



Sacred Heart Secondary School

Clonakilty

Co. Cork

62170b

School Self-Evaluation Report

June 2017

School Self-Evaluation Report

1. Introduction

1.1 The Focus of the Evaluation

A school self-evaluation of teaching and learning, in relation to providing effective feedback to students at Sacred Heart Secondary School, was undertaken during the period September 2016 to June 2017. In the previous school year 2015-2016 a committee including David Pegler, Elaine Galvin, the Deputy Principal, Brendan Walsh and the Principal, Ann Marie Brosnan, gathered data (see SSE report 2016) to ascertain the current position with regard to providing feedback to students. Thereafter the committee devised strategies to provide teachers and students with opportunities to improve the mechanisms for providing more effective feedback on how students were progressing in their school work. Following the introduction of the strategies the same cohort of students, from which the original data had been obtained, were re-surveyed to see how the “Effective Feedback Strategies” worked. DES Inspector Kevin O’ Donovan was invited to the school to review progress on all SSE developments to date including feedback. Kevin met with the Literacy, Numeracy and effective feedback teams to discuss progress and targets attained and to evaluate potential developments in SSE into the future.

1.2 School Context

Sacred Heart Secondary school is an all-girls secondary school under the trustees of CEIST. Established in 1941 under the guidance of the Sisters of Mercy, Sacred Heart now caters for 525 students. Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate are offered. The school was one of the first to take up the offer of **Transition Year** when the programme became more available in 1984. **Leaving Cert Applied Programme** is offered to students since 1998. It has been a wonderful success for the students who have followed the programme. The Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme was undertaken in 1994. This is a valuable extra for many students.

The Back to Education Initiative was introduced to allow adult students a second chance in education. This has proven to be a significant milestone in promoting adult education in the area and enabling many to return to work. It now offers a qualification at FETC level 5 in Childcare.

2. The Findings

The study focused on the current second year students from the 2016/17 academic year, as this was the cohort of students from which the baseline data had been obtained. Anecdotal evidence was gathered from parents in relation to their experience with school reports and the specific feedback comments for each relevant subject.

School Reports

Feedback from parents at all of the parent teacher meetings throughout 2015 to June 2017 was particularly positive with respect to the specific feedback comments received on the school reports. A movement away from the use of the comment bank, where comments such as “excellent student” and “satisfactory result” occurred and were replaced with detailed specific comments that focused on providing students and parents with information on what the existing strengths were and what suggested improvements were required. This change of focus was reported to be a significant strength in the SSE process and as a result will be continued and developed further.

Teaching staff have also noted the effects of the comments in the school reports, in relation to improved student engagement and student response to the specific comments made.

Analysis of results of SSE (Strand 3) – Formative Feedback

The same cohort of students (presently second years of 2017) were re-tested using the same survey. The results are as follows:

1. Increase the percentage of students who feel their knowledge and understanding is checked regularly in class from 39% to

2017-44% (April 2017)

2018-48% (April 2018)

May 2017 - 40 %

2. Increase the percentage of students who feel they get feedback regularly from their teachers on what steps they need to take to improve their learning from 24% to

2017-29% (April 2017)

2018-32% (April 2018)

May 2017 - 13%

3. Improve the percentage of students who feel their teachers talk to them about how to improve their learning from 15% to

2017-20% (April 2017)

2018-25% (April 2018)

May 2017 - 14%

A number of factors may have contributed to the results obtained in the re-testing.

- Lack of staff meetings due to industrial relation issues gave limited opportunities to meet staff members to make them aware of the strategies and how to use them effectively. This also reduced the number of meetings with management.
- The second year “slump” could also have contributed to the reduction in positive responses in the survey. Second years completed another survey for SPHE teachers whereby statements such as “Teachers tell me how I can improve” and “The school regularly send info home about my work in school” were also answered very negatively even though reports are sent home after Christmas and Summer Exams, work and exams are discussed in parent teacher meetings and communication may also have been made through their diaries or a phone call home. Unless the action that is being carried out is labelled as “feedback” students appear to be unaware that they are receiving it.
- The design of the questionnaire gave the students three responses to choose from **agree**, **sometimes** and **disagree**. A large percentage of students when responding to the re-test chose **sometimes** as some teachers were carrying out the feedback techniques but not all teachers. Such responses are counted the same as **disagree** which is skewing the results. In any future surveys, consideration will be given to this.

Revised targets for April 2018

1. Increase the percentage of students who feel their knowledge and understanding is checked regularly in class from 40% to 2018-44% (April 2018)
2. Increase the percentage of students who feel they get feedback regularly from their teachers on what steps they need to take to improve their learning from 13% to 2018-25% (April 2018)
3. Improve the percentage of students who feel their teachers talk to them about how to improve their learning from 14% to 2018-20% (April 2018)

3. Progress made on previously-identified improvement targets

Improvement Target	Comment
1. A focus on teaching and Learning through the CPD provision of Differentiated Learning .	Liz O' Keefe of the PDST delivered a CPD session to all staff on Differentiated learning to provide ideas and strategies around the effective delivery of differentiated learning in the classroom.
2. Promote the use of ICT to assist in the Teaching and Learning process.	The school invested over €100,000 on an integrated ICT system, including a server to enable networking with shared folder facilities, interactive whiteboards and classroom PC's. Teaching and Learning has now a digital platform as an important tool in delivering effective lessons that all students can benefit from.
3. Improve the learning experience in TY through a comprehensive review and restructuring of the TY curriculum and its assessment .	New modules and subjects were introduced to suit the changing profile of the students in TY. Writing skills, cultural studies and Chinese are some of the recent additions to the programme. A credit system, based on the allocation of credits for attendance, course work completion and competencies in various areas, has revolutionized the experience of TY for students and teachers alike.
4. Introduction of additional assessment progress reports for 6th and 3rd year students .	Progress reports for all 3 rd and 6 th years in December have been introduced.
5. Policy review and formation.	The creation and review of the following key school policies has taken place: a)Code of Behaviour Policy b)Anti- Bullying Policy c)Enrolment Policy d) Student Care Policy e) Placement of Student in Class Policy
6. Development of a Virtual Learning Platform. (EDMODO)	EDMODO has been developed and promoted as the school's virtual learning platform for students and teachers to enhance the learning experience through the utilization of a "social media" site.
7. Academic Tracking of Students	All students in the school are closely monitored through an academic tracking progress system. In total, by the time they complete their Leaving Certificate there are 17 different individual academic results/scores that contribute to the long term monitoring of each student. This data is evaluated at a care team meeting that includes the principal, deputy principal, year heads, and S.E.N. coordinator and guidance teacher.
8. Statistical Analysis of the Leaving and Junior Certificate Examination Results.	A comprehensive analysis of the results of students in the state examinations is conducted and compared with the national norms and with statistics from previous years, with a particular focus on English and Maths.

9. School Self Evaluation: Literacy	An analysis of student reading ages was undertaken to assess the literacy standards of students. Pre-teaching of key words was adopted as a teaching strategy by all staff to improve comprehension. This resulted in an improved reading age in a retest of the New Group Reading Test (NGRT).
10. Results of the 1 st SSE on Literacy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 24% of students improved their NGRT scores in 2015- 4% higher than target. 2. Reading for leisure increased to 78% in 2014- 13% higher than target. 3. The average number of students doing Higher Level English over the last three years is 87% - 2% higher than target. 4. The average percentages attaining A, B and C grades at Higher Level English over the last three years is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A: 18% B: 42% C:25%
11. Results of 2 nd SSE on Numeracy (strand 2)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase the percentage of students who have the confidence to answer an unseen question from 20% to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2015-25% (May 2015) • 2016-28% (Jan 2016) <p>2016 March 57%</p>
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Increase the percentage of students who like maths from 55% <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2015- 58% (May 2015) • 2016- 60% (Jan 2016) <p>2016 March 61%</p>

	<p>3. The target percentage of students who will use the problem Solving approach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2015- 40% (May 2015) • 2016- 50 % (Jan 2016) <p>2016 March 35%</p>
	<p>4. Maintain the high level of higher level uptake in junior cert maths, based on a three year moving average.</p> <p>Current percentage: 2012 – 2014</p> <p>SHSS 77% National 50%</p> <p>2016 March 75%</p>
	<p>5. To maintain the students' attainment of grades in Junior Certificate Maths at higher level.</p> <p>A: 17% B: 45% C: 29%</p> <p>(Average 2013-2015) A: 15% B: 45% C: 29%</p>
12. Results of the Effective Feedback SSE.	<p>1. Increase the percentage of students who feel their knowledge and understanding is checked regularly in class from 39% to</p> <p>2017-44% (April 2017) 2018-48% (April 2018)</p> <p>May 2017 - 40 %</p> <p>2. Increase the percentage of students who feel they get feedback regularly from their teachers on what steps they need to take to improve their learning from 24% to</p> <p>2017-29% (April 2017) 2018-32% (April 2018)</p>

	<p>May 2017 - 13%</p> <p>3. Improve the percentage of students who feel their teachers talk to them about how to improve their learning from 15% to</p> <p>2017-20% (April 2017) 2018-25% (April 2018)</p> <p>May 2017 - 14%</p>
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4.1 Our school has strengths in the following areas:

- All students are encouraged to take Higher Level in all subjects. Higher level is the “default level”. The number of students taking higher level in all subjects at both Junior and Leaving Certificate is significantly higher than the national norms.
- Higher Level uptake for Maths is high. In the 2014 state exams, 82% of Junior Cert and 31% of Leaving Cert candidates took the higher level paper.
- Students continue to perform above average in state examinations.
- A variety of teaching styles and methodologies are being emphasised and used in the classrooms.
- There is an emphasis on numeracy across all departments. Each subject department has its own subject-specific numeracy policy.
- D.E.S. pilot testing in Maths and Literacy placed SHSS students much higher against the national norms.
- Existing strengths in numeracy were identified in the 2009 PISA report that the school partook in. A summary of the results are presented below.

SHSS compared to the National Average (PISA 2009)

	SHSS		National	
Characteristic	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Reading Achievement	578	69	496	95
Mathematics achievement	532	64	487	86
Science achievement	568	76	508	97
Digital Reading achievement	566	64	509	87
Non-engagement in reading achievement	19%	NA	42%	NA
Frequency of online reading	-0.62	0.6	0.50	0.9

4.2 The following areas are prioritised for improvement:

Targets	Original Strategies suggested	Improvements to suggested strategies
<p>1. Increase the percentage of students who feel their knowledge and understanding is checked regularly in class from 40% to</p> <p>2018-44% (April 2018)</p>	<p>Formative feedback strategies will be added to the teacher journal to support the improvement of this statement. For example: 3, 2, 1 strategy.</p> <p>3-things I have learned</p> <p>2-interesting facts</p> <p>1-question I have</p> <p>An A1 feedback tree will be placed in every classroom for students to ask questions on post-it notes. This will encourage ownership of students learning and also provide feedback to the teacher.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formative feedback strategies in the teachers' journal will be revisited at the start of the school term to remind teachers how they can be used effectively. The feedback trees will continue to be used as they have worked well for those of the teachers that engaged in the strategy. Encourage teachers to use the higher levels of Blooms taxonomy, for example application when asking students questions on content covered.
<p>2. Increase the percentage of students who feel they get feedback regularly from their teachers on what steps they need to take to improve their learning from 13 % to</p> <p>2018-25% (April 2018)</p>	<p>Each subject department will identify subject specific comments that provide formative feedback to their students. These comments will be inputted to vsware for the purpose of Christmas and summer school reports.</p> <p>A feedback record sheet will be included in both the student and teacher journals to log feedback given to students from teachers and when the</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers will continue to write in their formative feedback comments for Christmas and summer exam reports. Parents have been very positive to the layout of the new reports. There is specific advice and recommendations made on how each individual student can improve in their subject. In addition to the other techniques suggested in the journal; a new slip will be introduced for providing feedback on a piece of work, essay or test. The slip

	<p>students acted on the feedback provided.</p> <p>3-2-1 model and feedback post-it tree as mentioned above.</p>	<p>will have feedback written on top and a number of points can be made on what the student did well and how they can improve the piece of work. The results of the re-testing emphasized the importance of spelling out to students that “this is your feedback”.</p>
<p>3. Improve the percentage of students who feel their teachers talk to them about how to improve their learning from 14% to 2018-20% (April 2018)</p>	<p>An explanation of formative feedback will be provided to teachers in their teacher journal.</p> <p>A guest speaker from CPD/PDST will be arranged to talk to the whole staff on formative feedback.</p> <p>A guide of how to provide formative feedback to students on a piece of work will also be placed in the teachers’ journal; formative feedback: medals and missions.</p> <p><u>Goals:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the goals? (success criteria) • What does a good piece of work look like? <p><u>Medal :</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How far have they got in the direction of the goals? • Provide a medal for what they have done well, in the form of <u>information</u>. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formative feedback strategies in the teachers’ journal will be revisited at the start of the school term to remind teachers how they can be used effectively. • One of the focus groups for this strand was sixth year peer mentors, when asked what they would like to change in relation to feedback, attending parent teacher meetings was suggested. A new strategy for next year in relation to feedback is sixth year students will attend parent teacher meetings.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inform students on what they have done right and on what they have achieved. <p><u>Mission:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide students with a mission of how to move closer to the goal.• Tell them how to improve what they have already done, how they can improve overall and how they could approach the goal again better.	
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Sacred Heart Secondary School SIP Plan

Summary of main strengths as identified in the last SSE

- A change in practice in relation to providing more comprehensive feedback in school reports, across all subjects has been established. This has resulted in parents and students receiving effective feedback on students may improve.
- Feedback strategies have been developed.

e.g.

a) 3, 2, 1 strategy.

3-things I have learned

2-interesting facts

1-question I have

b) A feedback record sheet for both the student and teacher journals to log feedback given to students from teachers and when the students acted on the feedback provided.

c) Goals, Medals Mission has been adopted to provide teaching staff with a model on how one may provide feedback.

d) A feedback Tree was placed in each classroom for students to place post it feedback, following lessons.

- Following further dialogue in the area of Effective feedback, the school will pilot a scheme for Parent-Teacher meetings that will facilitate students to accompany their parents at the meetings. A proposed feedback slip will be designed to emphasise to students that they are receiving while providing a template for teachers to guide them when providing feedback.
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Summary of main areas requiring improvement as identified in last SSE

- Increase the percentage of students who feel their knowledge and understanding is checked regularly in class from 39% to

2017-44% (April 2017)
2018-48% (April 2018)
 - Increase the percentage of students who feel they get feedback regularly from their teachers on what steps they need to take to improve their learning from 24% to

2017-29% (April 2017)
2018-32% (April 2018)
 - Improve the percentage of students who feel their teachers talk to them about how to improve their learning from 15% to

2017-20% (April 2017)
2018-25% (April 2018)
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Required actions

- A guest speaker from CPD/PDST will be arranged to talk to the whole staff on formative feedback.
- A proposed feedback slip will be designed to emphasise to students that they are receiving while providing a template for teachers to guide them when providing feedback.
- 6th Year students will attend the Parent Teacher meeting in October with their parents to facilitate effective feedback on their progress.
- Further staff In-service provided by the effective feedback committee on the agreed strategies introduced in 2016-2017.
- Continued use and development of the feedback comments for the school reports.

Persons responsible

All staff including the Effective Feedback Committee

Time frame for action

September 2017 onwards

Success criteria

- Increase the percentage of students who feel their knowledge and understanding is checked regularly in class from 40% to 2018-44% (April 2018)
- Increase the percentage of students who feel they get feedback regularly from their teachers on what steps they need to take to improve their learning from 13% to 2018-25% (April 2018)
- Improve the percentage of students who feel their teachers talk to them

about how to improve their learning
from 14% to 2018-20% (April 2018)

Review Date	Ongoing with a formal review in May 2016
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