

School Improvement Plan for 2017/18

The school improvement plan for 2017/18 is a continuation of a plan commenced in 2015/16 (Literacy); 2015/16 (Numeracy) and 2016/17 (Assessment). The targets set originally continue to guide the School Improvement Plan for 2017/18. Progress may be tempered by the (now) increased emphasis on new Junior Cycle roll-out during the year, as the new Junior Cycle programme takes priority.

Literacy (3 key areas)

KEY AREA #1

Develop students' capacities to comprehend written and verbal questioning and to respond appropriately to it.

Target	Type	Action(s)	Person(s) responsible	Measure(s) of success	Review schedule	
KA1/1	Students will have easy access in each classroom to the meanings of the standard key words used in questioning.	Environmental	Classrooms will display these key words and their meanings in a prominent place for students to see throughout the year.	Students/teachers: 4 th years guide 1 st and 2 nd years to make the display and introduce them to Blooms Taxonomy in the process. Teachers do it with 3 rd , 5 th and 6 th years.	Students will make use of the display before attempting to answer questions.	Continuous
KA1/2	Teachers will more consciously use AfL in increasing student capacities in responding to questioning.	Skill – teacher	The teacher will ask students, prior to them answering questions, to explain the key words in the question and how these words will shape the answer.	Teachers	Students will provide more appropriate answers more consistently.	Continuous
KA1/3	Students will learn how meaning is constructed as written questions i.e. learn how learning is captured in written assessment.	Skill – student	Students will, for some exams, contribute to (or wholly take control of) the creation of the exam paper.	Students initially. Teachers will need to review the work for coherency etc.	Students contribute meaningfully constructed questions to their own exams.	Assessment of impact to be made after each set of exams to which students contributed in this manner.
KA1/4	Students will feel free to promote the use of the key words within their own questioning in the classroom.	Attitudinal	Teachers will prompt students to use key words when asking questions of the teacher.	Teachers	Students use key words when questioning the teacher.	Continuous

Progress made during 2015/16	
KA1/1	Good classroom displays of keywords in 5 classrooms. In some cases these are used during lessons, and prove helpful

KA1/2	Students are asked to express questions in their own words in approximately half of their classes (English, RE, History, Maths, Economics, Geography). This is an effective method in improving student performance
KA1/3	Not really attempted during 2015/16
KA1/4	Students are now asked to repeat questions using appropriate language in many subjects

KEY AREA #2:

Develop approaches that will enhance students' verbal reasoning and communication skills across all subjects.

	Target	Type	Action(s)	Person(s) responsible	Measure(s) of success	Review schedule
KA2/1	Teachers to include classroom debates and student discussions in their teaching methodologies.	Attitudinal Skill - Student	Teachers will arrange for students to debate topics in class	Teachers	Improvement in students' abilities and willingness to speak in public and improve their debating skills.	Continuous Teachers to share their experiences of the inclusion of classroom debates in their staff meeting.
KA2/2	Wider promotion of and increased participation by students, in debating clubs.	Skill - Student	Use of senior students to train 1 st and 2 nd year students in debate techniques. Greater promotion of debating club and improved access to debating club.	Teachers/ Senior Students	Greater participation in debating competitions. Increase in the number of debates held in the school.	Bi-Monthly
KA2/3	Increased use of Group work during classes.	Skill - Student	Teachers will endeavour to increase their use of group work as a teaching methodology.	Teacher	Increase in amount of group projects which the students are engaged in.	Continuous Teachers to share their experiences of the use of group work in their staff meetings.

Progress made during 2015/16	
KA2/1	Some teachers using debate in classroom and also use written debate as homework. Some teachers more at home with this method than others. Difficulties expressed around planning the expected outcomes.
KA2/2	Senior debating club worked well during the year (designated Club of the Year). High quality debates at lunchtime well attended. Major school debate on Proclamation Day a success. Need to get seniors more involved in training 1 st & 2 nd years in 2016/17.
KA2/3	Group work used by some teachers to review topics or in games based activities. It leads to a more positive engagement especially from the less academic students.
Progress during 2016/17	
KA2/2	Lunchtime whole school debates in hallway are helping to promote debating. Debating Club wins Club award for second year in a row.

KEY AREA #3:

Provide greater access to books for students via classroom libraries and e-book programmes.

Target	Type	Action(s)	Person(s) responsible	Measure(s) of success	Review schedule	
KA3/1	Access to a greater variety of books in the school	Environmental	The school will either provide funding for books or students will donate books	Board of Management / Principal / Student Council	Students using a book rental programme on a continuous basis	Continuous
KA3/2	Establish classroom-based themed libraries	Environmental	Each classroom in the school to have bookshelves	Board of Management / Principal / Teachers	Appropriate books in each classroom which can be used as a source of discussion	End of first term
KA3/3	Develop a more practical school library	Environmental	A full review of all literature currently on the shelves should be conducted Literature geared towards specific debate topics etc.	Teachers / Student Council	Greater utilisation of the school library for projects and debates	End of first term
KA3/4	Develop a schoolwide book rental programme	Teacher	Design a book rental programme for the school as a whole rather than individual teacher programmes	Principal / Teachers	This will depend upon the availability of books	End of first term
KA3/5	Incorporate ebooks into the school literacy programme	Teacher / students Attitudinal	All Surface tablets should have downloaded onto them a number of core texts	Teachers / Student Council	Teachers and students regularly using tablets for reading purposes	Continuous
KA3/6	Establish a culture of reading, using the Great Books programme	Teacher/student	Trial a Great Books short course in 2014/15	Principal/teachers	Attitude of students to reading & seeking to understand characters	End of first and third terms

Progress during 2015/16	
KA3/1,2,3	Some teachers have supplied books and maintained small class libraries. Small numbers of students make good use of such facilities. More suitable library shelves have been identified and are being put in more rooms which will lead to an increase in library activity. Classroom libraries are the way forward. No uniform enthusiasm for ebooks. Some specific budget needs to be supplied for book purchase. Book week was more low key in 2016; 'Your teacher is reading' notices were effective, but such efforts need to be sustained for longer during the year, or formalized more
KA3/4	Class libraries require attention and easier to manage than anything schoolwide. Book sales happened on two occasions (one student and one for staff) – should be encouraged more. Writers to be invited to the school in 2017. Consider if a student book club can be established/promoted, perhaps via the Great Books subject teacher.

KA3/5	Great Books programme has successfully used Kindle.
KA3/6	Great Books programme has worked well over the two years. Not developing as a short course yet, due to continuing uncertainty re new Junior Cycle, but will continue with it as a literacy support. Will be reviewed and revamped for 2016/17.
	Progress during 2016/17
KA3/1,2,3	More class libraries established following provision of bookcases. Display of materials in Business and Science also undertaken
	For 2017/18 consider using more guest speakers in junior classes who are writers/poets
KA3/6	Following teacher review, Great Books is to be run in 2 nd year as a literacy support, but not developing into short course for the present until (a) full review done (b) clarity on time available within the new JC timetable

Numeracy Plan (3 key areas)

KEY AREA #1

Develop students' capacities to comprehend written and verbal questioning around mathematical concepts and to respond appropriately to it. In short, that students would better understand the language of Maths.

	Target	Action(s)	Measure(s) of success	Review schedule
KA1/1	Students will have easy access in subject classrooms to the meanings of key words related to numeracy and Maths.	Maths, Geog & Business classrooms will display these key words and their meanings in a prominent place for students to see throughout the year.	Students will make use of the display before attempting to answer questions.	Continuous
KA1/2	Teachers will more consciously use AfL in increasing student capacities in responding to questioning.	The teacher will ask students, prior to them answering questions, to explain the key words in the question and how these words will shape the answer.	Students will provide more appropriate answers more consistently.	Continuous
KA1/3	Students will learn how meaning is constructed as written questions i.e. learn how learning is captured in written assessment.	Students will, for some exams, contribute to (or wholly take control of) the creation of the exam paper.	Students contribute meaningfully constructed questions to their own exams.	Assessment of impact to be made after each set of exams to which students contributed in this manner.
KA1/4	Students will feel free to promote the use of the key words within their own questioning in the classroom.	Teachers will prompt students to use key words when asking questions of the teacher.	Students use key words when questioning the teacher.	Continuous

	Progress made during 2015/16
KA1/1	Keywords displayed and regularly used in most maths classrooms. Displays are good and students find these helpful.

KA1/2	As with literacy, students are asked to explain questions in their own words, often before he receives teacher assistance.
KA1/3	No advance on this aim. Tried once, but time element involved has limited teachers' enthusiasm.
KA1/4	Students asked to express questions in a more mathematical way.
Progress made during 2016/17	
KA1/1	Need to address difficulty of weaker students not using keyword displays. Weaker students also need fun ways of explaining what is being done to help them remember.

KEY AREA #2:

Make mental mathematics an embedded process across all numeracy elements in the school curriculum

Target		Action(s)	Measure(s) of success	Review schedule
KA2/1	Teachers to include mental maths quizzes in their teaching.	Teachers will continually question students both on their numerical fluency and their capacity to estimate. Peer assessment to be used where possible. The use of calculators will be avoided in 1 st year.	Improvement in students' willingness to respond to questions and to think mathematically. Degree of interest generated in classroom quizzes.	Continuous. Maths teachers in particular to share their experiences of mental quizzes.
KA2/2	Wider promotion of and increased participation by students in mathematics, business and science competitions.	Use of senior students through Clubs (e.g. Maths, Science) to help students be more at ease with Maths. Teachers to promote specific Maths competitions.	Greater participation in relevant competitions. Greater participation by weaker students in Maths Zone club. More Maths competitions as part of Clann activity.	Review at every Maths department subject meeting

Progress made during 2015/16	
KA2/1	Students generally asked to supply answers to simple maths questions without calculators or at least to provide an estimate before using a calculator
KA2/2	Young Scientist promoted this year, initially with four groups, with eventually two group entries emerging. Lot of effort into promoting Business Enterprise Awards, with over twenty 2 nd years very actively involved and a few prizes won (2 nd year and 4 th year). Maths Zone activity didn't happen – needs a teacher to coordinate it, as not easy for students to lead this club. Clann activities included quizzes but not specifically maths focused.
Progress during 2016/17	
KA2/2	No external YSE, but internal competitions for 1 st , 2 nd and TY with public displays. Enriched Maths programme in UCD & Maynooth promoted among senior students & trials for Maths Olympiad. Aim to use Khan Academy and online Science Quizzes and Coding competitions as Clann activities in 2017/18.

KEY AREA #3:

Co-ordinate the teaching of Mathematics in the junior years to facilitate the use of numeracy in other subjects, in particular Science, Geography and Business Studies.

	Target	Action(s)	Measure(s) of success	Review schedule
KA3/1	Establish a list of key numeracy competencies that require coordination	Maths Dept will establish an agreed method of teaching these competencies across all relevant subjects	Students will get a good cross-curricular sense of the importance of certain mathematical tasks	Continuous
KA3/2	Implement a standard timetable for the teaching of these key mathematical competencies in 1 st -3 rd years	Subject plans in Maths, Science, Geog & Business will be adapted to ensure proper reinforcement of key competencies. Book scoops to be considered in year 2.	Programmes of study in these subjects will reflect this cross-curricular coordination.	Each term by Maths Department
KA3/3	Use standardised testing tools to evaluate students' abilities in basic mathematical competencies, especially those with a cross-curricular dimension.	Implementing standardised testing with incoming first years in 2015, 2016, 2017 and follow up with 2 nd year testing.	Results emerging from standardised testing. Ability to identify (and afterwards respond to) specific numeracy needs of weaker students or students with learning issues.	Each term

	Progress during 2015/16
KA3/1	Key skills for first and second year agreed on by Maths department by year end. Discussion on these with Science.
KA3/2	Progress made in timing around covering certain topics. However no full agreement around the best time to stream. Indications to date suggest streaming into a Higher and a Higher/Ordinary class in 2 nd year as the most suitable class division, based on maths level of our student intake.
KA3/3	Standardized tests investigated. Expect to implement a system around Maths in 2016/17.

	Progress during 2016/17
KA3/3	Standardised testing used for 1 st years. Will seek to follow through in 2 nd year in 2017/18

School Improvement Plan: Review of assessment practices (commencing 2016/17)

Summary of main assessment areas prioritised for improvement

Following on some staff discussions these are a summary of the main **assessment** areas prioritised for improvement over the next three years.

Key area #1: review summative assessment practices to ensure that these are comprehensive and to streamline these with feedback mechanisms to parents and students

Key area #2: examine the use of learning intentions and success criteria in approach to classwork

Key area #3: review the use of effective questioning in classroom and in summative examinations

Key area #4: review formative assessment feedback approaches (i.e. assessment for learning) that are currently used and improve their effectiveness.

During 2016/17, the initial priority will be on our summative assessment approaches and the assessment and marking of homework, i.e. Key area #1 and Key area #4, as we seek to re-balance the time given to exams and to formative class assessment. The targets set under Key area #2 and Key area #3 will be further refined during 2017. Thus, in subsequent years, the focus of the effort will shift to classroom practice (including learning intentions, success criteria, effective questioning and formative feedback,).

The following actions support the implementation of the School Improvement Plan in assessment

- The plan will be discussed at staff meetings (four meetings) during the year ahead.
- The school's ongoing teacher-collaboration initiative will focus, in 2016/17, on assessment methods within subjects to better align assessment with the acquiring of necessary skills.
- A range of specific actions around management approaches, teacher practice and learner experience will be implemented over the three-year period.
- Some of these actions are outlined below. This series of actions may be augmented in 2017 and after, as the review of assessment methods progress.

Specific actions around Assessment for Rockbrook Park School

KEY AREA #1

- ***review summative assessment practices to ensure that these are comprehensive and to streamline these with feedback mechanisms to parents and students***

	Target	Type	Action(s)	Person(s) responsible	Measure(s) of success	Review schedule
KA1/1	Streamline exam system to enhance student experience and ensure comprehensiveness. Include a review of practicalities of timing, exam paper production, exam supervision.	Environmental	New exam timetable and exam procedures to be developed through 2016/17	Management.	Quality of exam atmosphere at exam time. Enough assessment time available in each subject area. Reports cards issued on time.	Ongoing, but especially at year end – April 2017
KA1/2	Link exam system to feedback provided to parents.	Environmental Teacher- skill	Greater immediate availability of results to all staff. System for whole staff review of results following on exams Exam results to be available prior to parent-teacher meetings. Sharing of answer papers at parent-teacher meetings with parents for junior years.	Teachers	Parent satisfaction with exam feedback (via questionnaire)	Year end – April 2017, 2018.
KA1/3	Consider suitability & range of information communicated to parents in post-exam reports	Environmental	Explore capabilities of Serco system for reports. Review report card systems used elsewhere.	Management	Agreement re revised report cards for 2017/18	January 2017, May 2017, January 2018, May 2018
KA1/4	Allow for aural and oral exams in the revised system	Environmental Skill – teacher	Time available for aural & orals in language subjects Co-operation among teachers in aural/oral evaluation	Teachers, primarily language subjects	At least one set of assessments annually in aural/oral. Involvement of senior students in assessment of juniors. Parents provided with feedback on aural & oral skills.	Review March 2017, March 2018

KA1/5	Ensure projects in TY are appropriate substitute for exam-based learning & also support the teamwork skills aims of TY.	Skill – teacher Skills - students	Provide input to TY on what constitutes quality in a project. Co-ordination of projects through the year. Development of group projects.	Teachers TY coordinator	Report cards reflect achievements, especially around team projects.	Review four times annually – especially TY coordinator with management.
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	Progress during 2016/17
	Overall managed to give time to SIP at five staff meetings (28 Sept, 9 Nov, 21 Dec, 11 Jan, 26 April). Teachers’ document on how to make exams effective was produced mid-year. Specific progress on other targets detailed below and some targets set of 17/18.
KA1/1	One person given overall responsibility for managing exams; fewer exams & better able to monitor results; more attention to students with additional needs (although not without hiccups); rearrangement of exam supervision involving form-masters; all teachers consulted about length of all exams; change to VSWare (April 2017) will allow for easier result entry; time given at staff meetings re link between exams and what we wish to measure.
KA1/2	Both parent-teacher meetings in year now timed to suit availability of exam results. Some teachers now showing corrected exam papers to parents. Will review parent satisfaction with system when online report cards are implemented in 2017/18
KA1/3	Some report cards used elsewhere measure against new JC targets, but yet do not seem to provide useful information to parents. Further work of report card content to be carried out in 2017/18.
KA1/4	Teachers now alert to possibilities of aurals and orals. JC orals in Irish conducted. More orals were conducted in May 2017
KA1/5	More time given to cross-curricular projects for TY. Generally these were effective. Teachers now providing more detailed information in TY report cards. Some students find individual project work boring and thus we are not yet achieving here what we wish. More inventiveness needed. Teachers will continue to work in a more collaborative way around projects in 2017/18.

KEY AREA #2:

- **examine the use of learning intentions and success criteria in approach to classwork**

	Target	Type	Action(s)	Person(s) responsible	Measure(s) of success	Review schedule
KA2/1	Relate identified skills to be acquired at each level to learning intentions and success criteria	All teachers	Seminar on learning intentions and success criteria for all staff in 2017. Further development of this target in 2018.	Management. All teachers	Teachers regularly using success criteria and explaining this use to students	First review of target & greater clarification of same for September 2017
KA2/2	Review use of standardised testing to measure skills acquired	Environmental Teacher- skill	Teacher upskilled in use of standardised tests Budget implications considered. Skills shared with staff during 2018	Management Teacher to be upskilled	Use of appropriate standardised testing and sharing outcomes with parents as appropriate.	Year end – April 2018, 2019.
KA2/3	Review how study is used in class preparation with a view to getting more from class learning	All teachers Student skill	Teachers to learn of value to students of pre-class study. Students to be helped develop an appreciation of same.	Management	Silent work being done in advance of covering new topics	Commence action in 2017/18

	Progress made during 2016/17
KA2/1	Not really addressed in 2016/17. Work will be required on this in 2017/18 with regard to new JC in Business, Science, English, Art, Spanish.
KA2/2	Standardised tests introduced for 1 st year in English and Maths and will be compared against other results at year end, with learning feeding into 2017/18 objectives
KA2/3	Silent study built into 1 st year exam timetable. Silent reading built into TY timetable and quite successful. In 2017/18 can look at pre-class study being carried out by 5 th years.

KEY AREA #3:

- *review the use of effective questioning in classroom and in summative examinations*

	Target	Type	Action(s)	Person(s) responsible	Measure(s) of success	Review schedule
KA3/1	All teachers to appreciate what is effective questioning.	Teachers - skills	Seminar on effective questioning for all staff in 2018. Further development of this target in 2018.	Management. All teachers	Teachers improving quality of internal exam papers Move towards standardisation of exam papers	First review of target & greater clarification of same for September 2018
KA3/2	Close correlation of internal exam results to public examinations	Teacher- skills	Teacher to regularly compare public exam results with internal exam results to establish internal norms	Management All teachers	Correlation between public exam results and house exam results for students	Year end – April 2019

Progress made during 2016/17	
KA3/2	Document on effective examinations circulated among teachers in Jan 2017 with a view to seeking closer correlation between internal exam results and external results.

KEY AREA #4:

- *review formative feedback approaches currently used and their effectiveness*

	Target	Type	Action(s)	Person(s) responsible	Measure(s) of success	Review schedule
KA4/1	All teachers to review their use of formative feedback with a view to greater adoption of related AfL techniques	Teachers - skills Student skills	Seminar on formative feedback for all staff in 2017. Further development of this target in 2017.	Management. All teachers	More feedback provided in homework copybooks. Students valuing copybooks. Improved approach to homework and improved quality of homework among students.	First review of target & greater clarification of same for September 2017

Progress made during 2016/17	
KA4/1	House-style document regarding presentation of work circulated for testing among five teachers in March 2017. More work on formative feedback to feature in 2017/18. (With feedback, students need to know what is needed to get maximum marks the next time)

