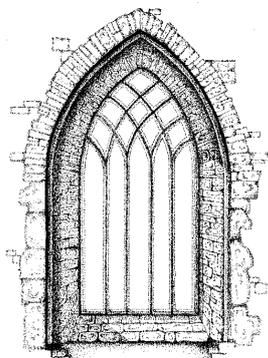# COLÁISTE MHUIRE, ASKEATON

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School Self-Evaluation

Summary Report for School Community

Evaluation period: September 2012 to June 2013

Report issue date: 30/09/13

Summary School Self-Evaluation Report

1. Introduction
Coláiste Mhuire is located in a rural setting. There are 34 teachers and 452 pupils in the school. The school offers a broad curriculum at Junior and Senior cycle including LCVP. Transition Year is well established. For more information on how we intend to improve our students' learning, please see our summary School Improvement Plan which is available on the school website, www.colaistemhuireask.ie

1.1 The focus of the evaluation

We undertook a school self-evaluation of teaching and learning during the year 2012/2013. We evaluated Literacy for one specific cohort. We chose Literacy because of the new emphasis on the Literacy and Numeracy strategy as outlined in the national strategy- *Literacy and Numeracy For Learning and Life- The National Strategy to Improve Literacy and Numeracy among Children and Young People 2011-2020.*

This report summarises the strengths that were identified and the areas that have been prioritised for improvement.

2. Summary of school self-evaluation findings

We examined the results of standardised tests and in-house tests in English. We looked at reading ages. We surveyed students on their attitudes to reading and Literacy. We surveyed staff re teachers' practice in relation to Literacy in their subject area. We also looked at the uptake of higher level English in Junior Cert from 2010-2013 and analysed the results of these exams.

2.1 We found that our school has **strengths** in the following areas:

Strengths

- The commitment, drive, energy and experience of the board of management, senior management and staff is evidence that the school is well placed to progress the self-evaluation process (WSE-MLL Finding: 2012)
- Senior management promotes a culture of self-evaluation and review within the school community. (WSE-MLL Finding 2012)
- There is a strong culture of CPD and involvement in school improvement initiatives.
- The willingness of teachers to engage with projects and initiatives was commended in the WSE-MLL report. The report stated that students are the ultimate beneficiaries through enhanced learning opportunities in the classroom.
- Uptake at higher level English is well above the national norm.
- STen scores for this cohort are at or slightly above the national norms.
- Reading ages for this cohort have improved through a reading strategy in 1st yr.

- 51% of this cohort considers themselves to be a good or very good reader.
- 65% recognise that reading is important.
- 68% of teachers ranked students' general reading ability as good, very good or excellent.
- Teachers are implementing a variety of literacy strategies in their classrooms.
- There are clear signs that the school support for group work *(Learning Schools Project 2011/2012)* is being fostered in classrooms.
- Teachers are actively maintaining and advancing high literacy standards.

We know that these are our strengths because of feedback from the WSE-MLL in September 2012, an Incidental Inspection in April 2013 and the analysis of a variety of data collected during the course of this evaluation. In addition, ongoing staff consultation and evaluation have highlighted these particular strengths and made an ongoing commitment to cementing and furthering Literacy strategies and initiatives.

2.2 We have decided to prioritise the following **areas for development:**

Areas for development

- Students' attitude to, and interest in, reading. Reading for enjoyment must be fostered and students must be encouraged to read a variety of media.
- An open reading culture in class must be developed.
- Results in English in 1st year.
- Oral literacy skills must be improved as students cited a lack of confidence when answering teachers' questions or giving their opinions.
- Further development of group-work strategies across all subject areas.Comprehension of subject specific vocabulary.
- Promotion of the language of higher order thinking and reasoning.
- Readability tests must be carried out for all subjects.

We have decided to prioritise these areas because of the value we place on the core skills associated with Literacy, i.e., reading, comprehension, oral literacy, higher order thinking and critical thinking. We feel that students will benefit from having a broad range of Literacy skills in all areas of school life and ultimately the Literacy skills to take forward into adult life and the wider community.

Appendix to Post-primary School Self-Evaluation Report: legislative and regulatory checklist – reporting to the school community

Rules and regulations for schools are set out in a number of Education Acts, and in Circulars issued to schools from time to time by the Department of Education and Skills. The list below deals with important areas of school life and tells you what rules and regulations apply to them. You will find the Acts and Circulars mentioned on the Department's website, www.education.ie.	
Which area of school life is involved, and what are the regulations?	**Is the school following the regulations fully?**
Enrolment of students The Education Act 1998, the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, and Circular M51/93 set out the principles schools should follow in their enrolment policies	☒ Yes ☐ No
Repeating a year Students may repeat a school year in certain conditions and for particular reasons, such as illness. Conditions are set out in Circular M02/95	☒ Yes ☐ No
The school calendar and the school timetable Schools must offer a minimum of 167 school days each year. Circular M29/95 sets this down.	☒ Yes ☐ No
Schools must offer a minimum school week of 28 hours for all year groups. Circular M29/95 sets this down.	☒ Yes ☐ No
Standardised school year School holidays are now standardised so all post-primary schools have holidays at the same time. The current school holidays circular is 34/2011	☒ Yes ☐ No
Parent/teacher meetings and staff meetings These meetings have to happen at certain times of the day so as not to interrupt teaching time or inconvenience parents. Circular M58/04 sets these out.	☒ Yes ☐ No
Implementation of national literacy and numeracy strategy Schools are required to have a whole-school approach to literacy and numeracy development. Parents have an important role to play in this area. See *Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life*, and Circular 25/2012	☒ Yes ☐ No
Agreement regarding additional time in school for teachers Circular 025/2011 requires teachers to do an additional 33 hours of out-of-class work each year, so as not to reduce teaching time	☒ Yes ☐ No
Development of school plan All schools are required to have a school plan, giving their mission and vision, policies and priorities for development	☒ Yes ☐ No
Engagement with school self-evaluation (SSE) process The SSE process requires schools to evaluate how well they are doing, and where they need to improve. The voices of parents and students are very important to this evaluation process. See www.schoolself-evaluation.ie.	☒ Yes ☐ No
Guidance provision in post-primary schools The Education Act 1998 requires all schools to provide appropriate guidance to students. See Circular 09/2012 for the current arrangements.	☒ Yes ☐ No
Delivery of CSPE to all junior cycle classes Civic, Social and Political Education is currently a compulsory subject in the junior cycle. All junior cycle students should have one CSPE lesson per week.	☒ Yes ☐ No
Exemption from the study of Irish Some students may be exempt from studying Irish. See Circular M10/94	☒ Yes ☐ No
Implementation of child protection procedures The *Child Protection Procedures for primary and post-primary schools* (2011) oblige schools to ensure that: liaison persons have been appointed ; the procedures have been communicated to the whole school community; and the procedures are being followed	☒ Yes ☐ No
Implementation of complaints procedure as appropriate Section 28 Education Act 1998 provides for procedures to address complaints about a school	Complaints have been resolved or are being resolved ☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☐
Appeal in the case of refusal to enrol students, suspension, and expulsion Section 29 Education Act 1998 provides for an appeal procedure in these cases. The school deals with them first. Where cases are not resolved at school level, an external appeals committee hears the appeal and makes a decision.	Appeals have been dealt with or are being dealt with ☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☐

Appendix to School Self-Evaluation report: policy checklist – reporting to the school community

Schools are required to have certain policies in place as part of their permanent school plan. It is good practice for schools to consult with the school community in forming and reviewing many of these policies. The school board of management has to approve and ratify policies, and should ensure that they are reviewed on a regular basis.	
What area of school life does the policy deal with and what is the aim of the policy?	**Has the policy been approved by the Board of Management?**
Enrolment policy Section 15 of the Education Act 1998 obliges schools to have and publish an enrolment policy that respects the principles of equality and parental choice	☒ Yes ☐ No
Code of behaviour Section 23, Education (Welfare) Act 2000, and the 2008 *National Educational Welfare Board Guidelines* set out regulations and good practice for schools to follow when drawing up and implementing a code of behaviour. This good practice includes consultation with parents and students.	☒ Yes ☐ No
Anti-bullying procedures The Department's *Anti-bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-primary Schools*, 2013, set out the measures that schools are required to have in place.	☒ Yes ☐ No
Attendance and participation strategy Section 22 Education Welfare Act 2000 requires schools to develop a strategy to support high levels of student attendance and participation in school life. Parents have a very important role and responsibility in this area.	☒ Yes ☐ No
Health and Safety Statement All schools should have a health and safety statement that is regularly reviewed (see Section 20 Health and Safety Act 2005)	☒ Yes ☐ No
Data protection School procedures relating to gathering, storing and sharing data on students should comply with data protection legislation - Data Protection Act 1988 and Data Protection (Amendment Act) 2003	☒ Yes ☐ No
Special education needs policy Various pieces of equality and education legislation, especially the Education for Persons with Special Education Needs Act (EPSEN) 2004, require schools to be inclusive of students with special educational needs and to provide for them appropriately using the resources available	☒ Yes ☐ No
Social, personal and health education(SPHE)/Relationships and sexuality education (RSE) policy Schools are required by various circulars to provide SPHE in the junior cycle and RSE throughout the school, and to have policies to support this provision.	☒ Yes ☐ No
Substance use policy The National Drugs Strategy and Department guidelines require schools to develop and implement a substance use policy in consultation with parents and students, and other relevant agencies	☒ Yes ☐ No
Internet acceptable use policy Schools should have and implement a policy to instruct students on safe and responsible use of the internet. Parents have a key role to play in this area. See www.webwise.ie.	☒ Yes ☐ No
Child protection policy All schools should have a child protection policy that includes the *Child Protection Procedures*. The policy should be communicated to the whole school community.	☒ Yes ☐ No
Parents as partners in education It is good practice for schools to have a parents' association, and to promote partnership between home and school. The board of management has an important role in supporting the parents' association.	☒ Yes ☐ No
Deployment of special needs assistants Circular 71/11 allows for SNAs to be deployed flexibly to respond to the needs of schools and students.	☒ Yes ☐ No