

Newtown School Self-Evaluation Report and Improvement Plan

Introduction

A School Self-Evaluation of Teaching and Learning in Newtown School was undertaken during the period from September 2024 to May 2025.

In September 2024, a School Self-Evaluation (SSE) working group was formed to implement the improvement plan for 2024-2025. The plan focused on:

Improvement plan for 2023-2024 focussed on

- Increasing the use of structured Groupwork in class
- Transitions & Student Leadership
- Homework and Formative Feedback
- Increased use of Compass

This report records the outcomes of our improvement plan for 2024-25 and sets out our improvement plan for 2025-26.

Transitions & Student Leadership

Transitions:

Prefects were given mentoring training by the school's Guidance Counsellor. A four-week mentoring programme was run by Prefects in September to help the 1st years settle into secondary school life. An induction booklet was developed to support the four week programme. Activities included:

- 'Getting to know your new school',
- 'Feelings about your new school',
- 'Friendship Bingo',
- 'Understanding Compass'
- How to join clubs and societies in Newtown.

Feedback received from the 6th year prefects was exceptionally positive. They valued the responsibility given to them in mentoring the younger year, particularly in getting to know and guide them. They were very appreciative of being able to show and develop their leadership skills. Feedback from 1st years was also extremely positive, notably that they liked meeting in smaller groups and got to know the 6th years by name.

Student Leadership

A team was formed to review student leadership within Newtown and investigate how to give students opportunities to be leaders within the community. Following discussions by the team, the belief is that leadership in Newtown is shown by example, that one does not need to have a position of power to be a leader. Recognition of those who show leadership is an area to be developed next academic year, including structures that give students the opportunity to show leadership. These leadership opportunities can be

developed using the clan structure, which supports connection between year groups. In the coming academic year, continuing expansion of clan events beyond sports is preferable to embed a sense of community and belonging whilst showing leadership.

Homework and Formative Feedback

At the end of the last academic year, in a whole school survey, 12% of students indicated that the reason they did not complete homework was the task was forgotten by the student.

Students were to be encouraged during tutor time and by class teachers to bring their journals to each class to take down their homework. Staff set aside time during class to allow students to note their homework. Results of the 2024/2025 survey indicated this figure had now reduced to 9%. Staff also noted greater and consistent use of journals by students, with the vast majority remembering to bring their journals to class.

Increased use of Compass

The use of Compass has improved this year, namely

- Order marks and conduct marks are being recorded on Compass, as well as in the Detention book. Students are being informed and enrolled into detention automatically.
- Parents are being emailed by staff via Compass.
- Notes of conversations with parents and students are being recording increasingly on Compass.

Increasing the use of structured Groupwork in class

Part of a Croke park hour focussed on the use of teamwork in class and the benefits of it. Staff were presented with several different groupwork strategies, the benefits of each and encouraged as a subject department to incorporate one strategy that would work well for their subject area and incorporate it into their classes. Staff were given laminated examples of groupwork strategies. Students, when surveyed, did not note an increase in use of groupwork in class from last year.

Improvement plan for 2025 - 2026

1. Ethos

Community (SPICES)– Hold a whole school event once per half term to encourage the sense of community and belonging within the school. Events will be sporting and non-sporting.

2. Leadership

Develop the Leadership system in the school

- Term 1 – clearly defined roles and responsibilities of the prefect system
- Term 2 – trial new responsibilities of the prefect system
- Term 3 – Review the trial ready for implementation in Sept 2026

3. Increasing the use of structured Groupwork in class

- At the beginning of the academic year, each subject department will agree a specific groupwork activity to use in their lessons for the year
- This strategy will be incorporated into Subject department planning
- Hold 5 Teach Meets for teachers next year to showcase different active learning/groupwork methodologies chosen by the different departments for use within the classroom
- Develop student awareness of groupwork activities when they take place in class.

School Self Evaluation 2025-2026

LOOKING AT OUR SCHOOLS

Target: Embed Structured Groupwork in class	Action	Implementation by	How it will be monitored?
<p>LAOS: Domain 2</p> <p>Learner Experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students engage purposefully in meaningful learning activities. Statement of Highly Effective Practice: Students are able to learn collaboratively in a very purposeful, creative and productive manner <p>Learner Experience: Students grow as learners through respectful interactions and experiences that are challenging and supportive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statement of Highly Effective Practice: Students ask question and suggest possible solutions confidently. They are willing to risk incorrect responses, and understand the value of making mistakes, using them as learning opportunities Pupils regularly contribute their opinions and experiences to class discussion with confidence. They are respectful of and interested in the opinions and experiences of their classmates and others in the school community. 	<p>Increased use of structured Groupwork in class</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At the beginning of the academic year, each subject department will agree a specific groupwork activity to use in their lessons for the year This strategy will be incorporated into Subject department planning Hold Teach Meets for teachers next year to showcase different active learning/groupwork methodologies chosen by the different departments for use within the classroom Develop student awareness of groupwork activities when they take place in class. 	Whole Staff	Surveys and Focus groups

<p><i>Domain 1: Leading learning and teaching</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethos <p>Those with leadership and management roles promote an inclusive school community which demonstrably values diversity and challenges discrimination.</p>	<p>Community (SPICES)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold a whole school event once per half term to encourage the sense of community and belonging within the school. Events will be sporting and non-sporting. 		
<p><i>Domain 1: Leading learning and teaching</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Leadership <p>Those in leadership and management roles support pupils in taking leadership roles by facilitating relevant training and providing opportunities to lead school initiatives.</p>	<p>Develop the Leadership system in the school</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Term 1 – clearly defined roles and responsibilities of the prefect system • Term 2 – trial new responsibilities of the prefect system • Term 3 – Review the trial ready for implementation in Sept 2026 		