



Swords Educate Together  
National School  
Roll Number 20145 O

## School Self Evaluation Community Report 2018-19

### Rationale

Over the last number of years the Swords ETNS has engaged in the School Self Evaluation process as directed by the Department of Education and Skills. School Self Evaluation provides opportunities for schools to examine their own practice within their own context and to report on their strengths and areas for improvement to their own school community. It brings benefits to teachers as they share experiences and ideas and helps them to become even more effective in their classrooms. It brings benefits to students as they have a say in what works for them and what would help them to learn. It brings benefits to the school as all teachers focus on the same small number of strategies for improvement.

### What is School Self Evaluation?

SSE is a collaborative, reflective, inclusive process of internal school review. During SSE, the principal, deputy principal and teachers, under the direction of the board of management and the patron and in consultation with the parents and students, engage in reflective enquiry on the work of the school.

School self-evaluation is primarily about school improvement and development. School self-evaluation enables schools:

- To take the initiative in improving the quality of education that they provide for their students.
- To affirm and build on what is working well.
- To identify areas in need of development and to decide on actions that should be taken to bring about improvements in those areas.
- To report to the school community about the strengths in the work of the school and its priorities for improvement and development.

Teachers reflect on their work and on the learning that their students achieve as part of their daily professional work. For many years schools have used the school development planning process to identify what is working well and what might need to be improved. School self-evaluation is a way in which this process of reflection, improvement and development can take place in a more systematic way.

School self-evaluation places greater emphasis on collecting, examining and sharing evidence about the work of the school when making decisions about what is working well and what areas need to be improved and developed.

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Principal: Karl Breen

Deputy Principal: Eoghan Beglan

School self-evaluation improves students' learning. Experience in Ireland and in other countries shows that when teachers reflect on their own practice regularly and focus on improving teaching and learning in classrooms, they can improve the learning achieved by students.

School self-evaluation enriches the professional lives of teachers. Teachers who engage in SSE reflect on how they teach and share ideas and questions with their colleagues in a professionally rewarding and supportive way.

## **History of School Self Evaluation to Date:**

Over the past number of years the school's engagement in the School Self Evaluation process has benefited the school's improvement in Teaching and Learning. The areas that we have examined and reflected upon have included:

- Assessment
- Whole School Curricular Planning
- Ethos Evaluation

With help from parents/guardians, students, staff and Board of Management the data collected has proven to be invaluable in providing us with a concrete framework of what areas are thriving as well as areas that need improvement.

As a result of reflecting on the areas above we have;

- Improved Teacher's planning to a more collaborative, structured approach. Templates have been created thus encouraging collaboration and consistency in our curricular planning.
- Provided new models of Standardised Testing and Assessment have been implemented which had a huge benefit on student profiles, especially those children with SEN (Special Educational Needs).
- Informed our understanding of our Educate Together Ethos and enabled us to reflect and make changes to our approach, teaching and planning of our Learn Together Curriculum.

## **2018/19: Ethos Evaluation**

Over the last two years the staff of Swords ETNS evaluated the Ethos of our school and in particular our Learn Together Curriculum. Led by Maeve Osborne (Assistant Principal in charge of Educate Together Ethos Development) we set about critically reflecting on our Ethos. With the help of staff, parents/guardians and students the following results were recorded and collated and are summarised below.

### **2018/19: Ethos Evaluation Summary as supported by data collected.**

- Pupils interpreted our Ethos in the context of following our Golden Rules and through surveys carried out by the student council.

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- Pupils reported on the effectiveness of mindfulness and weaving wellbeing as a core practice of our Ethos. This was completed through a survey on how much they enjoyed partaking in these initiatives.
- Pupils reported on the effectiveness of our Ethos in recording how important they think Assemblies are in reinforcing our Ethos.
- Pupils reported on the effectiveness of our motto “No Child is an Outsider” through questions based around whether they believe the motto is followed by students.
- Teachers reported on their engagement with planning for the Learn Together Curriculum in an attempt to further promote the Ethos of the school.
- Parents/PTA and Board of Management reported on the value of the Ethos in enrolling their children in Swords ETNS.
- Parents reported on their knowledge of the Learn Together Curriculum (strands/strand units)
- Parents reported on the value of “parental involvement” as a core value of our Ethos. They also provided feedback on the limitations to parental involvement within the school.
- Parents reported on their knowledge and support of initiatives to promote the Ethos i.e. Student Council, Positive behaviour Policy, Gold Cards, Golden Rules Trophy and School Charter.
- Parents also reported on the use of “first name terms” for the entire school community in promoting the Ethos.

### What we are doing well: Qualitative/Quantative Data

#### Quantitative data:

- ***Pupils demonstrate the knowledge, skills and understanding of our Ethos and are capable and confident in their understanding of it.***
  - ✓ 89% of the children believe that our school motto “no child is an outsider” is followed.
  - ✓ 70% of children believe that assemblies are important in promoting our Ethos.
  - ✓ 97% of children believe that the Golden Rules are important in promoting the Ethos.
- ***Parents/guardians understand the Learn Together Curriculum and support the strand and strand units of the curriculum.***
  - ✓ 80.4% of the parent population have a rich understanding of the Learn Together Curriculum.
  - ✓ 88.5% of the Parents surveyed said they chose the school because of its Ethos and reputation combined.
  - ✓ 99.6% of Parents reported that the Learn Together Curriculum (strands/strand units) are important in promoting the Ethos.
- ***Parents support the school’s Positive Behaviour Policy as a tool to promote and support the Ethos.***
  - ✓ 93.9% of parents believe that the Positive Behaviour Policy supports and promotes the Ethos

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- **Parents believe that “first name basis” is an important tool in promoting our Ethos.**
  - ✓ 89.2% of parents report that “first name basis” is an important tool in promoting our Ethos.

#### Qualitative data:

- **Staff report that the School’s focus on Mindfulness and Wellbeing is extremely effective.**
  - ✓ Staff discussed in Focus Groups the importance of promoting our Ethos through current initiatives such as Mindfulness and Weaving Wellbeing.
- **Staff believe that the Ethos is effective and feel supported in its delivery i.e (Resources, Support from Management Team and Board of Management)**
  - ✓ During Focus Group discussion the staff felt adequately supported by Middle/Senior Management in the delivery of the Learn Together Curriculum and felt that this supported and promoted the Ethos across the school.
  - ✓ Staff reported that Whole School assemblies were imported in reinforcing the Learn Together Curriculum and therefore the Ethos.
  - ✓ Staff reported that the teaching and learning of the pupils was effective in the Learn Together Curriculum and initiatives such as the following listed below were effective in supporting their teaching and hence their promotion of the Ethos.
    - Whole School Weekly thematic approach to LTP.
    - Golden Rules Trophy/Gold Cards
    - Spiral Approach to Long Term Planning already in place
    - Promotion towards inclusiveness (SEN Children especially)

#### What we can do to improve?

- Support Teacher’s Short Term Planning in relation to the Learn Together Curriculum.
- Use a more collaborative/spiralled approach to planning
- Review and update the Learn Together Policy in accordance with the School Self Evaluation review.
- Create a complete Google Drive Planning Document from JI-6th Class for Learn Together Curriculum.

#### What Next?

- Continue to Monitor the development of the Ethos Evaluation improvements.
- Introduce Wellbeing as the next focus area for School Self Evaluation in light of the publication of the DES Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice 2018-2023.

**Yvonne Coakley**

Chairperson BOM

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