



Tarbert Comprehensive School

TARBERT COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL

TARBERT CO. KERRY

81006S

**Summary School Self-Evaluation Report for the School Community
Assessment for Learning**

Evaluation period: *September 2015 – June 2016*

Report issue date: *June 2016*

Summary School Self-Evaluation Report

1. Introduction

The school, which has a current enrolment of 588, was established in 1973 and is comprehensive in the sense that it is a co-educational establishment catering for all ranges of abilities, embracing all social groupings, offering the widest possible range of subjects and being open to all religious persuasions. We promote a healthy work ethic and a love of learning in a spirit of collegiality and co-operation so that all may reach their full potential. For more information on how we intend to improve our students' learning, please see our Summary School Improvement Plan which is available on the school website

1.1 The focus of the evaluation

To date, school improvement has been informed by the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy and by Department of Education guidelines. We undertook a school self-evaluation of Teaching and Learning in the school during the period September 2015 to June 2016. During this time, teaching and learning in the area of Assessment for Learning was evaluated.

This report summarises the strengths that were identified and the areas that have been prioritised for improvement.

2. Summary of school self-evaluation findings

In March 2013 the Department of Education Inspectorate carried out a Whole School Evaluation of practises within the school, with the resulting report available in September 2013. The findings and recommendations of this and other recently published inspection reports, the analysis of standardised tests, surveys of teachers and students, focus groups and staff discussions have provided the basis for the current evaluation of Assessment for Learning in the school.

2.1 We found that our school has **strengths** in the following areas:

Strengths

- At both Junior Cert and Leaving Cert level, the overall uptake of subjects at Higher Level exceeds the national average.
- Our uptake of subjects at HL, and results in state exams compare favourably to national averages.
- The school is committed to ongoing development and improvement, as evidenced by our review of standardised tests and engagement with the process of school self-evaluation.
- Teachers currently assess students using a range of AfL and AoL strategies. Homework is set and monitored by teachers regularly, and along with formative and summative assessment, informs planning
- Teachers are encouraged and willing to engage in extensive CPD around new and existing initiatives in education
- Management and staff are committed to a whole school approach to school planning to improve quality of teaching and learning in the school, and have taken significant steps to date to improve numeracy in line with the national strategy
- Communication between the school and parents/primary caregivers is extensive and varied and presents opportunities to engage parents in their children's progress in meaningful ways
- Improvements in digital infrastructure over recent years have enhanced teacher practise and learner engagement

We have assessed these as our strengths because the MLL/WSE report on Tarbert Comprehensive, and subsequent subject inspection praised the quality of teaching and learning in the school. Students perform well at all levels in state exams. We communicate extensively with parents/guardians through varied means such as journals, texts, newsletters, information evenings and via the school website. In this way we ensure that the school works in partnership with parents in the care and education of our students.

2.2 We have decided to prioritise the following areas for development:

Areas for development

- The need for whole staff CPD in the area of Assessment for Learning, will be addressed in the course of the implementation of the SIP.
- The SIP will address the manner in which teachers communicate learning intentions to students, as well as ensuring those intentions are linked to skills and the application of knowledge rather than content.
- In order to build on the good practice already in place in the school, as praised in a recent SEN Inspection Report, it is our intention that the SIP should aim to stretch **all** learners, and specifically to use AfL strategies to address the needs of our more able students.
- Linked to the above, and as a result of data gathered in the students' survey and focus groups, we will also concentrate on the area of *Sharing the Success Criteria*. The purpose of this will be to encourage students to be more focussed and on task in their learning, and more able to engage in reflection and self-evaluation.
- Over the course of the SIP teachers will explore ways of enhancing and varying the feedback given to students so as to provide individual targeted direction for improvement.
- Subject plans will be amended as required to include details of AfL practices to be undertaken by subjects.

We have decided to prioritise these areas because our evaluations of learner experience and teacher practice in the area of AfL revealed that 31.7% of students, and 61.5% of teachers felt that learning intentions were **often** made clear at the start of classes. We would aim to see a measurable increase in these figures in the course of the SIP. Furthermore the surveys of teachers, and focus groups with students, indicated the need to link student awareness of success criteria and teacher feedback, so as to encourage students to reflect on their learning, and become more independent learners. Teachers themselves have indicated a need for targeted CPD in the area of Assessment for Learning as part of the SIP. It is anticipated that a whole school and coherent approach, involving strategies which promote Assessment for Learning, as well as Literacy and Numeracy where possible will facilitate more reflective practices on the parts of teachers and students in the school.

**Appendix to Post-primary School Self-Evaluation Report:
legislative and regulatory checklist – reporting to the school community**

Rules and regulations for schools are set out in a number of Education Acts, and in Circulars issued to schools from time to time by the Department of Education and Skills. The list below deals with important areas of school life and tells you what rules and regulations apply to them. You will find the Acts and Circulars mentioned on the Department's website, www.education.ie .	
Which area of school life is involved, and what are the regulations?	Is the school following the regulations fully?
<p>Enrolment of students The Education Act 1998, the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, and Circular M51/93 set out the principles schools should follow in their enrolment policies</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<p>Repeating a year Students may repeat a school year in certain conditions and for particular reasons, such as illness. Conditions are set out in Circular M02/95</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<p>The school calendar and the school timetable Schools must offer a minimum of 167 school days each year to all year groups. Circular M29/95 sets this down.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<p>Schools must offer a minimum school week of 28 hours for all year groups. Circular M29/95 sets this down.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<p>Standardised school year School holidays are now standardised so all post-primary schools have holidays at the same time. The current school holidays circular is 34/2011</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<p>Parent/teacher meetings and staff meetings These meetings have to happen at certain times of the day so as not to interrupt teaching time or inconvenience parents. Circular M58/04 sets these out.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<p>Implementation of national literacy and numeracy strategy Schools are required to have a whole-school approach to literacy and numeracy development. Parents have an important role to play in this area. See <i>Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life</i>, and Circular 25/2012</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<p>Agreement regarding additional time in school for teachers Circular 025/2011 requires teachers to do an additional 33 hours of out-of-class work each year, so as not to reduce teaching time</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<p>Development of school plan All schools are required to have a school plan, giving their mission and vision, policies and priorities for development</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<p>Engagement with school self-evaluation (SSE) process The SSE process requires schools to evaluate how well they are doing, and where they need to improve. The voices of parents and students are very important to this evaluation process. See www.schoolself-evaluation.ie.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<p>Guidance provision in post-primary schools The Education Act 1998 requires all schools to provide appropriate guidance to students. See Circular 09/2012 for the current arrangements.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<p>Delivery of CSPE to all junior cycle classes Civic, Social and Political Education is currently a compulsory subject in the junior cycle. All junior cycle students should have one CSPE lesson per week.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<p>Exemption from the study of Irish</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Some students may be exempt from studying Irish. See Circular M10/94	
Implementation of child protection procedures The <i>Child Protection Procedures for primary and post-primary schools</i> (2011) oblige schools to ensure that: liaison persons have been appointed ; the procedures have been communicated to the whole school community; and the procedures are being followed	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Implementation of complaints procedure as appropriate Section 28 Education Act 1998 provides for procedures to address complaints about a school	Complaints have been resolved or are being resolved <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
Appeal in the case of refusal to enrol students, suspension, and expulsion Section 29 Education Act 1998 provides for an appeal procedure in these cases. The school deals with them first. Where cases are not resolved at school level, an external appeals committee hears the appeal and makes a decision.	Appeals have been dealt with or are being dealt with <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>

Appendix to School Self-Evaluation report: policy checklist – reporting to the school community

Schools are required to have certain policies in place as part of their permanent school plan. It is good practice for schools to consult with the school community in forming and reviewing many of these policies. The school board of management has to approve and ratify policies, and should ensure that they are reviewed on a regular basis.	
What area of school life does the policy deal with and what is the aim of the policy?	Has the policy been approved by the Board of Management?
Enrolment policy Section 15 of the Education Act 1998 obliges schools to have and publish an enrolment policy that respects the principles of equality and parental choice	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Code of behaviour Section 23, Education (Welfare) Act 2000, and the 2008 <i>National Educational Welfare Board Guidelines</i> set out regulations and good practice for schools to follow when drawing up and implementing a code of behaviour. This good practice includes consultation with parents and students.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Anti-bullying procedures The Department's <i>Anti-bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-primary Schools</i> , 2013, set out the measures that schools are required to have in place.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Attendance and participation strategy Section 22 Education Welfare Act 2000 requires schools to develop a strategy to support high levels of student attendance and participation in school life. Parents have a very important role and responsibility in this area.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Health and Safety Statement All schools should have a health and safety statement that is regularly reviewed (see Section 20 Health and Safety Act 2005)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Data protection School procedures relating to gathering, storing and sharing data on students should comply with data protection legislation - Data Protection Act 1988 and Data Protection (Amendment Act) 2003	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Special education needs policy Various pieces of equality and education legislation, especially the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (EPSEN) 2004, require schools to be inclusive of students with special educational needs and to provide for them appropriately using the resources available	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Social, personal and health education (SPHE)/Relationships and sexuality education (RSE) policy Schools are required by various circulars to provide SPHE in the junior cycle and RSE throughout the school, and to have policies to support this provision.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Substance use policy	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

<p>The National Drugs Strategy and Department guidelines require schools to develop and implement a substance use policy in consultation with parents and students, and other relevant agencies</p>	
<p>Internet acceptable use policy Schools should have and implement a policy to instruct students on safe and responsible use of the internet. Parents have a key role to play in this area. See www.webwise.ie.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<p>Child protection policy All schools should have a child protection policy that includes the <i>Child Protection Procedures</i>. The policy should be communicated to the whole school community.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<p>Parents as partners in education It is good practice for schools to have a parents' association, and to promote partnership between home and school. The board of management has an important role in supporting the parents' association.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<p>Deployment of special needs assistants Circular 71/11 allows for SNAs to be deployed flexibly to respond to the needs of schools and students.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No