

*School Improvement Plan – Literacy 2013-2016

Summary of our main strengths in this area:

- A significant proportion of First Years have a reading age of 15+ and there is evidence of a positive disposition to reading
- Two of our teachers have completed the Instructional Leadership Programme
- The vast majority of teachers use comprehension strategies in their teaching
- There is a willingness to share good practice
- There is a Literacy plan in place
- The school has an appropriately qualified and highly experienced Learning Support Co-ordinator who is also an English teacher
- CPD is facilitated and encouraged
- A Drama club has been established by the English Department

The following areas are prioritised for improvement:

- Teachers participating in the Instructional Leadership Programme to share their teaching strategies
- All teachers to consistently compare results with the national norm using the PDST tool
- Teachers to focus on the development of literacy as well as knowledge and skills
- Increase the numbers of students that read as a hobby
- Increased expectations and standards in writing across the curriculum
- Build confidence in public reading/speaking skills by increasing participation in Drama, debating competitions etc.
- Increase, insofar as possible the number of students taking higher level English for both the Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate

Improvement Targets for Literacy related to students' achievement:

- 1 Increase by 5% (taking the average from the previous 3 years) the proportion of students taking Higher level English at Junior Certificate and by at least 10% at Leaving Certificate Level.
- 2 Increase by 20% the proportion of students that like to read "very much or" quite a lot".
- 3 By 2016, the majority will feel more confident and like to read in public (class)
- 4 At least 5% less students will report finding reading "hard".

Required actions to achieve those targets:

1. All subject teachers to have keyword notice-board / poster in classroom. Subject classrooms to be “print-rich”
2. All subject teachers to encourage the use of the **key-word journal** and to explain the key-words during class. According to our SSE students find it helpful when “big words are explained beforehand.
3. Keywords in every subject to be examined as part of the school in-house exams
4. All subject teachers to encourage reading where possible. This might involve subscriptions to relevant magazine/paper for the class. This has been done very effectively in Agricultural Science, for example using the “Farmers’ Journal”. When students are asked to *read* a topic for homework, they must be asked to take this down in the Homework Journal.
5. All teachers to regularly check homework for punctuation and spelling and clearly indicate on corrections when errors in these areas occur. According to our survey of parents, 78% of parents are satisfied that teachers regularly check homework for spelling and punctuation.
6. Where the syllabus allows, teachers should take into account the reading preferences of the students.
7. Some students may have already read prescribed materials before entering First Year. Students will be surveyed by the English teachers at the beginning of First year to establish what they have already read.
8. Paired reading activities where appropriate.
9. Increase the opportunities for students to speak in public – ie: school management to encourage and facilitate teachers to organise more debates, public speaking, “spellathon” , drama and talent shows.
10. Management to continue to timetable English classes for each year concurrently, where possible. This will facilitate pass/honours classes.
11. Resources to be used, where appropriate to provide extra help and encouragement to the Higher level students.
12. Learning Support Co-ordinator and English Dept to organise Literacy Information Evening for parents of First Years on an annual basis.
13. Students with reading/writing difficulties to be identified and referred to Learning Support co-ordinator at an early stage.
14. Weekly meetings with Learning Support co-ordinator as part of the Pastoral Care and Student Support Team
15. Management to award students with book vouchers as prizes rather than cash prizes.
16. Reading for information: ie: more school notice boards, digital display with news in main lobby. School web-site to be improved to provide more up to date information that students will be interested in reading.

17. School to contribute to school notes section of the local papers.
18. Teachers that completed the course in instructional Leadership to share their teaching methodologies with other staff.
19. All teachers to consistently compare results with the national norm using the PDST or other suitable software tool. Teachers to use VSware to monitor progress and compare results on a continuous basis

**Note : This is in addition to what we are already doing.*

