

Danu Community Special School Our Self-Evaluation Report and Improvement Plan 2025/26

1. Introduction

This document records the outcomes of our last school improvement plan, the findings of this self-evaluation, and our current improvement plan for Academic Year 2025/2026, including targets and the actions we will implement to meet the targets. During 2024/2025 staff and students continued to deal with the challenges of a temporary school building with limited space and no PE hall. The continued, unprecedented teacher shortages and shortfalls in securing qualified teachers has meant the school has had to operate using three out of six teaching positions with unqualified teachers since term 1. Furthermore, there was the appointment of 15/35 new SNAS since term 1. Although we have avoided class closures, and despite significant support from the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), this shortfall has impacted on the quality of teaching and learning provision. Despite these challenges the school's priority, was to continue to keep focused on student and staff wellbeing during Academic Year 2024/2025.

1.1 Outcomes of our last improvement plan from Academic Year 2024/25

- Teachers provided children access to curricular activities to promote their physical, social, and emotional competence to enhance their overall wellbeing.
- Teachers planned and prepared clear learning objectives for meaningful and purposeful curricular activities, so learners were offered and engaged in learning experiences that challenged them but also supported them.
- Students' enjoyment in learning experiences is evident and is linked to positive learning outcomes, making progress and achieving. Student engagement with the increase in physical activity learning experiences and learning outcomes contributed to their sense of overall wellbeing.
- All teachers received CPD training with Oide PE support on 02/12/24.
- Whole Day Planning on 16.5.25 for teachers for Junior Cycle L1L2.
- The In School Leadership Team (ISLT) accessed Oide Wellbeing Support on 30.4.25 to assist with development of Danu CSS Wellbeing Framework and SIP.
- Post holder designated responsibility for creating, implementing, and reviewing Wellbeing Framework and Policy.
- Staff engaging in CPD. SLT regularly consults with staff and debriefing is provided following incidents. Whole staff debriefing supports provided by NEPS (12.2.25) and DDLETB Psychological Supports Service (24.10.24). Staff informed of the DE EAS 'Spectrum Life.'

1.2 The focus of this evaluation

We undertook self-evaluation of teaching and learning during the period *September 2024 to June 2025 (02.10.24, 06.11.24, 05.02.25, 30.04.25, 07.05.25)*. We evaluated the following aspect of teaching and learning:

- Students accessing curricular activities to promote their physical, social and emotional competence to enhance their overall wellbeing.
- Staff experiencing a sense of belonging and feel safe, connected and supported.

2. Findings

2.1 This is effective practice in our school (list our strengths)

- 83% of staff feel the physical wellbeing of students is a priority.
- Students' have daily opportunities to engage in physical activity both in the classroom and the playground.
- Daily students are offered participation in Bizzy Breaks and go for a daily walk at 11.30am.
- Students in 5 classes accessed swimming on a termly rotation with parental support when necessary. Individual students were recognised for swimming on a weekly basis.
- Two-thirds of students engaged in weekly mindfulness activity e.g. yoga, sensory massage, quiet space.

- Teachers gathered information on student accessing curricular activities to promote their physical, social and emotional competence to enhance their overall wellbeing using teacher observation, teacher-designed tasks, portfolios and assessment.
- Teachers assessed each student individual learning needs using ABLLS, JC L1L2 during September/October and May/ June.
- 85% of staff say the school promotes the benefits of self-care and a good work life balance.
- 88% of staff say the school provided them with sufficient supports services e.g. EAS, Spectrum Life, NEPS.

2.2. This is how we know (*how well are we doing and how do we know*)

- The school signed up to and students took part in initiatives such as #activebreakschallenge24, 'Let's Get Active' and 'Active Schools Week'.
- Bizzy Breaks, Daily Walk, Sensory Massage, Yoga are timetabled for students.
- 5 out of 6 classes participated in a 6-week swimming programme at the local swimming pool.
- Students observed engaging in curricular activities that enhance their overall wellbeing.
- Each class teacher compiled a bank of physical activity resources for rainy days.
- The Active Committee organised and led Active Week and other physical activities/wellbeing, cultural events and festivities such as St Patrick's Day Parade, Easter Parade.
- Post holder designated responsibility for Wellbeing Framework and Policy has commenced leading this policy for example a school choir has been created; students' participation in Think Big Space (Lego Workshop 8.11.24); students attending UP IN THE CLOUDS performance in Draiocht (21.3.25 & 25.3.25).
- Teachers and ISLT embarked on CPD throughout the year to further their own learning and shared this with colleagues.
- Teacher preparation and planning ensured students access to curricular activities to promote their physical, social and emotional competence to enhance their overall wellbeing. This included a whole school approach of planning templates for Yearly Plan, Fortnightly written planning, short term plans, preparation, CM, IEPS and student assessments to inform future monthly planning.
- Review of SIP at teacher meetings 02.10.24, 06.11.24, 05.02.25, 30.04.25, 07.05.25 with final review at whole staff meeting 11.6.25.
- Students assessed using ABLLS, JC L1L2, IEP, Student IEP Review and End of Year Report.
- ISLT meet with staff for debrief following incidents.
- Well-being activities lead by designated staff provided at every staff meeting and once a month before school started. Celebration of SNA Appreciation Day (26.9.24) and World Teacher Day (6.10.24).
- Staff informed of the DE EAS 'Spectrum Life' via Induction, posters displayed in staffrooms/bathrooms/office, at meetings and/or an individual basis.

2.3 This is what we are going to focus on to improve our practice further (*what is our area for improvement*)

As per Looking at Our Schools 2016 Quality Framework for Primary Schools

- Target 1: Learner Experiences: Students will engage purposefully in meaningful learning activities where they understand their learning tasks (p.28).
- Target 2: Teachers' Individual Practice: The teacher selects and uses teaching approaches appropriate to intended learning outcomes and to students' learning needs (p.31).

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**.

Chairperson: John Walsh Principal: Patricia Doolan Date Ratified: 24.06.25

Danu CSS Improvement Plan Academic Year 25,26					
Target	Actions	Persons Responsible	Criteria for success	Progress & Adjustments	Date Target Achieved
Target 1: Learner Experiences: Students will engage purposefully in meaningful learning activities where they understand their learning tasks.	Read student IEP, IEP Review, End of Year Report, All About Me Plans and Stress Support/Wellbeing Plans as they provide details of where student is at and modes of communication used.	Teacher & SNAs	Read reports on and identify student communication modes used.	First week September	
	Assess student communication mode- AAC device, PECS, Written Word, Photograph, Object of Reference, to determine type of visual communication needed.	Teacher	Teacher complete communication audit and record in All About Me Plan.	First week September	
	Assess each student to determine Academic Baseline using ABLLS/Junior Cycle/ Senior Cycle and records.	Teacher	Teacher assesses and records in Student Assessment folder.	Sept/Jan/May	
	Prepare and plan clear learning objectives that are purposeful in meaningful learning activities that are age appropriate where students understand their learning tasks.	Teacher	Teacher prepares and plans clear learning objectives that are purposeful in meaningful learning activities for all curricular, so students understand their learning tasks. This is reviewed monthly in CM and in assessment.	Fortnightly planning, CM & Monthly assessments	
	Provided students with visuals that suits their learning style for every learning activity consistently (classroom, playground, Daily living skills etc) so they can participate purposefully in meaningful learning activities to understand the learning tasks presented. These include • Whole class schedule • Individualised schedule • Learning activities (First/Then/Next) • Transitions (First/Then/Next) • Movement Breaks • Sensory Breaks • Making choices • Expressing feelings and emotions	Teacher & SNAs	Students understand their learning tasks as class team to prepare visuals for • individualised timetable • learning activities for tabletop • learning activities for group and community outings • Transitions, movement, sensory, choices, feelings, and emotions Staff modelling use of visuals with prompting students when necessary.	Daily	
	Engagement in professional development in PECS, AAC, NCSE training, Oide teacher Training. Contribute to building whole staff capacity by sharing expertise.	Teacher & SNAs	Whole school staff participate in training provided and share expertise either on 1:1 basis, class support or at staff meetings.	Sept to June	
	Engage with professional collaboration with SLT and implement recommendations	Teacher & SNAs	Teachers consult and collaborate with SLT and implement recommendations given.	Sept to June	

Target	Actions	Persons Responsible	Criteria For Success	Progress & Adjustment	Date Target Achieved
Target 2: Teachers' Individual Practice: The teacher selects and uses teaching approaches appropriate to intended learning outcomes and to students' learning needs.	Whole school approach to using TEACCH approach 1. Provide a clearly defined structured environment for daily class activities such as tabletop, circle time, lunch time, art time, play time etc. 2. Provide students with consistent visual schedules (Object of Reference, PECS, Photographs, words, AAC device) that includes regular movement and sensory breaks and choice. 3. Provide each student with a visual work system that establishes student expectation and activity measurement to promote student independence. So that the student understands that... a) When I come here... b) This is what I do... c) For so long... d) And this is where I go next... 4. Establishing learning activities in class • Set up tasks for success • Visual set up of task- its disappearance to finishing 5. Support transitions consistently as part of daily routine • Whole class visual schedule • Individualised visual schedule • First/Then/Next outside of classroom • Visual Schedules for individual learning activities • Concrete finish tools e.g. finished box • Flexibility with transitions-Movement Breaks, Sensory Breaks, Making choices, Expressing feelings and emotions 6. Students follow and implement individual visual schedule 7. Provide visual cues for reminders and instructions • Token boards • Timers • First/Then/Next • AAC device • Core boards 8. Engagement in professional development e.g. TEACCH. Contribute to building whole staff capacity by sharing expertise.	Teacher Teacher & SNAs Teacher & SNAs Teacher & SNAs Teacher & SNAs Teacher & SNAs Teacher & SNAs Teacher & SNAs Teacher & SNAs	1. Teacher completes an Environmental Assessment for each student and implement 2. Teacher completes student Communication Audit before implementing a visual schedule determine student communication mode. This is recorded in student All About Me Plan. Class team consistently provide and support student with visuals and teach how to use them independently. 3. Class team to consistently provide and support student implementation of a visual work system for all learning activities so students understand what is expected. 4. Class team consistently provide learning activities supported with visuals. 5. Class team support transitions consistently with visuals as part of daily routine 6. Class prepare and encourage student to use visuals individual schedule and visual supports, staff using the following strategies 4'S Show Visual, Say Less, go Slow, Stress key word 7. Class staff provide visual cues consistently 8. Whole school staff participate in training provided and share expertise either on 1:1 basis, class support or at staff meetings.	Sept/Termly/when needed Sept/Termly/when needed Daily Daily Daily Daily Daily Daily Sept to June	