Self – Evaluation Report and Improvement Plan 2023-2026

Introduction

The Focus of this Evaluation

A school self-evaluation of teaching and learning in St Patrick's NS was undertaken for the period from September 2023 - June 2026.
It was decided that our School Self Evaluation would be used to support the introduction and implementation of the School Wellbeing Framework, where we will focus on the setting up and embedding of Wellbeing initiatives in St Patrick's NS.
A whole school evaluation was undertaken regarding the Wellbeing of the whole community in St Pat's. This report outlines its findings.

School Context

St Patrick's NS is an urban school*, with pupils ranging from Junior Infants to Sixth Class, with two language classes. We commenced the transition to coeducation, accepting boys and girls to Junior Infants in 2024/2025. We are a vertical school on a split campus. Currently we have 455 pupils in two-three stream classes, with 18 mainstream classes, two special classes for DLD, and 7 S.E.N. teachers. S.E.N. teaching is organised with a mixture of in-class support and some withdrawal from class.

Identification of Focus Area for School Self Evaluation

In order to identify our focus for the School Self Evaluation process, in 2022/2023, we reflected on the Department of Education document, School Self-evaluation: Next Steps 2022-2026, which includes Department of Education Circular 0056/2022 (Section 7). This set out what is required of schools in relation to SSE during the period September 2022 - June 2026. School Self-evaluation: Next Steps 2022-2026 is built around five key considerations:

- The impact of COVID-19
- The focus of SSE
- The SSE process
- Participation in SSE
- Supports for SSE

At a staff meeting, and using a shared jamboard, the staff of St Patrick's NS reflected on:
What is going well
New initiatives and programmes recently introduced
Areas for improvement in literacy
Resources and Teaching methodologies - those that are being used and those that could /should be used more often

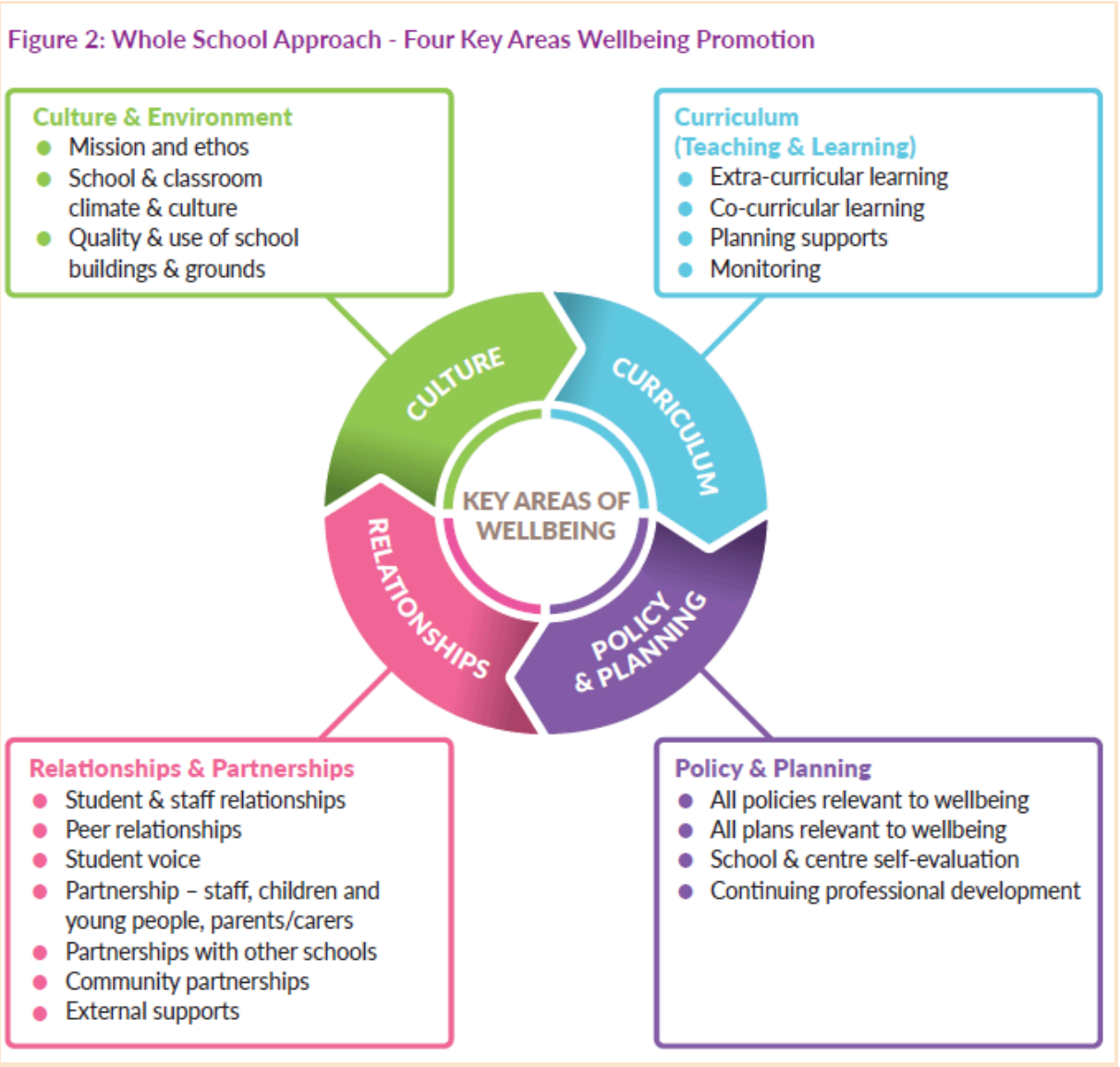
Our area of focus, namely the implementation of the School Wellbeing Framework was decided upon in June 2023, on the basis of these reviews and on government and curricular requirements. It was decided that this would be our focus from 2023-2026.

Findings for School Self Evaluation

In our evaluation of wellbeing in the school community, staff completed a checklist on Statements of Effective Practice for each Key Area of the Wellbeing Statement and Framework for Practice to reflect on how our school was performing in these areas.

The four areas are:

Figure 2: Whole School Approach - Four Key Areas Wellbeing Promotion



Staff rated the school as performing well in these areas:

Key area 1: Culture and environment

Strengths:

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.

Areas working well but in need of improvement:

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.

Key Area 2 – Curriculum (Teaching and Learning)

Strengths:

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 working well but in need of improvement:

Where an extra-curricular programme is provided, the school links with community-based clubs and organisations to ensure that it is broad, accessible and inclusive. However, children and young people, as well as their families could be invited to actively participate in planning the programme more effectively.

Key Area 3– Policy and Planning

Strengths:

The wellbeing of the whole school community underpins school policy and plans.
School has 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 working well but in need of improvement:

There is a comprehensive CPD plan to ensure all teachers have the necessary training to incorporate wellbeing promotion in their teaching practice to meet the particular needs of the school population.

Key Area 4 – Relationships and Partnerships Strengths

Strengths

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 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.

The school promotes teachers' engagement in networks for teacher collaboration.

Areas working well but in need of improvement:
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.

Key Area:
Following a review of staff responses by the Wellbeing Staff Focus Group, the key area of Culture and Environment was identified, with a focus on the statements below -

Statement K: The school building is accessible for all children and young people and accommodation is modified to meet the needs of all.

Statement M: Indoor and outdoor space is provided to facilitate social interaction and physical activity and quiet time.

In March - May 2024, we surveyed parents to investigate their opinions about their children's wellbeing in school and to identify our strengths and further areas for development. The survey was sent to all through Google Forms and 122 parents completed it. These are our findings:

96% of parents agreed that the school is welcoming and accessible to all pupils.

96% of parents agreed that the school is welcoming and accessible to all parents.

90% of parents agreed that the school is well kept and bright.

78% of parents agreed that their child can take part in activities at school, for example sport, dancing, drama, music etc.

98% feel that their child feels safe at school.

94% feel that their child feels connected and part of the school community.

92% feel that the school sees health and wellbeing as important.

93% feel that the school encourages the idea of every child doing their best.

89% know that extra help/support is available for pupils who need it.

81% feel that their child knows who to talk to in school if they have a worry or concern.

75% feel the school looks for and listens to the children's voice when developing school policies and plans.

96% feel informed about the policies in the school e.g. Anti-Bullying policy, Child Protection Procedures.

84% feel the school promotes healthy eating.

90% feel connected and part of the school community.

92% feel encouraged to support and be involved in the school's activities.

Through the open ended questions, parents commented on the need for

- Improvement on the toilets in the school
- Modernising the school building, especially the toilet facilities
- An opportunity for a tour on the improvements and changes made in the school

In March and April 2024, a pupil survey was provided to pupils from 1st-6th class.

<u>1st- 2nd class summary:</u>
81% feel their school is friendly and welcoming.
54% feel their school is tidy and bright.
90% feel that in their school, they have room inside and outside for playing games, sports, PE, talking and quiet time.
54% feel safe in school.
87% feel the school has activities like sports, art, drama, music etc.
54% feel the adults in the school help us to eat healthy food.
72% feel the adults in our school encourage us to do sports and be active.
54% feel the adults in our school talk to us in a calm and nice way.
81% feel they are calm and well-mannered when they speak to the adults in the school.
83% feel the adults in our school praise and encourage us to work hard and try our best.
87% feel they try their best at school.
69% feel the adults in our school help children who find it hard to make friends.
61% feel the adults in our school help children who get into trouble in the class or in the yard.
83% feel the adults in our school help children who feel sad or worried.
87% feel the adults in our school help children who find it hard to learn.

54% feel the adults in our school make learning interesting and fun
85% feel the adults in my school care about me.
81% feel their teacher encourages them to ask questions and give views in class.
83% said they did SPHE in class.
92% feel they learn that they are all special and that it is ok when people are different.

Focus group from 3rd-6th class - summary:

85% feel their school is friendly and welcoming.
71% feel their school is tidy and bright.
85% feel that in their school, they have room inside and outside for playing games, sports, PE, talking and quiet time.
89% feel safe in school.
74% feel the school has activities like sports, art, drama, music etc.
53% feel the adults in the school help us to eat healthy food.
84% feel the adults in our school encourage us to do sports and be active.
61% feel the adults in our school talk to us in a calm and nice way.
77% feel they are calm and well-mannered when they speak to the adults in the school.
87% feel the adults in our school praise and encourage us to work hard and try our best.
77% feel they try their best at school.
56% feel the adults in our school help children who find it hard to make friends.
75% feel the adults in our school help children who get into trouble in the class or in the yard.
77% feel the adults in our school help children who feel sad or worried.
93% feel the adults in our school help children who find it hard to learn.
33% feel the adults in our school make learning interesting and fun (33% responded YES, 56% responded SOMETIMES)
74% feel the adults in my school care about me.
61% feel their teacher encourages them to ask questions and give views in class.
74% said they did SPHE in class.
84% feel they learn that they are all special and that it is ok when people are different.

Through the open ended questions, pupils commented on the need for

- More PE
- More yard equipment
- Longer yard time
- More coat hangers
- Fix the doors as they are noisy

Our Improvement Plan

On the next page we have recorded:

● The targets for improvement

● 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, any adjustments made, and when

● Achievement of targets (original and modified), and when

School Improvement Plan 2023-2026

School Self Evaluation (SSE) Co-ordinator: Jenny Doyle

Key Area 1: Culture and Environment

The indicators of success are:

- **Children, young people and staff experience a sense of belonging and feel safe, connected and supported.**
- **Systems are in place so that the voice of the child/young person, teacher and parent are heard and lead to improvements in school culture and ethos.**

Wellbeing Statements of Effective Practice for All:

Statement K: The school building is accessible for all children and young people and accommodation is modified to meet the needs of all.

Statement M: Indoor and outdoor space is provided to facilitate social interaction and physical activity and quiet time.

Wellbeing Statements of Effective Practice for Some and Few:

Statement P: Staff, children and young people are welcoming and inclusive of those from different cultural backgrounds, those with additional needs and all sexual orientations.

Statement R: 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/sensory garden*
- *Safe room/space for distressed/anxious children and young people*
- *Buddy bench*
- *Quiet area on yard (Junior Building yard, Junior Yard and Senior Yard)*

Targets

- Establish an autism class so that our school building is accessible for all
- Modify existing facilities to meet the needs of all in the school (eg universal

access toilet, coeducational bathrooms etc) so that our school building is accessible for all

- Provide indoor and outdoor spaces for social interaction as well as activity and quiet time
- Professional development for all school staff in the promotion and use of whole school inclusive practices
- Reflect and update curricular policies to reflect inclusive and coeducational school practices (e.g. Code of Behaviour / Anti-bullying/ PE/ SPHE)

Actions	**Who is responsible**
Set up a committee to establish the autism class (Inclusion Committee) and relevant guidance documents	Class teachers Special Education Teachers SNAs SSE Co-ordinator
Identify locations for an active room, sensory room and quiet room	Principal and Deputy Principal
Complete building work over the summer months to include provision of universal access toilet as well as upgrade to existing toilets	Principal and BoM
Engage in staff professional development (whole staff, groups, individual) with NCSE and Middletown Centre for Autism. Participation in NCSE's Sustained In School Therapy Support pilot programme	Class teachers Special Education Teachers SNAs SSE Co-ordinator
Updating curricular policies (e.g Code of Behaviour / Anti-bullying/ PE/ SPHE)	Principal and Deputy Principal Assistant Principals (AP1/AP2)

	Principal and staff
Establish a Wellbeing Staff Focus Group to oversee the six-step process	NB, JD, MQ, A Kealy, S Griffin
Share reflective feedback with staff at staff meetings	Whole staff SSE Co-ordinator Principal and Deputy Principal
Monitoring **Strategies and approaches** Guidance from Oide will assist and inform teachers' reflective practice: https://oide.ie/primary/home/wellbeing/wellbeing/	**Who is responsible** Whole staff SSE Co-ordinator (JD) Wellbeing Postholder (MQ) Principal and Deputy Principal
Evaluation **Criteria for success** Teachers will share reflective feedback of process, with particular focus on participation in NCSE's Sustained In School Therapy Support pilot programme	**Evaluation tools** Staff feedback at staff meetings
Necessary adjustments throughout the implementation process Years 2 and 3 : 2024/25 and 2025/26 As part of our commitment to supporting pupils' sensory and emotional regulation, we have introduced **whole-school sensory stations** each morning. These	

stations provide some children with opportunities for gentle movement, sensory input, and calm focus before starting their classroom learning. The activities are designed to help pupils settle into the school day, improve attention, and support overall wellbeing. This whole-school approach ensures that each child in receipt of this support benefits from a consistent and supportive start to the morning routine

Year 3- 2025/2026 : Main Area of Focus

1.As part of our ongoing practice in supporting all pupils, following recommendations from our NCSE Speech and Language Therapist, and aligning with the RELATE document, the school plans to develop a **whole-school approach to the use of visuals**. This initiative aims to make our school environment clearly and consistently visually supportive and autism-friendly. Visual cues such as signage, symbols, schedules, and visual timetables help to provide structure, reduce anxiety, and support understanding for all pupils, particularly those with communication or sensory needs.

By adopting a consistent visual system across both school buildings, we aim to make transitions smoother for children moving between classrooms and between the two buildings. This approach supports predictability and independence, helping every pupil feel more secure and confident as they navigate the school day.These areas link with the wellbeing framework by supporting:Emotional, physical, cognitive and social wellbeing. They also link in with RELATE, by developing and supporting Relationships, Environment, Language, Assessment, Teaching and Engagement.

2. To further develop and maintain the school's Sensory Garden as a whole-school wellbeing initiative, ensuring it provides calming, regulating, and engaging sensory experiences for all pupils. This work will align with the RELATE framework and wellbeing Framework by promoting emotional regulation, positive relationships, and supportive learning environments.

Targets Year 1- achieved	**Date**
1. Autism Class established	Aug 2024

2. Existing facilities modified in Junior Building (eg co-ed bathrooms, universal access toilet)	Aug 2024 * Plan for co-ed bathrooms 1st class 2026 on Senior Side
3. Spaces for social interaction provided on junior and senior yards - outdoor table tennis and games tables, as well as climbing wall Junior/Senior Infant Yard - new playground markings selected (to be completed) Indoor spaces - Wellbeing Wednesday each month with buddy class level	2024/25 Ongoing 2025/26 Ongoing 2025/26
4. Professional development for all school staff with NCSE Autism Adviser	31st March 2025
5. Policies updated to reflect inclusive and co-ed school practices	Ongoing
Targets Year 2 achieved	**Date**
To incorporate distinct activities to elicit discussion and develop and assess explicit Maths Talk skills, using a range of resources	ongoing
To encourage, welcome and normalise multiple understandings, mistakes and misconceptions	ongoing
To develop a whole-school approach to the use of mathematical language	ongoing
To develop a whole-school approach to the use of Maths stations	Not commenced

To develop a new school plan and short-term planning document	Sept 2025
Actions Year 3 - Achieved (to add)	**Date**
Actions year 1	Who is responsible
Survey all teachers - whole school reflection. Group feedback given at staff meetings Incorporating distinct activities to elicit discussion and/or develop and assess explicit Maths Talk skills Encouraging children to use multiple means of modeling their reasoning and mathematical thinking using the resources in the maths boxes Resources - source within the school, and new resources to be purchased Encouraging, welcoming and normalising multiple understandings, mistakes and misconceptions Shared folder for station teaching developed with examples of activities for class levels Focus on mathematical language, Maths Talk (incl Sentence Stems), Number Talk Hand Signals, and note specific language of operations	Assistant Principals (AP1/AP2) John Moore AP2 Maths Jenny Doyle AP1 SSE JM - Establish maths boxes JM - Embed use of maths boxes and emphasise use the instructional routine “Build it, Sketch it, Write it!” in classes Maths Manipulatives Box per classroom compiled by JM JM - Action: Use “My Favorite No” (Identifying the error, misconception and emphasising mistakes as opportunities to learn) JM/JD - Google Drive
Actions year 2	Who is responsible
Repeat survey and monitor pupils attitudes towards maths Continue to develop shared folder of maths games and resources, outdoor maths trails etc	JM/JD JM/JD

Facilitate children to use technology in order to build, test and apply mathematical models Emphasising the importance of multiple strategies and approaches, thereby promoting flexibility. Develop a whole-school approach to the use of Maths stations	JM/JD - Use, and provide children with access to Virtual Manipulatives JM/JD - Respond to answers with the phrase “I don’t believe you! Prove it!”
Share reflective feedback with staff at staff meetings	Whole staff SSE Co-ordinator Principal and Deputy Principal
Actions year 3	Who is responsible
Agree on a standard visual style (symbols, colour coding, font, layout) for use throughout the school in identified priority areas . Ensure visuals are accessible across both buildings to support pupils moving between them. Prepare photos of staff door classroom doors, create or source the visuals to be used for classroom schedules Provide staff training on the purpose and use of visuals to support communication and independence. Continue to develop morning sensory stations in all classrooms, sharing ideas among staff for variety and engagement	All staff JD/ AD JD/ AD/NB Principal/ D.P to liaise withNCSE All staff

To further develop the design and plan for the school's Sensory Garden as a whole-school wellbeing initiative, ensuring it provides calming, regulating, and engaging sensory experiences for all pupils.	Principal/ Deputy Principal/A.P Staff members BoM Parent's Association Student Council
Monitoring Strategies and approaches Guidance from NCSE and Oide will assist and inform teachers' reflective practice	**Who is responsible** Whole staff SSE Co-ordinator (JD) Maths Co-ordinator(JM) Other relevant Assistant Principals Principal and Deputy
Evaluation / Criteria for success	**Evaluation tools**
Necessary adjustments throughout implementation process	