**School Self-Evaluation Report 2014/’15**

1. **Introduction**

School self evaluation is seen as an important area to inform school development planning in our school. For many years The Board of Management, staff, parents and pupils have worked together to improve the school infrastructure, resources, level of care, teaching and learning in our school. Evaluation of this work was mainly external in the form of occasional inspections by the inspectorate of the DES. Such external evaluation while valuable can only ever provide a snapshot of school work at a particular time.

The DES decision to formalise SSE as part of the evaluation structure for primary schools is therefore welcomed by our school. Through the ongoing process of SSE The Board of Management and staff hope that they will be enabled to focus on areas of concern to our school, particularly in teaching and learning, rather than being driven by top down initiatives which may or may not be relevant to our school. As recognised by the Minister such an approach will build our school’s capacity to improve.

This work continues and the school development plan drawn up after the school’s last WSE in 2011 and most recently updated in 2014 outlines the priority areas that our school is focused on. This school self-evaluation report for 2014/’15 concentrates on literacy but also evaluates the school’s legislative and regulatory compliance as per the School Self-Evaluation Guidelines checklist.

1. **The focus of the evaluation**

A school self-evaluation of teaching and learning in literacy was undertaken in the school during the 2014/’15 school year. During the evaluation teaching and learning, in particular in reading, across the whole school was evaluated.

1. **School Context**

* This is a mixed, vertical primary school located on the edge of Portlaoise with a rural/urban intake.
* At the time of the report there are 224 pupils.
* The school is single stream junior infants to sixth – eight classes, eight class teachers, 4 SET, an administrative principal, four SNAs and part-time ancillary staff.
* The school has an assessment policy which includes the standardised testing of English from 1st to 6th and the screening of Senior Infants annually.

1. **Findings**

* Standardised testing for the previous three years 2011/’12, 2012/’13 and 2013/’14 show that pupils are performing significantly above the national norms averaging 39% above the 50th percentile rank as against a national norm of 25% and 22% on average scoring above the 85th percentile rank or above compared with 16% nationally. The scores also indicate that far fewer pupils are scoring under the 16th percentile rank, 7% on average over the three years as against 16% nationally, and under the 50th percentile 34% as against 50% nationally.
* In a reading survey of pupils from 1st to 6th class across all ability levels 96% of pupils said they liked reading with 79% believing they are good readers and 74% of pupils indicating that they would like to read more in school.
* The same pupil survey indicated that pupils also appreciated the importance of reading with 94% stating that they believed reading was important.
* The survey also indicated a strong reading culture in pupils’ homes with 91% indicating they read at home, 87% indicating there are lots of books in their homes, 63% indicating they often see their parents reading, 70% indicating their parents help them with their reading and 57% stating they regularly use the public library service.
* The majority of pupils indicated that they read a variety of text types/genres with 83% reading fiction, 75% reading fact books & 74% reading magazines, comics or newspapers. 57% indicated that they understood the content of what they were reading however 30% indicated that they don’t always understand.
* The pupils provided many good suggestions for improving reading in the school including: Improving the school book stock in particular books for different levels of readers, a greater emphasis on novels, more DEAR time, a readathon, a school library, reading more aloud, a reader of the week, making their own books, dramatizing books, having a story read to them each week, a book club.
* 25% of pupils indicated that they would like more help with reading.
* In a parental survey on literacy 132 questionnaires were returned representing 60% of the total number.
* 86% of parents feel that their child has a positive attitude to reading with 88% of parents believing their child is doing well in reading & 77% indicating their child reads for pleasure.
* Again the parental survey indicated good support for reading at home with 77% of parents indicating they read to their children regularly, 84% indicating they listen to their children reading regularly, 97% indicating that their children see their parents reading regularly and 99% indicating that their children have access to age appropriate books at home.
* With regard to reading in school 86% of parents feel well informed on how their children are progressing in literacy & 72% feel the reading their child is bringing home from school is well matched to their ability. 21% however indicated that the reading was either too difficult or too easy.
* The majority of parents did not make any suggestions with regard to improving literacy in the school. Of those who did the majority complimented the school & encouraged the school to continue its strong emphasis on reading. Other individual suggestions included: having reading month twice a year, reading week once a month, reading every night, read stories to classes, book a week for homework, a wider variety/levels of books, more public speaking/reading aloud, more support around dyslexia, make parents aware of difficulties as early as possible.
* A staff survey on literacy indicated that all the staff believes that there is a strong emphasis on literacy in the school.
* Staff identified the following strengths with regard to literacy: a strong reading culture, pupils like reading, pupils have a good level of literacy, good standardised test results, good early intervention, affirmation of pupils work, differentiation, parental involvement at junior end of school, DEAR time, reading month and good selection of books & resources.
* Staff identified the following areas as concerns for them: need for a structured oral language programme, communication/consistency between classes, the suitability of the current reading scheme, the current phonics scheme and its effectiveness, the need for more differentiation, comprehension strategies.
* Staff identified the following areas as the priorities to change in the teaching of literacy:
* Class reader system. Introduce guided reading to cater for each child’s reading level.
* Whole school oral language plan.
* Phonics scheme at senior end of school.
* More team teaching, station teaching, in class support and communication with SET team.

1. **Progress made on previously identified targets.**

Work commenced on SIP for Maths. Year 1 target to identify areas of difficulty for pupils/classes through analysis of Standardised Test Results achieved. Year 2 target to incorporate the teaching of mathematical language into maths teaching achieved.

1. **Summary of school self-evaluation findings**

* Our school has strengths in the following areas:
  + Pupils are performing above the national norms in standardised testing which indicates good pupil learning, motivation and engagement in the area of literacy.
  + Pupils enjoy reading and view it as an important subject.
  + There is a strong reading culture in the school.
  + There is good parental support for reading with the majority of parents actively involved and encouraging reading with their children.
  + There is good communication between school and home with emphasis on early intervention.
  + All the school community are positive about the teaching of reading and would like to ensure that the school continues to succeed in this area.
* The following areas are prioritised for improvement:
  + Reading Fluency
  + Oral Language

1. **The following legislative and regulatory requirements need to be addressed.**

* No areas were identified at present.