

DEIS 2014 – 2017 PLAN

LITERACY GROUP

REPORT AT THE END OF YEAR 1

The main aims of the Literacy Committee for 2014-2015 were:

- to improve the literacy levels of all students:
 1. by decreasing by between 5%-10% those reading under age 10 at point of entrance assessment by the end of second year;
 2. to decrease by between 5%-10%, by the end of second year, those reading between the ages of 10 – 12 years at point of entrance assessment
 3. To increase by between 5-10%, by the end of second year, those reading at age 15 or over at the point of entrance assessment
- to foster a love of reading and all aspects of literacy

Reading Ages

Second year students were tested in April 2015. This is the second academic year in which we moved retesting from the end of 3rd year to 2nd year, in line with DES plans. The results indicate the improvement from the point of first assessment at point of entry. The results are as follows:

The percentage of students reading at below 10 years was reduced from 50% at entrance assessment to 20% at the end of 2nd year. This is a reduction of 30%.

The percentage of students reading at between 10 years and 12 years at entrance assessment was reduced from 23% at entrance assessment to 35% at the end of 2nd year. This is a reduction of 12%

The percentage of students reading at 15+ increased from 3% at entrance assessment to 19% at end of 2nd year. This is an increase of 16%

INITIATIVES SUPPORTING LITERACY DEVELOPMENT

WORD OF THE WEEK

This initiative, co-ordinated by Siobhan O'Brien, was very successful. By using the plasma screens in the halls this literacy initiative succeeded in achieving high visibility. In 2014-2015 the staff decided to focus "Word of the Week" on subject related keywords supplied by all departments. A section for Word of the Week and keyword is included on the mini-whiteboards supplied in each classroom. The Word of the Week was included in the weekly school diary circulated to all staff. Occasional spot prizes were given on the corridor to students who knew, could spell and explain the meaning of the week's keyword.

MAHARA/MOODLE

The NCCA project developing Mahara entered its 2nd year, with all mixed ability classes involved. Congratulations to Siobhan O'Brien and Ciara Doyle for their ground breaking work in this area which was showcased at the EUFolio workshops in Dublin Castle in April

2015. Thank you to Frank Whelan for leading and developing work on Moodle and Mahara. The Minister for Education's letter to the Principal reflects the team's achievement in this area.

SPELLING BEE

This initiative for 1st and 2nd years was lots of fun and resulted in a real literacy "buzz". The final took place in late May in the cinema and was organised by Siobhan O'Brien.

CROSS-CURRICULAR LITERATURE AND ART PROJECT

This project, organised by Shirley Doyle, was highly successful.

DEAR

Drop Everything and Read was successful this year with many students borrowing books to finish reading at home. The format was varied slightly to fit in with the Mock Examinations. Shirley Doyle undertook to co-ordinate this initiative.

School Library

An enhanced borrowing facility operated each lunchtime from Monday-Thursday through 2014-2015. Thank you to Brenda Sweeney who supervised the lunchtime opening. A record was kept of books borrowed. Also thank you to Katie Greenhalgh and Bessy Zhu, 5th year students, who as part of their community work for the President's Gaisce Award undertook a rota of morning and afterschool library opening hours. Many students used the library during lunchtime as a quiet, supervised place to read. The number of computers available to students in the Library was further increased by the Principal.

CECIL DAY LEWIS AWARD WINNERS

Aoife Cahill, 3rd year was a prize winner in the Cecil Day Lewis Creative Writing Competition (Short Story Section) 2015. Aoife Cahill and Corey Brennan also received certificates of high commendation for their entries. The school's involvement was co-ordinated by Shirley Doyle and Breda Sunderland.

Book Clubs

The highlight of Book Club activities this year was reading "Apple Tart of Hope" by Sarah Moore Fitzgerald and a trip to Athy Town Library to meet with the author. This was organised by Breda Sunderland in conjunction with Joanne Parry HSCL and Athy Town Library. Students from 1st to 5th year were involved.

Keyword Posters

The supply of laminated keyword posters proved a very practical initiative.

E Readers

Siobhan O'Brien co-ordinated the supply of e-reading devices and also gave CPD to English teachers on using them in class to promote reading.

Book Boxes

The initiative, of having boxes of books available for classes to read when a teacher is absent, was continued. Claire O'Connor co-ordinates this initiative.

FURTHER OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2015-2016

The Literacy Committee continues to be encouraged by the numbers of students who sit and read non-school material in areas of high visibility – eg the school hall – before school and during lunchtime.

The significance of 19% students at the end of 2nd year reading at age 15+ for textbooks in all subjects is very important.

As the group tested was particularly weak in terms of literacy at point of entry (50% reading at 8 years or lower and 23% reading between 8 years and 10 years) and as 55% of students entering 3rd year are reading at lower than 12 years, in conjunction with the English Department and the Principal it was decided, as a special arrangement to stream 3rd year English classes for 2015-2016.