

**Ardgillan College**

**Castelands**

**Balbriggan**

**Co. Dublin**

76129H

**School Self-Evaluation Report**

**LITERACY**

**Evaluation period: September 2012 to March 2016**

Report issue date:

**School Self-Evaluation Report**

* 1. **The Focus of the Evaluation**

A school self-evaluation of teaching and learning in Ardgillan College was undertaken during the period September 2012 to March 2016. During the evaluation, teaching and learning in the following curriculum area was evaluated:

* Literacy

This is a report on the findings of the evaluation.

* 1. **School Context**

Ardgillan College is a new school, now seven years old. The college opened in 2009 with 68 students and 6 staff, under the patronage of DDLETB. Our school has now grown to a student population of 710 and a teaching staff of 52.

We currently offer a full Junior Cycle programme and we have just implemented our 4th TY Programme which has been very well received by our students and parents. This year our second cohort of students will sit the Leaving Certificate exam in June 2016. Our students are in Mixed Ability classes in Junior Cycle (apart from Maths and Irish which are banded). We have banding in English, Irish and Maths at Senior Cycle and our option subject groups are mixed ability. We work hard at being an inclusive school and we have an SEN register which is communicated to and available to all staff so that they know how best to cater for the individual needs of our SEN students.

As a new and developing school our focus is on establishing our subject teams, developing the necessary curricular programmes and encouraging collaboration among our staff as well as putting the necessary structures in place e.g. our positive Code of Behaviour (Mol an Óige) and student supports/pastoral referrals.

Ardgillan College promotes a happy and caring school environment where pupils and staff are encouraged and supported to reach their full potential. The emphasis is placed on quality teaching and learning, positive behaviour and the pursuit of standards of excellence in all areas of college activities. Our philosophy is based on excellence, team work, respect, tolerance and understanding while appreciating the diversity of our changing world.

**2. The Findings**

A school self-evaluation of Literacy was undertaken in the 2012/2013, 2013/2014, 2014/2015 and the 2015/2016 school years between September and April.

During the evaluation we looked at the following data:

* Junior Cert results 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015
* Junior Cert results in English 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015
* Leaving Certificate results 2015
* Leaving Certificate results in English 2015
* English results for 3I class group
* CAT scores for 3I class group
* CAT scores for our 1st Years 2016 (Given to Year Head)
* Motivation to Read Survey (2nd and 5th year students)
* Student survey on our Literacy Initiatives and Teaching & Learning Strategies in our school. (2nd and 5th year students)
* Student surveys on our school
* Parent Surveys on our school
* Staff survey on our Literacy Initiatives and Teaching & Learning Strategies used in our school.
* Individual Subject Department WSA Forms on Approaches/Strategies to Literacy & Numeracy

**3. Progress has been made on previously identified improvement targets**

We looked at Literacy using the following model:

A: Quality of learner Outcomes

B: Quality of Students’ Learning Experiences

C: Quality of Teachers’ Practice

**A: Quality of Learner Outcomes:**

* All subject departments used the PDST tool for analysing results in the Junior Certificate exams. This was done in order to use it as an indicator of existing standards. The majority of subjects compare favourably to national norms, taking due cognisance of school context. Findings and targets are recorded in the respective subject department plans and are available on the Shared Folder. Subject Departments use this information to set realistic targets for the future and record them in their respective subject department plans. Senior management support departments in realising these targets.
* Review of the examination data in Junior Cert English indicates:
  + In 2015 our students achieved 10% As in HL (9% nationally) so we hope to maintain and improve on this in 2016.
  + 24% of our students achieved Ds in HL (21% nationally). In this context 95% of our cohort did HL as opposed to 74% nationally.
* Review of the examination data in Leaving Cert English indicates:
* In 2015 our students are achieving in line with national standards. We will continue to review exam results and have implemented strategies with a focus on improving exam results.
* The tracking of class group 3I for three years has informed all literacy initiatives.

* CAT Scores:
  + We used the CAT scores of our incoming 1st Years to identify SEN/EAL/gifted students and to indicate which students may need extra support.

**B: Quality of Students’ Learning Experiences**

* As part of our Literacy Strategy we have agreed and implemented the following literacy strategy moving forward:
* Word of the Day
* Key Words on display
* Print Rich Classrooms – high quality work of students on display
* Word Walls/Key Word Posters
* DEAR classes
* Motivation to Read
* Right 2 Read Week
* Exam Cover Sheet
* Literacy Code
* A focus on Oral Literacy
* Spelling, grammar and punctuation corrections in every subject department
* Transfer from Primary to Secondary Level
* Word of the Day

Engagement with Word of the Day continues in uptake on an annual basis with 80% of tutors ensuring tutors in their tutor group write the Word of the Day in their journal.

* Keywords

98% of teachers have keywords for their subject area on display, entered in student journals and then taught to the students – this is a significant increase on last year and an area we will continue to highlight.

* Motivation to Read

50% of our students read for pleasure at home. 70% of parents are not concerned about their child’s reading standard. 78% of parents are comfortable supporting their child’s reading at home. 67% of students read because they want to. 2016 – 2017 will see us continue focus on encouraging students to read and raising discussion about books across the school.

* Right 2 Read

Using the information from our Reading Survey and Parent Questionnaire and following feedback from students/parents staff on our Right to Read Week we again had a Right to Read Week this academic year (9th – 13th January) and have also continued with our DEAR classes for 1st Year and Transition Year students, where English teachers devote one period per week to students reading a book of their choice in class.

* Literacy Code

81% of staff always correct a spelling/grammar mistake in a student’s work, again this is an area where we can improve on for next year. Again this percentage has improved from last year, and we will continue to ensure that guidance and resources are available to teachers.

* Oral Literacy

92% of teachers have oral literacy as part of their classes on a regular basis, which is supportive of the oral focus as part of the new Junior Cycle. In combination with improvement and awareness and training for the new Junior Cycle we hope to improve this figure to 95%.

* CLIL:

Content and Language Integrated learning (CLIL) has emerged as a major innovation for improving both the quality of language learning and reform of the educational curriculum. 10 of our staff completed this course in 2015.

* Transfer from Primary to 2nd level:

Conscious of how difficult the transition can be for our new First Years we tried to ease the transition from NS to 2nd level for our students by the doing the following:

* Having an Induction booklet available to all students and their parents with the relevant information they will need and a FAQ section
* Improving our links with National Schools, visiting 6th class teachers of incoming students and exchanging books/texts/curriculum content/ideas with the 6th class teachers.
* Identifying our SEN students and putting the necessary supports in place.
* The English Department writes to all 1st year students and parents to draw attention to two approaches of DEAR and the class novel. Also included is a list of suggested reading material suitable for young teenagers.
* Communication to the school community

We also have an information page for parents and students in our school journal as to what is involved in literacy and numeracy and what our different strategies are.

**C: Quality of Teachers’ Practice**

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| * A number of staff focus groups met this year including the SSE and Literacy Group to review our initiatives and to encourage and support all members of school community in fully implementing our strategy. |

* Collaboration

We surveyed our staff with regard to teaching and learning and discovered that we have strengths in the area of AFL and teachers regularly use different strategies in their classrooms. Collaboration between members in particular departments is strong with 98% of staff collaborating with other members within departments and 98% of staff sharing resources.

* Keywords

With regard to Key Words, 98% of staff display key words. We promote the use of key words among teachers by providing strategies and resources to staff for incorporating keywords into teaching. Worksheets and guidelines are be available on the Shared Folder.

* Literacy Code
* We introduced the Literacy Code in 2014 – 2015 and had 72% of teacher engagement. Building on the successful implementation, 81% of teachers correct spelling and grammar mistakes of their students in accordance with our whole school literacy code. We hope to bring this common approach among staff up to 85%, by reinforcing the Code among all teachers, providing guidance and resources in achieving it and ensuring the Code is made available to every teacher to display in their classroom.
* Print Rich-Environment

Following our staff survey 92% of classrooms have a print –rich environment this is a significant increase. It is hoped that we will have 95% of classrooms with a print rich environment by this time next year, as we continue to develop quality work to be displayed in every classroom.

* Peer Observation

As a staff we agreed to observe the classes of our colleagues to see/share examples of best practice and to encourage the sharing of ideas/methodologies. We agreed to partake in a minimum of 3 peer observations each this academic year.

92% of staff are engaging with peer observation, a worthwhile activity whereby teachers observe different teaching methodologies, literacy, numeracy and AFL strategies and also view the print rich environment in the classroom and view different ways of incorporating oral literacy in the classroom and viewing the print rich environment.

* Subject Departments

Individual Subject Departments filled in the WSA Forms with strategies/aims in Literacy specific to each subject team for this academic school year. These aims/strategies are regularly reassessed at Subject Department meetings to ensure that they are achievable. Subject Departments will be assessed and new targets or approaches to achieve objectives will be established for 2016 – 2017.

* Subject Dept. Co-ordinators:

We agreed that each subject team would have a co-ordinator which will be rotated every two years and that all members of the subject team will have a clearly defined role within the team. This is to encourage collaboration and sharing of best practice and also the sharing of knowledge and consistency re: Assessment, AFL, Peer Observation, New JC etc.. In our survey 98% of staff said that their subject department members collaborated and shared resources on a regular basis.

* Staff Meetings

Literacy is a part of every staff meeting, which includes reminders and reviews of our whole school approach to literacy. The importance of reviewing individual department aims and providing discussion for any area of concern or development.

* Assessment

As a staff we are open to different methods of assessing our students and looked at the following: Different ways/methods to assess, Continual Assessment, Comment Only Marking and Exam Cover Sheet for House Exams.

81% of staff use comment only marking when appropriate. 2016 also brought the introduction of the mock exam booklet with 79% of staff finding it worthwhile.

Next year we will re-survey our students, parents and staff on our Literacy Initiatives.

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

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

In general:

* A highly qualified and committed teaching staff who are enthusiastic and open to developing new ideas.
* Well-motivated students
* A broad balanced curriculum
* Positive examination outcomes for our students
* A drive to encourage students to take higher level where possible
* Good ICT facilities
* Positive Reinforcement – Mol an Óige
* Good Discipline
* Collaboration among staff/Committees
* Good use of AFL across the curriculum
* Students have opportunities in the classroom to develop oral language
* CAT scores of 1st Year students for reading are above the national norms.
* Attainment in the majority of subjects at both JC & LC is above the national norms.
* Students are getting great opportunities to develop oral language and are confident working in pairs and small groups

In relation to Literacy:

* A commitment to enhancing literacy across the curriculum
* Literacy Committee
* Appropriate literacy goals identified and set
* Support and resources for staff
* A focus by subject departments of the topic of literacy in subject areas – 3 strategies identified by all subject teams.
* Effective learning support
* A range of strategies already in use to support literacy.
* Print-rich environment throughout the school
* Students’ work displayed
* Principal, Deputy Principal, Teachers, Parents and the Board of Management

collaborate to bring about school improvement through the implementation of the literacy plan.

**4.2** The following areas **are prioritised for improvement**:

* Continue to implement Whole School Literacy Strategy
  + Appropriate literacy goals identified and set
  + Support and resources for staff
  + Word of the Day
  + Motivating students to Read
  + Improving whole school spelling, grammar and punctuation
  + DEAR classes
  + Key Words
  + Right to Read Week
  + Print rich Classrooms
  + Exam Cover Sheet
* Literacy and Numeracy page in our School Journal so that all members of the school community are clear on what is involved and the role they have in improving the literacy of our students.
* Individual subject teams to identify and concentrate on their 3 strategies/targets for the coming academic year.
* AFL/Comment Only Marking/Group Work – to continue to develop our Teaching and Learning Strategies which will support the literacy of our students.
* To increase students’ participation in both Drama and Debating.
* Develop the literacy resources folder on the school’s server to share examples of god practice and further increase awareness.
* Have teachers as reading models, following the successful pilot of Teachers’ Reading Book displayed on classroom door during Right 2 Read Week, which provided much discussion with students. We plan to continue with this and update throughout the year.
* Increase expectations and standards in writing across the curriculum by continuing with the Whole School Literacy Code as every teacher is responsible for correcting spelling and grammar mistakes and not just the English teacher.
* Plan for and develop the school library.

***Appendix 1: Legislative & Regulatory Framework – School Policies***

**Ardgillan Community College – School Policies**

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| **Policy** | **Ratified** | **Reviewed/To be Reviewed** |
| Admissions Policy | 2015 | Annually |
| Anti-Bullying Policy | 2014 | Annually |
| Internet Acceptable Usage Agreement | 2013 | Annually |
| Child Protection Policy | 2015 | Annually |
| Code of Positive Behaviour | 2014 | Annually |
| Critical Incident Plan | 2014 | Annually |
| Data Protection |  | Adopt Data Protection Acts 1988 to 2003. |
| eLearning Policy | 2013 | Annually |
| Extra-Curricular/School Trips | 2015 | Annually |
| Guidance Policy | 2015 | Annually |
| Healthy Eating Policy | 2013 | Annually |
| Health & Safety Statement | 2013 | Annually |
| Homework Policy | 2015 | Annually |
| Literacy Policy | 2013 | Annually |
| Numeracy Policy | 2014 | Annually |
| Pastoral Care Policy | 2011 | Annually |
| RSE Policy | 2012 | Annually |
| School Improvement Plan | 2015 | Annually |
| SEN Policy | 2011 | Annually |
| SPHE Policy | 2011 | Annually |
| Substance Use Policy | 2011 | Annually |
| Suspension & Permanent Exclusion Policy | 2013 | Annually |

**Appendix 2 -General Self-Evaluation**

* Ardgillan College Self Evaluation Questionnaires/Surveys

**Appendix 3: Self Evaluation of Literacy in Ardgillan College**

* Teacher Feedback
* Student Feedback
* STEN/CAT /Test Scores for 3I
* Cat Results for incoming 1st Years
* JC Results – English Department
* Leaving Certificate Results
* Christmas Results

**Appendix 4: Whole School Initiatives to support Literacy & Numeracy**

* Exam Cover Sheet
* Word of the Day
* Literacy Code
* Model of calculator
* Key words
* Print rich classrooms
* Right to Read Week
* Maths Week
* Survey of students, parents of staff.