

# SDP Action Plan 2017/2018

*Following the six step process*

## **Identify a Focus:**

The introduction of the one hour classes at the beginning of the new school year 17/18. This was facilitated with the guidance of the PDST.

Background:

The timetable design in Moate Community School included:

- Nine daily periods of 35 and 40 minutes
- Double periods of 70 or 80 minutes for the purpose of practical classes
- Classes started at 9:00 a.m. and finished at 3:40 p.m Monday – Thursday, 9:15-3:25 Friday

The influence for placing the school timetable under the focus of School Self Evaluation came from teachers researching what other schools were doing in terms of SSE, and included feedback from Principals and Management conferences etc.

We decided to investigate the idea further as a means of improving teaching and learning in MCS. On looking at other schools the evidence was that;

- schools were calmer
- there were less students moving around
- teaching and learning was more efficient
- school bags were lighter
- An early finish to one school day may be possible, thus giving both teachers and students an added benefit.

This was based on reports and feedback of a qualitative nature from informal discussions and meetings. Our focus was also somewhat determined by the agreement that 35 minute classes may be short. Longer periods were argued from the experience of teachers to be more beneficial to the students learning outcomes, and were more conducive to active, independent and self-directed approaches to teaching and learning. In addition, a department directive that classes could be no shorter than 40 minutes meant that change had to happen and the opportunity was now there to change to one hour lessons.

## **Gather Evidence:**

Evidence was gathered from staff, students, parents and the BOM which included all relevant partners.

- Staff meetings took place to discuss the idea.
- A 6<sup>th</sup> year student focus group met and returned feedback and concerns to the principal.
- The idea was raised and discussed at BOM meetings which represented trustees, parents and teacher views.
- Teachers voted in the majority to introduce one hour classes, on a trial basis with an agreement to review it in a year.
- The Principal was active in his introduction of the idea to parents and held several meetings to outline the proposal.

- Some concern was raised at these meetings but overall they were positive about the proposed change.
- Some teachers had concerns. Home Economics, through their subject support groups and associations expressed concerns regarding practical lessons.
- Chemistry expressed a similar concern regarding the carrying out of science experiments. Feedback was gathered from other schools, teaching friends etc.
- Some teachers expressed concern about the weaker students being able to focus and effectively learn for an hour and concern about their welfare was raised.
- Examining evidence and feedback from within and outside the school, a general consensus was reached to trial the new one hour class.

***Process of introduction of 1 hour classes :pre September 2018***

- A group of teachers volunteered to four hours training on the topic of Active Methodologies facilitated by the PDST.
- These teachers disseminated what was learned in relation to Active Methodologies to small groups of the teaching staff in May 2017.
- The change to one hour classes coincided with the purchase of a mobile library of 30 tablets and the development of an eLearning plan (This is detailed in a separate report through SSE).
- We have an early finish on Friday. This effectively means that Monday – Thursday, students have 6 hours tuition while on Friday, 4 hours.

***Gather Evidence (Review introduction 2017/2018)***

Students and teachers will be surveyed to get feedback on:

- The process of the introduction
- The actual reality of 1 hour classes
- Recommendations for the future

**Questionnaires:**

- **42 Teachers responded**
- **176 students responded**

***The questionnaires were prepared in consultation with Seamus Knox (department inspector) as part of the SSE process for 2017/2018.***

***The majority of questions are asked to both teachers and students***

In general the feedback was positive for the 1 hour classes and the process of their introduction