

# **SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION Report & Plan –LITERACY (2014 -2017)**

## **1. Introduction**

Scoil Mhuire gan Smál (B) / Glasheen Boys' School is a DEIS Band 2 **Urban Boys'** School with 332 pupils (increased to **356 pupils** in autumn 2015). We have an Administrative Principal, 14 Class Teachers, 6 Full Time SEN Teachers, 1 Shared SEN Teacher, 2 EAL Teachers and a shared HSCL Teacher. Due to our location which is close to Cork City Centre, U.C.C. and a number of hospitals, we attract pupils from far and near, which means that we have quite a diverse school population. Many of our students come from homes where English may not be the first language. We also have a number of newcomer pupils. The school shares a campus with Glasheen Girls' School and also shares a building. Our school is involved in **several initiatives** including Reading Recovery, Literacy Lift-Off, Station Teaching, Building Bridges of Understanding (Reading Comprehension), First Steps (Writing), Maths For Fun and Ready Set Go Maths. Glasheen Boys' School is part of the Green Schools' Initiative and is currently working on our 5<sup>th</sup> **Green Flag** for Biodiversity. We have been a **Health Promoting School** since 2007. We have recently achieved a **Digital School of Excellence Award**, an **Active Schools Flag** and a **Yellow Flag**. A building project, replacing prefabs with three classrooms was recently completed. We have a number of **School Policies** in place, which we have been busy updating and reviewing during the school year 2014/2015. We have also been reviewing our school's **DEIS Plan** in 2014/15. In 2015/16, we will be a partner school with U.C.C. for the implementation of **Visual Thinking Strategies** (VTS) as a teaching & learning method, in our school.

### **1.1 The Focus of the Evaluation (Literacy)**

A school self-evaluation of teaching and learning in literacy was undertaken during the period from 2013 – 2015. During the current evaluation teaching and learning across the whole school was evaluated. The focus of this SSE report focuses on our teaching and learning in the area of oral language across all class levels. In particular we will focus on a whole school approach to the assessment of oral language.

#### **Rationale for choosing Oral Language**

READING

Our school employs **Building Bridges of Understanding** as a programme to support Comprehension strategies. Intensive **Literacy Lift Off** and **Reading Recovery** are rolled out throughout the school from Junior Infants to 1<sup>st</sup> class. We have a very good programme of early intervention in reading and writing.

## WRITING

The **First Steps** Programme was introduced in 2008 and is ongoing. We have a trained First Steps writing facilitator on our staff. As a result of these strengths in the areas of both Reading and Writing it was decided to focus on the area of Oral Language.

### **This is a report on the findings of the evaluation**

#### **1.2 School Context (\*Facts / Figures / Initiatives in Literacy & Numeracy in our school)**

- This is a Boys' primary school.
- There are currently 332 pupils enrolled (Increase to 356 expected in autumn 2015)
- There are 25 teachers on staff including (administrative principal, mainstream teachers, learning support, EAL, resource teacher and a shared HSCL Teacher )
- The school administers Sigma-T and Micra-T standardised tests in Mathematics and English reading from 1<sup>st</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> class.
- Other current Literacy & Numeracy initiatives being implemented include :
  - Reading Recovery
  - Maths for Fun
  - Ready Set Go Maths
  - Literacy Liftoff

#### **2. The Findings (\*General findings to include six to eight general statements across all areas of literacy)**

- Different programmes of instruction were in place for Oral Language across the class levels. Programmes currently in use include Chatterbox and Wonderland.
- The primary assessment tool in use was teacher observation but no standard criteria was in use for same.
- On shared analysis of whole school standardised tests in literacy, we as a staff found that 57.73% of the pupils are performing at or above the national norm in Literacy, based on Micra-T results (2013/2014).
- Examination of questionnaires from pupils from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> class showed that 93% of pupils felt they had a chance to speak about things in school. 94% indicated that they like to work in pairs or groups. Of the 55% of children who felt they made mistakes when speaking in public, 46% felt they didn't have the confidence to describe the subject matter.
- In a staff review of current practice in September 2014, teachers indicated in their focus group study that EAL and SEN pupils had different language needs. This review was followed up with children and parent questionnaires.
- In addition it was identified that there were no clear targets or milestones being used in classes and it was agreed that whole school strategies were needed. Following this review it was decided to use the Drumcondra Profiles, on a trial basis, as a tool of and for assessment.
- 73% of parents surveyed indicated that they would like more information in relation to their sons Oral Language progress.

### **3. Progress made on previously identified targets identified in the current SIP**

- We achieved an overall improvement in literacy levels in standardized testing (achieved 2010)

- We extended Reading Recovery In-class Support (through Literacy Lift Off) from Junior infants to First class (achieved 2011)
- We continue to promote the fun element of reading by involving parents (ongoing).
- **SPECIFIC LITERACY TARGETS 2014-2017**
  - To improve communication with parents around oral language expectations for their child at the relevant class level.
  - To adopt the Drumcondra Profile as a whole school approach to the assessment of oral language.
  - To maintain the current focus on early intervention in literacy.

#### **4. Summary of School Self-Evaluation Findings (\*General strengths across literacy through all strands / skills / classes etc.)**

4.1 Our school has strengths in the following areas:

- Our whole school standardised test results across literacy indicate that reading is an area of considerable strength.
- MIST and Quest indicate that the early intervention strategies are contributing to raising the literacy levels at the junior end.
- The assistance of a good Support Team contributes to the continued success in attainment.
- Our school is very well resourced in the area of literacy.

#### **4.2 The Following Areas are Prioritized for Improvement (sample actions to be put in place to ensure pupil progression)**

As a staff

- To adopt the use of the Drumcondra Profiles for AFL and future planning.

- To adopt a common approach to assessment and planning for oral language  
To improve communication with parents in relation to supporting their child’s learning in oral language

**4.3 The following legislative and regulatory requirements need to be addressed (SSE Guidelines p.64 – 67)**

- See checklist included outlining audit of policies in place.

| <b>• School Improvement Plan – Literacy</b> |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Baseline data</b>                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Different programmes of instruction were in place for Oral Language across the class levels. Programmes currently in use include Chatterbox and Wonderland.</li> <li>• The primary assessment tool in use was teacher observation but no standard criteria was in use for same.</li> <li>• On shared analysis of whole school standardised tests in literacy, we as a staff found that 57.73% of the 265 children tested are performing at or above the national norm in Literacy, based on Micra-T results (2013/2014). Almost 20% of the school are above or at the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile. (also 2013/2014)</li> <li>• 93% of pupils felt they had a chance to speak about things in school. 94% indicated that they like to work in pairs or groups. Of the 55% of children who felt they made mistakes when speaking in public, 46% felt they didn’t have the confidence to describe the subject matter.</li> <li>• Teachers indicated in their focus group study September 2014 that EAL and SEN</li> </ul> |

|   |   |  |                            |  |
|---|---|--|----------------------------|--|
|   | <p>pupils had different language needs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>73% of parents surveyed indicated that they would like more information in relation to their sons Oral Language progress.</li> </ul> |  |                            |  |
| <b>Summary of main areas requiring improvements</b>   | -   |  |                            |  |
| <b>Improvement Targets</b>  | <b>Required Actions</b>   | <b>Success Criteria / Measurable Outcomes</b>  | <b>Persons Responsible</b> | <b>Timeframe for Actions</b>                             |
| To adopt the Drumcondra Profile as a whole school approach to the assessment of oral language | Teachers will assess each child in his/her class 3 times during the school year, on 3 agreed dates.   | Teacher feedback – observation of pupils progress in the Drumcondra Profiles and recording on agreed template. | All class teachers         | 2014- 2017   |
| To improve communication with parents around oral language expectations                       | To supply all parents with an information sheet and ways in which they can assist their child’s oral language   | Parental feedback  | All Staff                  | November 2015 at Parent teacher meeting<br>Written form- |

|  |   |   |  |   |
|--|---|---|--|---|
| <p>for their child at the relevant class level.</p> <p>To maintain the current focus on early intervention in literacy</p> | <p>development</p> <p>To implement Literacy Lift Off in junior classes</p>  | <p>Group Reading testing administered and will continue to be administered prior to and following completion of the intervention.</p> <p>Teacher feedback</p> | <p>Class teachers and support staff (SEN/EAL teachers)</p> | <p>school reports</p> <p>Ongoing throughout the school year</p> |
| <p><b>Monitor and Review</b></p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This plan will be monitored on an ongoing basis and reviewed in full in May 2017.</li> <li>• The plan will be placed on the agenda for discussion at a staff meeting during the school year.</li> <li>• Teachers will be reminded of the need to assess the children in their class using the Drumcondra Profiles in advance of the agreed date.</li> <li>• Opportunities will be given to discuss findings at Croke Park sessions.</li> </ul> |   |  |   |