

St. Michael's School

SCHOOL SELF EVALUATION REPORT 2014

School Context

St. Michael's School is a centre for Special Education. It has a Catholic Ethos and is located small rural town. Its catchment area has changed considerably in recent years and currently encompasses all counties in Connaught.

St. Michael's caters for students with intellectual disabilities in the moderate range. Students may also have autism, physical or sensory disabilities. St. Michael's has two Special classes for Students in severe profound range of intellectual disability. In exceptional circumstances and, in the absence of a practical alternative, the school will enrol a pupil in the mild range subject to psychology input and planned review.

Students are aged between four and nineteen. The school continues to be recognised as a primary school and therefore works within the primary framework.

A range of facilities is provided which specifically accommodates and supports students with disabilities. Additional staff allocations further enhance teaching and learning in the school.

The school responds positively to the needs of the catchment area by acting as a resource for teachers and students alike. The school maintains a healthy level of activity and participation at all levels appropriate to the pupil population at local and national level. The school provides a second level programme and is an accredited centre for FETAC.

Integration and inclusion projects are ongoing.

There is a Parents Association in the school and strong lines of communication between home and school are maintained.

Update June 2014: A new extension was opened; students entered for state examinations; Green Flag (5th); Discover Science Award; Active flag;

Key Focus Area for research: Numeracy

Teaching and Learning Quality Framework

Aspect of Practice 1 Learner Outcomes Attainment of Curriculum Objectives

Aspect of Practice 2 Teachers' Practice Teaching Approaches

Preparation for Teaching

Assessment

Evaluation Methods

- Analysis of IEP Documents in relation to Literacy
- Evaluation of Short term planning
- Teacher reflection
- Standardised test
- Parent Questionnaire

Tools:

Review/ reflection Schedules Learning outcomes

Questionnaires Written plans

Checklists

Focus Group schedules

Focus of Learning

Evidence Gathered

- IEP Targets were reviewed for indicators of numeracy emphasis
- Short term plans were analysed for key elements and to establish teaching strategies
- Focus groups of teachers evaluated teaching approaches
- A standardised test was conducted to provide baseline information
- Parents' views were gathered

Summary of Findings

→ Numeracy Targets were common in the IEPs of 100% of students indicating that there is a clear focus of teaching on Numeracy Development.

→ Functional Maths was included as a priority goal for all students. Parents reported a similar focus. Results of a parent survey show that 37% of parents prioritised money, 30% prioritised time with 33% placing an emphasis on number. 85% of parents were happy with the level of progress in Mathematics in general.

This degree of consistency is a strength for development.

→ 100 % of teachers agreed that direct daily teaching was an effective strategy. This is a strength that may be built upon.

→ Standardised test results show a very uneven range of scores. This feature of attainment in the school is also evident in the teacher focus groups. This may indicate a particular challenge relating to numeracy faced by many pupils with special needs. The following areas were assessed: Reciting and naming numerals, copying over or under numbers, counting concrete objects, selecting bricks, writing numerals to dictation and sequence.

→ In relation to number 25% of senior students have achieved a full basic level. In relation to the writing of numbers to dictation and sequence 42% of students passed the actual test. One third of pupils scored 80% or over. One third of students failed to score but the majority of these students were in the junior age range. Whereas copying under numbers 60% of pupils scored 80% or over. When copying over numbers 75% of pupils scored 80% or over. 20% of pupils failed to score. When naming numerals 40% of students scored 80% or more. 50% failed to score. All pupils scored in the recital of numerals.

30% of students have computation skills. 70% do not, however most of those students are under eight years of age.

→ Some specific approaches are employed by individual teachers but there may be a lack of continuity as a student progresses through the school. Analysis reveals that various factors impact on these findings for example age appropriateness, respect for individual needs and resources available such as Numicon. However on professional reflection the teachers focus group would be of the opinion that a greater degree of consistency and continuity could be developed.

→ Planning documents included reference to all aspects of provision required to maximise achievement including objectives, methodologies, resources, and differentiation. However, assessment methods lacked coherence and consistency and may need to be prioritised for development. In the absence of an appropriate standardised test teachers will need to identify and examine alternative options.

→ Short term plans included a wide range of teaching strategies found to be useful by teachers.

→ Assessment of learning in relation to numeracy was limited to a factual rather than conceptual achievement.

Summary of Strengths

- Teachers show a strong commitment to the delivery of the maths curriculum and pupils show evidence of interest and enjoyment.
- School emphasis on functional maths is in line with parents views. There is good evidence of use of the language of Maths.
- Evidence of pupil attainment is available and pupils work is monitored. In St. Michael's information on pupils' learning is gathered mainly via the IEP process but also through testing (Gilliam etc.) and recording (IPR). This information is shared with parents through parent teacher meetings and annual reports.
- Teachers plan effectively for the delivery of the curriculum :-
 1. Pre-planning includes correlating strand/strand units of curriculum subjects to maximise cross curricular linkage, aimed to enable progression and consolidation of lesson content for the development of knowledge and skills. It also ensures commitment to functional maths throughout the school. The areas of time, money and number are prioritised on a fortnightly basis with a further strand covered per term.
 2. Uniform long term and short term plan templates are utilised to guide teaching and learning which clearly indicate:
 3. Expected outcomes of lessons (objectives) differentiated according to the learning needs and abilities of the students in the classroom.
 4. Teaching approaches and resources to be used to facilitate the achievement of the learning outcomes.
- Teachers deliver lessons in a focused, stimulating manner relevant to the pupil's needs, age and interest. There is evidence of progression and of the purposeful development of numeracy. Differentiation is evident in content, approaches, and resources.
- Teachers have the availability of subject specific sets of resources to support and enhance learning relating to each strand of the maths curriculum.
- The school is fully compliant with the requirements outlined in the National literacy and numeracy strategy at this time.

Areas for Development

- A more systematic approach may be needed for the teaching of numeracy as there is a very wide range of strategies in use currently, perhaps prioritise a number of core strategies.
- Assessment lacks consistency. School policy review in relation to this is required to facilitate the analysis and application of the information.
- There is also a need to increase the focus on development of problem solving and application of numeracy skills and knowledge.
- The range of good quality IT Resources needs to be increased in order to enhance numeracy development. This has implications for the school's E-learning plan.
- A Baseline of attainment needs to be identified against which improvement can be measured. This may need to be investigated by teachers to clarify and establish the core attainment and progression levels which can be applied. This is an area that will require professional collaboration.
- The current method of tracking student progress (Maths Profile) has been found, on reflection, to be too vague to be effective in the transfer of information relating to attainment and learner outcomes. A new template will be formulated that will include specific and detailed information.
- Teachers need to identify with greater clarity opportunities to transfer, implement and apply numeracy skills throughout the timetable.