



SAPERE AUDE

DUNDALK GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Dundalk Grammar School

Dundalk, Co. Louth

63920A

School Improvement Plan

September 2015-May 2018

Version date: 30th May 2017

1. INTRODUCTION

2. SUMMARY OF SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION FINDINGS

2.1. OUR SCHOOL HAS STRENGTHS IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

- Students are highly motivated and committed to the school, as evidenced by an active Student Council.
- Academic attainment is high. Student progression to third level study is well above the national norms. Each year a significant number of students are awarded entrance scholarships to Irish universities.
- Students with specific learning difficulties receive significant resource hours. The school caters for a broad range of academic abilities amongst its student body. There is no control on academic attainment at point of entry to the school.
- The care of students is a significant strength in the school. There are good pastoral care systems in place involving Form teachers, Year Heads, Special Needs Co-ordinator, Guidance Counsellor and Chaplain.
- Staff are dedicated to the provision of a wide range of co-curricular and extracurricular activities. The boarding tradition is recognised in the school and staff make a significant additional commitment to the welfare and supervision of activities in the boarding school.
- Students' achievement is acknowledged and celebrated by the school community, on the school website, in the school magazine, at assemblies and in displays in key areas of the school.
- The school's physical environment is excellent following on a decade of sustained investment in buildings and facilities. This includes very extensive ICT networking with wireless connectivity and high speed broadband.
- School stakeholders through its Boards (of Management and Governors) and parents (as evidenced by a very active Parent Teacher Association) are highly committed to school support and development.
- Parental and student satisfaction with the school performance is high. This is supported by good feedback systems to highlight concerns to school management and staff where these arise.

3. SUMMARY OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY

Significant time was devoted during the 2014/15 academic year to identifying areas of priority for development in 2015/16 and beyond. Support for this strategic planning process was sought from the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) and subsequently input was provided by a PDST Advisor at staff meetings during 2015. The outcome of this process was summarized in the School Self Evaluation document published in November 2015.

An action framework covering 5 areas was agreed:

- Teaching and Learning
- School Organisation and Management Systems
- Extra-curricular & Boarding
- School Staff
- Using Technology.

During the 2015/16 academic year, the Board of Management reviewed the priorities and potential actions, and these have been summarised and published in this document. It should be noted that many of the actions identified are already underway and significant progress having been made with their implementation.

Action Area 1 Teaching and Learning

STRENGTHS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment for Learning (AfL) techniques are widely used by teaching staff. • There is good evidence of sharing of good practice and resources within subject departments (teacher practice). • There are very good pastoral and SEN structures in place (teacher practice) including excellent Guidance and Counselling Service.
MAIN AREAS REQUIRING IMPROVEMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework • Feedback (as provided to students to improve learning) • Pedagogy (promoting good practice in teaching and learning) • Assessment for Learning – AfL (developing a bank of strategies for teachers)
IMPROVEMENT TARGETS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve quality of teaching and learning (pedagogy) • Extend use of Assessment for Learning (AFL) • Improve homework (quality, regularity, completion and assessment) and feedback to students
REQUIRED ACTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (i) Increase awareness of new Homework Policy e.g. publish on school website and in school journal; highlight with appropriate groups i.e. staff (include on agenda for staff discussion and review), students and parents (at PTA). (ii) Provide staff development on NCCA materials (e.g. use of Feedback) • (i) Promote meaningful professional development opportunities for teachers (ii) Support new teaching/learning methodologies (e.g. teacher collaboration; peer to peer learning for pupils; pupil reflection on, and evaluation of, own learning) (iii) Explore and support use of new technologies in classroom • (i) Develop a bank of AFL strategies for teacher use. (ii) Subject departments to review guidelines for best practice in teaching and learning (NCCA, DES websites). (iii) Subject departments to develop success criteria relevant to their subject area • Subject Departments e.g. review subject guidelines for best practice from DES/NCCA; development of success criteria within subject departments
PERSONS RESPONSIBLE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School management (organisation of professional development) • Subject departments • Individual subject teachers
TIMEFRAME FOR ACTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • September 2015-May 2018
SUCCESS CRITERIA/ MEASUREABLE OUTCOMES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement in responses to homework questions included in previous surveys (pupils and parents) • Pupil surveys and responses on classroom activities e.g. satisfaction with feedback given; extent of engagement in learning. Results to be compared with previous surveys (e.g. WSE-MLL student questionnaire responses) • Subject departments resources e.g. bank of AFL strategies; defined success criteria; best practice guidelines • Extent of staff participation in professional development (e.g. TL21 in association with Maynooth University) • Staff evaluation (feedback from staff meetings, questionnaires etc)
REVIEW DATES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • January 2018 and September 2018