard	N/A		
	Number of appeals upheld	N/A		
	Number of appeals dismissed	N/A		

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 ¹ 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 ²	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 ³	Education Act 1998 Equal Status Acts 2000- 2011 Education (Welfare) Act 2000 Education for Persons with Special Education Needs Act (EPSEN) ⁴ 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	
Public service (Croke Park) agreement – special needs assistants	Circular 71/11	Yes	

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 pupils with special educational needs.