

St Anthony's Special school

Humbert Way, Castlebar

County Mayo

Roll no 19248R

School Self Evaluation Report 2015

Literacy

Plan issue date: June 2015.

School Self-Evaluation Report – June 2015

1. Introduction

1.1 The focus of the evaluation

As part of our ongoing SSE work in the school, we conducted a School Self-Evaluation of teaching and learning where we evaluated teaching approaches, learning outcomes, attitudes, resources, and communication strategies in the areas of **Literacy**.

We are currently into our 2nd year of implementing the **Numeracy SIP** and it is ongoing throughout the school. It will continue for year 3 i.e. 2015 - 2016 and will be reviewed at the end of next year. In September 2014 we began our first year in **Literacy** evaluation. From evidence gathered we prioritised the area of **Oral Language & Communication** as the area to concentrate on for our 3 year **School Improvement Plan** or **SIP**. A survey on oral language & communication was sent home and completed by parents and guardians of our pupils to gather all views and comments about this area.

1.2 School Context

- This is a Special School for Children with Mild GLD who may also have co-existing conditions such as ASD, ADHD, Visual Impairment, Hearing Impairment, Physical Disabilities, other syndromes and/or EBD.
- **School Growth:** There are currently 50 pupils aged from 5-18 years of age in 6 class groupings. Our school community has grown in recent years- from 39 pupils in 2005 to the current level of 50 - an increase of 30%.
- Class groupings are based on age profiles, not ability profiles
- There are 6 class teachers, 1 administrative principal, and 4 subject specialist teachers involved in the education plans of the children
- The school does not administer standardised tests in Mathematics or English reading as they are not suitable in our school context.
- Teachers carry out regular and comprehensive assessments of their own teaching and the children's learning through the use of teacher designed tasks, assessment record sheets and diagnostic assessments.

- Our School Website: www.stanthonysmayo.ie is regularly updated and includes the SSE Numeracy Reports from June 2014 onwards.
- In 2014 we installed our new Wheelchair accessible Swing which is the first in a school in Mayo (as far as we know)
- During July/August 2015 we hope to have the entire heating system of the school replaced in time for September re-opening. The new system will be a gas fired system and should improve the temperature and comfort conditions for the entire school community.

2. Summary of school self-evaluation findings.

Throughout the year we conducted the following research and gathered evidence based on the results found;

- Teacher focus groups & Staff Meetings reviewing Literacy in the school
- Parental questionnaire's and surveys on Oral Language/Communication Skills for their children
- Evaluation of current classroom practice in the teaching of oral language and communication

From the above it was determined that our school has strengths and challenges in the area of Oral Language & Communication

2.1 Our school has **strengths** in the following areas:

Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We use extensive vocabulary both orally and using ISL (Irish Sign Language) throughout the school • Most staff have ISL qualifications Level 1, some have up to Level 3, all staff interested in continuing and maintaining their own ISL skill levels • Oral language & communication skills were seen as very important for our pupils at school & home as evidenced through parental questionnaire's and result of staff focus meeting • Literacy is consistently being worked on across all curricular areas including reading & writing in all curricular subjects. • The school is a print rich environment • Regular whole school assemblies celebrate class work through pupils showcasing their work/skills in a particular area.

2.2 Our school has decided to prioritise the following areas of development for Oral Language & Communication Skills:

Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explicit and direct teaching of communication methods including oral language, sign language and communication through pictures and/or symbols e.g. PECS, Boardmaker• More emphasis on communication techniques, as some of our pupils are non-verbal they find it difficult to express their feelings & emotions• Clarity of speech to be an area for concentrating reflective practice by all school adult staff and for encouraging in pupil communications• Conversational skills, turn taking opportunities in communication practices,• More time for verbal communication on a one to one basis• More social opportunities to communicate/interact with people in the community and practice oral language and communication techniques and skills.

2.3 Progress made on previously identified targets in Literacy not applicable as SIP not in place yet.

2.4 The following legislative and regulatory requirements need to be addressed.

The school makes every effort to comply with all legislative and regulatory requirements that the Department of Education apply. The Board of Management review the appendix of Policy and Legislative requirements annually and will follow up on any that require updating or modification in line with best practice and procedures for the benefit of the pupils and the school.