

Reports to Board of Management on Teaching & Learning during the Academic Year 2015/2016

November 2015

A Maths Inspection in October 2015 had resulted in very positive verbal feedback to the Maths Department by the Inspector Seamus Knox. The Board will receive an opportunity to make a written reply on publication of the inspection report.

The DEIS Plan will be brought to the Board for its consideration and ratification in 2016.

The new St Francis Xavier Scholarship will be awarded to one student from the school's 2014/15 Sixth Year cohort who is now attending university.

December 2015

1. The Introduction of 'Growth Mindset' in First Year

The introduction of 'Growth Mindset' into First Year was reported. The first year of post primary school is crucial in enabling students to develop the mindset to succeed at school. If those habits can be embedded at this early stage then the journey through second-level education can be smoother and much more rewarding. 'Growth Mindset' involves developing a culture of growing your intelligence in First Year and encouraging students to change their language from "I can't do this" to "this may take some time and effort". Displays in the corridors and classroom encourage students to change their language. First Year Students have completed a Growth Mindset survey.

All First Year students complete a weekly learning reflection journal. Students reflect upon weekly achievements, mistakes that they made during the week that helped them learn, what they found difficult during the week and challenges for the following week. Using the reflection journal, students choose an achievement for the first term. These achievements are then displayed on an achievement wall.

2. Teaching and Learning Club

The Teaching and Learning Club was set up last year for teachers. The Teaching and Learning Club usually meet for about forty minutes at a time. At each meeting a skill, strategy or organiser is shared by teachers. Teachers give feedback on how the innovations are working in their classrooms and bring samples of student work. Teachers have agreed to trial two teaching strategies each from the Junior Cycle CPD day. Feedback on the strategies will be shared by teachers in the Teaching and Learning Club in January.

3. The Principal's Observation of A Collaborative Lesson

The following report was written by two teachers who had invited the Principal to observe their collaborative lesson:

'In response to the recommendation from the school's Whole-School Evaluation Management, Leadership and Learning Report that, "The Principal and Deputy Principal should observe lessons as an additional means of providing on-going feedback and encouragement to teachers".

In furthering our participation in the Teacher Collaboration programme we invited the Principal to observe a double lesson (21st September 2015) taught by us in collaboration.

Having planned and taught the lesson, the two teachers met in the afternoon to evaluate the lesson. We agreed that the learner outcomes had been achieved. Aspects which went well included: use of ICT as a learning aid; student activity, engagement and participation; group work; questioning; choice and effectiveness of AfL strategies. Aspects we would revise were teacher exposition at the beginning and more use of differentiated tasks.

The feedback session took the form of a dialogue where the Principal commended many aspects of the lesson. It was clear that for the Principal the purpose was lesson observation and not teacher observation. Our feedback dialogue was an educational discussion where we exchanged ideas about the lesson. The feedback from the Principal was extremely positive, encouraging and affirmative.'

The next step for the two teachers will involve encouraging and supporting other members in the Religion Department to engage in an Observed Lesson.

March 2016

A comprehensive presentation on the school's involvement with the Dublin & Dun Laoghaire Education & Training Board iTunesU project was made to the Board.

A report on the involvement by a number of subject departments in a school-based collaborative lesson planning project was presented to the Board. The Board expressed their wish that all subject departments would engage in this professional development opportunity, in particular the core subjects of Irish, English and Mathematics.

April 2016

Tuesday March 15th 2016 was designated 'Proclamation Day' for schools in Ireland. The following report on the school's celebration of Proclamation Day was presented to the Board:

'The First Year Head and First Year History teachers facilitated all First Year students in writing their own proclamations for a new generation. These were put on display around the school.

The School Librarian and Writer in Residence worked with the Inklings writers' group to write a proclamation for a new generation on behalf of all the students.

A formal commemorative ceremony was held with staff and student representatives which comprised of:

- An address by the Principal
- A reading of the Proclamation for a New Generation by a student from Inklings writers' group
- The raising of our National Flag
- The playing of our National Anthem

Transition Year students had been working on group projects on the theme "Commemorating 1916" and displayed the projects around the assembly hall on the day. First Year and Third Year students were invited to view the projects and participate in an interactive quiz, helping them to learn more and commemorate the events of 1916.

The group projects were judged and prizes were awarded by the Deputy Principal and two Fifth Year students (who were the winners of the Transition Year group project competition last year). Transition Year students also held their own formal commemorative ceremony in the afternoon.'

June 2016

A report on the Next Step Programme which is a Second-Level Transfer Educational Programme, designed by the two staff members involved in the programme in 2015/16, was presented. The Board wished that their thanks be conveyed to the staff involved in the programme.

The Board considered and ratified the DEIS Plan.

Principal's Reports made to the Board of Management during the Academic Year 2016/2017

November 2015

The 2014/15 Report from the Student Council was presented to the Board.

The ETB booklet 'Know Your School/College' was circulated to the members. A number of sections, including the section on student enrolment, had been completed by the Principal and these were noted and discussed by the members.

December 2015

Strategic Planning 2015/2016

The following report on Strategic Planning was included in the Principal's Report: 'One of the main functions of the Board of Management as outlined in the ETBI document "Board of Management Functions and Responsibilities" is Strategic Planning. One of the recommendations in our WSE MLL 2014 Report is that the BOM should engage in "long-term strategic planning" for the school. Our new DEIS planning cycle has now commenced with a report coming to the BOM in 2016. It would be appropriate for a Strategic planning process to run alongside this cycle. The school planning cycle (2013-2016) is now coming to an end. Priority will then be given to identifying new areas for development.

In consultation with the Management Team and the Student Support Team, a comprehensive document has been drafted which identifies areas of school life under the headings: Curricular, Pastoral and Administrative Provision. Also listed are reflective future-focused questions pertaining to these headings.

In January 2016, agreed values and vision will serve as the context in which the reflective questions will then be evaluated and prioritised to identify areas for further development. Staff working groups will then be formed to develop these areas with updates provided to the BOM.'

Guide to Policy Writing

'A Guide to Policy Writing' was presented to the Board.

CSPE In-service – A new model

A CSPE in-service took place on Monday 14th December. The purpose of the in-service was to respond to the desire of some teachers to receive support in teaching aspects of the syllabus.

Prior to the in-service, CSPE teachers completed a Learning Needs Analysis to identify their specific area of need so that the best use of time could be made at the meeting. A programme was then delivered by the CSPE Co-ordinator. The teachers used the school iPads during the in-service whereby they actively engaged with the content, experienced the benefit of AfL strategies and ICT as a Learning Aid and shared best practice ideas.

All teachers present were very happy with the in-service and highly recommend it as a possible model for other short school based in-services in the future.

March 2016

The Principal reported that:

The first phase in replacing the school roof had been completed.

The school awaits the outcome of the application under the summer works 2016 programme to have the remaining sections of the roof replaced.

Progress continues in relation to strategic planning and a full report will issue to the Board in due course.

The DES draft report on the Inspection of Mathematics was brought to the attention of the Board. The members offered their congratulations to the subject co-ordinator and teachers of Mathematics.

April 2016

An Assistant Principal joined the meeting and made a presentation on the school's engagement in a Strategic Planning Process. Following the presentation, the Board considered the proposed new mission statement for the school, the shared vision statement for the school and a school self-evaluation 2015/2016 document including the school self-evaluation report on numeracy. It was agreed that the Board members would review the above documents and agree to ratify them, pending any suggested amendments being brought to the attention of the Principal, by Tuesday 19th April.

June 2016

The Principal reported that further correspondence had been received from the HSE regarding the proposed building of a Primary Care centre on a corner site on the school's grounds. She advised the members that she would keep them updated on any new developments.