



St. Paul's National School

Ratoath, Co Meath.

20215J

School Self-Evaluation Report

and

School Improvement Plan

September 2018 - June 2019

School self-evaluation report

The focus of the evaluation:

A school self-evaluation of teaching and learning in St. Paul's National school, Ratoath was undertaken. The school constantly evaluates what has gone before and the teachers, individually and collectively, strive to find ways to improve the teachers' practice, the learning experience of the children and learner outcomes. During this evaluation, the provision of P.E. and sport was evaluated.

School context:

St. Paul's is a large school in a suburban area. As the school has grown we have developed our teaching practices to keep up to date with best practice. Many interventions have been introduced into the school and the children's standardised scores are keeping above the national norms in literacy and numeracy. The teachers and staff have also put considerable effort into the holistic development of the children with opportunities being offered in a variety of sports and in the areas of music, art and drama.

Teaching of Physical Education in St. Paul's

Preparation for Teaching:

Curriculum objectives and the school plan are used to devise long and short term plans by teachers. Teachers plan with their class groups. They prepare fortnightly and long term plans and use their plans to guide teaching and learning. Teaching approaches, methodologies, activities and resources are identified in the plans.

Teaching Approaches:

Each class uses a variety of organisational styles - pair work, group work, individual work and whole class work. There is order and structure in the way activities are organised. Direct teaching, guided discovery and peer teaching are very successful methodologies used in the teaching of P.E.

Management of Pupils:

Planning of activities and resources is very important in the successful implementation of a P.E. lesson. We have a wide array of equipment and resources available to teachers. A list of these is available in each teacher's kit folder.

A positive code of behaviour, including an anti-bullying policy, is implemented in a fair and consistent way. This is an inclusive school which respects all pupils regardless of background or gender. Teachers have high but realistic expectations of pupils' behaviour and learning and they communicate these expectations to the children.

Assessment:

Assessment in P.E. is important as it provides the teacher with information to enhance the children's experience. It measures the degree of success experienced by the children and leads to meaningful progression within each year and as the class moves from year to year.

Assessment can take the form of observation, teacher designed tasks and check lists based on each strand unit.

Consideration should also be given to the assessment of the children's attitude to fair play, turn taking, inclusion of others and their response to winning and losing.

Learning Environment:

We are lucky in that we have a very large and well-resourced hall. The classes are all time-tabled an hour of P.E. each week. The teachers are also encouraged to avail of the outdoor space as much as possible. We don't have any grass area unfortunately but we have measured a one kilometre stretch around the school and all classes are encouraged to do laps. We have access to the athletics track and the GAA pitch and we are negotiating access to the tennis courts and the all-weather pitch. We also have three basketball courts which are available for any non-timetabled, additional P.E.

Pupil's engagement with P.E.:

Pupils at all class levels are actively engaged in P.E. and the level of pupil interest and participation is high. Where children are showing signs of a lack of interest or participation different methodologies are employed to encourage them. Each child is encouraged to participate at their own level and pace to encourage maximum involvement. A balance between competitive and non-competitive; contact and non-contact activities and a variety of different activities within each strand helps promote participation too as does the active assembly which is held annually.

Parental Involvement:

St. Paul's is an Active School. We are applying for our third Active Flag, having been the first school in Meath to receive one, back in 2010. We have a very wide range of extra-curricular activities and the children are given many opportunities to participate in a wide variety of sports. Parental support at all events is encouraged and we use parental connections with different groups to forge links with the school. We have also introduced 'Work-Out Wednesday' where the children are given no written homework but asked to engage in some physical activity with the support and involvement of their

parents! All children get a Super Trooper's Diary which is worked on and filled in in conjunction with home, this encourages activity and a healthy lifestyle.

We are also engaging in the Health Promoting Schools initiative which involves a combined approach to health through diet, exercise and mental health. Parents are members of the HPS committee and also contribute greatly in the Health Promoting Schools' week.

The Findings of the Evaluation

Physical Education provides children with learning opportunities through the medium of movement and it contributes to their overall development by helping them to lead full and active lives. Where it was presumed in the past that all children were active and enjoyed being active, it is now universally accepted that children are leading more sedentary lives, often by choice. Physical education in schools has therefore become more focussed on developing lifelong skills and attitudes for a healthy and active life.

To identify the needs of the schools in terms of P.E. we surveyed staff, parents and children.

Summary of School Self Evaluation Findings

Our school has strengths in the following areas with regard to P.E.:

- All teachers identified P.E. as important and almost all teachers did a minimum of 1 hour per week.
- The teachers identified the interest among teachers as being a significant strength.
- The skill level, motivation and energy of teachers were also identified as strengths.

- We have a very good hall and excellent resources.
- All strands of the curriculum are covered, at all levels.
- We have good connections with the community and can access the GAA pitches most of the time, although transport is needed. We can also access the athletics track on occasion.
- The parents identified the fact that their children like P.E. and enjoy being active.
- The parents acknowledged the variety of sports and the range of opportunities given to the children.
- The children love P.E.!
- They love how it is done.

Our school has challenges in the following areas with regard to P.E.:

- We have a great hall but we also have 700 children and 26 classes seeking to use it so lack of space is a challenge.
- A lack of grass is a significant challenge.
- Teachers identified time and class size as challenges.
- Teachers highlighted the areas of dance and gymnastics as areas where they felt they needed CPD.
- The parents would like more time allocated to P.E. in school.
- Parents would like more information on what is done in P.E. classes and how well their children are doing at P.E.
- The children want more P.E. and they would like more choice.

School Improvement Plan

In our preparation of our school self-evaluation report and our school improvement plan we are focussing on the area of physical education.

- Most sports offered are for the older children, third class and up, but all children are encouraged to be active and participate fully in P.E. class as well as the other activities undertaken in the school. Each class is timetabled for one hour in the hall but encouraged to bring the children outside for further P.E., when possible.
- All children go swimming for six days each year.
- The children are also following the Eur-Run challenge where they are brought out to do 'laps' and measure the distance each class covers, making it a collaborative event rather than a competitive one.
- All children from third class up are given an opportunity to train in, and participate in, a school tournament in Olympic handball and basketball.
- We have school teams for both boys' and girls' and in different ages for soccer, gaelic, hurling, camogie, Olympic handball, basketball, 7 a side and athletics.

Our targets for the school year 2018 - 2019:

- The lack of space is an on-going challenge. We are hoping to acquire land but, in the meantime we will contact the local sports' campus, who have recently developed all-weather pitches, with a view to reaching an arrangement around access.
- Teachers with talents in the area of dance have agreed to support other teachers.

- CPD from an external source has been organised for all staff in the area of gymnastics.
- Through the Health Promoting Schools newsletter we hope to give parents more information around what is going on in the school in relation to P.E. We have also a new tab on our website for Active schools.
- The existence of the curriculum and the restraints on teachers around timetabling P.E. will be explained to the children.
- The possibility of giving the children a choice in what they would like to do in P.E. once a term/ month /year.... will be discussed with the teachers.

Success Criteria and Measurable Outcomes

- The children's engagement with P.E., both in school and outside, should increase.
- Their levels of fitness should improve.
- Their attitude to activity and exercise should improve.
- Skills in certain areas should improve.
- Teachers should observe an increase in the children's confidence and competence when participating in P.E.

Review dates

We will continue to monitor the involvement of the children in physical activity and exercise while developing the next subject area, and beyond.