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

**Numeracy**

**Evaluation Period: September 2014 – March 2015**

**Report Issue Date: April 2015**

***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 Mathematics, 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 Maths (Understanding of Number, Concepts, Tables, Skills Development, etc.) 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 2014 – March 2015. After a period of analysis and consultation, Maths was selected as the curricular area to be focussed on in Year 2, 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 are also two part-time support teachers). There are 132 pupils in the school who mainly reside in the parish of Dunhill and the 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 questionnaire & reviews of practice in Maths and collective staff analysis of the other sources of evidence

- Pupil’s work – samples, copies, displays.

- The Learning Support teacher’s observations.

 - Analysis of Standardised Tests – Sigma-T Tests (May 2013 & 2014) from 1st – 6th class

- Parental Questionnaires

- Pupil Questionnaires – second to sixth class.

- The Board of Management feedback in relation to the school’s Standardised Test Results particularly in the area of Mathematics (BoM Meeting – February 2015).

**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 Maths. Those pupils who are having difficulties (children with specified special education needs or who are struggling to achieve success in the area of Mathematics) receive additional or differentiated support either from the class teacher in class, from the learning support teacher, or from the resource teacher.

Informal assessment of learning in the area of Mathematics 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 (Sigma-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. There is a large range of resources and learning tools (2-D/3-D Shapes, Tangrams, Trundle Wheels, Clocks, etc.), access to an interactive whiteboard in each classroom and a fully equipped Computer Room (25 Computers) which helps broaden Mathematical 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. Displays of pupil’s maths work can be seen on class display boards periodically. In general there is also an agreed approach to the language of Maths.

Results of a survey of parents with regard to Maths, completed in January 2015, confirmed the positive nature of the learning environment for pupils. Parental and Pupil suggestions for improvements (e.g. Maths games etc.) 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 Maths and are interested and aware of the importance of tables. Pupils engage in a variety of activities in Maths lessons – estimating, calculating, integrating and connecting, classifying, matching, can be practical in nature involving concrete materials.

Pupil’s engagement in learning is monitored by their class teacher and if any areas of difficulties 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, auditory and kinaesthetic (practical/concrete material) methods is enhanced through use of Mathematical equipment, an interactive whiteboard in all classrooms and the Computer Room. All pupils are required to learn tables as they are considered (as one 6th class pupil put it) to be ‘the basics of Maths’.

***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 & whole class teaching are used by classroom teachers during the course of the day, depending on the curriculum subject area, the Mathematical skills that are being taught and the needs of the class or pupil. Great use is made of Mathematical 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. 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 Mathematics – observations, checklists, curriculum objectives, questioning, self-assessment, classroom tests, teacher-designed tasks and standardised tests. The school also uses 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 in Maths are carried out in the final term of each school year (SIGMA-T test). All individual pupils’ results are imputed into the SCOR Z system which then helps us to get an individual profile on each child’s strengths and weaknesses. The school also avails of the services of the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) for a small number of psycho-educational assessment tests during the year. Assessment is also carried out in order to refer a pupil for assistance by outside specialists (e.g. Occupational therapy).

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

**Not - Applicable**

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

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

* Pupils in general have a positive attitude to Mathematics. Pupils in 2nd- 6th classes were surveyed and the majority of them (62%) said they like Mathematics.
* Parents have been surveyed in relation to their child’s Mathematics and a large majority (88%) feel that their child has a positive attitude towards Maths.
* The Parents Association & the parents themselves are extremely supportive of numeracy initiatives within the school.
* The teaching staff is conscious of the importance of numeracy development and is regularly upskilling in this area.
* A very in-depth analysis is done on each child’s Sigma-T test to assess pupil progress and put interventions in place, following consultation with parents and outside agencies, if necessary.
* Numeracy Initiatives to aid Mathematical understanding and learning are undertaken in the school– Problem Solving Initiative, etc.
* There is a good variety of Maths resources available in a central location in the school.
* Standardised tests are administered annually.
* Results of assessments are used to inform teacher planning.
* The school is very well equipped regarding ICT.
* In our recent Pupil Survey, all children felt that tables are important. There was no child that felt they were unimportant. 91% of pupils said that they did not find tables difficult to learn.
* Pupil performance in maths continues to improve. It is felt that the resources being given to the school – financial, teacher allocation and Learning-Support teacher have been a factor in this improvement. Should these resources be reduced then the Board of Management, the teaching staff and the parents feel that there will be a negative impact thus reducing pupil performance in mathematics in the future.
* There was a further improvement in the Sigma-T results in 2014 and now 45% of the pupils from 1st -6th were in the 90th-99th Percentile bracket.

Each year standardised tests in English and Maths are administered to all pupils in 1st to 6th classes. Results from these standardised tests reflect the strong numeracy 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 numeracy in pupils in Dunhill N.S. is well above the national norm.

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

* A Maths booklet will be created where parents can see how Mathematical processes and methods are performed so that they can help their children at home and do so in the correct manner (“all on the same hymn sheet”) as many of these maths processes have changed since parents were in school.

In the 2015/16 school year, the staff will draw up an information booklet for Parents. This will also help to create and maintain conformity of language and method in Mathematics within the school. This booklet will be disseminated to parents and will be put on the school website.

* The school will continue to focus on the area of Problem Solving. Though the Sigma-T score rates have improved from the Sigma-T tests in 2013 (School Percentage Average for Problem Solving: 54.8%) to the Sigma-T results in 2014 (School Percentage Average for Problem Solving: 58.1%), they still remain the lowest scoring Mathematical Area.

During the school year the school will undertake another Problem Solving Initiative. There will also be an opportunity given to pupils to create their own Maths problems and for other pupils to solve them. This is in response to pupils’ suggestions in their recent Maths Survey.

* More Mathematical games will be bought and introduced. Some will be used in the classroom and others will be used by pupils during wet lunch breaks e.g. Chess/Velcro Darts etc.

* In the classroom, Mathematics will be taught in a more practical and interesting manner. Teachers are concerned that there are time and space limitations when undertaking such activities. All school parties (Teachers, Parents & Pupils) are aware of the benefits of such activities and of making Mathematics more practical and relevant. Teachers will also increase the links between Maths and the environment.

Such areas as Measure, Shape & Space, Area & Data will be made more practical and will be linked with other subjects such as Science, Art, Geography and with the pupils environment.

* Though there is a large range of Mathematical Equipment in the school, the staff will add to it if and when the need arises. This of course will be done provided the finances are available within the school.

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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 : **1**

Number of Formal parental complaints processed : **1**

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**