



Abbeyleix South National School

Scoil Náisiúnta Mainistir Laoise Theas

Ballcolla Road, Abbeyleix, Co. Laois 14260F

2023-2026

During this three-year period, schools will have the autonomy to choose the focus of their SSE, subject to having a **concise three-year SSE plan** that enables them to address:

- Context-specific school priorities related to teaching, learning, equity and inclusion
 - National wellbeing goals
 - National curriculum goals
- Other national strategies, for example, the Digital Strategy for Schools and the National Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development.

Circular 0056/2022: SSE Next Steps 2022 – 2026

Three Year Plan for Abbeyleix South National School

School Year	Needs and Priorities	SSE Focus	Mandatory Policies	Curricular Policies	Organisational Policies	Policies for Review/Re-Ratification	Other
2023-2024	Communication Focus	Wellbeing Steps 1-5	Admission Policy Code of Behaviour Data Protection Policy Health & Safety Policy Child Safe Guarding Policy Acceptable Use Policy Anti-Bullying Policy	Drama Policy R.S.E Policy Substance Use Policy Visual Arts Policy	Communication Policy Irish Exemption Policy		
2024-2025	Special Education Needs New Language Curriculum and resources required Anti-Bullying Programmes and Workshops for Parents and Staff and Pupils	Wellbeing Steps 5-6 New Language Curriculum Steps 1-5	As above	S.P.H.E Policy English Policy Gaeilge Policy	Special Educational Needs Policy Mobile Phone Policy Data Protection Policy		

2025-2026	Maths Curriculum and resources Required	Wellbeing review – issue questionnaires, Study 2024 results and 2026 results.	As above	Maths Policy	First Aid Policy Administration Policy		
	Anti-Bullying Programmes and Workshops for Parents and Staff and Pupils	New Language Curriculum Steps 5 -6 New Maths Curriculum Steps 1-5		Digital Learning Policy Physical Education Policy	Homework Policy In-school Management Policy		

School Self-Evaluation - Wellbeing Promotion Review and outcomes of last Improvement Plan

2023-2024

School Self-Evaluation is part of the on-going work of Abbeyleix South National School. The focus of self-evaluation for 2021-24 is wellbeing.

Many wellbeing strategies have been introduced over the years in Abbeyleix South National School to integrate wellbeing widely across all aspects of school life. We agreed to retain successful aspects of the previous wellbeing initiatives, to maintain gains in pro-social skills and resilience.

Introduction:

This document records the outcomes of our findings of this school self-evaluation of wellbeing.

This school self-evaluation is in accordance with guidelines set out for schools in:

- Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice 2018-2023
- Wellbeing in Primary School, Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion

Outcomes of our last Improvement Plan

Year 1 2018 - 2019	Target Achieved	Year 2 2019 – 2020	Target Achieved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of S.P.H.E. Policy • Drawing up a two year plan • Become familiar with the revised Walk Tall Programme • Mindfulness Monday 	<p style="text-align: center;">Yes</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Yes</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Yes, fulfilled</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Yes, ongoing</p>	<p>Weaving Wellbeing 3rd and 4th classes</p> <p>Mindfulness in the classroom</p> <p>The Daily Mile Term 3</p> <p>Zippy’s Friends</p> <p>Stay Safe</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Yes, completed</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Yes, continuing</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Target met</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Yes, completed</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Completed</p>

School Self Evaluation Steps



The focus of this evaluation

We undertook self-evaluation of teaching and learning during the period September 2023 to June 2024.

We evaluated our progress using teacher professional dialogue, teaching observation and pupil assessment as our source of evidence under the following four areas from the

Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice for wellbeing promotion:

- culture and environment
- curriculum (teaching and learning)
 - policy and planning
- relationships and partnerships

School Context:

Abbeyleix South National School is a Church of Ireland Parish School under the Patronage of the Church of Ireland Bishop of Cashel and Ossory. There are currently 87 pupils on roll. There are four mainstream teachers including two Special Education Teachers. There are four SNAs on staff. We have an active Parents' Association and a supportive Board of Management.

Our school is a vibrant, friendly, exciting and happy place of learning. The staff of our school aims to create an atmosphere where all pupils are equally valued and respected. We endeavour to establish and maintain high standards of behaviour, discipline and achievement. Our pupils experience a sense of caring and belonging and are encouraged to reach their full potential. We believe education is about developing the whole person, giving them life-long skills and preparing them to participate as good citizens in an ever-changing society. Of paramount importance is the happiness of each child under our care.

The Findings:

In our evaluation of Well Being in the school community, the staff studied the Key Areas 1-4 in the **Wellbeing in Education Framework for Practice, Statements of Effective Practice**, thus reflecting on how our school was performing in this area.

The pupils from 1st to 6th class also completed the **'Mental Health Promotion: Self-Evaluation Checklist and Questionnaire for Children'**, giving a pupil perspective on well-being in our school.

Parents completed the **Wellbeing in Education Questionnaire PDST**.

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 Amber Flag Team were also used as tools to assess our strengths and areas for improvement to promote Well-Being in our school.

The Staff:

Key Area 1 – Culture and Environment Statements **Effective Practice for All**

According to the Key Area 1 in the Wellbeing in Education Framework for Practice, Statements of Effective Practice, staff rated the school as performing above average in these areas:

- The wellbeing of the whole school community is central to the school's ethos/mission statement and school leaders and management actively promote wellbeing.
 - The school communicates with parents about the supports that are in place regarding the promotion of the wellbeing of children and young people.
- 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.
- School leaders and management understand the link between physical activity and wellbeing and facilitate physical activity and movement breaks within the school environment.
- The indoor space displays the work, talents and accomplishments of children and young people.
- The school recognises that wellbeing is as important for the staff as for the children and young people.

Areas for Improvement:

The staff prioritised the following statements for further attention

- Opportunities for Continuing Professional Development (CPD) are provided to teachers to ensure that they have the relevant knowledge and understanding to promote wellbeing and to create a positive classroom environment.
- Indoor and outdoor space is provided to facilitate social interaction and physical activity and quiet time.
 - There is a positive approach to discipline where issues are resolved with care, respect and consistency.

Key Area 1 – Culture and Environment Statements **Effective Practice for Some & Few**

According to the Key Area 1 in the Wellbeing in Education Framework for Practice, Statements of Effective Practice, staff rated the school as performing above average in these areas:

- The school demonstrates commitment to identifying, including and providing targeted supports for children and young people experiencing barriers and challenges to wellbeing and learning.
 - Staff, children and young people are welcoming and inclusive of those from different cultural backgrounds, those with additional needs and all sexual orientations.

Areas for Improvement:

The staff prioritised the following statements for further attention

- The physical environment is modified to meet the needs of children and young people with additional and/or complex needs. Eg. Additional buddy benches, use of outdoor classroom.

Key Area 2 – Curriculum (Teaching and Learning) Statements
Effective Practice for All

According to the Key Area 2 in the Wellbeing in Education Framework for Practice, Statements of Effective Practice, staff rated the school as performing above average in these areas:

- The SPHE curriculum is implemented and taught to every class.
- Children and young people’s enjoyment in learning is evident and is linked to a sense of making progress and of achievement. Children and young people are motivated to learn, and see themselves as learners, demonstrating this in their positive approach to classwork and homework.
- Teachers’ preparation for teaching and learning explicitly references teaching, learning and assessment approaches that promote collaborative learning, peer and self-assessment and a sense of achievement.

Areas for Improvement:

The staff prioritised the following statements for further attention

- Teachers use opportunities to promote wellbeing across the curriculum.

Key Area 2 – Curriculum (Teaching and Learning) Statements
Effective Practice for Some & Few

According to the Key Area 2 in the Wellbeing in Education Framework for Practice, Statements of Effective Practice, staff rated the school as performing above average in these areas:

- The school deploys resources based on individual learning, behavioural, social and emotional needs under the Special Education Teaching Allocation model.

Areas for Improvement:

The staff prioritised the following statements for further attention

- Teachers attend CPD and deliver specialised and targeted programmes, selected in line with best practice and grounded in research and evidence, to individuals and/or small groups.

Key Area 3 – Policy and Planning Statements
Effective Practice for All

According to the Key Area 2 in the Wellbeing in Education Framework for Practice, Statements of Effective Practice, staff rated the school as performing above average in these areas:

- The wellbeing of the whole school community underpins all school policy plans.
- The school has appropriate wellbeing policies in place and are made available to staff, children and young people, parents and relevant school community partners.
- The school uses the Education Passport (NCCA) for children and young people transitioning to post primary school.

Areas for Improvement:

The staff prioritised the following statements for further attention

- 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 3 – Policy and Planning Statements
Effective Practice for Some & Few

According to the Key Area 2 in the Wellbeing in Education Framework for Practice, Statements of Effective Practice, staff rated the school as performing above average in these areas:

- The school has regard to the Department's policies and circulars that outline how to support children and young people with additional and/or complex needs.
- School based information is used, in conjunction with reports from external professionals, to set guidelines and recommendations for individualised supports for children and young people with additional needs.
 - A student support file is used to plan, record and review progress.

Areas for Improvement:

The staff prioritised the following statements for further attention

- The school ensures that children and young people with complex needs will be supported to understand and follow school policies such as bullying and the school code of behaviour.

Key Area 4 – Relationship and Partnership Statements
Effective Practice for All

According to the Key Area 2 in the Wellbeing in Education Framework for Practice, Statements of Effective Practice, 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.

Areas for Improvement:

The staff prioritised the following statements for further attention

- Relationships and partnerships are supported through a range of agreed formal and informal structures, such as, student councils, prefect systems, buddy systems, mentoring systems, assemblies, newsletters, student journals and through teaching and learning.

Key Area 4 – Relationship and Partnership Statements
Effective Practice for Some & Few

According to the Key Area 2 in the Wellbeing in Education Framework for Practice, Statements of Effective Practice, staff rated the school as performing above average in these areas:

- Mentoring systems are in place whereby more senior teachers offer practical and social support to Newly Qualified Teachers and/or new staff members.
- The school establishes good links with Department support services, community based statutory and voluntary support services and other external agencies to support the students with additional and/or complex needs.

Areas for Improvement:

The staff prioritised the following statements for further attention

- Befriending and buddy systems are in place for children and young people who require support to interact with peers.

Overview of Areas for Improvement

Area:	Areas for Improvement
<p>Key Area 1 – Culture and Environment Statements Effective Practice for All</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities for Continuing Professional Development (CPD) are provided to teachers to ensure that they have the relevant knowledge and understanding to promote wellbeing and to create a positive classroom environment. • Indoor and outdoor space is provided to facilitate social interaction and physical activity and quiet time. • There is a positive approach to discipline where issues are resolved with care, respect and consistency.
<p>Key Area 1 – Culture and Environment Statements Effective Practice for Some & Few</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The physical environment is modified to meet the needs of children and young people with additional and/or complex needs. Eg. Additional buddy benches, use of outdoor classroom.
<p>Key Area 2 – Curriculum (Teaching and Learning) Statements Effective Practice for All</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers use opportunities to promote wellbeing across the curriculum.
<p>Key Area 2 – Curriculum (Teaching and Learning) Statements Effective Practice for Some & Few</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A dedicated team supports all teachers and SNAs to implement appropriate strategies for children and young people with additional and/or complex needs, including those recommended in professional reports.
<p>Key Area 3 – Policy and Planning Statements Effective Practice for All</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
<p>Key Area 3 – Policy and Planning Statements Effective Practice for Some & Few</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school ensures that children and young people with complex needs will be supported to understand and follow school policies such as bullying and the school code of behaviour.
<p>Key Area 4 – Relationship and Partnership Statements Effective Practice for All</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationships and partnerships are supported through a range of agreed formal and informal structures, such as, student councils, prefect systems, buddy systems, mentoring systems, assemblies, newsletters, student journals and through teaching and learning.
<p>Key Area 4 – Relationship and Partnership Statements Effective Practice for Some & Few</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Befriending and buddy systems are in place for children and young people who require support to interact with peers.

Pupil Questionnaire

Mental Health Promotion: Self-Evaluation Checklist and Questionnaire for Children
Pupils from First Class to Sixth Class completed this questionnaire. There were 64 responses recorded.

- 82.8% of pupils feel that Abbeyleix National School is a happy and welcoming place.
 - 60.9% feel that the school is clean, tidy and bright.
 - 85.7% feel that there is enough space in the classroom.
 - 89.1% of pupils feel that teachers in the school listen to them.
- 82.5% of pupils feel that Abbeyleix South National School is important to them.
 - 87.5% report that they have SPHE classes in school.
 - 79.7% of pupils feel safe when in school.
 - 83.9% of pupils report that they are encouraged to join in at school.
- 78.1% of pupils feel that if they are worried or upset in school they have someone to talk to.
- 84.4% of pupils report that teachers have advised them what to do if they feel bullied.
 - 89.1% of pupils feel that teachers help them when they need it.
 - 93.8% of pupils feel that they are liked by their teacher.
 - 62.5% of pupils feel that teachers talk with their parents.

See Appendix 1 Presentation for full set of results.

Parent Questionnaire

Wellbeing in Education Questionnaire PDST

A link to this questionnaire was emailed to the parent body. There were 38 responses recorded.

- 92.1% of parents feel that the school is welcoming and accessible to all pupils. (2 responded sometimes, 1 responded no)
- 84.2% of parents feel that the school is welcoming and accessible to parents and carers. (5 responded sometimes, 1 responded no)
- 94.7% of parents feel that the school is bright and well kept. (2 responded sometimes, 0 responded no)
- 86.8% of parents feel that their child can take part in activities at school, like sport, art, dancing drama, music etc. (5 responded sometimes, 0 responded no)
- 89.5% of parents feel that their child is safe in school. (3 responded sometimes, 1 responded no)
- 92.1% of parents feel that their child feels connected and part of the school community. (2 responded sometimes, 1 responded no)
- 76.3% of parents feel that the school is committed to dealing with bullying and its prevention. (6 responded sometimes, 3 responded no)
- 92.1% of parents responded 'Yes' to: My child reports that school staff interact with him/her in a calm and respectful manner, even when there are disagreements. (3 responded sometimes, 0 responded no)
- 89.5% of parents feel that the school sees health and wellbeing as important. (3 responded sometimes, 1 responded no)
- 94.7% of parents feel that the school encourages the idea of every child doing their best. (1 responded sometimes, 1 responded no)
- 89.5% of parents responded 'Yes' to: I know that extra help/support is available for pupils who need it. (3 responded sometimes, 1 responded no)

- 78.9% of parents responded 'Yes' to: My child can get support in the school for social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. (7 responded sometimes, 1 responded no)

See Appendix 2 Presentation for full set of results.

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

Aims/Targets:

- To utilise the 'A Lust for Life' Schools Programme (a 10 week teacher-led programme which aims to build resilience, increase wellbeing and enhance the emotional literacy of 1st to 6th class pupils)

As a school we will endeavour to support the '**A Lust for Life**' mission which is to:

Empower future generations to be effective guardians of their own minds

Destroy the stigma that attempted to destroy previous generations

Drive a shift in society where we put people first

- To take part in the **Amber Flag Programme**

(The Pieta Amber Flag Initiative recognises the individual efforts to create healthy, inclusive environments that support the mental well-being of primary school pupils)

As a school we will support the Amber Flag Vision and Objectives

Amber Flag Vision

Promoting positive mental health and well-being in communities through shared participation, knowledge, and empowerment.

Amber Flag Objectives

Promoting Positive Mental Health

Enhancing inclusivity through teamwork and social support

Reducing risk factors through increased awareness and education

Improving quality of life for those with mental health challenges

- To become familiar with **Restorative Practice** in school
 - To access staff training in Wellbeing
- To explicitly teach the Walk Tall Programme and Stay Safe Programme
- To incorporate wellbeing across all curriculum areas, starting with PE and the Arts
 - To review our school Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying policies

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) is fulfilled.



Abbeyleix South National School

Scoil Náisiúnta Mainistir Laoise Theas

Ballcolla Road, Abbeyleix, Co. Laois 14260F

School Improvement Plan

Wellbeing Review

2023 – 2026

Target 1: To utilise the ‘A Lust for Life’ Schools Programme (a 10 week teacher-led programme which aims to build resilience, increase wellbeing and enhance the emotional literacy of 1st to 6th class pupils)

As a school we will endeavour to support the ‘A Lust for Life’ mission which is to:

- Empower future generations to be effective guardians of their own minds
- Destroy the stigma that attempted to destroy previous generations
- Drive a shift in society where we put people first

Task/Actions	Who	Monitoring	Evaluation/Success Criteria	Progress and Adjustments	Target Achieved
Action 1					
Staff will study and familiarise themselves with the ‘A Lust for Life’ schools programme to increase competency in teaching resilience and coping strategies to pupils.	All teaching staff of pupils from First Class to Sixth Class	Staff Feedback at meetings Pupil Feedback Amber Flag Team Feedback	The staff is more competent in delivering the ‘A Lust for Life’ Programme. Pupils are observed participating in activities and become more open at discussing feelings with classmates. Staff relay what they have learned to other colleagues.	Adjust timetable to ensure all elements of the SPHE programmes are completed as well as the ‘A Lust for Life’ Programme.	Programme completed. Excellent feedback from pupils and teachers.

Target 2: To take part in the **Amber Flag Programme**

(The Pieta Amber Flag Initiative recognises the individual efforts to create healthy, inclusive environments that support the mental well-being of primary school pupils)

As a school we will support the Amber Flag Vision and Objectives

Amber Flag Vision

Promoting positive mental health and well-being in communities through shared participation, knowledge, and empowerment.

Amber Flag Objectives

- Promoting Positive Mental Health
- Enhancing inclusivity through teamwork and social support
- Reducing risk factors through increased awareness and education
- Improving quality of life for those with mental health challenges

	Task/Actions	Who	Monitoring	Evaluation/Success Criteria	Progress and Adjustments	Target Achieved
Action 1	Create an Amber Flag Team responsible for organising activities to promote wellbeing throughout the school year.	Mrs. Mythen and The Amber Flag Team	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, June 2024.
Action 2	Celebrate a 'Wellbeing Week' in school based on the theme 'Feeling Good about Ourselves' Celebrate 'Health Awareness Week' with focus on a healthy body and mind.	The Amber Flag Team Mrs. Mythen Teaching staff and pupils	Pupil feedback Staff feedback Feedback from visitors to school on engagement of pupils	Pupils engage with activities during Wellbeing Week Staff observe pupils engagement with activities Visitors give their feedback to coordinator about engagement of pupils with activities		Achieved
Action 3	Add an additional 'buddy bench' to	The Amber Flag Team The Green	Teacher observation Pupil	Teachers observe if pupils are using the buddy bench when they don't have a		Ongoing

	school yard and set up a buddy system whereby senior pupils assist in the yard.	School Committee Parents	feedback	friend to play with.	
Action 4	To complete the Application form for The Amber Flag Initiative	Mrs. Mythen The Amber Flag Team	Feedback from Pieta	Achieving the Amber Flag	Achieved

- See Amber Flag Application Appendix 3

Target 3: To become familiar with **Restorative Practice** in school

As a staff to listen to Circles of Connection podcast episode 1-14 on <https://www.pdst.ie/post-primary/health-wellbeing/restorative-practice> Restorative Practice

The Childhood Development Initiative (CDI) works to improve outcomes for children, families and communities in Tallaght and throughout Ireland. CDI have recently launched a podcast series outlining current Restorative Practice in Ireland. **“Circles of Connection: Stories from Ireland about using Restorative Practices to Build Relationships”**. Episodes 1-14

Restorative practice is based primarily on a set of core values and the explicit promotion and enhancement of particular skills such as the ability to empathise and to find solutions to specific problems. This practice allows for building trust between and with people. It provides a structured approach in the form of a scaffold, which helps build and sustain relationships, and provides a focus which allows for the potential growth of positive relationships to become established between people. The development of each relationship is based on a set of core values. These values include respect, and being respectful of everyone, including towards people someone maybe doesn't always see eye to eye with or even like.

Through the development of empathy, and promoting understanding of perspective taking, people can learn to respect each other and where someone is coming from in terms of their own expression of thought and feelings. In our efforts to show empathy, as human beings we are able to harness the notion of fairness into our relationships, and therefore can also account for our own actions and hold others to account for theirs.

	Task/Actions	Who	Monitoring	Evaluation/ Success Criteria	Progress and Adjustments	Target Achieved
Action 1	As a staff to listen to Circles of Connection podcast episodes 1-14 on https://www.pdst.ie/post-primary/health-wellbeing/restorative-practice Restorative Practice	Teaching Staff	Staff	Successful relationships in school between peers.		Ongoing
Action 2	Purchase the resource ‘The Little Book of Restorative Tools’ by Lindsey Pointer. An ideal handbook for educators, program directors, trainers, consultants, and community group leaders, this book will serve as a catalyst for greater creativity and philosophical alignment in the teaching of restorative practices across contexts.	Mrs. Mythen	Staff	Strategies beneficial to both teachers and pupils.		Fulfilled
Action 3	Print the resource Restorative Classroom Practice by Belinda Hopkins	Hazel Wellwood				Fulfilled

Action 4	(Transforming Conflict) for all teaching staff.		
	To review our school Code of Behaviour	Teaching Staff Board of Managem ent	Fulfilled

Target 4: To access CPD Training in Wellbeing and Special Education.

	Task/Actions	Who	Monitoring	Evaluation/Success Criteria	Progress and Adjustments	Target Achieved
Action 1	Two staff members to complete Wellbeing in Education Seminar 3 PDST	Ms. Jackson Mrs. Mythen	OIDE	Certificate attained Sharing information with all teaching staff. Implementing knowledge		Achieved 7/11/23
Special Education Study	Diploma in Special Education Needs Mary Immaculate College, Limerick.	Ms. Bergin				Achieved May 2024

- Appendix to **School Self-Evaluation Report: legislative and regulatory checklist** (Primary)
See Appendix 4.