



Tarbert Comprehensive School
SELF-EVALUATION AND SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN
SCHOOL COMMUNITY SUMMARY PROGRESS REPORT
JUNE 2021

During our School Self-Evaluation Process, based on *Looking at Our Schools 2016-2020*, we have evaluated teaching and learning in our school to find out what we are doing well. This is what we discovered:

- Students are motivated to learn through having a clear sense of attainable and challenging learning outcomes
- Junior Cycle Students have attained proficiency in the prescribed key skills appropriate to their stage in the cycle
- Senior Cycle students have attained proficiency in the skills required for successful learning in the programmes they are following
- Students' achievements in summative assessments, including certificate examinations, is in line with or above expectations
- Students are able to work independently and collaboratively in a purposeful and productive manner
- Students contribute their opinions and experiences to class discussion with confidence. They are respectful of and interested in the opinions and experience of their classmates
- Teachers integrate relevant literacy and numeracy skills into the fabric of the lesson
- Teachers use formal meeting and planning time to reflect together on their work
- Teachers view collaboration as a means to improve student learning and to enhance their own professional development. They engage in constructive collaborative practice and in collaborative review of practice
- Teachers' plans identify clear relevant learning intentions

This is what we did to find out what we were doing well, and what we could do better:

- We analysed our results from state Examinations
- We engaged in teacher discussion and feedback
- We surveyed parents, teachers, and students on various aspects of teaching and learning in the school
- We held focus group discussions based around certain areas of teaching and learning
- We assessed our strengths and needs using the statements of quality in 'Looking at Our Schools (SSE Guidelines) 2016-2020
- We assessed needs based on the Framework for the JCSP
- We assessed our needs based on the 'Digital Strategy for Schools 2015-2020'
- We implemented and included recommendations made in Subject Inspections, Inspectorate Advisory Visits and WSE Reports, and recent relevant publications and guidelines

This is what we are currently working on and some of our progress to date:

Digital Literacy, Engagement and Citizenship:

Emphasis will be on students and teachers having the skills and knowledge associated with being engaged, literate, and responsible in the digital arena. These skills are essential not only for learning – as they are an important aspect of the JCSP – but for life, as students increasingly need to be cognisant of the responsibilities of digital citizenship. Our aims in this area are:

1. To increase in teachers' usage of school's digital platforms for teaching and learning and to increase the number of students regularly accessing same
2. Increase teacher and student knowledge, understanding and engagement with 'digital literacy' – terminology and visual cues associated with IT

Progress to date (June 2021):

Targets set in the areas of digital engagement and e-learning have been met

- Teachers have engaged in extensive training facilitated by the E-learning Co-ordinator during the course of the plan
- Computer classes have been expanded for Junior students to include Digital Citizenship as part of the school's Wellbeing programme, as well as Coding in Third Year
- Systems already in place allowed for efficient transition from classroom to on-line teaching and learning in January 2021. A survey of teachers indicated that live classes taught as per the timetable had a positive impact on student attendance and engagement
- 89% of teachers report that they have used Google Classroom this year, with 95% of Third year students and 92.5% of LC2 reporting Classroom was the main platform teachers used to share resources and organise online classes
- 100% of teachers and almost 92% of students surveyed now consider themselves to be 'Confident' or 'Comfortable' in their ability to engage with digital teaching and learning
- When asked what would support engagement students responded that they would like all teachers to use the same approach – this will be an action for next year
- To support first years in their engagement with our online learning platform, we will train a small group of LC2 mentors to be digital learning mentors

Teaching and learning in the Covid Classroom and Blended Learning

Changes in the physical classroom environment due to Covid has resulted in the ongoing need for teachers to adapt their teaching styles and methods accordingly. As a school we have focused on:

1. Adapting our classroom practice to the 'Covid Classroom' and engaging our students in active and enjoyable learning despite the physical restrictions necessary
2. Adopting a 'blended learning' approach to teaching and learning, incorporating digital elements in our classroom teaching

Progress to date:

- As a staff we have explored ways to modify plenaries, group work, graphic organisers, active learning methodologies and assessment strategies to allow for social distancing
- Teachers met the challenges of the new teaching environment in many ways including posting resources on Google Classroom instead of photocopying; using visualizers in demonstrating and modelling; creating or using videos and online content that students could access later, and accepting assignments and providing feedback online
- Teachers upskilled in the use of various apps and features of G-suite to incorporate into their teaching, the roll out and evaluation of these apps will continue next year for both teachers and students
- When we returned to the classroom following Lockdown 2021 the majority of students and teachers surveyed reported that a blended learning approach was used - this will continue next year

Assessment for Learning

We continue to prioritise Assessment for Learning as the means of reinforcing the idea that students and teachers are partners in the learning process, and to encourage a culture of self-evaluation among students. Previous targets in this area have been met. During Covid and next year:

1. We aim to vary our means of providing feedback to students, incorporating oral and whole class feedback, along with traditional written feedback.
2. We will create awareness among students of the relationship between the success criteria and their individual progress. Students will be encouraged to apply success criteria and feedback in such a way as to encourage self-evaluation

Progress to date:

- 92% of students surveyed indicated that Success Criteria in various forms is the basis for teacher correction and feedback
- 70% of teachers reported using whole class feedback during Lockdown. Further to this, 89% of students surveyed reported that teachers also provided individual written feedback in Lockdown. 39% of students also responded that they had received individual oral feedback during Lockdown. This will continue to be an area of focus next year
- 78% of teachers and almost 72% of LC2 students confirmed that targeted feedback indicating next steps for improvement was given on return of assessments
- Next year we will move towards the area of student self-evaluation - supporting students in being able to recognise the relationship between success criteria, feedback, and improved outcomes

Other areas of improvement in the 2021-2022 School Improvement Plan

- As all subjects now have new specifications for Junior Cycle, we will revisit our whole school approach to subject planning in the next school year, ensuring plans are up to date and follow similar formats
- Management in Tarbert actively encourage teacher participation in CPD and promote teacher leadership in regard to the sharing of new learning as part of our culture of collaboration and innovation. We will take steps as a staff next year to create structure around how we do this

- We will look at the area of 'Student Voice' next year, specifically in developing and expanding what we currently do to ensure students have an active voice and role within the school

This is what you can do to help:

Support the school's digital strategies - encourage your child to be a responsible digital citizen, and to avail of resources suggested by or created by teachers

Encourage your child to take responsibility for their learning and their progress. Engage them in conversation about their learning and encourage them to reflect on areas for improvement

Encourage your child to 'get involved' in school life, to take an active role in their learning and in their experiences in the school

Respond to any request from the school for feedback in the form of surveys, focus groups or other means of gathering information. We are partners in your child's education and your voice is important in informing future planning in the school

Here is some information about how we are carrying out our work and about what the Department of Education and Skills requires us to do.

School time and holidays

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

Our school year this year was from 28/08/20 to 04/06/21. 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. YES

The Department sets out arrangements for **parent/teacher meetings and staff meetings**. This year all such meetings were facilitated or adapted according to DES procedure and Covid regulations

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. YES

All teachers know about the *Procedures*, and we have told all parents about them and how we follow them. YES

Our Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is **Mr. Richard Prendiville** and our Deputy DLP is **Ms. Leila Moloney**

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. YES

We reviewed (and updated) our admissions policy on: March 2020

We keep accurate attendance records and report them as required. YES

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. YES

Our code of behaviour describes and supports positive behaviour. YES

We have a very clear and high-profile anti-bullying policy in our school. YES