



Scoil Ursula
Strandhill Road, Sligo
18979F

School Self-Evaluation Report

Numeracy

Evaluation period: June to September 2014

Report issue date: October, 2014

School Self-Evaluation Report

1. Introduction

Scoil Ursula embarked on a plan to improve Literacy & Numeracy standards in the school in response to the DES National Strategy to Improve Literacy & Numeracy among Children and Young People 2011-2020. The first stage of the process was an investigation and report into the school's current position in January, 2012. The report was presented to the Staff and Board of Management in February, 2012. Many of the elements of this process have been incorporated into our School Self Evaluation process.

1.1 The focus of the evaluation

A school self-evaluation of teaching and learning in Scoil Ursula was undertaken during the period June to September, 2014. During the evaluation, teaching and learning in the following curriculum areas were evaluated:

- Numeracy

This is a report on the findings of the evaluation.

1.2 School context

- This is a vertical co-educational primary school.
- The ethos of the school is Catholic.
- There are currently 378 pupils.
- There are 19 teachers including an Administrative principal, 3.5 SNAs, a full-time Secretary and Caretaker.
- Scoil Ursula is situated in a mainly middle-class suburban area.
- 10% of the school's pupils have Special Educational Needs including 10 children in receipt of Resource Teaching Hours.
- 19% of pupils are newcomer children.
- The school administers standardised tests in Literacy (Micra-T) and Numeracy (Sigma-T) from first to sixth class. The NRIT is conducted with 1st and 4th classes. The Belfield Infant Assessment Profile (BIAP) is conducted with those Junior Infants who are considered by their teachers to be at risk of educational failure. The Middle Infant Screening Test (MIST) is conducted with Senior Infants and the Forward Together Programme is conducted as necessary.
- Teacher Observation and Teacher-Designed tests and tasks are also used in Scoil Ursula.
- Strong emphasis is placed on early intervention strategies for pupils with learning difficulties or special needs. We endeavour to develop each individual child's holistic potential.
- Home-School links are fostered at every opportunity creating an open, welcoming school environment. Formal Parent-Teacher meetings are held in the Autumn.
- We have a supportive Parent's Association who work closely with staff, pupils and Board of Management.

- School Policies are updated regularly and are available to our school community through our website www.scoilursula.com
- The school has received 5 Green Flag Awards, 2 Discover Science & Maths Awards, a Digital School of Distinction Award and various other Literary & Arts Awards.

2. The findings

A number of instruments were used to gather data for the purposes of assessing our current provisions in numeracy and their effectiveness. The standardised test results from the Sigma-T carried out in June, 2014 were collated and analysed by Excel. We also analysed and compared the Problem Solving and non-Problem Solving scores from 4th to 6th classes, the classes where these two areas are tested separately. Through our school website and Google Docs, we created questionnaires for pupils, parents and teachers and the data from these was collated and analysed to produce the following results.

- **Numeracy**
 - **Standardised Testing:** Pupils are performing 7 points above the national norm. The school's overall average standard score in Literacy is 107 with 67.2% scoring above the 50th percentile rank; and 32.8% of pupils score at the 85th percentile rank or above compared with 16% nationally. When a comparison was made between Problem-Solving scores from 4th to 6th classes with non-Problem Solving scores, it was found that the average standard scores were 106 and 110 respectively. This indicates that problem-solving is a significant 4 points behind other areas of Maths in terms of pupil attainment.
 - **Pupils' Surveys:** 82% of pupils surveyed report liking Maths and 72% of them regarded themselves as good at the subject. 71% of the pupils stated that they find Maths easy. The most popular aspect of Maths among pupils was adding followed by graphs & charts while the least liked areas were subtraction & division.
 - **Parents' Surveys:** Parents were very positive about their children's experience of Maths with 81% reporting that their children enjoyed it, a close match to the children's own opinions. 63% of mums and dads reported knowing their children's strengths in Maths but only 35% knew where their children were finding difficulties. The main strengths identified by parents were in the areas of counting, adding & basic operations while problem-solving and focus were commonly identified area of difficulty. 76% stated that their children rarely had difficulty with Maths homework. Generally the parents were satisfied with the teaching of Maths in the school while some suggestions for improving included making it more fun and more challenging activities for the more able pupils.

- **Teachers' Surveys:** In general teachers were satisfied with the numeracy standards in the school. Problem- Solving and the uniformity of Maths language throughout the school were identified as areas for development. It was felt the explicitly teaching problem-solving strategies along a decided format could close the gap between pupils' attainments in Maths generally and their performance in problem-solving. Teachers identified the following specific Numeracy areas for development in the school as follows:

▪ Problem Solving	92%
▪ Maths Language	54%
▪ Number	23%
▪ Algebra	23%
▪ Measures	23%

Suggestions for improving standards in the above areas included

- Problem Solving: The explicit teaching of a common method throughout the school e.g. RUDE, CUBES or ROSE. Maths lessons to begin with a problem to solve as a way of focussing the learned skills on a specific objective. The use of the NZMaths website as a tool for teaching problem-solving.
 - Maths Language: Development of maths language throughout the school for commonly used operations and strategies. Assigning a colour coded system for operations to be displayed in all classrooms.
 - Number: Emphasis on oral and mental Maths as an integral part of each lesson to increase focus, capacity and speed of thought.
 - Algebra: More work on place-holders and variables in the senior classes to prepare for a major area of Maths in Post-Primary.
 - Measures: More emphasis on hands-on experiential teaching of measure. Investment in Maths resources to assist in the above.
- **Attainment of the Curriculum Objectives**
 - Teachers report that all strands of the Maths Curriculum are adequately addressed at each class level.
 - **Learning Environment**
 - Due attention is given to Maths Displays and centres of interest which create a stimulating Number-rich environment for the pupils.

- Resources and materials are in need of updating and a system of storage and usage needs to be devised.
- **Pupils' Engagement in Learning**
 - Pupils are enabled to take an active role in their learning and engaging lessons are prepared by teachers using effective methodologies and appropriate use of ICT particularly the Interactive Whiteboards which are in wide use in all classrooms.
 - Opportunities are identified for children to engage in Maths outside of the classroom such as attending workshops for Maths Week and participating in Kangaroo Maths.
 - Maths Trails are used by teachers to develop skills and 'Maths Eyes'. More emphasis on encouraging children to watch out for Maths in the environment would help.
- **Learning to Learn**
 - Pupils are taught strategies to promote independent learning particularly in the multi-grade class in the school.
- **Preparation for Teaching**
 - All teachers prepare plans to guide the teaching and learning of Maths. There are specific learning outcomes for numeracy skills stated in individual plans which are prepared on a fortnightly basis.
 - IEPs are developed to meet the individual needs of pupils in receipt of Resource Teaching Hours (RTH) and support is provided by Special Needs Team when numeracy deficits have been addressed.
- **Teaching Approaches**
 - A variety of teaching approaches and methodologies, as recommended by the curriculum, are skilfully applied in all classes.
- **Management of Pupils**
 - A variety of classroom management strategies for the teaching of numeracy are employed including independent work, group teaching and whole class teaching.
 - Pupils with Special Needs which dyscalculia or other difficulties with numeracy are supported both in and out of class by the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Team when allocation allows.
- **Assessment of Pupils**
 - A variety of modes of assessment of and for learning is used consistently in all classes to monitor pupils' progress. Assessment of results is analysed at all levels for screening and diagnostic purposes

and to identify aspects of numeracy in need of re-teaching. This is supported by the SEN Team during in-class support and group work.

3. Progress made on previously identified targets identified in the current SIP

- As this is the first year of Numeracy in our School Self Evaluation (SSE), there are no target achievements to be evaluated.

4. Summary of school self-evaluation findings

4.1 Our school has strengths in the following areas:

- Scoil Ursula has a conscientious, dedicated, innovative staff open to new ideas and initiatives and focussed on providing the best possible educational opportunities for its pupils.
- Pupils are performing well above the national norm with 67.2% scoring above the 50th percentile rank; and 32.8% of pupils scoring at the 85th percentile rank which is double the national average. There is a similar significant differential in the lower percentile brackets with 11.2% achieving below the 16th percentile against a national norm of 16%.
- The school's literacy standard score stands at 107 which is significantly ahead of the national average.
- 82% of pupils surveyed reported liking Maths and 72% of them regarded themselves as good at Maths.
- 81% of parents reported that their children enjoyed Maths.
- Children with numeracy deficits are provided with a differentiated programme to enable access to all strands of the curriculum.

4.2 The following areas are prioritised for improvement:

- Problem Solving
- Maths Language
- Number
- Algebra
- Measures

4.3 The following legislative and regulatory requirements need to be addressed:

- The Draft Attendance Policy needs to be ratified and implemented.
- A Data Protection Policy needs to be drafted and implemented.
- An Equality Policy needs to be drafted and implemented.
- A Home – School Links Policy needs to be drafted and implemented.

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	
Retention of pupils	Rule 64 Rules for National Schools Circular 11/01 Circular 32/03	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
Development of school plan	Section 21, Education Act 1998	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
Appointments to posts of responsibility	Circular 07/03 Circular 053/2011	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
Time for literacy and numeracy - assessing and reporting literacy and numeracy achievement	Circular 0056/11 Initial Steps in the Implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
Exemption from Irish	Circular 12/96	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
Implementation of child protection procedures	Circular 0065/2011 Please ensure the following in relation to child protection	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of cases where a report involving a child in the school was submitted by the DLP to the HSE 			<u> 0 </u>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 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 			<u> 0 </u>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of cases where the DLP sought advice from the HSE and as a result of this advice, no report was made 			<u> 0 </u>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of cases where the DLP sought advice from the HSE and as 			<u> 0 </u>

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
	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		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	For Formulation, Ratification & Implementation in 2015
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of formal parental complaints received 	<u>0</u>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of formal complaints processed 	<u>0</u>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of formal complaints not fully processed by the end of this school year 	<u>0</u>			
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	
Number of section 29 cases taken against the school	<u>0</u>			
Number of cases processed at informal stage	<u>0</u>			
Number of cases heard	<u>0</u>			

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 appeals upheld	<u>0</u>		
	Number of appeals dismissed	<u>0</u>		
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	<u>0</u>		
	Number of cases processed at informal stage	<u>0</u>		
	Number of cases heard	<u>0</u>		
	Number of appeals upheld	<u>0</u>		
	Number of appeals dismissed	<u>0</u>		
Expulsion of students	Section 29 Education Act 1998 Please provide the following information in relation to appeals taken in accordance with Section 29 against			

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
	the school during this school year			
	Number of section 29 cases taken against the school	0		
	Number of cases processed at informal stage	0		
	Number of cases heard	0		
	Number of appeals upheld	0		
	Number of appeals dismissed	0		

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	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Code of behaviour ¹ including anti-bullying policy	Circular 20/90 DES Guidelines on Countering Bullying Behaviour 1993	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 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.

	NEWB Guidelines Section 23, Education Welfare Act 2000		
Attendance and participation strategy ²	Section 22 Education Welfare Act 2000 Equal Status Acts 2000-2011	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	For Ratification & Implementation in 2014
Health and safety statement	Section 20 Health and Safety Act 2005	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Data protection	Data Protection Act 1988 Data Protection (Amendment Act) 2003	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	For Formulation, Ratification & Implementation in 2015
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	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Relationships and sexuality education (RSE) policy	Relationships and Sexuality Education: Policy Guidelines (1997)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Child protection policy	Circular 0065/2011	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Parents as partners	Circular 24/91	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	Home School Links Policy for Formulation, Ratification & Implementation in 2015
Public service (Croke Park) agreement – special needs assistants	Circular 71/11	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Other			

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.

