

School Self-Evaluation Summary Report – 2023/24

Introduction:

The 2023/24 was again a very busy and successful year for St. Ailbe's School. Enrolments continued to grow and breached the 600 mark. A second deputy principal has been appointed in response to this continuing increase in student population. St. Ailbe's is a DEIS school and the school fulfils its statutory reporting obligations through its DEIS reporting which includes target-setting and action-planning in relation to the pillars of the DEIS viz. attendance, retention, transitions, literacy, numeracy, examination attainment and partnership with parents and others. This SSE report (which is not intended to be exhaustive) is designed to complement the data-rich statutory reporting by giving a sense of the activities occurring in the school which go towards meeting our DEIS targets.

School Structures:

St. Ailbe's School benefits greatly from having a **Home School Liaison (HSCL)** teacher, a **Behaviour for Learning (BFL)** teacher and the presence and support of the **School Completion Programme (SCP)** in the school. These personnel provide invaluable support to our students, parents and staff. The school also has two middle management teams comprising of **AP1 and AP2 postholders**. These postholders provide support to the senior management team and their roles are both developmental and managerial. St. Ailbe's also benefits from having particularly active **AEN** and **Pastoral Care** teams which meet once per week. Our **guidance team** are active across all teams. There is substantial crossover between all of these teams and agencies, in terms of personnel, which results in very effective communication and ability to respond. The **Attendance team** (Senior Management, SCP and HSCL) meet once per week to monitor and address any attendance issues. All staff members are active on at least one **Croke Park team** which meet four times a year. These teams are reviewed each year and changed to reflect the needs of the school. As well as addressing the needs of the school, these teams provide opportunities for staff to make real contributions to the development of the school and have helped to build schoolwide capacity.

Development of Senior and Middle Management teams:

St. Ailbe's promotes self-awareness and reflection at all levels within the school. The Principal underwent individual coaching with Mr. John Reid during the current year. This coaching was extended to the Deputy Principal and the AP1 team later in the year. Dr. Joe O'Connell, who had previously guided the senior management and AP1 teams through the distribution of leadership process and his skills are now being used again by the school to build development capacity within the AP2 team.

Home School Liaison review:

The inspectorate reviewed the work of the HSCL teacher during the year. The following were considered to be well-embedded and established in St. Ailbe's School.

- Partnership with parents
- The transition processes worked particularly well, in particular, the transition from primary to secondary school
- The DEIS plan was a comprehensive document and was continually being reviewed
- Feedback from parents was extremely positive with particular reference to the very good communication with the school
- The use of VSware and the supports that were offered to parents in the initial set up were acknowledged.
- The morning lates were managed very effectively with particular reference being made to a welcoming atmosphere for students.
- The SMART targets in relation to attendance, particular reference was made to the target for students who have missed more than 20 days on their last year of primary school.

Guidance Counselling Review:

Our Guidance team requested an advisory visit from the NCCA. The advisor examined the Guidance plan and Guidance Policy and was happy that these were working very well. The advisor was particularly impressed with the high levels of communication and the strength of relationships between guidance, SCP, HSCL, BFL and management.

A review of the work of the Croke park Guidance team is included below:

- Visits from Colleges/Universities worked well when put opposite 6th year Guidance and religion classes. The team hope to try and continue this going forward to minimise interruption to academic classes
- The team will continue with our Career Open Day next year, it proved very successful this year. Next year it is hoped to open the day up to members of our community including the Tipperary town FET course students. this as the school is also introducing the use of Athena academic tracking software of Athena the academic tracker this coming September
- The Guidance Advisor suggested that the team should identify gifted learners and ensuring that appropriately challenging opportunities are presented to this cohort of students. It is envisaged that the introduction of Athena academic tracking software will be very useful in both the identification and tracking of the gifted student.

Literacy & Numeracy:

Work completed this year in both Literacy & Numeracy.

Literacy:

- One Book One Community
- Organise the library completed.
- Author Visit – great success – read the same book as studied. Very real experience for students.
- Friday Library class once a week for first years.
- Town Library visit for 2nd year English by English teachers
- Town Library visits for 1st years English by English teachers.
- English teachers reading class for first years.
- DEAR?
- JCSP library log ins with Donal
- JCSP written 50-word story – Easter competition with Mr Breen
- World Book Day – marked and recognised.
- SEN Team – Key word journal for subjects.

Numeracy:

- Corridor Signs – changed length variations etc.
- Reminder to teachers for date to be put on the board.
- Reminder for Fractions to be given on tests and students to get their own percentage.
- Bluckit – Maths week – liaised with Maths Dept.
- Irish Exempt – Maths Laboratory to develop their basic Maths Skills – with first years.

Work to be continued and introduced for 2024/25:

Numeracy:

- Continue with above and add:
- Drop Everything and Multiply:
- Continue to get their percentage of tests from the fraction.
- **Short intervention programme across all first year on basic maths elements – during tutor time.**

Literacy:

- Continue with above and
- DEAR – priority and resources.
- Look at the Roll-on Reading – difficulty organising with numbers getting bigger – more people to organise may help.
- **Short literacy intervention with all 1st year students during tutor time.**

Policy review team – Summary:

This year the policy review team continued its work reviewing policies relevant to St. Ailbe's in response to a recommendations from the principal. Early in the year the team reviewed, revised, and updated the **Code of behaviour** policies before presenting these to the AP1 team, which in turn went to the BOM meeting.

Later in the year, the team carried out a large body of work to develop a “**New Teacher induction**” document. The aim of this document is to assist new teachers that join St. Ailbe's School gain an understanding of a wide range of school procedures and policies within the school. This document will now go to the next BOM meeting.

The team will continue its policy work next academic year under the direction of the Principal.

Academic Tracking:

The Academic tracking team surveyed 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 5th and 6th Years, asking them to predict their grades in the upcoming Easter exams. Subsequent analysis was carried out to quantify the accuracy of the student's predictions. A sample of the data generated is given below which relates to 2nd year student prediction of how they would get on in their Easter assessment in Maths.

2nd Year Academic Tracking Report May 2024

Maths

78 responses the below information. 3 responses were omitted as the student had made their prediction but no result was available for Christmas or Easter assessments.

The results below have been formed using the student's predicted grades and comparing it with their Christmas and Easter grades. Where both grades weren't available only one grade was used. Where both grades were available the comparison was made using the higher grade.

81 responses from 141 current 2nd year students (57.45%)

27 students (34.6%) achieved exactly as they predicted.

Grade	No. of students	%
Distinction	5	18.5%
Higher Merit	4	14.8%
Merit	10	37%
Achieved	5	18.5%
Partially Achieved	3	11.1%
	27	

6 students (7.7%) achieved higher than they predicted

Grade	No. of students	%
Higher Merit- Distinction	1	16.6%
Merit-Higher Merit	0	0%
Achieved-Merit	1	16.6%
Partially Achieved-Achieved	1	16.6%
Partially Achieved-Merit	2	33.3%
Achieved-Higher Merit	1	16.6%
	6	

45 students 57.7% achieved lower than they predicted

Grade	No. of students	%
Distinction-Higher Merit	7	15.5%
Higher Merit-Merit	10	22.2%
Merit-Achieved	4	8.8%
Achieved-Partially Achieved	0	0 %
Distinction- Merit	1	2.2%
Distinction - PA	2	4.4%
Distinction- NG	1	2.2%
Higher Merit- Achieved	9	20%
Higher Merit- PA	2	4.4%
Merit- PA	8	17.7%
PA- NG	1	2.2%
	45	

The above analysis provides great insight into levels student self-awareness and it is hoped that resulting personal reflection will lead students to plan appropriately to ensure their potential is reached.

In order to assist students, we have added a page for each subject to the student Learning Log (Journal) which will allow students to plan and track their revision.

Roll out of ATHENA software:

St. Ailbe's has subscribed to the Athena Tracker. The Athena Tracker is an academic monitoring tool which creates a student's baseline potential in each subject and highlights when a student falls below this potential and may need further support. This baseline is based on a statistical model built using the exam results of all of the previous results of students on the software.

The purpose is to highlight when a student's performance falls below this potential and may need further support. When a student falls below their potential in any subject, the teacher

receives an alert and can investigate what is going on with the student and whether any additional support or intervention is required. Thus, ensuring no student gets missed in a very busy school system.

All data required by Athena including historical term assessments and CAT test results have been uploaded to Athena. It is hoped that effective use of this software by management and teachers will lead to improved levels of self-awareness by students and attainment levels also.

Roll out of Examrevision.ie:

The school established a partnership this year with Examrevision.ie. Their platform has been instrumental in fostering our students' academic success and exam preparedness. ExamRevision.ie offers an extensive, user-friendly platform providing access to high-quality study materials, revision notes, past exam papers, and interactive quizzes across various subjects and academic levels. Their tailored approach to exam preparation allows students to focus on areas where they need the most support, enhancing learning outcomes and boosting confidence. St. Ailbe's is confident that consistent use of this platform by students will lead to improvement in attainment levels for our students. As part of our annual ICT survey of staff and students, feedback was obtained regarding the use of examrevision.ie. Below is a summary of this feedback. (Note that examrevision.ie does not presently cover all Leaving or Junior Certificate subjects).

Teacher survey:

- 82% of teachers either 'strongly agree' or 'agree' that examrevision.ie is of benefit to their students
- 59% of teachers use examrevision.ie with their students
- 24% of teachers track student access to the video and quiz feature in examrevision.ie

Student survey:

- 90% of students surveyed were aware that they had access to examrevision.ie
- 41% of students access examrevision.ie daily or weekly
- 30% of students find the videos most useful
- 38% find the quizzes most useful
- History, Maths and Science are the subjects used most often by students
- 13% of students find it 'very useful and use it a lot'
- 31% of students find it 'useful and use it sometimes'

The extent to which the software is being used by teachers and students at this stage is quite encouraging as the roll out started mid-year. Subject departments will be asked to incorporate the use of examrevision.ie into teaching and learning plans for the 2024/25 year.

Restorative Practice:

Restorative [Practice programmes] in schools aim to develop:

- communities that value the building of quality relationships coupled with clear expectations and limits
- restorative skills in the way we interact with young people – using teachable moments to enhance learning
- restorative processes that resolve conflict and repair damaged relationships
- communities that are forward thinking

St. Ailbe's School continued the roll out of restorative practice training to its staff during the 2023/24 year. Joe Power began this training with some of our staff in the 2022/23 year. Two of our staff are now qualified to deliver this training and trained another cohort of staff this year. St. Ailbe's School believes that the restorative approach is the only approach which consistently promotes our core values of equality, care, community and respect.

The plan for the 2024/25 year:

- The training of staff is proceeding as planned. At present, 11 staff members are in the process of completing the Introductory training with our school trainers. It is hoped that training will continue for new staff members and for those who have not availed of it yet in September.
- The Restorative Practice team hopes to improve the visibility of RP around the school with posters and signage
- It was decided that RP as a four-week module should be facilitated with all incoming first year students. This can be facilitated in SPHE classes with our in-house trainers facilitating.
- It was suggested that we have an RP day, the details of which will be discussed in September, but it would bring RP to the forefront in the school and to everyone else's awareness, which is important.

Suspensions and Referrals:

Data regarding the number of suspensions and students referred (for serious breaches of discipline) to the Principal is provided below. As can be seen the number of referral forms issued and suspensions given, has dropped year on year since 2015. This should be viewed in the context of a corresponding year on year increase in the total enrolment in the school and can be taken as evidence of the effectiveness of the respectful and restorative approach taken during staff-student interactions.

Suspensions:

Year	Target (less than)	Actual
2024/25	20	
2023/24	20	17
2022/23	20	28
2021/22	20	28
2020/21	20	18
2019/20	20	12
2018/19	25	21
2017/18		32
2016/17		38
2015/16		43

Referral Forms:

Year	Target	Actual
2024/25	40	
2023/24	55	29
2022/23	60	59
2021/22	60	78
2020/21	80	58
2019/20	100	65
2018/19	120	106
2017/18	150	137
2016/17	200	178
2015/16		285

Green Schools:

The Green Schools team were again extremely active this year with TY students continuing the development of the sensory garden, the installation of a polytunnel for crop growing, litter picking in conjunction with Tipperary Tidy Towns, walk for water initiative, biodiversity signage around the school and the development of the Green Schools action plan.

In the 2024/25 year the team will concentrate on the areas of water conservation and recycling. TY students again will be actively engaging with the team to further these and existing projects.

Wellbeing:

The wellbeing team plays an enormous role in managing transitions, enhancing retention rates, establishing relationships with external partners and improving attendance. The incoming 1st year transition programme was enhanced this year by asking SPHE teachers to complete the transition booklet in more detail during the first four weeks of the year. Money was raised for the Irish heart Foundation, South Tipperary Hospice, Pieta House, Oscar Foundation and Circle of friends. St. Ailbe's School has completed year 2 of the Active Schools programme and we will apply for the Amber Flag in a year's time. The activities overseen by the Wellbeing team are numerous and diverse and are both curricular and extra-curricular in nature.

JCSP:

In the 2023/24 year the JCSP team planned to:

- 1) Apply for initiatives in Oct 2023
- 2) Review the number of students in 2nd and 3rd year in JCSP.
- 3) Create a JCSP group for incoming 1st years based on CAT scores and primary School recommendations i.e. refine our selection criteria
- 4) Raise awareness of JCSP in the wider School community.
- 5) Improve communication: Parents also to be informed their son/daughter is in JCSP

The team was successful in implementing these plans and, in particular, developed a more sophisticated set of criteria for selecting students for inclusion on the JCSP programme. Much improved communication with parents via email was also achieved. The 2nd and 3rd year students were reviewed according to the new selection criteria as well. It was agreed that the use of an excel spreadsheet to capture the JCSP statements worked well and would be continued for the 2024/25 year.

Communities of Practice:

As a Tipperary ETB school, St. Ailbe's School benefits from the expertise and experience of the wider TETB organisation. In recent years TETB has provided a forum for its schools to share good practice with each other. Some of the communities of practice that St. Ailbe's are involved in are

1. Excellence in Education
2. SENCO Forum
3. Provision Mapping
4. Digital Learning

1. Excellence in Education:

In the 2022/23 year TETB established a community of practice centred around 'Excellence in Education'. Excellence in Education is one of the five ETB core values. Principals and Deputy Principals were invited to share examples of excellence in education from their own schools with the other schools. This was facilitated by Dr. Tayo Adeneusi. St. Ailbe's School collaborated with Comeragh College and Colaiste Dun lascaigh on a project to enhance participation in maths homework.

The following actions were taken:

- Placing a big emphasis on the use of the homework journal.
- Allowing time in every class for the students to take down their homework (Drop Everything and Note).
- If homework is posted on Teams, it is also taken down in the journal.
- If there is no homework, students write down something they learned in class into their homework journal. This ensures there is something being entered in the journal for every Maths class.
- Putting Learning Intentions on the board for every class.
- Planned/relevant/appropriate/constructive homework is assigned and linked to learning intentions. Homework assigned is checked/corrected.
- If homework is not completed, we use the Three Dot system. Extra work can be assigned as punishment at different dots. After the third chance teacher enters it in VShare and it is -1 points.
- In order to gather our baseline data, we surveyed all 2nd year students.

2nd year students were surveyed before and after the above interventions and the results are summarised below:

- Students getting homework every night increased from 43 % to 54%
- Students that completed homework every night did not change but stayed consistently high at 70%
- There was an increase in the number of students who took their homework down into their diary, from 84% to 92%
- There was no change in the percentage of students that learned their learning homework, staying at 38%
- There was an increase in the number of students that separated their revision homework from their written work. It went from 55% to 70%
- There was an increase in the number of students that studied consistently, this went from 42% to 53%
- There was an increase in the number of students that commented that they would still complete their homework even if the teacher did not check their work, from 81% to 84%
- Overall, 83% of students felt that they had improved on completing or attempting homework since November

It is clear that the interventions outlined here lead to improvements in the rate of participation in Maths homework. As a result of the success of this project and the

ease with which TETB schools collaborated with each other, TETB will now extend the work by setting up a community of practice where English subject department representatives from all of the TETB schools will come together to share best practice.

1. Provision Mapping

Provision Mapping is an ongoing developmental process that aims to support inclusive school improvement. The initial 18-month cycle of Provision Mapping will provide participating schools with access to guidance, resources, workshops, and professional learning to enable them to collect data from staff, students and parents about inclusive education. This data will be analysed to inform future school improvement and identification of resources and professional learning and support needed to continue to respond to identified needs in an ongoing cycle. Foundational to Provision Mapping is ethos, and a school provision map is, in essence, the articulation of the school ethos.

The provision mapping team in St. Ailbe's has attended a number of training days provided for by the TETB Inclusion co-ordinator. The team facilitated a two-hour whole staff training and information-gathering event and has analysed teacher responses. The team will address the issues below:

- a) More CPD for teachers in the area of additional needs provision
- b) Assisting teachers when using ISPs (individual Student Plans)
- c) Managing teacher expectations of students with AEN and in particular gifted students

Students and parents will be surveyed in the 2024/25 academic year.

SENCO Forum

Following on from discussions at Deputy Principals meetings and with Principals of Tipperary ETB, it was decided to establish a Community of Practice to support the work of our Special Educational Needs Coordinators across Tipperary ETB.

One part of this support/advisory group was sharing practice from the ETBI and MIC collaboration pilot initiative of 'Provision Mapping in Schools'.

The SENCO forum has supported this initiative and has seen the roll out of the Provision Mapping Process Year 1 in many of Tipperary ETB schools including St. Ailbe's in the 2023-2024 academic year.

The SENCO forum held an online meeting on Tuesday 30th of April to discuss the new AON Circular and the Summer Programme. The SENCO forum has already scheduled 3 meetings for the upcoming academic year 2024-25 and these meetings will take place in September, February and May. The forum is proving to be a great way for SEN Coordinators to liaise,

network and support each other on any additional education needs issues and new initiatives.