

St Anthony's Special School
Our Self-Evaluation Report and Improvement Plan 2024-25

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 of our last improvement plan from Sep 2023- to June 2024

- When we analysed our data from staff and parents questionnaires we discovered that in the aftermath of the Covid isolation students had been deprived of social interactions and it had increased anxiety among our young students. When school was opened after Covid the restrictions we put in place created a divide in our school community and isolated classes from each other. With all that in mind we reached a decision that the school community had a need to get together more and that we had to create opportunities for students to ease their anxiety about social interactions

1.2 The focus of this evaluation

- We evaluated and analysed our data based on the six indicators of wellbeing – Active, Responsible, Connected, Resilient, Respected and Aware.
- The student's wellbeing questionnaire was given out in September and we got all 66 responses. The result of the questionnaire is overall very positive, see it attached at the end of the report.
- Based on the previous Parent's questionnaire where they expressed that Covid had a negative impact on their child's mental health, social interactions and an increase in anxiety, we trained all staff in the FRIENDS Student Resilience programme on February 11th 2025. Our NEPS school educational Psychologist Catriona Kennedy will come in next school year to offer the Pelican programme to all classes.
- Embedding previous SSE- Reading identified as priority area from 2018
 - EDMARK was bought June 2024 and training on EDMARK programme Sep 2024
 - See and Learn programme invested in and free training online 2025- P1 and P2 to complete
 - Age-appropriate Hi-Low and decodable reading schemes were bought 2025
- Embedding previous SSE in Numeracy-Games based approach in Numeracy. The new Maths curriculum focus is on a hands-on and fun learning experience and we will all get training this year. We also introduced maths fun day and games based homework
- Reinstate a Parents association

2. Findings of this evaluation

2.1 This is effective / very effective practice in our school

- Pupils experience opportunities to develop the skills and attitudes necessary for lifelong learning-Pupils make meaningful and authentic connections between school-based learning and learning that takes place in other contexts.
- Managing the organisation-Build and maintain relationships with parents, with other schools, and with the wider community The principal, the deputy principal and other

leaders in the school value and support partnership with parents as a means of supporting pupils' learning and wellbeing. They build and maintain positive relationships with parents. -

2.2. This is how we know

- Feedback from Students
- Feedback from parents
- Discussion during CP meetings and ½ day staff meeting

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

- **Connected-** We reinstate the Parents association and home-school link/support for fundraising needs
- **Connected-**Our new AP2 post holders area of focus is Assessment with monitoring students progress and an holistic approach
- **Resilience-**Two new ETB teachers in Music and HomeEconomics who will focus on enjoyment, mindfulness and independent skills
- **Aware-**Implementing a WOM – Wellbeing On Mondays.
- **Connected-** For our students to connect with their peers and share their learning
- **Responsible-** For the student to take ownership of their wellbeing and reflect on the activities taking place
- **Active-**To organise sports and activities that require movement to keep both body and mind healthy, apply for another Active school flag, take part in Irish Special School Sports Council- ISSSC, Mayo Sports Partnership and FAI events
- **Aware-**For students to sample different activities that can improve wellbeing and mental health
- **Respected-** Our new Bí Cineálta (Our Deputy Principal Helena Brady and teacher Rita Ansbro had training on 15/1/25 and we had a full staff ½ day closure in June to spread knowledge, discuss and draft up our Bí Cineálta policy and pledge) anti-bullying policy clearly states the students rights to be heard and respected. We also teach the Stay safe, WebWise and RSE on rotation every second year to give students the skills to protect themselves and feel respected

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**

Our Improvement Plan

Timeframe of this improvement plan is from September 2024 to June 2025

Targets	Actions	Persons / groups responsible	Criteria for success	Progress and adjustments	Targets achieved
Connected- For our students to connect with their peers and share their learning	We continue Assemblies and awards every month- not only for academics but social and interpersonal achievements.	Class teachers/SNA's /Students /Leadership team	All students are involved on their own merits and all presentations are differentiated	Some classes came together and the times for assembly were changed to accommodate junior classes	YES
Responsible- For the student to take ownership of their wellbeing and reflect on the activities taking place	We continue with a WELLBEING notice board showcasing all activities	Class teachers/SNA's /Students/ Leadership team	All classes choose what material to present and reflect on the wellbeing activity taking place.	Evidence of activities was not just limited to photographs but also written work and art	YES
Active- Focus on 4 fundamental movement skills for the Active flag: walking,	Plan with Walid, new PE teacher games lessons and contact GAA, soccer and rugby to come into school and	Teacher Ross Higgins to liaise with external coaches to come into school. Provide plans for Primary 1, 2	Teacher observation and assessments in the areas of walking, throwing, catching and	All activities were adjusted to meet every students physique and ability	YES

catching, throwing and kicking to improve skills in these areas improving physical and mental wellbeing	coach pupils with aim of improving these fundamental movement skills	and 3 for their games lessons in PE focussing on catching, kicking and throwing	kicking in PE and games. Teacher feedback		
Aware- For students to sample different activities that can improve wellbeing and mental health 1	Set up a WOM – Wellbeing On Mondays. At the end of each month there will be a whole school wellbeing activity for pupils e.g. September is Lego day, October is Maths fun games day for Maths week, November is Board games day etc.	Teacher Ross Higgins to make a monthly/yearly plan for Wellbeing On Monday activities. Plan with teachers and devise a programme of activities that teachers will plan for or oversee. Some wellbeing activities will involve making and planning resources or setting up games	Teacher observation and get teacher feedback to assess how well it went or areas for discussion and improvement and possible WOM activities for next year if it is a success.	We repeated the popular activities and included everyone	YES
Aware- For students to sample different activities that can improve wellbeing	St Anthony's school took part in the DoE and NCSE Inclusion initiative "Towards Inclusion" and Partnered with	Principal Anna Sweeney and Teacher Ross Higgins	All students mix with Davitt College 2nd year students and participate to the best of their ability in a number of		YES

and mental health 2	Davitt College in a Wellbeing sample trial-See appendix for details		Wellbeing workshops from January-May 2025		
Aware- For students to sample a variety of fruit and vegetables to encourage healthy eating	Food-dudes-To give each class one fruit and one vegetable to sample every day for a two week period	Teacher Ross Higgins AP2 post holder with responsibility for Wellbeing and Sports	For all students to sample the offered fruit and Vegetables and win prizes	Always a success	YES
Active- For students to take part and learn the skills involved in various sports	Take part on 4 occasions in ISSSC in soccer,Basketball, Swimming and Bowling. Mayo Sports Partnership(Ray McNamara and Simon) came to the school to give all classes Rugby skills tutoring and FAI trainers came to the school to teach all students soccer skills Students were also taken to the local bowling alley, Golf course, Kids in Motion (gymnastics), tennis club,	Teacher Ross Higgins AP2 post holder with responsibility for Wellbeing and Sports	For all students to feel included and can in an enjoyable way get involved in sports with their peers	We were going to get Hurling sessions as well through the Mayo Sports Partnership but there wasn't enough time	YES

	gym & Swimming club to experience and enjoy other ways to get healthy and learn new skills in a fun way for their wellbeing				
Active and Connected- For all students to get active in the playground and to use their social skills to play with their peers	We fundraised and installed a new playground in the inner Yard for Primary 1/ 2 and added 3 play equipment pieces to our outer yard	Principal Anna Sweeney and Deputy Helena Brady Parents Association	All students get along, share equipment and mix with their peers	Students that want to mix but find it difficult, get support from staff and students that are more interested to be by themselves but still take turns on equipment are respected in their wishes	YES
Responsible- For our students to have a calm place to go if they need to regulate and for students to develop skills in the garden to apply in other settings	We received funding from the Sustainability grant and used it to install Polycarbonate Poly tunnel and SISK Volunteer group came in to put down stone slabs inside and around the Poly tunnel and put up a new	Principal Anna Sweeney and Deputy Helena Brady Teacher Noelle Murphy	All students take responsibility for an area in the tunnel to care for and grow vegetables, herbs or flowers	The stone slabs and tarmac around the path makes it inclusive for all with mobility challenges and wheelchair users. The students grew sunflowers, vegetables and herbs and saw the progress of growth and sampled the fruits on the trees in the garden.	YES

	Pergola in the Sensory garden.				
Active and aware- For students to get motivated to move around the corridor in an entertaining way	We had an Easter raffle fundraiser to pay for a new Sensory Circuit around the whole corridor	Principal Anna Sweeney and Deputy Helena Brady Parents Association	Staff observe an increase in interest and motivation in our students and that the circuit is used frequently It has been noted as a great go to during wet weather and proves a fun activity for indoor break times	We had Creative Activity come back to update some parts that had been damaged	YES
Resilient- For all the teachers to feel personally supported and have tools to reinforce their own wellbeing to better cope with helping students in their professional role	April 7th 2025 Caroline Brennan from Oide School Support team came to give teachers new tools to take care of their own wellbeing and to value self care to have enough energy to give in their role as a special educational teacher	Principal Anna Sweeney applied for Oide support	All staff found it worth while and enjoyed the afternoon	None	YES
Responsible, Connected	We set up a Green schools, Active schools and Wellbeing	Teachers Noelle Murphy, Ross Higgins and all	All students on the committees attend the	The wellbeing committee will next school year	YES

and Respected Students having a say in what goes on in school and a way to get involved	committee this year.	the students volunteering	meetings, share suggestions and students opinions and wishes and return to their classes and share learning with their peers	transition into a student council	
Connected and Respected For all our students to have a voice and a system to communicate	NCSE trained teachers Clare Fitzgerald and Rita Ansbro in "Talking Mats" -a student voice project and delivered it to their students.	Teacher Clare Fitzgerald and Rita Ansbro NCSE	It gave all equal chance to communicate their needs, want and likes/dislikes		YES

Appendix 1



Wellbeing in St. Anthony's School



RESULTS October 2024

Please speak to your parents/guardians/staff member if you are worried about yourself or a friend.	 shutterstock.com - 1629738983		 sometimes
1. My school is friendly and welcoming.	100%		
2. My school is tidy and bright.	94%	3%	3%
3. In my school, we have room inside and outside for playing	97%		3%

games, sports, PE, talking and quiet time.			
4. I feel safe in school.	97%		3%
5. My school has activities like sport/drama/music.	97%		3%
6. The adults in our school help us to eat healthy food.	92%		8%
7. The adults in our school encourage us to do sports and be active.	100%		
8. The adults in our school talk to us in a calm and nice way.	97%		3%

Please speak to your parents/guardians/staff member if you are worried about yourself or a friend.	 shutterstock.com 1625738963		 sometimes
9. The adults in our school praise and encourage us to work hard and try our best.	100%		
10. I try my best at school.	92%		8%
11. The adults in our school help children who find it hard to make friends.	92%		8%
12. The adults in our school help children who feel sad or worried.	97%		3%

13. The adults in our school help children who find it hard to learn.	94%	3%	3%
14. The adults in our school make learning interesting and fun.	100%		
15. The adults in our school care about me.	97%		3%
16. My teacher encourages me to ask questions and give my views in class.	95%		5%
17. We do SPHE (Social Physical & Health Education) in our school.	100%		
18. We learn that we are special and that it is okay when people are different.	97%		3%
19. Bullying is not allowed in our school.	100%		
20. If I feel bullied in school, the adults in my school have told me what to do.	95%	5%	

Appendix 2

Wellbeing budget

Science day - January

Eva tutor fee - €300

6 X Trofast storage units = €350

Science materials - €500

Travel/Diesel - €30

Social Dancing - January

Sandra Ganley Tutor fee - €400

Travel/Diesel - €30

Cooking Workshop - January

Sarah Butler tutor fee - €100

Kitchen Equipment - €400

Travel/Diesel - €30

Circuit training - February

Dougie tutor fee - €250

Weights: 9kg = €40, 7kg = €32, 5kg = €32, 2.5kg = €16

Resistance bands - 3 packs of 3 bands x €10 = €30

2 x powertube resistance bands = €40

Weight balls - 6 x 5kg balls = €115

Kettle bells - 3 x 4kg = €48 and 3 x 8kg = €84

Exercise bike - €600

Rowing machine - €1000

Bikes and tricycles - €900

3 autism spin chairs = €600

Travel/Diesel - €30

Jewellery making - March

Victoria tutor fee - €245

Jewellery materials - €345

Travel/Diesel - €30

Leisure/Play day - March

Board games-€200

Outdoor play equipment-€600

Buddy/Friendship benches- €7,500

(Murray's Indoor / Outdoor coloured buddy benches - €400 x 10: €4,000

Semi-circular group benches - €590 x 6: €3,540)

Travel/Diesel - €30

Pilates - April

Dougie tutor fee - €250

Exercise mats - 8 x €40 = €320

Ocean waves projector = €72

Travel/Diesel - €30

Sensory Yoga Workshop - April

Yoga instructor fee - €500

Black out pop up tent - €60

Sensory mini mats - €53

Body sox - €101

Kinnebar- €250

Autism class resources - € 500

Travel/Diesel - €30

Drumming workshop - May

Anthony McNamee fee - €350

Music equipment- €500

Travel/Diesel - €30

Mood Design Clay workshop - May

Elizabetha Tutor fee - €500

Travel/Diesel - €30

End of project Day in the Mall - May

"Box of Bake" Cupcake van - €1,000

Travel/Diesel - €30

Postage and delivery of equipment and resources €500

Approximate total: €20,085

Section 1: General Wellbeing

1. Which of these areas would you like more support with at school?

(Select all that apply)

- ☐ Feeling safe and comfortable
- ☐ Learning new skills
- ☐ Managing stress or emotions
- ☐ Making friends
- ☐ Feeling understood by others
- ☐ Being included in activities

2. Which of these is most important to your wellbeing? (Choose one)

- ☐ Being physically active
- ☐ Having close friends
- ☐ Feeling respected
- ☐ Learning new things
- ☐ Feeling connected to others

3. Is there anything else that helps your wellbeing at school?

Section 2: Inclusion and Collaboration

5. Do you feel included in school activities and decisions?

- ☐ Always
- ☐ Most of the time
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Never

6. What helps you feel included at school? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Teachers and staff who understand my needs
- ☐ Activities I enjoy
- ☐ Friendly classmates
- ☐ Feeling listened to
- ☐ Opportunities to share my ideas

7. What would help you feel more included when working with students from other schools (e.g., secondary or special schools)?
8. What are your hopes for this project to connect students from different schools?
-

Section 3: Friendships and Social Connections

9. Do you feel you have good friends at school?
- Yes, I have many good friends
 - Yes, I have a few good friends
 - I'm not sure
 - No, I find it hard to make friends
10. What helps you make friends? *(Select all that apply)*
- Shared activities or hobbies
 - Group work in class
 - Clubs or school events
 - Spending time together during breaks
11. How would you like to meet and connect with students from other schools?
12. What activities would help build friendships between students from different schools?

Section 4: Hobbies and Interests

13. Do you have hobbies or interests outside of school?
- Yes
 - No
 - Not sure
14. What hobbies or activities do you enjoy the most?
15. Would you like to share your hobbies or interests with other students in this project?
- Yes, I'd love to!
 - Maybe
 - No, not really
16. What new activities or hobbies would you like to try?

Section 5: Looking Forward

17. What do you think this wellbeing project should focus on?
(Select up to 3)
- Making new friends
 - Feeling included
 - Trying new activities
 - Sharing ideas with others
 - Improving communication between schools
 - Learning skills to help with wellbeing
18. What would make this project fun and meaningful for you?
19. If you could design one activity or event for this project, what would it be?

20. Do you have any other ideas or thoughts to share about this project?