

The Schools' Provision for Students' Wellbeing Project

EMOTIONAL WELLBEING - AT THE HEART OF
SCHOOL COMMUNITIES



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PROJECT AIM:



The aim of this Project is ultimately to develop an evaluation framework which could be used both by schools and external evaluators, in the Irish context, to report on the quality of schools' provision for students' wellbeing.

We asked the participating schools to reflect with us on

1. those aspects of their provision that they believe contribute to their pupils'/students' wellbeing
2. how well those aspects are functioning to support pupils'/students' wellbeing
3. the perceptions of pupils/students and their parents with regard to aspects of school provision that support wellbeing

PROJECT CONTEXT:



A range of initiatives have been launched in schools which attempt to address wellbeing from particular perspectives.

These include:

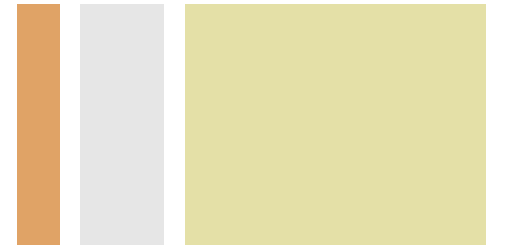
- *Social, Personal and Health Education – Teacher Guidelines* (DES and NCCA 1999)
- *Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties: A Continuum of Support* (NEPS, 2010)
- *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* (DES, 2011)
- *Schools for Health in Ireland: Framework Post-Primary* (HSE, 2012)
- *Get Active! Physical Education, Physical Activity and Young People: A Guiding Framework* (DES, 2012)
- *Well-Being in Post-Primary Schools – Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention* (DES, HSE, Department of Health and NEPS, 2013)
- *Action Plan on Bullying* (DES, 2013)

The *Schools' provision for students' wellbeing* project

The project began in June 2013 and proceeded in two phases:

Phase 1: Inspectorate research literature review June 2013 – September 2014

Phase 2: In-school research with partner schools 2014-15 school year



PROJECT METHODOLOGY



Phase 1: Following a comprehensive review of the research literature, we arrived at a definition of wellbeing in schools and a framework to help us explore provision in schools.

We wanted to test both in schools, so that we could be sure that the project would identify what can reasonably be expected of a school in terms of its provision for pupils'/students' wellbeing and what the appropriate provision for assessing its achievement **might?** should be.

Phase 2: We wanted to work with schools in a variety of circumstances to learn about the students they serve, the challenges faced by those students and the way the schools were working to meet those challenges.

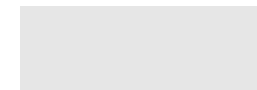
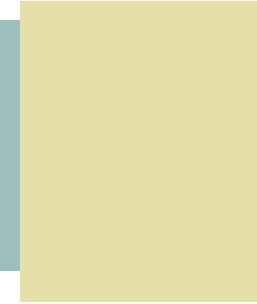
PROJECT METHODOLOGY



Definition:

Well-being in the context of schools may be defined as the presence of a culture, ethos and environment which promotes dynamic, optimal development and flourishing for all in the school community. It encompasses the domains of relationship, meaning, emotion, motivation, purpose, and achievement. It includes quality teaching and learning for the development of all elements related to healthy living whether academic, social or emotional, with a particular focus on self-efficacy, resilience and coping.

PROJECT METHODOLOGY



FRAMEWORK FOR REFLECTING ON A SCHOOL'S PROVISION FOR STUDENTS' WELLBEING	
DIMENSIONS	ASPECTS OF SCHOOL PROVISION
THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• School leadership• School culture• Classroom climate• Student support
THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Access to the curriculum• Co-curricular and extra-curricular programme• Learning experiences
PARTNERSHIPS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Communication• Student engagement• Partnership with parents• Community links

PROJECT METHODOLOGY



Preliminary visit

Self-reflection by school – advance information to inspectors

Two days in school:

- Discussion with principal and senior management
- Meetings as determined with school
- Student discussion group
- Lesson Observation
- Questionnaires to parents/students

Post-visit:

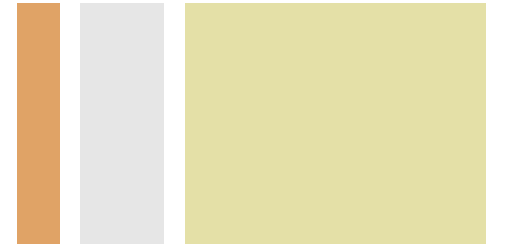
- Discussion of findings
- School comment on methodology and approach
- Record of visit

LEARNING FROM SCHOOLS

What did the schools say?

Schools welcomed the focus on provision for students' wellbeing and they identified a number of challenges which they face. These included:

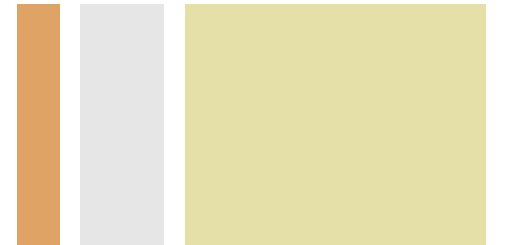
- ∞ Increasing numbers of students from families experiencing negative effects of recession and austerity
- ∞ Growth in non-traditional family structures, including one-parent families and blended families
- ∞ An increase in the number of students attending school with emotional difficulties
- ∞ Greater availability and use of drugs and alcohol among students



LEARNING FROM SCHOOLS

What did the schools say?

- ∞ The negative effects of student engagement with social media
- ∞ The negative impact of the moratorium on posts
- ∞ The challenge posed by the guidance allocation changes
- ∞ Ensuring coherence between the support, academic and administrative systems in the school (as fundamental to providing for students' wellbeing) is a challenge.



LEARNING FROM SCHOOLS

What did the parents say?

949 post-primary parents and 1082 primary parents

“I am satisfied with how my child is progressing socially, behaviourally and emotionally in school” (92% post-primary; 95% primary).

“The school helps my child to mature and take on responsibility” (87% of post-primary; 92% primary).

“My child gets on well with the staff in the school” (89% post-primary; 96% primary)

“My child gets on well with the other children in the school” (95% post-primary; 97% primary)

“My child knows where to go to ask for help when he/she needs it” (94% primary; 88% post-primary)

(Always or Most of the time responses)

LEARNING FROM SCHOOLS

What did the parents say?

Parents agreed that the school provided a range of inputs designed to inform students and support good decision-making.

“The school encourages my child to make healthy lifestyle choices”

“My child takes part in extracurricular activities organised by the school” (17% post-primary)

“The school helps my child to make healthy decisions about drugs” (28% primary; 12% post-primary)

“My child learns about relationships and sexuality in some lessons” (26% primary; 14% post-primary)

LEARNING FROM SCHOOLS

What did the students say?

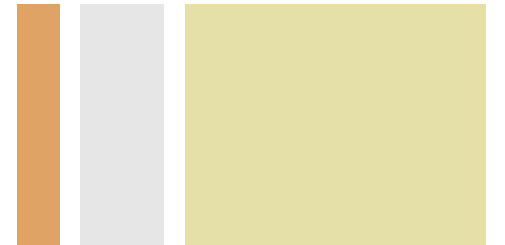
1050 primary and 1352 post-primary students

Building Relationships:

‘I was helped to settle in and make friends when I started in this school’. (86% primary and 71% post-primary)

‘I feel part of a group of friends who do things together.’ (85% primary and 84% post-primary)

‘All the pupils in my class are treated fairly and respectfully’ (85% primary and 73% post-primary)



LEARNING FROM SCHOOLS

What did the students say?

Efficacy:

'I can do things as well as most other people my own age' (82% primary and 78% post-primary)

'When I have problems I am good at finding a way to fix them' (73% primary and 70% post-primary)

'I have a say in how things are done in the school' (48% primary and 21% post-primary)

'Teachers listen to me and pay attention to what I say' (88% primary and 69% post-primary)

LEARNING FROM SCHOOLS



What inspectors found:

The school has a shared vision and plan for promoting, enhancing and sustaining the wellbeing of students

Schools attend to the provision of staff training and resources on issues affecting the wellbeing of students

Relevant procedures are in place in the school to identify students at risk and to provide support to them

Realising the whole-school approach at classroom level is a challenge

A strong reliance on visionary, energetic, leaders

LEARNING FROM SCHOOLS



What inspectors found:

The School Environment

Caring school climates: safe, secure and inclusive

The primacy of respect

Promotion of social responsibility, tolerance and understanding

Clear policies and procedures, including

- Code of Behaviour
- Child Protection Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Critical Incident Policy
- Child Protection Policy

LEARNING FROM SCHOOLS



What inspectors found:

The School Curriculum

Specific programmes or interventions, for example, The Health-Promoting School, Zippy's Friends Curriculum programmes - Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE), Physical Education (PE)

Opportunities to participate in activities which promote a healthy lifestyle

The celebration of success - Student effort and commitment is recognised

Aim - to positively influence children's and young people's attitudes and values; to help them acquire social competencies; to make healthy choices; and to behave responsibly and respectfully

LEARNING FROM SCHOOLS



What inspectors found:

The School Curriculum

Intervention programmes:

The operation of support structures and processes which enable learners with additional needs (for example, special education needs, behaviour support needs, language needs) to participate in the curriculum and to achieve to their potential.

Support teams in school – school management; Year Heads/Class tutors; Guidance teachers, SEN co-ordinator, HSCL co-ordinator

LEARNING FROM SCHOOLS



What inspectors found:

Partnerships

Social integration in the class group

Opportunities are available to facilitate student participation in school decision-making

In class, teachers encourage students to express and discuss their views

Good communication with parents

Close working with relevant support agencies

LEARNING FROM SCHOOLS



Challenges:

For the Inspectorate: Revision of the framework to reflect the importance of relationships and in-class experiences

For schools:

Realising the whole-school approach at classroom level

Building capacity and commitment across the whole-school staff

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THANK YOU

