Scoil Ursula
Strandhill Road, Sligo
18979F

School Self-Evaluation Report Update

Numeracy

Original Evaluation period: April to June 2014

Report Update issue date: October, 2015

1. Introduction

Scoil Ursula embarked on a plan to improve Literacy & Numeracy standards in the school in response to the DES National Strategy to Improve Literacy & Numeracy among Children and Young People 2011-2020. The first stage of the process was an investigation and report into the school's current position in January, 2012. The report was presented to the Staff and Board of Management in February, 2012. Many of the elements of this process have been incorporated into our School Self Evaluation process.

1.1 The focus of the evaluation

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

- Numeracy

This is an update to the original report and an appraisal of the attainment of our targets in our School Improvement Plan for Numeracy.

1.2 School context

2   This is a vertical co-educational primary school.
3   The ethos of the school is Catholic.
4   There are currently 405 pupils.
5   There are 20 teachers including an Administrative principal, 3.5 SNAs, a full-time Secretary and Caretaker.
6   Scoil Ursula is situated in a lower to middle-class suburban area.
7   10% of the school's pupils have Special Educational Needs including 10 children in receipt of Low Incidence Teaching Hours for disability ranging from ASD to Emotional& Behavioural Disorder.
8   19% of pupils are newcomer children.
9   The school administers standardised tests in Literacy (Micra-T) and Numeracy (Sigma-T) from first to sixth class. The NRIT is conducted with 1st and 4th classes. The Belfield Infant Assessment Profile (BIAP) is conducted with those Junior Infants who are considered by their teachers to be at risk of educational failure. The Middle Infant Screening Test (MIST) is conducted with Senior Infants and the Forward Together Programme is conducted as necessary.
10 Teacher Observation and Teacher-Designed tests and tasks are also used in Scoil Ursula.
11 Strong emphasis is placed on early intervention strategies for pupils with learning difficulties or special needs. We endeavour to develop each individual child's holistic potential.
12 Home-School links are fostered at every opportunity creating an open, welcoming school environment. Formal Parent-Teacher meetings are held in the Autumn.
13 We have a supportive Parent's Association who work closely with staff, pupils and Board of Management.
14 School Policies are updated regularly and are available to our school community through our website scoilursula.com

15 The school has received 5 Green Flag Awards, 2 Discover Science & Maths Awards, a Digital School of Distinction Award, the Active Schools Flag Award and various other Literary & Arts Awards.

2. The original findings

A number of instruments were used to gather data for the purposes of assessing our current provisions in numeracy and their effectiveness. The standardised test results from the Sigma-T carried out in June, 2014 were collated and analysed by Excel. We also analysed and compared the Problem Solving and non-Problem Solving scores from 4th to 6th classes, the classes where theses two areas are tested separately. Through our school website and Google Docs, we created questionnaires for pupils, parents and teachers and the data from these was collated and analysed to produce the following results.

- **Numeracy**

    - **Standardised Testing:** Pupils are performing 7 points above the national norm. The school's overall average standard score is in Literacy is 107 with 67.2% scoring above the 50th percentile rank; and 32.8% of pupils score at the 85th percentile rank or above compared with 16% nationally. When a comparison was made between Problem-Solving scores from 4th to 6th classes with non-Problem Solving scores, it was found that the average standard scores were 106 and 110 respectively. This indicates that problem-solving is a significant 4 points behind other areas of Maths in terms of pupil attainment.

    - **Pupils' Surveys:** 82% of pupils surveyed report liking Maths and 72% of them regarded themselves as good at the subject. 71% of the pupils stated that they find Maths easy. The most popular aspect of Maths among pupils was adding followed by graphs & charts while the least liked areas were subtraction & division.

    - **Parents' Surveys:** Parents were very positive about their children's experience of Maths with 81% reporting that their children enjoyed it, a close match to the children's own opinions. 63% of mums and dads reported knowing their children's strengths in Maths but only 35% knew where their children were finding difficulties. The main strengths identified by parents were in the areas of counting, adding & basic operations while problem-solving and focus were commonly identified area of difficulty. 76% stated that their children rarely had difficulty with Maths homework. Generally the parents were satisfied with the teaching of Maths in the school while some suggestions for improving included making it more fun and more challenging activities for the more able pupils.

    - **Teachers' Surveys:** In general teachers were satisfied with the numeracy standards in the school. Problem- Solving and the uniformity of Maths language throughout the school were identified as areas for

development. It was felt the explicitly teaching problem-solving strategies along a decided format could close the gap between pupils' attainments in Maths generally and their performance in problem-solving. Teachers identified the following specific Numeracy areas for development in the school as follows:

- Problem Solving   92%
- Maths Language   54%
- Number   23%
- Algebra   23%
- Measures   23%

Suggestions for improving standards in the above areas included

- Problem Solving: The explicit teaching of a common method throughout the school e.g. RUDE, CUBES or ROSE. Maths lessons to begin with a problem to solve as a way of focussing the learned skills on a specific objective. The use of the NZMaths website as a tool for teaching problem-solving.

- Maths Language: Development of maths language throughout the school for commonly used operations and strategies. Assigning a colour coded system for operations to be displayed in all classrooms.

- Number: Emphasis on oral and mental Maths as an integral part of each lesson to increase focus, capacity and speed of thought.

- Algebra: More work on place-holders and variables in the senior classes to prepare for a major area of Maths in Post-Primary.

- Measures: More emphasis on hands-on experiential teaching of measure. Investment in Maths resources to assist in the above.

- **Attainment of the Curriculum Objectives**

  o Teachers report that all strands of the Maths Curriculum are adequately addressed at each class level.

- **Learning Environment**

  o Due attention is given to Maths Displays and centres of interest which create a stimulating Number-rich environment for the pupils.
  o Resources and materials are in need of updating and a system of storage and usage needs to be devised.

- **Pupils' Engagement in Learning**

  o Pupils are enabled to take an active role in their learning and engaging lessons are prepared by teachers using effective methodologies and appropriate use of ICT particularly the Interactive Whiteboards which are in wide use in all classrooms.
  o Opportunities are identified for children to engage in Maths outside of the classroom such as attending workshops for Maths Week and participating in Kangaroo Maths.
  o Maths Trails are used by teachers to develop skills and 'Maths Eyes'. More emphasis on encouraging children to watch out for Maths in the environment would help.

- **Learning to Learn**

  o Pupils are taught strategies to promote independent learning particularly in the multi-grade class in the school.

- **Preparation for Teaching**

  o All teachers prepare plans to guide the teaching and learning of Maths. There are specific learning outcomes for numeracy skills stated in individual plans which are prepared on a fortnightly basis.
  o IEPs are developed to meet the individual needs of pupils in receipt of Resource Teaching Hours (RTH) and support is provided by Special Needs Team when numeracy deficits have been addressed.

- **Teaching Approaches**

  o A variety of teaching approaches and methodologies, as recommended by the curriculum, are skilfully applied in all classes.

- **Management of Pupils**

  o A variety of classroom management strategies for the teaching of numeracy are employed including independent work, group teaching and whole class teaching.
  o Pupils with Special Needs which dyscalculia or other difficulties with numeracy are supported both in and out of class by the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Team when allocation allows.

- **Assessment of Pupils**

  o A variety of modes of assessment of and for learning is used consistently in all classes to monitor pupils' progress. Assessment of results is analysed at all levels for screening and diagnostic purposes and to identify aspects of numeracy in need of re-teaching. This is supported by the SEN Team during in-class support and group work.

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

2014-2015	Targets	Attainment
Improvement targets (related to pupils' achievement)	• To increase the school's class-based Problem-Solving average standard score from 106 by .5 each year over the three-year period to a target of 107.5 by 2017.	• The Problem-Solving Score has risen to 108, which has exceeded the three-year target in just one year.
	• To reduce the percentage of pupils achieving below the 16th percentile from 11.2% by 0.4% each year over the three-year period to a target of 10% in 2017.	• Down from 11.2% to 6.8%, a decrease of 5.4% substantially exceeding the three-year target.
	• To increase the development of Maths Language and vocabulary throughout the school.	• Not a measurable target.
	• To develop the concept of 'Maths Eyes' in all pupils.	• Not a measurable target.

Note: The final two targets were found not to meet the criteria for SMART and they were more suited to being defined as actions rather than targets.

4. Summary of school self-evaluation findings

4.1 Our school has strengths in the following areas:

o Scoil Ursula has a conscientious, dedicated, innovative staff open to new ideas and initiatives and focussed on providing the best possible educational opportunities for its pupils.

o Pupils are performing well above the national norm with 71.1% scoring above the 50th percentile rank; and 41.8% of pupils scoring at the 85th percentile rank which is almost treble the national average. There is a similar significant differential in the lower percentile brackets with only 6.8% achieving below the 16th percentile against a national norm of 16%.

o The school's numeracy standard score stands at 111.5, which is up 1.5 from the previous year and is significantly ahead of the national average.

o The targeted area of Problem-Solving has increased by 2 points from 106 to 108 in the past year. The differential between it and the overall Numeracy figure has reduced by 4 to 3.5, but appears insignificant but has to be viewed in the context of the increase on the overall Numeracy score above.

o Children with numeracy deficits continue to be supported with a differentiated programme to enable access to all strands of the curriculum and those with significant dyscalculia are supported by the SEN Team in so far as is practicable.

In a WSE Report in January 2015, the DES Inspectors identified school strengths as follows:

o The well-informed and committed board of management provides very good governance to the school.

o The principal very effectively leads a dedicated and very professional team of teachers. He promotes a culture of collaboration and commitment to the development of the school.

o A sense of community and inclusiveness, a welcoming school atmosphere and positive interactions between staff, pupils and parents characterise the school.

o The pupils are very well behaved and are commended for their interest, enthusiasm and engagement with all learning activities.

o The overall quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in the school is good and some excellent examples were evident.

o The parents' association is very active and very supportive through engagement with a range of activities on behalf of the school.

o The school's engagement with school self-evaluation (SSE) and the school improvement process is very effective.

4.2 The following areas are prioritised for improvement:

        o Problem Solving
        o Maths Language
        o Number
        o Algebra
        o Measures

4.3 The following legislative and regulatory requirements were addressed:

- Our Anti-Bullying Policy was updated in accordance with the recently introduced DES guidelines.
- An Attendance Policy was drafted and implemented in 2014.
- A Data Protection Policy will be drafted and implemented in 2015.
- A Home-School Links Policy will be drafted and implemented in 2016.

Appendix to School Self-Evaluation Report:
legislative and regulatory checklist

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
Time in school - Length of school year - minimum of 183 days - Length of school day 4 hours 40 minutes (infants); 5 hour 40 minutes (1st-6th classes)	Circular 11/95	☒ Yes ☐ No ☒ Yes ☐ No	
Arrangements for parent/ teacher and staff meetings	Circular 14/04	☒ Yes ☐ No	
Implementation of Croke Park agreement regarding additional time requirement	Circular 0008/2011	☒ Yes ☐ No	
Standardisation of school year	Circular 034/2011	☒ Yes ☐ No	
Valid enrolment of pupils	Section 9(1), 15(2) and 23 Education Act 1998 Sections 20 and 21, Education (Welfare) Act	☒ Yes ☐ 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
	2000 Rules 55, 64, 108 and 123, Rules for National Schools Circular P24/02 Staffing Schedule for current school year		
Retention of pupils	Rule 64 Rules for National Schools Circular 11/01 Circular 32/03	☒ Yes ☐ No	
Development of school plan	Section 21, Education Act 1998	☒ Yes ☐ No	
Appointments to posts of responsibility	Circular 07/03 Circular 053/2011	☒ Yes ☐ No	
Time for literacy and numeracy - assessing and reporting literacy and numeracy achievement	Circular 0056/11 Initial Steps in the Implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy	☒ Yes ☐ No	
Exemption from Irish	Circular 12/96	☒ Yes ☐ No	
Implementation of child protection procedures	Circular 0065/2011 Please ensure the following in relation to child protection ▪ Number of cases where a report involving a child in the school was submitted by the DLP to the HSE __0___ ▪ 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 __0__	☒ Yes ☐ 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
	▪ Number of cases where the DLP sought advice from the HSE and as a result of this advice, no report was made	___0__		
	▪ 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	__0__		
Implementation of complaints procedure as appropriate	Complaints Procedures, Section 28 Education Act Primary Boards of Management Information Manual November 2007 Please consider the following in relation to complaints		☐ Yes ☒ No	For Formulation, Ratification & Implementation in 2015
	▪ Number of formal parental complaints received	__0___		
	▪ Number of formal complaints processed	__0___		
	▪ Number of formal complaints not fully processed by the end of this school year	__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	__0__		
	Number of cases processed at informal stage	__0__		
	Number of cases heard	__0__		
	Number of appeals upheld	__0__		
	Number of appeals dismissed	__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	__0__		
	Number of cases processed at informal stage	__0__		
	Number of cases heard	__0__		
	Number of appeals upheld	__0__		
	Number of appeals dismissed	__0__		

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
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___			

Policy	Source	Has policy been approved by the board of management?	If no, indicate aspects to be developed.
Enrolment policy	Section (15)(2)(d) Education Act 1998	☒ Yes ☐ No	

Code of behaviour[1] including anti-bullying policy	Circular 20/90 DES Guidelines on Countering Bullying Behaviour 1993 NEWB Guidelines Section 23, Education Welfare Act 2000	☒ Yes ☐ No	
Attendance and participation strategy[2]	Section 22 Education Welfare Act 2000 Equal Status Acts 2000-2011	☒ Yes ☐ No	For Formulation, Ratification & Implementation in 2014
Health and safety statement	Section 20 Health and Safety Act 2005	☒ Yes ☐ No	
Data protection	Data Protection Act 1988 Data Protection (Amendment Act) 2003	☐ Yes ☒ No	For Formulation, Ratification & Implementation in 2015
Special education needs policy[3]	Education Act 1998 Equal Status Acts 2000- 2011 Education (Welfare) Act 2000 Education for Persons with Special Education Needs Act (EPSEN)[4] 2004 Disability Act 2005	☒ Yes ☐ No	
Relationships and sexuality education (RSE) policy	Relationships and Sexuality Education: Policy Guidelines (1997)	☒ Yes ☐ No	
Child protection policy	Circular 0065/2011	☒ Yes ☐ No	
Parents as partners	Circular 24/91	☐ Yes ☒ No	Home School Links Policy for Formulation, Ratification & Implementation in 2016
Public service (Croke Park) agreement – special needs	Circular 71/11	☒ Yes ☐ No	

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[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 pupils with special educational needs.

assistants			
Other			