

# St Oliver Post Primary School



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## Summary School Self-Evaluation Report 2019-2020

### 1. Introduction

St. Oliver Post-Primary School is a stand-alone school under the auspices of LMETB and DES. The school embodies the principles of justice, truth and mutual respect as reflected in our mission statement. In accordance with the Education Act 1998, the school promotes inclusivity and equal opportunity to quality education which is reflected in our admissions and SEN policy. We offer a wide subject choice in both Junior and Leaving Certificate and recently introduced the Leaving Certificate Applied Programme. Transition Year and the Links Module Programme are both well-established. There is a very broad curriculum on offer to those who opt for the established Leaving Certificate option.

#### a) School time and holidays

The Department requires all post-primary schools to have 167 school days each year, and a 28-hour school week.

This year we had 167 school days, from 22.08.2019 to 29.05.2020.

Our school week is 28 hours. The Department sets out a standardised school year and school holidays. This year we took all our school holidays within the permitted time. The Department sets out arrangements for parent/teacher meetings and staff meetings. Despite the school lockdown due to public health restrictions, this year we were able to hold 5 parent/teacher meetings and 3 staff meetings, all in line with the Department's regulations.

#### b) Enrolment and attendance

The Department requires schools to have and publish an admissions policy, to record and report attendance accurately, and to encourage high attendance and participation.

We have an admissions policy and it is published. We reviewed (and updated) our admissions policy on: [27.04.2020]

We keep accurate attendance records and report them as required. We encourage high attendance in the following ways:

- Please see our Attendance and Participation Strategy on our school website.

#### c) Positive behaviour for a happy school

The Department requires schools to have a code of behaviour and asks us to consult parents and students about it. We do this. Our code of behaviour describes and supports positive behaviour through our STAR strategy which rewards students who have a clean slate (no negative notes in their journal) at each assembly every 4/5 weeks. We have a very clear and high-profile anti-bullying policy in our school.

d) Looking after the children in our school

The Department requires schools to follow the Child Protection Procedures it has set down. Our board of management has agreed in writing to do this. All teachers know about the Procedures and we have told all parents about them and how we follow them. Our Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is Mr Brendan Corcoran, and our Deputy DLP is Mr Michael McCafferty. All members of staff are mandated persons.

## 2. The Focus of Our Evaluation

We undertook a school self-evaluation of teaching and learning during the period September 2019 to May 2020. In addition to literacy and numeracy in recent years, as a school we have aimed to enhance our assessment for learning (AFL) approach through collaborative practice, peer observation and teacher training to improve student attainment. On a whole school basis, we are implementing the Battelle for Kids Programme to enhance our approach to School Self Evaluation (SSE). This year we specifically focused on Learning Intentions. Reflecting on our Whole School Evaluation – Management Leading and Learning in March 2018 we sought to build on best practice identified and address findings and recommendations from this report. A survey of teaching staff regarding AFL practice was conducted in October 2018 in advance of Teaching and Learning Week to gauge teacher’s thoughts about AFL practice within the school. A focus group of student representatives was also conducted in May 2019 to listen to student voice and cross check their feelings and effectiveness of AFL practice.

This report summarises the strengths that were identified and the areas that have been prioritised for improvement. The focus is to improve student outcomes through improved student engagement and teacher practice.

### 3. Summary of school self-evaluation findings

a) We found that our school has strengths in the following areas:

- Staff adaptable to remote teaching and learning initiatives.
- Comprehensive examples of various forms of teaching, learning, assessment and reporting within our school.
- Strong emphasis on Learning Intentions as our SSE focus during this academic year, complemented by our use of the Battelle for Kids Programme.
- Commencement of various literacy programmes and tracking of academic progress.
- Implementation of new Co Teaching model.
- Staff engagement with CPD.
- The quality of teaching and learning in the lessons observed was very good.
- Very good progress has been made in the implementation of recommendations from previous inspections.
- The school self-evaluation process is effective, and the staff demonstrates a very high level of commitment to and good capacity for school improvement.
- Learning intentions were shared at the start of almost all lessons and revisited at the end to assess and consolidate learning.
- Elements of good learner reflection were noted in many lessons.
- Good use was made of show-me boards, traffic lights and exit strategies to assess student progress and understanding.

We know these are our strengths because these results have been collated from observations and surveys (staff, students and parent) conducted during this academic year and during our Whole School Evaluation 2018. In addition, we survey staff prior to Teaching and Learning Week, and we conducted a focus group interview with student representatives towards the end of the 2019 school year.

b) We have decided to prioritise the following areas for development:

- Build on existing work with Battelle for Kids.
- Advance literacy and numeracy initiatives introduced.
- Provide opportunities for staff and students to work more on a cross-curricular basis.
- Strengthen student/learner voice structures within the school.
- Improve planning for differentiation and to further develop in-class questioning strategies.
- Improve planning and in-class strategies for exceptionally able students.
- More variation of questioning strategies, to include higher order directed questions is recommended.
- Extend formative feedback and student reflection throughout all subject areas.
- Extension of peer assessment using formative feedback where positive affirmation occurs.

We know these are areas for improvement. To help us improve in these areas we will build on existing work of Battelle for Kids Programme and aim to utilise the package for its full thus in turn strengthening student voice and wellbeing. Teacher training in the areas of questioning, group work and team teaching are being regularly explored.

c) This is what you can do to help:

- Parents are the primary educators in their child's life.
- Encourage your son or daughter strive to achieve their potential.
- To adhere to school policies and procedures.
- To follow their studies diligently and to work with their teachers.
- If there is an issue, highlight it to school staff who can then work to support the student in question.