Sacred Heart Secondary School

Clonakilty

Co. Cork

62170b

School Self-Evaluation Report

June 2015

School Self-Evaluation Report

1. Introduction

1.1 The Focus of the Evaluation

A school self-evaluation of teaching and learning in Sacred Heart Secondary School was undertaken during the period September 2013 to May 2015. During the evaluation a focus on numeracy deficits in students was investigated. Consultation, feedback and surveys informed the direction and focus of the initiative. A Numeracy committee was established to direct and to advise on the strategies adopted. The first year class of 2013-2014 were identified as the study group. Thereafter, the strategies would be adopted by each subsequent year. It was decided that Numeracy would be the focus in year 2. Sacred Heart participated in a Forbairt Active Learning Network, the focus of the network looked at the development of numeracy in schools.

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 a cohort of fifty first year students from the 2013/14 academic year. All evidence gathered was related to this group.

- A maths competency test given to two first year classes highlighted a weakness in the students' ability in probability, applied measure, and problem solving. Less than half of the students answered these sections correctly. The test highlighted many areas of strengths among the cohort such as computation, order of operations, and decimals.

- A questionnaire given to teachers of the first year cohort showed that teachers perceived a weakness in student's organisation of answers and ability in unseen problem solving style questions.

- A student attitudinal survey showed that there was a strong liking for the subject (>55% like maths), and appreciation for the need for maths (80% disagreement with the statement "I only need maths for the maths class"). The survey highlighted a lack of confidence among students (>50% not knowing if they would do higher level for Junior Cert), and in particular in unseen material (Only 20% agreed with the statement "I am good at figuring out questions I have not seen before")

- The school partook in a trial study of Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMMS). The results show a lack of confidence and engagement among the cohort towards maths.

TIMMS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study)

Measures	**Sacred Heart Secondary School**		**Irish field trial sample**	
Like Learning Maths	-0.2	1.1	0.0	1.0
Engaged in Maths Lesson	-0.2	1.0	0.0	1.0
Confidence in Maths	-0.2	1.1	0.0	1.0
Values Maths	-0.4	1.1	0.0	1.0

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 3rd and 6th 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, 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 1st SSE on Literacy	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: A: 18% B: 42% C:25%

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	Strategies
1. **Increase the percentage of students who have the confidence to answer an unseen question from 20% to** • 2015-25% (May 2015) • 2016-28% (Jan 2016) 2. **Increase the percentage of students who like maths from 55%** • 2015- 58% (May 2015) • 2016- 60% (Jan 2016) 3. **The target percentage of students who will use the problem Solving approach;** • 2015- 40% (May 2015) • 2016- 50 % (Jan 2016) 4. **Maintain the high level of higher level uptake in junior cert maths, based on a three year moving average:** **Current percentage:** **2012 – 2014** SHSS 77% National 50% 5. **To maintain the students' attainment of grades in Junior Certificate Maths at higher level. (Average 2012-2014)** **A: 17%** **B: 45%** **C: 29%**	1. Confidence and ability in unseen problem solving style activities will be supported by a school-wide problem solving strategy. The strategy follows the acronym S.U.P.E.R. and is outlined below. **<u>Scan</u> The question is read through to completion once.** **<u>Underline</u> The question is re-read and important points are underlined for emphasis.** **<u>Plan</u> A numbered plan is written down to break the question down and help with sequencing of tasks.** **<u>Experiment</u> The outlined plan is implemented and experimented with.** **<u>Reflect</u> The solution and methods are reflected upon with regard to the question asked.** 2. Each subject department will identify numeracy moments in their own subject and incorporate this into their schemes of work. 3. Numeracy will be promoted outside the class room through a range of initiatives including: • Numeracy clocks • Puzzle of the week • Numeracy posters • Signposts showing distances between classrooms 4. A numeracy class will be included in the timetable for Transition Year and Applied Leaving Cert students. There will be a focus on numeracy in the curriculum for both these groups.

Sacred Heart Secondary School SIP Plan

Summary of main strengths as identified in the last SSE

- 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.

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	SHSS		National	
Characteristic	**Mean**	**SD**	**Mean**	**SD**
Mathematics achievement	**532**	**64**	**487**	**86**
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Summary of main areas requiring improvement as identified in last SSE	6. **Increase the percentage of students who have the confidence to answer an unseen question from 20% to** • 2015-25% (May 2015) • 2016-28% (Jan 2016) 7. **Increase the percentage of students who like maths from 55%** • 2015- 58% (May 2015) • 2016- 60% (Jan 2016) 8. **The target percentage of students who will use the problem Solving approach;** • 2015- 40% (May 2015) • 2016- 50 % (Jan 2016) 9. **Maintain the high level of higher level uptake in junior cert maths, based on a three year moving average:** **Current percentage:** **2012 – 2014** SHSS 77% National 50% 10. **To maintain the students' attainment of grades in Junior Certificate Maths at higher level.** **(Average 2012-2014)** **A: 17%** **B: 45%** **C: 29%**

Required actions	• Whole-staff C.P.D. and information sessions on effective teaching strategies with particular reference to numeracy. These include: - A presentation to staff on the SUPER problem solving strategy - A staff meeting for departments to identify numeracy moments in their subject and time to build these into their scheme of work • Information on the above techniques in student diaries. • Default Strategy for promoting higher level uptake of Maths at JC and LC level to be maintained • Creating a numeracy-rich environment across the school through use of posters, puzzles, clocks and numeracy initiatives. • Timetabling a numeracy class for all Transition Year and Applied Leaving Cert students. •
Persons responsible	All staff including the Numeracy Committee
Time frame for action	September 2014 onwards

Success criteria	1. Maintenance of student uptake of JC Maths at higher level. 2. Maintenance of high academic grades in JC Maths and Science. 3. Improved problem solving ability. 4. The percentage of students who have the confidence to answer an unseen question will increase from 20% to • 2015-25% (May 2015) • 2016-28% (Jan 2016) 5. The percentage of students who like maths will increase from 55% • 2015- 58% (May 2015) • 2016- 60% (Jan 2016) 6. The percentage of students who will use the problem Solving approach • 2015- 40% (May 2015) • 2016- 50 % (Jan 2016)
Review Date	Ongoing with a formal review in May 2016