**SN Tobair Eoin Baisde**

**School Self-Evaluation**

**Progress Report**

All Primary Schools in Ireland are subject to the rules and regulations laid down by the Department of Education and skills.

Here is some information about how we carry out our work and about what the Department of Education and Skills requires us to do.

**Curriculum**

Johnswell National School follows the Primary School Curriculum as laid down by the Department of Education and skills. Details of the primary school curriculum are available online at [www.curriculumonline.ie](http://www.curriculumonline.ie)

**School Time and Holidays**

The Department requires all schools to work 183 school days each year. Due to Covid-19 this has been disrupted over the previous two years.

In the 2020-2021 school year Johnswell NS was open for 150 days and engaged in online teaching for 33 days. All school holidays were taken as directed, within the permitted times.

**Staff Meetings and Parent/Teacher Meetings**

In the 2020-2021 school year Johnswell NS held Parent/Teacher meetings by phone and staff meetings were held after school hours during designated Croke Park hours. All was done in line with Department regulations.

**Looking after Children in our School**

The Department requires schools to follow the *Child Protection Procedures* it has set down. Our Board of Management agrees in writing to this and reviews the procedures each year. All staff are aware of and follow these procedures. A copy of the Child Protection documents for Johnswell NS is available on our school website.

Our Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is Ms. Geraldine Patterson and our Deputy DLP is Mr. Shane Campion.

**Enrolment and Attendance**

The Department requires schools to have and publish and admissions policy, to record and report attendance accurately and to encourage high attendance and participation.

Our attendance policy is available to view on the school website.

Roll is called each day and attendance recorded. Annual attendance reports are sent to TUSLA. Attendance in Johnswell NS is of a high standard.

**Positive behaviour for a happy school**

The Department requires schools to have a code of behaviour. The Code of Behaviour for Johnswell NS is available to view on the school website.

This code of Behaviour describes and supports positive behaviour.

Johnswell NS also has a clear anti-bullying policy. This can also be viewed on the school website.

**School Self-Evaluation**

Each year the Department requires schools to choose an area for focus and improvement. Here are some of the areas we have chosen to work on over the past few years.

**2018 – 2020**

**Curricular Area: Literacy**

**Specific Focus: Differentiation**

Differentiation means that the teacher responds to individual learning needs and differentiates teaching and learning

needs as necessary.

As classes in Johnswell NS are multi-grade teachers plan for instruction on a two or three year cycle. They differentiate content and activities in order to cater for the varying needs and abilities of pupils and work together to devise learning opportunities for pupils across and beyond the curriculum.

Mathematics is delivered to each class at their own level with some overlap on topics. With most other subjects, including English, teachers engage in whole-class teaching when introducing a subject. Differentiation in this case is by expected outcome, activity or length of time allowed.

**2018 -2020**

**Curricular Area: Literacy**

**Specific Focus: Handwriting**

It was decided that a consistent approach would be used throughout the school and the cursive script used throughout the school would be visible in each classroom.

Cursive script is taught from Junior Infants to 3rd class.  In Junior and Senior Infants the children use joining tails when writing. Handwriting workbooks are used from Junior Infants to 4th class. Teachers dedicate at least 30 minutes a week to cursive handwriting. Children are encouraged to practice their cursive writing at home and during free time.

**2018 -2020**

**Curricular Area: Literacy**

**Specific Focus: Comprehension**

Comprehension strategies are taught using the *Gradual Release of Responsibility*model as follows:

First, the teacher explicitly describes the comprehension strategy about to be taught and states why good readers use this strategy when reading.

The teacher explicitly models the strategy by demonstrating and thinking aloud while the children observe the strategy in action.

Following this, the teacher continues to model the strategy and invites the children to contribute their ideas.

Next, the children engage in collaborative use of the strategy through guided practice where the teacher gradually releases responsibility for the strategy to the children through scaffolding instruction and facilitation.

The children engage in independent use of the strategy in subsequent lessons.

In a whole class situation during an oral language lesson, teachers cater for all abilities through use of well thought out questions. Teachers use a variety of organisational settings when striving to develop the pupils’ comprehension skills: children can work individually, in pairs, in groups or with the whole class.  Comprehension skills are developed through oral and written work with an emphasis on discussion. Workbooks and class readers are used selectively and judiciously by teachers as a tool to develop the pupils’ comprehension skills. Comprehension skills are developed across the curriculum in all subject areas.

Finally, the teaching of reading comprehension skills will be set at specific times of year to ensure that all children are learning certain comprehension skills on a whole school level. Specific targets are set for each class level.

**2018 - 2020**

**Curricular Area: Literacy**

**Specific Focus: Oral Language**

As a first step staff agreed that their own respectful interactions should be highly visible to the pupils. Every opportunity should be taken to model the desired behaviours. Each class should introduce structured oral-language games involving eye-contact, turn-taking and listening. In SPHE and Social Group activities positive language is encouraged and modelled. Rights and the responsibilities that come with them are discussed in class and at assembly. The school takes every opportunity to engage in whole-school activities, for example World Book Day or Science projects, to encourage social interaction between classes.

Respectful listening is encouraged through such activities as

* Show and tell
* Social groups
* Book discussions, poetry
* Daily assemblies, celebrating achievement
* Providing language around respect, rights and responsibilities
* Minute matters – daily one to two minutes of oral language

In general, every opportunity for children to speak is exploited. Teachers respectful listening and encourage children to listen, respond and take-turns. Our philosophy is that all opinions are valued, there is no such thing as a wrong answer and we learn from our mistakes.

**2019 -2020**

**Curricular Area: Literacy**

**Specific Focus: Writing Genres**

A two-year table outlining the genres was drawn up with a list of particular genres to focus on over a two-year period. Targets for each class group were identified based on the New Primary Language Curriculum.

The formal teaching of one individual genre takes place over 6-8 weeks during each term, while the genres taught in the previous year are revised intermittently during the year and at the discretion of the teacher.

**2020 -2021**

**Curricular Area: SPHE**

**Specific Focus: Wellbeing**

**Wellbeing Framework for Practice**

**Key area: Culture and Environment**

**Indicator of Success: Systems are in place so that the voice of the child/young person, teacher and parent**

**are heard and lead to improvements in school culture and ethos.**

**Opportunities are provided for children and young people, staff and parents to have an active voice in decisions relating to school improvement.**

During this school year the emphasis was on supporting children as they integrated back into school life and routines, following the long period of home-schooling due to Covid-19. Outdoor play areas were enhanced for younger children, thanks to the support of the Parents Council, and extra outdoor resources – balls, hoops, ropes etc. were provided for breaks. The parents council also provided an outdoor table-tennis table. Mr. Campion organised chickens for the school garden and the children took charge of their care.

From October the Weaving Wellbeing Programme was implemented in the Senior Room. The first group targeted was 4th class. This is a large class group of 14 pupils so they were divided into two groups who met with Mrs. Maher once a week. The programme focussed on positive emotions and also afforded an opportunity to the children to engage with each other in a small-group setting in a safe space. The sessions took place outside the classroom, in the Library area.

At the same time, Mrs. Maher also provided in-class support to the whole Senior Class for SPHE.

It had been planned to repeat this small-group withdrawal with the 5th and 6th class groups in January. However, the second lockdown in January 2021 put this plan on hold.

After the return to school in mid-March the decision was made to support individual children and small groups showing the most signs of continued anxiety.

At the same time, teachers used the outdoor areas of the school to great effect in their teaching. Reconnecting with the natural world surrounding their school helps anxious children while also providing opportunities throughout each day to ventilate classrooms. All PE activities moved outdoors and movement breaks were incorporated on a whole-class basis as often as possible. At the same time, particularly anxious, fearful or poorly motivated children were identified in each class and a system of movement breaks was put in place to aid these individuals. These targeted children were allowed to choose a companion or small group to accompany them on some breaks, thus ensuring that they were not further isolated from peers. This system was very effective in the middle classes. A number of storage areas were converted to ‘quiet spaces’ to assist in this.

The Walk-on-Wednesday initiative, incorporated into the Green School Travel Flag programme, was very effective in allowing the children to interact socially in an outdoor setting. Classes remained in ‘bubbles’ while still engaging in a whole-school activity.

Older and middle classes were very involved in the school garden and planning for outdoor activities while younger classes undertook their own weekly walk, monitoring the seasonal changes and investigating their surroundings.

Sports leagues and team activities helped to build confidence amongst the children and particular emphasis was placed on team-building amongst the older classes.

Particular care was taken to mark the special occasions throughout the school year while observing all safety precautions.

**2021 -2022**

**Curricular Area: Literacy**

**Specific Focus: Embedding IT**

Department of Education funding has allowed us to invest in IT to support the teaching and learning in the school. Each class already has an interactive whiteboard, which is used to great effect in presenting lessons and allowing the children to take part in Zoom activities with children in other schools. Twenty new android tablets were purchased in September and these are used by the children to access educational sites, work on projects, research topics and engage in class quizzes.