



*Loreto Secondary School,
Vevay Road,
Bray,
Co. Wicklow*

School Roll Number: 61820J

School Self-Evaluation Report

Evaluation period: September 2012 to June 2013

Report issue date: 19 November 2013

School Self-Evaluation Report

1. Introduction

1.1 The focus of the evaluation

A school self-evaluation of literacy was undertaken during the period September 2012 to June 2013. During the evaluation, teaching and learning in subjects and programmes were collaboratively evaluated, with particular emphasis on **whole school and subject specific literacy**. School self-evaluation in this area is essential for school improvement and future development in the area of **literacy**.

In addition, an evaluation of **the range of school cross-curricular and extra-curricular activities and events** was conducted by staff to ascertain the value and impact of these activities and events and the degree to which they informed the following: learning and teaching, school ethos and participation by students in school life.

1.2 School Context

Loreto Secondary School is situated in the town of Bray, Co. Wicklow. It is a Catholic Voluntary Secondary school for girls, under the trusteeship of the Loreto Trust. There are currently 849 post primary students attending the school. The school provides a varied curriculum including Transition Year and LCVP.

2. The findings

Learner Outcomes

The overall targets set in relation to **literacy** and **students' engagement with reading** are informed by data collected from two main sources: Loreto Bray's PISA 2009 scores and Loreto Bray's scores in a Vocabulary Field Trial conducted by the school's English teachers on behalf of St. Patrick's College as part of its Development of a Standardised Test of Reading Literacy, Sept. 2012. These targets are as follows:-

1. To maintain or improve Loreto Bray's Reading Achievement scores in PISA 2009 – see appendix 1.
2. To maintain or improve scores achieved by Third Years in the St. Patrick's College Vocabulary Field Trial Sept. 2012 – see appendix 2.
3. To maintain or improve Oral Literacy by increasing students' participation in inter-schools debating and the weekly Drama Club.

Evidence from the following areas was gathered to determine if the improvement targets set were achieved:-

1. CAT tests were administered to our first year students for the first time to measure their ability to read, spell and comprehend sentences.
2. Whole school reflection on literacy initiatives

Evidence from the following areas will be gathered in the first term of 2013-2014 to determine if the improvement targets set are being achieved:-

1. The Vocabulary Field Test will be re-administered to a sample number of last year's 3rd Year's to ascertain whether or not Reading Literacy levels have been maintained or improved.
2. Levels of borrowing from the school library will be measured as will levels of attendance at Junior and Senior Book Clubs.
3. Whole school reflection on literacy initiatives

3. Progress made on previously identified improvement targets.

- After a presentation on literacy to the whole staff, a Literacy Committee led by a Literacy Link teacher was established, and all Subject Departments adopted one common Literacy Improvement Strategy (Keywords).
- Reading for Enjoyment – Teachers noted a definite increase in the number of students using the library and attending the Senior and Junior Book Clubs. This was particularly evident among junior students.
- Keywords - Teachers noted greater understanding of students' understanding and use of keywords in their subject areas.
- Assessment for Learning continues to form an integral part of learning and teaching in the school
- The prevention of unnecessary departures home by the introduction of a computerised 'Outbook' (tracking and communicating to parents / guardians the frequency of some students' departures from school because of sickness, appointments etc.) has improved attendance and thus learning and teaching.
- The introduction of a Merit System affirms more overtly than previously student achievement (academic and otherwise), effort and participation in the life of the school.

4. Summary of school self-evaluation findings

4.1 Our school has strengths in the following areas:

Our school has **strengths** in the following areas in relation to literacy:-

- Principal, Deputy Principal, Teachers, Parents and the Board of Management collaborate to bring about school improvement through the implementation of the literacy plan.
- There is an awareness of the need for a whole school literacy approach to improve standards.
- The combined effect of the literacy and reading engagement strategies have brought about an improvement in teaching and learning.

- Evidence suggests a more positive attitude to the use of language, reading and writing.
- Students are affirmed in their work.

The following areas **are prioritised for improvement**

- To retain Data from test scores (e.g. CAT / class spelling tests / Reading Literacy tests) for analytical purposes and future evaluations i.e. gathering of evidence.
- To introduce further “Assessment for Learning” techniques in 2013-2014 to improve levels of motivation and learning and to give students a greater sense of purpose and involvement in their learning.
- The increase use of the school library and the borrowing of books by students. To issue Borrower Cards to all students. Parents to be invited to act as Librarians once vetted.
- To increase students’ membership of both Junior and Senior Book Clubs
- To increase students’ participation in both Drama and Debating
- To adopt the *Drop Everything and Read* (Book in the Bag) literacy strategy early in First term of 2013-2014.
- To provide on-going CPD for the school’s Literacy Link teacher.
- To follow the Literacy Committee’s recommendations in regards to further literacy strategies.
- To continue to purchase a wide variety of books, magazines and newspapers to encourage reading for enjoyment.
- To place a folder for literacy scores and a literacy resources folder on the school’s server to share examples of good practice and further increase awareness.

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

- The school’s Anti-bullying policy needs to be reviewed in light of recent DES guidelines on implementation of an Anti-bullying policy.
- Once legislative requirements are clear the school’s Admission Policy needs to be reviewed.
- The review of the school’s Code of Behaviour and Discipline needs to be finalised.
- A Whole School Guidance Policy needs to be drawn up and implemented
- A Data Protection Policy needs to be drawn up and implemented

Loreto Bray School Improvement Plan – 17 June 2013

<p>Summary of main strengths as identified in last SSE in June 2013</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal, Deputy Principal, Teachers, Parents and the Board of Management collaborate to bring about school improvement through the implementation of the literacy plan. • There is increased awareness of the need for a whole school literacy approach to improve standards. • The combined effect of the literacy and reading engagement strategies have brought about an improvement in teaching and learning. • Evidence suggests a more positive attitude to the use of language, reading and writing. • Students are affirmed in their work (e.g. through new Merit System).
<p>Summary of main areas requiring improvement as identified in last SSE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To retain Data from test scores (e.g. CAT tests / class spelling tests / Reading Literacy tests) for purpose of gathering evidence • To introduce further “Assessment for Learning” techniques in to improve levels of motivation, learning and student involvement. An increase use of the school library and the borrowing of books by students is also required. • To increase students’ membership of both Junior and Senior Book Clubs • To increase students’ participation in both Drama and Debating • To adopt the <i>Drop Everything and Read</i> (Book in the Bag) literacy strategy • To provide on-going CPD for Literacy Link teacher. • To implement the Literacy Committee’s recommendations • To continue to purchase a wide variety of books, magazines and newspapers • To place a folder for literacy scores and a literacy resources folder on school’s server.
<p>Improvement targets (related to students’ achievement)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To maintain or improve Loreto Bray’s Reading Achievement scores in PISA 2009 – see appendix 1. • To maintain or improve scores achieved by Third Years in the St. Patrick’s College Vocabulary Field Trial Sept. 2012, particularly in regard to students with Special Needs – see appendix 2. • To maintain or improve Oral Literacy by increasing students’ participation in inter-schools debating and weekly Drama Club. • Overall, to improve students’ engagement with reading levels

Required actions (Related to Teaching & Learning that will help to achieve the targets)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To adopt cross-curricular Literacy strategies e.g. Keywords, Drop Everything and Read, etc. • To improve students' access to the library by increasing its opening times • To have at least weekly meetings of both Junior and Senior Book Clubs • To regularly assess literacy levels in target groups and retain data for analysis and evaluation • To provide support for students with continuing low literacy levels, especially students with Special Needs • To further develop Assessment for Learning
Persons responsible	Principal, Deputy Principal, Literacy Link teacher, Literacy Committee members, Learning Support Coordinator, subject teachers including Library Coordinators and Book Club organisers, Parents Association volunteers
Timeframe for action	September 2013 to June 2014
Success criteria / measurable outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased numbers of students using library / borrowing books • Increased involvement by students in Drama Club, Debating and Book Clubs • Surveys should show increased levels of reading for enjoyment among students • Scores in CAT tests / Vocabulary tests (e.g. St. Patrick's College test) should show improvement among students whose previous scores reflected poor reading engagement levels and/or poor understanding of key vocabulary
Review date(s):	September 2014

Appendix One

Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) – Results issued 2 Nov 2011

Loreto Secondary School, Bray, was one of 144 schools in Ireland that took part in PISA in 2009

Reading was the main focus of PISA 2009

The following is a comparison of Loreto Bray with Irish and OECD averages:

Mean Scores and Standard Deviations for Ireland, the OECD and Loreto Bray

Characteristic	Ireland Mean	Ireland SD	OECD Mean	OECD SD	Loreto Bray Mean	Loreto Bray SD
Reading Achievement (paper-based)	496	95	493	93	532	61
Non-engagement in reading for enjoyment (NB - percent 'never')	42%	NA	37%	NA	34%	NA

Results show that

- a) Loreto Bray exceeds Reading Achievement Score in Ireland and in OECD countries
- b) Loreto Bray level of engagement in reading for enjoyment exceeds that of Ireland and of OECD countries.

Appendix Two

Vocabulary Field Trial, September 2012

Loreto Secondary School, Bray, cooperated with St. Patrick's College in its development of a Standardised Test of Reading Literacy by participating in a Vocabulary Field Trial in September 2012.

An English teacher from Loreto Bray, Ms Noreen O'Dwyer, organised the administration of the test to 115 3rd Year students.

Results were issued in November 2012.

Scores are relative to other students in the Field Trial and allow for comparisons.

Scores of 115+ are considered Well Above Average, 108-114 High Average, 93-107 Average, 85-92 Low Average and 84 or below Well below Average.

The following table sets out the percentages of 3rd Year Loreto students in the score categories above:

22.5%	Well Above Average
14%	High Average
40%	Average
14%	Low Average
9.5%	Well Below Average