

Harold's Cross N.S.
Clareville Road,
Harold's Cross, Dublin 6W.
Roll Number: 19924i

School Self- Evaluation Report

May 2021

Cycle 2 of School Improvement Planning

Subject area of Physical Education

School Self-Evaluation Report 2 – Physical Education (May 2021)

The focus of the evaluation:

A school self-evaluation of teaching and learning in the area of Physical Education took place in Jan - April 2021 at the end of the first 3 year cycle (2018-21). The following is the report on the findings of the evaluation.

School Context:

Harold's Cross NS is a vertical, co-educational national school with DEIS Band 2 status. The school was a developing school for the last decade and now has 2 of each class level. Pupil enrolment currently stands at 409, with 16 mainstream classes, 8 SEN staff- which seven are full time and one shared, a full time HSCL coordinator and an administrative principal. The school serves the surrounding parishes of Harold's Cross, Mt. Argus, Kimmage and Crumlin. The school also has five SNAs who between them support twelve to fifteen pupils throughout the school.

2. The Findings:

Teacher Feedback:

A team of 10 staff members evaluated the school's current performance in Physical Education using the Teaching and Learning domains from Looking at Our Schools (2016). Areas of strength were noted in green and areas for development were noted in red (see [appendix 1](#)).

Domain 1:

In general, staff felt there has been an improvement among most students' interest levels, knowledge and understanding for P.E along with teacher's individual practices over the past three years but more discrete focus needs to be placed on the area of skills & understanding going forward.

The team felt pupils are enjoying most P.E lessons and are motivated to learn as teachers share the attainable learning objectives with pupils before lessons. It was noted that the sharing of our WALT & WILF before leaving the classroom has been working well in many classrooms and should continue to be practiced going forward.

Lessons are differentiated as much as possible within classes and it was suggested that talented pupils or those with a keen interest within an area are encouraged to take part in extra-curricular activities to nurture their talent. Students could be linked up to clubs within the local area. A list of pupils can be drawn up and the Home School Liaison teacher can be involved in this process.

The team felt that progress & motivation levels towards P.E are very much dependent on the strand that is being taught. When pupils feel confident in lessons, they are more motivated which leads to their sense of wellbeing but unfortunately it was noted that the opposite was the case in less popular strands. Staff felt dance was a strand where students were less motivated and it was very much so the case within the senior classes where attitudes towards Dance were noted to be more negative.

Assessment of children's progress & achievement was an area that the team felt was not practiced effectively over the past three years. The use of glance cards and pupil ownership of their learning in the senior classes was noted as being beneficial and a greater focus will need to be placed on these assessment practices going forward.

Domain 2:

While pupil's interest levels and awareness around different strands of the P.E curriculum have improved over the past three years, pupils still remain quite unaware of the key skills underpinning the P.E curriculum. This has been noted as an area of focus for our Senior classes in the coming year. Staff agreed that more cross curricular links could be made with P.E where students can become more competent in reporting or explaining processes from P.E activities. This could be linked closely to procedural writing and oral Language tasks within English lessons.

Students were commended for their respectful and co-operative interactions with other pupil's and their teacher's within p.e lessons. Since our student council has been set up, staff have recognised that many students have become more confident in contributing their opinions whereby they have been asking or making suggestions for different after school clubs to be set. This has been seen in classes where students have been learning the skills for different team games. This will continue through the setting up of an Active Schools Committee alongside the Student Council in the coming months as well as carrying out surveys/focus groups to ascertain feedback on the different aspects of the School Improvement Plan (Sports Day, Active Schools, and Coaches etc.)

The idea of students negotiating their own learning was noted to be very difficult in the junior end of the school but it was decided that we could focus on this within warm up games with these younger classes. Senior Classes would be more capable in setting up stations or creating team games and this should be focussed on more regularly in our lessons.

Domain 3:

Teacher's expressed their willingness to continue with CPD within P.E each year. The areas suggested to focus on next year are either Outdoor & Adventure or Athletics. This will need to be discussed with the whole staff and decided on accordingly.

Teachers did feel more confident last year (pre-covid) in teaching gymnastics having completed the CPD in 2019. It still does remain a case of teacher's being more comfortable within some strands as they are more confident.

The idea of the different team games assigned to the classes was noted to be working really well but teachers again felt that they often didn't know enough about the team game themselves so felt uncomfortable teaching it to their pupils. Staff were reassured that it is mainly the skills (passing, scoring, kicking etc.) that we are to focus on and there are many resources online available for covering these skills with young pupils. A file on the shared drive has been opened and any useful resources that people find can be uploaded so to help other members of staff in the coming years. Assessment practices within P.E have been difficult to carry out in most classes over recent years. Staff found short video clips of gymnastics tracker pupils useful and in the senior classes see saw provided opportunities for students to assess peers once given the success criteria. The use of tracker children within other strands was discussed and staff were not too sure if it would be as effective in other strands. Other suggestions for assessment were made such as a brief checklist for the 3 tracker children.

Integrating P.E with other areas of the curriculum was an area that we discussed in length. At present most staff were not integrating their p.e skills with other areas but agreed that this would be an achievable target to focus on going forward (long jump linked to length, dance with music, time with athletics etc.)

Domain 4

Staff found working closely with their partner teacher this year has enhanced their p.e teaching where they have shared ideas, useful resources, lesson ideas etc. with each other. It is hoped that

more resources can be uploaded to the shared drive so that all staff can benefit in the same way, especially in relation to the teaching of team games.

Staff agreed that P.E was not one of the areas that was given a lot of focus within our annual parent teacher meetings. It was mainly discussed if there were gross motor difficulties or behavioural difficulties arising within lessons. Communicating with parents about p.e is regularly done through uploading of photographs to the website at different stages throughout the year.

Going forward, where time allows staff will try to comment on the child's progress in p.e in Parent Teacher meetings. This will only need to be a very brief comment about overall progress since the start of the year or it may be specific to the strand being covered at the time or an area that they have found difficult in class.

Pupil Feedback

A questionnaire was drawn up using the criteria from the Active Flag and given to 6 classes (2nd X 2, 3rd, 4th, 5th & 6th) and a focus group was carried out with junior & senior infant pupils in May 2021 (see appendix 2 and 3)

All pupils within the focus group stated they liked p.e with 93% stating they believed they were good within the subject area. Like many classes, students recalled the most recent skills of Athletics (running) but a knowledge of team games being covered was known.

Of those who completed the questionnaire, 55.2 % of the pupils said they were good at P.E, while 42.4 % of pupils said it depended on what they are doing in the lesson. 57.1 % of the pupils stated that they enjoy all p.e lessons within their class, 28.6 % said they enjoy some or most of the lessons and 12.9 % of the group stated that their enjoyment depended on what strand they were covering in the lesson.

Students were asked to choose the strand they enjoy most within the p.e curriculum(aquatics was excluded as class teachers do not teach this strand) .The results were as follows ; 121 pupils chose games as the strand they enjoy most, 76 pupils chose Outdoor & Adventure, 73 chose athletics, 62 chose gymnastics & 48 pupils chose dance.

When asked to rate how confident they felt across the strands the strand that they felt most confident in, 139 chose games, 105 chose Outdoor & Adventure, 87 chose Athletics, 72 pupils chose gymnastics and only 44 felt really confident within the dance strand. It is important to note, gymnastics was the strand that we haven't covered since February 2020 due to the use of equipment/mats

Similar to staff, students enjoyment appears to be closely linked to their sense of achievement and self-confidence within the strand.

30% of the group were not sure what strand they needed to further develop while 24% chose Dance as the area they felt they needed to improve within. 11.4 % of pupils chose athletics and 21.4% chose gymnastics as the area for further development. Only 6.7% of the pupils chose Outdoor & Adventure as an area for further development.

Students were asked to list some skills they have developed in p.e lessons over the past 2 years. In this question, a number of responses listed skills they were currently covering in their classes but many pupils mentioned strands/strand units rather than specific skills taught within the P.E curriculum.

89% of pupils stated that they are enjoying the Active Homework they are receiving from their teacher while 11% are not. 66.2 % of the group would like to receive more active homework and 4.8 % would like to see the amount of Active Homework decreasing going forward.

51 % of pupils are members of sports team within school or an outside club and 21.4 % of pupils are looking to join a school sports team once training is allowed again post covid restrictions.

Parent Feedback:

A questionnaire was sent out to parents via Google Forms in April 2021. 157 parents responded.(See Appendix 4) 96.8 % of parents agreed that their child likes P.E while 88.4 % felt their child was confident in P.E this year.

68.2 % of parents believe that their child always has a positive attitude towards P.E while 28% said their positive attitude is strand dependent which matches closely to the pupil's response.

37.6 % of parents stated that they do not know what their child covers in their P.E classes while 62.4 % were aware of the content.

The strongest strand for parents was Games followed closely by Outdoor & Adventure and Dance was noted as the strand that parents believe their child is weakest in. Despite these results, 25.5 % of parents felt that Athletics was the strand that their child needs to develop most going forward.

Parents selected a range of skills from the curriculum with the explicit Athletics and Games skills most popular. There was a lack of awareness around the skills covered in the Outdoor & Adventure strands as well as dance and gymnastics skills.

18.5 % of parents state that their child is receiving Active Homework once every 2 weeks, 18.5% also stated their child receives active tasks. 49.7% of parents stated that their child rarely gets Active homework with 18.5 % stating they never received active homework this year. Following on from this 72 % of parents stated they would like their child to receive Active Homework going forward.

Focussing on activity levels outside of school, 89.2 % of parents stated their child is active or very active at home with 61.8 % of pupils a member of a sports club outside of school. This is an increase of almost 10% since our last evaluation. A number of different sports clubs were listed with the most popular clubs among our students being Gymnastics, Soccer, GAA, Dance and Swimming. The clubs listed by parents will help us as a school develop links where possible.

Progress made on previously identified targets:

The previous SSE in P.E was carried out in April 2018. Areas for improvement identified at that time were less reliance on coaches for the delivery of P.E lessons, a whole school approach to ensure a broad and progressive curriculum is covered, improved focus upon the Outdoor & Adventure strand within all class levels, Active Homework and the commencement of school sports teams with these entered into leagues and competitions throughout the year.

- The yearly calendar laid out for each class level is a strength highlighted within teacher's feedback. A few little tweaks to this calendar for particular strands will be looked at going forward.
- The removal of coaches and our class teachers following lessons from the PSSI materials appears to be working well. This can be seen as there is a greater awareness and knowledge among pupils over the particular skills from the curriculum that are being covered in their P.E lessons.
- A broader and progressive curriculum is being delivered especially within the games strand with whole school team games working well in many classes.
- Covid has affected a number of areas within the School Improvement Plan mainly the delivery and progression within the gymnastics strand and the activity levels at break times decreasing due to the lack of morning break times outdoors and playground games being discouraged to ensure social distancing.
- 2018/2019 was an extremely successful year for School Sports teams. Our Athletics Relay team won a medal in Santry Sports, our basketball team were runners up in an inter-schools tournament, our G.A.A team won a shield in Croke Park with Cumann na mBunscoil and were also runners up in an inter schools tournament with Templeogue Synge street GAA club. We entered our first cross county athletics team and 40 pupils travelled to Sundrive Park for their first competitive race where many performed really well. Each of these events involved large parent support and many links were made to outdoor clubs(especially Crumlin GAA) encouraging students to continue their training at these clubs in the off season.

Summary of school Self- Evaluation findings:

Identified Strengths:

- Student's enjoyment, engagement and confidence within P.E was evident in teacher, pupil and parent feedback.
- Gymnastics CPD was very helpful for teachers and these skills will continue to be embedded over the coming cycle due to pupils not having covered this strand properly since 2019.
- The use of the yearly calendar with a mixture of class teacher and coaches leading the lessons working well.
- Available resources across most strands have meant more effective lessons have been taught. A number of additional resources need to be purchased to improve the delivery of whole team games going forward.
- Increased activity levels within most classes with teachers completing and noting active breaks regularly over a fortnight in their planning documents as well as assigning Active Homework more regularly.
- Sharing of resources, playground games, lesson ideas among staff (especially partner teachers within the same class level) is being practiced a lot more and the shared drive for uploading materials to support the teaching of team games is building up.

Identified areas of improvement:

- Whole School Approach to the assignment of Active Homework needs to be embedded over the coming cycle. A list of suitable resources to be shared with staff in the drive that they can use with their class each fortnight.
- Approaches to the teaching of the skills within team games to be embedded and lesson ideas/resources shared with staff.
- Sharing of learning intentions with pupils to include specific skills within the curriculum so that the students are developing an awareness and knowledge of the skills within the p.e curriculum.
- Incorporating p.e activities within other curricular areas where at all possible.
- Students leading their own learning where possible – creating their own games regularly within different strand areas given particular criteria/equipment etc.
- Teacher CPD to be carried out in the Athletics strand.
- Develop students' ability to assess their own progress and progress of their peers – sharing precise success criteria with pupils regularly and allowing opportunities to note strengths and areas for improvement.

Areas for Prioritization:

1. Discrete naming of the p.e skills within the curriculum as we teach them.
2. Integration across curriculum where possible – Numeracy length linkage with the long jump. Music –dance linkage, oral language- procedures
3. Taking responsibility and negotiating their own learning - senior once a month creating a game. Infants once a term setting up a warm up game. Active Schools Committee
4. Assessment – Checklists/ glance cards to be used within the Senior End of the school. Success Criteria – Students assessing each other
5. Active Homework
6. Collaborative planning where possible – building up resources and assessment resources and upload these to the drive

The following legislative and regulatory requirements need to be addressed

Ongoing review of the school's Child Safeguarding and Risk Assessment Policies.