

Loreto College Swords

Rivervalley, Swords, Co. Dublin

Roll Number 60810B

School Self-Evaluation Report (SSER)

2014 - 2017

Report issue date: May 2014



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School Self-Evaluation Report

Literacy from September 2014 to May 2017

1. Introduction

1.1 The Focus of the Evaluation

A school self-evaluation of teaching and learning was undertaken during the Spring Term of 2014. Literacy in the school was examined and how the teaching and learning in all subjects support the acquisition of literacy skills.

This is a report on the findings of the evaluation.

1.2 School Context

We are an all-girls post-primary school in an urban area in North County Dublin, under the trusteeship of *The Loreto Education Trust*. There are currently 630 students enrolled in the school. There are 120 girls in each year, from first to sixth, with thirty girls opting to study Transition Year.

There is a strong culture of CPD in our school and core teams in Literacy and Numeracy have been established with representatives from a wide variety of subjects and disciplines. The teaching staff have benefitted from training in all aspects of IT in recent years thanks to in-services provided by our IT Committee. All members of the teaching staff use the Teachers' Shared Area for the storage and sharing of resources. Presentations on Literacy, Numeracy and AfL have taken place during the current academic year 2013-2014, which have been delivered by the school's own staff.

There are twelve feeder schools in our catchment area, two of which are Gaelscoils. The majority of our students come from three main feeder schools. Currently, we have twenty four students who previously attended Gaelscoils. Ten students are in receipt of individual resource hours from the DES. We also have ten students with Individual Educational Plans and approximately sixty students who receive learning support in the subjects of Maths and/or English.

1.3. Literacy to date

The Literacy Committee, which was formed in 2012-2013, has implemented a number of initiatives to date. Examples include:

1. Drop Everything and Read
2. Book in the Bag
3. Reading Press
4. Punctuation and Grammar Desk Signs
5. Print Rich Environment
6. Staff Presentations on various aspects of Literacy
7. Literacy Assessment of Sample First Year Group

2. The Findings

2.1 Learner Outcomes

The current 120 first year students' standardised test results and report cards from primary school were analysed by the career guidance counsellor. It was noted that the STen scores for reading for the cohort show that 48% achieved a score of 5-6, which is deemed 'average'. This is higher than national norms (See Chart and Table 1).

Chart 1

2013/2014 First Year STen* scores in Literacy

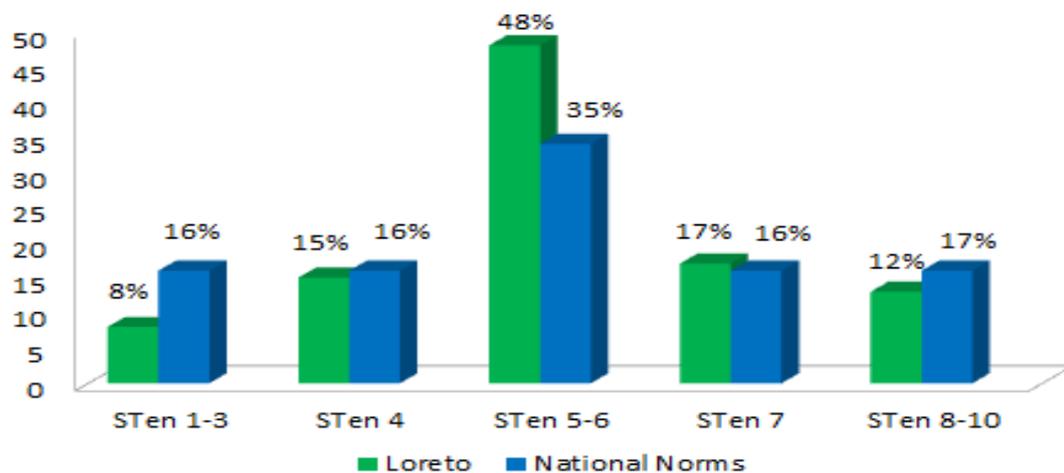


Table 1 – Summary of STen Scores

STen score	1-3	4	5-6	7	8-10
Loreto Swords	8%	15%	48%	17%	13%
National average	16%	16%	34%	16%	16%

2.2. PDST Tool

All subject departments use the PDST Tool for analysis of Leaving Certificate and Junior Certificate Examination results. This is used as an indicator of existing standards. It also promotes an awareness of our school's position in relation to national norms and aids future subject planning.

2.3 Learning Experiences

At a staff meeting, an overview of good practice (page 25 of the SSE Guidelines) was used to reach a consensus on our strengths, areas for improvement and priorities for action. All teachers examined the evaluation criteria in the SSE Guidelines. Subsequently, the Literacy Committee designed a student questionnaire on attitudes to literacy and engagement in learning. The online questionnaire was designed and administered to ninety-six students, using three class periods in total. By utilising an online tool, results were instantly collated and analysis began immediately.

Sample Findings

1. 49% of students have read a book in the last month.
2. 48% of students do not like to read at all or very often.
3. 74% of students believe that they can learn better when they work in a group.
4. The type of homework correction that leads to best learning is putting examples on the board and oral correction.
5. 42% of students believe that they do not learn from peer correction of work.
6. 83% of students find it somewhat helpful to have the aim of the lesson written on the board.
7. Students find grammar and spelling more difficult than presentation and punctuation of their work.
8. 46% of students do not feel comfortable presenting their work orally in the classroom.

9. 76% of students believe that having time to ask questions would enhance their learning greatly.
10. 25% of students always check their own work for errors.

2.4 Teachers' Practice

At a staff meeting in January 2014, the teaching staff reflected on the following themes: *Learner Outcomes, Learning Experiences* and *Teachers' Practice* using the SSE Guidelines. An overview of good practice (page 25 of SSE Guidelines) was used to reach a consensus on our strengths, areas for improvement and priorities for action and was recorded on the staff reflection sheet (page 84 of the SSE Guidelines). Based on this feedback, a survey was designed on teaching approaches and was administered online.

Sample Findings

1. Teachers regard spelling and grammar as the two areas of greatest concern
2. 71% of teachers use independent learning most often.
3. 48% use group work once a week and 3% use it every lesson
4. 52% of staff use IT in their teaching in every lesson
5. 58% of staff correct homework orally most often
6. 3% of teachers use peer correction every lesson
7. 29% of teachers write learning objectives on the whiteboard for every lesson
8. Differentiated Questioning is the initiative used most often by teachers (32%)
9. 26% of staff state use (AFL) feedback most often.
10. Oral literacy is an initiative used least often by teachers.

Progress made on previously identified targets identified in the current SIP

This is the first SSER so no progress to date

3. Summary of School Self-Evaluation Findings

The results of the surveys were collated and analysed by the Literacy Committee. At a meeting on the 13th of May 2014, the findings of both surveys were presented to the staff. The staff, seated in

randomly selected groups, used the schedule on page 80 of the SSE Guidelines to guide the discussion. All feedback (oral and written) was communicated to the Literacy Committee during the meeting. The following is a summary of the strengths and areas for improvement identified on the day.

3.1 Our school has strengths in the following areas:

1. Use of differentiated questioning in class.
2. Use of learning objectives on the board, which is valued by 83% of students.
3. 48% of teachers use group work once a week.
4. Homework correction methodologies are valued by students.
5. There is a willingness to share good practice and collaborative teaching methods using the Teachers' Shared Area.

3.2 Our school has room for improvement in the following areas:

1. Teachers and students view spelling and grammar as areas in need of improvement.
2. 52% of students read for pleasure- this percentage needs to be improved.
3. 54% of students are confident when speaking in class- this percentage needs to be improved.
4. Peer correction needs to be developed.
5. Increase the use of learning objectives in every class.

On the 15th of May 2014, following in-depth analysis and discussion, the staff agreed on the areas of literacy which will be prioritised for future improvement.

3.3 The following areas are prioritised for improvement:

1. Reading
2. Spelling
3. Group Work