# Ratoath Senior National School

# Our Self-Evaluation Report and School Improvement Plan 2020-2021

# 1. Introduction

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

* 1. **Outcomes of our last improvement plans from 2019 to 2020**
* **Building relationships and community**

Building relational practices where staff and pupils work to understand how individuals in the classroom or the school community relate to one another, using affective language.

* **Developing social and emotional capacity**

Using circles to facilitate pupil and teacher connectivity – community building circles, thereby developing responsibility for self and others and learning about accountability.

* **Developing school wide/prevention practices**

Developing routines, creating classroom values, thereby building community, working together addressing school-wide and classroom issues.

**2. Step 1: Identify Focus**

We undertook self-evaluation of teaching and learning during the period 2019 - 2020 and now will continue the process of School Self-Evaluation. During that evaluation teaching and learning across the whole school in the area of Restorative Practice was evaluated. The focus of this SSE report is on our teaching and learning and leadership and management in developing the area *.*

There are seven key principles and values of restorative practice for a school setting which are as follows:

1. It acknowledges that relationships are central to building community
2. It builds systems that address misbehaviour and harm in a way that strengthens relationships
3. It focuses on the harm done rather than only on rule-breaking
4. It gives voice to the person harmed and also to the person causing harm, developing empathy on both sides
5. It engages in collaborative problem solving
6. It empowers change and growth
7. It enhances responsibility

There are six strategies which help guide effective practice when implementing Restorative Practice. They are as follows:

1. Make positive teacher-pupil relationships a priority
2. Expect school staff to model moral, ethical and pro-social behaviour
3. Provide opportunities for students to develop and practice skills like empathy, compassion, and conflict resolution
4. Mobilise students to take a leadership role
5. Use discipline strategies that are not simply punitive
6. Conduct regular assessments of school values and climate

The above strategies were used to formulate questions which we as a staff reflected upon in identifying what is working well in our school and what needs to be improved.

1. How well is the school applying and ‘living’ the values and principles?
2. Do we make positive student relationships a priority?
3. Does the school staff model moral, ethical and pro-social behaviour?
4. Do we provide opportunities for students to develop and practice skills like empathy, compassion and conflict resolution?
5. Do we use discipline strategies that are not simply punitive?
6. Do we conduct regular assessments of school values and climate?
7. What aspects are highly effective? What are we doing well?
8. What areas need improvement and development? What are the areas for growth?
9. How can we work towards improving these sections? Where and what can we do to make that improvement happen?

We looked at the following aspects of teaching and learning and leadership and management from the perspective of implementing Restorative Practice:

**Pupils**

* Learner Outcomes – Have the necessary knowledge and skills to understand themselves and their relationships
* Learner Outcomes – Grow as learners through respectful interactions and experiences that are challenging and supportive
* Learner Outcomes – Grow and develop as people learning important traits and life skills such as empathy, compassion and self-reflection

**Teachers**

* Teachers’ Individual Practice - Have the requisite subject knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and classroom management skills
* Teachers’ Collective/ Collaborative Practice – Value and engage in professional development and professional collaboration
* Teachers’ Collective/ Collaborative Practice – Contribute to building whole-staff capacity by sharing their expertise
* Teachers’ Collective/ Collaborative Practice – Help develop an ethos and atmosphere that reflects the ethos of Restorative Practice while all of the time reflecting the Catholic ethos of the school

**School Leaders**

* Leading learning and Teaching – Promote a culture of improvement, collaboration, innovation and creativity in learning, teaching and assessment
* Leading learning and Teaching – Foster a commitment to inclusion, equality of opportunity and the holistic development of each pupil
* Managing the Organisation – Establish an orderly, secure and healthy learning environment, and maintain it through effective communication
* Managing the Organisation – Manage challenging and complex situations in a manner that demonstrates equality, fairness and justice
* Leading School Development – Communicate the guiding vision for the school and lead its realisation
* Leading School Development – Build and maintain relationships with parents, with other schools, and with the wider community
* Leading School Development – Manage, lead and mediate change to respond to the evolving needs of the school and to changes in education
* Developing Leadership Capacity – Promote and facilitate the development of pupil voice, pupil participation, and pupil leadership

We decided that our focus would be taken from the Teaching and Learning Dimension, Domain 3, Teachers’ Individual Practice, Standard Number 3.

**Step 2: Gather Evidence**

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| **Domain** | **Standard** | **Questions** | **Methods to Gather Evidence** |
| Teacher’s Individual Practice | The teacher has the requisite subject knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and classroom management skills | With respect to classroom management skills, does the teacher:   1. Have the required professional qualifications and have engaged in a range of continuing professional development courses to make positive teacher-pupil relationships a priority? 2. Create an inclusive, orderly, pupil-centred learning environment based on mutual respect, affirmation and trust providing opportunities for pupils to develop and practice skills like empathy, compassion and conflict resolution? 3. Have high expectations of pupils’ work and behaviour, and communicate these expectations effectively to pupils and use discipline strategies that are not simply punitive? 4. Provide pupils with an opportunity to be listened and to use their voice | * Reflection sheets to be completed by all teachers * Professional collaboration review * Teachers’ focus groups * Whole school discussion * Looking at our School 2016 – a quality Framework for Primary Schools |

**Step 3: Analyse and Make Judgements**

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| **Statements of Effective Practice** | **How well are we doing?** | **What are the strengths?** | **What are the areas for improvement and growth?** |
| Teachers have the required professional qualifications and have engaged in a range of continuing professional development courses (CPD) to make positive teacher-pupil relationships a priority. | It was established that all teachers have the requisite subject knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and classroom management skills.  Restorative Practice facilitator, Michelle Stowe presented two two hour workshops to staff. in May 2019.  A number of teachers have completed the summer course Introducing Restorative Practice to Classroom and School. Twenty hours was completed.  Class teacher Erin Callinan is engaging in further Restorative Practice training. Erin Callinan hosts teacher/teacher talks for all staff members every Thursday morning to provide teachers with the opportunity to discuss how restorative Practice is going with their class. | The strengths are that the teachers learn from each other and are very interested in developing their skills in these areas. | Changes in the needs of some of our pupils have been identified with regard to social and emotional development. As a school we have to change and develop so that we can respond professionally to these needs as they occur amongst our pupils. The teachers will engage in further continuous professional development to ensure that they have the knowledge and skills to implement any changes necessary. |
| Teachers create an inclusive, orderly, pupil-centred learning environment based on mutual respect, affirmation and trust providing opportunities for pupils to develop and practice skills like empathy, compassion and conflict resolution. | It was established that allteachers endeavour to create an inclusive, orderly, pupil-centred learning environment based on mutual respect, affirmation and trust providing opportunities for pupils to develop and practice skills like empathy, compassion and conflict resolution, through the means of Circle Time once a week. | The strengths are that the teachers have identified these areas as being central to the effectiveness and development of our school community. Teachers know that if these areas are not in place teaching and learning will not be effective. | Due to changes in society some pupils in our school community find the practice of empathy, compassion and conflict resolution difficult. As a school it is necessary for us to respond to these children and provide them with these skills, thus equipping them for life beyond the school community.  As teachers we will engage with a variety of teaching methodologies to enable the children to develop the confidence to solve issues of conflict in a restorative manner. |
| Teachers have high expectations of pupils’ work and behaviour, and communicate these expectations effectively to pupils and use discipline strategies that are not simply punitive. | It was established that allteachers high expectations of pupils’ work and behaviour, and communicate these expectations effectively to pupils and use discipline strategies that are not simply punitive. | The strengths are that the teachers expect the highest of standards from all of the pupils and that they engage in a variety of approaches to discipline. It is important that the children also get a chance to discuss and give their own response and ideas with regard to the area of discipline. | What became clear from our discussions was that a common approach to discipline, that was more holistic and child centred, was an area that the teachers wished to explore. The teachers believe that there needs to be more discussion with the pupils and they need to take greater ownership of decisions that they make, understand what they do, why they do it and the consequences that ensue from their decisions. |

**Step 4: Write and Share Report and Improvement Plan**

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| **School Improvement Plan 2019-2020** | |
| **Improvement Plan**  **Co-ordinator** | **Mary Garvey** |
| **Targets** | 1. **Building relationships and community**   Building relational practices where staff and pupils work to understand how individuals in the classroom or the school community relate to one another, using affective language.   1. **Developing social and emotional capacity**   Using circles to facilitate pupil and teacher connectivity – community building circles, thereby developing responsibility for self and others and learning about accountability.   1. **Developing school wide/prevention practices**   Developing routines, creating classroom values, thereby building community, working together addressing school-wide and classroom issues. |

**Step 5: Put Improvement Plan into Action**

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| **ACTIONS**  **Actions for Target One**   1. The staff will consider the presentations delivered by Michelle Stowe delivered in May 2019. At our staff meeting in August 2019 the staff will discuss the implementation of Restorative Practice in the school. 2. The staff will be cognisant of Restorative Practice and its implementation. Feedback from other Restorative Practice courses engaged in by the staff will be discussed. 3. Affective language will be used and modelled by all staff (Questions that can make things right). Classroom expectations will be devised instead of rules. 4. A support group will be established and they will meet weekly to discuss the implementation of Restorative Practice.   **Actions for Target Two**   1. Proactive class circles around social and emotional learning will be developed. Teachers are encouraged to try using the circle to support social and emotional learning. 2. The children will learn that the talking piece regulates the dialogue. The teachers will use ‘the giraffe’ as their talking piece. 3. There will be explicit discussion of values and expectations before discussing the issues. The staff is reminded of the need to discuss the values and expectations regularly with the children.   **Actions for Target Three**   1. ‘Friends’ values will be taught. Lessons based on each value are to be developed and delivered at each class level as appropriate to the age group. 2. Restorative conversations will take place as required in the classroom, corridor and on the yard. As the school becomes more accustomed to the use of Restorative Practice staff members and pupils are encouraged to apply their learning outside the classroom. 3. Affective question will be used by staff members when a pupil has misbehaved and they will also be used as an aid to resolving conflict. 4. Affective statements will be used by staff members when a pupil has misbehaved. 5. The establishment of a Student Council will be researched. 6. A follow-up to the Zeeko Internet Safety Programme, Appyness On-Line, will take place in the new term, with a view to it being rolled out to all of the classes after Christmas. | **WHO**  All staff  All staff  All staff  All staff  All staff  All staff  All staff  All staff  All staff |

**Step 6: Monitor Actions and Evaluate Impact**

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| **Monitoring Strategies for Actions**  **Action 1**: Mary Garvey will lead the discussion in relation to the implementation of Restorative Practice at the August 2019 staff meeting.  **Action 2:** Many staff members will engage in continuous professional development in the area of Restorative Practice and Erin Callinan will complete the Check Out part of the training.  **Action 3**: Staff members will begin using affective language with the pupils upon return to school in August 2019. The effectiveness of this will be reviewed by the In-School Management Team at the end of September/beginning of October 2019 following class level planning meetings.  **Action 4**: Erin Callinan will hold regular ‘Check-ins’ on Thursday mornings at 9.00a.m for all staff members who can attend, at which the use of the circles will be discussed.  **Action 5**: The principal, Loraine Butler, will check with staff regarding the use and effectiveness of the giraffe as the talking piece.  **Action 6**: Teachers will be reminded to display their class values and expectations by Loraine Butler.  **Action 7**: Feedback will be taken from staff members at the end of month reviews as to the effectiveness of using restorative conversations with the children.  **Action 8**: Feedback will be taken from staff members at the end of month reviews as to the effectiveness of using affective questioning with the children when there is an incident of misbehaviour.  **Action 9**: Feedback will be taken from staff members at the end of month reviews as to the effectiveness of using affective statements with the children when there is an incident of misbehaviour. |

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| **Evaluation Approaches**  **Target 1:** In June 2020, the staff focus group will be conducted to determine if relational practices where staff and pupils worked to understand how individuals in the classroom or the school community related to one another, using affective language.  **Target 2**: In June 2020, the staff focus group will determine if using circles facilitated pupil and teacher connectivity – community building circles, thereby developing responsibility for self and others and learning about accountability.  **Target 3**: In June 2020, the staff focus group will determine if Restorative Practice routines were developed in the classes, incorporating classroom values, thereby building community, with the objective of working together, addressing school-wide and classroom issues. | **Evaluation Tools**   * Focus groups * Staff meetings * In-school management meetings |
| **Necessary Adjustments Throughout Implementation Process**  Regular reflection at staff meetings and at the monthly planning meetings regarding the implementation of Restorative Practice will be required. Relevant adjustments will be made based on challenges and successes incurred. | |