

Literacy-Spelling and Vocabulary-Review January 2020

1. Introduction

A school self-evaluation of teaching and learning in Literacy was undertaken by the Staff of St. Fergus' N.S. The focus of the evaluation were the areas of spelling and vocabulary throughout the school.

This is a report on the finding of that evaluation.

A review of this SSE was undertaken by staff in January 2020 and discussed at a Staff Meeting on Wednesday 15th January 2020. Areas in re are findings of that review.

2. School Context

- This is a vertical, mixed, rural primary school operating under the jurisdiction of Bishop Breandáin Leahy.
- There are currently 126 pupils enrolled in the school. 132 enrolled in January 2020.
- There are 7 teachers (5 class teachers including a teaching principal, 2 full time Special Education Teachers and 1 Shared S.E.T. for 10 hours per week. This S.E.T. is based in Ballyguiltenane N.S.)
- There are 2 full time S.N.A.s working within the school. One full time and one S.N.A. on an Infant Day.
- The school administers standardised tests in Mathematics and English from 1st to 6th classes in May/June each year. These are the Drumcondra Reading Test and S.I.G.M.A-T.

All Junior Infants are screened in the second term using the B.I.A.P. (Belfield Infant Assessment Profile)

The M.I.S.T. (Middle Infant Screening Test) is administered to Senior Infants in the Second Term. The SWST (Single Word Spelling Test) is administered to all classes from 1st (6 year olds in Senior Infants are included in this test) to 6th classes in November of each year. This is used to facilitate differentiated spelling tests for pupils. Staff feel that the SWST is proving very difficult for those children who are 6 years old. The majority are coming out with spelling ages of 5:10yrs (8 out of 9 pupils tested in November 2019). We question if it is too difficult for children of this age.

3. Results of the SWST for the years 2016 and 2017 were used to form a basis for this report.

4. Results in Vocabulary Sections of the Drumcondra Reading Test were also studied for the purposes of this report.

5. Teacher observations were also used.

6. The Findings:

➤ When we studied the tracker children* for spelling through the school, it was found that of the 12 children, 7 children's spelling ages had improved by more than 12 months in the last year. The average increase in spelling age across the 12 students was 1yr and 2 months. In January 2020, the review of Tracker Children found that of the 18 children being followed, 9 were behind their chronological age in spelling and 9 were above. It should be noted that of the Sixth Class Children tracked each of them was above their chronological age in spelling and were found to have spelling ages of 13:05+

➤ When we studied the tracker children* for vocabulary through the school, it was found that of the 10 children, 8 children's STENs (scores out of ten) had improved or stayed the same in the last 12 months.

In January 2020, the review of Tracker Children found that of the 12 children being tracked from Third to Sixth Class, 9 children have seen a drop in STENs and 3 have remained the same since the introduction of the New Drumcondra Reading Test, as drops were expected. In Second Class results, 16 of the 19 pupils had met the criteria, with 3 approaching the criteria for that assessment. We will need to see another year to evaluate the progress properly.

7. Our school has strengths in the following areas

- Standardised test results show that teaching and learning in the areas of Spelling and Vocabulary remain good.
- Spelling and Vocabulary are specifically taught in our school and is assigned set time in class timetables through the school.
- Teachers feel that Literacy is taught to a high standard within the school and that we are differentiating where necessary for the needs of each child. Test results corroborate this belief.
- Assessment of Learning and Assessment for learning are used by the teachers in our school.
- A positive attitude towards Literacy is also fostered.
- Most children in the school state that they like reading.
- The introduction of guided reading and pupils reading at a level at which they can engage has had a positive impact on reading levels within the school.

8. Vocabulary development and spelling will continue to be a focus in the school year 2018/19. The following areas are prioritised for focus;
- ✓ Implementation of the New Primary Language Curriculum in full from Junior Infants-2nd Class and the area of Oral Language from 3rd-6th Classes.
 - ✓ Introduction of a new planning template for teachers which refers to the learning outcomes and the progression milestones and steps for literacy as referred to in the N.P.L.C.
 - ✓ Improve children's vocabulary through use of "Word a Day" books in senior classes.
 - ✓ Introduction of Guided Reading throughout the school.
 - ✓ Introduction of a staged Oral Language Programme from Junior Infants-2nd Class.
 - ✓ Use of pre and post learning tests in spellings from Rang 1-Rang 6.
 - ✓ Introduction of Cursive Writing throughout the school.
9. Following Classroom Teacher observation and study by S.E.T.s of Comprehension Scores through the school, we believe that Comprehension skills and more specifically, the retelling and sequencing of a story will be the focus of our S.S.E. for the 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 school years. Tracker children in this area have been pin pointed through looking at Comprehension Standard Scores in the Drumcondra Reading Tests (New) which are administered each May.

Year	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3
2019-2020	Review and study of tracker children's scores in Drumcondra Reading Test and SWST-whole staff Comprehension Box/Literacy Box Activities	Each class to engage in at least one spelling app-each teacher.	I-pad trolley to be sourced-Mrs Dalton Each class to engage in picture of the week style language activities. Junior Classes-Pobble365 Senior Classes-NY Times/ National Geographic
2020-2021	Word a Day Retelling of a Story	Idiom of the Week Sequencing of a Story	Internal School Spelling Bee
2021-2022	Eason Spelling Bee	Putting a Story back together	

10. The legislative and regulatory requirements have been addressed.

*The term “tracker children” refers to a sample of children within a class grouping. Staff refer to the work/results of these children when studying the progress of students in a certain area of learning (in this case spelling and vocabulary development). It would not be viable for all pupils to be tracked for this purpose and so a random sample of pupils are taken and followed for statistical purposes.

Ratified Board of Management Meeting 11/3/2020

Signed: Tommy Barrett

CHAIRPERSON BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

Signed: Deirdre Kennelly

PRINCIPAL