



# **St George's National School**

## **School Self-Evaluation Report**

### **Evaluation period**

**March 2019 - February 2020**

## Introduction

### 1.1 The focus of evaluation

A school self - evaluation of teaching and learning in St George's was undertaken during the period March 2019 -February 2020. During this time teaching and learning in the following curriculum area was evaluated. Irish (oral language) During the course of teachers' discussions staff identified oral language Gaeilge as the area they most needed to work on. It was expressed that they would most like to see and hear Irish more around the school every day.

### 1.2 The context

St George's N.S. is made up of a diverse population of 54 different nationalities and for whom English is not their first language. It has been proven that proficiency in mother tongue is key to developing proficiency in additional languages. Our pupils are therefore dual learners i.e. children who are acquiring two languages simultaneously pupils who are developing their primary language as they learn a second language may be better understood as dual language learners(Gutiérrez et al 2010). This captures the diversity of this group of learners as language and literacy learners. It is important for teachers to understand how their every day literacy practices unfold. Evaluations of studies of early literacy learning for all children have identified gaps in knowledge of literacy practice as they apply to dual learners Effective Pedagogy and practice for this group of learners is not identified in NELP (2008) (National Early Literacy Panel 2008). A European Core Curriculum for mainstreamed second language teacher Education is being developed. Ireland is not currently a participant in this European Comenius project. However Leung (2011) recognises that the teacher competencies outlined in it would be a useful resource for E.A.L. teachers in Ireland. The foundation of this curriculum is CLIL (content and language integrated learning)

### Vision

In St George's N.S. we are committed to the holistic development of all pupils. We see development of their fluency in English and Irish as being central to this process. We believe that the ability of the pupils to

communicate fluently, confidently and successfully will contribute greatly to the development of their academic ability. Languages are a high priority in our school as we are very much a "language school".

## 2. The Findings

92% of parents/guardians Parents' Questionnaires acknowledged that it was important that pupils learned languages other than their native language, Less importance was placed on that language, being Irish with 63% preferring that the 2<sup>nd</sup> language should be another European other than Irish. However if pupils were learning Irish and another European language 77% would be happy. Over half the parents expressed the view that their child(ren) enjoys Irish reading (51%), Irish speaking (53%) Irish writing (55%)with overall, enjoyment of Irish learning was expressed by (60%). Irish was deemed to be as important a subject on the curriculum as any other by 67% of respondents.

### Pupils' Questionnaires

The majority of pupils hold very positive opinions about learning Irish. 63.3 % of pupils said that they are proud to be able to speak some Irish. 60.3% of children said that they enjoy acting and roleplay in Irish. 71.3 % of pupils said that games help them to learn Irish in the classroom. 46.2 % of children said that songs and poems help them to learn. 46 % of children said they enjoy learning new words and phrases in Irish. 44% feel that they have many opportunities to speak Irish during the day. 44.9% of pupils understand when their teacher uses some Irish. 53.5 % of pupils said they would like to do some lessons such as P.E, Art or Science through Irish.

### Teachers Questionnaires

All the teacher respondents agreed unanimously that Irish is an important language with 96% declaring it is not an easy language to learn. That said 91% enjoy teaching Irish and 86% felt that the pupils enjoy learning Irish. 70% of the teachers agreed that Irish was as important a subject as any other. 91% use *Gaeilge NeamhFhoirmiúil* in the course of the school day. However 78% do not feel confident that they can incorporate additional Irish language into the elements of teach and 91% of teachers denied that they could teach another subject through Irish (CLLT). While 62% of teachers

feel confident speaking Irish curriculum relevant to his/her class, 59% would like further support in speaking Irish. 81% feel confident listening but 36% would like further support. 95% of teachers feel confident reading but 23% need further support. 19% feel confident writing but 14% said they need further support.

Teachers said they would like extra support.

#### Conclusions:

While parents do not value Irish to the same degree as the teachers they support the learning of Irish once there is another European language involved too - i.e. Irish is not valued over European languages.

Teachers hold an enthusiasm for Irish but lack confidence in their own competence and need support in their teaching to promote this

- The school staff would not be ready to engage in C.L.L.T. Instead a resource of *nathanna agus fóclóir* to be standardised in PE and Art lessons which will build on competence and confidence in teaching through Irish with the aim to work towards C.L.L.T in the long term. (appendix ).
- Support needs to be provided in terms of *Nathanna Neamhfoirmiúla* to incorporate through the *Gaeilge* curriculum and extended through the day. (appendix )
- The month of March will be used to promote *Gaeilge* further with language activities and cultural promotions using Irish as a living language:  
Tráth na gCeist; Comórtas amhráin; Céili agus fáinní awards, pop amhráin.
- The Irish school plan has been reviewed and edited in light of the results of our questionnaires with an increasing emphasis on promoting Oral language and evidence of Irish around the school.