

# St. Anthony's School

## School Self-evaluation Report June 2014

### 1. Introduction

#### 1.1 The focus of the evaluation

A School Self-Evaluation of teaching and learning in **Numeracy** was continued during the school year September 2013 to June 2014. Year 1 of the SIP-NUMERACY was commenced and we worked continuously towards reaching the targets we had set ourselves.

This year also saw the start of the SSE process in **Literacy**.

Training for both Link Teachers on Literacy and Numeracy happened in September 2013. Following this the staff met to review how Literacy and Numeracy would be evaluated and developed over the school year. Further training with Karen Brogan from the PDST helped staff to evaluate which part of the Literacy Programme was a priority for our school development going forward. Teaching staff have been working on this and will continue to do so over 2014-2015 with a view to having a SIP-LITERACY plan in place by June 2015.

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

- Individual teacher and whole staff reviews of practice in Numeracy and also Literacy.
- Pupils work - samples, copies, displays, results of assessments over the year.
- Parental and Student Questionnaires: (In 2013 Parents and Senior Pupils were asked their opinions on Literacy and Numeracy, and they were asked to identify areas where they felt the school was performing well and areas for improvement. It is proposed to develop a specific questionnaire for the Literacy area in 2014-2015)
- PDST Facilitated evaluation sessions with school staff.
- WSE Report from 2009

A link teacher for Numeracy and Literacy have been appointed and they have established core Numeracy and Literacy Teams involving other teaching staff so that all staff are closely involved with the SSE process.

**This is a report on the finding of the evaluation**

#### 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 51 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 51 - 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](http://www.stanthonysmayo.ie) is regularly updated and will include the SSE Reports from June 2014 onwards.
- In 2014-2015 we hope to open our new Wheelchair accessible Swing which will be the first in a school in Mayo (as far as we know)

## 2. The Findings

- There is a very good commitment towards improving Numeracy and Literacy among staff, parents and pupils in the school: supported by questionnaires and staff focus discussion groups
- Teachers continue to place a central focus and emphasis on developing social, practical and real-life maths and literacy skills, however there is scope to improve this further and expand this to try to get pupils to generalize their learning to transfer skills to their home and community lives
- Many methodologies are used to try to motivate students in maths
- Mental maths is difficult for our pupils, maths must be concrete for them
- The school maths plan needs to be continually revised and updated as per targets from SIP
- Teachers, parents and pupils highlighted the need to review maths homework - type, focus, amount, and parents would like more information on how to help their child.
- Assessment is an area where teachers would like to develop agreed checklists/assessment tasks that can follow pupils throughout their school life and show if they make progression in various skills/areas.
- Resources for maths should be catalogued and games should be developed for use both at school and at home to try to break the idea of maths as being just about numbers and facts - making it integral and easy part of everyday life of the child

## 3. Progress made on previously identified targets identified in the current SIP

### Numeracy:

- ✓ The SIP-NUMERACY year 1 was implemented during 2013-2014
- ✓ Training for Numeracy Link Teacher held in September 2013 and March 2014

- ✓ SSE Report was reviewed in October and SIP targets looked at and planned for.
- ✓ Teachers met as Junior and Senior Teams and agreed on common approach to:
  - ✓ Attitudes to Maths
  - ✓ Use of Games
  - ✓ Use of Calculators
  - ✓ Concepts of Time and Money
- ✓ Maths Week was held in October 2013 with games and a Whole School Maths Assembly as the focus.
- ✓ The Heinemann Pilot Maths Programme was reviewed by Room 5 and 6 and a decision was agreed in May 2014 to adopt the Heinemann Maths programme for the Senior Classes i.e. Rooms 4, 5 and 6.
- ✓ Junior Class teachers will adopt the Ready Set Go Maths programme.
- ✓ The GP Hall Numeracy Display was finished where each class displayed their work in a particular and different Strand Area of the Maths Curriculum.
- ✓ In April 2014 Numeracy and Literacy Teams were established and meetings held which concluded the following:
  - ✓ Good practice is continuing in the use of concrete materials
  - ✓ Need to concentrate on the use of games more
  - ✓ Formal numeracy assessments discussed, new sample assessments sourced and reviewed by staff.
  - ✓ Informal assessment going well.
  - ✓ More staff training in numeracy recommended by the Numeracy Team
  - ✓ Numeracy is on the agenda of staff meetings
- ✓ In September 2014 it is planned to seek PDST support for Numeracy Training for school staff.

#### **4. Summary of school self-evaluation findings**

##### **4.1 Our school has strengths in the following areas:**

- Very positive attitude towards maths improvement by staff
- Attainment of curricular objectives: pupils are working through the curricular objectives in a very concrete way
- Teaching Approaches: teachers use a variety of methodologies to engage pupils and motivate them in maths
- Teaching Approaches: a variety of strategies are used to cater for individual needs of all pupils
- Learning Environment: pupils are exposed to creative, concrete, real life practical maths learning environments in all classes.

#### 4.2 The following areas are prioritized for improvement: Numeracy & Literacy -

- Following a review of previous Parents and Students Questionnaires alongside teachers own reviews of teaching and classroom practice it was agreed that the area of priority for SSE in Literacy was Oral Language and Communication.
- The review and evaluation of Oral Language and Communication in literacy will be further developed and explored over 2014-2015 with the aim of developing a 3 year SIP (School Improvement Plan) by June 2015.
- For teachers to learn about, access and use the newly developed Curriculum Access Tool which is used as a framework to assist teachers in implementing the curriculum for student with General Learning Disabilities, specifically in the area of Communication and Language in the Primary Curriculum.
- To continue the SIP in Maths and work on target objectives identified.
- Attainment of curricular objectives in relation to attitudes to maths: to have an increase in the number of pupils with positive attitudes to mathematics as compared to the responses to parent and pupil questionnaires March 2013 (18/37 parents disagreed that their child liked maths; 13/22 senior pupils stated they did not like or were unsure about liking maths)
- Pupils' learning experiences and engagement in learning: to make maths more enjoyable for pupils, parents and teachers through the use of more interactive methodologies, more home-school collaboration and information sharing, and through the use of games to develop maths skills and knowledge in a more real way for children.
- Assessment: to continue looking at assessment tasks and methodologies to engage more pupils and letting them learn for themselves how well they are doing in mathematics. Also to use the newly acquired maths assessments of and for learning.
- Updating and reviewing the school maths plan over next 2 years based on SIP target areas for improvement

#### 4.3 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 reviewed the attached appendix of Policy and Legislative requirements in May 2014 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.**