



GOOD COUNSEL COLLEGE

NEW ROSS, CO WEXFORD
63610I

Literacy Self-Evaluation Report

Evaluation period: *August/September 2014*

Report issue date: *January 2015*

Good Counsel College Self-Evaluation Report

1. Introduction

1.1 The focus of the evaluation

A school self-evaluation of teaching and learning in Good Counsel College was undertaken during the period August/September 2014. The focus of our evaluation is to identify and assess areas of literacy in need of improvement thereby developing practical, implementable and effective whole-College strategies which will enhance our students overall proficiency in areas of literacy as identified by the data.

This is a report on the findings of the evaluation.

1.2 College context

Good Counsel College is an urban Voluntary Boys Secondary School under the trusteeship of the Augustinian Order. The school operates an open admissions policy with over 800 students of which approximately 40 students access SEN of 121.25 hours. The College has a teaching allocation of 50.79 and 6 SNA posts. The College continues to offer the widest curriculum possible to its students. The School supports students on the autistic spectrum with the admission of boys to the school from September 2014 and the construction of two ASD classrooms from September 2015.

While the College is located in an urban setting a significant majority of the student body come from rural backgrounds.

Over 50% of current first years come from families with either full medical cards or GP visit cards. Farming, fishing, manufacturing and construction are the traditional industries in the area.

We have an excellent tradition of subject planning, collaboration and College development planning and have applied for support from the PDST through the Forbairt Programme in addressing the College Self Evaluation process.

We provide a varied curriculum including Junior Certificate, Leaving Certificate and TY, programmes.

2. The findings

BACKGROUND TO FOCUS ON LITERACY

1. In March 2013 GCC was involved in St Patricks Education Centre Field Trial of standardised tests. Our Second Year students at the time performed as follows;

Categorisation	Number of Students	Expected outcome based on national norms	Actual outcome	Difference
Well Above average	4	0.17	0.08	-0.09
High Average	7	0.17	0.13	-0.04
Average	21	0.32	0.40	0.08
Below Average	9	0.17	0.17	0.00
Well Below Average	12	0.17	0.23	0.06
	53	1.00	1.00	

- a. 40% of students were categorised as 'low average' or 'well below average' with respect to Literacy.
- b. Of this 57% approximately (three fifths) were deemed to be 'well below average'.

This led to our teacher focus as outlined below.

TEACHERS' PRACTICE

1. In September 2014 our teachers with the assistance of our Literacy Link person led a teacher focus in the area of literacy.

From this focus group the following key areas or focus were identified,

- The need to encourage reading in the student body across all levels of ability.
 - A focus on subject specific language.
2. A standard cross curricular approach to these topics was agreed and delivered.
 - a. Common agreed methodology
 - b. Agreed physical displays in all classrooms.

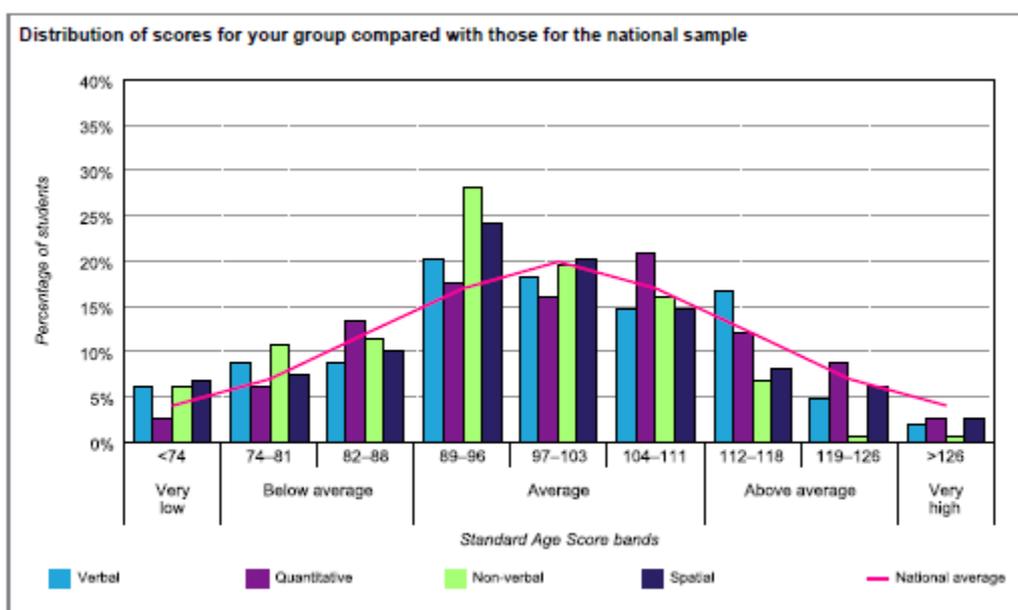
LEARNER OUTCOMES

1. The Standard Average Scores the incoming 1st year students (2014-15) from their Cognitive Abilities Test 4 (CAT4) correlates with national figures indicating no significant differences.

	Verbal mean SAS	Quantitative mean SAS	Non-verbal mean SAS	Spatial mean SAS	Overall mean SAS
National average	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Group	98.7	100.8	94.1	97.3	97.8

The table below shows the distribution of scores for our group compared with those for the national sample. In addition, the bar chart presents this information.

Description	Very low	Below average			Average			Above average		Very high
SAS bands	<74	74-81	82-88	89-96	97-103	104-111	112-118	119-126	>126	
National average	4%	7%	12%	17%	20%	17%	12%	7%	4%	
Verbal	6%	9%	9%	20%	18%	15%	17%	5%	2%	
Quantitative	3%	6%	13%	17%	16%	21%	12%	9%	3%	
Non-verbal	6%	11%	11%	28%	19%	16%	7%	1%	1%	
Spatial	7%	7%	10%	24%	20%	15%	8%	6%	3%	



2. A Group Reading Test (GRTII) C for current 1st years was administered by the Literacy Link person and the Career Guidance Counsellor in September 2014 which identified base line reading ages. The results of this assessment indicate:
 - a. 21 students had a Reading Age <10 years
 - b. 46 students had a Reading Age >10<12 years
3. Leaving and Junior Certificate exams are analysed over the last number of years. In 2014 JC uptake of HL English was 82% compared with 73% nationally* and LC uptake at HL is 74% compared with 67% nationally, with no student taking Foundation Level. *Data allowing for comparison with performance by other Colleges, with similar contextual factors, is not available.

	2014	2013	2012	2011
L. Cert HL uptake	74%	79%	70%	75%
National HL uptake	65%	65%	63%	64%

4. Findings from the attitudinal survey administered in September 2014:
 - a. Students:
 - i. 51% of students like to read in their free time.
 - ii. 80% of students prefer Social Media and computer games to reading in their free time.
 - iii. Novels, Magazines and Newspapers were identified as student's preferred reading material. Electronic formats such as e-books and blogs were least favourite at 7% each.
 - iv. 71% of students prefer text heavy books to illustration heavy books at 29%.
 - v. 13% of students read for enjoyment between 0 and 1 hour each week, 43% read for between 1-3 hours per week with 44% of students reading for more than 3 hours each week.
5. In a survey of 1st Year parents (2014-15) we found;
 - a. 71% of parents believe their son enjoys reading with 95% of parents describing their son as an 'able reader'.
 - b. Where a parent believes their son does not enjoy reading they cite a greater interest in sport (39%) and Technology (19%) as the main reason. Specific learning issues were identified in 8% of cases.
 - c. 97% of parents said their son has access to books in the home with the significant majority bought (76%) and borrowed from the public library (56%). Only 5% of books were sourced from the school library.
 - d. 2/3 of parents surveyed often discuss the books that their sons are reading with them.
 - e. Parents were asked to identify each of the following statements that were relevant to them.

Statement	No of Parents	Percentage
1. I think reading is important	56	95%
2. In my home, I set aside time for reading.	23	39%
3. I limit the amount of time my children watch TV/access computers.	43	73%
4. My child has a library card.	44	75%
5. I have recently spent time with my child in a bookstore.	20	34%
6. I have bought e-books for my child.	11	19%
7. I like to read.	48	81%

3. Progress made on previously-identified targets improvement targets

This is not applicable to Year 1 as the College Improvement Plan (SIP) is not in place yet.

4. Summary of College self-evaluation findings

4.1 OUR COLLEGE HAS STRENGTHS IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

- i. There is awareness of literacy development amongst staff and they see themselves as having a role to play in developing literacy skills.
- ii. Teachers wherever possible use concrete materials or link problems to real life.
- iii. A dedicated staff that is willing to engage with programmes in order to enhance student literacy and professional development in the area.
- iv. Parents are actively involved in valuing and supporting their son's literacy skills and reading.
- v. Our cohort of first year students' literacy standards correlates positively with the CAT norms.
- vi. Strong tradition and culture of cross-curricular activities in GCC.
- vii. A very effective Learning Support Department and the use of the FastForWord Programme.

4.2 THE FOLLOWING AREAS ARE PRIORITISED FOR IMPROVEMENT

- i. The continued development of common teaching strategy to promoting Literacy supported by SNIP.
- ii. The continuous development of a Literacy rich environment.
- iii. Embedding a culture of 'Literacy confidence' in GCC.
- iv. Increasing further the up-take of higher level English both at junior and senior cycle where appropriate to individual student abilities.
- v. Develop awareness around Literacy life skills (Basic Literacy) and the role of all stakeholders in nurturing those skills through the development of a literacy committee and staff led literacy foci.
- vi. The promotion of the Student Journal as a focal point for developing and implementing our Literacy strategy. Encourage the use of the Student Journal as a tool in developing Assessment for Learning strategies around Literacy.

Appendix to College Self-Evaluation Report: legislative and regulatory checklist

Issue	Relevant legislation, rule or circular	Is the College fully meeting the requirements of the relevant legislation, rule or circular?	If no, indicate aspects to be developed
Valid enrolment of students	M51/93	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Time in College - Length of College year (minimum of 167 days for all year groups) - Length of College week (minimum of 28 hours for all year groups)	Circular M29/95	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Standardisation of College year	Circular 034/2011	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Arrangements for parent/teacher and staff meetings	Circular M58/04	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Implementation of national literacy strategy	Circular 25/12	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Implementation of Croke Park agreement regarding additional time requirement	Circular 025/2011	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Development of College plan	Section 21 Education Act 1998	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Guidance provision in secondary Colleges	Circular PPT12/05, Education Act 1998 (section 9(c))	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Whole-College guidance plan	Section 21 Education Act 1998	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Delivery of CSPE to all junior cycle classes	Circular M12/01 Circular M13/05	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

Issue	Relevant legislation, rule or circular	Is the College fully meeting the requirements of the relevant legislation, rule or circular?	If no, indicate aspects to be developed	
Exemption from the study of Irish	Circular M10/94	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
Implementation of revised in-College management structures	Circular M29/02, Circular 21/98, Circular 30/97, Circular 29/97	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
Limited alleviation on filling posts of responsibility for College year 2011/12	Circular 53/11	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
Parents as partners in education	Circular M27/91			
Implementation of child protection procedures	Circular 65/11 Please provide the following information in relation to child protection		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of cases where a report involving a child in the College was submitted by the DLP to the HSE 	<input type="checkbox"/>	4	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of cases where a report involving a child in the College was submitted by the DLP to the HSE and the College board of management informed 	<input type="checkbox"/>	4	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of cases where the DLP sought advice from the HSE and as a result of this advice, no report was made 	<input type="checkbox"/>	6	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of cases where the DLP sought advice from the HSE and as a result of this advice, no report was made and the College board of management informed 	<input type="checkbox"/>	2	
Implementation of complaints procedure as appropriate	Section 28 Education Act 1998 Please provide the following information in relation to complaints made by parents during this College year		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of formal parental complaints received 	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of formal complaints processed 	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of formal complaints not fully processed by the end of this College year 	<input type="checkbox"/>	0	

Issue	Relevant legislation, rule or circular	Is the College fully meeting the requirements of the relevant legislation, rule or circular?	If no, indicate aspects to be developed	
Refusal to enrol	Section 29 Education Act 1998 Please provide the following information in relation to appeals taken in accordance with Section 29 against the College during this College year		N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
	Number of section 29 cases taken against the College	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	
	Number of cases processed at informal stage	<input type="checkbox"/>	0	
	Number of cases heard	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	
	Number of appeals upheld	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	
	Number of appeals dismissed	<input type="checkbox"/>	0	
Suspension of students	Section 29 Education Act 1998 Please provide the following information in relation to appeals taken in accordance with Section 29 against the College during this College year		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
	Number of section 29 cases taken against the College	<input type="checkbox"/>	0	
	Number of cases processed at informal stage	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	Number of cases heard	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	Number of appeals upheld	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	Number of appeals dismissed	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Expulsion of students	Section 29 Education Act 1998 Please provide the following information in relation to appeals taken in accordance with Section 29 against the College during this College year		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
	Number of section 29 cases taken against the College	<input type="checkbox"/>	0	
	Number of cases processed at informal stage	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	Number of cases heard	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	Number of appeals upheld	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	Number of appeals dismissed	<input type="checkbox"/>		

Appendix to College Self-Evaluation report: policy checklist

Policy	Source	Has the policy been approved by the Board of Management?	If no, indicate aspects to be developed
Enrolment policy	Section 15(2)(d) of Education Act Equal Status Acts 2000-2011	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Code of behaviour, including anti-bullying policy ¹	Circular M33/91 NEWB guidelines Section 23, Education Welfare Act 2000 Guidelines on Countering Bullying Behaviour, 1993, Circular M33/91 Equal Status Acts 2000-2011	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Attendance and participation strategy ²	Circular M51/93 Section 22, Education Welfare Act 2000	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	
Health and Safety Statement	Health and Safety Act 2005 Section 20	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Data protection	Data Protection Act 1988 Data Protection (Amendment Act) 2003	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	
Special education needs policy ³	Education Act (1998) Equal Status Acts (2000 to 2011), Education (Welfare) Act (2000), Education for Persons with Special Education Needs Act (EPSEN) ⁴ (2004) Disability Act (2005))	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Social, personal and health education (SPHE)/Relationships and sexuality education (RSE) policy	Circulars 37/2010, 23/2010, M27/08, M11/03, M22/00, M20/96, M4/95	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Substance use policy	Department of Education and Skills Directive; guidelines issued to Colleges in 2002	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Internet acceptable use policy	Department of Education and Skills Directive	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Child Protection Policy	Circular 0065/2011	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

¹ Under the provisions of the Education (Welfare) Act (2000) (section 23) the College's code of behaviour should conform to the specifications stated.

² Under the provisions of the Education (Welfare) Act (2000) (section 22) the College's attendance strategy should conform with the provisions stipulated.

³ Section 9 of the Education Act (1998) requires a College to "use its available resources" to identify and provide for the educational needs of those "with a disability or other special educational needs."

⁴ The EPSEN Act requires that Colleges be inclusive of and provide an appropriate education for students with special educational needs.