# School Self-Evaluation – April/May 2013

## Introduction

### 1.1 The Focus of the Evaluation

A school self-evaluation of teaching and learning in literacy (with a particular focus on reading/comprehension) was undertaken during April/May of this academic year.

This is a report on the findings of the evaluation.

### 1.2 School context

The Muslim National School is a vertical, co-education primary school. There are presently 285 pupils. There are 11 class teachers, 2 learning support teachers, 1 resource teacher, 4 permanent EAL teachers, 2 temporary EAL teachers and an administrative principal.

The Muslim N.S is one of two Muslim primary schools in Ireland catering for the needs of Muslim children in our community. The Islamic ethos is of great importance in our school. The school is under the auspices of the DES and adheres to the guidelines for primary schools.

In excess of 75% of our pupils come from homes where English is either a second language or not spoken at all. As a result, the requirement for EAL support for children is huge in our school.

The Micra-T standardised test was formulated by reference to native speakers and does not take into account EAL students. This highlights a need for the newer standardised test, which caters for newcomer children. In the absence of such a test, results from our school need to be interpreted in this context.

## The Findings

Improving comprehension of reading is very important to us. Children’s attitude to books and reading was the focus of our paper questionnaires. Pupils from 4th to 6th classes were surveyed and the results collated. An online survey of parents’ attitudes to their children’s reading at home was also undertaken. Teachers’ opinions on areas of comprehension that were in most need of development were sought at our afterschool meeting.

## Summary of school Self-Evaluation findings

### 3.1 Strengths

* Children have positive attitudes to reading.
* Children like listening to stories.
* Children use computers for finding out information.
* The mechanics of English are understood by the vast majority of children.
* Parents were interested in their child’s progress at reading in English (unfortunately, only 14% of parents responded).

### 3.1 Areas prioritised for improvement

* Updating of class library.
* Development of higher order skills in reading.
* Listening to reading for enjoyment and understanding.
* Vocabulary development for variety of topics in junior classes and in SESE subjects for senior classes.
* Discrete functional English Lesson Development (grammar focus).

# School Improvement Plan 2014 / 2015.

## Summary of Main Strengths identified in SSE in Feb-Jun 2013

* Positive attitude of children to reading.
* Children like listening to stories.
* Children use computers for finding out information.
* The mechanics of reading are understood by the majority of children.
* Parents are interested in their children’s progress at reading in English (unfortunately only 14% of parents responded).

## Summary of Main Areas Requiring Improvement as identified in SSE

* Updating of class library.
* Development of higher order skills in reading.
* Listening to reading for enjoyment and understanding.
* Vocabulary development for a variety of topics in junior classes in SESE subjects for senior classes.
* Discrete functional English lesson development.
* Improvement in attendance of pupils throughout the school.

## Improvement Targets

* Comprehension skills:

1. Creating images.
2. Determining importance.
3. Self-questioning and writing questions based on a piece of text read.
4. Inferring meaning.

* Improve oral language fluency using specified topics.
* Teacher modelling of reading/listening for enjoyment.
* Teaching of discrete English grammar lesson weekly.
* Reduction(on average) in number of absences by two per child per year.

## Required Actions (related to teaching and learning that will help to achieve the targets)

### Comprehension skills:

1. Pause during reading of text and
2. teacher says what image is being created in his/her head and
3. asks children for images the material is creating for them in their mind.
4. Checking which sentences can be omitted without affecting meaning and determining the ‘key’ sentences containing the important information.
5. Children question text before, during and after reading. Children compose questions on a piece of text for other children to answer.
6. Encourage inferential understanding of text read (reading between the lines). A well-known story or text from a more junior class reader can be used initially. The main idea is that children try to pick up information that is not literally stated.

## Oral Language Fluency

* For all classes from Junior Infants to 6th class, a list of topics and related vocabulary (one per month) will be compiled e.g. clothes, food, the home, the school, etc.
* This will be linked to EAL teaching in learning support.

Ten minutes daily will be allocated for this oral language activity.

## Teacher Modelling of Reading

All mainstream class teachers will read to children for 10-15mins daily at the end of the school day.

## Grammar Lesson

* Teachers from 1st to 6th classes will teach a grammar lesson on Monday. The plan of grammar areas to be covered are available for staff.
* The grammar point being taught will be consolidated throughout the week in all areas of the curriculum where relevant.

1. Teachers will encourage good attendance among all pupils. Notes from parents for absences will be insisted upon. Verbal praise for good attendance will be focused upon. Gold and silver star awards will be given to high attendance pupils at assembly in June.

## Persons Responsible

* Self-Evaluation/reflection by each individual member of staff.
* SSE/SIM committee.

## Timeframe

* Envisioned for one academic year (September 2014 – June 2015) initially with regular reviews at staff meetings/Croke Park hours.

## Success Criteria/Measurable Outcomes

* Piece of text and questions related to the four comprehension skills to be focused on during the year administered in September and repeated (exact same text) in June.

## Review Date

* To be reviewed in May 2015

# Guidelines for Discrete Grammar Lesson

Many teachers may not be familiar with the terminology in teaching discrete grammar lessons. The provided book ‘Essential Grammar in Use’ by Raymond Murphy will prove an invaluable support to all. The EAL curriculum linked to this book is available and will be used primarily in 5th and 6th classes.

Units have been highlighted in relation to chosen areas of study for each month to provide support/reference material for teachers and students.

The EAL curriculum attached has been designed so that material from each month should be used to consolidate the previous month’s work. For example, the adverbs being studied in October should be presented to children using the verb structures learned in September.

The ‘Jolly Grammar Handbooks 1, 2, 3, and 4 will be used in classes 1st to 4th. There are 36 grammar units in each handbook, one per week for the academic year.

The proposed idea is that a discrete ‘grammar’ lesson is taught on Monday in all classes from 1st to 6th. This lesson will be teacher directed with information being delivered by teacher to children. The books should be used as a reference for teachers and NOT as a photocopiable resource for children. The actual exercises in the book can be used by the teacher to provide examples of the grammar being studied, either orally or on the whiteboard.

This lesson should be of 20mins duration and should incorporate oral practice as well as written consolidation. Tuesday to Friday discrete time (10 minutes approximately) should be given to consolidate and build upon the structure taught on Monday.

A list of frequent errors made by children is included. These should be addressed throughout the year as they crop up. Constant reminders will help.

CHANGES FOR 2014 / 2015.

Following from our SIP Committee Review of the programme for 2013 / 2014 the changes below will be made for 2014 / 2015:

Updating of classroom libraries.

As a centralised school library is not viable at present, all the collected books will be sorted according to suitability for each year group from Junior Infants to 6th class. They will be distributed to extend classroom libraries.

Vocabulary Lists.

Work has already been undertaken to extent the vocabulary lists for all ten topics. The vocabulary is divided into three categories – simple, medium and advanced – for each topic. This gives a more extensive range of vocabulary to assist with varying class levels and level of difficulty in relation to EAL.

The language of SESE topics will be covered by individual class teachers and the vocabulary lists will be used throughout the school in classrooms and Learning support.cus

Grammar.

A focus on the teaching of grammar will continue this year. A new resource – Jolly Grammar Handbooks 1, 2, 3, and 4 will be used in classes 1st to 4th . Grammar Handbook 4 may be used in 5th and 6th as well as ‘Essential Grammar in Use’. The Grammar Handbooks are more child friendly with 36 topics in each one (one per week for the academic year).

Comprehension.

The comprehension pieces for September and June have been updated. Two questions on imagining, two on determining importance, two on questioning and two on inferential comprehension (linked to the four skills to be focused on in the SIP.) A marking sheet for each level has also been added to ensure consistency of marking. As a school we will focus on one of the comprehension skills per month from(October – January and February – May).

Attendance.

As per last year’s SIP every effort will be made to encourage good attendance.

(Please see attached information for parents on attendance).

FOR PARENTS.

The importance of regular attendance.

* Your child’s regular attendance at school is crucially important.
* Success in curricular areas is directly influenced by attendance.
* You, as parents, control your child’s attendance.
* Make sure your child does not miss days unnecessarily.
* Encourage good attendance.
* It is one of the most important factors in your child’s education.