



St Aloysius Secondary School.
Sharman Crawford Street, Cork.
62630J.

School Self- Evaluation Report.

Evaluation Period: September 2013 – May 2014

Report Published: September 2014

School Self-Evaluation Report

1. Introduction

1.1 The focus of the evaluation

A school self-evaluation of teaching and learning in St. Aloysius Secondary School was undertaken during the period September 2013 to May 2014. During the period of evaluation, teaching and learning in the following area of literacy was evaluated.

A Literacy core team was established and following a number of preliminary discussion meetings, the team decided on a six-step evidence-based plan to assess the state of literacy among the target group (the second year cohort). Various members of the core group took responsibility for different aspects of the plan and for devising, administering, administering and analysing the tests and surveys.

The School Improvement Plan (S.I.P.) was drawn up by the Principal in collaboration with the literacy coordinator. The S.I.P. was later published to the entire staff, Parents' Association, Students' Council and the Board of Management.

The plan was published on the school website, for all members of the school community to access. The steps in the plan to produce the School Improvement Plan were as follows:

1. Decide on what was to be evaluated.
2. Gather evidence.
3. Analyse the evidence.
4. Draw conclusions.
5. Draw up a report based on the conclusions.
6. Develop a School Improvement Plan for Literacy

This is a report on the findings of the evaluation.

1.2 The School Context

- St Aloysius Secondary School is a Catholic girls' voluntary secondary school founded by the Mercy Order in 1927.
- There are currently 281 students enrolled in St Aloysius Secondary School.
- St Aloysius provides a varied and full curriculum, including transition year and Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme.
- St. Aloysius today, operates under the Patronage of the Catholic Education, an Irish Schools Trust (CEIST).
- Under the Patron, the Board of Management has charge of the overall management of the school. The Board extends day to day management of the school to the Principal.
- The principal is supported in the day to day management of the school by the deputy principal and a very effective in school management team, comprised of two assistant principals and six teachers with "special duties".
- The principal and deputy principal are committed to developing a school community loyal to the CEIST Charter honouring our Catholic ethos through the involvement of staff, students, parents and the local community in school life.
- There are 22 teachers on staff and 1 SNA.

2. The Findings

A school self-evaluation of teaching and learning in St Aloysius Secondary School Cork was undertaken. During the evaluation, teaching and learning in the following area was evaluated: Literacy and student engagement in reading for pleasure.

This is a report on the findings of the evaluation.

- The school uses the CAT's Assessments for incoming 1st Year students.
- This information is used in conjunction with standardised test scores and other information from the source primary schools.
- Other current initiatives in Literacy include –
 - Literacy Link Teacher
 - Literacy Committee

- Keywords/Spelling Challenge
- Emphasise correct spellings
- Print Rich Environment & Display of students' work in all classrooms
- Oral Proficiency
- Literacy notice board in the staff work room.
- Visits to the theatre, cinema, drama festivals etc.
- World Book Day/Week
- One Library Class per week for 1st Years.
- Theatre, cinema, drama events and workshops.
- "Red Read Wall" – Red Notice Board in corridors covered with student reviews.

1. An Attitudinal Survey was carried out on all First Years, in September 2013. This returned very valuable information.

- 26% of students read every day, 28% two or three times a week, 12% read once a month, 17% rarely with 5% stating they never read.
- 69% of pupils enjoy reading, 19% only read when they have to, 7% only read in class, and 5% state they never read.
- Prior to joining our school library, 85% of students had, at some stage, been a member of a library with 75% having attended a Primary School which had a library.
- 74% of respondents consider themselves "good at reading" and in response to the final question 64% believe that "being a good reader" is an important skill.

These results flagged the following findings:

- The majority of students are positively disposed to reading.
- The high percentage of students who enjoy reading suggests that majority of students would like to be in a position whereby they would be able to read successfully in front of their peers.
- The number of students who never read is considerably low and with literacy initiatives across the subject range may decrease over the duration of the academic year if targeted.

2. Teachers were given a published Literacy card, which include reference to commonly misspelt words, common grammatical errors and explain 26 English language words which are often misused. The Literacy Card chosen was deemed to be transferable across all subject departments.

3. The updating of the school library- an on-going project which began in 2012.

4. Some subject teachers have publicly displayed important assessment question terms, commonly used in their subject area attempting to improve the student's understanding of assessment questions.

5. An analysis of Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate State Exam Results has been undertaken. The number of students participating at Higher Level English at Junior and Leaving Cert Level continues to be above the national averages, whilst the attainment rates continue to match the national averages. This reflects a very strong culture of English teachers promoting the maximum levels for their students, and students endeavouring to promote their own Literacy Skills to their own maximum level.

6. Debating is a feature in the school, with the school annually entering the various local and national debates. All students at both junior and senior level are encouraged to participate.

7. Student Council members' availed of opportunities to address the Parent's Association, Board of Management and public representatives at school events. These opportunities were available to all Student Council members', the mentor teacher encouraged a variety of members who had not previously address the above list school partners to do so.

8. At year group assemblies, students are encouraged to report on any relevant activities or events they may have attended in their respective year group.

3. Progress made on previously-identified targets improvement targets.

- **Not Applicable for Year One as SIP not in place yet.**

4. Summary of school self-evaluation findings.

4.1 Our school has strengths in the following areas:

- Very dedicated and motivated teaching staff willing to promote Literacy across all subject departments using a varied number and mix of strategies.
- A very positive and ambitious student cohort who are willing to embrace active methodologies in the pursuit of improving their Literacy Skills.
- Extremely engaged and supportive parents who are very trusting of the school to improve their children's Literacy and general attainment.
- Dedicated Literacy Link Teacher and Literacy Committee.

4.2 The following areas are prioritised for improvement:

- Understanding of Keywords across all subject departments.
- The number of students reading for pleasure and for information.
- Correct mechanics of writing/spellings across all subject areas.

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

- Development of a whole school guidance plan.
- Written attendance and participation strategy.
- Data protection policy.
- Special education needs policy.
- Substance use policy.

Appendix to School Self-Evaluation Report

St Aloysius Secondary School, legislative and regulatory checklist.

Completed in May 2014

Issue	Relevant legislation, rule or circular	Is the school fully meeting the requirements of the relevant legislation, rule or circular?	If no, indicate aspects to be developed
Valid enrolment of students	M51/93	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Time in school - Length of school year (minimum of 167 days for all year groups) - Length of school week (minimum of 28 hours for all year groups)	Circular M29/95	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Standardisation of school year	Circular 034/2011	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Arrangements for parent/teacher and staff meetings	Circular M58/04	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Implementation of national literacy strategy	Circular 25/12	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Implementation of Croke Park agreement regarding additional time requirement	Circular 025/2011	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Development of school plan	Section 21 Education Act 1998	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Guidance provision in secondary schools	Circular PPT12/05, Education Act 1998 (section 9(c))	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Whole-school guidance plan	Section 21 Education Act 1998	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	
Delivery of CSPE to all junior cycle classes	Circular M12/01 Circular M13/05	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Exemption from the study of Irish	Circular M10/94	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

Issue	Relevant legislation, rule or circular	Is the school fully meeting the requirements of the relevant legislation, rule or circular?	If no, indicate aspects to be developed	
Implementation of revised in-school management structures	Circular M29/02, Circular 21/98, Circular 30/97, Circular 29/97	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
Limited alleviation on filling posts of responsibility for school year 2011/12	Circular 53/11	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
Parents as partners in education	Circular M27/91	Yes		
Implementation of child protection procedures	Circular 65/11 Please provide the following information in relation to child protection	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
	▪ Number of cases where a report involving a child in the school was submitted by the DLP to the HSE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1 in 2012/13 0 in 2013/14	
	▪ Number of cases where a report involving a child in the school was submitted by the DLP to the HSE and the school board of management informed	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1 in 2012/13 0 in 2013/14	
	▪ Number of cases where the DLP sought advice from the HSE and as a result of this advice, no report was made.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	0 in 2012/13 1 in 2013/14	
	Number of cases where the DLP sought advice from the HSE and as a result of this advice, no report was made and the school board of management informed	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	0 in 2012/13 1 in 2013/14	
Implementation of complaints procedure as appropriate	Section 28 Education Act 1998 Please provide the following information in relation to complaints made by parents during this school year	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
	▪ Number of formal parental complaints received			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0
	▪ Number of formal complaints processed ▪ Number of formal complaints not fully processed by the end of this school year			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0
Refusal to enrol	Section 29 Education Act 1998 Please provide the following information in relation to appeals taken in accordance with Section 29 against the school during this school year	N/A		

Issue	Relevant legislation, rule or circular		Is the school fully meeting the requirements of the relevant legislation, rule or circular?	If no, indicate aspects to be developed
	Number of section 29 cases taken against the school	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0		
	Number of cases processed at informal stage	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0		
	Number of cases heard	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0		
	Number of appeals upheld	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0		
	Number of appeals dismissed	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0		
Suspension of students	Section 29 Education Act 1998 Please provide the following information in relation to appeals taken in accordance with Section 29 against the school during this school year			
	Number of section 29 cases taken against the school	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0		
	Number of cases processed at informal stage	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0		
	Number of cases heard	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0		
	Number of appeals upheld	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0		
	Number of appeals dismissed	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0		
Expulsion of students	Section 29 Education Act 1998 Please provide the following information in relation to appeals taken in accordance with Section 29 against the school during this school year			
	Number of section 29 cases taken against the school	0		
	Number of cases processed at informal stage	0		
	Number of cases heard	0		
	Number of appeals upheld	0		
	Number of appeals dismissed	0		

Appendix to School Self-Evaluation report: policy checklist

Policy	Source	Has the policy been approved by the Board of Management ?	If no, indicate aspects to be developed
Enrolment policy	Section 15(2)(d) of Education Act	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

	Equal Status Acts 2000-2011		
Code of behaviour, including anti-bullying policy ¹	Circular M33/91 NEWB guidelines Section 23, Education Welfare Act 2000 Guidelines on Countering Bullying Behaviour, 1993, Circular M33/91 Equal Status Acts 2000-2011	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Attendance and participation strategy ²	Circular M51/93 Section 22, Education Welfare Act 2000	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	We practise a specific attendance and participation strategy, but do not have a written explanation of this strategy.
Health and Safety Statement	Health and Safety Act 2005 Section 20	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	We have a whole school Safety Statement but need to have subject specific safety statements.
Data protection	Data Protection Act 1988 Data Protection (Amendment Act) 2003	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	We consider ourselves complainant, but do not have a written policy in place.
Special education needs policy ³	Education Act (1998) Equal Status Acts (2000 to 2011), Education (Welfare) Act (2000), Education for Persons with Special Education Needs Act (EPSEN) ⁴ (2004) Disability Act (2005))	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	
Social, personal and health education (SPHE)/Relationships and sexuality education (RSE) policy	Circulars 37/2010, 23/2010, M27/08, M11/03, M22/00, M20/96, M4/95	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Substance use policy	Department of Education and Skills Directive; guidelines issued to schools in 2002	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Internet acceptable use policy	Department of Education and Skills Directive	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Child Protection Policy	Circular 0065/2011	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

¹ Under the provisions of the Education (Welfare) Act (2000) (section 23) the school's code of behaviour should conform to the specifications stated.

² Under the provisions of the Education (Welfare) Act (2000) (section 22) the school's attendance strategy should conform with the provisions stipulated.

³ Section 9 of the Education Act (1998) requires a school to "use its available resources" to identify and provide for the educational needs of those "with a disability or other special educational needs."

⁴ The EPSEN Act requires that schools be inclusive of and provide an appropriate education for students with special educational needs.