

# School Self-Evaluation (SSE) Report

Gorey Educate Together N.S.  
School roll number: 20214H  
Evaluation period: 2014-2015 school year  
Report issue date: 14<sup>th</sup> March 2016

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 The focus of the evaluation

Curriculum area: **Social, Personal & Health Education (SPHE)**

[Ref: Department of Education Circular 39/12]

[In choosing to focus on this curriculum area, the school is also preparing itself for the forthcoming republication of key SPHE programmes, such as *Stay Safe*.]

Evaluation theme: **Learner outcomes** [Ref: Inspectorate Guidelines]

Sub-Theme: Attainment of curriculum objectives (Sub theme 1.1 in Inspectorate Guidelines)

### 1.2 School context (September 2015)

- An equality-based 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 1681% increase in enrolment in the period 2005-2015, (26 pupils – 437 pupils.)
- An inclusive school community, where pupils thrive on the support and dedication of many individuals and groups, including (at present): sixteen mainstream classteachers, sixteen special needs assistants, three learning support & EAL teachers, two special class teachers, one special pre-school class teacher, five resource teachers, administrative principal, secretary, cleaners, caretaker, bus escorts, after-school supervisors, parent & staff volunteers, parent class representatives, Parent Teacher Association and Board of Management.
- A school already committed to continuous improvement, where the *school development planning process* was supplemented by external inspection. E.g. 50% of our permanent 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 29% were evaluated in the 12 months before they joined Gorey Educate Together.\*\*\*) [September 2015]

\* *Inspection of Probationary Teachers + Incident (unannounced) Inspection*

\*\* *Inspection of Probationary Teachers*

## 2. Evaluation approach/methods

The key source of evidence in this school self-evaluation process is:  
**the views of parents & guardians.**

Tool used to support the gathering of information:  
**questionnaire.**

- ✓ February and March 2015: Questionnaire drafted by Principal (Ref: 'The Broad Objectives of SPHE,' [the *Primary School Curriculum*] and 'Growing Up in Ireland,' [*National Longitudinal Study of Children.*])
- ✓ 25<sup>th</sup> March 2015: Questionnaire reviewed and revised by teachers and special needs assistants.
- ✓ April 2015: Redrafted questionnaire piloted amongst 20 families (random sample of families perceived by teachers as having a good track record regarding written home-school communication.)
- ✓ May 2015: Questionnaire finalised by Principal and made available online to all families via *SurveyMonkey*.
- ✓ 106 responses received in the period 11<sup>th</sup> May 2015 – 26<sup>th</sup> May 2015.
- ✓ Results analysed by staff August 2015 and February 2016 and by Board of Management February 2016.

## 3. Findings

### Main findings

- Most parents & guardians report positively about aspects of their child's intrapersonal development. Examples: self-esteem (74%), self-confidence (74%), personal responsibility (76%).
- Most parents & guardians report positively about aspects of their child's interpersonal development. Examples: making friends (75%), relationships with classmates (84%), cooperation with other children (84%), communication skills (75%).
- Most parents & guardians report positively about the development of their child's societal attitudes, skills and abilities. Examples: safety skills [general] (83%), safety skills [abuse prevention] (71%), understanding of healthy living (91%), understanding the feelings of others (80%), respect for diversity (92%).
- In the open-format responses, parents highlight the following features of life at Gorey Educate Together NS as having helped the child's personal development: the extensive range of learning experiences (including positive social experiences); school atmosphere (including the support & encouragement of school staff); diversity & inclusion (including the area of special educational needs.)
- Most parents & guardians participating in the questionnaire report that their child is 'happy in school' (88%) and 'happy outside school' (92%).
- In the open-format responses, a few parents highlight the following (non-typical) features of school life as having troubled or worried the child: the challenging behaviour of some other pupils (including pupils experiencing emotional and/or social difficulties); actual and/or possible bullying-type behaviour; conflicts with peers & adults; actual and/or perceived inconsistencies regarding Behaviour Management.

### Other findings

Other findings of particular note to the staff and Board of Management are as follows:

*(Numerical analysis of all Closed-Format Questions and Importance Questions is appended to this report.)*

- Just over half (55%) of parents 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' that the child can 'resolve or deal with everyday/conflicts/arguments in an appropriate way.'
- Just over two-thirds (67%) of parents 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' that the child 'does the right thing in bullying-type situations.' 37% of parents 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' that the child 'is easily led' and 44% 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' that the child can 'tell when other children are manipulating her/him.'
- Less than half of parents (42%) Strongly Agree or Agree that the child 'understands the influence of the media.'
- Just over half of parents (55%) Strongly Agree or Agree that the child 'is aware of his/her rights.'
- 72% of parents list 'Respect' as a value that the school should promote. (This figure is significantly higher than figures for other ethical and/or moral values.)

## **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:

- The provision of a school atmosphere that is supportive and encouraging, and that contributes to the happiness and well-being of the children.
- Positive and effective provision for diversity and inclusion (including the area of special educational needs.)
- Effective provision of an extensive range of SPHE-related learning experiences, including positive social experiences.

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

- Continued work re: the challenging behaviour of some pupils, (including pupils experiencing emotional and/or social difficulties.) Helping other pupils to understand these behaviours (in a general sense) and how these behaviours are managed. Helping all pupils to feel safe in school.
- Continued targeted work re: bullying behaviour and conflict resolution & management, (including peer pressure and manipulation.)
- Further communicating agreed Behaviour Management values and strategies throughout the school community, with an emphasis on respect for all.
- Further targeted work re: 'The Rights of the Child'
- Further targeted work re: 'The Influence of the Media.'

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

- N/A (At present, the school is fully compliant.)

**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 <sup>st</sup> -6 <sup>th</sup> classes)	Circular 11/95	<b>Yes</b>	
Arrangements for parent/ teacher and staff meetings	Circular 14/04	<b>Yes</b>	
Implementation of Croke Park agreement regarding additional time requirement	Circular 0008/2011	<b>Yes</b>	
Standardisation of school year	Circular 034/2011	<b>Yes</b>	
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	<b>Yes</b>	
Retention of pupils	Rule 64 Rules for National Schools Circular 11/01 Circular 32/03	<b>Yes</b>	
Development of school plan	Section 21, Education Act 1998	<b>Yes</b>	<i>[On-going development and redevelopment]</i>

Appointments to posts of responsibility	Circular 07/03 Circular 053/2011	<b>Yes</b>	
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	<b>Yes</b>	
Exemption from Irish	Circular 12/96	<b>Yes</b>	
Implementation of child protection procedures	Circular 0065/2011 Please ensure the following in relation to child protection	<b>Yes</b>	<i>[Ref: confidential minutes of Board of Management meetings]</i>
	<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>		
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	<b>Yes</b>	<i>[Ref: confidential minutes of Board of Management meetings]</i>
	<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>		

Refusal to enrol	Section 29 Education Act 1998		<b>Yes</b>	
	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		<b>Yes</b>	
	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		<b>Yes</b>	<i>[Ref: confidential minutes of Board of Management meetings]</i>
	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	-		

<b>Policy</b>	<b>Source</b>	<b>Has policy been approved by the board of management?</b>	<b>If no, indicate aspects to be developed.</b>
Enrolment policy	Section (15)(2)(d) Education Act 1998	<b>Yes</b>	
Code of behaviour <sup>1</sup> including anti-bullying policy	Circular 20/90 DES Guidelines on Countering Bullying Behaviour 1993 NEWB Guidelines Section 23, Education Welfare Act 2000	<b>Yes</b>	
Attendance and participation strategy <sup>2</sup>	Section 22 Education Welfare Act 2000 Equal Status Acts 2000-2011	<b>Yes</b>	
Health and safety statement	Section 20 Health and Safety Act 2005	<b>Yes</b>	
Data protection	Data Protection Act 1988 Data Protection (Amendment Act) 2003	<b>Yes</b>	
Special education needs policy <sup>3</sup>	Education Act 1998 Equal Status Acts 2000- 2011 Education (Welfare) Act 2000 Education for Persons with Special Education Needs Act (EPSEN) <sup>4</sup> 2004 Disability Act 2005	<b>Yes</b>	
Relationships and sexuality education (RSE) policy	Relationships and Sexuality Education: Policy Guidelines (1997)	<b>Yes</b>	
Child protection policy	Circular 0065/2011	<b>Yes</b>	
Parents as partners	Circular 24/91	<b>Yes</b>	
Public service (Croke Park) agreement – special needs assistants	Circular 71/11	<b>Yes</b>	

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

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

<sup>3</sup> 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."

<sup>4</sup> The EPSEN Act requires that schools be inclusive of and provide an appropriate education for pupils with special educational needs.