

Kilcolgan Educate Together National School

Our Self-Evaluation Report and Improvement Plan 2018/2019 - Spelling

1. Introduction

This document records the outcomes of our last improvement plan, the findings of this self-evaluation, and our current improvement plan, including targets and the actions we will implement to meet the targets.

1.1 Outcomes of our last improvement plan from 2014 to 2017/18

- The Brendan Culligan spelling programme was introduced. Teachers received training. The programme was implemented whole school and spelling results in standardised tests were monitored over a 3 year period.
- It was decided that children with dyslexia who are exempt from Irish would use the Lexia app during Irish instruction. Appropriate support programmes would be used by support teachers: SNIP, Alpha to Omega, Pat or Toe by Toe depending on recommendations from the child's psychological educational report.
- A review of the programme after year 1: teachers in the middle stream were finding it difficult to implement the Culligan programme independently – support teachers were needed to assist in the setting up and monitoring of groups. In the senior classes the model was working well but the teachers felt they weren't able to support the most able group who were independent but not being stretched to fulfil their potential. Children in the weakest group were not progressing as well as anticipated. Their motivation was low.
- Year 2 – staff turnover had a significant impact on the success of the programme and its implementation whole school, as new staff did not have the relevant training. More support time was being given over to supporting spelling in the classroom. As a whole school approach it wasn't satisfactory because the programme only started in First Class.
- In our results report for 2015 it is recorded that: "1st Class are of particular concern with 13 children falling below or significantly below average. 2nd class are also a concern with 10 children falling below or significantly below average. 3rd class has 6 children out of 13 children falling below or significantly below average. Although a lot of these children have learning needs or reading difficulties the numbers are too significant and indicate that intervention is necessary. All three classes will need support with spelling next year."
- Comparative analysis of results showed from 2014/2015 a fall-off of the most able students. These students were not reaching their potential.
- **Comparative Analysis 2014-2015: Year 1**

At or below 2nd PR – no. of children has **decreased**

3rd-16th PR – no. of children has **increased**

17th-50thPR – no. of children has **increased**

51-84th PR – same

85th – 98thPR – no. of children has **decreased**

98th PR – no. of children has **decreased**

- We deduced from analysing results over 3 years and consulting with students and teachers that the Culligan programme was better suited to the senior end of the school as it required children to be more independent and mature in their approach to learning. However, after discussing the programme with children in 6th class they felt they needed to be assessed in spelling with regularity, i.e. a weekly spelling test.
- In 2016 we identified a spelling workbook for the whole school so that all teachers would be using the same programme. Feedback from teachers and parents was that the tasks could be laborious and that children weren't motivated to learn the spellings but simply complete the task in the book. However, in 2016 results improved possibly as a result of the regularity of dictation and spelling assessments throughout the school. But our most able children were still not reaching their potential. From our 2016 results report: We were below normal distribution in the 3rd-16th percentile (a turnaround from last year) and in the 17th-50th percentile. We scored significantly above normal distribution in the 51st-84th percentile bracket and marginally above in the 85th-98th percentile bracket, however we were below normal distribution in the above 98th percentile.

- A concern raised by teachers was that we were not seeing the transfer of learning spellings for a test into using these same words and spelling them correctly in their free writing copies and other school work.
- We decided that after Christmas we would re-evaluate the programmes in place in classes with the view to adopting changes in September. Below is a summary of results over a 4 year period tracking class groups by colour.

- **Lowest Percentile Bands**

Class Level	2014		2015		2016		2017	
	2 nd PR	3 rd -16 th PR	2 nd PR	3 rd -16 th PR	2 nd PR	3 rd -16 th PR	2 nd PR	3 rd -16 th PR
1 st	0	5	0	9	0	2	0	8
2 nd	0	5	0	5	3	5	0	4
3 rd	1	2	1	5	0	3	3	5
4 th	2	0	0	2	1	5	0	4
5 th	0	3	0	0	0	1	0	0*
6 th	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	2

- * a number of children were absent for testing so results are not reflective of a change

- **Mid-range Bands**

Class Level	2014		2015		2016		2017	
	17 th -50 th PR	51 st -84 th PR	17 th -50 th PR	51 st -84 th PR	17 th -50 th PR	51 st -84 th PR	17 th -50 th PR	51 st -84 th PR
1 st	9	8	10	6	9	13	7	3
2 nd	4	3	9	5	12	8	9	13
3 rd	9	15	1	6	6	9	11	5
4 th	4	10	10	15	5	10	7	9
5 th	0	4	3	10	7	15	5	6
6 th	4	5	1	5	3	10	7	11

- **Highest Bands**

Class Level	2014		2015		2016		2017	
	85 th -98 th PR	Above 98 th PR	85 th -98 th PR	Above 98 th PR	85 th -98 th PR	Above 98 th PR	85 th -98 th PR	Above 98 th PR
1 st	2	0	5	0	6	0	5	0
2 nd	2	0	3	0	1	0	3	0
3 rd	4	0	1	0	5	0	6	0
4 th	5	0	3	0	1	0	4	0
5 th	4	1	3	1	3	0	4	0
6 th	2	3	1	0	6	0	4	0

1.2 The focus of this evaluation

We undertook self-evaluation of teaching and learning during the period (*May/2018*) to (*June/2019*). We evaluated the following aspect(s) of teaching and learning:

- Adopting a whole school approach to spelling from Junior Infants (focus on Jolly sounds and blending and segmenting) to Sixth Class.

- Implementing a blended programme using the **Spelling Made Easy Programme** and tricky word lists compiled for each class based on dolch words, core words (Culligan Programme) and tricky words. Children would be introduced to a new word family one week and a tricky word list the following week.
- We wanted to adopt a user-friendly programme that was structured (introducing one word family a week) to ensure children met all sound families over the course of their schooling eliminating any gaps in knowledge.
- To adopt a differentiated framework so that the needs of all children in the class were met.
- To assess spelling on a weekly basis and keep records of results.
- To develop whole school yearly plans for spelling.

2. Findings

2.1 This is effective / very effective practice in our school

List the main strengths of the school in teaching and learning.

- Teachers were very receptive to the programme and eager to implement it. Record keeping and monitoring was implemented immediately.
- Spellings could be administered by the class teacher – whole class – using the same spelling list by utilising the differentiated framework.
- Spelling homework is given every night and spellings are assessed on a Friday.
- A4 spelling notebooks were introduced whole school – for all spelling work (homework and assessments).

2.2. This is how we know

List the evidence sources. Refer to pupils' dispositions, attainment, knowledge and skills.

- Teacher feedback on homework noted an improvement.
- Teacher records of spelling results saw an improvement particularly on weeks where a sound family was assessed. Tricky word lists were more difficult for children to score consistently high in.
- Teachers reported an improvement in attitudes towards spelling, spelling in other class work improved and a willingness to try to spell independently.
- A marked improvement in results in standardised tests in 2019 revealed the programme was having a positive impact on all children.
- No. of children at or

Percentile Bands	No. Of Children 2018	No. Of Children 2019	Difference
below 2nd PR	8	4	-4
3rd-16th PR	27	18	-9
17th-50th PR	52	54	+2
51st-84th PR	37	51	+14
85th-98th PR	28	36	+8
Above 98th PR	2	5	+3

2.3 This is what we are going to focus on to improve our practice further

Specify the aspects of teaching and learning the school has identified and prioritised for further improvement.

- Spelling lists in 1st class will be transferred to cursive script as this group were struggling to transfer spellings correctly from print to cursive.
- Utilising the workbooks that are attached to the Spelling Made Easy Programme in all classes for phonic and editing activities.
- Reviewing spelling as a staff each term and identifying children of particular concern early.
- Informing parents of our progress thus far.

3. Our improvement plan

On the next page we have recorded:

- The **targets** for improvement we have set
- The **actions** we will implement to achieve these
- **Who is responsible** for implementing, monitoring and reviewing our improvement plan
- How we will measure **progress** and check **outcomes**(criteria for success)

As we implement our improvement plan we will record:

- The **progress** made, and **adjustments** made, and **when**
- **Achievement of targets** (original and modified), and **when**

Our Improvement Plan

Timeframe of this improvement plan is from September 2018 to June 2019

Targets	Actions	Persons / groups responsible	Criteria for success	Progress and adjustments	Targets achieved
<p>Implementation of whole school blended spelling programme – Spelling Made Easy and Tricky Word Lists to be taught from half way through Senior Infants to Sixth Class.</p> <p>Differentiated framework to be devised as a guideline for teachers.</p> <p>Whole school yearly plans to be written and utilised.</p>	<p>All spelling lists to be typed and made accessible on server.</p> <p>High frequency word lists, dolch lists, tricky words and commonly misspelled words to be compiled for all classes.</p> <p>A4 Hardback spelling notebooks to ordered for every child.</p> <p>All lists to be made accessible on the server.</p>	<p>Joanne/ Patrick</p> <p>Joanne/ Sorcha/ Claire</p> <p>Anna (booklists)</p> <p>Patrick</p> <p>All teachers</p> <p>Joanne (to update yearly)</p>	<p>Spelling records kept by class teachers – progress monitored throughout the year.</p> <p>Spelling homework to be monitored by class teachers.</p> <p>Monitoring of written work – are children transferring new spellings into their written work.</p> <p>Improved results on standardised tests</p>	<p>Spelling lists in cursive script for 1st Class.</p> <p>Review with class teachers.</p>	<p>A decrease in the number of children scoring below the 2nd percentile and in the 3rd-16th percentile.</p> <p>An increase in the number of children scoring in the remaining percentile brackets.</p>

Review

In October 2021 the In-School Management Team conducted a detailed review of the Spellings Programme.

Context:

Due to Covid 19, children had missed the summer term (March to September) of 2020 and the 1st half-term of 2021 (Christmas to March). While children engaged in distance learning, spellings were not consistently taught across all classes during distance learning. Since school resumed fully in March 2021, the school spelling programme was implemented fully in all classes from 1st – 6th. The Spellings for Me programme was being used for most children with spelling difficulties but in most instances it was replacing the school programme.

2019 Results:

	below 70	70-79	80-89	90-109	110-119	120-129	130 and above	Total results	Excluded	Absent	Total
1st Class (2018)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	7 (24%)	11 (38%)	6 (21%)	5 (17%)	0 (0%)	29	1	0	30
2nd Class (2018)	0 (0%)	1 (3%)	5 (17%)	16 (55%)	2 (7%)	3 (10%)	2 (7%)	29	0	1	30
3rd Class (2018)	1 (4%)	4 (17%)	4 (17%)	9 (38%)	2 (8%)	4 (17%)	0 (0%)	24	0	1	25
4th Class (2018)	0 (0%)	2 (7%)	3 (10%)	7 (24%)	12 (41%)	4 (14%)	1 (3%)	29	0	0	29
5th Class (2018)	3 (11%)	1 (4%)	2 (7%)	13 (46%)	4 (14%)	4 (14%)	1 (4%)	28	0	0	28
6th Class (2018)	0 (0%)	1 (4%)	2 (7%)	13 (46%)	5 (18%)	6 (21%)	1 (4%)	28	0	0	28
Total 2018 / 2019	2%	5%	14%	41%	19%	16%	3%	167	1	2	170
Normal distribution	2.0%	7.0%	16.0%	50.0%	16.0%	7.0%	2.0%				

2021 Results:

	below 70	70-79	80-89	90-109	110-119	120-129	130 and above	Total results	Excluded	Absent	Total
1st Class (2020)	2 (7%)	1 (3%)	5 (17%)	14 (47%)	4 (13%)	2 (7%)	2 (7%)	30	0	0	30
2nd Class (2020)	1 (4%)	2 (8%)	3 (12%)	15 (60%)	4 (16%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	25	0	0	25
3rd Class (2020)	1 (4%)	1 (4%)	2 (7%)	14 (52%)	5 (19%)	4 (15%)	0 (0%)	27	1	0	28
4th Class (2020)	0 (0%)	1 (3%)	4 (14%)	14 (48%)	3 (10%)	5 (17%)	2 (7%)	29	1	0	30
5th Class (2020)	2 (7%)	2 (7%)	3 (10%)	15 (52%)	4 (14%)	3 (10%)	0 (0%)	29	0	0	29
6th Class (2020)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4 (14%)	8 (28%)	12 (41%)	4 (14%)	1 (3%)	29	0	0	29
Total 2020 / 2021	4%	4%	12%	47%	19%	11%	3%	169	2	0	171
Normal distribution	2.0%	7.0%	16.0%	50.0%	16.0%	7.0%	2.0%				

Bands	No. of children 2019	No. of children 2021	Difference
Below 70	4	6	+2
70-90	9	7	-2
80-89	23	21	-2
90-109	69	80	+11
110-119	31	32	+1
120-129	26	18	-8
130+	5	5	No change

The above findings include children who joined the school in 2020 or 2021

Findings:

The ISM team reviewed the Drumcondra spellings results from 2019 against those from 2021 (testing could not take place in 2020). It also took into account feedback from teachers. The following can be summarised as the main findings:

1. There was an overall 3% increase in spelling results from 2019 to 2021 for those children tested in 2019 *and* 2021. This follows on from a similar trend from 2018/ 2019 review.
2. Overall there was a general move towards higher percentiles.
3. The Support Team liked the Spellings for Me programme as it provides an individualised programme to students. Class teachers were less enthused about it as progress is harder to measure with irregular testing and dual programmes operating in the class meant that some students felt they no longer needed to engage with the school programme. The school programme also allows for vocabulary expansion activities especially in the senior classes.

Conclusion and Recommendations:

Given the significance of school closures it was very positive to see an improvement in spellings across the school. From this it can be deduced that the school programme works. Because of this it is important that all children continue to engage with the school programme (it allows for differentiation for those who find spellings more challenging by reducing the number of words per week that a child needs to learn). Children who require additional support with spellings and where this is identified as a target on their support plan should continue to use the Spellings for Me programme *in addition* to the school programme.

A future review should focus on free writing samples to ensure that spelling works is embedded across all curricular areas , assuming that results from standardised tests will remain generally positive.

