



## **Bush Post Primary School School Self Evaluation Process**

### **Step 1: Gather Evidence**

Ms Karen Byrne was chosen to be our Literacy Link Teacher. The school established a Literacy Core Team of 8 teachers from a range of subject areas:

#### Literacy Core Team

Emma Mc Mahon (Maths & Science), Geraldine Guerin (French), Paul Harkin (Metalwork & Engineering), Kevin Joyce (Principal), Sinead McDonnell (Deputy Principal), Fiona O'Murchú (Learning Support), Colette Lennon (English) and Karen Byrne (English).

At our first two meetings, literacy was discussed in its broadest sense in relation to our school. Our aim was to pinpoint an area of literacy that would benefit from being targeted as part of the School Self Evaluation process. There was a general consensus among the team that reading itself and student's ability to read texts/exam papers may require some attention.

Surveys were compiled by the team to give us a clear focus going forward with this process. 100 Students, 93 parents and 37 staff were surveyed to gather survey evidence for our School Self Evaluation focussing on Literacy in 2013-2014.

The Core Team meetings took place on April 17<sup>th</sup> 2013 and May 2<sup>nd</sup> 2013. (See minutes attached).

### **Step 2: Analyse Evidence**

The results of the students' survey were discussed by the Literacy Core Team at a meeting on May 2<sup>nd</sup> 2013. The team felt that the learner experience was an area for improvement as there was a wide range of reading habits where some students read regularly but 26% of students were not reading outside of school for enjoyment.

The team discussed the need to encourage our students to be more active readers for pleasure. This will help improve the students' skills at reading and encourage more self-motivated reading for pleasure by introducing targeted activities to provide opportunities for reading for enjoyment. The team reported that some students struggle with the language in textbooks and exam papers, by encouraging independent reading it was hoped that school books would be less challenging to some students.

### **Step 3: Drawing Conclusions**

#### **a) Strengths identified from Students' Survey**

- 74% of students surveyed were reading for pleasure.
- Students read a range of subject matter including fiction, non-fiction, textbooks, newspapers, magazines and digital media.
- 81.82% of students surveyed said that their parents read in their free time
- 49% of students surveyed were comfortable expressing themselves

#### **a) Weakness identified from Students' Survey**

- 68% of students surveyed never visit the local library
- 13% of students are never comfortable sharing their ideas either orally or in writing.
- 38% of students surveyed were only comfortable expressing themselves in written form

To conclude, while reading strengths outweigh reading weaknesses in that 74% of our students are reading for pleasure, the Literacy Team felt that 26% was a high percentage not reading for pleasure. Having discussed the merits of The National Literacy Strategy and its message that "The child who reads does better", the team agreed that our aim should focus on the area of reading for pleasure. We believe that this will have a knock-on effect on students' oral expression as well as having a positive effect on their learner experience of language within textbooks and exam papers.

#### **b) Strengths identified from Parents' Survey**

- 88.04% of parents surveyed read in their spare time
- 90.32% of parents surveyed have encouraged a love for reading to their children
- 78.26% of parents surveyed would be willing to take part in reading initiatives led by the school

### **b) Weakness identified from Parents' Survey**

- 11.96% of parents surveyed do not read in their spare time
- 11.83% of parents surveyed have not encouraged a love of reading to their child
- 21.74% of parents surveyed would not be willing to take part in reading initiatives led by the school.

To conclude, it is a very important strength that such a high percentage of parents surveyed both read for enjoyment themselves (88.04%) and also encourage their children to read for pleasure (90.32%). It is encouraging that 78.26% of parents surveyed would be willing to get involved in school reading literacy initiatives as they are our partners in education and play a vital part in working with the school to enable their child to reach their full potential.

A challenge to the success of our reading literacy targets may be the fact that 11.83% of parents surveyed have not encouraged their child to read for pleasure and this may be because 11.96% of parents surveyed do not read for enjoyment themselves. This makes it all the more important that we provide opportunities for students to read for pleasure as 26% of students surveyed do not read for pleasure currently at home.

### **c) Strengths identified from Teachers' Survey**

- 94% of teachers surveyed read for enjoyment in their spare time
- 100% of teachers surveyed are willing to promote reading in school through targeted actions to increase the number of students reading for enjoyment

### **c) Weakness identified from Teachers' Survey**

- 97% of teachers surveyed felt that there were first years whose learner experience had been affected by poor understanding of the language of their textbooks or exam questions
- 91% of teachers surveyed felt that there were students in their classes who were reluctant to express themselves orally

To conclude the strengths from our teacher survey indicate that 94% of teachers are reading for pleasure and 100% are willing to encourage more students to also read for pleasure. These are

important strengths as it means that teachers value reading for pleasure and see it as an essential component for learning.

The findings of the teachers' survey echoed that of our student survey in that 97% of teachers felt that there were students whose learner experience was being affected by language difficulties. 91% of teachers felt that there was reluctance among students to express themselves orally.

The positive results from the teachers' survey give us the confidence to proceed in the knowledge that our targeted action in the area of literacy will have the full support of the teaching staff. The implementation and potential success of our School Improvement Plan is greatly enhanced by such a positive approach to reading and its merits for students' learning among staff members.

#### **Step 4:**

### **School Self Evaluation Report**

#### **Focus of Evaluation**

Here at Bush Post Primary School we decided to focus our evaluation on literacy, in particular to increase the number of students reading for pleasure.

#### **Context**

We felt that it would be a worthwhile task to study the reading habits of our students. Our concern was over the learner experience of our student whereby some students may have, at times, found their subject language inaccessible/difficult. It has often been said that the student who reads does better academically. Therefore we decided to investigate the habits of both students and their parents in relation to reading for pleasure.

Surveys were carried out on 100 students, 93 parents and the 37 teaching staff. The focus of the surveys was to find out if reading for pleasure was happening but also to find out if a reader friendly environment was being created at home.

#### **Findings**

Our Student Survey revealed that while reading strengths outweigh reading weaknesses, in that 74% of our students are reading for pleasure, the Literacy Team felt that 26% was a high percentage of students not reading for pleasure. Having discussed the merits of The National Literacy Strategy and

its message that “The child who reads does better”, the team agreed that our aim should focus on the area of reading for pleasure. We believe that this will have a knock on effect on students’ oral expression as well as having a positive effect on their learner experience of language within textbooks and exam papers.

Our parent Survey showed that a high percentage of parents surveyed read for enjoyment themselves (88.04%) and also encourage their children to read for pleasure (90.32%). It is encouraging that 78.26% of parents surveyed would be willing to get involved in school reading literacy initiatives as they are our partners in education and play a vital part in working with the school to enable their child to reach their full potential.

It was also found that a possible challenge to the success of our reading literacy targets may be the fact that 11.83% of parents surveyed have not encouraged their child to read for pleasure and this may be because 11.96% of parents surveyed do not read for enjoyment themselves. This makes it all the more important that we provide opportunities for students to read for pleasure as 26% of students surveyed do not read for pleasure currently at home.

The findings from our teacher survey indicate that 94% of teachers are reading for pleasure and 100% are willing to encourage more students to also read for pleasure. These are important strengths as it means that teachers value reading for pleasure and see it as an essential component for learning.

It was found that the Teachers’ survey results echoed that of our student survey in that 97% of teachers felt that there were students whose learner experience was being affected by language difficulties. 91% of teachers felt that there was reluctance among students to express themselves orally.

The positive results from the teachers’ survey give us the confidence to proceed in the knowledge that our targeted action in the area of literacy will have the full support of the teaching staff. The implementation and potential success of our School Improvement Plan is greatly enhanced by such a positive approach to reading and its merits for students’ learning.

## **Strengths**

### **i) Strengths identified from Students’ Survey**

- 74% of students surveyed were reading for pleasure.

- Students read a range of subject matter including fiction, non-fiction, textbooks, newspapers, magazines and digital media.
- 81.82% of parents surveyed read in their free time
- 49% of students surveyed were comfortable expressing themselves

## **ii) Strengths identified from Parents' Survey**

- 88.04% of parents surveyed read in their spare time
- 90.32% of parents surveyed have encouraged a love for reading to their children
- 78.26% of parents surveyed would be willing to take part in reading initiatives led by the school

## **iii) Strengths identified from Teachers' Survey**

- 100% of teachers surveyed feel that students' learning experience could be improved through reading for enjoyment in their spare time.
- 94% of teachers surveyed read for enjoyment in their own spare time.
- 100% of teachers surveyed are willing to promote reading for pleasure through targeted actions in the school.

## **Areas for Improvement**

### **i) Areas for Improvement identified from Students' Survey**

As 68% surveyed never visit the local library the school will endeavour to ensure that 100% of first year students in 2014-2015 visit the school library and/or the County library. Currently, the school library is used as a general classroom but it is hoped to reinstate the school library in the next academic year.

### **ii) Areas for Improvement identified from Parents' Survey**

A challenge to the success of our reading literacy targets is the fact that 11.83% of parents surveyed have not encouraged their child to read for pleasure. One reason for this may be the fact that 11.96% of parents surveyed do not read for enjoyment themselves. An important area for improvement is to

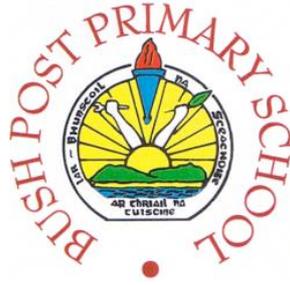
increase the percentage of students reading for enjoyment and to provide opportunities for students to read for pleasure in school as 26% of students surveyed do not read for pleasure currently at home.

### **iii) Areas for Improvement identified from Teachers' Survey**

The findings of the teachers' survey echoed that of our student survey in that 97% of teachers felt that there were students whose learner experience was being affected by language difficulties which may be attributed to their reading ability.

### **Legislative Requirements**

This School Self Evaluation Report has followed the six step process as outlined by the Department of Education and Skills guidelines on School Self Evaluation. It meets the legislative requirements for schools to put in place a Literacy or Numeracy School Self Evaluation Report and School Improvement Plan.



## Step 5

## School Improvement Plan

### Targets

As a result of the School Self Evaluation process, it was concluded that targeting our students' reading habits would be the most effective action to enhance their learning experience.

Therefore our target is simply for each first year student to have **a book/novel in their bag** at all times over the coming academic year.

### Actions

The following actions will be carried out to ensure that this target is achieved:

- (a) Selecting a book – All first year students will complete a personal profile that their English teacher will consider when helping students choose the right book. Each student in first year must be given the opportunity to visit our library, their local library or buy a book of their own choice to have in their bag at all times.
- (b) Drop Everything And Read (D.E.A.R.) – This will be conducted three times across the school year. During these three weeks it will take place at the same time for 15 minutes each day.
- (c) The Red Read Wall – This wall will be updated regularly with books read and recommended by students and members of staff.
- (d) Word of the Week – This will be in circulation each week via the newsletter and also on the screen in the front hall. Students will be asked to try to use that word orally and in their written work at least once that week. Students will also be welcome to recommend words for W.O.W. from their own reading material.
- (e) When a teacher is absent it will be recommended that on some occasions students are encouraged to read their books/novels during the class. This way supervising teachers are confident that each student is occupied in a positive way. (Two book boxes have been

prepared to aid this idea – one with books aimed at junior students and one with books aimed at senior students. These will be kept in the staff room. )

- (f) World Book Day/Literacy Week – to be a celebration in the school year creating excitement about reading and books in general.

### **Responsibility**

These actions will be the responsibility of the Literacy Core Team, school management and the entire teaching staff.

The Literacy School Self Evaluation report and the School Improvement Plan will be included in all subject department plans under the heading ‘Literacy’.

### **Timeframe**

This target will be implemented in September 2014 and will continue across that academic year.

### **Measurable Outcomes**

Incoming students in first year will be surveyed in October 2014 about their reading habits, attitude towards reading and their confidence at reading the language of the text books they are covering.

This survey will be repeated in May 2015 to measure any possible changes across the academic year.

## Appendix 1

### a) Student Survey ( 100 students answered 5 Questions)

1. How many hours per week do you read for enjoyment?
  - More than one hour – 34%
  - Less than one hour – 40%
  - Not at all – 26%
  
2. Please select which of the following you prefer to read for enjoyment.  
(You may tick more than one box).
  - Magazine/comics-35%
  - Newspapers-23%
  - Fiction -43%
  - Non-fiction-14%
  - Digital media-43%
  - Textbooks-1%
  - None-7%
  
3. I am most comfortable sharing my ideas:
  - In pairs- 27/100
  - In small groups 39/100
  - In whole class discussions 17/100
  - In a presentation to the class 7/100
  - On paper 38/100
  - Never 13/100
  
4. Do you visit the local library often?
  - Once a week -6%
  - Once a fortnight -7%
  - Once a month -22%
  - Never -68%

5. Do your parents read in their spare time?
- More than 1 hour per week-59.6%
  - Less than 1 hour per week-22.22%
  - Never-21.21%

**b) Parent Survey ( 93 Incoming First Year Parents answered 5 Questions)**

1. Do you read in your spare time?
- Yes 88.04%
  - No 11.96%
2. If you answered yes to Q1, how much time do you spend reading per week?
- Up to 30 minutes 17.07%
  - Up to one hour 35.37%
  - Up to three hours 28.05%
  - More than three hours 20.73%
3. Do you think that you have encouraged a love for reading to your child(ren)?
- Yes 90.32%
  - No 11.83%
4. If you answered yes to Q3, how do you feel that you have done this? You may select more than one option.
- Read stories to them as a child 72.62%
  - Read stories with them as they learned to read 50%
  - Visited the library 52.38%
  - Bought books 67.86%
  - Other 10.71% (Some specified: Read as a family, Ebooks, Discussed new publications)
5. Would you be willing to take part in reading initiatives led by Bush Post Primary School when your child starts his/her studies here?
- Yes 78.26%
  - No 21.74%

**c) Teacher survey (37 teachers surveyed)**

1. Do you feel that there are students in first year whose learner experience has been affected by poor understanding of the language of their textbooks or exam questions?
  - Yes 97%
  - No 3 %
  
2. If you answered 'yes' to question 1 do you feel that reading for enjoyment would improve these first years' learner experience?
  - Yes 100%
  - No 0%
  
3. Do you feel that there are students in your class who are reluctant to express themselves orally in class?
  - Yes 91%
  - No 7%
  
4. Do you read for enjoyment in your spare time?
  - Yes 94%
  - No 6%
  
5. Would you be willing to positively promote reading for enjoyment/pleasure within the school (especially first years ) through actions like Drop Everything and Read, The Red Read Wall, Word of the Week, etc.?
  - Yes 100%
  - No 0%