



## Our Self-Evaluation Report and Improvement Plan

### Context:

Meánscoil Iognáid Rís is a Catholic voluntary secondary school under the trusteeship of the Edmund Rice Schools Trust. The school, named after the founder of the order Edmund Ignatius Rice, opened its doors in September 1871. Pupil numbers have increased greatly over the years from 233 (1971) to 414 (1981) to a current enrolment of over 1000 pupils. We traditionally welcome pupils from a wide catchment area and this mix of town and country contributes greatly to the good atmosphere which is a celebrated feature of the school. The school remains, of course, a Christian Brothers School with the staff and management committed to the ethos of the Edmund Rice Schools. The current principal is Mr. Ben Travers.

Progress of the S.S.E. programme in our school was interrupted by the school's closure on March 12<sup>th</sup> 2020 due to Covid 19. The S.S.E. process and the pursuit of previously identified targets did not resume until the 2021/2022 school year.

### 1. Introduction

This document records the outcomes of our last improvement plan, the findings of this self-evaluation, and our current improvement plan, including targets and the actions we will implement to meet the targets.

### Outcomes of our previous improvement plans:

- *The focus of our evaluation for 2014/2015 was numeracy and ongoing actions include*  
Agreed use of common methodologies across all subject areas (e.g results as fractions).  
Numeracy posters in classrooms  
Increase use of team and group work in class  
A particular focus on problem solving  
A strong emphasis on improving core skills using common practice and extra classes in first year to work on these core skills  
Casio calculators given to all staff to advance common practise
- *The focus of our evaluation for 2015/2016 was literacy and actions are still ongoing*  
An increased use of the library by class groups  
An increase use of IT in class to complement literacy skills  
An increased uptake in students taking Higher Level English  
A particular focus on the use of keywords  
Development of study skills programme  
Literacy posters in classrooms  
A focus on positive written feedback from teachers to students written work and tests.
- *The focus of our evaluations for 2016/17 was Communication and actions are still ongoing*  
Providing personalised comments including areas for improvement in school reports  
Teach students how to make use of teacher feedback  
Use learning intentions in classes and in the school journal  
Improve website and twitter feed to improve access for students and parents  
Expand and improve the use of the school app  
Team teaching to share methodologies and improve teacher feedback.
- *The focus of our work in 2017/18 was consolidation of the existing three strands and reinforcement of school wide approaches to numeracy, literacy and communication.*
- *The focus of our evaluations in 2018/19 was Independent Learning through CBAs and actions are still ongoing*  
Encourage independent learning facilitated by the teacher in the CBA process.  
Fully inform parents & students about the CBA process, emphasising importance of Independent Learning  
To provide adequate resources to facilitate the CBA process.  
To distribute the CBA timetable fairly over the school calendar  
To support staff and provide opportunities for staff to share their experiences in completing CBAs.

- *The focus of 2019/2020 & 2020/2021 (still being developed due to Covid 19 interruption) was the implementation of improvement strategies for our fourth strand 'Independent Learning through CBAs' actions are still on going.*

Facilitation of staff led focus groups to share good practise and experience of the CBA process.

A regular review of the presentation to parents and student workshops on the Junior Cycle/CBAs.

The creation and circulation of a Reflection Poster for each classroom.

A toolkit of resources available to encourage independent learning in classroom & homework activities.

SSE initiatives and actions were made accessible and relevant to students through a specific SSE student notice board and inclusion of a student orientated SSE placemat and a Reflection guide in the journal.

Renewal/reminder to staff of existing S.S.E. actions on S.S.E. placemats for each classroom.

Inclusion of SSE in the school's induction programs for PMEs, NQT teachers and the Droichead programme.

- The focus of 2021/2022 was the progression of the Independent Learning strand with an emphasis on reflection, actions are still on going.

A presentation with voice over on the value and process of reflection was created and shown to all classes.

The presentation was shared through the School App. with parents to encourage their engagement..

Templates were created to encourage and support students and parents to engage in regular reflection.

Teachers were encouraged to include a reflections page as part of exams or with the return of exams.

Reflection posters were provided to display in all classrooms.

## **1.2 The focus of S.S.E. efforts in 2022/2023 evolved through the year in line with Circular 0056/2022 SSE Next Steps 2022-2026.**

### **Investigation of the impacts of COVID**

Parents of third year students were invited to participate in a survey to investigate students' educational experience and outcomes during Covid, their well being, their motivation to learn and their engagement in learning. 50 responded and broadly speaking were positive in relation to each domain. Parents were satisfied with the provision of live classes and google classroom through school closure. Motivation to engage and awareness of additional supports available in school were identified as areas of concern for the parents. The results of the survey were shared with staff and parents. A reminder of support services and how to access them was communicated through the school app. The TL21 initiative of 'Good Notes' and 'Postcards' promoted to all staff were appropriate actions to address motivation and improve engagement in learning.

### **Investigation and Reinforcement of Existing SSE**

Awareness and implementation of existing SSE strands and actions by staff was surveyed prior to returning to school in August 2022. The results were mixed and showed up some inconsistencies. A presentation to reinforce and support SSE actions in the classroom was provided to staff as part of the August meetings. Regular reminders of SSE actions in the classroom were included in the daily notes by Mr. Travers.

Student focus groups were conducted in November 2022 to gauge student experience and effectiveness of SSE actions in their learning. At the first year parent teacher meetings in February 2023 20 parents (selected at random) participated in an interview to investigate the effectiveness of existing SSE strategies and to assess student experiences of first year. In March 2023 a presentation on SSE and its intentions was presented to the Student Council who were encouraged to participate in future SSE initiatives. In staff meeting of May 2023 teachers were encouraged to commit to school wide effort to include reflection opportunity as part of all summer exams in 2023.

### **Strand 5 Student Participation**

Student participation was identified as an area of teaching and learning to improve specific to the context of our school. This will be the focus of the fifth strand of SSE in our school. Throughout the final term of the year the effectiveness of Student Participation was investigated and actions developed for 2023/2024. Student participation in classroom activities, existing SSE initiatives, in school events and in extracurricular activities were considered in our review of practices in our school.

## 2.1 This is effective / very effective practice in our school

- The Meitheal programme with first years is very effective and popular with parents and students.
- There are a wide range and level of student participation opportunities in the school.
- Most teachers (70%) frequently or sometimes engage in group work
- Most teachers (83%) have engaged in self reflection with junior classes, (81%) with senior classes.
- Most teachers (93%) felt peer mentoring could be implemented in their subject.
- Most teachers (70%) had experience of school initiatives in which students were in some way involved in the event or its preparation and planning
- Most students (83%) believe they are participating well or very well in class activities.
- Most parents (65%) agree or strongly agree that students are given responsibility to organise and prepare activities.
- Only 17% of students felt students were not given adequate opportunity to express opinion and influence decisions.
- Only 13% of students felt that our school does not listen or respond to students' opinions.
- Student focus groups have been involved in and influenced all recent policy reviews.
- There are regular interactions between management and student council
- Students are integral parts of some school events and activities including Open Night, Graduation ceremony, Seachtain na Gaeilge, Prefects, Student Council.

## 2.2. This is how we know

- Surveys completed by 252 students (100 senior cycle, 152 junior cycle)
- Surveys completed by 133 parents.
- Surveys completed by 47 staff members
- A review of responses to questions during interviews of 20 parents of 1st years.
- An audit was completed of all extracurricular activities and student involvement in school events.
- Review of Student Council School of Sanctuary and TL21 survey results .
- A focus group of school management and the SSE team.

## 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.*

- To better engage 'student voice' in school activities inside and outside the classroom.
- To encourage and increase student participation in existing school initiatives and extracurricular activities.
- To give more responsibility to students in the planning, organisation and delivery of appropriate events and activities in the school.
- To increase awareness of the opportunities that exist to participate in extracurricular activities and school events outside sport
- Encourage parents and students to value the importance of student participation in class but also within the broader school community.
- To develop student engagement in the SSE process in the school.
- To improve communication of student participation in school events and the influence of student opinion on school planning and processes.

## 3. 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), and **when**

## Our Improvement Plan – (timeframe of this improvement plan is from Sep 2023 to June 2024)

Targets	Actions	Person (s) responsible	Criteria for success	Progress/ adjustment	Targets achieved
<p>To develop student engagement in the SSE process in the school. Supporting their understanding of SSE strategies as outlined in the school journal and encouraging them to implement the strategies in class and in their own work</p>	<p>A member of the SSE committee and management will speak with each year group at assembly in September to explain SSE and emphasise the page in the journal.                      Maintenance of the student notice board &amp; inclusion of SSE pages in school journal.                      Year Heads/Management will renew the message during the year at assembly.                      Students will be given opportunities to contribute to SSE related classroom activities and initiatives.</p>		<p>An improved understanding and engagement with the strategies evident through surveys and focus groups.                      Regular notice board updates                      SSE on assembly agendas once a month                      Improved implementation and involvement with SSE influenced activities in class.</p>		
<p>To develop the awareness and the range of opportunities for students to participate in extracurricular groups and activities.</p>	<p>Student activity and student group Expo event in the assembly                      Communication on School App to parents of opportunities.                      Allocation and Maintenance of an Extra Curricular Notice board in Assembly                      Continued acknowledgement, promotion and celebration of achievements of groups on app and intercom.                      Invitation and support to all staff toward new initiatives in line with staff and student interest.</p>		<p>Successful expo event with suitable number and range of stalls                      Regular app activity offering opportunities                      Well maintained and used notice board                      Staff and student awareness of activities/achievements                      Invitation at September meeting/support during year</p>		
<p>Current Student Student Participation Opportunities in School Events, Activities and School and Class Planning</p>	<p>Review of Gaisce and Community Week to investigate potential for school community actions/activities.                      Investigate opportunities and implement where possible mentoring of younger students by senior students.                      Trial student involvement in the planning and delivery of school study skills workshops.                      Encourage greater engagement by students with the Student Council and facilitate student council representations to staff meetings once per term.                      Reintroduction and definition of Class reps./captains                      Improved student involvement in school wide initiatives such as Maths and Science Week.                      Review supervision and allocation of rooms for extracurricular groups to facilitate student leaders</p>		<p>Meeting with TY teachers trial of school based activities.                      Mentoring in practise in a regular and planned fashion                      Review of study skills and student delivery of material                      Student Council on the agenda of staff meetings. Improved communication to the council.                      Class Captain in all first year classes in 2023/24                      Student initiatives planned and delivered by students.                      Student clubs active at lunch</p>		

