St Paul's Secondary School, Oughterard

OUR SELF-EVALUATION REPORT AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN

In the last year, we have looked at teaching and learning in our school to find out what we are doing well. This is what we discovered:

- Teachers encourage a positive atmosphere in lessons where students are happy to offer answers or raise questions which are valuable learning opportunities.

- ICT is used effectively by many teachers to enhance and support teaching and learning.

- Questioning is used very well to scaffold and support learning, to keep students on track, to assess the level of understanding and to promote learning.

- In lessons where high expectations are set for the quality of students' work, it is obvious that students strive to achieve these high standards.

- The majority of students have experienced a vast range of formative assessment strategies e.g. self-assessment, peer-assessment, mini-whiteboards, brainstorming, etc.

This is what we did to find out what we were doing well, and what we could do better:

- A range of students completed an online survey relating to their experience of AfL in the classroom.

- A survey of 2nd year parents was conducted during a parent teacher meeting to assess their attitudes towards assessment.

- Teachers completed an online survey to attain their perspectives towards assessment in our school and to examine their use of AfL strategies in the classroom.

- State Examination results were analysed to give an overview as to how our Leaving Certificate results compare to the national norms.

- Reports from the Department of Education and Skills Inspections were analysed.

*AfL: Assessment for Learning is about using assessment in the classroom as a tool to improve students' learning.

This is what we are now going to work on:

- Increase the amount of written feedback students receive on their formative/summative assessment to allow them to focus on their individual areas for improvement.

- Incorporation of learning intentions at the beginning and ending of each lesson to allow students to be aware of what their teacher requires them to know, understand and be able to do following the lesson.

- Sharing the criteria for success with students on a more regular basis in order for them to acknowledge the standard required of particular learning intentions.

This is what you can do to help:

- Encourage your son/daughter to take the time to read through their written feedback, express any concerns/questions they may have with the teacher and more importantly, to take comments on board with the aim of improving the next time.

- Remind you son/daughter that they must take responsibility for their own learning and to be the best that they can be.

Here is some information about how we are carrying out our work and about what the Department of Education and Skills requires us to do.

School time and holidays

The Department requires all post-primary schools to have **167 school days** each year, and a **28-hour school week**.
Last year we had 165 school days, from 28th August to 1st June. Our school week is 28 hours.

The Department sets out a **standardised school year and school holidays**.
This year we took all our school holidays within the permitted time.   YES / NO

The Department sets out arrangements for **parent/teacher meetings and staff meetings**.
Last year we had 7   parent/teacher meetings and 7 staff meetings, all in line with the Department's regulations.

Looking after the children in our school

The Department requires schools to a Child Safeguarding Statement (C.S.S).
Our board of management has ratified the school's C.S.S.   YES / NO
All teachers know about the Statement and we have told
all parents and students about it and where to find it   YES / NO

Our Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is Mrs Orla Malone.
Our Deputy DLP is Mr Micheál Ó'Frighil.

Enrolment and attendance

The Department requires schools to have and publish an admissions policy, to record and report attendance accurately, and to encourage high attendance and participation.

We have an admissions policy and it is published. YES / NO
We updated our admissions policy on: June 2018

We keep accurate attendance records and report them as required. YES / NO

We encourage high attendance in the following ways:

- The importance of good attendance is highlighted at assemblies
- Attendance is discussed at Parent Teacher Meetings and Student Council Meetings.
- Teachers positively affirm attendance while taking roll call.
- A record of attendance is included in school reports.
- The Student Council have a 'Wellness Week' each year which promotes positive mental health and good nutrition for students. This helps to encourage students to stay well.
- Attendance is an item discussed at Board Meetings and Staff Meetings.
- A prize is given for the best attenders in Transition Year.

This is how you can help:

- To ensure regular and punctual attendance of students every school day and to avoid absences.
- To ring school on first day of absence.
- To provide written explanation of student's absence on 1st day of return to school.
- To inform school in advance of any planned absences from school
- To provide the school with reliable contact details/numbers.
- To acknowledge and, where necessary reply to communications from the school in relation to attendance issues.
- Any student who needs to leave the school during the school day must be collected and signed out by a Parent/Guardian at reception and students sign in on return.

Positive behaviour for a happy school

The Department requires schools to have a code of behaviour, and asks us to consult parents and students about it. We do this. YES / NO

Our code of behaviour describes and supports positive behaviour. YES / NO

We have a very clear and high-profile anti-bullying policy in our school. YES / NO