

Loreto College, St Stephen's Green



School Self Evaluation Report 2021-2022

School Self-Evaluation Report

Focus 1: Reporting to parents

1. Introduction

1.1 The focus of the evaluation

A school based self-evaluation of reporting to parents was undertaken during the period September 2018 to April 2019. In September 2018 we agreed as a staff to trial comment-only feedback on school reports for first year parents and students. The focus of the reports was to emphasise students' improvements rather than their grades. Teachers were encouraged to report on (i) where the students were at in their learning and (ii) what they can do to improve in the future. Following this, research was gathered to determine parent and teacher satisfaction with comment-only reporting (See SSE Report 2019). This research informed the decision to include a Junior Cycle descriptor to 2nd Year reports and established a new target which aimed to increase 2nd year parent satisfaction with reporting from 82% to 85%. A need for further training for teachers was also identified by Year Heads to improve the quality of reporting within the school. The following report evaluates the progress of these targets.

1.2 School context

This school is an all-girls fee paying Voluntary Secondary school which offers the Junior Certificate, Transition Year and Leaving Certificate programmes to its students. The school has an open enrollment policy. Its feeder primary schools include the Loreto Junior School St. Stephen's Green and schools from a wide catchment area including parts of Meath and Kildare. Loreto College is one of eighteen secondary schools which the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Loreto Sisters) runs in Ireland, north and south. The Loreto schools share a common educational philosophy and maintain links through inter-school co-operation and extra-curricular activities.

2. Summary of main findings

Based on a parent survey conducted in January 2022 and teacher consultation during staff meetings

2.1 Strengths

Parents of 2nd year students

- 93% of parents said they were satisfied with their daughter's most recent report
- 90.7% said that the feedback on their daughter's comment-only report provided a good overview of her learning
- 90.7% said that the addition of a descriptor was beneficial to their daughter's understanding of her learning
- 90.7% said the students were taking the feedback on board
- 88.4% believed that the reports helped the students to reflect on their own learning

Teachers

- Teachers were satisfied with the introduction of a descriptor on 2nd year reports
- Year Heads and the SMT noted an overall improvement in the quality of teachers' comments

2.2 Areas for development

- Year Heads have identified a need for further training for staff in relation to reporting to ensure the maintenance of a high standard of reporting across all subject areas and to reduce the time spent by Year Heads and the SMT reviewing reports
- The SMT have identified the need for increased support for new members of staff in relation to reporting

2.3 This is what we are going to focus on to improve our practice further

- Based on the success of the new reporting model for Junior Cycle and the satisfaction of parents, teachers and students, the school will continue to provide comment-only reports for 1st year students with the addition of a descriptor in 2nd year
- The school's staff induction programme will be used to provide guidance to new members of staff in relation to reporting
- Department meetings and department collaboration will be used to support new members of staff in writing reports
- Workshops will continue to be provided throughout the year to share resources and provide support to staff in writing reports

Note:

- In consultation with all teacher staff and the SMT during a whole-staff inservice day, it has been decided to amend the reporting and feedback approach for Junior Cycle students to include a varied approach across year groups.
- The following decisions have been made in relation to reporting, assessment and feedback:
 - 1st years will receive comment only marking on in class assessments and reports and will receive a descriptor on their summer report.
 - 2nd and 3rd will receive a grade and descriptor on in class assessments and reports from the beginning of the year.

Focus 2: 1 Hour Classes

1. Introduction

1.1 The focus of the evaluation

A self-evaluation of the school's timetable was undertaken in 2021. This evaluation aimed to investigate the benefits of moving from 40 minute classes to 1 hour classes. The school's curriculum co-ordinator undertook research to gather feedback from a number of schools using 1 hour classes. The SMT attended a Loreto conference on the move to 1 hour timetables. The information gathered from the curriculum co-ordinator and SMT was presented to staff in addition to a presentation of research conducted by the NCSE. Time was then allocated during a number of staff meetings in 2021 to the discussion of 1 hour classes among teachers. A number of motivations and aims for the

introduction of 1 hour classes were established. These factors included improvements in teaching and learning, student wellbeing and school management (see 1 hour classes document). It was decided that a trial of a 1 hour timetable would be undertaken in the 2021-2022 academic year. The following report evaluates the progress of this trial.

2. Summary of main findings

Based on teacher and student surveys, student focus groups conducted between March and May 2022.

2.1 Strengths

Teachers

- **Implementation and Organisation**

- 93.5% were satisfied with the level of communication surrounding the change
- The majority of teachers are satisfied with the spread of classes throughout the week and the allocation of hours to each year group
- 70.2% felt there was adequate planning time given to 1 hour classes
- 70.2% felt students were given adequate preparation for 1 hour classes

- **Teaching and Learning**

- Overall, teachers feel 1 hour classes are working well for each year group. 5th and 6th year classes were identified as the most successful
- 76.6% of teachers feel the move to one hour classes has either increased or somewhat increased opportunities to use technology in the classroom
- 89.4% feel opportunities for group work have increased
- 72.4% of teachers feel opportunities for assessment or opportunities to vary assessment methods have increased
- 68.1% of teachers feel opportunities for feedback have increased
- 93.6% of teachers feel the overall impact of one hour classes on teaching and learning has been positive

- **SEN**

- 70.2% of teachers feel 1 hour classes provide opportunities to differentiate and support students with additional needs

- **Wellbeing and the School Environment**

- 80.9% of teachers feel there has been a positive impact on student wellbeing
- 80.4% of teachers feel there has been a positive impact on their own wellbeing
- The majority of teachers commented on an increased sense of calm in the classroom environment
- 95.7% of teachers are in favour of retaining 1 hour classes

Students

Individual student feedback can be found below:

 *Junior Students Focus Group Feedback*

 *Senior Student Focus Group Feedback - 1hr Timetable*

- **Implementation and Organisation**

- 74.7% were satisfied or somewhat satisfied with the level of communication surrounding the change
- 29.2% felt they were adequately supported in managing the change and 61.8% feel they did not need any support
- The majority of students are satisfied or mostly satisfied with the spread of classes throughout the week and the allocation of hours to each year group

- **Teaching and Learning**

- 88.1% feel 1 hour classes have positively impacted their learning
- 82.5% of students feel the move to one hour classes has either increased or somewhat increased opportunities to use technology in the classroom
- 65% of students feel there is more group work taking place
- 71.3% of students feel opportunities for assessment or opportunities to vary assessment methods have increased
- 46.2% of students feel they are receiving less homework
- 41.4% of students feel they are receiving more feedback and 36.5% are satisfied with the level of feedback given

- **Wellbeing and the School Environment**

- 45.4% of students feel their wellbeing has improved and 45.4% feel there has been no change
- Students noted that they feel calmer and less stressed during the day
- 91.1% of students are in favour of retaining the 1 hour timetable

2.2 Areas for development

Teachers

- **Implementation and Organisation**

- 10 first year teachers are dissatisfied with the spread of classes across the week
- A number of Junior Cycle teachers feel the current time allocated to their subject was inadequate

- **Teaching and Learning**

- Teachers feel that for subjects allocated 2 hours at Junior Cycle, there has been difficulty completing course content
- Language teachers identified that 2 contact hours a week for Junior Cycle is not sufficient
- 1 hour classes are not working for Home Economics practicals
- Science teachers feel 1 hour classes have presented challenges to practicals

- **SEN**

- 19.1% of teachers feel that 1 hour classes are difficult for SEN students in the mainstream classroom
- 10.6% of teachers feel there are more opportunities to differentiate for SEN students in 1 hour classes but feel they need more support in this area
- Some teachers feel a 1 hour class is too long for a one-on-one or small group SEN class

- **Wellbeing and the School Environment**

- All responses in relation to this area were positive

Students

- **Implementation and Organisation**

- 19% are not satisfied with the spread of classes across the week
- 7.6% are not satisfied with the time allocated to their subjects

- **Teaching and Learning**

- 7.4% of students would like to engage in more group work
- 28.1% of students feel assessments are happening more frequently in some subjects
- 26.9% of students feel they are getting too much homework on some days
- 22.8% of students would like more feedback in some subjects
- Many students notes that 1 hour classes can feel long or that they find it difficult to focus

- **Wellbeing and the School Environment**

- Some students noted that classes can “drag” and it can feel that there is too much time and not enough to do
- Some students find it hard to concentrate for the duration of a 1 hour class

2.3 This is what we are going to focus on to improve our practice further

- We will focus on the issue of student focus and engagement in 1 hour classes particularly for SEN students
- We plan to provide teachers with support in relation to differentiation and setting learning intentions
- We will provide in-house training to staff in these two areas to create practical, subject-specific methods of differentiation to be used by all teachers

Focus 3: Wellbeing

1. Introduction

In preparation for the new SSE cycle which begins in September 2022, a review of Wellbeing in the school was conducted. The aim of this review was to gather data in relation to student, teacher and parent perceptions and experiences of wellbeing in the school. The school wellbeing co-ordinator, the Student Enrichment Officer and the wellbeing committee created surveys which were distributed to students and staff. This data has been gathered and collated and will be analysed as part of the next step of the SSE cycle.

1.1 The focus of the evaluation

2. Summary of main findings

2.1 Strengths

2.2 Areas for development

2.3 This is what we are going to focus on to improve our practice further

The following legislative and regulatory requirements need to be addressed:

**Appendix to Post-primary School Self-Evaluation Report:
legislative and regulatory checklist – reporting to the school community**

Which area of school life is involved?	What is the relevant legislation, rule or circular?	Is the school fully meeting the requirements of the relevant legislation, rule or circular?
Valid enrolment of students	Sections of the Education Act 1998 and the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, and Circular M51/93 set out the conditions for students to be validly enrolled in a school	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
The school calendar and the school timetable	Circular M29/95 sets down the length of the school year - minimum of 167 days for all year groups	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Circular M29/95 sets down the length of the school week - minimum of 28 hours for all year groups	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Standardisation of school year	Circular 034/2011 gives the dates for school holidays	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Parent/teacher meetings and staff meetings	Circular M58/04 sets out the arrangements for these meetings	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Implementation of national literacy and numeracy strategy	Circular 25/12 describes the whole-school approach required by the strategy, and the implications for timetabling, assessment and reporting students' progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Implementation of agreement regarding additional time in school for teachers	Circular 025/2011 requires teachers to do an additional 33 hours of out-of-class work each year, so as not to reduce teaching time	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Development of school plan	Section 21 Education Act 1998 requires all schools to have a school plan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Engagement with school self-evaluation process	Circular 40/2012 outlines the SSE process and what it requires of schools	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Guidance provision in secondary schools and whole-school guidance plan	Circular 09/2012 sets out the current arrangements for guidance planning and provision and refers to Section 9 of the Education Act 1998	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Delivery of CSPE to all junior cycle classes	Circular M12/01 Circular M13/05 set out the required provision for Civic, Social and Political Education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Exemption from the study of Irish	Circular M10/94 sets out the conditions necessary for students to be exempt from studying Irish	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Implementation of child protection procedures	Circular 65/11 and the Child Protection Guidelines oblige schools to ensure that: liaison persons have been appointed ; the procedures have been communicated to the whole school community; and the procedures are being followed	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Implementation of complaints procedure as appropriate	Section 28 Education Act 1998 provides for procedures to address complaints about a school	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Complaints have been resolved or are being resolved <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Appeals in the case of refusal to enrol students, suspension and expulsion (permanent exclusion)	Section 29 Education Act 1998 provides for appeals procedures in these cases, which are dealt with first of all by the school. Where cases are not resolved at school level, an	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Appeals have been dealt with or are being dealt with

	external appeals committee hears the appeal and makes a decision.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
--	---	---

Appendix to School Self-Evaluation report: policy checklist – reporting to the school community

Policy	Source	Has the policy been approved by the Board of Management?
Enrolment policy	Section 15 of the Education Act 1998 obliges schools to have and publish an enrolment policy that respects the principles of equality and parental choice	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Code of behaviour, including anti-bullying policy	Section 23, Education (Welfare) Act 2000, and the 2008 National Educational Welfare Board Guidelines set out regulations and good practice for schools to follow in drawing up and implementing a code of behaviour and an anti-bullying policy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Attendance and participation strategy	Section 22 Education Welfare Act 2000 requires schools to develop a strategy to support high levels of student attendance and participation in school life	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Health and Safety Statement	All schools should have a health and safety statement that is regularly reviewed (see Section 20 Health and Safety Act 2005)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Data protection	School procedures relating to gathering, storing and sharing data on pupils should comply with data protection legislation - Data Protection Act 1988 Data Protection (Amendment Act) 2003	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Special education needs policy	Various pieces of equality and education legislation, especially the Education for Persons with Special Education Needs Act (EPSEN) 2004, require schools to be inclusive of students with special educational needs and to provide for them appropriately using the resources available	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Social, personal and health education (SPHE)/Relationships and sexuality education (RSE) policy	Schools are required by various circulars to provide SPHE in the junior cycle and RSE throughout the school, and to have policies to support this provision.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Substance use policy	A Department directive and guidelines issued to schools in 2002 require schools to develop and implement a substance use policy in consultation with parents and students	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Internet acceptable use policy	Schools should have and implement a policy to instruct students on safe and responsible use of the internet	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Child protection policy	Circular 0065/2011 sets out requirements (see above for details of policy and implementation)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Parents as partners in education	Circular M27/91 requests schools to set up a parents' association, and promotes partnership between home and school	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Deployment of special needs assistants	Circular 71/11 allows for SNAs to be deployed flexibly to respond to the needs of schools	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No