

Mary, Help of Christians Girls' National School

Our Self-Evaluation Report and Improvement Plan 2025/2026

1. Introduction

This document outlines the findings of this self-evaluation, and our current improvement plan, including targets and the actions we will implement to meet these targets.

The focus of this evaluation

We undertook self-evaluation of how we were approaching two strands of Gaeilge within the PLC – Teanga ó bhéal agus léitheoireacht with a particular focus on pupil engagement, confidence, continuity and progression from Junior Infants – 6th Class in line with the Primary Language Curriculum and Is feidir liom, Is feidir linn, Action Plan for Gaeilge in English Medium Schools.

We used the Primary Language Curriculum and School Self Evaluation: Next Steps, September 2022 – June 2026 as a guide throughout the process.

2. Findings

2.1 This is effective / very effective practice in our school

List the main strengths of the school in wellbeing

1. Learner Experiences and Outcomes

Strengths

Oral Language

- Pupil voice from 2nd – 6th Class confirms that Irish lessons are generally enjoyable and engaging, particularly in 2nd and middle standards.
- Pupils in 2nd Class associate learning Irish with games, songs, repetition and teacher talk, reflecting strong alignment with early PLC oral language outcomes.
- 4th Class pupils demonstrate a developing awareness of meaning and understanding, showing a connection between playful engagement and more structured language learning.
- 5th and 6th Class pupils clearly identify speaking Irish as central to language learning, showing increasing reflection and ownership of their learning, as expected by the PLC.
- There is clear evidence of continuity and progression in oral language development across class levels, from repetition to purposeful communication.

Areas for Development

Oral Language

- While enjoyment remains high, confidence decreases in senior classes, with pupils expressing fear of making mistakes when speaking Irish.
- Senior pupils report insufficient opportunities for extended oral language, particularly real conversational use of Irish.
- Oral language practice becomes less frequent and more teacher-led in senior classes. This is less than intended by the Primary Language Curriculum.

2.2. This is how we know

List the evidence sources.

- Pupil voice questionnaires (2nd, 4th, 5th and 6th Class)
- Teacher reflection and discussion
- Observation of classroom practice
- Alignment with Primary Language Curriculum learning outcomes

2.3 This is what we are going to focus on to improve our practice further

Specify the aspects of teanga ó bhéal the school has identified and prioritised for further improvement.

1. Increase Structured Oral Language Opportunities

- Introduce daily oral language routines in all classes (e.g. greetings, partner talk, cluichí cainte).
- Ensure pair and group speaking activities are planned weekly in every class.
- Use talking frames and sentence starters to scaffold pupil talk, especially in 4th, 5th and 6th Class.

2. Explicitly Teach and Protect Confidence

- Establish a whole-school approach that normalises mistakes as part of language learning.
- Use low-risk speaking strategies, such as:
 - Think-pair-share
 - Choral responses before individual responses
- Reduce over-reliance on correction in oral work; prioritise communication over accuracy in early stages.

3. Strengthen Continuity and Progression

- Agree whole-school oral language expectations by class standard.
- Develop an agreed approach for progression in oral Gaeilge, showing how speaking skills develop year-on-year.
- Ensure 4th Class explicitly bridges playful learning and structured oral practice.

4. Enhance Teacher Practice

- Share effective strategies observed across classrooms.
- Provide CPD focused on oral language methodologies, aligned with the PLC.
- Encourage consistent use of Irish as the language of instruction during Gaeilge lessons.

5. Review and Monitor Progress

- Re-gather pupil voice data annually to track improvements in confidence and speaking.
- Use shared planning and reflective discussion to monitor implementation.
- Review progress as part of the SSE cycle and adjust targets as needed.

3. Our improvement plan

On the next page we have recorded:

- The **targets** for improvement we have set
- The **actions** we will implement to achieve these
- **Who is responsible** for implementing, monitoring and reviewing our improvement plan
- How we will measure **progress** and check **outcomes** (criteria for success)

As we implement our improvement plan we will record:

- The **progress** made, and **adjustments** made, and **when**
- **Achievement of targets** (original and modified), and **when**

Our Improvement Plan

Timeframe of this improvement plan is from March 2026 to December 2026 (Term 1)

Looking at Our Schools 2022 Domain 3: Teacher's Individual Practice Standard: The teacher selects and uses teaching approaches appropriate to the intended learning outcomes and to pupils' learning needs Teachers select and use approaches to match the selected learning outcome of the lesson, meet the learning needs, interests and abilities of pupils, and to open up further learning opportunities.					
Target	Action	Who is responsible	Criteria for Success	Adjustments	Target achieved
Increase oral language opportunities – use of posters as a stimulus for this.	The first five minutes of each Gaeilge lesson will focus on oral language development and progression.	All teachers	<i>Lessons are structured in this format where everyone begins with Teanga ó bhéal. The pupils expect this and engage with this.</i>	Staff feedback from Croke Park meeting provided teachers with further ideas and suggestions. (14 th April 2026) Oral language posters displayed around the school for continuity of in-class oral language.	The target has been achieved, with teachers incorporating a five minute Irish oral language component since March 2026. This target remains a valuable practice, and it will be continued to be developed in the next academic year.
Increase structured oral language opportunities – use sentence starters and talking frames for this.	Talking frames and sentence starters will be used in the first five minutes of each Gaeilge lesson.	All teachers	<i>The pupils are confident using the talking frames and sentence starters.</i>	Irish talking frames, shared by AP1, will be implemented by teachers. (March 3 rd 2026) Teachers will collaborate by saving their oral language prompt ideas to SharePoint folder 'Irish Talk'.	Progress is evident and staff feedback is very positive. (Feedback received on 27 th March 2026 and relayed at Croke Park meeting on 14 th April 2026). Target to be continued from September 2026 and a continued focus is required to embed these practices consistently across all class levels.
Eiseamláirí Teanga is revised and shared with all teaching staff.	AP1 revises the Eiseamláirí teanga which will be our agreed whole school approach to oral language progression from class to class. The relevant language will be displayed in each	AP1 All teachers	<i>All teachers know what they are working on regarding oral language during the year.</i>	Some class teachers have been using this document for guidance with their 'Nath na Seachtaine'.	Target achieved on 14 th April 2026. All classroom teachers have an A4 laminated Eiseamláirí teanga

	classroom. The whole document will be printed and stored in hard copy in 'Whole School Approaches' folder.				document on display in their classroom. Whole school document is available in 'Whole School Approaches' folder.
Nath na Seachtaine – increased focus on this so that the pupils can gain confidence through repetition and reinforcement.	Each class teacher decides on the Nath na Seachtaine for the week and plans opportunities for the children to use the sentence, change the sentence by building on what they already know.	All teachers	<i>Nath na Seachtaine is displayed in the classroom. Pupils can use this in the appropriate context and can change the sentence when necessary by using vocabulary they are familiar with, whilst maintaining the structure.</i>	Teachers will incorporate their Nath na Seachtaine when calling the rolla in the morning, instead of 'anseo'.	Largely achieved. There is strong evidence of this practice around the school, but continued emphasis will be placed on ensuring consistency in all classrooms in the next academic year.

