

De La Salle College

Newtown

Waterford

School Roll Number 64950o

## **School Self- Evaluation Report**

Evaluation period: September 2017 to May 2018

Report issue date: June 2018

### **INTRODUCTION**

A school self-evaluation of teaching and learning across all subject departments and programmes in De La Salle College will take place during the academic year 2017/18.

De La Salle College Waterford is an all-boys Catholic school. It is a learning community where all students are valued and educated in preparation for a meaningful life. The school offers the Junior Certificate, Junior Certificate Schools Programme (JCSP), Transition Year, Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) and Leaving Certificate programme to its students. We have an enrolment of 1130 students in 2017/2018. The schools catchment area includes Waterford City, Co. Waterford (East), South Kilkenny and South Tipperary. De La Salle College Waterford is an all-boys Catholic School under the trusteeship of Le Chéile. The college is managed by a Board of Management, is funded by the Department of Education and Skills. De La Salle College Waterford was founded in 1891 by the De La Salle Brothers and serves as a Catholic school for boys. De La Salle College Waterford seeks to promote an atmosphere of friendliness, discipline and co-operation where everyone can experience respect, encouragement and support. While every school is a community in which adults and young people live and work together, the La Sallian School is

inspired by the vision of St. John Baptist De La Salle that Gospel values must permeate the life of a Catholic school in such a way that students internalise those values and reflect them in their behaviour.

## **OUTCOMES OF OUR LAST IMPROVEMENT PLAN FROM 2014-2018.**

### **Literacy targets & progress**

#### ***Print rich environment (Visual)***

There are many new notice boards on the corridors for many subject departments. A new reading room has opened in the school (DEAR has been introduced). The TY class have surveyed students in regards to the most popular books being read by them.

#### ***To continue, and to develop further the use of "key word list" across all subject areas. (Written)***

"Literacy development has a clear visibility in geography classrooms. This is evident through the emphasis on understanding and on the correct spelling of key geographical terminology and through the development of students' reading towards their comprehension of geographical concepts and topics. These ongoing strategies reflect the geography teachers' translation of whole-school improvement planning into the classroom" (Geography subject inspection, 26/11/15)

#### ***Oral literacy- to encourage more class discussion within the classroom***

Improved literacy and oral skills as measured by data (PISA Reading our school average 83.5 SD, National average 78.4 SD). The number of students taking Higher Level English in DLS is 83% (An increase by 5% since 2014) the National average is 79%. There has been an increase in the number of students participating in oral presentations in the current academic year.

### **Numeracy targets & progress**

A continuation of Numeracy strategies have been put in place in the current academic year. A Numeracy week now takes place in the school. There are now numeracy noticeboards and a visible numeracy rich environment. The number of students taking Higher level Maths in 2017 was 58% (An increase of

1% since 2014), the National average taking Higher level Maths is 57%. All subject Departments have numeracy on their agenda at subject planning meetings and have incorporated numeracy into their subject plans.

### **Differentiation/Effective Questioning targets & progress**

The targets in this area include allowing a sufficient “wait time” for students to think and formulate an answer before taking responses, Planning questions in advance of class and using a “no hand rule”. The main findings of the Geography inspection , November 2015 stated *“Key whole-school initiatives that include differentiated teaching and learning strategies and the development of students’ literacy, are evident in classroom planning and practice in Geography”* *“ use of clear and effective differentiated strategies”*. *“The quality and level of questioning was excellent in that it engaged, encouraged and affirmed students”*. All subject departments have differentiation and effective questioning on their agenda at subject planning meetings and is incorporated into their subject plans.

### **Formative feedback and peer assessment targets and progress**

The targets set for 2017/18 were to allow sufficient time for students to consider/reflect on feedback they receive, to encourage students to give feedback to each other using an agreed structured approach and all teachers are encouraged to use an agreed template when providing feedback.

### **The focus of this evaluation**

We undertook self-evaluation of teaching and learning during the period September 2017 to May 2018. We evaluated the following aspects of teaching and learning.

- Preparation for teaching- All lessons should have a clear learning objective/outcome displayed either on whiteboard or through ICT at the beginning of each lesson and stated orally. The aim is for learning intentions to reflect a developmental and incremental approach to progressing students’ learning.
- Homework – All teachers need to endeavour to write the homework on the board. Time should be given to take down the homework in the

student journal. If no homework is assigned teachers should encourage students to note down in journal and revise what was covered in class.

- Learning environment – To promote the use of effective groupwork within classrooms as a key aspect to strong teaching and learning.

The following are the **findings** from the Staff Survey carried out in March 2018 (Google Docs VSware)

1. Do you currently use group work in your class
  - Never 2.8%
  - Rarely 16.7%
  - Sometimes 58.3%
  - Often 22.2%
2. In general, do you think group-work is beneficial
  - Yes 61.1%
  - No 2.8%
  - Maybe 36.1%
3. Would you be willing to use group work more in your classroom
  - Yes 86.1%
  - No 13.9%
4. When assigning homework what method of presentation is used
  - Stated orally 2.8%
  - Presented on board 5.5%
  - Combination of both 91.7%
5. Do you give adequate time to ensure students record their homework in their school journals
  - Yes 88.9%
  - No 11.1%
6. Do you conduct checks to see if students are recording homework
  - Yes 55.5%
  - No 44.5%
7. Do you think it would be a good idea to give students an allocated time during class to record homework in their journals
  - Yes 88.9%
  - No 11.1%

8. Do you display your learning outcomes on the board at the beginning of each lesson
  - Yes 41.6%
  - No 58.4%
9. Do you think it would be beneficial to share learning outcomes at the beginning of each lesson
  - Yes 91.7%
  - No 8.3%

A focus group comprising of a selection of 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> year students took place on 9<sup>th</sup> May 2018. The **findings** are as follow:

### **1. Learning Intentions**

Learning intentions describe clearly what the teachers want the students to know, understand and be able to do as a result of learning and teaching activities.

- Do any of your teachers state learning intentions at the start of class?  
Students reported that approximately half of their teachers do state learning intentions at the start of the class.
- Do you think it is a worthwhile idea?  
9/9 = 100% of students think it is a worthwhile idea
- And if so, why?
  - “gives the student an idea of what they’re going to learn in that lesson and this will help the student to focus during the lesson”.
  - “it allows you to get your mind ready as you know what’s coming”.
  - “you know what you’re going to be doing”
  - “will help understanding”

- “students will know what they will have to be able to do by the end and then they will be able to do their homework”
  - “allows me to learn more during class and understand the topic better”.
  - “keeps us on track”
- Would you prefer to visually see it on the board or hear it orally?
    - Students said that they would like to be able to see it and hear it. If it’s written on the board the students felt that they will be able to look at it throughout the lesson and this would remind them of their own learning possibilities that may occur during the lesson.
    - One student said that it depends on the class and that each teacher should ask at the start of the year whether the students would prefer to see the learning intentions on the board or hear them.

## **2. Groupwork**

- Have you used groupwork in class?
  - All students reported that that they have participated in Group Work in class.
  - They felt the success of groupwork depends on the class group, the classroom, the content, the teacher and the subject.
  - Some said they think it is more suitable for some subjects rather than other subjects.
- Do you think Groupwork is beneficial/worthwhile. Why?
  - “You get to hear what other people think”

- “Helps to become a better team player”
  - “if you get stuck, someone will help you”
  - “improves communication skills”
  - “can be fun and makes learning fun and enjoyable”
  - “brilliant in language subjects”
  - “not suitable for all subjects, e.g. maths or BST”
  - Good for socialising and improving communication
  - Feels good if you help others.
  - Great to be able to hear other students opinions
  - A student will help others some days in some classes and will be the one receiving the help on a different day in a different lesson. It works both ways.
  - It is important to learn from your peers.
- What are the drawbacks of using Groupwork?
    - Some students said they would prefer to work on their own.
    - It can lead to chatting and going off task.
    - Some students prefer to work on their own.
    - Some students get distracted easily.
    - Some tasks can take longer to complete.
    - Sometimes there can be a dictator in the group who thinks he knows it all.
    - Weaker students tend to stay quiet.
    - The teacher needs to monitor the work all the time.
    - Some students do not “pull their weight”.
    - Lack of continuity if the group changes regularly.
- Would you like groupwork to be used more?
    - Yes (all students said they would like if it was used more).
- What advice/tips would you give to teachers when using groupwork?

- Walk around the class all the time to ensure the work is being done.
- Monitor all the time
- Be available to help if called upon.
- Clarity – give clear guidelines at the start
- Ensure students stay on task.
- Check and correct the work.
- Look for feedback.

### 3. Homework

- Do you always record homework/study in your journal?
  - 3 said “yes”
  - 6 said “no”.
  
- Is homework mainly assigned orally , i.e. teacher calling out the homework or is it written on the board?
  - Most students said that it is usually called out orally but some teachers do put it on the board. It varies from teacher to teacher.
  
- Do you think it would be a good idea to give a specific time in class to record homework/study?
  - All students present felt that this would be a good idea.
  
- What would you see as the benefits of being given an allocated time to record your homework?
  - Students will know exactly what their homework is
  - There will be less excuses from the students.
  - Students will not be able to blame the teacher
  - It will ensure that the homework will be done.
  - It will allow parents to see what the homework is – students said that in First year, parents do check the homework journals but by Second and Third Year



parents rarely check the diaries as students do not record their homework.

**The following areas are prioritised for improvement**

- To promote and improve the use of effective groupwork in class
- To improve the percentage of lessons where clear learning outcomes/intentions are stated orally and/or presented visually at the beginning of each lesson across all subject and year groups.
- That teachers allow time for students to record their homework in their student journal in each class.