

St Joseph's Secondary School

Newfoundwell, Drogheda, Co. Louth

School Self - Evaluation Report



Evaluation Period: Aug 2021 – June 2022

Date of Report June 21st 2022

1. Introduction - SSE in St. Joseph's Secondary School

As per Department of Education Circular 0040/2016, each year the school must create a brief summary of the Self-Evaluation Report and School Improvement Plan. In line with the Department of Education's *School Self Evaluation Guidelines 2016-2020*, this report follows.

(It should be noted that this report covers a period of time where covid19 government restrictions were in place and hence some activities were restricted or curtailed. It also follows a period of two academic years that saw lengthy school closures and a move to online teaching and learning which also impacted on planning)

This document records the outcomes of our last School Improvement Plan, the findings of this self-evaluation, and our current Improvement Plan, including the actions we will implement to meet targets. Self-evaluation is an important means to develop and improve our school. We understand that this requires whole school engagement. To that end teacher sub committees were established to support and engage with the process of planning and development. These committees worked in the following areas - Literacy, Numeracy, SSE, Digital strategy & ICT, STEM, Creativity & Inclusion, Health & Safety, TY development & Mentoring

1.1 The focus of this evaluation

We undertook self-evaluation during the period September 2021 to June 2022. The areas of focus evaluated were –

- Literacy
- Numeracy
- Wellbeing
- Assessment for Learning

2. School context

St. Joseph's Secondary School is an all-boys school of circa 800 pupils and has a total staff of approximately 80 people.

We are an ERST school in the Edmund Rice tradition and the ERST charter is central to all that we do.

St. Joseph's recognizes that each student who enrolls in our school is unique and has different gifts as well as different needs. It is our aim that our students will leave us with enhanced self-confidence and with life skills and attitudes which will enable them to lead fulfilling lives contribute positively to society. We recognize that a student's development is closely linked to a good self-image and so we strive to present the school's total curriculum in such a manner as to allow all to realize their full potential.

We offer the Junior Cycle, Leaving Certificate Established, Leaving Certificate Applied, the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme and Transition Year Programme. We also offer the Level 2 Learning Programme where appropriate to students with MGLD. We also have three autism classes providing an integrated education for students with AS.

The school also undertakes to provide a wide range of extra-curricular activities to assist the social, personal, musical, artistic and sporting development of our students.

3. Findings 2021 - 2022:

The following list indicates our findings for the academic year 2021/22 in relation to the quality of practice of teaching and learning with reference to the sub-themes of, **Literacy, Numeracy, AFL & Wellbeing**

Literacy

A review of practice shows there are a number of literacy initiatives happening at a whole school level as well as an individual classroom level.

The following were identified as whole-school approaches to literacy being implemented in St Joseph's Secondary School:

- Drumcondra testing of students to identify students who require additional literacy support
- PPAD assessment with all first year students and use of data from same to inform targeted support
- Two periods per week of in class resource support for all 1st year English students
- Additional literacy support for EAL students and students who are exempt from Irish. Resource classes are provided in all year groups for all students who are exempt from Irish
- A timetabled reading & literacy development class timetabled once a week for all first year classes
- Accelerated reader programme followed by all first years in the reading & literacy development classes.
- Drop Everything & Read classes at junior cycle every term
- Literacy Week is run annually to coincide with World Book Day

- Literacy sub committee leads up literacy and related activities in the school
- Reading for Pleasure module as part of wellbeing programme in 2nd, 3rd & 5th year
- The library is made available once a week for reading at lunchtime for first year students
- Ongoing selection and purchase of books for the school library ensures a wide and diverse selection of books for students

A survey of teachers at the start of the academic year showed that almost 80% see literacy as an essential element of their subject .

The following were identified from the survey of teachers as classroom-based approaches to literacy being implemented in the majority of classes in St Joseph's Secondary School:

- Use of key words to assist teaching and learning - these are used orally, visually, digitally and as part of assessment
- Active learning methodologies such as *think-pair-share discussions, pair work, group work*
- Focus on the development of Oral Language work through CBA presentations (of particular relevance in English and Business Studies)
- Presentations, poster making and summarizing which encourages students to find information, reword it and present back to the class
- Use of google classroom platform to record key words, content and assessments
- Use of mind maps and other visual aids to assist learning

This report acknowledges that additional literacy strategies are being carried out in classrooms which are more subject specific. These strategies should be described in each subject department plan.

Numeracy

A review of practice shows there are a number of numeracy initiatives happening at a whole school level as well as an individual classroom level.

The following were identified as whole-school approaches to numeracy being implemented in St Joseph's Secondary School:

- Drumcondra testing of students to identify students who require additional numeracy support
- Two periods a week of in class resource support for all first year maths students
- Further resource for maths classes in every year group targeted to classes identified with higher need for extra support
- Additional numeracy support for EAL students and students who are exempt from Irish. Resource classes are provided in all year groups for all students who are exempt from Irish
- In line with the continuum of support additional numeracy support for identified students is made available
- Annual Maths Week – daily puzzles, drop everything and Sudoku, first year maths investigation
- Links with STEM programme that is lead by the STEM sub committee

A survey of all teachers in September 2021 indicated that 60% felt that numeracy is an important element of their subject

The survey identified strategies currently being used in classrooms to support numeracy. These include

- Timelines
- Labels
- Diagrams, charts and graphs to assist learning
- Time keeping and time management particularly in relation to assessments and examinations
- Analysis and evaluation of statistics
- Identifying patterns, rhyming structures,

This report acknowledges that there are a range of additional numeracy strategies being carried out in classrooms which are more subject specific. These strategies should be listed and captured in each subject department plan.

Assessment for Learning (AFL):

Ongoing work in AFL shows that there are whole school strategies being used to support this area. A survey of teachers in September 2021 showed a comprehensive understanding of AFL and identified strategies currently in place. These are happening in the classroom and at whole school level and include

- Sharing Learning Intentions with all year groups - this is done in a variety of ways - orally, displayed on a white board, on google classroom space
- Wide range of formative assessment strategies used by teachers including traffic lights, think pair share, exit pass etc.
- Teachers continue to use AFL and FA resources in the school journal
- CPD for all teachers on the use of Learning Intentions - lead by the SSE Sub committee
- CPD for teachers on formative assessment by the SSE sub committee exploring how to use different techniques & highlighting resources already available to support same
- Lesson studies video clips have been made of teachers demonstrating strategies in the classroom – for example differentiation, questioning, assessment. These clips will be shared with all staff in the academic year 2022/23 and will be further developed to include more teachers
- Development of a common 'language of learning' poster to be displayed in all classrooms and in the student journal
- Formative assessment to be discussed at subject department meetings & reflected in the subject plan
- All staff attended CPD on the use of 'Success Criteria' in January 2020 (*JCT Whole school day on Teaching, Learning Assessment and Reporting*)
- Management team observed classes on the use of AFL strategies
- Emphasis on sharing success criteria strategies in subject departments will be a focus in the 21/22 teaching year and will be supported by the SSE sub committee team.
- Staff accessed Erasmus Plus programme

Wellbeing

We take a whole school approach to wellbeing and it involves a collaborative process to improve specific areas of school life that impact on wellbeing.

Embedded in the whole school approach is the recognition that members of the school community can have different needs at different times

The following were identified as whole school approaches to Wellbeing being implemented in St Joseph's Secondary School:

- Student Support Teams are in place for every year group. They are made up of Deputy Principals, Year Head, Guidance Counsellor, AEN co-ordinator with oversight by the Principal. These teams meet on a weekly basis and staff can refer students of concern to the team. These Support teams are a visible representation of the schools understanding and valuing of each individual student.
- Wellbeing Policy in place – school has developed and implemented a wide range of wellbeing related polices as listed in the Wellbeing Policy pg.3
- A comprehensive wellbeing programme is in place at junior cycle and in fifth year with a timetabled wellbeing double class every week. The programme is designed to link with the indicators of wellbeing and includes modules related to physical, psychological and emotional wellbeing. A survey of first year students in May 2022 showed that the modules are well received and enjoyed by first year students
- A visual display area has been created in the school's general purpose area where wellbeing posters, images, students work all linked to wellbeing are displayed. These are updated regularly
- Anti-bullying charter is prominently displayed and is explored and discussed with all students
- Annual participation in Stand-up week where students focus on inclusion and equality
- Participation in national wellbeing initiatives including Walk in my Shoes wellbeing and positive mental health awards and AIB future sparks wellbeing programme.
- Inclusion of wellbeing awards in annual school awards ceremony to celebrate students who make a particular contribution to wellbeing activities in the school
- A wide range of extra-curricular activities are available to students and students are encouraged to participate in these.
- A games club for first and second year students takes place daily and provides a fun, safe space for students

- The school journal contains information on wellbeing, safety guides and the ERST charter
- An annual culture week celebrates the inclusion of all students in the school community
- After school study is facilitated for students and a homework club is also available to junior cycle students
- The school works to support students in conjunction with external agencies such as NEPs, CAHMs and TUSLA
- An active student council is in place and is made up of student elected representatives. The student council receive an agreed report from BOM meetings and are consulted re the SSE process.
- A Check and Connect programme in the school supports vulnerable students
- Induction for 1st year students provided to help them settle in takes place as part of the wellbeing and SPHE programmes.
- Academic Mentoring is provided for 6th year students by teachers
- School canteen provides a wide variety of healthy food options for staff and students
- CPD for staff is encouraged and is sourced and funded by the school. One of the Deputy principals, the wellbeing coordinator and SSE coordinator have attended CPD on wellbeing framework and planning.
- A staff social committee organize staff outings and gatherings throughout the year
- Participation in the Blast Creative Arts programme – a group of teachers and TY students scripted, produced and directed a sort film on the subject of consent. This will be used as part of the SPHE/RSE programme in the academic year 2022/23
- A team of staff have received training in the establishment and operation of a nurture room in the school and this will be set up for the academic year 2022/23

3.1 PROGRESS MADE ON IDENTIFIED TARGETS IN SIP 2020 - 2022

WELLBEING -

Target

School to provide additional safe spaces and activities at lunchtime in a designated space for students

Action taken

The establishment of a daily lunch time games club for first and second year students and the opening of the school library twice weekly for first years for reading at lunchtime

Target

Establishment of a CARA mentoring programme for first years facilitated by fifth year students

Action Taken

Cara mentors appointed and trained. They facilitate a support programme for first year students.

Focus group with Cara mentors carried out in May 2021 to evaluate the programme

Target

Organised trip(s) for first years

Action Taken

Lifting of covid restrictions in late 2021 allowed for trips for first years to Tayto Park, Pantomimes, Science exploriums and history museums.

Target

Creation of a wellbeing visual display area

Action Taken

Visual wellbeing displays are updated regularly in the schools General Purpose Area

Target

Participation in national wellbeing awards and initiatives

Action

Successful participation in Walk in my Shoes Wellbeing and positive mental health awards and AIB future sparks wellbeing initiative

Target

Nutrition and Healthy eating module to be run in junior cycle wellbeing classes as part of wellbeing programme

Action

A six-week nutrition and healthy eating module is run in first year as part of the wellbeing programme

ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING (AFL)

Target

Teachers to share learning intentions in all classes

Action

Teachers continue to share learning intentions across subjects. This is done in a variety of ways with the use of google classroom allowing for a digital sharing of same.

Target

Further CPD for all teachers on the use of learning intentions

Action

As part of whole staff in school CPD members of the SSE team presented on the use of learning intentions and facilitated discussion re same

Target

Wide range of assessment strategies to be used by teachers

Action

SSE sub committee created a google drive and shared resources with all staff around assessment strategies.

Subject departments discuss and include assessment as part of their subject plan

Target

CPD for all teachers on formative assessment and feedback

Action

A staff morning was facilitated by the SSE sub-committee demonstrating strategies and exploring feedback in the classroom. Resources were shared with subject convener's and discussed further at subject department meetings. Shared google drive with sample strategies was shared with all staff.

A focus group interview around feedback was facilitated with students and a focus group interview with staff

Target

Strategies on success criteria to be shared with staff

Action

Strategies were presented to staff by the SSE team and shared via google drive A focus group interview of students and a focus group interview with staff was facilitated around success criteria.

Target

Establishment of teacher sub committees in the following areas - Literacy, Numeracy, SSE, Digital strategies, STEM, Mentoring, Creativity and inclusion, Health and safety and TY development

Action

These sub committees were established in September 2021 and met several

times throughout the year. Each committee lead initiatives in their chosen area

Target

Development of common learning language visuals for display in all classrooms

Action

These visuals were worked on by the SSE co-ordinator and a member of the SSE team and the ICT co-ordinator and will be ready for display in classrooms for the start of the 2022/23 academic year.

Target

Survey of teaching staff on ICT and teaching and Learning

Action

Survey was completed in March 2022 and findings of same has lead to the introduction of IPADs for all first, TY, AS & LCA1 students in academic year 2022/23

Literacy

Target

Reading & Literacy development class for all first years where they will follow the accelerated reader programme.

Action

This class is now timetabled for all first years once a week and the students follow the accelerated reader programme. An evaluation of the programme with first years was carried out in May 2022 and this showed that it is a programme enjoyed by students and that they are reading more as a result of participation in this class.

Target

Introduction of a Reading for Pleasure module through wellbeing for 2nd - 5th year

Action

2nd - 5th year classes all have a six week Reading for Pleasure module as part of their wellbeing programme. A wide range of reading material is made available through the school library.

Target

To create a space for reading at lunchtime in the library

Action

Reading at lunchtime in the library is made available to first year students twice a week.

Target

Promote Literacy at whole school level through participation in world book day and annual literacy week

Action

World Book day is celebrated by junior cycle classes with a variety of activities – these include Drop Everything and Read Classes, quizzes, book reviews, visits from writers and workshops.

It forms part of an annual literacy week in the school

Numeracy

Target

Support numeracy as a common approach in all subjects through the appointment of a numeracy coordinator and the development of a sub committee for this area

Action

Sub committee was established in September 2021 and met several times through the year to explore numeracy and related activities

Target

Creation of a numeracy space on the school website with resources and ideas

Action

This numeracy space is on the school website and is accessible by all

Target

Annual STEM week to promote related activities among staff and students

Action

As well as an annual STEM week a STEM student of the month award happens in junior cycle classes.

Students participated in national SATCAN competition as part of STEM related activities.

Target

Development of a Fun maths module as part of wellbeing programme for 1st - 5th years

Action

1st - 5th year students have a six week fun maths module as part of their wellbeing programme

4. Summary of SSE findings

4.1 Our Strengths:

This SSE report identifies strengths in the following areas:

- The majority of teachers are sharing the learning intentions of lessons.
- Use of Key words is common across all subjects
- Some teachers are using key AFL strategies in their lessons.
- Teachers are encouraging both peer and self-assessment in their students.
- The development of 'Guidelines in Formative/Comment only Reporting' was shared with all teachers in May 2020
- Reading and Literacy development classes for first years are enhancing student's literacy skills
- Reading for Pleasure module as part of wellbeing programme means students are reading more.
- Literacy Week is run annually to coincide with World Book Day
- Continued support of literacy, numeracy and EAL through AEN support in line with the continuum of support
- Students are given opportunities to participate in national competitions and initiatives particularly in STEM and wellbeing areas
- CPD is encouraged and supported by school management
- The establishment of teacher sub committees has allowed staff to work in areas where they have a particular interest and/or skillset

4.2 Prioritized Areas for Improvement:

The following areas are prioritized for improvement:

Literacy

- Development of a literacy policy
- Teaching and assessment of key words should feature in all lessons
- Creation of a literacy space within the school - this could take the form of a literacy board that is updated regularly

- A timetabled DEAR class every term for all junior cycle years - these to be included on school calendar
- Focus on oral and presentation skills in all classes

Numeracy

- Development of a numeracy policy
- Creation of a numeracy space within the school - this could take the form of a numeracy board that is updated regularly
- Numeracy space on the school website to be updated and monitored regularly

Assessment for Learning (AFL)

- Promote and develop the use of visual common language posters that will be in all classrooms in September 2022
- Promote and develop the use of shared google drive with AFL strategies, ideas and resources
- A weekly SSE/AFL email drop to all teaching staff with strategies, ideas and resources
- Teachers to share success criteria with their students
- Differentiation strategies to be further developed particularly around assessment and reporting

Wellbeing

- Review of the wellbeing programme
- Further development and promotion of student voice
- Promotion of positive behavior strategies
- Continue to improve a culture of belonging and personal safety in the school
- Introduce a cultural/inclusion module into wellbeing programme
- Assessment and reporting of wellbeing to be developed

4.3 Legislative and Regulatory Requirements:

- Whole School Guidance Plan has been completed and ratified by the BOM

4.4 Agreed Targets for 2022/23

(Refer to SIP for more detail on how the school aims to achieve the following targets)

Literacy:

- To embed literacy strategies as a common approach in all subjects through the development of a Literacy Pack and a Literacy Policy
- To continue to measure success of targets in the areas of Key Words and Presentation Skills
- To continue to promote Literacy at whole school level through Literacy Week,

Numeracy:

- To embed numeracy strategies as a common approach in all subjects through the development of a numeracy policy
- To create a numeracy rich environment by adopting new actions in subject areas as identified in the Numeracy Pack
- To support Numeracy in all subjects through the numeracy sub-committee.
- To continue to promote Numeracy at whole school level through Numeracy Week, and participation in 'Build a Bank' Competition

Assessment for Learning (AFL):

- Development of a common '*language of learning*' poster to be displayed in all classrooms - the use of these to be promoted in all classes
- Further CPD for all teachers around success criteria and formative feedback
- Assemblies with students to explore what success criteria and formative feedback involve.
- Teacher peer observation of AFL in the classroom with a focus on the use of success criteria and formative feedback and assessment

- Support of Formative Assessment/Feedback through the school's assessment Policy.
- Formative feedback & success criteria to be reflected in each subject department plan

Wellbeing

- A review of the wellbeing programme to take place as a matter of priority
- Programme of induction & a welcome pack to be developed for new students in any year group
- Annual wellbeing day for students and staff to be listed in school calendar
- Posters promoting healthy eating to be displayed across the school but particularly in the school canteen area