

Corpus Christi Girls National School



OUR SELF-EVALUATION REPORT AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN

In the last year, we have looked at teaching and learning in our school to find out what we are doing well. This is what we discovered.

Corpus Christi Girls' National School is a Catholic Primary school in which we strive to learn together, in a happy and safe environment, where everyone is valued, respected and encouraged to do their best. We provide caring environment which enables pupils and staff alike to grow holistically and feel accepted.

- Corpus Christi GNS has a culture of high expectation which enables all pupils to excel in all aspects of their development. The school's ambition is to ensure a creative, rich and balanced curriculum supported by excellent knowledge of our pupils, ensuring all pupils are supported to reach their full potential on their learning journey
- Learning and teaching is of a high standard and our pupils are confident learners, showing pride and enjoyment in their learning. They demonstrate high levels of engagement and independence and are enthusiastic about their achievements
- Pupil outcomes are prioritised in all respects and there is a whole school focus on communication, independence and personal development, preparing pupils extremely well for the next stage in their lives
- At Corpus Christi we are a reflective school, we review our practice in line with research and best practise from the PDST
- Staff demonstrate a willingness to engage in CPD and keep abreast of new research. They are highly motivated and are interested in professional development and relish the opportunity to share expertise at Croke Park sessions and at sub-committee level
- Our pupils have access to a variety of resources to support literacy, in the last number of years pupils have access to a broader range of digital resources and different types of texts
- Parents are highly supportive of the school and are interested in seeing their child grow and develop as enthusiastic, independent learners.
- Our pupils really enjoy reading and writing. Our pupil questionnaire revealed that:
 - 71.4% of our pupils like to read
 - 70% of pupils view themselves as good readers
 - 78.6% think there are good books in their classroom
 - 68.6% read books at home
 - 55.2% find spelling easy
 - 49.5% always understand what they read, 45.2% did sometimes understand what they read
 - 61.7% would like to spend more time reading at school
 - 44% sometimes found comprehension difficult, 49.8% did not find it difficult, the remainder found it difficult sometimes
 - 32.9% like reading aloud, 31.9% did not like reading aloud and 35.2% liked reading aloud sometimes

- 72.4% understand what they read better when they read silently, 17.6% when they read aloud and 10% when someone read to them
- 49.3% said they would sound out/blend if they came to a difficult word, 29.7% said they would reread the text, 11% said they would read on
- 61% of pupils like writing in school, 34.8% sometimes like to write in school
- 62.%% think they use good words in their writing
- 65% re-read their work to check for mistakes, 29.4% do sometimes
- 59.6% edit their work to correct spellings and add interesting words
- 49.2% draft, edit and publish their work, 30.5% do sometimes
- 31.8% like to read their writing aloud for others, 28,4% do not
- 70.5% like to get feedback on their writing, 8.5% do not, 21% do sometimes
- 65.9% find giving their opinions in classroom oral presentations easy
- 40.6% enjoy presenting their work orally in class, 41.1% do sometimes, 18.3% do not enjoy it.

Our parent questionnaire revealed that:

- 52.6 % read aloud to their child at least once a week
- 47.4% said their child is a member of a local library
- 96.7% said they were happy with their child's ability to answer questions about her reading
- 44.1% spend time listening to their child read, 19.7% do not spend time listening to their child read and 36.2% do sometimes
- 37.7% discuss the text with their child after reading, 48.3% do not and 13.9% do sometimes
- 98% reported their child to be doing well at reading
- 81.5% felt the reading their child brought home from school matched their child's reading ability, 11.3% felt it was too easy, 6% didn't know and 1.2% felt it was too hard
- 100% said their child had access to age appropriate books at home
- 20.5% on parents said their child spent approximately one hour reading per night without having to be asked, 35.1% said their child spent 10-20mins reading per night without having to be asked, 21.9% said their child spent 20-40 mins reading per night without having to be asked and 22.5% said their child spends 0-10 mins without having to be asked.
- 66.9% of parents said their child likes to write recreationally outside of school activities, 33.1% do not like to write outside of school
- 89.3% reported their child to be a good writer
- 89.4% reported their child is good at handwriting
- 82.9% reported their child to be confident at spelling

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

A Literacy committee was set up comprising of classroom teachers, Special Education teachers, the Principal and Deputy Principal

A Literacy coordinator was appointed

Teachers were asked to answer a questionnaire to identify focus areas for improvement

A pupil questionnaire was administered to all pupils from third to sixth class on Reading and Writing to seek their views on their learning experiences of literacy at home and at school

A parent questionnaire was administered to parents of pupils in the senior classes to quantify their views of their child's experience of literacy at Corpus Christi

We set time aside at every staff meeting to discuss how our literacy targets are progressing

We will set up a focus group of children to discuss their experience of literacy at the start and end of each school year

This is what we are now going to work on:

It was agreed to review the current Reading scheme used by the school in the junior and senior classes

The literacy resources of the school will be reviewed with the intention of increasing the number of novels available to senior classes and the number of graded readers, picture books and big books available to the junior classes.

The teaching staff will work on three focus areas from the Primary Language Curriculum with the pupils from Junior Infants to Sixth class:

- ✓ A whole school approach to Genre Writing guided by the PDST manual on 'A Structured Approach to the teaching and learning of the Writing Genres.'
- ✓ A whole school approach to the teaching of Comprehension Strategies using the PDST manual 'Guiding Comprehension, teaching for meaning'
- ✓ To develop and enhance Teanga ó bhéal in all classes from Junior Infants to Sixth class

This is what you can do to help:

Ensure your child's participation in the relevant questionnaires set up on Seesaw by the Literacy Committee

Participate in all parent questionnaires sent to you by the school

Implement any advice from any literature sent to you from the school

Literacy at home (from *The Primary Language Curriculum Support Materials*)

The most important thing that you as a parent can do is to build your child's confidence in speaking, reading and writing, and to promote positive attitudes and habits for life. You are the person best placed to be a positive role model. Let your child see you reading and writing every day. Your child should realise the enjoyment that reading and writing give you, and how they are useful and necessary tools to be used on a daily basis.

It is a good idea to establish a strong predictable routine. Find a quiet comfortable spot to enjoy a book together. This can be a special time to build relationships and literacy skills simultaneously. It is a great way to spend some quality time with your child. Key to this is selecting the right book for your child.

Before Reading- Building Comprehension

The aim is to get your child thinking about what they will read. Discuss the cover: Front, and blurb on the back. Share your own ideas and thoughts and make predictions using clues from the cover: the title, illustrations, etc.

Make connections between the text and real life, other books read, e.g., I'm thinking this book will be about...I think.....will happen because...This reminds me of...

During Reading- Building comprehension

Read the text aloud with your child. Take time to pause and discuss the pictures, the characters, the unfolding story line; make predictions... ask questions, wonder aloud. BUT, don't slow the story down too much.

Read with expression: use different voices for the various characters...loudly, softly (children are experiencing fluent reading).

After Reading- Extending the child's comprehension of the story

This is the ideal time to have a chat about the story. Ask your child if they enjoyed the story, if it reminded them of any other books or events in their lives. Think about the characters...their feelings, why they might have acted the way they did...and any changes they would make to the story. See if your child can retell the main events or important parts of the story in sequence.

A whole school approach to the teaching comprehension strategies

The teaching of reading involves a range of comprehension strategies. These strategies are explicitly taught to develop independent readers who engage meaningfully with the text. The process of comprehension begins before a pupil starts to 'read' and continues even after the 'reading' is finished. Good readers use pre-reading strategies like previewing the text and use post-reading strategies like summarizing in addition to the many strategies they use to make meaning during 'reading' itself.

By dividing instruction into pre-reading, during reading and post-reading, teachers can design activities for each stage that will improve student's comprehension and also provide opportunities for teachers to demonstrate strategies that readers can use at each stage. Strategies will be introduced and mastered individually. Over time the child will develop a repertoire of strategies which they can independently draw on when reading. For this reason, comprehension strategies will be developed from the earliest levels of the school across a range of genres and modalities (both print and digital).

Children will get opportunities to practice and consolidate these strategies in a cross curricular manner. A variety of fiction and nonfiction texts will be used for strategy instruction. The teaching staff at Corpus Christi will adopt a whole school plan for teaching comprehension strategies across the school year. Teachers will teach the strategies using the gradual release of responsibility model.

Writing- Encourage your child to build her writing experiences

At home, writing should be meaningful, i.e., have a specific purpose such as writing birthday cards, shopping lists, phone/text messages, diaries, notes, letters etc.

Drawing is often the first entry point into writing. Encourage your child to draw and tell you about the drawing. Encourage your child to tell you about their writing and to read it to you.

Helping children notice words and word patterns supports their writing.

Approximate spelling is acceptable, e.g., 'bcoz' for 'because', and shows that your child is using letters and sounds they have learned.

Playing games like I spy helps children to link words and spelling. All attempts should be praised.

Provide opportunities for your child to experiment with writing, such as a writing box.

At home, writing should not be an extension of school work (except for what is required for homework) but should be fun and informal.

The genres of writing will be taught in Corpus Christi over a two-year period. In the first year, they will learn how to write a recount, how to write a procedure and how to do narrative writing. In year two, they will learn how to do Report writing, Explanatory Writing and Persuasive writing. Each child will learn the language and structure of each writing genre and the criteria for assessment for each writing genre.

As your child is taught a new genre in school, take an interest in what they have written, praise their efforts. Look for examples of genre writing in literacy encounters outside of school.

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.

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 August 31st 2021 to June 30th 2022.

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 on Wednesday 24th and Thursday 25th November 2021 and we had regular 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 Niamh Greene (Principal)

and our Deputy DLP is Aisling Downes (Deputy Principal)

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: Tuesday 29th March

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

We encourage high attendance in the following ways:

During the COVID-19 pandemic, we had to pause our Attendance strategy because of COVID-restrictions in regard to attending a school/ workplace when symptomatic and because of the level of infections of the virus in the school community. Our strategy for the last two years was to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the school setting. As our school emerges from the pandemic and when there is no longer a threat to the health and safety of our school community, we aim to work with our pupils and parents on improving attendance.

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**