Loreto College Swords

Rivervalley, Swords, Co. Dublin

Roll Number 60810B

School Self-Evaluation Report (SSER) Attendance

2016

Report issue date: April 2016

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School Self-Evaluation Report

Attendance 2016

1. The Focus of the Evaluation

A school self-evaluation of teaching and learning was undertaken during the school year 2014/15. Attendance was identified by teachers as a priority for future development.

This is a report on the findings of the evaluation.

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, AFL and collaborative learning have taken place, which have been delivered by the school's own staff and by PDST.

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. Thirteen students are in receipt of individual resource hours from the DES. Thirteen students with Individual Educational Plans and approximately seventy-three students receive learning support.

3. Gathering evidence on Attendance

Qualitative data:

   a) **Student survey**

A group of 9 students, who have been absent more than 15 days this school year, was selected to take part in a survey on attendance. They were asked 7 questions:

THIS QUESTIONNAIRE ON ATTENDANCE IS FOR STUDY PURPOSES ONLY.

PLEASE ANSWER AS ACCURATELY AS POSSIBLE.

PLEASE READ ALL THE QUESTIONS BEFORE ANSWERING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE.

Name:_____ Year:_____

Q1. How many **full days** do you think you have been absent from school this year?

0 – 5	6 – 10	11-15	16 - 20	21+
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q2. How many **full days of absence** were due to:

Illness ☐

Appointments ☐

Family circumstances ☐

Non-school activity (e.g concert, Confirmation, sports event etc.) ☐

Participation in non-school competition (e.g. sport, dancing, music etc.) ☐

Family holidays ☐

Third Level Open Days ☐

Other (please specify) ☐ _____

_____

Q.3 How many times have you been **late for the 9:00 class** this year? ☐
If you have been late, how many of these late arrivals were due to

Traffic ☐
Bad weather ☐
Sleeping in ☐
Medical or dental appointments ☐
Illness ☐
Delay going to class ☐
Other? (Please specify) ☐ _____

Q.4 How many times did you leave school before the end of the school day this year? ☐
If you left school early how many of these departures were due to
Medical or dental appointments ☐
Non-school activities (e.g. concerts etc.) ☐
Illness ☐
Study ☐
Family matters ☐
Other (please specify) ☐_____
_____

Q.5 Do you ever choose to stay at home from school for reasons other than those listed in Q.2?
If yes, please explain _____
_____

Q.6 In your opinion what can school do to improve student attendance?

_____
_____

Q.7 Did you parents discuss the attendance letter they received with you? _____

b) Student Focus Group

A focus group of sixth year students was selected to gain the student perspective on attendance. These students were selected because they had an attendance issue in Junior Cycle and have improved since then. They were asked the following questions:

Focus Group On Attendance

Question 1:   Is there a link between attendance and attainment?

Question 2:   Greatest reason for absence

Question 3:   Which year/day/time of day highest absence

Question 4:   Missing classes during school (how & why?)

Question 5:   Role of your parents

Question 6:   What could the school do to improve attendance?

c) Staff Survey

Staff were organised into 8 groups for discussion on attendance. Each group were asked to identify what is working well, where we can improve and to add other comments on attendance.

Quantitative data:

ePortal

ePortal is used by all teachers in all subject departments to record and monitor attendance. Attendance is recorded twice daily at 9:00 and at 1:55. It is also used to record student progress and to promote positive behaviour.

Using data from **Facility and ePortal** we examined our attendance figures. We considered our attendance reports for last term and determined the number of students absent 10 or more days. Our Attendance Officer makes four reports to an Tusla in the course of the school year. She ends a warning letter to parents after ten absences and another after fifteen absences. A formal letter is sent to parents after twenty days and a referral form and pre-referral checklist is completed by the Principal in cases of required support.

Analysis of Annual Attendance Reports

2014 -2015:

- Total number of days lost through student absence in the entire school up to and including the date the school closes = 5801

- Total number of students who were absent for 20 days or more during the school year = 60

2013 – 2014:

- Total number of days lost through student absence in the entire school up to and including the date the school closes = 6263

- Total number of students who were absent for 20 days or more during the school year = 54

4. Findings

Attainment: In Q6. of the focus group students believe that the link between school attendance and job references should be communicated to students at an early stage in school. They say that seeing the statistics linking exam results and attendance is effective in promoting good attendance. Support for students in subjects they are struggling in is a way that school can improve attendance. Teachers see a need to remind parents of the importance of attendance.

Engagement in learning: In Q1. Focus group students believe they can catch up in most subjects with the exception of Maths.
 Q2. Students tend to avoid days when there are class tests. This was also an answer in Q6. on the Student Survey: " Make school easier, loads of tests make you stressed".
Students also claim to "mitch" when struggling at a subject, when family breakdown occurs, when both parents are at work, because it becomes a habit. Parents who are not concerned about attendance - related to school attendance. The influence of friends or problems with friends is also a factor in absences and this was found in Q.6 in the student survey also. Students come in to school for class activities according to the student survey (Q.6) and those who are absent often would like school to be a happier place.

Management of students:
Students tend to go to bathrooms during classes they want to miss or leave school at break-times. They suggest that more texts to parents would be effective in promoting good attendance. Afternoons are when students are most likely to absent themselves from class. The teacher feedback supports this: unexplained half days was an area identified for improvement. Students suggest that texting to parents is a deterrent to absenteeism and the teacher survey agrees that texts to parents works well. Teachers suggest this system could be improved by texting home if attendance changes during the day. The roles of Attendance Officer, Year Heads, Tutor, Care Team, , office administration, eportal, positive school atmosphere and attendance awards were all noted by teachers as working well in managing student attendance. Improvement in communication between school, students and parents is an area identified for improvement in the staff survey.

Assessment in our practice and records
Teachers identified a need to spot patterns in attendance together with a tweaking of the absent notes system of collection to promote greater accuracy in records. The use of ePortal to register attendance in every class was also suggested.

5. Strengths
- We have an Attendance Officer and her work is acknowledged and appreciated.
- We provide support for students with attendance difficulties through the Care Team
- We have a team of Year Heads who liaise with home and communicate with teachers on attendance issues and this work is acknowledged and appreciated.
- Attendance is well monitored by the office staff.
- We have a positive and encouraging school atmosphere.
- We have a system for rewarding attendance.
- We have a system for recording attendance that is accessible to every teacher.

6. Areas for improvement
- Communication with parents:
  - Linking attendance and attainment, highlighting the importance of good attendance in order to reduce the total number of students absences.
  - Addressing unexplained half days.
  - Texting parents more frequently/ conducting spot checks to reduce the number of students absent half days.
- Communication among ourselves:
  - Improving accuracy in the note collection structure
  - In the use of ePortal
  - In spotting patterns
  - between Year Heads and Tutors
- Communication with students:
  - Linking attendance and attainment for students regularly
  - checking with students who want to leave early (class tests)
  - Engaging with students who are struggling in school and who are absent often and helping them see the relevance of school.

7. The following areas are prioritised for improvement:

1. To reduce the total number of days lost through student absence in the entire school up to and including the date the school closes.
2. To reduce the total number of students who were absent for 20 days or more during the school year.
3. To reduce the number of 6th year students who take half days during the school year.

8. Progress made on previously identified targets identified in the current SIP
All actions have been undertaken in accordance with the **SIP for Numeracy**. The period for review of these targets runs from March 2016 to the end of April 2016.
Target 1:

The Application of numeracy skills in other subjects worksheet has been issued to second year students

A numeracy rich school environment has been established using a height chart and distance signs.

A clock has been installed on the concourse displaying the time in 2 formats

A Maths noticeboard is maintained by TY students

The numeracy initiative was launched on the school website for the attention of parents.

Target 2:

Success criteria is shared with students using classroom checklist posters

Maths Week occurred and included a problem solving workshop for senior students

Target 3:

An AFL workshop was held for staff with a focus on student self-evaluation and peer assessment

A poster pack for numeray was created for each classroom.

This document was compiled by the Attendance Team: Mary O'Dowd, Grainne Gibbs, Peter Macnamara and Sharon Gunn.

It was ratified by the Board of Management on 7th June 2016

The following legislative and regulatory requirements need to be addressed.

Appendix to School Self-Evaluation Report: Legislative and Regulatory Checklist

Issue	Relevant legislation, rule or circular	Is the school fully meeting the requirements of the relevant legislation, rule or circular?	If no, indicate aspects to be developed
Valid enrolment of students	M51/93	☐ Yes ☐ No	
Time in school - Length of school year (minimum of 167 days for all year groups) - Length of school week (minimum of 28 hours for all year groups)	Circular M29/95	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Yes ☐ No	
Standardisation of school year	Circular 034/2011	☐ Yes ☐ No	
Arrangements for parent/teacher and staff meetings	Circular M58/04	☐ Yes ☐ No	
Implementation of national literacy strategy	Circular 25/12	☐ Yes ☐ No	
Implementation of Croke Park agreement regarding additional time requirement	Circular 025/2011	☐ Yes ☐ No	
Development of school plan	Section 21 Education Act 1998	☐ Yes ☐ No	
Guidance provision in secondary schools	Circular PPT12/05, Education Act 1998 (section 9(c))	☐ Yes ☐ No	

Issue	Relevant legislation, rule or circular	Is the school fully meeting the requirements of the relevant legislation, rule or circular?		If no, indicate aspects to be developed
Whole-school guidance plan	Section 21 Education Act 1998	☐ Yes ☐ No		
Delivery of CSPE to all junior cycle classes	Circular M12/01 Circular M13/05	☐ Yes ☐ No		
Exemption from the study of Irish	Circular M10/94	☐ Yes ☐ No		
Implementation of revised in-school management structures	Circular M29/02, Circular 21/98, Circular 30/97, Circular 29/97	☐ Yes ☐ No		
Limited alleviation on filling posts of responsibility for school year 2011/12	Circular 53/11	☐ Yes ☐ No		
Parents as partners in education	Circular M27/91			
Implementation of child protection procedures	Circular 65/11 Please provide the following information in relation to child protection	☐ Yes ☐ No		
	▪ Number of cases where a report involving a child in the school was submitted by the DLP to the HSE	☐		
	▪ Number of cases where a report involving a child in the school was submitted by the DLP to the HSE and the school board of management informed	☐		
	▪ Number of cases where the DLP sought advice from the HSE and as a result of this advice, no report was made	☐		
	▪ Number of cases where the DLP sought advice from the HSE and as a result of this advice, no report was made and the school board of management informed	☐		
Implementation of complaints procedure as appropriate	Section 28 Education Act 1998 Please provide the following information in relation to complaints made by parents during this school year	☐ Yes ☐ No		
	▪ Number of formal parental complaints received	☐		
	▪ Number of formal complaints processed	☐		
	▪ Number of formal complaints not fully processed by the end of this school year	☐		
Refusal to enrol	Section 29 Education Act 1998 Please provide the following information in	N/A		

Issue	Relevant legislation, rule or circular	Is the school fully meeting the requirements of the relevant legislation, rule or circular?	If no, indicate aspects to be developed
	relation to appeals taken in accordance with Section 29 against the school during this school year		
	Number of section 29 cases taken against the school	☐	
	Number of cases processed at informal stage	☐	
	Number of cases heard	☐	
	Number of appeals upheld	☐	
	Number of appeals dismissed	☐	
Suspension of students	Section 29 Education Act 1998 Please provide the following information in relation to appeals taken in accordance with Section 29 against the school during this school year		
	Number of section 29 cases taken against the school ☐		
	Number of cases processed at informal stage ☐		
	Number of cases heard ☐		
	Number of appeals upheld ☐		
	Number of appeals dismissed ☐		
Expulsion of students	Section 29 Education Act 1998 Please provide the following information in relation to appeals taken in accordance with Section 29 against the school during this school year		
	Number of section 29 cases taken against the school ☐		
	Number of cases processed at informal stage ☐		
	Number of cases heard ☐		
	Number of appeals upheld ☐		
	Number of appeals dismissed ☐		