

Ballinrobe Community School

Pobalscoil Bhaile an Róba
Bóthar an Chlochair, Baile an Róba, Co. Mhaigh Eo.

**Convent Road,
Ballinrobe,
Co. Mayo.**



School Self Evaluation Report

Evaluation Period: January – October 2013

Report Issued: 2014

1. INTRODUCTION

In September 2012, as part of a whole school evening, the issue of School Self Evaluation was discussed. It was agreed for the school that literacy would be the first area and a Literacy committee was formed consisting of the school Principal, resource/learning support teacher, an English teacher and a teacher from the Humanities. This core committee aimed to develop and include teachers from the other academic disciplines in the school.

1.1 FOCUS OF THE EVALUATION

A School Self-evaluation of teaching and learning was undertaken in Ballinrobe Community School between January and October of 2013. We decided, under Literacy to focus on key words/spelling with our first year group.

1.2 SCHOOL CONTEXT

Ballinrobe Community School was founded in 1990, officially opened in April 1991, through the amalgamation of three schools, The Convent of Mercy, The Christian Brothers and the Vocational school. We are a co-educational school under the trusteeship of the Bishop of Tuam, the Mercy sisters and the ETB, (formerly Mayo VEC).

Our enrolment has shown a steady increase over the past number of years and we now have an enrolment of 587 students, taken from 17 feeder schools in the area.

Students are offered a wide range of subjects at both Junior and Leaving Cert and can also avail of our very successful Transition Year programme which is optional for post Junior Cert students. Leaving Cert students can also do the Leaving Cert Vocational programme.

There is a strong culture of CPD within the staff, coupled with a generosity of time for helping students with extra-curricular activities.

Our school had a very positive Whole School Inspection in 2007 and has had numerous subject and incidental inspections over the years. We appreciate the support and input of the Inspectorate at all times.

2. THE FINDINGS

The First Year Students were set the "New Group Reading Test" (NGRT). This is a standardised test and provides standardised scores, percentiles and reading ages. The tests were marked and each student's score recorded and matched to their chronological age.

We then introduced a number of interventions with a view to improving their scores.

The interventions used included:

- i. Spelling tests
- ii. Word searches
- iii. Glossary
- iv. Designing and using bookmarks with key words written on them
- v. Displaying key words in the classroom
- vi. Mind maps
- vii. Reading class and book review

The students were retested and their scores compared, on average the student scores increased by 6.9.

We plan implement the interventions used through first and second year and next school year to include the all junior cert groups. We will be looking at ways to involve all subject areas reading and spelling as part of their normal classroom teaching.

Through collaboration between the various subject teachers we plan to highlight existing best practice and identify which of these literacy related activities could be extended across the entire curriculum and examine the scope for new practice.

Research has shown that children that come from homes that are literacy rich environments tend to have a much higher level of literacy. With this in mind we are looking at ways of promoting reading in the school and the home.

Areas we have identified as having a significant impact on student literacy are

Positives:

- ❖ Reading for pleasure
- ❖ Parents encouraging their children to read books
- ❖ Newspapers and books in the home

Negatives:

- ❖ Lack of parental involvement
- ❖ Use of mobile phones
- ❖ Lack of newspapers and books in the home

4. SUMMARY OF SCHOOL SELF EVALUATION

4.1 OUR SCHOOL HAS STRENGTHS IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS

- a. Hardworking teaching staff who give of their time to help students in all aspects of school life, core curricular and extra-curricular**
- b. Staff share and use the interventions mentioned above**
- c. Good teaching and learning environment in the school**
- d. Strong pastoral care system providing a safe environment for the students**

4.2 THE FOLLOWING AREAS ARE PRIORITISED FOR IMPROVEMENT/NEW TARGETS

- a. Develop and implement a more focused approach to improving literacy across the curriculum.**
- b. Facilitate reading time for students in class/in each subject**
- c. Develop a print rich and literacy rich school environment**
- d. Use the data from the assessments to inform teachers in developing best practice**