Tarbert Comprehensive School

SELF-EVALUATION AND SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

SCHOOL COMMUNITY SUMMARY PROGRESS REPORT JUNE 2026

During our School Self-Evaluation Process, based on *Looking at Our Schools 2022-2026*, we have evaluated teaching and learning in our school to find out what we are doing well. This is what we discovered:

- ✓ Junior cycle students have generally attained proficiency in the prescribed key skills appropriate to their stage in the cycle
- ✓ Senior Cycle students have attained proficiency in the skills required for successful learning in the programmes they are following
- ✓ Students' achievements in summative assessments, including certificate examinations, is in line with or above expectations
- ✓ Students are able to work independently and collaboratively in a purposeful and productive manner
- ✓ Students understand and can explain the purpose of their learning tasks, and can extend and develop the activity meaningfully
- ✓ Students contribute their opinions and experiences to class discussion with confidence. They are respectful of and interested in the opinions and experience of their classmates
- ✓ Teachers have the required professional qualifications and actively seek out further learning opportunities. They reflect critically on their own learning and practice. They engage in a range of personal and professional learning opportunities that develops their capacity as professionals to meet the learning needs of their students and contributes to school improvement
- ✓ Teachers' preparation identifies relevant learning intentions that are contextualised to students' learning needs, interests and abilities. Learning intentions reflect a developmental and incremental approach to progressing students' learning
- ✓ Teachers regularly provide students with constructive, developmental oral and written feedback on their learning
- ✓ Teachers share and co-create success criteria with students so that they can assess their own learning through self-assessment and peer assessment, and identify areas for improvement and strategies to achieve improvement
- ✓ Teachers meaningfully differentiate content and activities to cater for the varying needs, interests and abilities of students.
- ✓ Teachers integrate relevant literacy and numeracy skills into the fabric of the lesson
- ✓ Teachers use formal meeting and planning time to reflect together on their work
- ✓ Teachers view collaboration as a means to improve student learning and to enhance their own professional development. They engage in constructive collaborative practice and in collaborative review of practice
- ✓ Teachers collectively agree and implement whole-school approaches to learning and teaching that include the use of online platforms and other digital technologies to improve students' experiences and outcomes

This is what we did to find out what we were doing well, and what we could do better:

- ➢ We analysed our results from state Examinations
- ➢ We engaged in teacher discussion and feedback
- ➢ We surveyed parents, teachers, and students on various aspects of teaching and learning in the school
- ➢ We held focus group discussions based around certain areas of teaching and learning
- ➢ We assessed our strengths and needs using the national school evaluation guidelines in 'Looking at Our Schools (SSE Guidelines) 2022-2026
- ➢ We assessed needs based on the Framework for the JCSP
- ➢ We assessed our needs based on the 'Digital Strategy for Schools to 2027'
- ➢ We implemented and included recommendations made in Subject Inspections, Inspectorate Advisory

Visits and WSE Reports, including the most recent 2024 WSE Inspection, and recent relevant publications and guidelines

In 2024 the Inspectorate carried out a WSE (Whole School Evaluation) of the school and concluded that in Tarbert Comprehensive School:

- The quality of teaching and learning was very good, with a number of excellent lessons and many examples of excellent practice observed
- The overall quality of school leadership and management was excellent
- The principal and deputy principal formed an excellent senior leadership team and provided exemplary leadership of teaching and learning
- The school's improvement planning was driven by a culture of high expectations of both staff and students
- The school self-evaluation (SSE) process purposefully, and very effectively, ensured that actions implemented at whole-school and classroom levels, led to measurable and identifiable improvements in learner outcomes and experiences
- Teachers, with and without formal posts of responsibility, were encouraged and supported to take leadership roles
- A wide range of leadership opportunities existed for students: it was commendable that students were represented on the Teaching and Learning and Wellbeing teams
- The support provided for student wellbeing was exceptional: a high priority was placed on the creation of a positive school culture that was underpinned by respectful interactions, evidenced throughout the evaluation

Evaluation and adjustments in respect of the current School Improvement Plan

These are the areas of focus in this year's SSE (School Self-Evaluation) Report:

- ✓ Teaching and Learning including Assessment for Learning and actions taken to address the impact of COVID-19
- ✓ Blended Learning/E-Learning
- ✓ Wellbeing Promotion in the school
- ✓ Leadership - Planning and Student Voice

Teaching and Learning including our COVID-19 Response

We continue to prioritise Assessment for Learning as the means of reinforcing the idea that students and teachers are partners in the learning process, and to encourage a culture of self-evaluation among students. The focus in the current School Improvement Plan remains on the delivery and application of quality feedback, with more targeted focus on strategies to support student reflection on learning, including a whole school approach to study strategies.

The LAOS (Looking at Our Schools) Standards relevant to our current targets in this area are:

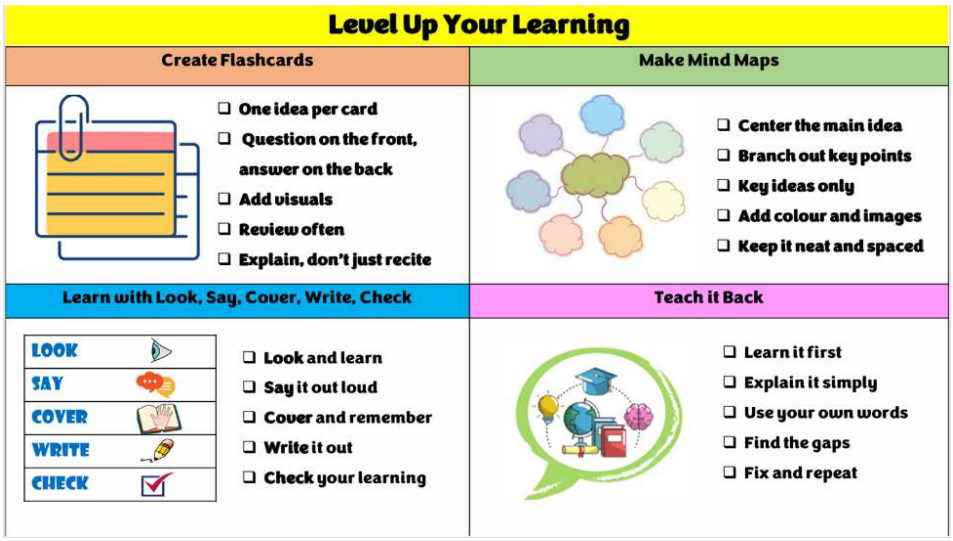
- ✓ **The teacher selects and uses planning, preparation and assessment practices that progress students' learning**
- ✓ **Students reflect on their progress as learners and develop a sense of ownership of and responsibility for their learning**

Progress to date and Next Steps (June 2026):

- ➢ Our 2024 WSE report, found that '*in many junior cycle lessons, teachers utilised a common whole-school*

strategy to provide both oral and written formative feedback.'

- The number of students stating they are provided with 'Next Steps' for improvement 'Often' has not yet met our target and so we will continue to reinforce this in order to improve on this

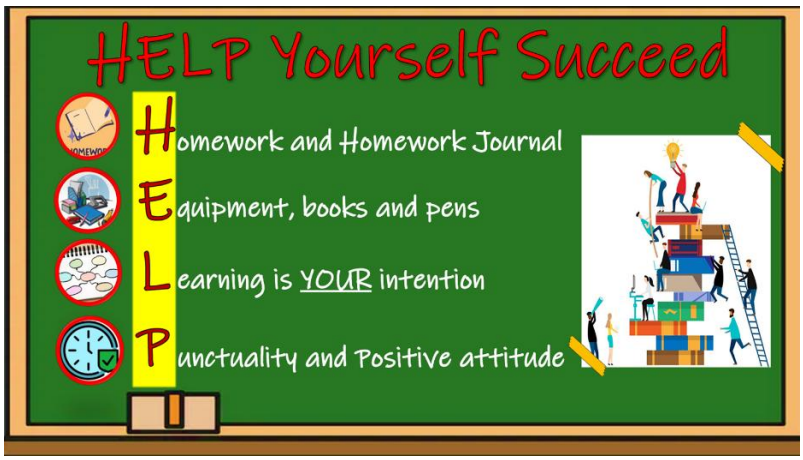


- Our current focus is in the area of student self-evaluation - supporting students in being able to recognise the relationship between using success criteria, applying feedback, and improved outcomes. Last year we included an action in our SIP to adopt a whole school approach to study techniques based on current practice in study skills by the Guidance Department, outside study skills providers, and feedback on approaches favoured by students. Evidence of the effective implementation of this was the large numbers of students observed using flashcards and mindmaps during study periods prior to house and state exams. This action will remain a focus for the coming year. To support this further teachers will begin the process of recording class test results on VSware - initially this will be for LC1 students only. This information will be shared at parent-student-teacher meetings and will provide a clear overview of students' progress and areas for attention

<u>Addressing the impact of Covid</u>

The LAOS (Looking at Our Schools) Standards relevant to our current targets in this area are:

- ✓ **Students reflect on their progress as learners and develop a sense of ownership of and responsibility for their learning**
- ✓ **Teachers collectively develop and implement consistent and dependable formative and summative assessment practices**
- ✓ **Create and maintain a positive school culture and a safe, healthy and purposeful, learning environment and sustain it through effective communication**



As a result of our previous review, conducted via a survey of students, parents and teachers, about the impact of COVID-19 on students and school life, we noted common responses across the three groups which fell broadly into the areas of: attendance; exam/study-related issues; focus and engagement; social issues, and Wellbeing. In response to this in a previous School Improvement Plan we introduced the 'HELP Yourself Succeed' strategy. This strategy has been successful in addressing the issues stated, and remains as an action. A change last year in order to address lateness to school and classes on the part of a small cohort of students was to change **<u>P</u>** to emphasise the importance of Punctuality.

Progress to date and Next Steps (June 2026):

- ✓ Targets to reduce the number of VSware notes pertaining to homework and equipment were met last year and no longer form part of our plan
- ✓ A current area of focus in respect of the HELP Yourself Succeed action is to encourage whole school approach homework practices given the changing and varied needs of subjects. To this end and in light of curricular changes there is a need to examine redraft the school's homework and assessment policies as a staff
- ✓ Information collected from students indicated that while older students attribute lateness to class to the need to have a break or fresh air between classes, younger students tend to blame organisational issues. These will be addressed in the coming year. Regarding lateness in the morning, students suggest that in some cases parents may need to be reminded of the importance of arriving on time to school

Blended Learning/Digital Learning Targets

Emphasis up to now has largely been on students and teachers having the skills and knowledge associated with being engaged, literate, and responsible in the digital arena, with targets including implementing a whole school approach to how we manage classes and resources, using Google Classroom and adopting a 'blended learning' approach to teaching and learning. As these skills have been embedded, focus has shifted to the students themselves being able to engage with various technologies and tools to work together and individually to create digital artefacts in classes and assessments. To further support students' focused and meaningful engagement with the digital, the e-Learning and IT Co-ordinators undertook specific training in supporting students in the use of Digital Portfolios to improve student reflection and outcomes. A continuing related target that TY subjects provide students with feedback that the students can upload so that they can demonstrate how they applied this feedback in order to improve outcomes.

The LAOS (Looking at Our Schools) Standards relevant to our current targets in this area are:

- ✓ **Students reflect on their progress as learners and develop a sense of ownership and responsibility for their own learning.**
- ✓ **The teacher selects and uses teaching approaches appropriate to the learning intentions to students' learning needs, and appropriate to a blended learning model**

Progress to date and next steps (June 2026):

- ➢ The report on the recent WSE was complimentary about the structures, provision and use of digital technologies for learning in the school, indicating: *'There was very good use of Digital Learning Technologies (DLT) to support student learning in all lessons'* and that the use of DLT in observed lessons was of '*exceptional quality'*
- ➢ The design of relevant course content and skills continues to be at the centre of planning for computer classes. This includes Digital Citizenship as part of the school's Wellbeing programme, as well as Coding in Third Year, a Responsible Research Module for Second Year, and the recent introduction of Computer Science as a Leaving Cert option
- ➢ We have introduced measures to support students in engaging with technology including digital learning mentors to help first years, and a page to the school journal to remind students of how to use various aspects of Google Classroom
- ➢ Evaluation this year indicated that some but not all TY students had received and uploaded feedback to their e-portfolios. This action will be continued next year

The school has engaged with Government policy on the restriction of mobile phones in second level schools (05/25). As a result of the consultations held with students, parents and staff a new Mobile Phone Policy will be in place next year. Parents can access the full policy on the website and student friendly versions in the school journals.

Wellbeing

As was required by the Inspectorate during this SSE cycle, a review of the promotion of Wellbeing in the school was carried out resulting in a target to ensure that students felt supported by staff when appropriate and were aware of our systems and structures in this regard. Actions to support this included the recently introduced 'One Good Adult', programme to provide supports to senior students, and the development of inclusive and student friendly version of key policies - including the mobile phone policy above, and the Bi Cinealta (Anti-Bullying policy) - to support understanding and accessibility for all. This process will continue with other key policies next year.

The LAOS (Looking at Our Schools) Standards relevant to our current targets in this area are:

- ✓ Foster a commitment to inclusion, equality of opportunity and the holistic development of each student
- ✓ Create and maintain a positive school culture and a safe, healthy and purposeful, learning environment and sustain it through effective communication

Progress to date and Next Steps (June 2026):

- ➢ Following the recent WSE, the Inspectorate deemed that in this school: *'The support provided for student wellbeing was exceptional. A high priority was placed on the creation of a positive school climate that was underpinned by respectful interactions, which were evidenced throughout the evaluation'* It further praised the leadership, structures and systems, and their role in '*creating a positive and enriching school experience*.'
- ➢ Students and parents surveyed were positive about the school as an inclusive environment, and responded positively to those areas associated with safety
- ➢ Following the initial creation of a student friendly infographic for Bi Cinealta, this year the Student Council developed a similar infographic for the new mobile phone policy. This action will continue next year with other key policies
- ➢ The 'One Good Adult' programme will continue and be adjusted according to student feedback around the consistency of approach by teachers

Leadership, Planning, and Student Voice

Management in Tarbert actively encourages leadership in many ways - through teacher participation in CPD in the sharing of new learning as part of our culture of collaboration and innovation. We do this in various ways including sharing best practice online and at staff meetings. Next year focus will be on training in

respect of new Senior Cycle subject specifications as they are available, and on further planning for the new Transition Year Programme Statement which has necessitated subject audits and a resulting revision of plans. We also encourage student leadership and involvement in various ways in the school, through our Mentoring programme, Gaisce, student involvement in school teams and Student Council, among other activities.

The LAOS (Looking at Our Schools) Standards relevant to our current targets in this area are:

- ✓ The teacher selects and uses planning, preparation and assessment practices that progress students' learning
- ✓ Teachers collectively develop and implement consistent and dependable formative and summative assessment practices
- ✓ Promote and facilitate the development of student voice, student participation, and student leadership

Progress to date and Next Steps (June 2026):

- Subject departments have continued a process of planning based on feedback from recent WSE and subject inspections. These include planning for individual Units of Learning linked to learning outcomes and success criteria, based on Junior Cycle subject specifications; focus on L2LP planning within subject plans; the auditing and adjustment of TY plans according to the requirements of the new programme for TY, and initial planning in light of changes to Senior Cycle subject specifications
- Teachers continue to undertake CPD in relation to the above including whole staff, subject department and individual training
- Teachers continue to share their expertise in many ways including at school staff meetings and on our staff site, on various teams and committees, and in subject departments. Such practice was judged in the WSE to constitute *'exceptional collaborative practice'*
- We continue to promote and include student voice and feedback through a variety of mechanisms
- The Teaching and Learning Team and the Wellbeing Committee will continue to include students - this practice was commended in the recent WSE

This is what you can do to help

Support the school's digital strategies - encourage your child to engage fully with our learning platform and the digital resources suggested by or created by teachers

Lead by example by downloading the school VSware App in order to submit absences and **check your child's progress each week prior to signing the homework journal**

Encourage your child to take responsibility for their learning and their progress. Engage them in conversation about their learning and encourage them to reflect on areas for improvement

Encourage your child to 'get involved' in school life, to take an active role in their learning and in their experiences in the school

Respond to any request from the school for feedback in the form of surveys, focus groups or other means of gathering information. We are partners in your child's education and your voice is important in informing future planning in the school.

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

School time and holidays

The Department requires all post-primary schools to have **166 school days** each year, and a **28-hour school week**.
Our school year last year was from 25/08/25 to 29/05/26. Our school week is 28 hours.
The Department sets out a **standardised school year and school holidays**.
This year we took all our school holidays within the permitted time. YES

The Department sets out arrangements for **parent/teacher meetings and staff meetings**. This year all such meetings were facilitated according to DES procedure

Looking after the children in our school

The Department requires schools to follow the *Child Protection Procedures* it has set down. Our board of management has agreed in writing to do this. YES
All teachers know about the *Procedures,* and we have told all parents about them and how we follow them. YES
Our Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is ***Mr. Richard Prendiville,*** and our Deputy DLP is ***Ms. Leila Moloney***

Enrolment and attendance

The Department requires schools to have and publish an admissions policy, to record and report attendance accurately, and to encourage high attendance and participation.
We have an admissions policy, and it is published. YES
We reviewed (and updated) our admissions policy in: January 2023
We keep accurate attendance records and report them as required. YES

Positive behaviour for a happy school

The Department requires schools to have a code of behaviour and asks us to consult parents and students about it. We do this. YES
Our code of behaviour describes and supports positive behaviour. YES
We have a very clear and high-profile anti-bullying policy in our school. YES