

# **Our Lady of Good Counsel School**

## **School Self Evaluation Plan**

**Report Issue Date: June 9<sup>th</sup> 2015**

### **1. Introduction:**

#### **1.1 The Focus of the Evaluation**

A school self-evaluation of teaching and learning was undertaken during the period June 2012 and June 2013. This evaluation informed practice for the following three years. During the process teaching and learning in the following areas were evaluated.

- Numeracy
- Literacy
- SPHE

Evidence was gathered in the following ways:

- Professional Discussion amongst the In-School Management Team and with all teachers
- Teacher Questionnaires
- Parents Questionnaires

This is the report on year three of the findings of the evaluation. Please also refer to School Evaluation Reports 2012-2013 and 2013-2014.

#### **1.2 School Context**

Our Lady of Good Counsel School currently has 12 teachers including the Principal, 19.5 SNAs, 5 Part-Time teachers, 18 bus escorts and 5 office and caretaking staff. The pupils are supported by a Multi-Disciplinary Team which is provided by the Brothers of Charity Services, Trustees and Patron. The school is oversubscribed and operates a waiting list each year to fill available places.

The school caters for 68 pupils who are diagnosed as having a General Moderate Learning Disability. 41 pupils also present with dual or multiple diagnoses such as Downs Syndrome, ASD, Hearing Impairment, Visual Impairment, ADHD, Emotional Disturbance and others. A number of pupils present with medical issues such as epilepsy, diabetes, cerebral palsy and other physical issues. A small number present with very significant challenging behaviours requiring a whole school, intensive, integrated response from staff and management.

As reported last year the school continues to place great emphasis and value on safeguarding children and safeguarding staff in order to ensure that a safe learning and working environment for all is our top priority. This issue formed the main focus of our School Improvement Plan for 2012-2013 and was followed through to 2014-2015. Staff wished that the incidents of challenging behaviour be reduced so that teaching and learning could occur smoothly and in safety for all. They also wished that the students presenting us with these challenges be afforded quality teacher support throughout the school day. The issue of well-being and tension/anxiety reduction in pupils was considered to be very important.

The school responded by increasing the number of staff in the Pupil Support Team developed last year by two. One additional teacher and one additional SNA. The curriculum and environment for these pupils was adapted to support their well-being and to enable staff to employ the skills of diffusion, diversion and de-escalation more safely. Central to the focus of these pupils' school day was to provide increased opportunities for inclusion with peers and increased teacher contact time. A 'pyramid' approach was used to support not only these pupils but also up to 15 others who attended the Pupil Support Team for various activities and skills teaching. Increased opportunities for exercise in association with peers became a central theme with a view to improving well-being by decreasing anxiety. Following staff discussions and an analysis of high risk incidents involving 2 pupils a marked decrease in high risk incidents has been noted as follows:

	2013/14	2014/2015
Number of high risk incidents	96	40
Number of those incidents which involved a restrictive physical intervention or restraint	71	18
Number of those incidents which involved a degree of seclusion	21	10

From the above table it is clear that high risk incidents have decreased significantly thus reducing the need for physical interventions. It is also clear that whilst in excess of a 50% decrease has been achieved this year, which is significant, more work needs to be done to address the issue of seclusion. A specific Risk Reduction Plan to address this issue will be conducted by the PSR team in consultation with the parents of the children involved and the school psychologist if available as soon as possible in September.

### 1.3 The Findings

A number of issues were highlighted by staff as evidenced from discussions at staff meetings. Parental views were not formally sought this year. All agreed that the issue of reducing disruption to teaching and learning had been addressed very successfully. Teachers of classes with pupils who presented with significant challenging behaviours reported that they were able to conduct their classes with minimum disruption and when disruption did occur significant support was available.

This year teachers highlighted three key areas for improvement in the areas of Numeracy, Literacy and SPHE.

#### 1. Numeracy:

Develop a programme to teach 'Time' similar to the programme we developed to teach 'Money' last year to make it more functional for the pupils.

#### 2. Literacy:

Introduce Blanks Questioning as recommended by SLT to improve pupils' ability to ask and answer questions.

#### 3. SPHE:

- Review the RSE programme for the Junior pupils. (A comprehensive Senior Programme was developed last year by Senior School Teachers).
- Develop a Functional Skills Programme in the Senior End of the school for some pupils

#### 4. Other areas requiring development

- Begin the process of implementation of the new Level 2 Junior Cycle Programme to Senior Pupils. Our school will be a pilot school for the introduction and development of one short course.
- Review and update our Curriculum Policies to reflect actual practice
- Increase opportunities for exercise by establishing a daily exercise routine for all pupils each morning and develop a running track in the school field asap – this is considered to be a key target to reduce tension and promote well-being in our students thus creating safe environments conducive to teaching and learning.

#### NOTE:

Teachers commented during the final staff meeting of the year that our Assessment Folder is not suitable for some of our younger pupils. This issue requires further attention. 2 teachers will investigate the PEP 3 Assessment Tool during the coming school year, attend training, purchase the assessment and implement it in the two most junior classes. Their experience will be shared with other teachers at the end of the school year.

#### Required Training to implement goals:

1. Training for all staff and parents in 'Blanks Questions' to support the Literacy target. Geraldine Moran (SLT).
2. Training re Junior Cycle Programme for all pupils. (PDST and Cherryl Elliott, Teacher).
3. Training for 2 teachers re PEP 3 Assessment tool. (SESS).
4. Lamh Training for 2 teachers in BOC and refresher training for other teachers, SNAs, Escorts and parents. (Nollaig Moynihan and Annette Tierney Teachers).
5. Refresher training in managing and handling younger pupils with whom staff are using physical interventions is a priority this year for all staff – Team Teach Tutors (Siobhan Allen, Principal, Nollaig Moynihan and Aisling Heidt, Teachers).
6. Refresher training in Client Lifting for all staff is a priority due to the intake of a pupil who is a full-time wheelchair user. (Health and Safety Services, Newmarket).
7. Training in the management of emotions. Fiona Du Boucher-Ryan, (Psychologist).

#### Policies:

- The RSE programme for younger pupils requires review.
- The newly devised Time Programme will need to be added to the Maths Policy
- All Curriculum Policies need to be reviewed and updated to reflect practice.
- School Tour Policy requires review.
- Using and Reducing the use of restrictive practices requires review

#### **2.0 Progress made on previously identified improvement targets**

- All targets were achieved with the exception of reviewing the 'Parents as Partners' Policy.
- The running track continues to be progressed.

- The issue of researching and implementing the new Junior Cycle Level 2 Programme was progressed much more than expected. Please refer to School Improvement Plan 2013/2014.

2.1 Summary of School Self Evaluation findings

See 1.3 above

2.2 Summary of areas that are prioritised for improvement

See 1.3 above

## School Improvement Plan 2015/2016

<b>Summary of Strengths</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Problem Solving Child Centred Approach</li> <li>• Behaviour Support and Training</li> <li>• Pupils Staff Ratios</li> <li>• Pupil Support/Comfort Rooms/Areas</li> <li>• Effective Curriculum</li> <li>• Positive 'Can Do' attitude</li> <li>• Communication between Staff</li> <li>• Assessment Folders</li> <li>• Individualised Programmes</li> <li>• Respect for all</li> <li>• Use of Praise and Positive Approaches</li> <li>• Use of repetition as a teaching strategy</li> <li>• Age appropriate activities</li> <li>• Generalisation of Skills</li> <li>• Social and Life Skills</li> <li>• SLT and OT programmes</li> <li>• General Resources and Equipment</li> <li>• Environmental Alterations as a tool for behaviour management</li> <li>• Increased skill set of staff in relation to thinking about and managing high risk behaviours</li> <li>• Use of iPads as a tool to promote communication</li> </ul>
<b>Summary of Main Areas Requiring Improvement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review RSE Programme for junior pupils</li> <li>• Continue to devise ways of reducing tension and anxiety for all pupils thus reducing risk.</li> <li>• Continue to monitor and review incidents of CB so that teaching and learning can continue to occur. Devise a regular reporting procedure for the BOM especially in relation to incidents involving seclusion.</li> <li>• Devise a better way of teaching Time.</li> <li>• Develop a better way of teaching questions to pupils</li> <li>• Develop Junior Cert Level 2 short course to replace FETAC Programmes and contribute to research on Level 1 with the NCCA</li> <li>• Investigate alternative assessment tool for Junior pupils</li> <li>• Develop a Functional Skills Programme for some Senior pupils</li> </ul>
<b>Improvement</b>	Numeracy:

<b>Targets (related to pupil achievement)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a functional programme to teach ‘Time’ skills</li> </ul> <p>Literacy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase staff skills in relation to ‘questioning’ children to elicit sentences and information. Introduce ‘Blanks Questions’ as a programme in the school in conjunction with SLT support. Provide training for same.</li> </ul> <p>SPHE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review RSE Programme for Juniors and hold an information night for Junior parents.</li> <li>• Develop a Functional Skills Programme for some Senior pupils</li> </ul> <p>Challenging Behaviours/Tension Reduction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete (with parents) specific Risk Reduction Plans in relation to the use of seclusion with those pupils involved.</li> <li>• Develop a running sports track in the field.</li> <li>• Increase playground/exercise equipment.</li> <li>• Provide access to at least one alternative therapy for all pupils (emotional well-being).</li> <li>• Continue to review Positive Handling and Incident Reports to facilitate monitoring, reflection and review leading to continued reduction of incidents and restrictive practices.</li> </ul> <p>Other Areas of Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a new short course for the new Level 2 Junior Cycle Programme instead of FETAC which will be discontinued</li> </ul>
<b>Persons Responsible</b>	Principal, Deputy, B. Post Holder, Numeracy and Literacy Co-Ordinators, Class Teachers, P.E Teacher, Multi-D Team, Board of Management, Parents’ Association
<b>Timeframe for Action</b>	June 2015-June 2016
<b>Success Criteria/ Measurable Outcomes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Functional Skills Programme available to teachers and parents of some Senior pupils</li> <li>• ‘Blanks Questioning’ programme implemented in all classes</li> <li>• Additional playground/exercise equipment available to pupils</li> <li>• Further reduction in serious incidents requiring physical interventions as evidenced by a review of same.</li> <li>• Availability of at least one alternative therapy throughout the year to complement our exercise programmes similar to drumming last year.</li> <li>• Individual Risk/Restraint Reduction Plans available for relevant pupils</li> <li>• Progress made on installing a running/sports track in the field</li> <li>• Completed Level 2 Short Course for Junior Cycle</li> <li>• Reviewed RSE Programme for Juniors available to relevant teachers and parents</li> <li>• Lesson Plans related to a more functional approach to the teaching of time skills available to each teacher with associated resources. Included in Maths Curriculum.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PEP 3 Assessment tool trialled in two classes</li> </ul>
<b>Review Dates</b>	23rd <sup>th</sup> Sept 2015, 17 <sup>th</sup> May 2016,
<b>Evidence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Functional Skills Programme for Senior pupils</li> <li>• Completed Level 2 Short Course for the new Junior Cycle Programme</li> <li>• Committee to develop track/plans drawn up for same</li> <li>• Evidence of risk reduction such as reviewed incident reports, graphs etc.</li> <li>• Availability of at least one alternative therapy similar to drumming last year</li> <li>• Completed PEP 3 assessments in two classes</li> <li>• Reviewed and ratified Junior RSE policy available to teachers and parents</li> <li>• Lesson Plan entitled 'My Time' available to all teachers to implement as appropriate to their classes</li> </ul>