



Gaelscoil na Lochanna

Report on School Self-Assessment

PFS 2

1. Preface

1.1 Focus of evaluation

A school Self Assessment on teaching and learning in literacy in Irish was carried out in Gaelscoil na Lochanna during the months of February through to June 2013.

This is a report on the findings of our evaluation.

1.2 School context:

We are an all-Irish school, founded in 2006.

The school is growing since 2006 with children, teachers, and new class rooms each year since 2006.

The school is still growing with the first class, that started in 2006, leaving this year.

The Principal is teaching.

It is a single stream school.

There are 151 children in the school. (girls and boys)

There are six classroom teachers, one learning support teacher and two resource teachers in the school (that are shared with other schools).

2. The Findings

Attitude and culture of the school regarding Irish.

1. We have a very positive attitude, atmosphere and culture within our school regarding Irish. We also have a very strong relationship between enjoyment and using the language within the school.
2. We continuously give praise, prizes and encouragement for speaking the Irish language in the school.
3. A big emphasis is placed on the enjoyment of Seachtain na Gaeilge each year in particular.
4. We have a very effective rule of speaking Irish in the school and we have strong support from home with this.

Drama in lessons

Rang 2-6: All children agreed that drama is what they enjoy the most with their Irish lesson.

Irish culture

Every class practice the tin whistle.

The school runs after-school classes in fiddle (19 children), Irish Dancing (23) and school band (28). In total 54 children take part in these classes, that is more than 1/3 of the school. It can be difficult to find people to do these classes that speak Irish.

Other

These elements are done continuously throughout the school:

The communication approach, activity based learning, group work, paired work, Irish time given to other subjects, specific structure in lessons and a wide range of assessment methods are used.

Spellings:

56% of children ranging from 2-6 class said that it was easy for them to learn Irish spellings. The children are doing well with these spelling exams.

Aistear:

Aistear takes places every day in the Infant classes.

Accuracy of spoken Irish:

In the school we gauge that there is a high standard of oral fluency and vocabulary used by the children but

1. We note a lack of accuracy in the Irish that children used naturally amongst each other.(i.e. when teacher is not involved). Irish in the yard, only 19% of the samples collected were accurate.
2. We do not have a whole school approach for correcting mistakes and grammar.
3. We have not yet determined a whole school method of assessment of spoken Irish.
4. Most of the children from Rang 3-6 do not have an English-Irish dictionary.
5. Grammar- The majority of children from Rang 2-6 said that Irish Grammar is the most difficult thing for them.
6. Prizes and methods of encouragement for speaking Irish in the yard- It takes places at times but not continuously.

Parents answers regarding feedback on Irish:

91 out of 151 (68%) parents said that they do not receive enough feedback on how their child is progressing in school with regards to Irish.

Writing:

1. Even though teachers have rules and standards of their own regarding the handwriting of the children we do not have a whole school plan in place.
2. There is a wide range of writing genres/exercises practiced in school but without a continuous approach from class to class throughout the school.
3. 58% of children from classes 2-6 said that they do not like to write stories.

IT:

There is a wide range of IT materials used within classes to teach Irish (ie: Garageband, internet, i photo, interactive white boards and now new visualiser cameras).

Reading:

1. Although there is a high reading ability in the school,
 - {2011- 56% of children in classes 1-5 at sten 8-10
 - 2012 – 45% of children in classes 2-6 at sten 8-10 – national norm is 16% and 53% of children from classes 2-6 said that they were good readers (2013);}

- › there is, however, a lack of clarity in school of the whole reading system from class to class.
 - › there is a demand for whole class readers (in every class) (i.e. new rental books).
 - › there is a demand for a wider range of reading material in Irish for senior classes (i.e. magazines, news papers, e stories).
2. There is a lack of library books that are enjoyed by the children in their classroom library classes 4-6 (85% of children said this) and 53% of the children (classes 2 -6) said that they dislike their class book that they have in class.
 3. 59% of children classes 5+6 said that they dislike reading in Irish.
 4. Each teacher has their own system in place regarding reading homework.
 5. 15/91 parents mentioned that they would like more Irish reading to be included in homework.

Irish for parents:

There are currently no Irish classes taking place in the school. Classes did take place once in the school and there are some classes taking place now again around the area. There is a conversation group that takes place on an ongoing basis in the area. In the survey, 6/91 parents said that they would have an interest in taking an Irish course. There is a good chance that much more people are interested (survey 2013).

Irish phrases have been sent home in the past but there has been a decline on the amount that is sent home with the children. 12/91 parents mentioned that they would like phrases and phonetics to be sent home

3. Progress achieved to date on School Improvement targets

- During PFS 1 the school carried out the first Drumcondra standardised test in Irish and 56% of the children in classes 1-6 were at sten 8-10. Only 1.4% of the children were at sten 1-3.
- During PFS 1 there was emphasis placed on improving the quality and richness of spoken Irish around the school.
- During PFS 1 Aistear was started on an ongoing basis in the Infant classes.

4. Summary of findings on self assessment.

4.1 Our school have strengths in all areas listed below:

- There is a strong relationship between the enjoyment and Irish in the school. We have a very positive atmosphere amongst the entire school population around spoken Irish and the Irish culture.
- We have a very effective rule on speaking Irish in the school.
- The children (Classes 2-6) really enjoy creating and showcasing dramas in Irish and they are given the opportunity to do so in their Irish lessons.
- The standardised trials in Irish reading showed that most of the children are performing over the national norm.
- We have a satisfactory standard of: Communication approach, group work, paired work, range of assessment methods and active learning taking place throughout the school.

4.2 In this plan these are the areas that take first priority for improvement.

Learning results:

› To improve the accuracy of the children's everyday speech in Irish from 19% to

yr.1 to 25%

yr.2 to 40%

yr.3 to 50%

› To improve the standard of presentation of work and handwriting in the children's work throughout the school.

The children's learning experience:

To develop the enjoyment of reading in the higher classes. To reduce the amount of children (classes 4-6) that dislike reading in Irish from 59%.

Teacher's practice:

To create a certainty in the organisation of reading throughout the school.

The culture of effective communication:

We aim to have an effective system in place with regards to feedback on the progress of children in every aspect of their school life.

Le deaghúí,

Foireann na Scoile