St. Ailbe's School

School Self-Evaluation Report 2021/22

Introduction:

The 2021/22 school year started with Covid-19 restrictions still in place but fortunately school closures were avoided. As the year progressed, restrictions were lifted and the school was able to return to a relatively normal rhythm and pattern. The school ran a very successful musical 'Take a Chance' and the Transition Year tour to Italy was a huge success. All of the normal sporting activities returned and our teams had great success in various competitions. Face to face parent teacher meetings made a return in the latter part of the school year and important events such as the annual sports day and the 6th year graduation ceremony went ahead unrestricted for the first time since 2019.

St. Ailbe's fulfils its statutory reporting requirement through its DEIS plan and this School Self-Evaluation report is designed to compliment the DEIS plan and, moreover, to give our stakeholders a sense of the work carried out during the year by our staff and our various teams, which helps the school to meet its DEIS targets. The report also outlines proposed work for the coming year. In broad terms, DEIS planning aims to improve literacy & numeracy standards, maintain and improve parental and wider community involvement and enhance, attendance, retention and progression.

Responding to change:

St. Ailbe's has seen a significant and consistent increase in enrolments over the last number of years and has responded to this increase accordingly. Some of these responses are outlined below:

- An application for the construction of 7 new classrooms (5 general classrooms, 1 Science Room and 1 Music room) has been approved by the Department of Education & Skills with work to commence within 18 months.
- 5 temporary classrooms are being currently constructed on the school premises which will accommodate students while the permanent classrooms are being constructed.
- 1st & 2nd year students take their morning and lunchtime breaks at different times to the remainder of the school in order to ensure that all students have a comfortable experience during rest breaks.
- Teacher allocation has been optimised to ensure that class size remains at a relatively low level despite rising enrolments.
- St. Ailbe's operates a highly effective distributed leadership system which ensures that we have the capacity to manage and develop the school and to respond to change.
- St. Ailbe's has expanded the curriculum on offer over the last number of years with Applied Technology added at Junior Cycle and Accounting and Physical Education (Leaving Certificate exam subject) added at Senior Cycle.

Wellbeing:

Our Wellbeing team were very active again this year with emphasis being placed on managing the post-covid return to normality for students. Some of the initiatives undertaken and events that occurred this year include;

- National walking day
- Mental health Week

- World kindness day
- 6th year Hike for Wellbeing
- Darkness into Light

Curricular inputs included:

- Friends for Life (all 1st year students received this programme in rotating small groups)
- Learning to Learn (all 1st year students)
- Digital media Literacy (Introductory ICT, tackling Cyberbullying)
- Road to Resilience programme (all 2nd year students covering topics such as dealing with change, resilience, connections and mental health & awareness)

For the coming academic year, the plan includes:

- Move to 400 hours for academic year 2022-23. Curricular Review involving subject teachers of Junior Cycle PE, SPHE and CSPE. Appendix I to be completed for short courses.
- Active Schools Flag
- Pieta House Resilience Programme for 2nd years to be incorporated as part of SPHE curriculum.
- Restorative Practice Programme to be rolled out for students and staff.
- Tackle Your Feelings School Programme: Positive Mental Health Programme for 14-17 year olds. It is a classroom based, teacher-led and supported programme has been designed using positive and sport psychology theory.
- Sway Newsletter for Wellbeing: We are looking into using Sway as part of the Microsoft package to produce our Wellbeing Newsletter to highlight Wellbeing events taking place in our school.
- Roll out of the 'One Good School' programme. (see below)

One Good School:

St. Ailbe's are delighted to have been chosen as part of Jigsaw's One Good School Initiative. The One Good School initiative is aimed at supporting the mental health and wellbeing of young people by developing a shared responsibility for mental health across the whole school community. Participating in this initiative helps us as a school community build our knowledge and understanding of mental health, develop skills to mind our own mental health and learn strategies to support young people with theirs. Our One Good School Team will roll out the One Good School Initiative over two years. Our staff all received online training as part of our JCT day and a Tiktok was created by students. As part of our preparation for the roll out staff, students, parents and senior management were surveyed, priority areas for each group of respondents were identified and an action plan and a calendar have been prepared.

Areas for action identified from the student survey include:

- Managing exam stress (for 3rd & 6th year)
- Let's Talk Sure Why Not? (Online course to be undertaken by 50% of students)
- My mental health (face to face workshop to be undertaken by 50% of the students)
- Innovate for Wellbeing (Core group of TY students to undergo training and to roll this programme out to other students)

We look forward to rolling out training for staff, students and TYs next year.

ETBI Core Values:

In 2018 an ETB-wide review of ETB school ethos commenced. Resulting from this work ETB schools are defined as state, co-educational, multi-denominational schools underpinned by the core values of:

- Excellence in Education
- Care
- Respect
- Equality
- Community

In the 2021/22-year St. Ailbe's made great progress in embedding these core values into various aspects of the school. This work initially required setting up an Ethos Leadership team (ELT). A summary of the work undertaken so far is given below:

- Set up our ELT – made up of 3 members of our policy review team and one member of senior management.
- Appointed our team leader for the ELT who has been linking in with PLN (ETB Professional Learning Network) group over teams to share ideas with other ETB schools
- Presented this presentation to staff at a recent staff meeting to begin the process of raising awareness
- Linked in with the student council and asked students to list 2-3 things they feel we do here in St. Ailbe's that links with the 5 core values
- Started raising awareness through social media posts
- Creating a document with the ELT – where the 5 core values of the ethos are visible and communicated in our school community

Work will continue in the coming year to include raising awareness among the student body by having poster competitions et. Policies due for review will also be looked at through the lens of the five core values.

Academic Target Setting:

One of the ETB core values is 'Excellence in Education' and one of the DEIS areas for target setting is 'Examination Attainment'. We established an Academic Target Setting team this year to develop a means of setting academic targets and tracking attainment levels. St. Ailbe's wants to ensure that all of our students are meeting their potential and a formal mechanism of academic tracking based on student expectations and subject teacher expectations of Christmas assessment performance for 1st & 5th year students was piloted. Much useful information was obtained from the results. Where appropriate, conclusions were shared with parents.

In the 2022/23 academic year the target setting process will be simplified and greater use of information such as CAT testing results etc. will be used to set expectation levels and to determine if students are performing academically at an appropriate level.

Behaviour for Learning (Positive Reinforcement):

This year the team restarted the the token system after a pause of a couple of years due to Covid 19. The token system operates by awarding tokens to students or class groups who are observed doing something good e.g. helping others, queuing in an orderly manner outside a classroom etc. After a set period of time the tokens are counted and whichever base class have the highest number of tokens receive a reward. We began this year with 1st years and extended to 2nd years . Positive Behaviour Target posters were placed in each base classroom . Movies were shown at end of each term for winning class group for 1st and 2nd year groups .

Changes to be implemented for the 2022/23 year include:

- Token System - Introduce new rewards for the system
- Introduce Most improved Student of the month - Bring in from September most improved student of the month based on teacher vote for each class group.

Policy Review Committee:

Policies discussed through the year were -
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- ETB Core Values
- Extracurricular Policy

As well as the work carried out by the committee the following policies were also reviewed:

- Internet Acceptable Use Policy

- Admission Policy

- Critical Incident policy

- Child Safeguarding and Risk Assessment

- DEIS Summary Action Plan

- Covid 19 Policy Statement

- Covid 19 Response Plan

- Covid 19 Risk Assessment

- Classroom Based Assessment Policy

Anti-bullying Inspection:

The school underwent a DES inspection in 2021. The inspector evaluated the work of the school in relation to the implementation of aspects of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-primary Schools (2013). The inspector also discussed with the school principal the priorities of the school in relation to creating a positive school culture. The school was found to be fully compliant with all statutory requirements in respect of its Anti-Bullying procedures. The following points were recorded in the inspection report:

- The school has an anti-bullying policy that has been ratified by the Board of Management and uses the template provided in the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (2013).
- The school records incidents of bullying behaviour using the form provided in the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (2013).
- The Board of Management minutes show that, at least once in every school term, the principal provides a report to the board which sets out the overall number of bullying cases reported to the Principal or Deputy Principal since the previous report to the Board, and confirmation that all of these cases have been, or are being, dealt with in accordance with the school's anti-bullying policy and the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (2013).
- The school's anti-bullying policy has been published on the school's website or where none exists, is otherwise readily accessible to board of management members, teachers, parents and pupils/students. Published January 2022.
- The school's Board of Management has undertaken an annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy in accordance with the checklist provided in the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (2013) and it is signed and dated.

Literacy & Numeracy:

Post-Primary Assessment and Diagnosis-English (PPAD-E).

This test has been developed by the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) in collaboration with the Educational Research Centre (ERC). The PPAD-E is a screening and diagnostic tool for assessing literacy skills that is specifically designed for use in the Irish context. It is intended to be used from First Year intake across the age-range in post-primary schools. St. Ailbe's recognises the need for in depth assessment of literacy skills and has used the PPADE tool on the 1st year intake for 2020/21 and 2021/22. The assessment consists of five different subtests (Spelling, Reading Comprehension, Writing Samples, Reading Speed and Word Reading). By careful analysis of the results of these assessments, the SEN team have identified small groups of students who may need interventions in specific areas of literacy. The team can then provide intensive, short term support for these students without having to permanently extract the students from class. This allows the student to continue to engage with all aspects of the curriculum and to receive the necessary support also. St. Ailbe's intends to continue to use the PPADE tool to identify areas in which 1st year students require support.

Literacy initiatives:

The Literacy & numeracy team implemented the initiatives below and will continue to implement them for the coming year:

- One Book, One Community
- A writing competition for 1st year students with the best five pieces being recognised on the annual awards day.
- The Rolling reading initiative where students are provided with the opportunity to read for a class period every week
- World Poetry Day
- Paired reading for 1st year and TY students
- Opportunities for using numeracy in literacy will be explored e.g. asking students to use pie charts etc. to analyse literacy levels

The team will also take on the 'Well Rea' initiative in the 2022/23 year.

Green Schools:

- We were awarded the green flag for litter and waste and had a ceremony in Sept. to raise our flag
- Students began looking at the theme Water
- We had a week where we looked at the responsible consumption of products, focusing on fast fashion. TYs and 5th years watched the documentary The True Cost and created a display based on their findings.
- 5th years did a clean-up of the Hills area in October
- 1st years created poster and entered them into the An Taisce's Groundwater- A Hidden Treasure art competition.
- 5th year LCVP students participated in the National Spring Clean in early April the focused-on Rossmore Village area, James Connolly Park, St. Michaels Rd and the Hills.
- Multiple class groups have litter picked around the grounds of our school with an emphasis on the junior classes ensuring they know where all the bins are and what can be recycled. We also tried to emphasise the importance of keeping our school and community clean by recycling and disposing carefully of waste.
- We worked on reintroducing recycling bins to base classrooms after covid restrictions eased and no more food was being consumed in classrooms.
- We introduced recycled paper for the photocopiers and printers in the school
- We repurposed as much old props and sets from previous musicals for this year's show held in April.
- All clothing and coats left in lost and found were donated to charity once they went unclaimed for a long period, this reduced waste.
- Students took part in Take 1- an ETBI initiative where we focused on the Sustainable Development Goals, we created displays, cleaned up our garden, began composting and made birdboxes and insect hotels for our outdoor areas (this is still a work in progress)

For the 2022/23 year the main focus of the school will be on Water. This theme develops awareness around water conservation and how to effectively manage this important resource in schools.

ICT:

Work carried out in the current year includes:

- Organised new antivirus system for management devices.
- Implemented 2 factor authentication for all staff.
- Purchased and installed 55" touchscreen TV for Art Room
- Purchased and installed 75" touchscreen TV for PE Hall
- Data projector maintenance
- Manage use of mobile device trollies.
- Manage all hardware in school inc. computer room and all staff devices.
- Organised a cloud-based backup extension to school data backup system
- Purchased, configured and supplied new mobile devices to new teachers.
- Provided "Teams" training for all Staff that required it
- Co-ordinated with 1st Yr. Digital Media Teachers to outline a course to prepare students in the event of a new lockdown.
- Updated Internet Acceptable Use Policy
- Prepare end of year surveys of Teachers and Students to help plan for 2022/2023
- Support Teachers who had IT technical issues and Microsoft technical issues.
- Planning for 2022 ICT Grant (€24,315)
- Planning for 2022 Digital Divide Grant (€27,000)

Absences & Suspensions:

Suspensions:

Year	Target	Actual
2021/22	Below 20	28
2020/21	Below 20	18
2019/20	Below 20	12
2018/19	Below 25	21
2017/18		32
2016/17		38
2015/16		43

Referral forms:

	Target	Total
2015-16		285
2016-17	200	178
2017-18	150	137
2018-19	120	106
2019-20	100	65

2020-21	80	58
2021-22	60	78
2022-23	60	