

School Self-Evaluation Process

Kilbonane National School

18/December/2015

Introduction:

School self-evaluation of teaching and learning is part of the ongoing work of Kilbonane National School. The focus of school self-evaluation for 2015/16 is **Literacy**.

Kilbonane NS is a rural, mixed primary school under Catholic patronage. As of the above date, there are currently 95 pupils (49 boys and 46 girls), four Mainstream Teachers, a teaching Principal (Resource), as well as a part-time resource teacher and one shared learning support teacher. Twelve pupils have low incidence special education needs and are allocated resource hours based on these needs. Two SNAs cater for the needs of five of those pupils also. Pupils generally come from middle class backgrounds and there is strong parental support for teaching and learning, a factor that is acknowledged as having a positive effect on pupil attainment levels and on pupils' attitudes to learning.

Below is an outline of the SSE process that we have undertaken in our school recently:

A Staff Meeting was held to discuss what our focus for School Self-Evaluation might be. We had decided at an earlier meeting that since there had been such a high turnover of teaching staff in the last number of years that we would begin the process again – from the beginning.

The Principal discussed the matter with Inspectors Paul Stevens – and later Máire Uí Chonghaile – and was given the go-ahead to go back to the start of the process.

At our staff meeting, we decided to examine the first subject area: **Literacy**

Data Gathering:

Discussing the topic as a staff, it was agreed that overall, Reading is quite strong in our school. On average, 44% of each class is in the 'Above Average' to 'Well Above Average' Range (see summary of MICRA-T STEN scores). It was also agreed that pupils have a positive view of reading in general.

We decided therefore to shift the focus our attention to the area of Writing. As a staff, we felt that the pupils generally engaged more in the Narrative and Recount genres and this needed to be addressed.

We formed a questionnaire survey and sent it (using Google Forms) to the parents of 1st Class to 6th Class. The results of that survey can be seen at the end of this report. Overall, the school is performing very well and the parents have a positive view of how Literacy is being taught in Kilbonane NS.

When examining the writing genres, it was confirmed to us that parents feel that the two writing genres of 'Narrative' and 'Recount' are taught more frequently in school – the other areas of Procedural Writing, Report Writing, Explanation Writing, Persuasive Writing, Writing to Socialise and Poetry are not being used nearly as much as the other two.

On average, only 8.6% of parents surveyed felt that the writing genres were being covered fully.

The pupils were then surveyed, again using Google Forms. Every child from 2nd Class to 6th Class was surveyed and they were able to submit their answers anonymously on a school laptop.

Again, the results of that survey can be seen at the end of this report. Overall, the children have a very positive view of Literacy in Kilbonane NS. They enjoy reading, writing and oral language, they have good books available to them and are confident and happy reader. When looking at the writing genre questions, the same results as above were observed – not as broad a range as we would like to see.

With this knowledge, the staff met to discuss the outcomes.

The following recommendations and strategies were agreed upon:

1. Going forward, we will focus on covering all Writing Genres over a two-year period
2. The whole school will work on the same genre at the same time
3. Each child will have a Writing Genre Folder assigned to them
4. We will focus on a particular genre every two months, covering all eight genres over a two-year period
5. For each writing genre, the pupils will have to produce at least one piece of writing in that style. This will then be placed in their Writing Genre Folder
6. As the pupils progress from one class to another, their folders will be handed from one teacher to the next
7. Every child will be presented with their Writing Genre Folder as they leave school at the end of 6th Class.
8. This plan is rolling – once all eight genres are covered, we will begin again at the beginning.
9. It is important to note that during each two-month period, the pupils will not focus solely on the genre indicated for that period – rather, they will be required to complete a minimum of one piece of writing in that style
10. Responsibility for the above will rest with the individual class teachers
11. Teachers may use any resources they like to teach each genre – however, the PDST document ‘Writing Genre – A Structured Approach’ will serve as a guide
12. We will begin the process in January-February 2016 with the writing genre of ‘Procedural Writing’

The order of the remaining genres will follow the order outlined in the PDST guide:

- (i) Narrative Writing
- (ii) Recount Writing
- (iii) Procedural Writing (beginning in January 2016)
- (iv) Report Writing
- (v) Explanation Writing
- (vi) Persuasive Writing
- (vii) Writing to Socialise
- (viii) Poetry (added by the school)