School Self-Evaluation Report

School Name: Seamount College

School Address: Kinvara, Co. Galway

School Roll Number: 63050T

Evaluation period: April- May, 2014

Report issue date: 31st May, 2014

Compiled by   : Christina Kennedy

Contents

School Self-Evaluation (SSE) Report

1. Introduction

SSE is a collaborative, reflective, inclusive process of internal school review. whereby the principal, deputy principal and teachers, under the direction of the board of management and the patron and in consultation with the parents and students, engage in reflective enquiry on the work of the school. School self-evaluation is primarily about school improvement and development (Department of Education & Skills, 2013).

1.1 The focus of the evaluation

A school Self-Evaluation of teaching and literacy in Seamount College, Kinvara was undertaken during the period April-May, 2013. A school Self-Evaluation of teaching in literacy and numeracy in Seamount College, Kinvara was undertaken during May, 2014.

This is a report on the findings of the evaluation.

1.2 School context

Seamount College is a co-educational secondary school which is increasing in numbers. There are currently 341 pupils in our school. There are 28 members of staff to include principal, deputy principal, 22 teachers, one special need assistant and three ancillary staff. Two of our teachers are currently on career break.

Our school has strengths in the following areas (based on a whole school inspection report from 2012 and our exam results year on year):
1. Our students perform well above the national average in both Junior and leaving Certificate results.
   (Evidence based on our exam results compared to the national average. All Comparison charts available in subject folders).
2. Students are happy in this school and state that they feel safe and cared for (Appendix 3: whole school inspection questionnaire administered to students)
3. The teaching and learning in Seamount College is good to very good (Appendix 2
4. Parents are generally very happy with our school (Appendix 3-Part 2).

Following on from our whole school inspection which was carried out in Seamount College in May, 2012, a number of areas were noted as possible areas we could improve on. These include the areas of discipline, attendance, punctuality and classroom environment. Collectively staff have collaborated on these topics and decided on our overall long term areas for improvement with a specific area to work on for each year.

1.3 Rationale
School Self-Evaluation enables schools:
- To take the initiative in improving the quality of education that they provide for their students.
- To affirm and build on what is working well.
- To identify areas in need of development and to decide on actions that should be taken to bring about improvements in those areas.

- To report to the school community about the strengths in the work of the school and its priorities for improvement and development.

Year 1   2013-2014   Our focus is on developing Literacy.

1.4 Terms of reference
Our goal for year 1 of our School Self-Evaluation programme was that we would concentrate on enhancing our students' literacy development. Teachers agreed that improvements in literacy levels were integral to the development of understanding and learning in all subject areas. Collectively the staff discussed the School Self-Evaluation process and the headings we might use for our proposed questionnaire to students. It was decided that a questionnaire to our first years on literacy was the first step on our School Self-Evaluation agenda.

Working in pairs all teachers worked on the School Self- Evaluation literacy questionnaire. All responses were collated and the final questionnaire was decided on. 23 questions were agreed on by the teachers present on April 18th, 2013.

The questionnaire was administered to our three first year classes in the computer room on the 26th of April 2013. The questionnaire was administered to the same group one year later.

1.5 The Process
A school development planning meeting was held on the 18th of April, 2013. Our goal was to discuss our school self- evaluation process. We reviewed and analysed the findings from our whole school inspection report.   From our whole school inspection feedback and from our own knowledge of our first year cohort of students we decided that for year 1 we would concentrate on enhancing each student's literacy skills.

A questionnaire was designed to establish our first year student's level of and interest in reading, writing, learning and oral presentation. 23 questions were agreed on for our questionnaire.

At a subsequent School Development planning meeting the results of the questionnaire were analysed and strategies for the development of reading and learning were discussed and agreed on.

2.0 The Findings of our Questionnaire

2.1 Summary of School Self-Evaluation findings

A questionnaire was distributed   to all of our first year students on the 26th of April, 2013. The total number of students present who participated in this study was 88.

The questionnaire, consisting of 23 questions, covering the areas of reading, writing, oral presentation and learning, was presented to students. This is a brief summary of the main findings of that questionnaire. (The full summary is enclosed as an appendix with this report.)

Reading

45% of students spend less than one hour per week reading for enjoyment.
26% prefer to read digital media such as Facebook, blogs, Twitter and Wikipedia.
65% say if they had a free class they would like to read a novel.
41% say that finding suitable reading material is a challenge for them.
27% find new words challenging and 20% have problems following or understanding a story.
13% of students have not read any book in the past 12 months.
76% would like to have regular reading for pleasure time during school hours.
However, only 38% say they would like to get a book as a present.

Writing

59% of our students in first year say they would benefit from a prominent display area in the classroom for displaying excellent essays/reviews, short stories, song lyrics and poems.
37% feel texting affects their spelling.
19% say they do not like writing at all and only 2% ever check their writing for mistakes.

Oral Presentation

Most students prefer to present ideas in small groups (33%) whilst only 8% are comfortable standing in front of the class giving a presentation to peers.
48% feel uncomfortable reading aloud in class.

Learning

Students preferred way to learn is using technology (31%) such as i-pads, internet and multi-media. Only10% enjoyed making their own notes.
27% of students say they do their homework with music or TV (television) on whilst 16% of our first years claim to complete their homework in a busy family room.
50% of our first years complete their homework in a quiet place on their own.

35% of our first year students state that they never watch the news. Students feel they need a dictionary (59%), a spelling chart (6%) and a thesaurus(7%) in their homes to improve their reading and writing skills. 71% say they need to improve their vocabulary. 40% maintain that if they encounter a word or sentence that they do not understand they would ask somebody as opposed to looking it up in a dictionary(9%) or using the internet to find out its meaning (17%). 20% say they always understand when something is explained in class.

Students use varying methods to retain/recall information:
- Learning off (rote learning) (22%).
- Understanding/comprehension (15%).
- Using or identifying key words (13%).
- Re-writing in their own words (17%).
- Being questioned (15%).
- Testing themselves (14%).l

2.2 Summary of Students Needs

What do our students need?
Students need:
- to read and write more,
- to develop their vocabulary and literacy skills,
- a dictionary , a spelling chart and a thesaurus in their homes to improve their reading and writing skills,
- to develop a love of reading,
- access to a quiet, comfortable room/place to study, and
- need a variety of teaching methodologies to help them recall.

What can we as a school do to improve our students standards of Literacy?

As a result of these findings teachers have decided to concentrate on promoting a love of reading and learning.
Literacy questionnaire responses were analysed and strategies were agreed on. All staff had time to study the results of this questionnaire.

3.0 Recommendations

The following areas are prioritised for improvement:

- Develop students' interest in reading.
- Develop students' interest in the issue of literacy.
- Enhance their skills in literacy.
- Enhance the students' love of reading.
- Develop students' interest in writing.
- Enhance the students' standard of writing.
- Develop students' skill of oral presentation.

Our specific goals for the 2014-2015 academic year:

1. Increase the percentage of students in our first year class who read for enjoyment from 55% to 62% by May 2015.
2. Increase the percentage of students who are comfortable giving an oral presentation in class from 15% to 16% by May 2015.
3. Increase the number of students who retain/recall information through understanding from 32% to 42% by May 2015.
4. Increase the percentage of students who study in a quiet place from 61% to 70% by May 2015.

The following strategies were agreed on:
1. Teachers to formalise oral presentation. The student can select a topic, prepare a presentation, and present it to the class with the support of the teacher.
2. Design and use a marking scheme for this presentation. This will engage the class.
3. Use key words in each class. Put up on board for each class/topic.

4. Teachers to ask students at end of class what they have learned today in class.
5. Promote a love of reading in school by giving time to the student to read.
6. Teachers will check written work regularly and give feedback to students on how to improve the standard of their written work.
7. Foster a love of learning by varying teaching methodologies in class to engage all of our learners.
8. Encourage discussion in class on various topics. (Consider groupwork where different students lead the group and feedback the results so that no student is left out).
9. Promote self evaluation - encourage students to re-read, review and correct/mark their own work based on marking criteria/scheme as provided by the teacher.
10. Remind students that it is important not to have additional distractions on desk other than the topic under study.
11. A memo will be sent home to each student's parents to encourage them to provide their son/daughter with a comfortable room or area in a room that is free from distractions. It should contain resources such as dictionaries, a thesaurus and interesting educational reading material.

Year 2 of our SSE process is to improve Literacy and numeracy levels.

A questionnaire was administered to the 2013-2014 first year class to ascertain their attitude to numeracy on May 2nd, 2014. The findings of this questionnaire are summarized and enclosed in Appendix 3. At a staff meeting held on the 30th May, 2014 teachers agreed on achievable, realistic targets for the 2014-2015 academic year. As a result of our analysis of this questionnaire we chose four specific goals to concentrate on for the 2014- 2015 academic year.

Our specific goals for developing Numeracy for the 2014-2015 school year are:

To create a numeracy rich environment in our classes and throughout our school (Whole school Approach to Numeracy).

To increase the percentage of students who like studying maths from 60% to 65%.

To increase the percentage of students who enjoy problem solving from 47% to 55%.

To encourage students to develop their own problem solving strategies. Increase from 77% to 80% the percentage of students who feel they are encouraged to develop their own problem-solving strategies.

Strategies for developing Numeracy

In addition to the methodologies outlined in our strategies for developing literacy the following were agreed on:
1   Use Key words in each class
2   Create a Maths Wall where teachers can add interesting maths facts, quotes by famous mathematicians, diagrams, charts etc.
3   If numeracy is part of a topic in any subject get the students where possible to work out the problem. Get students to explain their answers and be able to describe where the solution comes from. Talk it out. Discuss in class alternative ways of solving the problem.
4   As part of our Literacy and Numeracy initiative, continue with our Spelling and DEAR class. Add a problem solving question for students to solve i.e Have the spelling test followed by the maths problem to solve. Correct in class and allow students time to read for rest of class. Allow students time to work in pairs or groups to work out problems.

Suggestions for improving numeracy
Maths Posters in classrooms and throughout the school
Maths Signs showing length, area and volume
(E.g. Computer room 50metres
Area of Computer Room =Length by Breadth, get students to measure)
DEAP class Drop everything and Play (Sudoku, Monopoly, Chess, Scrabble, Darts)
Quiz spelling test to include maths words such as cardinal number, integer, rational number, irrational number etc.
Lists of Maths words and symbols,Mystery Maths
How to use a calculator Poster
Symbols chart
Tables of maths addition, multiplication facts
Problem solving strategies… Think aloud. Talk it out. Why do you do the problem that way? What other ways could you use to solve that problem.
Relate numeracy to everyday life.
3 clocks: Digital, regular and with roman numerals on or near our Maths Wall.
Show me boards

Other suggestions of merit for developing numeracy and literacy levels include
- using lists of words,
- spelling charts,
- bank of common mistakes,
- noticeboard painted and articles placed there for shared reading,
- essay rewarded,
- essay of the week,
- 'read wall',
- spelling words,

- grammar,
- punctuation,
- weekly word bank,
- reading class,
- study class,
- read your novel class once a month,
- shared newspapers articles,
- encourage to read newspapers,
- Press Pass,
- Debating
- library time,
- Readers Theatre,
- reading blogs, school blogs, I.T. packages
- paired reading,
- group reading etc.
- Class set of novels
- DEAR time (Drop Everything and Read)
- Maths wall
- Problem solving time
- Quiz on maths wall. Quiz box beside our maths wall where students can put their answers.
- On line Resources IXL maths and Accelerated Reader. Have you got Maths eyes?
- Fun things, games, live bingo, chess, Did you know facts?
- Paired reading and debates
- Maths class on line via porthole
- Where does maths get you? Salary scales of various maths graduates. STEM careers.
- Encourage students to have a self assessment, self learning journal. Document areas where they are having difficulty.

Review of Year 1   2013-2014 academic year.

In relation to our specific goals for 2013-2014 the following results were achieved in our attitudinal survey given to our present second years on May 1st,2014.

1. The percentage of students who read for enjoyment increased from 55% to 60% (Our specific target was 60%).

2. We increased the percentage of students who are comfortable giving an oral presentation in class from 8% to 15% (Our specific target was to reach 16%).

3. We have increased the number of students who retain/recall information through understanding from 32% to 42%. (Our specific target was 36%)

4. The number of students who claim to study in a quiet place free from distraction in this group have increased from 61% to 70%. (Our specific target was 75%).

Overall, our literacy initiative has proved a success. The initiatives taken in subject classes have been helpful to our students. The Read Wall has encouraged reading of topical issues. The Spelling tests and DEAR classes have created a greater awareness of the importance of reading and learning.

The paired reading was a great success in 2013-2014 and should be continued for 2014-2015. Several of our fifth years took paired reading classes at lunchtimes with some of our junior students who had difficulty reading. This proved to be a great success as several of our students improved their proficiency in reading.

4.0 Self-Evaluation Plan Going Forward

Year 2 of our school evaluation will involve concentrating on developing student's numeracy and literacy levels.

Our ongoing School Self-Evaluation plan involves improving our overall performance in areas such as:

- Student discipline
- Attendance and punctuality
- Improving the school environment to include helping students organise their own classroom and work area
- Maths, Science and Technology

Appendices

Appendix 1: Legislative and regulatory requirements

Appendix 2: Results of our First Year Questionnaire administered on 26th April, 2013

Appendix 3: Results of our Second Year Questionnaire administered on 1st May, 2014

Appendix 4: Results of our First Year Questionnaire administered on May 2nd , 2014

Appendix 5   Part 1:Summary of student Questionnaires given to our students as part of our whole school evaluation April, 2012

Appendix 6   Part 2: Summary of parent Questionnaires given to our parents   as part of our whole school evaluation April, 2012

Appendix 7: Cognitive Ability tests (CAT)

Appendix 8 : Maths Competency test (MCT)

Appendix 9: Our Junior cert and Leaving cert results compared to National norms.

The following legislative and regulatory requirements need to be addressed:
(See enclosed appendix)

Education Welfare Act 2000
Section 21, Education Act 1998
Circular 0056/11 Initial Steps in the Implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy

Useful Resources and helpful websites for developing Literacy and Numeracy:
Ncca.ie
PDST.ie
DES.ie
Projectmaths.ie
Scoilnet
Skoool.ie
Doyouhavemathseyes.com, mathsisfun.ie, coolmaths4kids, mangahigh.com
Enrich.ie, Tutpup for tables, planetmaths,funbrain, mathletics
100 squares printable resources
Khanacademy
Maths journal
Plus Magazine

Folders of Support and Resources:

*el**Developing Numeracy Folder** (Folder in school Learning Support room).*
Approaches and methodologies
Individual differences in talents, strengths, and needs
Mathematical Language
Strategies for teaching areas of difficulty

*el**Developing Literacy Folder** (Folder in school Learning Support room).*
Approaches and methodologies
Individual differences in talents, strengths, and needs
Folder of activity sheets and resources

*el**Guidelines for teaching students with General Learning Difficulties***
(Folder in school Learning Support room).
Behavioural challenges, withdrawn children
Support lesson plans, Group Activities and Assessment strategies, Suggested outcomes, Supporting activities,

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
Time in school - Length of school year - minimum of 183 days - Length of school day 4 hours 40 minutes (infants); 5 hour 40 minutes (1st- 6th classes)	Circular 11/95	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Yes ☐ No	
Arrangements for parent/ teacher and staff meetings	Circular 14/04	☐ Yes ☐ No	
Implementation of Croke Park agreement regarding additional time requirement	Circular 0008/2011	☐ Yes ☐ No	
Standardisation of school year	Circular 034/2011	☐ Yes ☐ No	
Valid enrolment of pupils	Section 9(1), 15(2) and 23 Education Act 1998 Sections 20 and 21, Education (Welfare) Act 2000 Rules 55, 64, 108 and 123, Rules for National Schools Circular P24/02 Staffing Schedule for current school year	☐ Yes ☐ No	
Retention of pupils	Rule 64 Rules for National Schools Circular 11/01 Circular 32/03	☐ Yes ☐ No	
Development of school plan	Section 21, Education Act 1998	☐ Yes ☐ No	
Appointments to posts of responsibility	Circular 07/03 Circular 053/2011	☐ Yes ☐ No	
Time for literacy and numeracy - assessing	Circular 0056/11 Initial Steps in the Implementation of the National Literacy and	☐ 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
and reporting literacy and numeracy achievement	Numeracy Strategy		
Exemption from Irish	Circular 12/96	☐ Yes ☐ No	
Implementation of child protection procedures	Circular 0065/2011 Please ensure the following 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	Complaints Procedures, Section 28 Education Act Primary Boards of Management Information Manual November 2007 Please consider the following in relation to complaints	☐ 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 relation to appeals taken in accordance with Section 29 against the school during this school year	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
	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	☐		

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
	dismissed				

Policy	Source	Has policy been approved by the board of management?	If no, indicate aspects to be developed.
Enrolment policy	Section (15)(2)(d) Education Act 1998	☐ Yes ☐ No	
Code of behaviour[1] including anti-bullying policy	Circular 20/90 DES Guidelines on Countering Bullying Behaviour 1993 NEWB Guidelines Section 23, Education Welfare Act 2000	☐ Yes ☐ No	
Attendance and participation strategy[2]	Section 22 Education Welfare Act 2000 Equal Status Acts 2000-2011	☐ Yes ☐ No	
Health and safety statement	Section 20 Health and Safety Act 2005	☐ Yes ☐ No	
Data protection	Data Protection Act 1988 Data Protection (Amendment Act) 2003	☐ Yes ☐ No	
Special education needs policy[3]	Education Act 1998 Equal Status Acts 2000- 2011 Education (Welfare) Act 2000 Education for Persons with Special Education Needs Act (EPSEN)[4] 2004 Disability Act 2005	☐ Yes ☐ No	
Relationships and sexuality education (RSE) policy	Relationships and Sexuality Education: Policy Guidelines (1997)	☐ Yes ☐ No	

[1] Under the provisions of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 (section 23) the school's code of behaviour should conform to the specifications stated.
[2] Under the provisions of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 (section 22), the school's attendance strategy should conform with the provisions stipulated.
[3] Section 9 of the Education Act 1998 requires a school to "use its available resources" to identify and provide for the educational needs of those "with a disability or other special educational needs."
[4] The EPSEN Act requires that schools be inclusive of and provide an appropriate education for pupils with special educational needs.

Child protection policy	Circular 0065/2011	☐ Yes ☐ No	
Parents as partners	Circular 24/91	☐ Yes ☐ No	
Public service (Croke Park) agreement – special needs assistants	Circular 71/11	☐ Yes ☐ No	
Other			