

St. Mary's Parish Primary School

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School Self-Evaluation: Numeracy

School self-evaluation of teaching and learning is part of the ongoing work of St. Mary's Parish Primary School. The focus of our self-evaluation for 2013/14 was numeracy, with a particular focus on problem-solving skills in mathematics.

Approach:

Analysis of the standardised test results revealed that, while results were generally good, there was some scope for improvement in the area of problem-solving. In keeping with the aims and objectives of the curriculum it was felt that a student's ability to apply mathematical concepts and knowledge to real-world problems must be at the heart of any mathematics education. Accordingly it was decided that further analysis should be carried out to further identify areas where we could improve our teaching of problem solving and to determine the most effective actions to address these weaknesses. A detailed survey was completed by all staff members to examine existing classroom practice with regard to the teaching of problem-solving. Similarly a survey of pupils was carried out which looked primarily at their attitudes towards mathematics and their experience and of different methodologies in the classroom.

Findings:

Analysis of the standardised test results revealed that overall numeracy results were slightly above average. The level of pupil interest and participation in mathematics is high and there is a very positive disposition and attitude towards mathematics among students. The needs and abilities of all pupils are catered for in the course of lessons though effective differentiation of provision. A number of areas for improvement were also identified. There is a need for an increased focus on the formal teaching of problem-solving along with the provision of a wider range of relevant resources. More time should be devoted to exploring mathematics in the wider environment beyond the confines of the classroom and students should have greater access to ICT in their learning.

Action Plan:

Based on the evidence gathered with respect to problem solving, the school identified improvement targets related to pupils achievement. In order to work towards these targets a timeline of activities will be implemented over a 3 year period (2014-2017). The action plan will focus on the following areas:

- **Provision of resources:** the school will need to ensure that all classes have access to appropriate materials. In terms of problem solving this will include a variety of manipulatives and the compilation of a suitable bank of word problems.
- **Continued Professional Development:** CPD will be organised for all staff on problem-solving in mathematics and also in the use of ICT in mathematics.
- **Classroom Practice:** teachers will ensure that:
 - A greater range of problem-solving strategies are formally taught in the class.
 - There is an increase in the amount of class time devoted to problem solving in mathematics
 - Greater opportunities will be provided for collaborative / independent work.
 - Greater use is made of the wider school environment for problem-solving activity.
 - Students have more regular opportunity to access ICT as part of their learning. This will include using ICT for problem-solving in mathematics.
 - Mathematics (and particularly problem solving) displays will be utilised in all classes.