St. Attracta’s Community School, Tubbercurry, Co. Sligo.

School Self Evaluation Report 3

Evaluation Period: 2015-2017
Report Issue Date: May 2018
**Outline of Progress**

In September 2012, a whole staff in-service took place on School Self-Evaluation. A Literacy and Numeracy Core Team was assembled consisting of school management, resource/learning support teacher and staff representing various subject areas.

The first S.S.E. Report was completed in January 2014. The School Improvement Plan for Literacy was confirmed in September 2014, with continuous reinforcement of the Literacy targets.

The second S.S.E. Report was completed during the 2014/15 school year. The School Improvement Plan for Numeracy was confirmed in September 2015, with continuous reinforcement of the Literacy and Numeracy targets.

A S.S.E. Committee was established in 2016 with an S.S.E. Co-ordinator, two Literacy Link teachers, Numeracy Link Teacher and Teaching and Learning Link Teacher.

Teaching and Learning in relation to homework was chosen by staff as the third S.S.E. Area of Focus in 2015. This was evaluated in 2016 and 2017, along with continuous reinforcement of the Literacy and Numeracy targets.

The third S.S.E. Report was completed in 2017 and 2018, along with continuous reinforcement of and focus group re-evaluation of the Literacy, Numeracy and Teaching and Learning in Relation to Homework targets.

The S.S.E. Committee selected school Wellbeing as an additional area of focus in 2017/18 and established a Wellbeing Week Committee to organise Wellbeing Week 2018, directed by the School Chaplain and Guidance Counsellor. Wellbeing Week was also evaluated in student focus group discussion and committee reflection.
Gavin Doyle from the Department of Education visited the school in May 2018 to assess our progress in S.S.E. His conclusion was that the process of S.S.E. in the school is well ahead of requirements.

The third School Improvement Plan will be completed in school year 2018/19.

School Context

St. Attracta's Community School came into being in 2002 through the amalgamation of Banada Abbey Secondary School and the Marist Convent. We are a co-educational school in a rural setting under the Trusteeship of the Bishop of Achonry and the Marist sisters. Numbers have increased from 527 in 2002 to 662 currently with a staff, teaching and ancillary, of 60. There are 12 feeder schools in our catchment area.

As well as the traditional Junior and Leaving Certificate, we also have a well-established Transition Year and Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme. There is a strong culture of CPD in our school. St. Attracta’s strives to create a Christian Community where the academic, cultural, sporting and spiritual aspects of each student is developed within an atmosphere of mutual respect, integrity, sincerity, honesty and tolerance.

Our school has successfully undergone a Whole School Evaluation, a Whole School Evaluation/ Management, Leadership and Learning in 2015, numerous subject inspections and incidental inspections since its opening. We appreciate the input and support of the Inspectorate at all times.

The Focus of the Evaluation

The S.S.E. Committee and staff considered aspects of the school relating to teaching and learning, that they felt were in need of development and improvement for the third Area of Focus. The aim was to provide an opportunity for meaningful improvement planning and actions that would be measurable and motivating.
Having considered the recommendations of staff, management and the most recent W.S.E./M.L.L., three possible areas were identified—Collaborative Learning Strategies, Assessment for Learning and Homework Policies. Following a staff discussion and vote, it was decided to focus on Teaching and Learning in Relation to Homework.

Research of opinions of staff, parents and students was conducted by means of questionnaires, focus group discussions and staff group discussion activities.

**Teaching and Learning in Relation to Homework- The Research Findings**

A detailed outline of the research results of suggested homework strategies of staff, parents and students can be referred to in the appendix. This was made available to staff.

In summary, the main points of the staff suggestions were to update the school homework policy, to provide students with study tips, to aim to disperse homework load and deadlines throughout the week.

The main points of the parental research were to have consistent feedback on homework, to distribute homework more evenly and to have an emphasis on quality rather than quantity.

The main points of the student suggestions were to be provided with homework tips, to place homework on the whiteboard at the beginning of class, to give advance notice of homework deadlines where possible and to spread the load of homework throughout the week.

Based on the results, three actions were then identified and presented to staff.
S.S.E. Actions Identified and Completed- Teaching and Learning in Relation to Homework

1. **Updating of School Homework Policy**- this policy was updated in 2017 following consultation with management, S.S.E. committee discussion, staff reflection and staff discussion at a staff meeting.

2. Inclusion of a **7 Step Homework Plan** in students’ Homework Journals.

3. Staff were asked and regularly reminded to consider **writing homework on the board at the beginning of class**, and to refer to it throughout, where possible and appropriate.

4. Staff were asked and regularly reminded to consider **giving advance notice of homework deadlines**, where possible and appropriate.

**Results of Re-Evaluation of S.S.E.**

A detailed outline of the student S.S.E. focus group discussion results relating to areas of focus of Literacy, Numeracy, Teaching and Learning in Relation to Homework and Wellbeing Week 2018 are available in the appendix.

In summary, students felt that the school was print rich for both Literacy and Numeracy. They mentioned that there are excellent cross curricular links in relation to Numeracy in subjects such as Physics, Business, Geography and Mathematics. They said that homework on the board at the beginning of class and homework deadlines being given in advance is
very helpful and provides the opportunity for discussion. The Wellbeing Week 2018 was identified as being very beneficial, particularly the main guest speaker at the opening ceremony, the opportunities for relaxation such as meditation and mindful coloring and the corridor displays and Thoughts for the Day.

Some recommendations from the student research included corridor displays having specific subject relevance, allowing plenty of time in class to consider homework, continuing with Wellbeing Week next year and dispersing promotion of Wellbeing throughout the school and the school year.

S.S.E. Strengths

- There is evidence of willingness among staff to share and promote good practice, resources and methodologies.
- Independent reading is being promoted.
- Classrooms and corridors are environments for the promotion of Literacy and Numeracy.
- The Homework Policy is up to date and available to the school community.
- Where possible and appropriate, homework is being identified on the board at the beginning of class and where possible and appropriate, homework deadlines are being given in advance.
- The 7 Step Homework Plan is available to students in the Homework Journals.
- Wellbeing Week 2018 was a success and Wellbeing promotion continues on corridor visual displays.
Students are being given the opportunity to discuss and provide feedback relating to teaching, learning and the school environment.

**Future S.S.E. Priorities**

- Continue to develop the school, both inside and outside the classroom, as a Literacy rich and Numeracy rich environment.
- Continue to promote good practice in relation to teaching, learning and homework.
- Continue giving students the opportunity to discuss and provide feedback relating to teaching, learning and the school environment.
- Consider continuing with Wellbeing Week and promotion of Wellbeing in the future.
- Consider Collaborative Learning Strategies, Assessment for Learning and Wellbeing as aspects of teaching and learning to be investigated and enhanced in S.S.E. in the future.