



Cashel Community School

Our Self-Evaluation Report and Improvement Plan 2021/22

1. Introduction

This document records the outcomes of our last improvement plan, the findings of this self-evaluation, and our current improvement plan, including targets and the actions we will implement to meet the targets.

1.1 Outcomes of our last improvement plan from September 2020 to June 2021

- **Literacy:** Due to school closure the DEAR programme did not run. DEAR reading books have been supplied from the PPLI initiative. These were covered and catalogued by TY students and will be made available to the DEAR programme. National DEAR day was celebrated online and at home due to school closure. 1st and TY students have become active library members. This was delivered online to all 1st year students. The Literacy and numeracy week was changed to 'squeeze in a read' and world book day competitions due to school closures. Prizes were awarded to 1st and 2nd year students.
- **Numeracy:** New signposts were put up in the school to promote distance. Due to school closure no other targets were achieved.
- **Formative Assessment Practices:** Assessment for Learning is now part of department meetings which are minuted and available on the shared folder. The 'Learning Schools Project' linking with Limerick Education Centre ceased to operate this year due to Covid 19 restrictions. But the focus on Learning Intentions & Success Criteria was embedded in the school community both in school and virtually when teaching remotely. E- Portfolio with TY groups was implemented for the first time for storage, showcase and reflection on learning. To replace in person parent/ teacher meetings a new format was developed through the Compass App which addressed four aspects of each child's learning being communicated to their parents in each subject. Subject departments developed a comment bank for each of these areas in a subject specific manner with the use of AFL phrases to maximise the feedback capacity.
- **Teaching and Learning:**
Digital Learning Plan
The main focus for 2020/21 was providing on-going support with the Digital Learning Platform through 'Google Classroom' and 'G-Suite. Virtual training was provided by colleagues and outside agencies throughout the year. The Compass App was introduced and implemented with staff, students and parents. Training was provided for all parties.

1st and 2nd Year students all received training on how open their school Gmail account and how to use google docs and slides along with their use of the Compass App.

At senior cycle, the use of google classroom as a method of sharing resources, assigning work and giving feedback increased in all departments. (This happened at a much greater extent than envisaged due to remote learning)

This platform allowed for greater collaboration digitally between students & teachers and students & students which was central to teaching and learning when schools were closed in Term 2 and all teaching was carried out remotely.

TY groups created a digital portfolio using google sites for storage, showcase and reflection on learning. Students spoke at their virtual Grad night about these portfolios and they showcased some of their work.

- ***Engagement in Learning:***

- 1st Year Business Project:

- All pupils got the opportunity to conduct research, work as part of a team and compile their research. However the first year pupils did not do their class presentations due to the Covid 19 shutdowns and restrictions. However great awareness was created about sustainable development business practices in all classes. A variety skills, attitudes and values were fostered and will be built on going forward.

- The Guidance Team:

- Study Skills:

- The following study skills seminars took place last academic year.*

- 1st Years: Two 40 minute classes provided by the Guidance Dept (Nov/ Dec)

- 2nd Years: 120 minute block in class groups (Mid Sept)

- 3rd Years: External speaker Ray Langan (Sept)

- Presentation by YH, Guidance Dept, former students to 6th & 3rd Year students on study skills during assemblies.

- This was reinforced in classrooms by subject teachers and class tutors

- 5th Years: 120 minute class (September)

- 6th Years: External speaker Ray Langan (Sept)

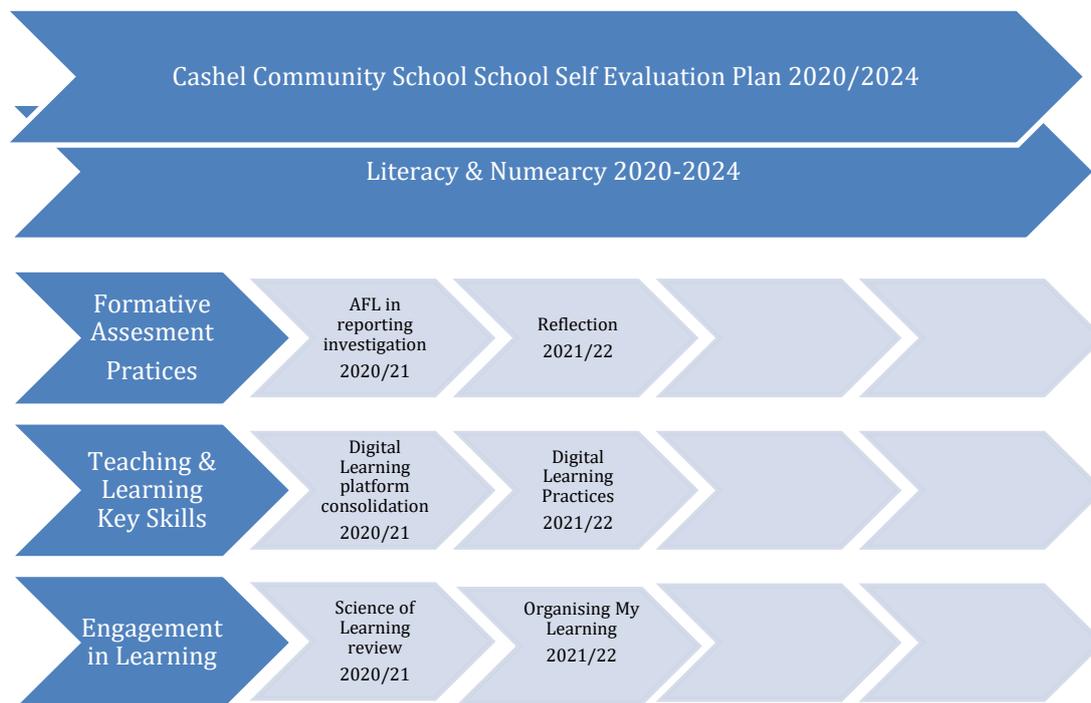
- School Self-Evaluation Committee:

- This committee continued and a timetabled meeting was held weekly, its role being:

- To assist in the implementation of Formative Assessment Practices in the classroom 2020/21
 - To support Teaching and Learning by providing support material for 'Reflective Practice' through the TY E-portfolio
 - To review Engagement in Learning practices, focusing on study skills
 - To support all Literacy and Numeracy initiatives
 - To continue with the development SSE section/tab on the school

1.2 The focus of this evaluation

We undertook self-evaluation of teaching and learning during the period (Sept/2021) to (May/2022). We evaluated the following aspect(s) of teaching and learning:



Literacy and Numeracy:

Literacy:

It is planned that DEAR will continue with first and second years, discussions with staff will take place to evaluate the current system and make adjustments if required. It is hoped that all first years will watch a presentation by local librarian about the library and what it has to offer. Whole school resources will be made available on Compass. These will focus on reflective language for each subject.

Whole school literacy initiatives will take place over the course of the year- World Book Day/ Whole School DEAR

First and second year students will be invited to participate in An Post Literacy competitions. Oral Literacy information to be included on insights on the Compass App for student and parents to access as an additional support to their learning.

Numeracy:

Whole school focus on percentages and distance

First and second year students to participate in An Post Numeracy competition

Maths and numeracy competitions to be held over the course of the year

Staff reinforcement of distance and percentages within their class groups

Liaison will continue with maths department regarding whole school numeracy needs going forward.

Formative Assessment Practices:

Reflection:

A function has been added to the Compass App called Insights. Students have access to this function on their App. Teachers can formulate reflective questions following an event that students can answer. This information is stored in their App and can be accessed in future years. It is hoped that these reflections can help 3rd students to formulate their 'other areas of learning'

statement. This will be used with 1st years to reflect on their 1st week in the school and their experience of their induction into the school. It will also be utilised for whole school assemblies on *wellbeing* giving each student an opportunity to reflect on the theme by answering specific questions uploaded on 'insights'.

Transition Year Students will use 'google sites' to create digital portfolios. Reflection is a central theme when building their portfolio.

Tara 365 will provide external training for all staff on three methods of providing formative feedback to students including; google forms, rubrics and quizlet.

PDST will give a presentation on various strategies that can enhance formative assessment practices in the classroom. Three teams will be developed focusing on one of the following three areas. It is envisaged that the teachers trained by the PDST will provide 'teach meets' for the remainder of the staff to share their expertise in these areas. The areas of focus are:

Team 1 - The use of graphic organisers - KWHL, Fishbone, summarisation strategies

Team 2 - Embedding Digital Technologies into our Classrooms - Thinglink & Mentimeter

Team 3 - An introduction to digital technology tools for teaching and learning. Padlet/ Jamboard /Quizlet.

Teaching and Learning Skills

Main **digital learning** target next year will be to embed the practice of using google sites to create digital portfolios for all TY students. These portfolios will also be a form of formative assessment for all TYs.

Introduce the use of rubrics amongst senior cycle teachers and students as a means of formative assessment.

Use google forms to provide JC students with formative assessment feedback. Training will be provided by Tara 365 on how to formulate both google forms and rubrics at a SIP meeting in September.

1st and 2nd Years will continue to receive training from the digital team on how to utilise google classroom effectively for consolidation of learning.

Engagement in Learning:

Organisation Skills:

The main focus will be on 1st and 2nd years this year. Due to the large amount of time both year groups have lost due to Covid it was agreed that additional support would be required to help them engage in their learning.

1st Year Induction Week:

A new induction plan was formulated with a view of providing a supportive transition for the new 1st years in their first week in CCS.

Activities include: Guiding students on how to use their locker effectively. How best to follow their timetable. Colour coding of each subject and linking it to the colours on their timetable for continuity. How best to record their homework in their journal and checking work assigned on their google classroom. Help in how to create an effective study space. Guidance will also be provided in the development of mind maps and on how to create an effective study plan.

The Guidance Department will arrange a virtual guest speaker Ray Langan to give a two hour seminar on **Study Skills** for all 6th and 3rd year students the first week of this academic year.

Each 1st, 2nd and 5th year class group will be provided with a double class (1 hour 20 minutes) class facilitated by a guidance counsellor on study skills.

This will enhance the student's toolbox of skills to enable greater cognitive engagement, analysis and evaluation skills. It is envisaged these initiatives will promote and nurture student self-directed learning whilst complementing and extending opportunities for students to actively participate in differentiated learning experiences. This will be strengthened by the digital learning platform where students especially 1st years and students new to the school are tutored in the usage of G-suite.

A folder on the Compass app will be made available to students and parents called 'School Documentation' which contains a variety of teaching and learning and wellbeing support material.

Graphic Organisers and Flash Cards will be made available to all students from their Year Heads and those attending evening study will have access to templates in their study classroom to encourage greater engagement in their learning.

2. Findings

2.1 This is effective / very effective practice in our school

List the main strengths of the school in teaching and learning.

- Staff and students have become more proficient in utilising the digital learning platform on Google classroom due to on-going support from the Digital Team and outside agencies e.g. Tara 365.
- Google classroom is being used to communicate work covered in class and to record homework, giving students an opportunity to access this information if absent from school.
- The Compass app has become an effective forum for communicating with students, staff and parents.
- Comprehensive support material has been uploaded on the compass app under 'school documentation' to assist teaching and learning in the school community. This will soon be made available to parents and students. Teachers can currently access it.
- Comprehensive training has been provided for staff, students and parents on how to utilise the Compass App to maximum effect.
- Collaboration has improved due to the use of google classroom and google drive not only between teachers and students but also by subject departments and various other teams in the school community e.g. healthy eating committee.
- Student voice is central to all research carried out by the SSE team either by surveys on google forms, participating in focus groups or communications with the student council.
- The SSE website has been updated and work is continuing on how to make it more visual and accessible to whole school community.
- Structured teacher wellbeing initiatives are practiced throughout the year including the 'step challenge'.
- A word bank has been developed in each subject department that includes formative assessment language allowing for more targeted feedback to students when reports are posted on compass.
- PDST training is on-going. The focus for this academic year is 'formative assessment practices'

2.2. This is how we know

List the evidence sources. Refer to students' dispositions, attainment, knowledge and skills.

- **Teaching & Learning Skills:**

Digital Learning Platform was embedded during this academic year 2020/21.

Building on the findings from the previous academic year further research was carried out in 2020/21.

In October 2020 all students were surveyed and in January 2021 all staff was surveyed.

Student survey findings:

The main focus was to investigate how students managed with remote learning at home during the first lockdown in term 2 and 3 2020.

60% of the student body responded to the survey with the following findings:

- 97.4% have broadband access although 50% of these used a combination of home broadband and data from their phone. However 40% stated that their broadband was only ok to bad. This highlighted the challenge presented to some students to access live classes or pre-recorded videos and to upload assignments.
- 99.1% have smart phones
- 84.4% bring their smart phone to school
- 90% of students used their smart phone to access google classroom at times.
- 70% had access to a tablet but only 41% had access to a laptop. This posed difficulties when trying to type up assignments and upload them to google classroom.
- 83.9% had their own device be it a smart phone, tablet or laptop that did not need to be shared. Anecdotally those with laptops had to share them with other family members limiting their access to them.

Students were also asked '*what can teachers do to help when learning on line*'. The following responses were noted:

- Video calls/ live classes allowed for more interaction.
- It is important that teachers give clear instructions.
- Many were over whelmed by the large number of assignments posted daily for each subject.
- Videos explaining how to do a question were very helpful.
- Feedback via voice notes e.g. mote were beneficial.
- Some found it hard to use certain apps e.g. cam scanner and needed more instruction on how to use it effectively.
- Uploading of documents was a difficult task for some.

This information assisted management in their planning for remote learning going forward. Teachers were informed of these findings giving them a greater understanding of the challenges many of our students faced remotely. It guided the digital team on the areas that required additional training for students.

Staff survey findings:

The main focus of this research in *mid-January 2021* was to give teachers an opportunity to express areas where additional support in the area of digital learning was required due to the second lockdown which resulted in remote teaching and learning. 80% of teachers responded to this survey.

The findings included:

- 77% of teachers felt more competent on line than they did in the first lockdown. This increased competency was down to two main factors. One that further training had been provided in term 1 of 2020 (Sept-Dec) and two that teachers had embedded the practice of utilising google classroom frequently in all their classes so both the students and teachers were more familiar with its workings.

Through the survey teachers highlighted what had made them more competent:

- More familiar with on-line teaching and learning tools.
- Their Google classroom knowledge had increased.
- Students had more IT skills
- The provision of a tablet by management to all teachers was very beneficial for correcting homework uploaded on google classroom by students.
- The voice note function, 'mote' allowed for fast and effective formative feedback for students on the work they submitted.
- Teachers were now far more confident with having live classes or pre-recording classes.

Recommendations from teachers:

Teachers more competent in digital strategies suggested tools that they found beneficial in their remote teaching. These included:

Screen Castify, Mote, Pre-recorded lessons, Quizlet, Google docs, Scheduling pre-recorded classes, Google Meets i.e. live classes, Cam Scanner.

Great collaboration was practiced amongst colleagues in training those who needed additional support on how to use these digital strategies. Short concise videos were shared on google drive that all staff members could access to explain various functions.

2.3 This is what we are going to focus on to improve our practice further

Specify the aspects of teaching and learning the school has identified and prioritised for further improvement.

- **Compass:** Continue with training to show the capacity of this App for staff, students and teachers.
- A folder on the **Compass app** will be made available to students and parents called ‘*School Documentation*’ which contains a variety of teaching and learning and wellbeing support material.
- Continue to use the specific department word banks to communicate **formative feedback when reporting** on students’ progress.
- **Collaboration:** Continue to strengthen the use of the shared folders on the shared google drive. Building on the climate of sharing resources amongst colleagues and utilisation of the G suite, Compass and Google Docs amongst staff & staff and staff & students.
- 1st and 2nd Years will continue to receive **training** from the digital team on how to utilise google classroom effectively for consolidation of learning.
- Continue to **develop the use of google classroom** amongst staff and students for assessment and learning by posting content covered in class and posting of homework to inform students absent from school of the work they need to focus on.
- **Utilising google classroom as a form of assessment** by students uploading assignments assigned by teachers.
- **Promotion of student voice** through surveys, focus groups and student council.
- **SSE tab on website:** further development of the SSE tab on our school website the main focus being to make it user friendly. The vision is to provide a forum where parents and students can access clear relevant information which will strengthen their learning in literacy, numeracy and relevant topics.
- **Teacher wellbeing:** Work with the teacher wellbeing coordinator on strategies which can support staff through this challenging academic year.
- Greater monitoring of individual progress: by continuing to encourage more targeted discussions within departments regarding student progress. The **insights** section on Compass can be utilised to monitor their targets.
- Encourage students to fill out **insights** uploaded on their compass app mainly in the area of **wellbeing** allowing students to **reflect** on their practices.
- Tara 365 will provide external training for all staff on three methods of communicating **formative feedback** to students including; google forms, rubrics and quizlet.
- Teachers explore **formative assessment methodologies:** by attending **CPD** in small groups with a PDST facilitator. Three groups will be formed. Those trained will facilitate ‘teach meets’ in the strategies they learn in these training sessions. This training will support staff in developing strategies for differentiation in the classroom.
- **Graphic Organisers and Flash Cards** will be made available to all students from their Year Heads and those attending evening study will have access to templates in their study classroom to encourage greater engagement in their learning.
- To **strengthen engagement in learning** through teaching 1st years how to **organise their learning** in various ways as outlined in the School Improvement Plan and carry this through with 2nd years.

- Continue to support **Literacy** initiatives as outlined in School Improvement Plan including the DEAR programme and the use of reflective language.
- Continue to support **Numeracy** initiatives as outlined in School Improvement Plan including embedding distance and percentages into every subject area.
- To **complete the targets** on the actions outlined in the School Improvement Plan 2021-22 where practical and possible under the current restrictions and loss of tuition time in the past two academic years.

3. Our improvement plan

On the next page we have recorded:

- The **targets** for improvement we have set
- The **actions** we will implement to achieve these
- **Who is responsible** for implementing, monitoring and reviewing our improvement plan
- How we will measure **progress** and check **outcomes** (criteria for success)

As we implement our improvement plan we will record:

- The **progress** made, and **adjustments** made, and **when**
- **Achievement of targets** (original and modified), and **when**



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