

St. Colman's N.S.
Clara
Kilkenny

School Self-Evaluation Report
Numeracy

Evaluation period: **February 2013- June 2014**

School Self-Evaluation Report

1. Introduction

1.1 The focus of the evaluation

A school self-evaluation of teaching and learning in St. Colman's N.S was undertaken during the period February 2012 to June 2014. During the evaluation, teaching and learning in the following curriculum area was evaluated

- Numeracy: Problem Solving

This is a report on the findings of the evaluation.

1.2 School context

St.Colmans NS is a mixed school under the patronage of the Bishop of Ossory. The school currently has seven mainstream classes from Junior Infants to 6th class. We also have a full time resource teacher and learning support teacher. The current enrolment is 196.

Having had a very successful Whole School Evaluation in November 2012, we met our inspector on January 14th 2013 for our School Self Evaluation seminar. We decided that while our standards in numeracy were very high we would concentrate on Problem Solving in Maths from 3rd to 6th class. We spoke in detail of the difficulties facing children when it comes to Problem Solving. Even though our standard scores show high achievement in Maths it was a concern for all staff that many children tend to lack confidence in this area.

We decided on the following approach to improve problem solving from 3rd to 6th classes:

- One problem per night similar in structure to our shared reading programme which runs from Junior Infants to 3rd
- Children learn to develop their problem solving abilities by solving problems
- A questionnaire to pupils and parents would be most appropriate at the end of an 8 week trial period

2. The findings – Numeracy

2.1

Pupils' Attainments

Our strength with regard to pupils attainment in numeracy are:

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- The pupils' attainment in standardised tests compare very favourably with national norms with improvements evident in the increase in the number of pupils performing at Stens of 6 and over.
- Pupils perform very well in number, shape and space, data and algebra.
- Pupils are articulate in their use of mathematical language
- The vast majority of pupils have made progress from last year.

Pupil questionnaire responses indicated that

- 86% of pupils liked Maths, 9% didn't know and 5% didn't like Maths
- 87% of pupils found tables easy to learn, 10% weren't sure and 3% found tables difficult
- 73% of pupils felt they were good at solving problems, 21% weren't sure and 6% felt they weren't good at problem solving
- 89% of pupils said they enjoyed the challenge of problem solving, 6% didn't know and 5% didn't like the challenge
- 96% of pupils said they got help with Maths in school when they needed help, 4% didn't know
- 98% of pupils said they got help at home with Maths when they needed it, 2% didn't know

Parental questionnaire responses indicated that

- 90% of parents felt their children liked Maths, 2% didn't know and 8% felt their children didn't like Maths
- 94% of parents were happy with the way Maths is taught, 5% don't know and 1% weren't happy
- 86% of parents felt their children enjoyed problem solving and 95% of parents felt their children were improving at problem solving
- 99% of parents felt the problems given for homework were challenging and appropriate

Areas requiring improvement with regard to pupils' attainment are:

- Some pupils continue to make mistakes in basic computation even though they are competent in using the operations
- Some pupils, despite very good computational ability, find problem solving quite challenging

2.2 Teaching

Our strengths with regard to teaching of numeracy are:

- The teachers use a variety of teaching approaches that successfully stimulate and challenge the pupils
- Concrete materials and station teaching are used effectively
- Teachers explain concepts very well and work consistently through the Maths curriculum at all class levels

- There is excellent collaboration between the SEN teachers and class teachers with both in – class support and withdrawal in small groups taking place from infants to 6th.

2.3 Learning

Our strengths with regard to pupils learning of numeracy are

- Achievement in numeracy is of a very high standard
- Most pupils are able to discuss and explain their learning and experience success in mathematics
- There is clear progression in pupils' learning in most cases

3. Progress made on previously-identified improvement targets

- It is a school aim that we try to ensure that children learn and know their addition tables are known at the end of 1st class, subtraction tables are known at the end of 2nd class, multiplication tables are known at the end of 3rd and division tables at the end of 4th. Through constant emphasis on learning of tables we are pleased that in the majority of cases this is very much the situation.
- Computational ability has been improved significantly through use of 'Brain Trains' from 3rd to 6th class
- Ballard timed table testing from 1st to 4th has heightened teacher and children awareness of the importance of tables

4. Summary of school self-evaluation findings

4.1 Our school has **strengths** in the following areas:

- Attainment of curricular objectives:

80% of pupils in St. Colmans NS score a Sten of 6 or higher on Sigma T standardised testing. This is significantly above national norms of 50%

Pupils in our school from 4th to 6th class have an average standard score of 77% in Problem Solving. This was 70% in 2012 and 75% in 2013

- Teaching Approaches

A variety of strategies are used to cater for differentiation, both for extension and reinforcement

Teachers reflect critically on the impact of their practice through high quality classroom – based assessment and regular whole-school consideration of pupil achievement.

- Reporting/Communicating with Parents

For our problem solving initiative all parents from 3rd to 6th sign the children's problem sheet indicating the children's success or otherwise

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The school report card includes the sten score of the standardised maths test – the Sigma T test

4.2 The following areas **are prioritised for improvement:**

- To continue to improve the positive attitude of children towards problem solving in Maths
- To continue to support parents in their role as partners in education in the teaching and application of Maths
- To continue to develop our own understanding as teachers of new methodologies which will enrich our teaching of the various strands in Maths

4.3 The following legislative and regulatory requirements have been addressed:

- The administration of Sigma t testing has been moved to May in line with reporting requirements
- Provisions have been made for sending our results of Sigma T tests to the Department of Education

