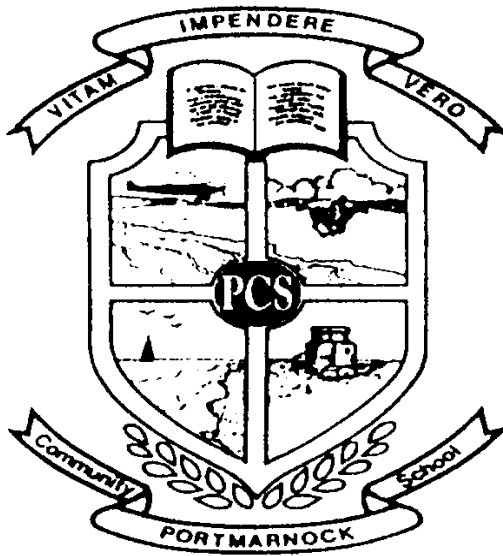




Portmarnock Community School

Portmarnock

County Dublin

Roll Number : 91324p

SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION REPORT

Evaluation period : September 2017 to May 2018

SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION REPORT

1 Introduction:

1.1 Context of our school:

Portmarnock Community School is a co-educational school, of approximately 900 students, established under the Deed of Trust for Community Schools. The school serves the community of Portmarnock and the surrounding area. The school is under the trusteeship of the Loreto Sisters, the Archbishop of Dublin and Dublin and Dún Laoghaire ETB. It is multi-denominational, co-educational, offers a comprehensive curriculum, has a non-selective intake and promotes enlightened management reflected in high standards of academic achievement. Portmarnock Community School has a reputation for the provision of quality teaching and learning, earned through the excellence and commitment of its teaching staff. The support of the Parents and the local community are also vital ingredients in the school's continued success.

1.2 The focus of our evaluation:

A school self-evaluation of teaching and learning was undertaken in Portmarnock Community School during the period from September 2017 to May 2018. As a school we evaluated Assessment for Learning, AFL, as an "umbrella" for our teachers and departments to work from. The autonomy lay with each department to focus on one area within assessment for learning. This provided each department the ability to select an area that they felt was best practice for their classrooms and a selection which would provide the most successful outcome for the enrichment of the student's learning experience within their lessons.

1.3 Rationale:

Within our first subject department meetings in September, each department looked at their current teaching methodologies being employed within the classrooms. They decided on what was currently working well within lessons and what needed improvement. From here, departments collaboratively selected one area, within assessment for learning, that was a "best fit" for the advancement of the pedagogical environment within their lessons. Departments reported back their findings and proceeded to work on this area for improvement.

The time frame for completion of the self-evaluation focus was Easter of 2018. Each department met at least five times, within this timeframe, to analyse and evaluate their ongoing work and to tweak their performance based on collaborative and collegiate input and discussions within their professional learning community.

A varying diversity of assessment for learning techniques were utilised:

- Exit cards
- Self-assessment
- Self-reflection
- Peer assessing work
- Peer assessment
- Feedback forms
- Traffic lights
- Self-assessment rubric
- KWL

At Easter, each department completed their extensive final evaluation report, outlining, in great detail, their success and areas for improvement for the upcoming academic year.

2 Findings:

2.1 Departments identified their progress and success, in assessment for learning, in the following areas:

- Students are more reflective
- Students express their own learning/ students are more responsible for their own learning
- Students manage their own learning
- Students are thinking about what they are achieving/ have achieved
- The process enables weaker students
- Students recognise mistakes more readily
- The process reinforces individual learning
- The process generated an environment where students are more careful with their own work
- There was an improvement in understanding
- An incorrect answer now facilitated an opportunity/ a lead to correct the answer and used a source of revision
- Students retained information for longer
- Facilitated more student engagement
- Within the process students became more prepared for their lessons, which resulted in a lowering of student anxiety around their learning
- The more practiced students became at peer correction the less daunted they were about the process
- It modelled best practice
- Students were more open-minded about their learning
- It provided a more light-hearted approach to assessment
- It promoted idea sharing
- Teachers found that the process enabled the less able student- they could experience exemplars of good quality
- Discussions, which took place around achieving certain success criteria, enabled students to become more active in their own learning
- It allowed students to develop the skill of critical thinking and to give them a clear sense of what they were being assessed on
- Students were motivated and engaged in the design process

2.1 Teachers, within their departments, outlined their own personal learning from the self-evaluation work that had been undertaken:

- Teachers were more aware of students learning and achievements
- Process was quick
- Process was effective
- There was immediate feedback
- A good learning atmosphere was generated within the lessons and classrooms
- Students became more confident and less anxious
- The process promoted learning

2.2 teachers also outlined difficulties that they found during this evaluation process:

- Need for clearer success criteria
- The process is only effective if used within selected lessons
- Assessment for learning needs to be differentiated for different ability levels

- Students need to partake of this process from first year to enable them to become confident, familiar and skilled when using this method of assessment
- Process took longer in certain subjects
- Students confidence attained when teacher corrected the work
- The process, even though highly effective, took longer in certain cases which led to less content being covered
- Throughout each department it was felt that lower ability students struggled with this form of assessment
- Students can find it challenging as it is outside their comfort zone.

2.3 Teachers outlined the areas for improvement for the upcoming academic year:

- Make success criteria clearer
- If one strategy does not work, look at other strategies
- Use ICT to share exemplars of high quality work and skill
- Use ICT for assessment
- Aim self-reflection that suit particular ability levels
- At the commencement for this process use this strategy on low stakes homework and tasks
- Keep the process as a novelty to ensure continued success
- Keep the focus narrower
- Use new methods like “show me boards”