

St Anthony's Special School
Our Self-Evaluation Report and Improvement Plan 2023-2024

1. Introduction

This document records the outcomes of our last improvement plan, the findings of this self-evaluation, and our current improvement plan, including targets and the actions we will implement to meet the targets

1.1 Outcomes since our last improvement plan (SIP)

- Re-engagement with SSE process by all school staff since early 2018 when moratorium on engagement with SSE was lifted.
- Support visit from Inspector to re-engage with SSE process in June 2018
- Principal attended SSE Inservice by PDST in September 2018 and Leading Teaching & Learning Through SSE with Inspectorate in March 2019
- Our Numeracy SIP 2013-2016 has been completed and teachers continue to focus on maintaining use of games, concrete materials and interactive software programmes to foster enjoyment and skills development in all aspects of numeracy
- Our Literacy SIP 2015 - 2018 has been completed and teachers continue to foster and develop ISL skills using booklets and new ISL school made videos (available on our website).
- During the 2018-2019-year focus in Literacy has been on the implementation of the new Primary Language Curriculum throughout the junior primary side of the school with supports from PDST/SESS facilitators alongside a review of the whole school English Plan now called Language & Communication School Plan which was approved by the BOM in 2019.
- 2019
 - PDST Maria Carroll worked with school and Draft C & L Plan formed and approved
 - Applied for sustained support for PLC and was accepted in Cohort 1
 - It was reviewed over 2019-2020 and halted during COVID pandemic school closures
 - Ross drafted pilot School Leavers Programme based on JCL2 and QQI Health Related Fitness course - to be trialled 2020-2021
- 2020-2021
 - NCSE Marie Ryan reconnected with the school under sustained support, reviewed work progressed on in the school plan under the PLC and the revised plan was brought to BOM for approval on 6/12/2021
- 2021-2022
 - NCSE continued sustained support on PLC and Assessment under the SSE process as well as looking at "Disciplinary wellbeing" (Literacy/Numeracy) across all the disciplines and beginning to look at wellbeing itself under the SSE process.
 - CPI pivotal behaviour training took place for all staff to encourage a PBS and mindful approach to behaviour
 - -Artist/Teacher Partnership completed Summer 2021 by Anna Sweeney and Helena Brady with Catherine Donnelly-to create a sense of fun and learning through expression & movement. Overall vision-That the children engage in a creative process using their own imagination to choreograph their own material -Dance culminating in the performance of the famous by Pina Bausch in Lough Lannagh
- **SSE:** DES put a pause on SSE process in schools due to COVID. Priority was **Wellbeing** for all and return to school and SCOT review done by whole school staff Jan 2022 identified potential areas for development, resumed in Sept 2023.

- 2022-2023/2023-2024

- Assessment & Monitoring Policy review for Language (and across school entirety) was also started and can be continued on by the new AP2 teacher responsible for Assessment 24/25 Assessment can be episodic and end of year, Ongoing AOL and AFL, looked at current strategies being used, looked at current resources for assessment teachers use, looked at progression monitoring across the Primary and Post Primary sectors - and the difficulties from school context in that, created an assessment folder for school
- Our new 2022-23 AP2 post holder Ross Higgins' area of responsibility is Wellbeing and Sports.
- **Numeracy:** Active learning is promoted in this area. Concrete materials and use of phone/calculator for social maths promoted especially for senior classes – real life maths. New Maths curriculum training took place 2023-24 as well as one of our teachers Clare Fitzgerald is a member of the NCSE delivering the programme and a member of the NCCA forum. Senior E also started up a Tuck shop for the entire school to practise active learning and handling money in line with our SIP for Numeracy.
- **Literacy & Communication:** New Primary Language Curriculum In-service support for teachers with PDST Facilitator Marie Ryan resumed in 2021-22 with multiple visits to support teachers on planning, PLC, assessment and Irish Language Policy for school.
- **Literacy: SSE:** Reading identified as a priority area from 2018
AP2 Helena Brady conducted a major audit of all reading scheme materials in school as of June 2022. 2 new schemes identified as beneficial: See and Learn which was bought in 2023 and The two sets of the EDMARK programme were bought June 2024.
New Junior Cycle: Further In-service support with facilitators from the JCT Service was given to relevant class teachers and teachers work on JC L1LP and L2LP's PLU's as their official curriculum for 12-16 years (from Sept 2020). The Senior cycle programmes 1 and 2 will be introduced to 16-18 year olds as soon as they are released in 2024/25.
- **ICT:** Agreement by teachers on need for further CPD to make full use of infrastructure available – 4 teachers took part in summer courses in technology July 2022.
Colm Bannon from Oide came in December 2023 for School support in relation to our new AP2 post holder Orna Cunniffe responsible for IT and our Data improvement plan.
Acting Principal Anna Sweeney hired Adrian Keena to create a new School Website
- **Languages Connect Sampler Module ISL Pilot School:** Our school was selected to Pilot a 6 week ISL Tutor Teaching Programme for all classes 2021 – went extremely well and we have just been approved to be part of the 2nd year initiative in Spring Term 2023. Nicola Forde was our tutor for 8 weeks starting Sept 20 2023. We have been approved the 'Say Yes to Language' grant again for the school year 24/25
- **DRAMA/ART/Music:**
June 2022 Drama Teacher Danielle worked with all classes on theme of Friendship and Welcoming Others - lots of Language and Communication through Drama & Dance, non verbal means etc

BLAST programme 2022 with artist Lindsay McConnell creative artist working with Willow supported the students in the design and creation of our beautiful Willow rabbit that took pride of place in our refurbished senior yard. Children got to work with design and actually weaving the willow together to create a large sized rabbit and base for our school yard.

Creative Schools 2022/23- We had the amazing opportunity of working with many different artists and Babaro from Galway Joj Hynes our Resident Artist for this project also brought Miquel Barcelo with his performing theatre and music to the school for 3 sessions which was hugely successful. Also Colette Balfe with her expertise in puppetry and shadow theatre brought great creativity, fun and enjoyment to all the students. Then we also had sessions with Philada Eves an expert in sensory Art allowing all students in our school to experience

the arts in the way they can best experience it esp those that have very serious sensory issues and sensory processing. Finally in this project the senior classes had the opportunity to work with Scannan Technologies to learn about motion films and create their own, which was very age appropriate for the senior class.

Jan 24 Senior A Linenhall "Making Waves" inclusive Sensory production session 2 days Creative clusters-2023-24 Lead Teacher– Helena Brady. Cluster with C.E.T.N.S & Barnacoque school together with artist Jojo Hynes with the theme and aim of our 2 year project was 'Growing in Friendship & Creativity'.

March 2024- Breaffy N.S music group visited to perform some traditional music for our whole school and to celebrate our National Saint-St.patrick

Dec 2024- The school choir and staff visited our local Mayo Hospice and sang Christmas carols for the patients, families and staff an initiative we hope to continue every Christmas.

We also visited a local mainstream school Breaffy N.S to teach our communion song 'If I were A Butterfly' through sign to 2nd classes x3 in that school an initiative we hope to continue for the good and well being of students in both schools and ensure connections with our local community are strong.

- o **ACTIVE LEARNING:** all classes are encouraged to participate in as much active learning both inside and outside the classroom and the results can be seen in the Active Summer Newsletter which is now an annual summer newsletter.
- o **Irish Language & Cultural Activities Policy** finalised and approved Jan 2022
- o **SCOT Review** – Whole School Jan 22 – identified priorities for SSE action planning & policy reviews.

- o **Inclusion/Training** We have since 2022 collaborated with Middletown centre for Autism who have provided us with training for the past 3 years, Nov 23 teacher attended 5 day TEACCH, In 2022 and 2023 teachers were trained in Handwriting without tears programme, Visits from VTHI and VTVI – Flor O'Mahony & Audrey Moyo over the year, CDNT/HSE provided SLT, OT and Physio, Playtherapist Breeda in to support some students, PLC webinars and face to face training for teachers

1.2 The focus of this evaluation

We undertook self-evaluation of teaching and learning during the period Sep 2022- June 2023.

- Impact of Covid-19 closures on staff via google forms surveys
- Impact of Covid-19 closures on parents and students via google forms surveys Feb 2023
- SCOT review carried out by staff Jan 22 and reviewed June 22

2. Findings

2.1 This is effective / very effective practice in our school

- Pupils grow as learners through respectful interactions and experiences that are challenging and supportive-Interactions among pupils and between pupils and teachers are respectful and positive, and conducive to wellbeing

- The teacher has the requisite curriculum knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and classroom management skills-Teachers create an inclusive, purposeful, pupil centred learning environment based on mutual respect, affirmation and trust.
- The wellbeing of the whole school community – both physically and mentally underpins our school policies and plans.
- The school building, hall, walking track, playgrounds and grass areas are well maintained, secure and appropriately furnished to accommodate full engagement of physical activity for our students.
- Our school has appropriate wellbeing policies in place (RSE, Anti-bullying, Critical incident, Child safeguarding statement and SPHE plan)

2.2. This is how we know

Parents/students responses-

- 98.5% of parents thought that Covid had a negative impact on their child's education and wellbeing
- 79.2% stated it negatively affected their child's social skills and friendships
- 66.7% of parents reported that their child was experiencing difficulty in social interactions with others
- 33.3% of parents stated that they had seen an increase in anxiety in their child

The most concerning impact was reported to be

- Increased fear of mixing with other children and adults
- Loss of friendship and learning
- Loss of social interactions and working with peers
- Reduction in ability to learn new things
- More withdrawn and avoids interacting with others
- High levels of stress during a prolonged period.
- Their child expressed that they missed their friends in school

Parents suggestions as to what school could do to lessen the impact

- Create more opportunities to learn through play and rebuild confidence in social interactions
- Eradicate overreaction and fear around common childhood illnesses
- More physical education
- Encouraging children to talk about feelings, developing friendships, behaviours and social skills for success
- Keep communication going with home-
- We all work together as a collective approach -New Parents Association.

Staff responses

- 77% of staff were in agreement that Covid and resulting closures, isolation and aftermath had a negative impact on their emotions and mental wellbeing
- 70.6% answered that they recognise that our school considers staff mental wellbeing.

Staff suggestions or ideas as to how our school could help promote or improve positive wellbeing?

- Good channels of communication
- Check in on people
- Random tokens of appreciation
- To continue the promotion of health and well-being services in our school
- More staff activities team building
- More training as a team group like CPI.

What you could do as a staff member to help promote and improve positive wellbeing among pupils and staff in our school

- Be nice ,smile, and be positive. Offer support to someone who you think needs it.
- Be aware of each other and practice empathy.
- Check in on people.
- Behaviour influences behaviour positive attitude and actions to be continued for children & staff.
- Support my colleague and lend an ear if they are struggling. Understand and have a consistent approach to strategies when there is an issue that arises due to behaviour or needs.
- Show respect and show how everyone is valued
- Flexible workingpositive relationships and to have a good working environment.
- Continue to be helpful and kind to colleagues and children.
- To always be available for courses and continue to be a positive member of staff.
- To have time allocated for all staff to get involved with children and staff for a walk, planting flowers or just having a chat.
- To do the best that I can in a calm, positive loving way & be fully present in my day for the children, friends & colleagues & myself.
- Child centred approach/ work on the students making friends.
- Maybe meeting a whole school such as assembly, so that the students can meet each other.
- Be open to help where I can and support my colleagues.
- Have a Secret Friend day for staff and pupils and make something for them(craft/card/cake).

2.3 This is what we are going to focus on to improve our practice further

- **Target 1:** Establish a wellbeing committee team with pupil/staff/ISM member in 3 years time have a functioning student council.
- **Target 2:** Assembly once a month to get the school community together again with one class in charge of showcasing something from recently completed curriculum activity. To celebrate achievements with student awards for friendship, helping others and encouraging curricular attainment .
- **Target 3:** Every class makes plans for wellbeing activities such as class yoga, team teaching, sports outings(swimming, bowling, tennis etc), Sensory experiences, Group activities and mindfulness and collects photos from the activities to put up on the class WELLBEING Noticeboard to show our successful mental and physical well being achievements.
- **Target 4-**We focused on an Active mindset for a healthy body and mind with application for the Active school flag and looking after the wellbeing of our planet and school with our 8th Green schools application.
- **Target 5-**To To make a conscious effort to gather the whole school community with activities such as Halloween Spooky Walk/parade, Whole school Green schools assembly, Whole School Christmas Dinner, Christmas Mass and Party, Whole school cinema trip, Cosy clothes day, Anti Bullying week, Friendship week, Ice-cream van get together, Holy Communion and Confirmation celebrations with the whole school, Graduation and awards celebrations.

3. Our improvement plan

On the next page we have recorded:

- The **targets** for improvement we have set
- The **actions** we will implement to achieve these
- **Who is responsible** for implementing, monitoring and reviewing our improvement plan
- How we will measure **progress** and check **outcomes** (criteria for success)

As we implement our improvement plan we will record:

- The **progress** made, and **adjustments** made, and **when**
- **Achievement of targets** (original and modified), and **when**

Approved - Joe Stanton, Chairperson

Our Improvement Plan

Timeframe of this improvement plan is from September 2023 to June 2024

Targets	Actions	Persons / groups responsible	Criteria for success	Progress and adjustments	Targets achieved
<p>Assembly once a month to get the school community together again with one class in charge of showcasing something from recently completed curriculum activity and a wellbeing</p>	<p>Each month a class will show an assembly to show off what they have been learning. After awards will be awarded for personal achievements and photos of presentations will be put up on the Star of the week.</p>	<p>Each class is responsible to choose a month to show off their assembly and select a student of the month Principal Anna announces the individual awards and Ross takes care of the Star of the month wall and shows photos of the presentation.</p>	<p>Teacher assessment to assess if there is a change in attitudes and effort in class.</p>	<p>Pupil response was very good, enjoyed having their pictures on the star of the month wall</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>Each class to produce a Wellbeing display</p>	<p>Each class will put up their own wellbeing display and change it termly.</p>	<p>Each class teacher will be responsible to put up and change their wellbeing displays termly.</p>	<p>Complete regular observation in classroom and walking to see if physical engagement and therefore their wellbeing has improved among the pupils.</p>	<p>Each class completed and occasionally updated the display</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>Focus on walking and promoting the walking track to promote physical wellbeing</p>	<p>A relay walking challenge to Galway/Sligo and a 'Walk around Mayo' challenge will be given to the pupils to complete. Pupils can record how many laps to complete to get to Breaffy for example 7 laps = 1km. Breaffy is 4km away therefore 28 laps are required. Repeat for 44 other destinations in Mayo. Final 1km to be completed on last day of Active week</p>	<p>Ross will set up walking track and information board to inform pupils of how many laps are required to go to 44 destinations in Mayo</p>	<p>Gather teacher feedback on pupil engagement</p>	<p>Pupils enjoyed getting out on the walking track and particularly enjoyed completing the last kilometre on Active week with a whole school celebration</p>	<p>Yes</p>

<p>Set up a two-day Wellbeing event to promote mental wellbeing</p>	<p>Two days of activities during friendship week will be set up for classes to take part in: Board games day and creative arts day</p>	<p>Ross is in charge of setting up games tables and liaising with class teachers to set up creative art activities that they can offer pupils in a 30-45-minute duration.</p>	<p>Teacher observation and get teacher feedback to assess how well it went or areas for discussion and improvement and possible activities for next year during friendship week.</p>	<p>Extremely popular and successful based on observation and teacher feedback</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>Set up a four-day Wellbeing events during active week to promote physical and mental wellbeing liaising with outside sports bodies such as Connacht rugby, FAI, Mayo sports partnership</p>	<p>Four days of sporting events Mon - Sports day Tue - FAI soccer Wed-Rugby with Connacht rugby Thur-Mayo sports partnership Fri-Final km of 'Walking relay race to Galway</p>	<p>Ross responsible for liaising and booking coaches for the week and liaising with Wendy PE teacher for sports day</p>	<p>Teacher observation and get teacher feedback to assess how well it went or areas for discussion and improvement and possible activities for next year during Active week.</p>	<p>Extremely popular and successful based on observation and teacher feedback and coaches have agreed to come back again to coach the pupils</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>Encourage healthy eating of fruit and vegetables</p>	<p>Food Dudes Refresher week. Fruit and veg bags delivered daily. Programme come with lesson plans and videos</p>	<p>Students from Senior F in charge of distributing the daily delivered fruit and veg bags to all classes/ prices to be won for tasting</p>	<p>Staff observe and encourage students to taste in stages</p>	<p>Extremely popular and successful based on observation and teacher feedback Students enjoyed the videos and were encouraged by the prices</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>To make a conscious effort to gather the whole school community for fun celebrations and events</p>	<p>Halloween Spooky Walk/parade, Whole school Green schools assembly, Whole School Christmas Dinner, Christmas Mass and Party, Whole school cinema trip, Cosy clothes day, Anti Bullying week, Friendship week,</p>	<p>ISM team (Anna Sweeney, Helena Brady, Ross Higgins, Noelle Murphy, Orna Cunniffe) co-ordinating, planning and delivering</p>	<p>Enjoyment and wellbeing for all</p>	<p>Students truly love getting together with their peers for a range of events</p>	<p>Yes</p>

<p>Creative clusters- collaboration between artists and school communities</p>	<p>Ice-cream van get together, Holy Communion and Confirmation celebrations with the whole school, Graduation and awards celebrations, Pizza van celebrations, Creative Schools performance, The Official opening and celebrations of our New build and Modular unit</p>	<p>Lead Teacher- Helena Brady. Cluster with C.E.T.N.S & Barnacoque school together with artist Jojo Hynes. Music with Music Generation, Drama with Cathal McCarthy and the performance of 'Moby's Return' and finally literature and story telling by Clare artist Tommy-Balor O'Brien.</p>	<p>To create great creativity, fun and enjoyment for all the students to grow in friendship and imagination</p>	<p>The coming together of the 3 schools for each experience was invaluable for all students creating lasting friendship and ensuring inclusivity was amazing.</p>	<p>Yes</p>
	<p>In year 2 we worked with Jojo Hynes and the amazing artist Midi on workshops and performance in the mall for all school communities and the wider public to attend- performance based on the story 'Circle of Friends' liking in our original theme and title for the cluster- 'Growing in Friendship & Creativity'. Finishing with a huge picnic in the mall for all the students</p>				