



Scoil Ghráinne CNS
Phibblestown, Clonee, D.15
20247W

School Self-Evaluation Report

Evaluation period: *September 2013 to June 2014*

Report issue date:

School Self-Evaluation Report

1. Introduction

1.1 The focus of the evaluation

A school self-evaluation of teaching and learning in Scoil Ghráinne CNS was undertaken during the period *September 2013* to June 2014. During the evaluation, teaching and learning in the following curriculum areas were evaluated:

- Literacy – Oral language

This is a report on the findings of the evaluation.

1.2 School context

Scoil Ghráinne Community National School is a co-educational Primary School which will soon be under the patronage of Dublin and Dun Laoghaire Educational Training Board. Scoil Ghráinne aims to promote the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the child: intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual. Scoil Ghráinne seeks to provide a high standard of education where each child is encouraged to reach his/her personal potential. The school is committed to a spirit of inclusion, equality and harmony where each child and member of the school community is valued and treated with respect.

It is the policy of Scoil Ghráinne to respect, celebrate and recognise diversity in all areas of human life. Children attending Scoil Ghráinne will be taught and encouraged to view diversity as something which reflects the community from which the children are drawn. The school will endeavour to encourage the children committed to its care to have a pride in what makes them different and a belief that difference, when respected and valued, gives strength and vibrancy to the total school community and the wider community in which they live. As part of its ethos, Scoil Ghráinne welcomes children from all faiths and none in common with the other Community National Schools under E.T.B. Patronage, Scoil Ghráinne will recognise the wishes of parents to have their children receive religious education, or morality based education as an integral part of the school curriculum.

Scoil Ghráinne currently caters for 513 pupils from a variety of cultural backgrounds. 83% of our pupil population is from an International Newcomer Background and 17% of our enrolled children were born in Ireland to Irish parents. As a direct result of this Scoil Ghráinne has a great deal of language based needs and challenges to be met. Scoil Ghráinne is a developing school and will be increasing its enrolment by a further 90 children in September 2014 and it is expected to cater for 720 children in mainstream education and a further 12 children within a Special Needs Unit (2 classes).

2. The findings

Given the diverse language needs within the school and the fact that several of our families and children are without competent levels of English it was decided after a school-based review that oral language within literacy was a key area for development. The following sources of evidence were used to compile the findings of this report:

- Discussion at staff meetings- at school staff level we found that there were a lot of assumptions with regards to the existing vocabulary of our pupils being made and that there was a need to revisit the way in which Scoil Ghráinne was teaching the English language.
- We analysed the qualitative and quantitative data on standardised tests in Literacy.
- We had a school-based review of the literacy lessons being taught at each class level in order to identify priority areas for development.
- Decisions were taken by each year group to prioritise areas for development and decided upon timeframes for the completion of work. (focus groups)

The Literacy committee and the Literacy link teacher researched the PDST ‘5 Components to Oral Language Instruction’ which includes the following:

1. Teach and Extend Vocabulary – individual words, word learning strategies and fostering a love of words and language
2. Promote Auditory Memory – ability to process, store and recall information
3. Create a Language Learning Environment – physical environment within the classroom and school, providing opportunities for communication.
4. Teach a variety of Spoken texts – range of language for different functions, i.e. needs, feelings, interacting, influencing, imagining and communicating information. Using a variety of text types – oral reporting, debate, storytelling and procedures.
5. Develop Listening and Speaking skills – rules for social interaction i.e. turn taking, politeness, non-verbal skills and pragmatics.

From the information gathering process of our SSE the following areas were highlighted:

- Results from the Primary School Assessment Kit (PSAK) show that 0% of children in our school scored at level B1.3 (the highest level of proficiency) in the area of speaking while just over 8.3% scored in the A1 category (lowest level of proficiency) in the area of speaking. The majority at 76.1% of our children scored at level A1.2 (the second lowest level of proficiency)
- The PSAK results show that only 8.7% of children scored at the level B1.3 in the area of listening while 1.8% scored in the A1 category in the category of listening (the lowest level of proficiency). The majority of children at 43.7% scored at level B1.2 but only from 1st class upwards.
- The above results may account for some of the weaker scores attained further up the school in the Micra-T reading assessment standardised test where children are scoring below the national average due to a lack of comprehension skills.

- Each of the 5 components of Oral Language was examined in isolation and was the curricular development focus of our staff meetings during the past academic year.
- We also identified the need to explicitly teach vocabulary at the beginning of a theme or topic in order to ensure understanding for the pupils.
- Direction was given to staff members at all levels as how best to attain the curriculum objectives within each of these areas.
- At planning and staff meetings each year group identified what aspects of oral language they were already fulfilling and also the areas that were in need of further development.
- A whole school approach to the development of listening and speaking skills was agreed upon.
- The literacy committee developed and circulated resources focusing on what good listening and speaking looks like, strategies for refocusing a class ‘give me 5’, ‘pretzel’ and ‘5 steps to speaking’ were explicitly taught at each class level.

3. Progress made on previously-identified improvement targets

N/A for year one as *School Improvement Plan* is not currently in place

4. Summary of school self-evaluation findings

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

- Parents are willing to further develop their child’s oral language. This was evidenced by the response from parents to the ‘Tips for parents’ oral language information sheet that was sent home with each child and the positive feedback received by teachers.
- Year heads at fortnightly group planning meetings kept running records of what they were covering in each of the oral language areas and together identified the areas they were going to develop further.
- In Junior and Senior Infant classes children are given the opportunity to converse in English through the ‘Aistear’ programme which has been heavily resourced and structured during this academic year
- Children from 1st-4th class are given many opportunities to speak English in class everyday
- From Senior Infants upwards our Learning Support, Resource and EAL team provide in-class support and withdrawal for more intensive language support
- A variety of teaching approaches and methodologies are being used right throughout the school to support the children’s language learning
- Oral language lessons are taking place formally in each class with a variety of resources being used.

4.2 The following areas are prioritised for improvement:

- In terms of further developing the Aistear programme; the school is nearing capacity and therefore the EAL teachers that were used to reduce class size at Junior and Senior Infant level will now be focusing solely on EAL teaching. This means that the EAL team will now support the Infant class teachers to fully implement the Aistear programme for a designated amount of time each day
- Grouping of children and support for these groups will be arranged more effectively throughout the school with a greater emphasis placed on station teaching e.g. conversation stations in the infant classes, guided reading programme being introduced for September
- A broader development of oral language topics will be developed especially for the older classes i.e. story-telling, debates etc.
- More group work and pair work will give the children more opportunities to converse with adults and peers during class work.
- More emphasis will be placed on the teaching of discrete oral language lessons
- Although a lot of work has gone in to developing a standardised school-wide approach to listening and speaking skills these will be heavily reinforced at the beginning of and throughout the school year.
- Standardised test score analysis from June 2013 indicates that 44% of our 1st, 2nd and 3rd class children scored a STen of 5-6 (**National average for this range is 34%**)
- It should be noted that 15% of 1st, 2nd and 3rd class children scored a STen of 4 (**National average for this range is 16%**)
- It should also be noted that 7% of our children scored in the 8-10 STen range (**National average for this range is 9%**)

4.3 The following legislative and regulatory requirements need to be addressed:

- We will continue to develop our school Code of Behaviour to take into account the age profile of our pupils
- We will continue to develop our school plans for the following areas
 1. Drafting of the Scoil Ghráinne Oral Language Policy
 2. Drafting of the numeracy/maths policy
 3. Drafting of the Scoil Ghráinne CNS RSE policy