

**Sacred Heart Secondary School
Clonakilty
Co. Cork
62170b
School Self-Evaluation Report
June 2016**

1. Introduction

1.1 The Focus of the Evaluation

Feedback is one of the most powerful influences on Learning and achievement, but this can be either positive or negative (Hattie and Timperley 2007)

A school self-evaluation of teaching and learning in Sacred Heart Secondary School was undertaken during the period September 2015 to June 2016. Previously, school self evaluation (SSE) concentrated on Literacy in 2013-14 (strand 1) and Numeracy in 2014-15 (strand 2). The reason formative feedback was chosen for strand 3 of the SSE process was because of the results of research from Hattie and Timperley amongst others. It was felt that a focus on good quality formative feedback could have a positive effect on teaching and learning. Also, the previous year, a focus on more formative feedback via school reports had proved to be successful in motivating students. It was agreed that more could be done.

A feedback committee was established. Consultation, surveys and focus groups informed the direction and focus of the initiative.

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 537 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 included the whole school environment. Information was gathered from Parents, Students and Teachers.

Parents

A focus group of parents were consulted about their experience of the type and effectiveness of feedback. Parents were satisfied with the feedback teachers gave to students either orally at parent teacher meetings, or written comments via the school journal and end of term reports. Parents felt that their daughters were regularly assessed and both student and parent had been made aware of the progression of learning.

Leaving Certificate Students

A focus group of Leaving Certificate peer mentors were consulted about their experience of feedback during their secondary school life and how this feedback might be improved upon to further their learning. The students felt that one-to-one feedback was particularly helpful and indicated that some teachers provided this more frequently than others. The type of feedback given was also discussed; students stated that precise and specific direction on how they might make improvement was particularly useful.

First Year Students

The study focused on 97 first year students from the 2015/16 academic year with all taking part in the survey. Most of the results from this survey were encouraging and emphasised the good practice in the school with regard to feedback.

The majority of first-years felt they

- had opportunities to work with other students and help each other
- knew how to judge their own work and where and how to improve
- had time to reflect on progress during the learning
- could show what they had learned in different ways, not just in written tests
- were clear on what they were expected to achieve for a task/project

It was established that

- students' knowledge and understanding needed to be checked more regularly in class
- more specific feedback should be given to students on the precise steps needed to improve learning
- one-to-one feedback on how to improve learning needed to be increased

Teachers

All teachers were surveyed on their experience of feedback; its implementation and effectiveness.

Teachers used many different methods of feedback such as trend graphs, peer-assessment, oral feedback and comment only feedback (with no grade). Nearly all teachers felt very strongly that feedback improved learning. 52% of teachers always set success criteria to enable students to assess their own learning; 47% sometimes did.

Teachers suggested that feedback could be improved by

- using subject-specific comments (comment bank) for school reports
- students providing written record of their action in response to feedback from teachers
- developing a strategy that examines whether or not students have taken on board feedback

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, 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 SSE on Literacy (strand 1)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 24% of students improved their NGRT scores in 2015- 4% higher than target. Reading for leisure increased to 78% in 2014- 13% higher than target. The average number of students doing Higher Level English over the last three years is 87% - 2% higher than target. The average percentages attaining A, B and C grades at Higher Level English over the last three years is: <p style="text-align: right;">A: 18%</p> <p style="text-align: right;">B: 42%</p> <p style="text-align: right;">C: 25%</p>

11. Results of 2 nd SSE on Numeracy (strand 2)	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>
	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>
	3. The target percentage of students who will use the problem Solving approach <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2015- 40% (May 2015) • 2016- 50 % (Jan 2016) <p>2016 March 35%</p>
	4. Maintain the high level of higher level uptake in junior cert maths, based on a three year moving average. <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%</p> <p>B: 45%</p> <p>C: 29%</p> <p>(Average 2013-2015)</p> <p>A: 15%</p> <p>B: 45%</p> <p>C: 29%</p>
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4.2 The following areas are prioritised for improvement:

Targets	Strategies
<p>1. Increase the percentage of students who feel their knowledge and understanding is checked regularly in class from 39% to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2017-44% (April 2017)• 2018-48% (April 2018)	<p>1. Formative feedback strategies will be added to the teacher journal to support the improvement of this statement. For example: 3, 2, 1 strategy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3-things I have learned• 2-interesting facts• 1-question I have <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>
<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> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2017-29% (April 2017)• 2018-32% (April 2018)	<p>2. 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 students acted on the feedback provided.</p> <p>3-2-1 model and feedback post-it tree as mentioned above.</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> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2017-20% (April 2017) • 2018-25% (April 2018) 	<p>3. 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>. • 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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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.

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- 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
Mathematics achievement	532	64	487	86
Science achievement	568	76	508	97

Summary of main areas requiring improvement as identified in last SSE

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%
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<p>Improvement targets</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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) 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) 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)
<p>Required actions</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Formative feedback strategies will be added to the teacher journal to support the improvement of this statement. For example: 3, 2, 1 strategy. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3-things I have learned • 2-interesting facts • 1-question I have 2. 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. 3. 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.

4. 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 students acted on the feedback provided.
5. An explanation of formative feedback will be provided to teachers in their teacher journal.
6. A guest speaker from CPD/PDST will be arranged to talk to the whole staff on formative feedback.
7. A guide of how to provide formative feedback to students on a piece of work will be placed in the teachers' journal; formative feedback: medals and missions.

Persons responsible

All staff including Feedback Committee

Time frame for action

September 2016 onwards

Success criteria

The percentage of students who feel their knowledge and understanding is checked regularly in class will increase from 39% to

- 2017-44% (April 2017)
- 2018-48% (April 2018)

The percentage of students who feel they get feedback regularly from their teachers on what steps they need to take to improve their learning will increase from 24% to

- 2017-29% (April 2017)
- 2018-32% (April 2018)

The percentage of students who feel their teachers talk to them about how to improve their learning will increase from 15% to

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

Review Date

Ongoing with a formal review in May 2017