Ennis National School

Self – Evaluation Report and Improvement Plan

2018 – 2019

Introduction

The Focus of this Evaluation

A school self-evaluation of teaching and learning in Ennis National School was undertaken for the period from September 2018 - June 2019. It was decided that our School Self Evaluation would be used to support the introduction and implementation of the School Well Being Framework, where we will focus on the setting up and embedding of Well Being initiatives in Ennis National School.

A whole school evaluation was undertaken regarding the Well Being of the whole community in Ennis National School. This report outlines its findings.

School Context

Ennis National School is a co-educational school in a large town, with pupils ranging from Junior Infants to Sixth class, two A.S.D classes and a reading class. Currently we have 640 pupils in single stream classes, with 24 mainstream classes, two A.S.D. classes, one reading class and 12.5 S.E.N teachers. S.E.N teaching is organised with a mixture of in-class support and some withdrawal from class.

Findings

Identification of Focus Area for School Self Evaluation

In order to identify our focus for the School Self Evaluation process, we had Anne McMahon from the PDST facilitate a workshop during a Croke Park day. The staff of Ennis National School met in small groups, led by the post holders. Reviews were carried out by each group in their curricular area under the following headings:

- What is going well
- New initiatives and programmes introduced
- Areas for improvement
- Resources
- Teaching methodologies - those that are being used and those that could /should be used more often
- Methods of differentiation - those that are being used and those that could /should be used more often.

- Methods of assessment - those that are being used and those that could /should be used more often.

The above reviews were collated and presented to the staff as a whole, with any further contributions being added. Our area of focus, namely the implementation of the School Well Being Framework was decided upon, on the basis of these reviews.

Findings for School Self Evaluation

In our evaluation of Well Being in the school community, staff completed the 'Mental Health Promotion: Self-Evaluation Questionnaire' to reflect on how our school was performing in this area. A range of pupils from 2nd to 6th class also completed 2 surveys: 'Me and my Feelings Questionnaire' and 'Mental Health Promotion: Self-Evaluation Checklist and Questionnaire for Children', giving a pupil perspective on well-being in our school. The questionnaires were analysed to assess what we are doing well and areas that we could improve on. Teacher observation, collaboration, discussion amongst staff members and feedback from the Health Promoting Schools Committee were also used as tools to assess our strengths and areas for improvement to promote Well-Being in our school.

Key Area 1 – Culture and Environment

Strengths

According to the Mental Health Promotion: Self-evaluation Questionnaire completed by staff members, staff rated the school as performing above average in these areas:

- The wellbeing of the whole school community is central to our school's ethos/mission statement and it is recognised by school leaders and management and all members of staff that the entire school community has a role to play in supporting learning for and learning about wellbeing.
- There is a positive approach to discipline where issues are resolved with care, respect and consistency.
- The school building, grounds, classrooms, bathrooms and work spaces are well maintained and appropriately furnished, creating a welcoming, safe and warm environment.
- Staff, children and young people are welcoming and inclusive of those from different cultural backgrounds, those with additional needs and all sexual orientations.
- The physical environment is modified to meet the needs of children and young people with additional and/or complex needs. The following are available if applicable:
  - Sensory room
  - Room for meeting with parents, visiting professionals
  - Specialist technology

Areas for Improvement

Partnerships with students were identified as an area for improvement.

- 50% of staff members felt that there are not adequate structures in our school which allow students to have a voice

- 20% of staff members felt that we are average at letting pupils know that their feelings and views are valued

Key Area 2 – Curriculum (Teaching and Learning)

Strengths

According to the Mental Health Promotion: Self-evaluation Questionnaire completed by staff members, staff rated the school as performing above average in these areas:

- Teachers are encouraged and facilitated to attend relevant CPD to meet the needs of the school population and are encouraged to engage in collaboration.
- Teachers use opportunities to promote wellbeing across the curriculum.
- The school deploys resources based on individual learning, behavioural, social and emotional needs under the Special Education Teaching Allocation model.
- There are opportunities for training and on-going practice support and guidance for SNAs to further build their capacity to support children and young people with additional needs.

Areas for Improvement

Information gathering was identified by staff as an area for improvement:

- 50% of staff felt that the school was performing fair or poor at routinely gathering information from students about their perceptions of how they are doing at school in a systematic way (e.g. 'My Thoughts about School Checklist' from the NEPS Continuum of Support)

Key Area 3 – Policy and Planning

Strengths

According to the Mental Health Promotion: Self-evaluation Questionnaire completed by staff members, staff rated the school as performing above average in these areas:

- The wellbeing of the whole school community underpins all school policy and plans.
- Schools have appropriate wellbeing policies in place (for example, Anti Bullying Policy, Child Protection Policy, Critical Incident Policy)
- The school uses the Education Passport (NCCA) for children and young people transitioning to post primary school.
- School-based information is used, in conjunction with department policies and circulars and reports from external professionals, to support children and young people with additional needs.
- The school engages in a collaborative problem-solving process to support a child/young person's needs, identified through the school's continuum of support.
- A student support file is used to plan, record and review progress.
- At times of transition, information is gathered and transfer review meetings are held for those children and young people with additional and/or complex needs.
- The school has mechanisms in place for identifying and supporting vulnerable children and young people in the event of a critical incident.

Areas for Improvement

Development and dissemination of plans and policies was identified by staff as an area for improvement:

- 17% of staff members felt that we were performing fair at ensuring that 'all staff are fully knowledgeable about relevant plans and policies' and 7% of staff members gave no response to the above statement.
- 20% of staff members also felt that we were performing fair at ensuring that newly appointed staff are made aware of policies and plans as a matter of priority and 7% gave no response to this statement.

Key Area 4 – Relationships and Partnerships

Strengths

According to the Mental Health Promotion: Self-evaluation Questionnaire completed by staff members, staff rated the school as performing above average in these areas:

- School staff model openness, respect and listening in their interactions with each other, children and young people and parents.
- The board of school leaders and management promotes the establishment of a parents' association in the school, and collaborates with the them as appropriate.
- The school promotes professional networks for principals and teachers.
- The school establishes good links with Department support services, community-based statutory and voluntary support services and other external agencies to support students.
- Mentoring systems are in place whereby more senior teachers offer practical and social support to Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) and/or new staff members.
- At times of transition schools link with other education settings, including early childhood care and education settings, crèches, other primary/post-primary schools, Youthreach, Community Education Centres to ensure successful transfers.
- The school promotes teachers' engagement in networks for teacher collaboration.

Areas for Improvement

Internal School Supports were identified by staff as an area for improvement

- 50% of staff members rated our school as performing fair or poor in relation to the presence of a support team, while 33% of staff members did not respond to the statement.
- 44% of staff members rated our school as performing fair or poor in supporting the 'Support Team' in its role, while 43% of staff members did not respond.
- 50% of staff members rated the school as performing fair or poor in ensuring that staff and parents were familiar with the workings of the support team while 37% of staff members failed to respond to the above statement.
- 47% of staff members rated the school as fair or poor for the Support Team consulting with students who are presenting with a concern and with their parents/guardians, while 37% of staff members did not respond.

Pupil Survey

Mental Health Promotion: Self-Evaluation Checklist and Questionnaire for Children

85% of pupils feel that Ennis National School is a happy and welcoming place.
87% of pupils feel that Ennis National School is important to them.
74% of pupils feel that if they are worried or upset in school they have someone to talk to.
79% of pupils feel that they are liked by their teacher.

Me and My Feelings Questionnaire Responses

53% of pupils never feel lonely, 46% of pupils sometimes feel lonely and 0% always feels lonely.
43% of pupils never worry, 49% of pupils sometimes worry and 6% always worry.
69% of pupils never worry when they are at school, 27% of pupils sometimes worry at school and 3% always worry at school.

- From our analysis of pupil surveys, we noted that our pupils value their school community and school is important to them. Therefore, we feel that it is important to celebrate pupils' talents and success, to increase their sense of self-worth while attending Ennis National School.
- Pupils reported a positive relationship with their teachers and we feel that these positive relationships should be used to increase pupils' self-esteem.
- Over half of pupils reported feelings of worry and 30% of pupils reported feelings of worry at school, therefore we decided that it is important to build resilience and coping skills in our pupils to enable them to deal with feelings of worry/anxiety.

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

Aims/Targets:

1. To build pupil's resilience and ability to cope with feelings of worry by engaging with Friends for Life programme
2. To set up a Support Team responsible for organising activities to promote wellbeing in our school

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**

School Improvement Plan

2018-2019

Target 1: To build pupil's resilience and ability to cope with feelings of worry by engaging with Friends for Life programme

	Tasks/Actions	Who	Monitoring	Evaluation / Success Criteria	Progress and Adjustments	Target Achieved
Action 1	The support team will work with pupils to create a 'Friends for Life' board which will be updated termly throughout the year	Ms. De Buitléir Ms. Kelly Pupils	Staff feedback Pupil feedback	Friends for Life board is updated regularly All pupils are aware of the board and show some understanding of the different materials posted on board	Need to remind teachers to show the board to their class.	**Achieved**
Action 2	Teachers will teach 'Friends for Life' programme in 4th class	4th class teachers SET teachers	Pupil feedback Staff feedback Cuntas Míosúil	Pupils in 4th class engage with Friends for Life Programme Pupils are observed participating in activities and become more open at discussing feelings with classmates.	Needed to adjust content of programme as there was too much in each lesson to fit time period (1 hour)	**Achieved**
Action 3	Staff will complete training for 'Friends for Life' programme to increase competency in teaching resilience and coping strategies to pupils	Ms. Cullinan Ms. McMahon Ms. Fitzgerald Ms. O'Sullivan	Staff feedback on training of Friends for Life Programme	Staff are more competent in delivering the Friends for Life Programme Staff relay what they have learned to colleagues		**Achieved**

Target 2: To set up a Support Team responsible for organising activities to promote wellbeing in our school

Key Area	Tasks/Actions	Who	Monitoring	Evaluation / Success Criteria	Progress and Adjustments	Target Achieved
Action 1	Create a support team responsible for organising activities to promote well-being throughout the school year	Ms. De Buitléir Ms. Cullinan Ms. McMahon Staff	Staff feedback Pupil feedback Parent feedback	Support team comprising teachers, parents and pupils working together to organise activities to promote well-being in our school and to reflect on the effectiveness of these activities		**Achieved**
Action 2	Celebrate a 'Wellness Week' in school based on the theme 'Feeling Good about Ourselves' Celebrate 'Health Awareness Week' with focus on a healthy body and mind	Ms. De Buitléir Ms. Cullinan Ms. McMahon	Pupil feedback Staff feedback Feedback from visitors to school on engagement of pupils	Pupils engage with activities during wellness week Staff observe pupils engagement with activities Visitors give their feedback to coordinator about engagement of pupils with activities	Staff feedback informed Ms. De Buitleir that wellness week was quite busy and to reduce the amount of activities going forward	**Achieved**
Action 3	Make a 'buddy bench' for school yard	Ger Pupils Ms. Cullinan	Teacher observation Pupil feedback	Teachers observe if pupils are using the buddy bench when they don't have a friend to play with	Took longer than expected to price materials so the buddy bench has not been introduced to date	**Not Achieved**
Action 4	Produce a termly school magazine showcasing our pupil's talents	Support team Pupils	Pupil engagement in school termly magazine Pupil feedback	School magazine Pupil's engagement in creating school magazine	We limited pupil's contributions to magazine to children in 4th/5th class so that we could	**Achieved**

			Staff feedback		include all contributions from pupils. Received a huge number of contribution so may limit to one class going forward	

Appendix to School Self-Evaluation Report: Legislative and regulatory checklist (Primary) 2018/2019

Issue	Relevant legislation, rule or circular	Is the school fully meeting the requirements of the relevant legislation, rule or circular?	If no, indicate aspects to be developed
Time in school - Length of school year - minimum of 183 days - Length of school day -4 hours 40 minutes (infants); 5 hour 40 minutes (1st-6th classes)	Circular 0011/1995	School year ☑ Yes ☐ No School day ☑ Yes ☐ No	
Standardisation of school year	Circular 0009/2017	☑ Yes ☐ No	
Valid enrolment of pupils	Section 9(1), 15(2) and 23 Education Act 1998 Sections 20 and 21, Education (Welfare) Act 2000 Rules 55, 64, 108 and 123, Rules for National Schools Circular 0024/2002	☑ Yes ☐ No	
Updating and simplifying the manner in which schools can maintain pupil enrolment and attendance records (Clárleabhar, Leabhar Rolla and Leabhar Tinrimh Laethúil) following the introduction of the Primary Online Database (POD)	Primary Online Database - Circular 0025/2015, Update - Circular 0033/2015	☑ Yes ☐ No	
Pupils repeating a school year	Rule 64 Rules for National Schools, Circular 0011/2001 Circular 0032/2003	☑ Yes ☐ No	
Annual returns on Attendance to Tusla: The Child and Family Agency	Education and Welfare Act 2000	☑ Yes ☐ No	
Development of school plan	Section 21, Education Act 1998	☑ Yes ☐ No	
Engagement with SSE process	Circular 0039/2016	☑ Yes ☐ No	
Time for literacy and numeracy	Circular 0056/11, Circular 0066/2011, Circular 0018/2012,	☑ Yes ☐ No	
Administration of Standardised Tests and Return of Data	Circulars 0056/2011, 0018/2012, 0045/2014, 0027/2015, 0034/2016 and 0038/2017	☑ Yes ☐ No	
Primary Language Curriculum (Infants to Second Class)	Circular 0061/2015	☑ Yes ☐ No	
Exemption from Irish	Circular 12/96	☑ Yes ☐ No	

Issue	Relevant legislation, rule or circular	Is the school fully meeting the requirements of the relevant legislation, rule or circular?	If no, indicate aspects to be developed
Deployment of Teachers	Staffing arrangements for the 2017/18 school year Circular 0017/17 Special Education Teaching Allocation Model Circular 0013/2017	☑Yes ☐ No	
Posts of Responsibilities	Circular 0063 / 2017 – Leadership and Management in Primary Schools	☑Yes ☐ No	
Seniority of primary teachers	Circular 0015/2016	☑Yes ☐ No	
Release Time for Principal Teachers in Primary Schools	Circular 0012/2016	☐ Yes ☑ No	N/A
Implementation of national agreement regarding additional time requirement	Circular 0008/2011 Circular 0052/14	☑Yes ☐ No	
Grant Scheme for ICT Infrastructure – 2018/19 School Year	Circular 0019/2019	☑Yes ☐ No	
Implementation of Child Protection Procedures 2017	Circular 0081/2017 Please record the following information in relation to child protection as reported to the board Child Protection Oversight Report presented at each board meeting ☑Yes ☐ No	☑ Yes ☐ No	
Implementation of vetting requirements	National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012 Circular 0026/2015 Circular 0016/2017 (Statutory requirements for retrospective vetting) Child Protection Procedures 2017	☑Yes ☐ No	
Implementation of complaints procedure as appropriate	Complaints Procedures, Section 28 Education Act	☑Yes ☐ No	
Appeals in the case of refusal to enrol students, suspension and expulsion (permanent exclusion)	Section 29 Education Act 1998 provides for appeals procedures in these cases,which are dealt with first of all by the school. Where cases are not resolved at school level, an external appeals committee hears the appeal and makes a decision.	☑Yes ☐ No	

Appendix to School Self-Evaluation Report: Policy checklist (Primary) 2018/2019

Policy	Source	Has policy been approved by the board of management?	If no, indicate aspects to be developed.
Enrolment policy	Section (15)(2)(d) Education Act 1998	☑Yes ☐ No	
Attendance and participation strategy[1]	Section 22 Education Welfare Act 2000 Equal Status Acts 2000-2011	☑Yes ☐ No	
Child Safeguarding Statement	Child Protection Procedures 2017 Circular 0081/2017	☑Yes ☐ No	
Code of behaviour[2] including anti-bullying policy Dignity in the Workplace Charter	Circular 20/90 NEWB *Guidelines* Section 23, Education Welfare Act 2000 *Anti-bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-primary schools* 2013, and Circular 45/13 Section 8(2)(b), Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005	☑Yes ☐ No	Dignity in the Workplace Policy to be developed.
Critical incident management plan	Responding to Critical Incidents: NEPS Guidelines and Resource Materials for Schools 2016	☑Yes ☐ No	
Data protection	Data Protection Act 1988 Data Protection (Amendment Act) 2003	☑Yes ☐ No	
Health and safety statement	Section 20 Health and Safety Act 2005	☑Yes ☐ No	
Internet acceptable use policy	National Council for Technology in Education (NCTE) Guidelines, 2012 at www.webwise.ie	☑Yes ☐ No	
Parents as partners	Circular 24/91	☑Yes ☐ No	
Public service agreement – special needs assistants	Circular 71/11	☑Yes ☐ No	
Relationships and sexuality education (RSE) policy	Relationships and Sexuality Education: Policy Guidelines (1997)	☑Yes ☐ No	
Substance use policy	National Drugs Strategy and Department of Education and Skills Guidelines	☐ Yes ☑No	To be developed.
Special educational needs policy[3]	Education Act 1998 Equal Status Acts 2000- 2011 Education (Welfare) Act 2000 Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (EPSEN)[4] 2004 Disability Act 2005 Circular RAM –SEN (2017)	☑Yes ☐ No	

For DEIS schools only: DEIS Action Plan	DEIS Plan 2017 Department of Education and Skills Guidelines on the appropriate use of the DEIS Grant (updated annually)	☐ Yes ☑No	N/A

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[1] Under the provisions of the Education (Welfare) Act (2000) (section 22), the school's attendance strategy should conform to the provisions stipulated.
[2] Under the provisions of the Education (Welfare) Act (2000) (section 23) the school's code of behaviour should conform to the specifications stated.
[3] Section 9 of the Education Act (1998) requires a school to "use its available resources" to identify and provide for the educational needs of those "with a disability or other special educational needs."
[4] The EPSEN Act requires that schools be inclusive of and provide an appropriate education for pupils with special educational needs.