



Our School Improvement Plan 2021-2022 for parents and students

Aim: To embed differentiation in teaching and learning in a student-centred environment

What is differentiation?

Heacox, (2002) defines differentiation as ‘changing the pace, level, or kind of instruction in response to individual learners’ needs, styles, or interests’ while Willis, S & Mann, L., (2000) states that ‘differentiation is a teaching philosophy based on the premise that teachers should adapt instruction to student differences.’ (*Differentiation in action!* www.pdst.ie)

In the last academic year, we looked at teaching and learning in our school to find out what we are doing well. This is what we discovered:

Practice in our school is effective / very effective.

The main strengths of the school in teaching and learning:

- *Differentiated learning experiences that are socially beneficial and academically rewarding for all learners, that prepares students for a society that needs all forms of diversity to fully function, thrive and grow.*
- *Regular communication between all partners in the school community*
- *SEN Co-Ordinator, Student Support Team support and communicate regularly*
- *Good teacher-student rapport: teachers are aware of students’ needs and they plan, assess and track accordingly with their students*
- *Excellent Pupil-Teacher Ratio in a small school setting. (Student Support Team and Ladder of Referral System)*
- *Additional teacher to Student Support Team this academic year*
- *The adoption of digital platforms such as School Wise enhances teaching and learning, assessment, and communication between all partners in the school community.*

- *Team-teaching opportunities to support literacy and numeracy skills*

This how we know

- *Feedback from Parents and Students regarding Blended Teaching and Learning was mostly positive. (Parents' Association Meetings, Individual Parents Emails, Student Council and Subject Teacher Feedback with their class groups; Surveys; August 2020-May 2021)*
- *Whole Staff Meetings and Subject Department Meetings facilitate feedback and reviews of practise.*
- *Evidence from school exams and standardised tests administered.*
- *Regular communication between SEN Co-Ordinator & Staff*
- *Continuous Professional Development of teachers in Teaching and Learning Training*
- *Impact of 'Step-Up CBA (Classroom Based Assessments) Project 2018-2019': common approach for all students & staff*

This is what we did to find out what we were doing well, and what we could do better

- *Whole Staff Meeting August 2021 and Student and Teacher Surveys (May 2021) confirmed that differentiation continues to be a relevant focus.*
 - *Communication and feedback between Principal, Deputy Principal, SEN Co-Ordinator, Subject Teachers and Management Teams*
 - *May 2021 - Survey results show that most students feel that teachers are aware of their needs and abilities for the most part.*
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This is what we are continuing going to work on

The following aspects of teaching and learning have been identified and prioritised for 2021-2022:

- *Differentiation in all forms of teaching and learning in student centred approaches to meet diverse learners. Teachers will build on their teaching materials, pedagogy, and assessment practices to suit the needs of a range of learners and check that all students can access these.*
- *Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for staff in planning, teaching & learning methodologies, and pastoral care.*
- *Team-teaching to support students with literacy and numeracy skills (as per Student Support Team (SST))*
- *Academic and social support (as per the Ladder of Referral System: a process or steps taken to get additional assistance for a student who requires additional intervention)*
- *Data collection, analysis & distribution of students' test results*
- *Use of digital platforms such as School Wise & VS Ware to communicate teaching and learning goals and to track students' progress with them.*

This is what you can do to help:

- *Increase communication following reports, standardised tests, and outside accreditation exams.*
- *Continue to support your child's engagement in learning.*
- *Encourage effective study habits.*
- *Support us with the Code of Positive Behaviour and 'netiquette' in a blended learning environment. (See our website for School Policies and Information for parents).*

<p>School Time and Holidays</p> <p><i>The Department requires all post-primary schools to have 167 school days each year, and a 28-hour school week.</i></p> <p><i>The Department sets out a standardised school year and school holidays.</i></p>	<p><i>This year we have 165 school days</i></p> <p><i>Our school week is 29.9 hours.</i></p> <p><i>This year we have online parent/ teacher meetings and staff meetings, all in line with the Departments regulations.</i></p>
<p>Looking after the Children in our School</p> <p><i>The Department requires schools to follow the Child Protection Procedures it has set down. Our Board of Management has agreed in writing to do this.</i></p>	<p><i>Teachers, Parents & Students are aware of our policies and procedures.</i></p> <p><i>Our Designated Liaison Person (DP): Patricia Gordon</i></p> <p><i>and our Deputy DLP: Siobhan Reynolds</i></p>
<p>Enrolment and Attendance</p> <p><i>The Department requires schools to have and publish an admissions policy, to record and report attendance accurately, and to encourage high attendance and participation.</i></p>	<p><i>We have an Admissions Policy, and it is published.</i></p> <p><i>We will review our policy following the commencement of the Education (Admissions to School) Act 2018 October 2018 and advice as relevant.</i></p> <p><i>We keep accurate attendance records and report them as required.</i></p> <p><i>We encourage high attendance through our Attendance Policy and Strategy.</i></p>
<p>Positive Behaviour for a Happy School</p> <p><i>The Department requires schools to have a code of behaviour and asks us to consult parents and students about it. We do this.</i></p>	<p><i>Our Code of Positive Behaviour describes and supports positive behaviour.</i></p> <p><i>We have clear and high-profile Wellbeing, Anti-Bullying and Digital Learning policies in our school.</i></p>

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*Here is some information about what the Department of
Education and Skills require from us.*
