**School Self Evaluation Report for Dunhill National School**

**Literacy**

***Introduction***

In discussing and developing this school self-evaluation report, in line with DES requirements, the Board of Management and school staff are mindful of the fact that the educational needs of our pupils are treated in a holistic fashion. While the focus of this report is Literacy, we see the development of this area within the wider ambit of the social, personal and academic needs of the pupils in our care. We endeavour, with the help of parents, to address these wider needs, always being mindful of the importance which a grounding in literacy – oral language, reading and writing – can play in the future lives of our pupils. It is against this background that the following report should be considered.

**The Focus of the Evaluation**

A school self-evaluation of teaching and learning was undertaken during the period September 2013 – January 2014. After a period of analysis and consultation, literacy was selected as the curricular area to be focussed on in Year 1, in accordance with Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life (Circular 56/2011). This document is a summary of our findings.

**School Context**

Dunhill N.S. is a rural, co-educational school in Co. Waterford. It is a Catholic school under the patronage of Bishop of Waterford and Lismore. It is a 6 teacher school (5 classroom teachers and 1 full time support teacher. There is also a part-time support teacher). There are 122 pupils in the school who mainly reside in the parish of Dunhill and surrounding area. The vast majority of these students are Irish in nationality. Attendance levels are high and the school adopts effective enrolment practices which are in line with National Education and Welfare Board (NEWB) and Department of Education and Skills guidelines. Dunhill N.S. recognises the uniqueness of each child. We strive to nurture in every child all the dimensions of his/her life – spiritual, moral, cognitive, creative, emotional, imaginative, aesthetic, social and physical whilst taking into account each child’s individuality.

**Sources**

The following sources of evidence were used to compile the findings of this report:

- Individual teacher reviews of practice in Literacy.

- Collective staff ratings of school literacy plans, initiatives, resources and practices

- Pupils work – samples, copies, displays.

- The Learning Support teacher’s observations.

- Analysis of Standardised Tests – Micra-T Test, (May 2013) from 1st – 6th class

- Parental Questionnaires

- Pupil Questionnaires – second to sixth class.

**The findings**

***Attainment of curriculum objectives***:

Assessment tools indicate that the majority of pupils attain curriculum objectives relative to their class grouping, as set out in the 1999 Primary School Curriculum for English. Those pupils who are having difficulties, children with specified special education needs or children who are struggling to achieve success in literacy, receive additional or differentiated support either in class from the class teacher, from the learning support teacher, or from the resource teacher.

Informal assessment of learning in the area of English is carried out on an ongoing basis by class teachers to monitor attainment of curriculum objectives relevant to the pupil’s class.

Formal assessment by way of a standardised test (Micra-T) is carried out at end-May/beginning of June for classes from 1st to 6th and parents are notified of the outcome. The DES is notified of summary results for 2nd, 4th and 6th classes in accordance with requirements.

***Learning environment***:

Although the physical nature of the classroom setting is somewhat constrained by the structure of the school building and its configuration, and does not lend itself easily to group work, especially in larger classes in certain classrooms, the other factors associated with the learning environment are positive for pupils. They have a wide range of resources and learning tools, in particular reading materials (Class libraries, Class Novels, Oxford Reading Tree, Supplementary readers) and access to an interactive whiteboard in each classroom and a fully equipped Computer Room (25 Computers) which helps broaden literacy experiences for all pupils. The learning environment is one of encouragement and boosting pupil self-esteem to aid learning, and pupils are encouraged to give feedback to their class teacher in relation to any difficulties which they may have, so that their learning can be maximised. The print rich environment is evident around the school. The school is decorated with displays of pupils work. There is also an agreed approach to the teaching of handwriting.

Results of a survey of parents with regard to Literacy, completed in November 2013, confirmed the positive nature of the learning environment for pupils. Parental suggestions for improvements (e.g. additional books, ideas for novels) are incorporated into this plan.

***Pupils’ engagement in learning***:

Results of surveys carried out with pupils in the senior classes (2nd-6th), and teacher observation of pupils indicate that pupils at all class level are actively engaged in their learning and the level of pupil interest and participation is high. Teacher observation, parental & pupil feedback indicates that the pupils enjoy reading and are interested in Literacy as a whole. Pupils engage in a variety of activities in English lessons – reading, writing stories, drama, poetry and comprehension.

Pupil’s engagement in learning is monitored by their class teacher and if any areas of concern arise, these are brought to the attention of parents so that any concerns can be addressed and the pupil’s learning improved.

***Learning to learn***

Pupils are encouraged to use a variety of tools to help their own learning, both in school and at home, as all pupils have their own individual learning style and supports for learning, depending on their individual circumstances. In school, learning through visual and auditory methods is enhanced through use of the interactive whiteboard in all classrooms, the Computer Room and pupils may use any technology they have at home to research a topic they are studying in school, prepare projects, etc depending on their class level. They are encouraged to use a dictionary, develop their own personal dictionary and use a range of strategies to aid development of their literacy skills in order to help them learn.

***Preparation for teaching***

All teachers have a wide range of experience at different class levels and update their pedagogical skills on an ongoing basis through a range of continuous professional development courses relevant to school and classroom needs. Planning is focused on curriculum objectives and adapted as necessary to the needs of pupils in a class. Fortnightly and yearly plans are prepared by classroom teachers and Individual Education Plans by our resource teacher, in consultation with classroom teachers and parents. Plans relevant to group or classroom activities, as appropriate, are prepared by our Learning Support teacher in consultation with the classroom teachers.

***Teaching approaches***

A variety of teaching approaches and styles are adopted, depending on the age and class level, or on learning needs of pupils. In-class support and small group work is incorporated into the work of the learning support teacher, while individual or small group work is normally implemented by the resource teacher. Group or pair work,

circle time and whole class teaching is used by classroom teachers during the course of the day, depending on the curriculum subject area and needs of the class or pupil. Great use is made of resources including ICT to support pupils in their learning. Teachers differentiate the lessons effectively to cater for the needs and abilities of all pupils.

***Management of pupils***

Pupils, in general, are focused on learning and pupils display a willingness to learn and co-operate with their class teacher and with school staff. Behavioural management issues are low and any issues of concern are brought to the attention of parents as necessary and as soon as possible. Collaboration between class teachers and learning Support teachers takes place on a regular basis and team teaching/In class support is being used to support the development of Literacy. A positive code of behaviour including an anti-bullying policy is implemented in a fair and consistent way.

***Assessment***

Teachers employ a large selection of assessment tools to assess learning in Literacy – observations, checklists, curriculum objectives, questioning, self-assessment, classroom tests, teacher-designed tasks and standardised tests. The school also uses a range of assessment tools to monitor pupil progress and to assist in the diagnosis of difficulties which may arise in individual cases. Results are also used to assist in teacher planning and to co-ordinate learning supports for pupils. Standardised tests of English and Maths are carried out at the end of the year (MICRA-T/ SIGMA-T Maths) and other types of diagnostic testing is also used (e.g. Neale Analysis of Reading/ Schonell Spelling test/Non-Reading Intelligence Test etc) as necessary. The school also avails of the services of the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) for a small number of psycho-educational tests during the year. Assessment is also carried out in order to refer a pupil for assistance by outside specialists (e.g. Speech and Language therapy; Occupational therapy).

**Progress made on previously-identified Literacy improvement targets**

**Not - Applicable**

**Summary of school self-evaluation findings with regard to Literacy**

Our school has **strengths as regards Literacy** in the following areas:

* Pupils in general have a positive attitude to literacy. Pupils in 2nd- 6th classes were surveyed and the majority of them say they like English and reading and felt that they are good readers. A lower proportion felt that they were good at hand-writing.
* Parents have been surveyed in relation to their child’s literacy and are on the whole positive with regard to the development of literacy skills in their child.
* The Parents Association & the parents themselves are extremely supportive of literacy initiatives and have provided assistance for literacy resources (reading-buddies scheme etc.)
* The teaching staff is conscious of the importance of literacy development and are constantly upskilling in this area.
* The majority of pupils enjoy reading at school and at home and a proportion of pupils are joined the library.
* A wide range of assessment tools are used to assess pupil progress and put interventions in place following consultation with parents and outside agencies, if necessary.
* Reading Initiatives to encourage reading – Paired reading, DEAR, Readathon, shared reading and visits to Library.
* There are good resources available in the school
* There are a variety of assessment tools used
* There is a print rich environment – lots of sight vocabulary
* There is a good variety of reading texts used
* Standardised and Diagnostic tests are administered in the school
* Results of assessments are used to inform teacher planning
* The school has a very successful on-going reading-buddy initiative which fosters reading for enjoyment
* Parental attitude to Literacy is very positive and parents are very supportive towards the school, the teaching staff and Literacy in Dunhill N.S.
* The school is very well equipped regarding ICT

Standardised tests in English and Maths are administered to all classes from 1st to 6th each year. Results from these standardised tests reflect the strong literacy focus in the school and improvements that have been carried out on an ongoing basis over the past few years. The whole school results indicate that the level of Literacy in pupils in Dunhill N.S. is well above the national norm.

**The following Areas are prioritized for improvement with regard to Literacy:**

1. **– Hand Writing**

21% of pupils surveyed felt that their handwriting was not good

26% felt that they do not hold a pencil/pen properly

The staff did their own survey on pencil/pen grip and found that around 20% of the pupils had the incorrect pencil/pen grip.

It was noted that at the induction day for the new entrants (2013/14) in May 2013, 33.3% of the pupils had the incorrect pencil/crayon grip.

Therefore we plan

* To improve how pupils hold a pencil/pen when writing.
* To improve the level of handwriting within the school, particularly the male students in the higher classes.
* To ensure that the school handwriting plan is adhered to and that there is continuity from Infants to 6th Class.
* To bring the proper pencil grip to the attention of the pre-schools in the area so that the pupils have the proper grip even before beginning Junior Infants. To bring it to the attention of all the parents in the school via an informative information letter.

**2 - Oral Language Skills**

Improvement in Oral Language confidence and fluency and a development in the expressive capacity of pupils.

i) Specific Oral Language skills are to be taught and practiced

ii) Offer opportunities for pupils to develop oral language skills at each class level.

**3 - Poetry**

We hope to improve the pupils interest in Poetry in the following ways.

* To make poetry more interesting and purposeful for people.
* To ensure that children experience a broad range of different types of Poetry
* To get children to create/write poems either in a group or individual basis.
* That children would be able to recite a poem by heart.

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| **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 hours 40 minutes (1st-6th classes)** | **Circular 11/95** | **Yes**  **Yes** |  |  |
| **Arrangements for parent/ teacher and staff meetings** | **Circular 14/04** | **Yes** |  |  |
| **Implementation of Croke Park agreement regarding additional time requirement** | **Circular 0008/2011** | **Yes** |  |  |
| **Standardisation of school year** | **Circular 034/2011** | **Yes** |  |  |
| **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** |  |  |
| **Retention of pupils** | **Rule 64 Rules for National Schools Circular 11/01**  **Circular 32/03** | **Yes** |  |  |
| **Development of school plan** | **Section 21, Education Act 1998** | **Yes** |  |  |
| **Appointments to posts of responsibility** | **Circular 07/03 Circular 053/2011** | **Yes** |  |  |
| **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** | **Yes** |  |  |
| **Exemption from Irish** | **Circular 12/96** | **Yes** |  |  |

Implememtation of **Child Protection Procedures** (Circular 65/2011) : **Yes**

Number of cases where a report involving a child in the school was submitted by the DLP to the HSE – **0**

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 – **0**

Number of cases where the DLP sought advice from the HSE and as a a result of this no report was made – **0**

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 – **0**

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Implimentation of **the Complaints Procedure** as appropriate

Complaints Procedures, Section 28 Education Act (Primary Boards of Management Information Manual November 2007) : **Yes**

Number of formal parental complaints received : **0**

Number of Formal parental complaints processed : **0**

Number of formal complaints not fullyprocessed by the end of this school year: **0**

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**Refusal to Enrol** (Section 29 Education Act 1998)

(Please provide the following in formation in relation to appeals taken in accordance with Section 29 against the school during the school year)

* Number of Section 29 cases taken against the school : **0**
* Number of cases processed at informal stage : **0**
* Number of appeals upheld : **0**
* Number of appeals dismissed : **0**

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**Suspension of Students** (Section 29 Education Act 1998)

(Please provide the following in formation in relation to appeals taken in accordance with Section 29 against the school during the school year)

- Number of Section 29 cases taken against the school : **0**

- Number of cases processed at informal stage : **0**

- Number of appeals upheld : **0**

- Number of appeals dismissed : **0**

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**Expulsion of Pupils**

(Please provide the following in formation in relation to appeals taken in accordance with Section 29 against the school during the school year)

- Number of Section 29 cases taken against the school : **0**

- Number of cases processed at informal stage : **0**

- Number of appeals upheld : **0**

- Number of appeals dismissed : **0**

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**Enrolment Policy** (Section 15 (2)(d) Education Act 1998 : **Yes**

**Code of Behaviour** (including Anti-Bullying Policy) – (Circular 20/90, DES Guidelines on Countering Bullying Behaviour 1993, NEWB Guidelines, Section 23 – Education Welfare Act 2000) :  **Yes**

**Attendance & Participation Strategy** (Section 22 Education Welfare Act 200, Eqial Status Acts 2000-2011) : **Yes**

**Health & Safety Statement** (Section 20 Health & Safety Act 2005) : **Yes**

**Data Protection** (Data Protection Act 1988, Data Protection (Ammendment Act) 2003) : **Yes**

**Special Education Needs Policy** (Education Act 1988, Equal Status Acts 2000-2011, Education (Welfare) Act 2000, Education for Persons with Special Needs Act (EPSEN) 2004, Disability Act 2005 : **Yes**

**Relationships and Sexuality Education** (RSE) **Policy** (Relationships and Sexuality Education:Policy Guidelines (1997)) : **Yes**

**Child Protection Policy** (Circular 65/2011) : **Yes**

**Parents as Partners** (Circular 24/91) : **Yes**

**Public Service** (Croke Park) **agreement** – spacial needs assistants : **Yes**