



DOMINICAN COLLEGE SION HILL

Established in 1836

School Improvement Plan 2017-2018

Dominican College Sion Hill

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School context

Dominican College, Sion Hill, founded in 1836, is one of the oldest secondary schools for girls in Ireland. The school is part of Le Chéile Schools Trust, and is strongly committed to carrying on the Dominican approach to education which is based on the ideal of developing the whole person. The school's mission is 'to help each student achieve her full potential academically, spiritually, physically, emotionally and socially in a happy secure environment'. Commitment to achieving this goal informs every aspect of school life and is strongly acknowledged in responses to recent Staff, Parent and student questionnaires.

The school provides the Junior Certificate, a compulsory Transition Year (TY) programme, LCVP programme, and the established Leaving Certificate. Enrolment in the school has grown steadily over recent years and it now caters for 441 students who come from economically, socially and culturally diverse backgrounds.

1. Introduction

The focus of the evaluation

1. Examination of data relating to academic achievement in State Examinations and Academic Ratios across the school
2. A school self-evaluation of teaching and learning in Dominican College was undertaken during May 2017 re introduction of one hour classes and use of digital technology and certain applications.
3. Survey of all teaching staff under the headings:
 - Management and Leadership
 - Staff working environment and support
 - Student Learning and achievement
 - Extra curricular activities
 - Environment and facilities
4. Numeracy: Analysis of State Examination results in Maths and survey on attitude to Maths

The findings

1. Analysis of State Examination results and Academic ratios.

Summary of Strengths

- Vast majority of Students are working to ability and achieving their potential

Summary of weaknesses

- Examination of data revealed that some students that could be categorised as gifted and/or talented may not be achieving their full potential.

2. One Hour Classes- integration of Technology in Learning and Teaching

Summary of Strengths

- 92% respondents- very or generally positive about the introduction of 1 hour classes
- Vast majority mentioned that the extra time was invaluable for deeper learning and more efficient coverage of the curriculum
- Use of Schoology ≈ 66%
- See further details below at Appendix 1.

Summary of weaknesses

- 9% do not think that 1-hour classes work for certain subjects, mainly because of gap between classes during the school week and the inevitable adjustment process to the new system.
- Effective use of i-Pads, interactive Boards ≈ 50%

Priority Actions for Improvement

- Continued development of Collaborative practices in Learning and Teaching methodologies and strategies.
- Continued development of the effective integration of Technology into L&T
- Increase significantly the % of students responding positively to use of Schoology

3. Teaching Staff Survey

Management & Leadership

Summary of Strengths

90% + reported Strongly agree/Agree to the following

- Strong leadership
- School is well managed
- Positive atmosphere
- Implementation of school ethos
- Communication between school and home
- Communication between senior management and staff
- Staff achievements recognised
- Happy working in the school
- Teachers receive support when dealing with problems
- Distributive leadership is promoted
- Whole school planning is well developed
- Optimistic about the future development of the school
- Views of teachers are valued in decision making
- Posts/role allows teachers exercise leadership
- School has a good reputation in the community
- Award ceremonies well organised and effective

Staff working environment and support

Summary of Strengths

89% + reported Strongly agree/Agree to the following:

- Staff Morale high
- Sense of teamwork is good
- A good inclusive social atmosphere
- New staff members are given appropriate and effective induction
- Lack of staff meetings due to industrial action detrimental to effective communication
- Fair play in allocation of resources to subject departments
- Excellent communication among staff
- Staff always treat each other with courtesy and respect

Summary of weaknesses

- 22% disagreed that there was consistent implementation of the Code of Behaviour by teachers.

Student learning and achievement

Summary of Strengths

86% + reported Strongly agree/Agree to the following

- Teachers use technology regularly to enhance learning
- The school curriculum is sufficiently broad to meet students' needs
- Students with difficulties are getting the appropriate supports
- Students learning outcomes including examination results are reviewed regularly at subject department level
- Teachers use analysis to inform their teaching and learning strategies
- Students are well behaved
- Teachers use AFL in their teaching
- High level of student engagement in class
- Effective use of i-Pads in Teaching and learning
- Academic awards prizes encourage students to work harder
- Confidence in understanding the rationale behind Academic Ratios

Summary of weaknesses

- 19% disagreed that students took responsibility for their own learning.

Extra Curricular activities

Summary of Strengths

96% + reported Strongly agree/Agree to the following:

- The school provides for the holistic development of students
- Good balance between academic work and extra curricular activities
- Student leadership is working well in the school
- Extra curricular activities are organised in such a way as to minimise disruption to learning
- The spirit award system is an effective motivator for involvement in extra curricular activities
- VsWare system for awarding points for extra curricular activities is effective

Environment and facilities

Summary of Strengths

96% + reported Strongly agree/Agree to the following

- Facilities for supporting learning are good
- School has excellent facilities
- Resources and equipment are well maintained and updated
- New Red Stairs Café has been a positive development
- School is well maintained
- Astro pitch has had appositive effect in increasing participation in sport
- Effectiveness of library as a resource has grown in recent times
- Library use is effective

4. Numeracy 2015-2017:

Summary of Strengths

1. A target was to increase % uptake of HL Maths at Junior Cert from 57% in 2014 to 68% by 2016. Uptake in 2017 now stands at 62%.
2. To increase % taking HL Leaving cert Maths from 24% in 2014 to 33% by 2016.This was achieved. Uptake in 2016 was 33% and in 2017 was 55%.

Summary of weaknesses

- Percentage of students who say they enjoy problem solving is 38% (As per survey in 2016)

Target No. 1	<u>Learning Outcomes for students</u>			
<i>Improvement Targets</i>	<i>Required Actions</i>	<i>Persons responsible</i>	<i>Success criteria / Measurable outcomes</i>	<i>Timeframe for actions</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academic ratios of GAT students will indicate that student is working to and achieving potential. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identification of Gifted and Talented students largely on the basis of strengths identified through CAT4 Interested staff will be requested to mentor a number of students. Ideally the identified strengths of the student will match the subject area and/or interests of the teacher. Each student will have a file that will be updated regularly throughout their time in Sion Hill. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Orla Condren and volunteers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in Academic Ratios of mentees across house and state exams. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction beginning of academic year 2017/18 Review September 2018
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embedding use and review of Academic Ratios across the whole school with a view to ensuring that students are achieving their potential 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers including Tutors and Year Heads will review the Academic Ratios of all students in their classes subsequent to House/Mock Exams and State Examinations in September, November, and March. Appropriate interventions actioned for students who are performing below expected levels of achievement. Academic Review survey of all years will be carried out on two occasions in the academic year . 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> O Condren will calculate Academic Ratios for all students subsequent to relevant examinations. Teachers/Tutors/Year Heads will review the Ratios in conjunction with Academic Review of students in their classes or Year Groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvement in Academic Ratios for students identified as underachieving 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review September 2018

Target No. 2	Teachers' collective/Collaborative Practice			
Improvement Targets	Required Actions	Persons responsible	Success criteria / Measurable outcomes	Timeframe for actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 90% + of teachers who say they share resources regularly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More extensive use of Dropbox for sharing of resources among and between Departments Allocation of Croke Park Hours for Department planning with a view to promoting collaborative practice. In house CPD by staff members on teaching strategies and use of technology in the classroom CPD on Formative Assessment in Sept 2018 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal/Deputy Principal All teaching staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical examination of shared folders in Dropbox End of year survey of students and staff to review success or otherwise of Improvement Target 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction September 2017 Review May 2018
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peer Review of class videos taken by members of L&T group at the end of last academic year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Request access to Mike Hughes' video exemplars used during his visit to the school Peer review protocols established followed by peer review. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> L&T group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive feedback at end of year review meeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> End of Year review May 2018

Target No. 3	Teachers' Practice			
Improvement Targets	Required Actions	Persons responsible	Success criteria / Measurable outcomes	Timeframe for actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase usage across all Departments of VLE Schoology to over 90% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-school CPD for teachers in effective use of schoology during the school year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All teaching staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review May 2018 with student body reflecting target increase 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2017-18 school year

Target No. 4	Attainments in Numeracy			
Improvement Targets	Required Actions	Persons responsible	Success criteria / Measurable outcomes	Timeframe for actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To increase the % of students who say they enjoy problem solving from 38% in 2014 to 55% by 2017. This is under review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of Problem Solving Posters and THINK strategy. Introduction of special 'Numeracy Moments' boards into all classrooms for subjects other than Maths 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deputy Principal All teaching staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repeat survey will reflect achievement of improved target and awareness of 'Numeracy Moments' in subject areas other than Maths 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2017-18 school year

Target No. 4	Attainments in Literacy			
Improvement Targets	Required Actions	Persons responsible	Success criteria / Measurable outcomes	Timeframe for actions
<p>Further development of Strategy 3: Reading attitudes and Library use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and expansion of Catalogue based on data from Reading Interest survey (May 2017), Library Usage survey (2016) and NGRT. • Expansion of Book Club into three separate clubs facilitating junior, intermediate and senior clubs • Establish Library committee for the promotion and facilitation of further events e.g Book Club, World Book Week, Short Story competitions, Toastmasters etc • Regular review of reports (top borrower, most borrowed book, borrowing trends across year groups) from librarian • Lunchtime events in the library e.g debates • Regular reading classes through English timetable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation by C Morris in conjunction with Library Committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C Morris • S McCarthy • Library Committee • All teaching staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey will reflect progress in current year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2017-18 school year