

Jesus and Mary Secondary School

Gortnor Abbey

2017 – 2018

OUR SELF-EVALUATION REPORT AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN

In the last year, we have looked at teaching and learning in our school to find out what we are doing well. This is what we discovered:

We have completed our Literacy Strategy and have decided to imbed the following:

The use of Key Words

Presentation of Work

Book in the Bag: It has been decided to retain this strategy but it will be the responsibility of the English teachers to oversee its delivery

We have also completed our Numeracy Strategy and will move forward retaining the following:

Estimate before you calculate

Spot the Maths

Graphing of results

Beginning September 2015 we undertook Assessment for Learning (AFL) as our third SSE strategy and reviewed progress at the end of 2016 and again at the end of 2017. It was decided to imbed the following aspects:

Peer Assessment

Focused written Feedback: This feedback refers to strengths in the work corrected and highlights necessary next steps the students must take to improve.

In September 2016 two teachers, together with the Principal and Deputy Principal, took part in "Forbairt", undertaking a project on Team Teaching with a view to maximising resource hours allocated to the Claudine Centre (ASD Unit).

Team teaching is not a strategy which can be part of SSE moving forward as it does not lend itself to involving **all** teachers. The school will however continue to explore the potential of team teaching outside the SSE process.

In September 2016 following discussions with staff it was felt that before deciding on future SSE strategies the area of Attendance needed to be addressed.

A new attendance Strategy was developed and the school's attendance Policy in conjunction with students, parents, teachers and Board of Management was reviewed.

We highlighted the importance of attendance at every available opportunity

Letters were sent to parents once students had 15 days, unexplained or partially unexplained, absence.

At the end of the year students with both full and excellent attendance (no more than 3 days absent) were awarded certificates in May 2017. The introduction of certificates marking excellent attendance was a new strategy. Also to be implemented is giving access to parents to their child's attendance on VSWare.

Certain students are required to "check-in" daily with the Deputy Principal/Principal.

We will continue to target a reduction in the percentage of days missed by students by encouraging excellence in this aspect of school life. The target for 2017-18 is a 5% reduction.

This is what we did to find out what we were doing well, and what we could do better:

Feedback from teaching staff was gathered at a staff meeting in relation to Literacy, Numeracy and AFL

Each Subject Dept. was asked at the end of the academic year to identify the three most effective teaching strategies used by them

In relation to Team Teaching surveys and feedback were carried out and results collated from students, parents and teachers involved

The Leaving Cert class was surveyed with a view to investigating their overall experience of their time in Gortnor Abbey. It is planned to use the outcomes to inform future planning and policy review.

An Academic Council comprising of interested members of staff from across a range of subject areas was formed with a view to preparing for the introduction of **Wellbeing** in September 2017 into the First Year timetable. Parents were involved in the process through the Parents' Association. The Student Council was involved in a focus group session with the Principal to ascertain their point of view. Further work will continue this year to embed the new subject area.

A significant outcome from this process to date is the introduction of "taster programme" involving the 9 Option Subjects First Years will have to choose from. Surveys will be carried out upon completion to establish the success of this strategy.

This is what we are now going to work on:

Teaching Strategies to encourage increased use of active learning methodologies and continued expansion of the use of Assessment for Learning Techniques. One in-service completed in August 2017. Subject departments to agree on strategy/strategies to use in order to support the development of the 8 key skills central to the New Junior Cert

Embedding the New Junior Cert including the implementation of a newly devised Wellbeing programme including a wellbeing class, double PE, SPHE and CSPE for first years 2017/18

Additional undertakings:

Review of the Code of Behaviour with all partners

Tracking academic results

This is what you can do to help:

Attendance:

Ensure your son/daughter attends school regularly and on time and that all absences are explained.

Code of Behaviour:

Complete and return the Code of behaviour survey when received.

Homework:

Monitor completion of homework by your son/daughter.

Wellbeing:

Communicate any concerns you may have about your son/daughter's wellbeing. Input from parents greatly enhances our ability to support student's wellbeing. 1st year parents are welcome to feedback on the 1st year Wellbeing programme.

"Taster" Option Subjects for 1st years:

Complete the feedback questionnaire which will issue upon completion of the tasters

Here is some information about how we are carrying out our work and about what the Department of Education and Skills requires us to do.

School time and holidays

The Department requires all post-primary schools to have **167 school days** each year, and a **28-hour school week**.

In 2016/17 we had **167** school days, from 29th August to 2nd June. Our school week is 28 hours.

The Department sets out a **standardised school year and school holidays**.

In 2016/17 we took all our school holidays within the permitted time. YES

The Department sets out arrangements for **parent/teacher meetings and staff meetings**. In 2016/17 we had 3 parent/teacher meetings and 3 staff meetings in line with the Department's regulations. We held 3 parent-teacher meetings and 1 staff meeting in school time due to the ongoing industrial relations situation.

Looking after the children in our school

The Department requires schools to follow the *Child Protection Procedures* it has set down.

Our board of management has agreed in writing to do this. YES

All teachers know about the *Procedures* and we have told all parents about them and how we follow them. YES

Our Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is **Patricia Melvin**

and our Deputy DLP is **John Mangan**

Enrolment and attendance

The Department requires schools to have and publish an admissions policy, to record and report attendance accurately, and to encourage high attendance and participation.

We have an admissions policy and it is published. YES

We are in the process of reviewing this policy

We keep accurate attendance records and report them as required. YES

We encourage high attendance in the following ways:

- Our attendance strategy focuses on rewarding full and excellent attendance.
- The importance of attendance is highlighted at every available opportunity.
- Students demonstrating a pattern of poor attendance are spoken to and parents contacted by phone and/or letter

This is how you can help: **See above**

Positive behaviour for a happy school

The Department requires schools to have a code of behaviour, and asks us to consult parents and students about it. We do this. YES

Our code of behaviour describes and supports positive behaviour. YES

We have a very clear and high-profile anti-bullying policy in our school. YES