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Saint Michael's National School

Our Self-Evaluation Report and Improvement Plan

1. Introduction

Literacy:

- The profile of our school has changed significantly. Our school represents over 30 different nationalities. 67 pupils out of a total of 121 are scoring below the B1 proficiency in the Primary School Assessment kit.
- 55% of the pupils in our school have English as a second and third language.
- A temporary EAL teacher has been appointed from September 2021.
- Teachers have been made aware of the importance of differentiating language learning in all subject areas so that there is equality of access for learning.
- Analysis of the Drumcondra Reading test shows that most children are scoring well in the reading comprehension test.

Wellbeing:

- Wellbeing in Education Framework for Practice highlighted the importance for children to access curricular activities to promote their physical, social and emotional competence to enhance their overall wellbeing.
- Circular 0042/2018 highlights the importance of principals and teachers selecting wellbeing promotion programmes and/or external facilitators to support the implementation of the Wellbeing Promotion Process.
- The principal and teachers are aware of the importance of promoting wellbeing. Training has been undertaken with Friends for Life.
- School Closures in 2020/2021 has impacted students wellbeing in different ways.

1.1 Outcomes of our last improvement plan from School year 2018/2019 to 2020/2021

Literacy:

- Targets specified were not supported by specific strategies
- Covid 19 resulted in school closures from March 2020.
- Change of staff resulted in the plan not being communicated efficiently

Wellbeing:

- Whole school assembly every Wednesday to promote a sense of belonging and celebration of the children in the school.
- Increasing the participation of students in the assembly.
- Wellbeing calendar of events created with a theme per month. This thematic approach is communicated with all class teachers and the theme is promoted at each assembly.

1.2 The focus of this evaluation

Literacy:

We undertook self-evaluation of teaching and learning during the period (*January 2022*) to (*May 2022*). We evaluated the following aspect(s) of teaching and learning:

- The understanding of staff members to the current improvement plan
- If strategies mentioned in previous improvement plan were being used
- Assessed all children from First class to 5th class using the Primary school assessment kit.

Wellbeing:

- Introduce a more structured approach at whole school level to promote Wellbeing.
- Select the most relevant wellbeing promotion programme .

2. Findings

Literacy:

- Just over 55% of our students are below the B1 proficiency in at least 1 area of listening, speaking, reading and writing.
- Majority of children scored above B1 in the reading test.
- Majority of children scored below B1 in both the speaking and written task.
- English speaking children also found it difficult to talk and give their opinions about the picture presented

Wellbeing:

- Teachers believed that using a different wellbeing programme other than Friends for Life may be more beneficial.
- Fourth Class and Senior Infant Teachers trialled the Weaving Wellbeing programme in the school year 2022/2023 and agreed that it was more suitable and effective for the students in our school.
- Principal and Deputy Principal undertook training with the PDST. This training highlighted that the school should focus on Key Area 2 Curriculum (Teaching and Learning).

2.1 This is effective / very effective practice in our school

List the main strengths of the school in teaching and learning.

- Explicit teaching of vocabulary through oral language development works well
- A thematic approach to learning works best for all learners
- Collaboration with SEN teacher promotes a consistent approach to learning
- Giving children the opportunity to present their learning in a variety of ways supports inclusion and pupil voice

Wellbeing:

- A holistic approach to teaching and learning is prominent. Physical wellbeing is promoted through a variety of activities - sports coaches organised, active school tours, Sports Day, running in the park, UL athletics day.
- Stay Safe and RSE is undertaken by all classes at the same time.

- Introduced a theme a month to promote different aspects of wellbeing based on the indicators of wellbeing (Aware, Active, Connected, Respected, Responsible and Resilience.) This theme is reflected in Assembly each week.

2.2. This is how we know

List the evidence sources. Refer to students' dispositions, attainment, knowledge and skills.

- Teacher Observation: Teachers noted that oral language lessons explicitly teaching vocabulary further supports children's ability to use the vocabulary in orally or in written representation.
- Teacher designed tests and tasks: pupils were more competent with written tasks after specific language learning was undertaken in the classroom.
- Oral language sessions were trialled in various classes using pictures as a stimulus. Children enjoyed giving their opinion in relation to the picture, however continuous use of this method is required to promote participation.

Wellbeing:

- Teacher Observation: Teachers felt that Friends for Life was not fully effective for all children. Weaving Wellbeing programme has been trialled with teachers preferring this programme as a more holistic approach.
- Organising sports coaches and artists to work with children has been successful. Inviting speakers and the community garda to discuss internet safety with the children and parents has also been beneficial.
- A whole school thematic approach would further promote wellbeing among all students.
- Teachers highlighted the importance of having an evidence based programme to teach core social and emotional competence and to help children develop coping skills to manage challenges.

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

Specify the aspects of teaching and learning the school has identified and prioritised for further improvement.

- Using Critical Book Talks as a basis for oral language development.
- Term 1- 1-2 sessions per week: 10-15 minutes Critical Thinking Talk Session using pictures from Pobble 365 and Once upon a picture.
- Introducing the rules for the session and explicitly teaching the language for 'Accountable Talk'
- Term 2: 1-2 sessions per week- 10-15 minutes using Critical Book Talks

Wellbeing:

- Year 1 (2022/2023) : Trial Weaving Wellbeing in Senior Infants and Fourth Class. Friends For Life undertaken with Second Class.
- Wellbeing Theme per month to be celebrated at a whole school level linked to Assembly each week.
- Year 2 (2023/2024): Weaving Wellbeing undertaken in all classes. Thematic Wellbeing Calendar to reflect school celebrations for example Internet Safety in February. Evidence of the theme visible in the school environment.

3. Our improvement plan

Literacy Targets:

Content Objective(s) / Learning Outcome(s):

Oral Language : Understanding

Stage 1:

- Use sophisticated oral vocabulary and phrases, including the language of text, topic and subject-specific language, and express and use decontextualised language.

Stage 2:

- Critically select and use a wide-ranging, complex oral vocabulary, phrases and figurative language for familiar, abstract and subject-specific concepts and topics, as appropriate to audience and purpose.

Critical Thinking and Book Talk

- encourages children to become critical thinkers.
- fosters thinkers, speakers and readers who enjoy reading, and discussion and dialogue about books.
- The pupils will be able to :
 - give their opinion on the picture being shown.
 - Answer higher order evaluative questions modelled by the teacher.

Actions:

- Each teacher in collaboration with the SEN teacher will choose a picture for the Critical Thinking Session from Pobble 365 or Once upon a picture.
- Teachers will prepare open ended questions to motivate children to share answers that illustrate higher order evaluative thinking skills.
- Accountable Talk prompts/Sentence frame will be used/ on display to support pupils: I agree with, I do not agree with. I see the___
- Topic specific vocabulary outlined in the fortnightly plans.
- Sustained support from PDST. We are in phase 1.

Wellbeing:**Targets:**

- Teachers use opportunities to promote wellbeing across the curriculum
- A Universal, evidence based programmes are chosen and guided by Circular 0042/2018 to teach core social and emotional competence and to help children to develop coping skills to manage challenges.

Actions:

- Year 1: Weaving wellbeing trialled in Senior Infants/First class and Fourth Class
- Weaving Wellbeing implemented in all class levels throughout the school
- Wellbeing Thematic Calendar is linked with national awareness days and communicated clearly with staff.
- Wellbeing theme is visual in the school environment.

Responsibility:

Implementation: All teachers both Class teachers and support staff are responsible for timetable 1-2 sessions of Critical Thinking sessions every week.

Each teacher will include the Wellbeing theme as part of their planning each fortnight. Teachers will ensure that effective teaching and learning in relation to wellbeing is planned and implemented each fortnight.

Monitoring: SSE co-ordinator will check in regularly to informally monitor progress so as to adjust the plan as necessary.

Reviewing: Opportunity at each staff meeting to review progress and share expertise so as to amend the plan as necessary.

Measure Progress: Criteria for Success

- Teacher Observation: Are all children taking part in the critical thinking sessions?
 - Are all pupils able to give their opinion about the pictures?
- Teacher Designed Task: Seesaw Task/ Oral Task with a picture and questions for each child to answer to check progress.
- The whole school plan for promoting wellbeing is more structured and visible in the school environment
- Students and teachers are using the appropriate language to promote wellbeing

Progress and Adjustments made :

Targets achieved

Our Improvement Plan

Timeframe of this improvement plan is from September 2022 to December 2023

Targets	Actions	Persons / groups responsible	Criteria for success	Progress and adjustments	Targets achieved
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<p>Introduce Critical Thinking talks using pictures from Pobble 365 and Once upon a picture</p> <p>Explicitly teach children vocabulary to support accountable talks</p> <p>Ask open ended evaluative questions to encourage children to critically reflect on the picture</p> <p>Select a wellbeing promotion programme to support the implementation of the Wellbeing Promotion Process</p>	<p>Choose a picture</p> <p>Create a list of questions</p> <p>Collaborate with SEN teacher</p> <p>Display accountable talk prompt/ poster</p> <p>Weaving wellbeing teacher books purchased (Junior Infants, First Class, Third and Fifth Class for 2023/2024) and (Senior Infants, Second, Fourth and Sixth Class for 2023/2024)</p> <p>A wellbeing Thematic Calendar shared with the whole staff to promote wellbeing at a whole school level.</p> <p>External Speakers organised when relevant</p>	<p>Class teachers</p> <p>SEN teachers</p> <p>EAL teacher</p> <p>SSE co-ordinator</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All pupils engage in the session by sharing their opinions. • All pupils can answer evaluative questions based on the picture orally. • A whole School wellbeing promotion programme is visible and lived in the school environment • Each theme is developed over an 8 week period. • Wellbeing displays are evident in the school environment • Communication with parents in relation to the theme via the newsletter and aladdin Connect 		
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