

**St Andrews College**  
**School Support and Improvement Plan**

## **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 September 2018 to June 2019**

#### **Oral communication**

- Presentation to staff on oral communication techniques
- Implemented the following oral communication strategies devised by the committee across all departments
  - Pair Work
  - Group Work
  - Whole Class Discussion
- Encouraged students to present work in front of class through a variety of mediums
- Staff Survey February 2020 revealed the following
  - 90% of staff said that they had used more oral communication than the previous year
  - 68% of staff said that they had included oral communication strategies in their department plans
  - 84% of staff said they would be willing to try more oral communication strategies in their junior classes
- Student focus group January 2020 revealed the following
  - 100% of students said that there has been more oral communication strategies in their classes than the previous year

### **1.2 The focus of this evaluation**

The DES Circular 0040/2016 states that the SSE focus for the evaluation years 2018-2022 is 'Engagement in learning'. St Andrew's College chose to focus on Assessment for Learning (AfL). Self-evaluation was undertaken during the period *August 2019 to October 2019*. This was carried out through surveying staff and students and analysing the findings. Appendix A provides links to the surveys and survey results.

In keeping with the DES School Self Evaluation guidelines, the evaluation process has led to action planning for improvement. The improvement plan has been informed by evidence gathered with St Andrew's College's unique context in mind and has identified meaningful and specific targets and actions.

## **2. Findings**

### **2.1 This is effective / highly effective practice in our school**

Investigations regarding Assessment for Learning under the Looking at our School 2016 guidelines showed that the following teaching and learning areas were effective in our school.

#### **Learner experience**

- Students grow as learners through use of activities such as group work and other assessment for learning techniques
- Students are acutely aware of how teacher feedback helps with learning
- Students experience opportunities which involves them in assessment for learning opportunities
- Students are keenly aware of the value and important role of assessment for learning as a tool for reviewing learning

### **Teachers individual practice**

- The teacher selects and uses planning, preparation and assessment practices that progress students' learning
- Teachers strategically select and use approaches to match the learning intentions of the lesson, meet the learning needs of students, and open up further learning opportunities
- Teachers recognise that providing student feedback has an impact on their teaching
- Teachers engage in a wide range of assessment for learning techniques

## **2.2. This is how we know**

### **The student survey carried out in October 2019 revealed that:**

- 86% of the students prefer when a lesson is made up of a variety of activities to help their learning
- 91% of students feel that teacher feedback helps with their learning
- 66% of students feel that their teacher is able to know if they understand the material that they have covered in class
- 99% of students feel that it is important that a teacher knows that the student understands the material covered in class while they are learning it
- 78.4% of students say that they are asked questions in every lesson
- 51% of students say that they get group work a few classes a week

### **The teacher survey carried out in August 2019 revealed that:**

- 98% of teachers say that feedback from students has an impact on their teaching
- 89% of teachers use questioning as a means of identifying students understanding
- 61% of teachers use worksheets/reflective sheets at least once a week
- 78% of teachers use group work at least once a week

## **2.3 These are a summary of areas for improvement with regard to *Assessment for Learning***

The following findings were identified as areas for improvement:

- 66% of students believe the teacher is able to know how well they understand the material covered in class
- 50% of teachers said that they daily stated the learning intentions at the start of the lesson and referred back to them during the class
- 19.5% of teachers said they would use groupwork in every class and 58.5% every week
- 13.4% of teachers said they would use 'Think, Pair Share' in every class with 46.3% using it every week
- 53% of students say that the traffic light technique is rarely/never used in classes
- 88% of teachers would like additional resources showing a willingness to engage in Assessment for Learning strategies
- 65% of teachers say time is the main thing preventing them from using Assessment for Learning

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

- Increasing the number of Assessment for Learning techniques that are used within the classroom setting for 1<sup>st</sup> year students
- Encourage all teachers to write the learning intentions at the start of the class and to refer back to them during the class
- Increase the usage of traffic light smiley faces as an Assessment for Learning technique
- Look for teachers to include 2/3 oral communication strategies into their department plans

## 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 - Assessment

Timeframe of this improvement plan is from August 2019 to May 2022

Targets	Actions	Persons / groups responsible
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update staff on the self evaluation initiatives</li>   <li>• Teachers to use a wider range of AfL methods in their lessons in 1st year classes</li>   <li>• Traffic light smiley faces</li>   <li>• Increase the amount of classes that the learning intentions are written on the board at the start of class</li>   <li>• Oral communication</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide information on the initiatives to staff at a staff meeting in Aug 2019</li>   <li>• Ensure all staff have access to AfL strategies by furnishing every class room with an AfL toolkit box</li>   <li>• Distribute traffic light smiley faces to all 1<sup>st</sup> year students</li>   <li>• Install learning intention boards into all classrooms</li>   <li>• Request that every department embeds 2/3 oral communication strategies into their schemes of work for junior cycle students</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SSE Assessment Committee</li>   <li>• SSE Assessment Committee</li> <li>• Subject Coordinators</li> <li>• Subject Teachers</li>   <li>• SSE Assessment Committee</li> <li>• Subject Coordinators</li> <li>• Subject Teachers</li>   <li>• SSE Assessment Committee</li> <li>• Subject Coordinators</li> <li>• Subject Teachers</li> </ul>
Criteria for success	Progress and adjustments	Targets achieved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survey teachers and students with targeted questions regarding Assessment for Learning techniques to establish current practice Appendix A</li>   <li>• Survey teachers and students towards the end of each academic year using the questions in Appendix B</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>

## Appendix A

### Surveys and results

**AfL Teacher Survey – August 2019** If you are unable to access this link it is printed in Appendix C

[https://forms.office.com/Pages/AnalysisPage.aspx?id=PDqqN6i\\_80O8W-oEPFA34-R\\_vUYVpYJFICEm3F7OFVURVdMRkhKU1EwVjVPN09EOU5KNUtFVjBEQS4u&AnalyzerToken=72vuDBQ6jldnoVaORJv16yGYu0PltZng](https://forms.office.com/Pages/AnalysisPage.aspx?id=PDqqN6i_80O8W-oEPFA34-R_vUYVpYJFICEm3F7OFVURVdMRkhKU1EwVjVPN09EOU5KNUtFVjBEQS4u&AnalyzerToken=72vuDBQ6jldnoVaORJv16yGYu0PltZng)

**AfL Student Survey – October 2019** If you are unable to access this link it is printed in Appendix D

[https://forms.office.com/Pages/AnalysisPage.aspx?id=PDqqN6i\\_80O8W-oEPFA34-R\\_vUYVpYJFICEm3F7OFVUQ0hDS1JNTkRQRE8zRDQwNFE0VVhOQUPaNS4u&AnalyzerToken=Mp2uF2IHkUNKO1fnn6luJO9J9sCH7UYu](https://forms.office.com/Pages/AnalysisPage.aspx?id=PDqqN6i_80O8W-oEPFA34-R_vUYVpYJFICEm3F7OFVUQ0hDS1JNTkRQRE8zRDQwNFE0VVhOQUPaNS4u&AnalyzerToken=Mp2uF2IHkUNKO1fnn6luJO9J9sCH7UYu)

**Oral Communication Staff Survey – February 2020** If you are unable to access this link it is printed in Appendix E

[https://forms.office.com/Pages/AnalysisPage.aspx?id=PDqqN6i\\_80O8W-oEPFA34-R\\_vUYVpYJFICEm3F7OFVUNVI5UjdVNVNHSE1UUUVLUFAyM1VZMDRVOS4u&AnalyzerToken=69KwqTxW1c8fPTIeCjG1pfs4isBRMVmB](https://forms.office.com/Pages/AnalysisPage.aspx?id=PDqqN6i_80O8W-oEPFA34-R_vUYVpYJFICEm3F7OFVUNVI5UjdVNVNHSE1UUUVLUFAyM1VZMDRVOS4u&AnalyzerToken=69KwqTxW1c8fPTIeCjG1pfs4isBRMVmB)

### Oral Communication Student Focus Group – January 2020

This focus group was about oral communication in the classroom. A mixed group of 2<sup>nd</sup> year students were asked questions and given opportunities to respond.

1. Do you use oral communication in your second year classes (2019.2020) more or less than you did in your first year classes (2018.2019)?

100% of students answered yes.

2. What activities involving speaking or listening have you used in class this year?

A) Think, Pair, Share

100% of students said that teachers use this

Most used when starting a new topic

Most classes include pair work

87% of students said that if the teacher sets guidelines for the students the activity works best

92% of students find it most useful when it is used for a topic that is linked for them and relevant to them

B) Speaking in small groups

86% of students said that this was done in their classes

65% of students said that when it was done in small groups, pair work worked best

35% of students said that in bigger groups there are some students who end up not doing any work as someone leads all the work

5% of students said that when the activity is done with only one main task

(PowerPoint on a computer), the groupwork is very hard to get done

C) Speak to the whole class from their desk

100% of students said that this happens in their classes  
Students find it very easy to speak to the class from their desk  
The 9% of students who do not like talking to the class at all thought that sitting at their desk was a less daunting way of doing this

- D) Speaking to the whole class from the front of the class  
91% of students have done this this year  
Students maintained that ways the teachers could make this an easier process might be to:
- Allow students to go up with someone to the front of the class
  - Clear guidelines from the teacher as to how the other students behave and act towards the speakers
  - Silence before anyone goes up
  - The class asks more questions and questions are easier to answer and can relax the students

- E) Answering questions during class  
23% of student's said that they answer questions randomly in class  
64% of students said that they answer questions when the teacher calls out their name  
36% of students said that the teacher waits for a hand up when asking for an answer to a question  
0% of students said that their teachers use a name randomizer to answer questions

- F) Reading aloud  
68% of students said that they had read aloud in class this year  
The follow up question to this was: Why are you comfortable talking from your desk rather than reading aloud?  
70% of students said that it is more comfortable for them when the ideas come from their head instead of stumbling over words on a page  
82% of students thought that if it was a rule that everyone reads in class no matter what that this would work better  
18% of the remaining students who said that they did not like reading aloud would accept this option and maybe try to enjoy the class more

- G) Drama/Games  
32% of students said that they have done this in class this year

**3. Why are some students reluctant to speak in class?**

- Students said that they are nervous to get things wrong as people might laugh at them either in class or bring it up later
- They said that it is a fear of getting things wrong and a fear of failure
- They also said that it is a fear of having all eyes focused on you
- They said that they were afraid that they might not meet the correct standards

**4. What might make it easier to talk in front of the class?**

- Do more of it (short-term nerves for long-term gain)
- Ask questions for presentations as opposed to just read them
- Work in groups for presentations
- Have a more relaxed environment in the classroom where it is ok to make mistakes

## Appendix B

Survey questions for teachers	Year 2019 findings	Aim 2020/2021
I use group work in every class	Yes 19.5%	Increase this by 5% per year
I communicate the learning intentions at the start of the class	Yes – 50%	Teachers reporting yes - a minimum of 5% increase per year
I use Traffic lights as a strategy to assess learning	44% said they would never use this strategy	Reduce this by 10%
We have included oral communication strategies into department plans	Yes – 68%	Increase by 5% A breakdown of specific strategies used will also be measured

Survey questions for students	Year 2019 findings	Aim
Group work takes place	51% said in a few classes a week	Increase this by 5% per year
Teachers tell us what we are going to learn at the start of the lesson	36% said every/most lesson	Increase this by 5% per year
Traffic lights usage in class	53% said rarely used	Reduce this by 10%
There has been an increase in the amount of oral communication strategies used in class	100% of focus group said yes	Take specific strategies and see can we get a 5% increase from previous focus group results