**Stepaside Educate Together National School** 

OUR SELF-EVALUATION REPORT AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2013-2016.

We have looked at teaching and learning in our school to find out what we are doing well. This is what we discovered:

In general the pupils are highly motivated towards literacy and numeracy. Teachers are well- disposed to collaborative approaches and towards trying out new methodologies. Feedback from parents received as part of a review last year of school-self-evaluation indicated that parents are investing time in helping their child(ren) with homework and supporting their learning. Pupils reported that they have opportunities both at school and at home to use language are generally (71%) confident around doing and using maths.

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

We began the process in 2013 with a very small group of pupils and have gradually built on it. Last year (2015/2016) the school had grown considerably and it was a good time to get an updated measure from parents and pupils as to how they view the approach of the school towards literacy (in particular oral language) and towards numeracy (in particular the use of concrete materials- counters, lollipop sticks, compare bears etc.). Pupils completed questionnaires with their parents for homework and this data was collated and condensed in to a PowerPoint presentation supported by written responses and graphs. The pupil’s feedback was discussed by the staff and was presented to a group of parents at the PAC AGM. A selection of concrete materials was on display for the parents in attendance. Following on from this presentation all parents (present and absent) were then asked to complete a questionnaire regarding the same two aspects of literacy and numeracy. This data was then analysed and compiled and presented to the school on our SSE noticeboard in the main corridor of the school for 2 months. The staff and the Board examined the feedback. The findings informed the school about areas of strength and areas that need additional focus.

This is what we continue to focus on:

**Oral language**:

The ‘Chatterbox’ oral language programme has been invested in and will be used throughout the school to ensure continuity and progression.

Oral language is discretely planned for in teacher timetables.

A central bank of resources to support the teacher in addressing oral language needs is being constantly invested in and developed.

Increased opportunities for public speaking are being provided following on from pupil feedback. Weekly assemblies form a part of this, with each class leading an assembly each month.

Class meetings include information for parents on the focus on oral language and ideas for home.

Oral language will form part of the homework during each month.

Listening skills have an increased focus as these ensure progress in oral language skills

Teachers are looking throughout the school day, in all subject areas, to encourage pupils to attend, listen, name and label, describe, classify, question, predict, explain-cause and effect, make observations, sequence and justify.

**Numeracy:**

Class meetings will be used to explain what concrete materials are (this was highlighted in parent feedback) and to give examples of ways to use them to support homework.

Concrete materials will be used to support learning from infants to 3rd class.

Oral maths have also been prioritised in the school and will form part of each day. Oral maths combine a focus on both literacy and numeracy skills.

Teachers will be working to use real-life situations and materials to support understanding of different mathematical topics. (e.g. TV listings, luas timetables, menus etc.). This was feedback from both pupils and parents.

We will have a maths week during the year with a broad focus (famous mathematicians, what would happen without maths?, maths games etc.).

Music:

This was the third and last area of focus for the school and was the focus for 2015/2016. During that school year a school choir was started, instruments were introduced in 1st and 2nd class (tin-whistle and recorder), percussion instruments were invested in, a block of workshops was invested in for all classes, a music week took place in February and guest performers came in to perform for the pupils, a range of classical pieces and folk pieces.

The school will continue to develop the school choir, who will attend the Peace Proms this year. The choir will now be voluntary. Teachers will continue to build up resources, currently we work from the ‘Let’s Make Music’ programme however we review our programmes annually to ensure we are getting the best fit for our school. We welcome musical parents to visit and perform throughout the year. Teachers will implement the pre-instrumental approaches passed on from the workshops and will utilise percussion instruments. 1st class upwards (starting in term 2) will continue to learn recorder and/or whistle.

This is what you can do to help:

Attend class meetings.

Use homework as a valuable time to give your child one to one instruction in any areas that they need support.

Volunteer to help in infant classes with Ready Set Go Maths programme. In more senior classes if you have a job which depends on Maths or oral language you might like to volunteer to talk to the class about it.

Speak positively about school life and schoolwork with your child. A positive attitude towards school and learning is hugely important. Sharing the fact that you didn’t like Irish when you were in school, or that you were bad at Maths, can influence their attitudes.

*We will be moving in to phase 2 of School Self-evaluation which runs from 2016-2020 and will be inviting you to engage in the process during the year. This will focus on at least 2 other curricular areas.*

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. (Based on 2015/2016 school year)

***School time and holidays***

The Department requires all primary schools to have **183 school days** each year.

This year we had 183 school days, from 31 August to 29 June.

The Department sets out a **standardised school year and school holidays**.

This year we took all our school holidays within the permitted time.

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

***Looking after the children in our school***

The Department requires schools to follow the *Child Protection Procedures* it has set down. Our board of management has agreed in writing to do this. YES

All teachers know about the *Procedures* and we have told

all parents about them and how we follow them. YES

Our Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is Anne Carroll and our Deputy DLP is Mallaidh Milotte.

***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

We reviewed (and updated) our admissions policy on: [April 2016]

We keep accurate attendance records and report them as required. YES

We encourage high attendance in the following ways: We developed an attendance policy in 2016. We ask that all absences be accounted for and we keep these on file. The parents of any pupil who has reached 15 days absence in the school year will be alerted that they are close to the 20 day point at which point Túsla will be informed. The parents of any pupil who has missed 20 days or more will be sent a copy of the Túsla leaflet ‘Don’t let your child miss out’. We give certificates for full attendance at the end of each school year.

This is how you can help:

Have your child in school on time each day. Plan holidays and appointments for outside of school time. Provide absence notes if your child cannot attend school for any reason.

***Positive behaviour for a happy school***

The Department requires schools to have a code of behaviour, and asks us to consult parents and children about it. We do this. YES

Our code of behaviour describes and supports positive behaviour. YES

We have a very clear and high-profile anti-bullying policy in our school. YES