



# St Ignatius College

## Strategic Literacy Plan

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## Executive Summary

St. Ignatius College (SIC) is committed to ensuring that every learner achieves foundational literacy proficiency, essential for lifelong learning, active citizenship, and academic success. This Strategic Literacy Plan outlines the College’s comprehensive and data-informed approach to addressing literacy development across the Early and Junior Years. Rooted in the College’s mission to deliver high-quality, inclusive education, the plan responds to national priorities and assessment data, particularly the National Literacy Assessment (NLA) results from Year 2 through Year 4 cohorts. **These results highlighted persistent challenges, particularly in writing, and informed the creation of a person-centred strategy that integrates evidence-based interventions, continuous professional development, and systematic monitoring.**

Key components of the plan include:

- The implementation and expansion of a “setting system” to enable more focused and differentiated instruction in Maltese and English.
- The continuation of College-wide Year 1 literacy screeners followed by summer catch-up programmes to provide early intervention and preventive support to mitigate the gap.
- A strong emphasis on formative and summative assessment data to tailor instruction and track progress.
- Targeted COPE sessions and professional development to strengthen educator capacity, particularly in teaching writing through a balanced literacy approach.
- Comparative analysis demonstrating measurable gains between assessment points for Year 3 and Year 4 students.

The plan also sets out a series of development targets aligned with national frameworks, covering foundational skills, communication, reading and writing proficiency, and teacher development.

Concluding with evidence-based recommendations and a clearly defined action plan, this report affirms SIC’s commitment to improving literacy outcomes through collaboration, innovation, and reflective practice. It is a strategic step forward in reducing the number of students falling within the lowest literacy bands, with the broader aim of supporting equitable academic progression across the College network.

## Preamble

St Ignatius College (SIC) is committed to empowering all learners by equipping them with strong foundational skills in **literacy, science, and digital competence**. Our overarching aim is to ensure that students complete each educational cycle having acquired the expected competencies aligned with their developmental and academic stages. Through this commitment, the College actively contributes to the development of a socially just, ethical, and inclusive society.

The College's improvement strategy is grounded in a **data-informed, inductive approach to action**. Strengths and areas for development are systematically identified through internal reviews and assessment data, enabling the formulation of targeted, evidence-based action plans that are responsive to the needs of our learners.

In the domain of **language literacy**, SIC adopted a proactive stance as early as May 2022. At that time, the results of the National Literacy Assessment revealed significant concerns, prompting immediate discussion at the Council of Heads. In response, an action plan was developed to address the issue strategically. One school within the College initially implemented a **setting system** for Maltese and English instruction, enabling more focused and differentiated teaching. This model was later expanded by two additional schools, which also introduced setting in **Mathematics**. Now, three years into the implementation, the College is pleased to report encouraging outcomes. In one of the schools, **Checklist 1 learners have been eliminated**, except for one student with Special Educational Needs (SEN). Moreover, in one year group, setting in English is no longer required, having reached the expected proficiency levels, and will now only continue for Maltese. This significant success has not been celebrated enough and therefore, we are grateful and welcomed the request from the **Office of the Permanent Secretary**, to produce a report outlining SIC's **Strategic Literacy Plan**, reflecting on past actions, ongoing initiatives, and the future direction. The ultimate objective is to **significantly reduce—and ideally eliminate—Checklist 1 students**, thereby reducing intake into CCP (Core Curriculum Programme) classes. Our target for the Middle School is to have learners placed between **Level 1 and Level 3**, creating a ripple effect that supports a stronger progression pathway into the Secondary cycle.

The structure of this report begins with a literature review on the subject, thoroughly researched by Ms Nadia Zammit, Head of Department for Literacy. This is followed by an overview of the College context, supported by data presentation and analysis carried out by Mr Julian Tabone, Education Officer for Curriculum. The report concludes with key findings and recommendations, which inform the proposed action plan.

SIC remains steadfast in its commitment to fostering literacy for all through structured, reflective, and collaborative action.

## The Literature

A structured and data-informed school action plan is fundamental to driving sustained educational improvement. It functions as a strategic roadmap, enabling school leaders and educators to assess strengths and challenges, establish priorities, and implement focused interventions aimed at enhancing overall school performance. An effective action plan not only streamlines efforts in curriculum development, teaching methodologies, and resource allocation but also ensures accountability and progress monitoring. Ultimately, the core aim is to improve student achievement by enhancing teaching quality, strengthening support systems, and creating an environment conducive to learning.

This proposed Strategic Literacy Action Plan addresses persistent challenges in the teaching of literacy across the early and junior years. It responds directly to national educational priorities as outlined in the National Literacy Strategy for All in Malta and Gozo 2021–2030, which states that “students need to develop literacy skills in both Maltese and English to be able to master the curriculum effectively” (National Literacy Strategy, 2021, p. 9). In parallel, the National Education Strategy 2024–2030 underscores the principle of educational equity, affirming that “all the children, irrespective of their economic, social and cultural status, [should] possess a basic level of literacy” (National Education Strategy, 2024, p. 60).

This plan is anchored in the annual National Literacy Assessment data for Years 3 and 4 due to the extensive data that we have. The data reveal that a considerable number of students continue to experience difficulties with basic literacy skills, particularly at Year 4. Notably, even high-performing students tend to underachieve in the writing component, leading to lower overall scores.

Guided by Pillar 2 of the National Literacy Strategy, the action plan draws on Objective 1, which calls for schools to “prioritise literacy in their school development plans” (p. 38), and Objective 2, which encourages schools to “support educators on the best practices that can help children to develop their literacy skills” (p. 40). The plan is grounded in the Balanced Literacy Model, which advocates for a comprehensive, assessment-driven approach that combines explicit skill instruction with authentic literacy experiences. Instruction is delivered using a structured framework that gradually transfers learning responsibility from the teacher to the student.

The action plan is organised around four core developmental targets:

**1. Foundational Literacy Skills:** This first target focuses on the systematic development of early literacy skills including phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, and spelling—key aspects of word study that form a critical bridge to more advanced literacy competencies.

**2. Oral Language Development:** Recognising the importance of communication, the plan promotes the development of listening and speaking skills in both official languages. The Language Education Policy Profile for Malta (2015) affirms that “communication in languages is

the ability to understand, express and interpret concepts, thoughts, feelings, facts and opinions in both oral and written form in both the mother tongue and the second language, which in the Maltese context generally refer to Maltese and English respectively” (p. 17).

**3. Reading and Writing Proficiency:** This target supports the structured development of reading and writing skills through the Gradual Release of Responsibility (GRR) model. This approach blends modelled, shared, guided, and independent practices, and is, as Fisher and Frey (2013) explain, a method in which “the learning process should shift slowly and intentionally from teacher modelling to joint responsibility between teachers and students, to independent student work.”

**4. Professional Development for Educators:** Achieving the first three targets depends on empowering educators with the tools and strategies required to deliver effective literacy instruction. Professional development initiatives should include targeted workshops, mentoring, collaborative learning communities, and peer observations—approaches that promote continuous pedagogical improvement.

Assessment is central to the plan’s implementation. Both formative and summative assessments will be employed to monitor student progress. The Senior Leadership Team (SLT), in collaboration with educators, will systematically analyse assessment data to identify progress, adjust strategies, and compare pre- and post-intervention outcomes. Sharing results transparently with stakeholders is essential to cultivating a culture of continuous improvement. As Fullan (2000) emphasises, “effective school leadership involves engaging all stakeholders in the improvement process, fostering a shared vision, and using data to inform decisions.” Similarly, Hallinger and Heck (2010) assert that “when school leaders engage with teachers and the community through data sharing, it enhances the school’s ability to improve and leads to better student outcomes.”

Moreover, a successful literacy strategy requires active parental and community involvement. The plan recommends structured initiatives **to strengthen the home–school partnership**. These include regular communication through emails, newsletters, and parent–teacher meetings, as well as literacy-focused parent workshops. As Crane (2001, cited in Pulis, 2022) rightly observes, “schools cannot learn how to become better places for learning without asking the students” (p. 54). Collecting feedback from both parents and learners will play a pivotal role in evaluating and refining school practices.

In conclusion, this proposed College Strategic Literacy Action Plan is a comprehensive, evidence-based framework designed to raise literacy standards in alignment with national policy priorities. It integrates pedagogy, assessment, leadership, professional development, and stakeholder collaboration, with a clear focus on improving learning outcomes for all students.

## The College Context

### Year 1 Literacy Screening and Support Initiatives at SIC

Over the past ten years, the College has been **conducting literacy screeners with Year 1 and Year 2 students to assess literacy levels achieved by the end of the scholastic year.** More importantly, these screeners **serve to identify students' literacy needs early on, enabling Year 2 and Year 3 teachers to address any emerging difficulties promptly, thus preventing wider learning gaps.** Recognising the need to upgrade these screeners, meetings were held last year, in July 2024, with Director General Mr Jude Zammit. As a result, enhancements were implemented. The Education Officer (EO) for Curriculum and the Head of Department (HoD) for Literacy collaborated closely with the EO for Early Years to formulate the updated screeners.

In parallel with these developments, **the College also took the initiative to organise summer catch-up classes for students identified with significant literacy challenges.** Two out of five schools implemented this support programme in summer 2024.

Building on the positive feedback received, the updated literacy screeners were once again conducted this year with all Year 1 students across all schools in the College. Year 2 students did not participate in the College-level screening this year, as they were the first cohort to sit for the National Literacy Assessments.

The results of the Year 1 screeners were communicated to Senior Leadership Teams (SLTs) and class teachers. Subsequently, meetings were held between the SLT, the HoD for Literacy, and class teachers to analyse the screening outcomes, identify key areas of concern, and propose strategies for improving teaching practices and learning outcomes.

Furthermore, all schools have now taken the initiative to organise summer catch-up classes for students requiring additional support. This intervention is being offered in coordination with the National Literacy Agency. A total of **100** students **supported by 19 educators** from the same respective schools are expected to benefit from these classes during the summer months.

### Use of National Literacy Assessment Data and Implementation of the setting system

Since the introduction of the National Literacy Assessments in 2020, the College has consistently placed strong emphasis on these assessments and has used the resulting data strategically to enhance teaching practices and provide targeted support to students.

The established procedure within the College involves recording and analysing each student's scores once the correction process is completed. These scores are used to determine each learner's literacy level. The analysed data is then communicated to the Senior Leadership Teams (SLTs), and meetings are held involving the SLT, the Head of Department (HoD) for Literacy, and the respective class teachers to discuss student progress and identify necessary interventions.

In addition to the individual-level analysis, a comprehensive performance analysis across the entire College is conducted. **The results of this analysis are then discussed during the Council of Heads meetings to inform College-wide strategies.**

As a direct outcome of these assessment results, **the College proposed the introduction of a setting system for Maltese and English.** In the scholastic year 2022–2023, one school within the College initiated a pilot project to implement this system. Following a noticeable improvement in student performance after one year, the school opted to continue with the setting approach. **Encouraged by these results, two additional schools within the College adopted the setting system in the subsequent year.**

At present, three out of the five schools in the College are implementing this system. The Head of College Network (HCN), SLTs, Education Officer (EO) for Curriculum, and the HoD for Literacy are actively monitoring the implementation to ensure its effectiveness. Positive outcomes continue to be reflected in student performance data. Regular meetings are held among the involved teams, and ongoing support is provided to the teachers concerned to ensure high standards of delivery and consistency across schools.

### Professional Development Initiatives and Ongoing Literacy Training and Support for Educators

Throughout the scholastic year, the Education Officer (EO) for Curriculum and the Head of Department (HoD) for Literacy provide continuous support and professional development to teaching staff across the College. In addition, COPE (Continuous Professional Education) sessions related to literacy **are regularly organised to address identified challenges and offer targeted upskilling opportunities.**

A recent enhancement to these training efforts has been **the dissemination and collective discussion of whole-school literacy assessment results with all educators.** This practice has proven to be an effective strategy for **raising teacher awareness of student performance within their school and fostering a collaborative, whole-school approach to addressing literacy challenges and improving instructional quality.**

Analysis, discussed in the next section, of literacy assessment data revealed that **writing remains the most problematic component for students across the College.** In response, during the scholastic year 2022–2023, **three COPE sessions were held with each of the five schools.** These sessions focused on **balanced literacy approaches, the teaching of writing, and Assessment for Learning (AfL) strategies.** The training was delivered collaboratively by the HoD for Literacy and the HoD for AfL within the College.

However, it was noted that **implementation of the training content at classroom level was limited, and consequently, student performance in writing has remained weak.** As a result, it has been decided that during the first term of the upcoming scholastic year (2025–2026), **an additional COPE session focusing specifically on the teaching of writing will be delivered in each of the five schools.** This session will offer more focused, practical training aimed at improving classroom implementation.

To ensure accountability and sustained impact, SLTs will be responsible for overseeing the implementation of the strategies presented. A follow-up COPE session is scheduled for the third term, during which schools will share evidence of implementation, discuss challenges encountered, and highlight good practices.

## Findings and Data Analysis

### Year 2 NLA Results (March 2025)

#### Key Takeaways

As part of our whole-school focus on developing strong, evidence-based literacy practices, this year marked the introduction of a structured Literacy Assessment process for our Year 2 students. This **initiative –a step-up to the college-based Literacy Screeners that used to be held until last year** -was designed to offer a clearer, more targeted picture of individual and school-wide literacy development, and to support our ongoing goal of delivering responsive, differentiated instruction.

These assessments with Year 2 students also served as both a learning opportunity and a benchmark-setting exercise. The assessment framework was aligned with our existing literacy progression and categorised students into four levels of attainment:

- **CL1:** Students currently developing foundational literacy skills, still working within the expectations of Checklist 1.
- **CL1/2:** Students who are transitioning between Checklist 1 and Checklist 2, showing emerging competency but requiring ongoing support.
- **Working on CL2:** Students who are largely operating at Checklist 2 level, with potential gaps in one or more components.
- **CL2 Mastered:** Students who have confidently and consistently demonstrated full mastery of Checklist 2 competencies.

The purpose of this first round of assessments was not only to determine student achievement levels but also to better understand how our literacy practices align with student needs. The data collected also offers valuable insights for future professional development and curriculum alignment.

The following section presents a detailed analysis of the assessment results, including patterns observed across the whole college, in Maltese and in English.

St. Ignatius College						
MALTI Literacy Assessment - March 2025						
Year 2s	Total number of students	CL1	CL1/2	Working on CL2	CL2 Mastered	Absent or exempted *
Mar-25	256	55 (21.5%)	97 (37.9%)	100 (39.1%)	4 (1.6%)	13

St. Ignatius College						
ENGLISH Literacy Assessment - March 2025						
Year 2s	Total number of students	CL1	CL1/2	Working on CL2	CL2 Mastered	Absent or exempted *
Mar-25	258	58 (22.5%)	71 (27.5%)	124 (48.1%)	5 (1.9%)	8

*\*Absent or exempted students were not included in % and in the total number of students*

As can be seen in the table above; a total of **256 Year 2 students** across the whole College participated in the **Malti Literacy Assessments**. The breakdown of student achievement across the four defined categories is as follows:

- CL1 – 55 students (21.5%)
- **CL1/2** – 97 students (37.9%)
- **Working on CL2** – 100 students (39.1%)
- **CL2 Mastered** – 4 students (1.5%)

These figures highlight that **over three-quarters of the cohort (78.5%)** are either approaching or actively working within the expectations of Checklist 2, which is encouraging given this was the first formal assessment of this kind. Most **students (39.1%)** are currently 'Working on CL2', suggesting that **while most learners are progressing appropriately, targeted support will be essential to help these students to fully consolidate their learning and to move toward mastery.**

The relatively small number of students (1.5%) who have achieved full mastery of Checklist 2 reinforces the importance of using this data to inform ongoing teaching and intervention. Meanwhile, the **21.5% of students still at CL1** represents **a key focus group for early intervention.**

A total of **258 Year 2 students** completed the **English Assessment** across the College. The distribution of students across the four attainment categories is as follows:

- CL1 – 58 students (22.5%)
- **CL1/2** – 71 students (27.5%)
- **Working on CL2** – 124 students (48.1%)
- **CL2 Mastered** – 5 students (1.9%)

These results indicate a **positive overall trajectory in English achievement**, with nearly **half the cohort (48.1%)** demonstrating that they are 'Working on CL2', **suggesting a solid alignment with expected Year 2 competencies.** An additional **29.4%** of students (CL2 Mastered, and CL1/2 combined) **are showing either early signs of consolidation or full mastery.**

**A sizeable group (22.5%) remains at CL1, requiring continued focus on foundational skills.**

These findings will inform both targeted classroom strategies and broader curriculum planning to ensure students continue making progress toward mastery.

## Year 3 NLA Results (May 2025)

### Key Takeaways

In May 2025, all Year 3 students across the college participated in the National Literacy Assessment designed by the National Literacy Agency (NLA). These assessments were meant to evaluate student progress.

Within St. Ignatius College, the assessment measured individual student achievement in relation to **Checklist 1 (CL1)** and **Checklist 2 (CL2)** – the expected literacy competencies at the end of Years 1 and 2 respectively – as well as their progression toward **Learning Outcome 5 (LO5)**, which reflects Year 3 expectations, and beyond that too.

Student performance was categorized into four levels:

- **CL1:** Students demonstrating skills aligned with end-of-Year 1 expectations.
- **CL1/2:** Students in transition from CL1 to CL2 or performing consistently at CL2 level.
- **Working on LO5:** Students beginning to meet Year 3 expectations, with minor gaps or difficulty in one specific assessment component.
- **LO5:** Students performing confidently and consistently at the expected Year 3 standard.

The above framework provides us with a clear developmental picture of student progress and highlights the varying levels of support and intervention that may be required.

The following section presents a detailed analysis of the assessment results, including patterns observed across the whole college, in Maltese and in English.

St. Ignatius College						
MALTI Literacy Assessment - May 2025						
Year 3s	Total number of students	CL1	CL1/2	Working on LO5	LO5 Mastered	Absent or exempted *
May-25	265	29 (10.9%)	76 (28.7%)	102 (38.5%)	58 (21.9%)	14

\*Absent or exempted students were not included in % and in the total number of students

St. Ignatius College						
ENGLISH Literacy Assessment - March 2025						
Year 3s	Total number of students	CL1	CL1/2	Working on LO5	LO5 Mastered	Absent or exempted *
May-25	269	24 (8.9%)	58 (21.6%)	115 (42.7%)	72 (26.8%)	10

A total of **265 Year 3 students** across the college sat for the **Maltese Literacy Assessment** in May 2025. The assessment provided insights into students' literacy development in relation to expected levels.

- **10.9% (29 students)** were assessed at **Checklist 1 (CL1)** level, indicating that they are still **consolidating foundational skills typically expected by the end of Year 1**.

- **28.7% (76 students)** were classified as **CL1/2**, suggesting they are either transitioning from CL1 to CL2 or consistently performing at the end-of-Year 2 level.
- **38.5% (102 students)** were found to be **Working on LO5**, meaning they are approaching Year 3 literacy expectations, with some requiring targeted support in one component of the assessment.
- **21.9% (58 students)** successfully **mastered Learning Outcome 5 (LO5)**, demonstrating a strong performance aligned with Year 3 expectations.
- An additional **14 students** were either **absent** or **exempted** from the assessment for valid reasons.

These results suggest that while a significant proportion of students (60.4%) are operating at or above Year 3 level, and nearly one-quarter have reached Year 3 mastery, there **remains a need to support the 10.9% still developing Year 1 skills and to accelerate the progression of those in the transitional CL1/2 group.**

These results provide valuable insights that can guide targeted support strategies and help strengthen literacy teaching and learning across the college. Importantly, the fact that **60.4% of students are already performing at or beyond end-of-Year 3 expectations** is a strong testament to the effective practices and commitment already in place. Building on this solid foundation, the college is well-positioned to further support all learners in reaching their full literacy potential.

A total of **269 Year 3 students** sat for the **English Literacy Assessment** in the same month; May 2025. The data reflects encouraging progress in students' development of English literacy skills:

- **8.9% (24 students)** are performing at the **Checklist 1 (CL1)** level, indicating the need for **continued support in building foundational skills.**
- **21.6% (58 students)** were identified as **CL1/2**, showing **they are transitioning toward or have reached end-of-Year 2 competencies.**
- The largest group, **42.7% (115 students)**, are **Working on LO5**, meaning they are nearing Year 3 expectations with some specific learning needs.
- **26.8% (72 students)** have **mastered Learning Outcome 5 (LO5)**, demonstrating strong and confident Year 3-level literacy performance.
- An additional **10 students** were **absent or exempted** from the assessment.

Overall, **69.5% of students are working at or beyond Year 3 expectations**, which highlights the positive impact of effective teaching strategies and targeted literacy initiatives. This outcome reflects the solid groundwork laid across classrooms and confirms that the college is on a strong trajectory. With focused support for students still consolidating earlier skills, there is clear momentum to continue building on this success in the years ahead.

## Year 4 NLA Results (Jan 2025)

### Key Takeaways

In January 2025, all Year 4 students across the college participated in the National Literacy Assessment designed by the National Literacy Agency (NLA). These assessments were meant to evaluate student progress.

Results emanating from the assessments have been categorised into three achievement bands:

- **<LO5:** Students in this category have not yet grasped key competencies and continue to work through foundational targets outlined in Checklist 1 or Checklist 2. These learners require targeted support to build core skills and confidence.
- **Working Towards LO5:** These students are generally progressing well and beginning to meet Year 4 expectations. They may have minor learning gaps or display difficulty in one specific component of the assessment but over-all are on a positive trajectory.
- **LO5:** Students at this level are consistently performing at or above the expected Year 4 standard. They demonstrate confidence and competence across multiple literacy strands and are well-positioned for continued growth.

The following section presents a detailed analysis of the assessment results, including patterns observed across the whole college, in Maltese and in English.

St. Ignatius College					
MALTI Literacy Assessment - Jan 2025					
Year 4s	Total number of students	<LO5	Working towards LO5	LO5	Absent
Jan-25	275	115 (41.8%)	105 (38.1%)	55 (20.1%)	11

St. Ignatius College					
English Literacy Assessment - Jan 2025					
Year 4s	Total number of students	<LO5	Working towards LO5	LO5	Absent
Jan-25	279	93 (33.3%)	95 (34.1%)	91 (32.6%)	7

Out of 275 students assessed in Maltese literacy:

- **41.8% (115 students)** were identified as performing **below the expected standard (<LO5)**, indicating a significant proportion of learners are still working on foundational competencies and thus require structured, targeted intervention.
- **38.1% (105 students)** were classified as **Working Towards LO5**, showing that many students are progressing toward the standard but may have isolated gaps in specific literacy components.

- **20.1% (55 students)** achieved **LO5**, demonstrating consistent performance at the expected Year 4 standard.
- **11 students** were absent from the assessment.

The data suggests that **while nearly 60% of students are on a trajectory toward or achieving LO5**, there is a **considerable need to address the learning needs of the 42% who remain below standard**. Support structures must **continue to prioritise early intervention and differentiation in Maltese literacy**.

On the other hand, out of 279 students assessed in English literacy:

- **33.3% (93 students)** were performing **below LO5**, indicating a lower proportion of struggling students compared to Maltese.
- **34.1% (95 students)** were identified as **Working Towards LO5**, showing a relatively balanced distribution across the three bands.
- **32.6% (91 students)** achieved the **LO5** benchmark, reflecting a strong cohort of students meeting or exceeding expectations.
- **7 students** were absent from the assessment.

Compared to Maltese, **English literacy results reveal a more even spread of performance, with a higher percentage of students achieving LO5** and a smaller proportion below standard. **This suggests stronger overall performance in English**, but also highlights the **need for continued support for the third of students still requiring further development**.

Comparative result: Year 3 (May 2024) and Year 4 (Jan 2025)

Interestingly to note the progress made from the same cohort of students when compared to the performance they had in Term 3 of the previous scholastic year, in May 2024 as seen in the tables below:

St. Ignatius College					
MALTI Literacy Assessment - May 2024					
Year 3s	Total number of students	<LO5	Working towards LO5	LO5	Absent
May-24	272	126 (46.3%)	112 (41.2%)	34 (17.5%)	11

St. Ignatius College					
English Literacy Assessment - May 2024					
Year 3s	Total number of students	<LO5	Working towards LO5	LO5	Absent
May-24	274	101 (36.9%)	95 (34.7%)	78 (28.5%)	9

As regards **Maltese Literacy**, between May 2024 and January 2025, there has been **notable progress** in the cohort's performance:

- The proportion of students **performing at the expected standard (LO5)** increased from **12.5% to 20.1%** — a gain of **7.6 percentage points**, indicating that several students **successfully transitioned from "Working Towards" or "<LO5" into meeting Year 4 expectations.**
- The percentage of students **below standard (<LO5)** decreased from **46.3% to 41.8%** — a **4.5 percentage point improvement**, suggesting that some students **previously struggling have moved into higher categories.**
- The **"Working Towards LO5"** group remained relatively stable, decreasing slightly from **41.2% to 38.1%**, likely due to students moving upward into LO5.

There is **clear evidence of upward movement**, with a **reduction in the number of students below standard** and a **meaningful increase in those reaching the Year 4 benchmark in Maltese literacy.**

As regards English Literacy, progress was also evident across the same timeframe:

- The percentage of students achieving **LO5 rose from 28.5% to 32.6%** — a **4.1 percentage point increase**, reflecting **gradual strengthening in core literacy skills.**
- The proportion of students **below LO5 dropped from 36.9% to 33.3%**, a **3.6 percentage point improvement**, **signalling that targeted support may be having a positive effect.**
- The **Working Towards LO5** group remained relatively stable (from 34.7% to 34.1%), with a small decrease.

These results show a **steady progress** as students start to transition into Year 4, **with more students meeting national standards and fewer remaining below.** Gains are **slightly more moderate than in Maltese but nonetheless encouraging.**

## Conclusions and Recommendations

The vision and mission of St. Ignatius College, which are committed to providing meaningful, high-quality education, have established a robust foundation for addressing literacy challenges at the primary level. This report has detailed the College's position concerning English and Maltese literacy skills among students from Year 2 through Year 4, based on the National Literacy Assessment (NLA) results. These results were further analyzed at the college level, enabling a more precise understanding of each student's performance and, consequently, providing more accurate data for the entire cohort.

Additionally, a comparative analysis of Year 3 students' performance from May 2024 to their subsequent performance as Year 4 students in January 2025 has been presented. Moreover, findings from the Year 1 screening assessments and current intervention measures addressing identified areas for improvement have been outlined. These interventions complement existing strategies implemented for other year groups, notably through the application of the setting system.

Considering these findings, St. Ignatius College recommends:

1. Strengthening and potentially expanding the setting system to additional schools within the network.
2. Continuing with detailed, college-level analysis to ensure a comprehensive, individualized understanding of student progress, thereby reinforcing a person-centred educational approach.
3. Assisting all schools in developing tailored micro action plans derived from the overarching college literacy strategic plan.
4. Providing ongoing professional development opportunities for educators to enhance their literacy instruction knowledge, skills, and competencies.
5. Monitoring the implementation of strategies introduced during professional learning sessions to ensure effective classroom application.
6. Regularly monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness and impact of this literacy action plan to ensure continuous improvement.

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## Action Plan

<b>School Development Action Plan</b>		
<b>KEY AREA: Teaching and Learning</b>		
<b>Priority Development Target</b>	<p>DT 1. Strengthen learners' basic literacy skills in Maltese and English to support effective curriculum mastery.</p> <p>DT 2. Equip learners with strong communication skills in both Maltese and English to foster meaningful interactions.</p> <p>DT 3. Enhance learners' reading and writing proficiency in both languages to improve overall academic performance.</p> <p>DT 4. Provide educators with professional development on implementing a balanced literacy approach.</p>	<p><b>National Literacy Strategy 2021 – 2030</b></p> <p><b>National Education Strategy 2024 -2030</b></p>
<b>Success Criterion/Criteria</b>	<p>DT 1. Students demonstrate measurable improvement in standardised literacy assessments for both Maltese and English by the end of the scholastic year.</p> <p>DT 2. Students actively participate in class discussions, presentations, and collaborative activities in both languages, with noticeable improvement in fluency and confidence.</p> <p>DT 3. Students reading levels improve and students can produce written work in both languages with an increased level of accuracy and depth.</p> <p>DT 4. Educators demonstrate effective implementation of balanced literacy pedagogies, leading to improved student engagement and literacy outcomes.</p>	
<b>Implementation: Early and Junior Years</b>		

Actions	Steps to be taken	Timescale	Coordinator	Monitoring and evaluation
<p>DT 1 - Helping all learners to develop basic literacy skills by making use of different strategies to teach word study.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on various aspects of word study to help students acquire basic skills in both Maltese and English.</li> <li>• Educators use strategies such as:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Phonological awareness</li> <li>– Vocabulary instruction</li> <li>– Spelling strategies</li> <li>– Phonic instruction</li> <li>– Sight word recognition</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>October - June</p>	<p>Literacy Link Person (LLP) - Deputy Head responsible for Literacy in the school</p> <p>Head of Department (HoD) for Literacy</p>	<p>LLP conducts classroom walkthroughs/lesson observations.</p> <p>LLP reviews teaching plans to ensure that different aspects of word study, listening and speaking activities are embedded in the teaching plan.</p> <p>LLP organises regular meetings between teachers and HoD Literacy to evaluate lessons, plan future sessions and discuss queries.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To organise parental meetings where parents are briefed about the teaching and learning strategies adopted by the school in order to strengthen school-home links and to provide parents with skills on how to support their children's development of literacy skills at home.</li> </ul>			
<p>DT 2. Help learners to acquire communication skills in both Maltese and English to be effective communicators.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allocate time for modelled, supported, and independent practice of listening and speaking skills.</li> <li>Embed listening and speaking activities, such as storytelling, show and tell and discussions in the teaching plan.</li> </ul>	<p>October - June</p>		

<p>DT 3. Helping all learners to develop reading and writing skills in both languages by making use of different strategies to teach reading and writing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prioritise reading and writing time across the curriculum.</li> <li>• Teachers use different reading strategies including Read-aloud, Shared, Guided and Independent reading.</li> <li>• Provide all children with opportunities to borrow and read books from classroom, school, public and virtual libraries.</li> <li>• Teachers use different writing strategies including modelled, shared, guided and independent writing instruction to help children develop their writing skills.</li> </ul>	<p>October to June</p>	<p>LLP HoD Literacy</p>	<p>Reading Running records are used as a tool to assess children’s reading levels and monitor progress.</p> <p>LLP conducts classroom walkthroughs/lesson observations to ensure that different reading and writing strategies are being used.</p> <p>LLP organises regular meetings with teachers and HoD Literacy to evaluate lessons held, plan future lessons and discuss queries.</p>
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<p>DT 4. To provide educators with opportunities for continuous professional development on implementing a balanced literacy approach.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organise professional development sessions on Balanced Literacy Strategies.</li> <li>• Organise professional development focused on the Teaching of Writing through the Gradual Release of Responsibility Model.</li> <li>• Encourage professional learning communities and peer observations.</li> </ul>	<p>Professional development sessions to be organised once a term.</p> <p>Weekly meetings amongst educators.</p>	<p>Head of School (HoS)</p> <p>LLP</p> <p>HoD Literacy</p>	<p>HoS keeps a record of teacher participation in professional development sessions.</p> <p>HoS collects teachers' feedback on the effectiveness of training through questionnaires.</p>
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