



GOOD COUNSEL COLLEGE

NEW ROSS, CO WEXFORD
63610I

School Self-Evaluation Report

Evaluation period: **January 2016** - *September 2019*

Report issue date: *Draft*

School Self-Evaluation Report

1. Introduction

1.1 The focus of the evaluation

A school self-evaluation of learning & teaching in Good Counsel College (GCC) was undertaken during the period January 2016 to March 2019 particularly in the area of leading learning & teaching. The focus of our evaluation is to identify and assess areas of curriculum and in particular timetabling in need of improvement thereby developing practical, implementable and effective whole-school strategies which will enhance our delivery of Specifications at Junior and Senior Level.

This is a report on the findings of the evaluation.

1.2 School context

GCC is an urban boys school with 838 students and approximately 127 hours of Learning Support. The school has a teaching allocation of 60.56 teachers and 5.5 SNA posts. We also have a 2 classroom Autistic Support Unit known as Ostia. The school continues to offer the widest curriculum possible to its students.

Over 30% of current first years come from families with either full medical cards or GP visit cards. Farming, fishing and construction are the traditional industries in the area with some involvement in medical device manufacture.

We have an excellent tradition of subject planning, collaboration and school development planning and have welcomed support from the PDST through the Forbairt Programme, Centre for School Leadership, SESS, NCCA and JCT to help us address the School Self Evaluation process.

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

The school is under the trusteeship of the Augustinian Order.

1.3 LAOS Guidelines:

The following Standards were considered in the process;

- Manage the planning and implementation of the school curriculum.
- Foster a commitment to inclusion, equality of opportunity and the holistic development of each student.
- Manage the planning and implementation of the school curriculum
- Mediate change to respond to the evolving needs of the school and to changes in education
- Teachers value and engage in professional development and professional collaboration

2. The findings

BACKGROUND TO FOCUS ON TIMETABLE

1. 12 (20% of Staff) teachers have completed or are completing the Instructional Leadership programme with Barrie Bennett.
2. We currently have a provision of 30 hours contact time per week (28 hours being the minimum requirement) which can put pressure on resources.
3. JCT in-service has promoted the consideration of 1 hour classes which complements many of the active teaching strategies being espoused at this training.
4. Potential changes to 'core' curriculum at Junior Cycle has created an opportunity for discussion around our College curriculum.

TEACHERS' PRACTICE – RSPONSES REGARDING 1 HOUR TT PROVISION

1. In 2016 following involvement in the above programmes a decision was made to evaluate our current 40 minute class period provision. This was led by the Curriculum Advisory Board.
 - a. Evidence was gathered from schools who had moved to 1 hour timetable provision.
 - b. Current timetable provision was considered in light of subject department requests and observations from Subject Inspections, particularly Irish provision at Junior Certificate level.
 - c. LCVP was to be reconsidered as an option at Leaving Certificate.
 - d. A discussion document was prepared for staff regarding 1 hour timetable outlining implications on class contact.

Decision made not to proceed at this point by CAB.

2. September 2018 the new CAB was asked to reconsider the option of 1 hour timetables.
 - a. Sample 1 hour timetable was prepared based on the 2018/19 timetable and distributed to all teachers for consideration and feedback.
 - b. A detailed spreadsheet showing impact of change on subjects was produced and distributed to teachers.
 - c. Teachers identified the positive and negative implications of a 1 hour timetable. See below.

Summary of 1 hour TT Feedback from Teachers

Each ✓ indicates where the same or similar point was made.

Positive

- Ideal for applying the principles of Instructional Leadership. ✓✓
- Additional time allocation to the subject across all year groups. ✓
- Fits in with new Junior Cycle. ✓✓
- Opportunity to explore material in greater depth in each class. ✓✓✓✓✓✓
- Less movement and time lost as less class changes. Less corridor creeping ✓✓✓✓
- Opportunity to mix up content and teaching techniques in one hour class periods. ✓✓
- May be less draining on teachers. ✓
- Provide scope for taster TT in 1st Year.
- Better for project work and group work. ✓✓
- More time available for and less classes to plan for.
- Opportunity for innovation in class. ✓✓✓
- S & S – you would be finished quicker.
- More significant time off within the school day.
- Benefit higher level students.
- It would force me to plan my lessons better and therefore help improve my teaching. ✓
- Opportunity for greater self-directed learning. ✓✓
- 4 minute transition period between classes would lead to less students being late. ✓
- Less books for students helping students organise themselves.
- Less subjects for homework each night.

Negative

- Teacher/student absence has significant impact on learning time lost ✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓
- Work left for classes when absent need to be varied and sufficient to focus students over 1 hour. ✓✓✓✓
- May be difficult in pupil : teacher ratio of 1:1
- Some weak students may find it difficult to concentrate for the hour. (but this can be offset by good planning) ✓✓✓✓✓✓
- Loss of more regular class contact with groups. ✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓
- Significant loss of class contact in PE and PE/Games ✓✓
- One- to- one time for teachers involved in Guidance/Pastoral Care would diminish. Increase whole class contact.
- PE Inspection was positive regarding time allocation to PE/Games. More time needed instead of less.
- 1 hour class in TY may be too long.
- Difficult with a challenging class group. ✓✓
- Would parents stop students from participating in extra/co-curricular activities due to the impact of lost time on learning.
- Reduced contact time in my subject. ✓✓✓
- Loss of double class in my subject area which is vital for projects/experiments
- Less interaction between staff.

This was used to inform our staff meeting discussion along with our Student and Parents Council Focus Groups

3. LEARNER OUTCOMES – Student Focus Group outcomes

1. A broad range of students across Junior and Senior years were involved in the focus groups.
 - a. The Senior Prefect Team.
 - b. 5th Year and Transition Year.
 - c. 2nd year.

Senior Prefects	
Arguments for:	Arguments against:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less time lost from movement as we are coming from different parts of the building • For practical subjects e.g. TG & science more time for experiments • Less chance of a 'rush' at the end of class where homework could be assigned 'at the bell' which means you may be late for the next class • Improved efficiency – more time to get to class so starting on time (no limbo period of waiting for students who are in distant parts of the building to arrive) • Time for teacher help with questions in class – (with the extra time work could be assigned and started in class so there would be time to deal with questions from students who may have a problem with the task) • More time for recuperation with 6 periods per day ... particularly if you have heavy subjects • Less carrying of books (especially with PE etc.) as it is some are currently carrying two bags of books • 1 regular hour is better than odd 40 mins • Better for exam preparation – can do timed questions in class to assist with exam preparation and timing ... also the extra time would mean that in some subjects there could be immediate feedback on questions • Less alteration for exam timetable necessary when house exams take place • Lectures in college are 1 hour (or 50 mins) therefore this would be good preparation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For note taking in class / classes where note taking is necessary this could not go on for a full hour • 1 hour of a subject you don't like is harder than 40 mins of a subject you don't like • Class control - if there is a problem already in the 40 minute class this would prove difficult in a 1 hour class / Discipline for disruptive students in a longer class ... (discipline for students who are already disruptive / teacher tactics for dealing with this need to be considered) • Concern about younger classes not concentrating for an hour

5th Year And TY Students

Arguments for:	Arguments against:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less books to carry • Less moving around • Get more work done in class • None! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 hour classes are too long • Would get too bored in longer classes (some expressed it difficult to keep concentration in 40 minute lessons) • Lose focus towards the end of longer classes • Wouldn't be able to remember 1 hour of work • Less time for PE • Less time for some subjects i.e. Technology • Too much of core subjects & mass • Don't want a change in routine • Don't fix something that's not broken

2nd Year

Arguments for:	Arguments against:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less books to carry • Less weight in the schoolbag • Less moving around • Especially on a rainy day • Time to move around between classes • Get more work done in class • More time to work in class • Less homework • More time in some subjects e.g. mass 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less time for PE / shorter PE • 1 hour classes are too long

2. The College participation as one of the 41 schools nationally in NCCA Senior Cycle review has also informed us around student views on timetable and curriculum.

4. PARENT OUTCOMES – Parent Focus Group outcomes

Summary of 1 hour TT Feedback from Parents

December 4th 2018

Positive

- Helps to meet Junior Cert Requirements.
- Give teachers an opportunity to deliver in different styles and take on some new approaches.
- More scope for the use of technology – BYOD.
- Would allow students to process group work and other activities at the end of a lesson.
- Lighter bags.
- Easier to organise time.
- Greater opportunity for pupil teacher interaction.
- Good for CBAs.

Negative

- Student concentration levels – particularly weak students.
- Reduction of time allocation in some subjects is a disadvantage.
- Will it be more difficult for substitute teachers to supervise?
- May be a challenge for some teachers.

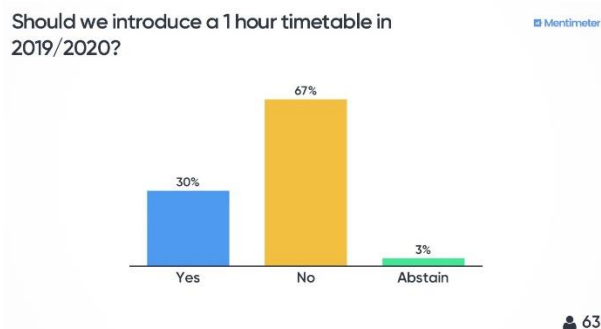
Other points

Resources and supports will need to be provided to enable teachers to adapt and plan lessons.

General feel from the focus group was positive regarding move to 1 hour TT.

5. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS.

The decision was made having considered all of the feedback not to move to 1 hour timetables.



6. OUR SCHOOL HAS STRENGTHS IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

- i. The positive robust discussion by staff, students and parents in relation to the provision of 1 hour timetables demonstrates a community willing to share their views through the lens of enhanced student outcomes.

- ii. Our current timetable, despite some minor changes, meets the needs of our students and parents. This promotes equality of opportunity, particularly as the College offers a free choice to students in 2nd and 5th year regarding optional subject choices subject to resource availability.
- iii. The College foster students' holistic development by providing a very broad range of curricular, co-curricular and extracurricular learning opportunities. The provision of 2 games periods and 1 Mass period per week supports our school culture and promotes wellbeing across the entire community.
- iv. The opportunity for double class periods in all optional subjects at Junior and Senior Cycle allows for the effective use of Instructional Leadership and active learning and teaching methodologies.

7. THE FOLLOWING AREAS ARE PRIORITISED FOR IMPROVEMENT

- i. The continued development of the timetable to accommodate individual subject provision and needs.
- ii. The specific time for scheduling subjects such as Games to be considered in the context of extracurricular provision.
- iii. The potential to block schedule core subjects like Maths, English and Irish across all year groups.
- iv. The provision of double classes, particularly at Junior Cycle, in English.
- v. Look at alternative, more user friendly timetabling software which may allow us the flexibility to enhance the structure of our timetable.

8. Additional Information

Please click below for links to:

1. [Sample 1 hour timetable](#) structure.
2. Spreadsheet of [impact on class contact and teaching](#) time in each subject.
3. [Discussion points from Staff Meeting](#) where decision was made. 14.3.19

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

Issue	Relevant legislation, rule or circular	Is the school 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 type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Time in school - Length of school year (minimum of 167 days for all year groups) - Length of school week (minimum of 28 hours for all year groups)	Circular M29/95	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Standardisation of school year	Circular 034/2011	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Arrangements for parent/teacher and staff meetings	Circular M58/04	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Implementation of national literacy strategy	Circular 25/12	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Implementation of Croke Park agreement regarding additional time requirement	Circular 025/2011	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Development of school plan	Section 21 Education Act 1998	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Guidance provision in secondary schools	Circular PPT12/05, Education Act 1998 (section 9(c))	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Whole-school guidance plan	Section 21 Education Act 1998	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Delivery of CSPE to all junior cycle classes	Circular M12/01 Circular M13/05	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Exemption from the study of Irish	Circular M10/94	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

Issue	Relevant legislation, rule or circular	Is the school fully meeting the requirements of the relevant legislation, rule or circular?	If no, indicate aspects to be developed
Implementation of revised in-school management structures	Circular M29/02, Circular 21/98, Circular 30/97, Circular 29/97	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Limited alleviation on filling posts of responsibility for school year 2011/12	Circular 53/11	<input 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 type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of cases where a report involving a child in the school was submitted by the DLP to the HSE <input type="checkbox"/> ▪ Number of cases where a report involving a child in the school was submitted by the DLP to the HSE and the school board of management informed <input type="checkbox"/> ▪ 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"/> ▪ Number of cases where the DLP sought advice from the HSE and as a result of this advice, no report was made and the school board of management informed <input type="checkbox"/> 		
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 school year	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of formal parental complaints received <input type="checkbox"/> ▪ Number of formal complaints processed <input type="checkbox"/> ▪ Number of formal complaints not fully processed by the end of this school year <input type="checkbox"/> 		
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 school during this school year	N/A	

Issue	Relevant legislation, rule or circular		Is the school fully meeting the requirements of the relevant legislation, rule or circular?	If no, indicate aspects to be developed
	Number of section 29 cases taken against the school Number of cases processed at informal stage Number of cases heard Number of appeals upheld Number of appeals dismissed	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>		
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 school during this school year			
	Number of section 29 cases taken against the school Number of cases processed at informal stage Number of cases heard Number of appeals upheld Number of appeals dismissed	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <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 school during this school year			
	Number of section 29 cases taken against the school Number of cases processed at informal stage Number of cases heard Number of appeals upheld Number of appeals dismissed	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>		

Appendix to School 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 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 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 type="checkbox"/> No	
Health and Safety Statement	Health and Safety Act 2005 Section 20	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Data protection	Data Protection Act 1988 Data Protection (Amendment Act) 2003	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input 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 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 type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Substance use policy	Department of Education and Skills Directive; guidelines issued to schools in 2002	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Internet acceptable use policy	Department of Education and Skills Directive	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Child Protection Policy	Circular 0065/2011	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

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

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

³ Section 9 of the Education Act (1998) requires a school 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 schools be inclusive of and provide an appropriate education for students with special educational needs.