

Ursuline College Sligo
SSE & SIP 2026-2027

School Self Evaluation Report 2025-2026 and School Improvement Plan 2026-2027

Ursuline College Sligo

Our Self-Evaluation Report (25/26) and Improvement Plan (26/27)

1. Introduction

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

1.1 Outcomes of our last improvement plan from 23rd August 2025 to May 30th 2026

- There is clear evidence that teachers are cognisant of and familiar with the schools' SSE Report & SIP with 92% of staff respondents saying they were familiar with the priorities of our SIP. Staff demonstrated strong engagement with School Improvement Plan priorities and reflected positively on the use of student feedback to inform practice.
- Survey data indicates a strong sense of belonging among students with 80% of students agreeing or strongly agreeing that they feel a sense of belonging in Ursuline College.
- Students reported positive relationships with teachers, strong pastoral support structures, a welcoming and inclusive school environment and pride in participation in extracurricular and co-curricular activities. Feedback suggests that school wellbeing initiatives have had a positive impact on student engagement and school culture.
- Staff responses indicate strong progress in promoting student voice, wellbeing and school connectedness. The majority of teachers reported that students actively participate in learning and demonstrate a strong sense of belonging within the school community. Students also expressed a desire for additional opportunities to contribute to school decision-making and further develop student leadership. Findings suggest that opportunities for student consultation are valued and should continue to be expanded.
- Teachers reported high levels of awareness of student learning needs and widespread use of assessment information to inform planning and differentiation. Further development is required in embedding inclusive practices consistently across all classrooms. Future professional learning priorities include differentiation, neurodiversity, co-teaching methodologies, sustainability education and assistive technology.
- Students generally reported high levels of classroom participation. Questioning strategies were viewed as inclusive and supportive. Most students indicated that teachers encourage participation and engagement.
- Student responses indicate that feedback practices are well established throughout the school. Students reported that feedback helps them improve their work, teachers provide clear guidance on next steps and that self-assessment practices support reflection and ownership of learning. The evidence suggests that Assessment for Learning strategies are embedded across many subject areas. However, opportunities remain to develop a more consistent whole-school approach to feedback and increase the use of peer assessment.
- Students generally reported positive experiences of support within classrooms and feel respected by teachers and peers. Particular strengths identified include positive relationships with teachers, effective support for many students with additional educational needs (AEN), strong pastoral care structures and access to appropriate supports when difficulties arise. Students also identified some inconsistency in how differentiation is experienced across subjects. The evaluation highlighted the need to further embed Universal Design for Learning (UDL), strengthen adaptive teaching practices and ensure consistent use of learner profiles, IEP's and student data to inform planning.
- Staff responses indicate strong support for collaborative approaches to school improvement. Examples of effective practice include: Subject department collaborations, shared planning practices,

professional dialogue during staff meetings and engagement with CPD opportunities. The school recognises the need to further develop: Peer observation, collaborative inquiry, sharing of effective practice and structured professional reflection.

- Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) continues to be a growing area of school development. Students and staff value: Green Schools initiatives, sustainability projects, student leadership opportunities and cross-curricular engagement with sustainability themes. The school now wishes to further embed ESD within teaching and learning and strengthen student participation in sustainability initiatives. Most teachers reported integrating Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) themes into teaching and learning.
- Students understand the importance of attendance, but maintaining motivation remains an area for development. From our research both academic and social factors contribute significantly to attendance as do extracurricular activities which play an important role in student engagement and attendance. Students identified friendships, extracurricular activities, future goals, parental encouragement, enjoyable subjects and positive teacher relationships as key motivators for attendance. The most commonly reported barriers to attendance were illness, tiredness, motivation, schoolwork difficulties, anxiety/mental health concerns, social reasons and transport issues. This indicates that wellbeing and motivation remain important attendance considerations.
- Students demonstrate strong awareness of school attendance procedures and expectations, however communication regarding attendance supports and pastoral care structures could be strengthened. Students value engagement, support and positive relationships as the strongest drivers of attendance.
- A strong culture of resource sharing and professional collaboration is evident across the school. While collaborative practice is well established, staff identified time constraints as the principal barrier to peer observation and deeper professional collaboration. Dedicated collaboration time, structured peer observation opportunities and increased sharing of effective practice were identified as priorities.

1.2 The focus of this evaluation

We were guided in our work by the following key documents: *Looking at Our School 2022: A Quality Framework for Post-Primary Schools* and *Circular 0056/2022 – School Self-Evaluation: Next Steps (September 2022–June 2026)*. These documents continue to shape our whole-school approach to self-evaluation and improvement planning.

In line with the national SSE focus for 2022–2026, this review reflects the evolving priorities of teaching and learning in a post-Covid educational landscape - where flexibility, digital competence, inclusion and wellbeing are central to school development.

In this cycle, the focus of our self-evaluation was on enhancing the quality of teaching and learning across a number of key pedagogical areas. The evaluation period extended from August 2025 to May 2026 and involved the active participation of staff and students across year groups.

This review aimed to explore how teaching and learning practices continue to evolve, with a particular emphasis on the areas of differentiation, active methodologies, digital learning, peer observation and inclusion. We have included a particular focus on Attendance The findings gathered during this period have informed the development of our current improvement plan and will support the continued professional growth of staff and the engagement and progress of our students.

We evaluated the following aspect(s) of teaching and learning:

1. **Clarity of Instruction (Learning Intentions & Success Criteria)**

Are learning intentions and success criteria clearly communicated at the beginning of lessons? Do students understand what success looks like in different subjects? Are these strategies applied consistently across the curriculum?

2. **Assessment for Learning (Feedback, Self-Assessment & Peer Assessment)**

Are students receiving feedback that enables them to improve their work? Do students understand how to use feedback effectively? Are self- and peer-assessment strategies contributing meaningfully to student learning and ownership?

3. **Student Engagement through Questioning and Participation**

Are questioning techniques inclusive, clear and used to support deeper understanding? Do students feel they have opportunities to respond in class and participate meaningfully? Is time provided to students to reflect before responding?

4. **Differentiation and Adaptive Teaching**

Are teaching methods adapted when students experience difficulty in understanding? Do students feel supported when they struggle in class? Are the roles of additional teachers/support teachers clear and effective? Are AEN students supported through tailored classroom strategies?

5. **Active Learning & Group Work**

Are active methodologies such as group work used effectively to support student understanding? Do students report that these methods contribute to their engagement and learning? How consistently are group-based strategies implemented across subjects?

6. **Inclusion, Belonging and Support**

Do students feel supported and included in their classrooms? Are students aware of and engaging with support systems in the school? Do students report feeling a strong sense of school spirit and belonging? Is the classroom environment respectful, inclusive and student-centred? To what extent do students perceive Ursuline College as possessing a strong sense of school spirit?

7. **Peer Observation:**

What progress has been made in developing collaborative teacher teams focused on school development and improvement? Is there a culture of inter-collegial collaboration being embedded and progressed?

8. **Attendance**

Are students aware that their attendance is tracked and monitored by school? Do students know that attendance effects learning and that our school is working to improve attendance? Does the school recognise and reward good attendance and support those struggling to attend?

2. Findings

2.1 There is effective / very effective practice in our school

The main findings of teacher, student & inspectorate feedback

- **Clear Learning Goals:** Most classrooms effectively share learning intentions and success criteria, helping students understand lesson aims.
- **Regular Feedback:** Students consistently receive written feedback that supports reflection and progress, with growing confidence in using this guidance.
- **Self-Assessment Strong:** Many subjects use self-assessment well, encouraging student ownership of learning. Peer assessment is less common and needs development.
- **Engaging Questioning:** Lessons feature inclusive, purposeful questioning, with plenty of chances for students to participate and deepen understanding.
- **Thinking Time:** Teachers generally allow time for student responses but could improve by using more intentional wait time, especially with complex topics.
- **Student Motivation:** High levels of student responsibility and motivation are evident, especially when feedback and clear expectations are consistent.
- **Differentiation Growing:** Teachers adapt lessons to meet learners' needs, though real-time adjustments vary and require ongoing focus.
- **Support for AEN Students:** Students with additional needs feel supported, particularly in well-structured support teaching settings, but the role of support teachers could be clearer.
- **Group Work Varies:** Some students benefit from group tasks, but opportunities are inconsistent—there's room to embed collaborative learning more widely.
- **Inclusive and Supportive Culture:** Students feel respected, valued and connected in Ursuline College, reflecting a strong sense of belonging and positive wellbeing throughout the school.
- **Strong Focus on Attendance:** 89% of students agreed or strongly agreed that the school encourages good attendance. 87% agreed or strongly agreed that they understand the school's attendance expectations.

2.2. This is how we know

List the evidence sources. Refer to students' dispositions, attainment, knowledge and skills.

- Student Voice – Questionnaire
- Staff Meetings & Staff Teams
- Subject Department Meetings
- Bi Cineálta Core Team work
- Student Council – Focus Group
- Middle Management Meetings
- Senior Management Feedback
- AP1 & AP2 Meetings & Annual Evaluations
- Incidental Inspection
- Oide In Service & Cluster Days
- AEN – IEP's, weekly meetings of AEN teachers and Management.
- Attendance Working Group

These findings are supported by a broad range of evidence gathered throughout the academic year. In addition to the Student Voice Questionnaire, insights were informed by regular staff meetings, subject department discussions and focused input from staff teams. AP1/AP2 evaluations provided valuable reflections on classroom practice, leadership engagement and the impact of professional learning. Contributions from the Student Council Focus Group, Bi Cineálta Core Team, AEN, Attendance Working Group and Middle Management Team meetings further validated emerging themes, particularly around student engagement, inclusion and support structures.

Feedback from senior management and observations from an incidental inspection reinforced the consistency between students' reported experiences and classroom realities. Meanwhile, participation in Oide in-service and cluster days ensured that evaluation processes remained aligned with national frameworks and policy developments. The range and depth of this evidence enabled the school to triangulate data meaningfully, ensuring that decisions about improvement priorities were grounded in both student dispositions and attitudes as well as their attainment, participation and overall learning experiences.

2.3 This is what we are going to focus on to improve our practice further

Specify the aspects of teaching and learning the school has identified and prioritised for further improvement.

1. **Further Strengthen Student Voice and Learner Agency**
   While students report a strong sense of belonging, survey findings indicate a need for more structured opportunities for consultation, leadership and participation in school decision-making. Increasing student voice will strengthen engagement, ownership and school connectedness.
2. **Deepen Feedback Literacy and Peer Assessment**
   Students value teacher feedback and use it to improve their work. Future development should focus on helping students become more confident in self-assessment and peer assessment so that they take greater ownership of their learning.
3. **Enhance Differentiation and Inclusive Practice**
   Both student and staff feedback highlight the importance of meeting diverse learner needs. Continued development of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), differentiation strategies and inclusive classroom practices will support all learners more effectively.
4. **Expand Collaborative Professional Practice**
   Students respond positively to team-teaching and collaborative approaches. Staff identified further development of peer observation, team teaching, professional dialogue and sharing of effective practice as priorities that can further improve teaching and learning across the school.
5. **Improve Attendance, Engagement and School Connectedness**
   Attendance findings suggest that motivation, wellbeing, tiredness and engagement influence student attendance. Future actions should focus on engaging learning experiences, strong teacher-student relationships, attendance supports and extracurricular participation.

Conclusion

These five priority areas are supported by both the Student Voice and Staff Questionnaire findings and align with Looking at Our School 2022, national SSE priorities and the school's commitment to continuous improvement.

Our Improvement Plan

Timeframe of this improvement plan is from 22/08/25 to 01/06/26

Targets	Actions	Persons / groups responsible	Criteria for success	Progress and adjustments	Targets achieved
To ensure all staff are fully aware of the SIP for the year ahead. **Students reflect on their progress as learners and develop a sense of ownership of and become more confident in taking responsibility for their own learning** **LAOS 2022 – Learner Experiences, Domain 2, p. 28** **And** **Students use digital technologies to support self-directed learning, personal organisation and the development of key skills.** **Digital Learning Framework for Post Primary Schools Page 6**	Presentation at staff meeting in August 2024 of the data collected and the targets for the academic year ahead. - To facilitate structured student focus groups once per term. - To integrate student feedback into Subject Department planning and review. - Provide regular opportunities for students to reflect on their learning and wellbeing using varied formats for learner self-reflection (e.g. journals, check-ins, group discussions). - To promote school spirit through calendar-based wellbeing initiatives (e.g. Assemblies, Theme Weeks etc.). - To support the visibility of student-led initiatives through digital displays and social media.	SSE coordinator, Principal and Deputy Principal in consultation with the staff. SSE Coordinator Student Council Co-ordinator Year Heads and Class Tutors Subject Department Coordinators Digital Literacy Team Pastoral Care and Wellbeing Team	Staff are aware of the SIP and know how to access it. The SIP is used to help formulate subject department plans. • Student focus groups occur more regularly with clear outcomes recorded. • Department plans show evidence of adapting based on student feedback. • At least one piece of self-reflection activity completed per student per term. • Increased participation in wellbeing and extracurricular events. • Students report stronger sense of voice and belonging in annual survey.	Review of subject department plans to ensure the inclusion of the SIP Regular ongoing review and assessment of the process throughout the year. Share good practice examples at staff meetings. Adjust initiatives based on attendance/engagement data.	

Targets	Actions	Persons / groups responsible	Criteria for Success	Progress and adjustments	Targets achieved
The teacher selects and uses planning, preparation and assessment practices that progress students' learning **LAOS – Teachers Individual Practice, Domain 3 page 30** **And** **Teachers use digital and inclusive tools to differentiate content and personalise feedback** **Digital Learning Framework for Post Primary Schools Page 10**	Teachers continue to use a variety of modes to deliver AFL comments when giving feedback to students on class work, homework and class tests. To discuss the merits/flaws of the current way we give and receive and identify the barriers to success. Students seek clarification on feedback when unsure how to proceed. To develop a rubric/whole school approach to giving feedback. To share examples of effective feedback in staff meetings and classrooms Encourage students to use feedback logs or trackers to support improvement Embed Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles in subject plans Use student data (IEPs, literacy/numeracy profiles, EAL needs) to inform planning	Individual teachers and Subject Departments select and use planning, preparation and assessment practices that progress students' learning. Student & Staff groups to access how to develop a rubric to use as a whole school approach. SSE Coordinator Subject Departments Individual Teachers SEN Team	• Students recognise and are using feedback to improve their work. • Students are can realistically use and adapt their work accordingly to avoid making the same mistakes. • Students are given regular opportunities to reflect on their progress through both self-assessment and group reflection with the aid of digital templates. • Teachers have high expectations of students' work and behaviour, communicate these expectations effectively to students, and facilitate students in internalising them. • UDL strategies visible in planning and lessons	Using feedback from staff and student groups to develop a template for giving feedback. Review rubric use and revise as needed Gather student samples and feedback on what works Conduct planning audits for inclusion practices Identify training needs in UDL and SEN differentiation	

Targets	Actions	Persons / groups responsible	Criteria for Success	Progress and adjustments	Targets achieved
To continue to respond to individual learning needs by deepen the use of and differentiates learning and teaching activities as necessary **LAOS – Teaching & Learning, Domain 3 page 32** **And** **Digital Learning Framework for Post Primary Schools Page 6, 7 & 9**	Teachers are aware of students' individual learning needs, and adapt teaching and learning practices to help students overcome challenges. Teachers plan active learning activities which meaningfully cater for the varying needs and abilities of students. Teachers meaningfully differentiate content and activities in order to ensure that all students are challenged by the learning activities and experience success as learners. Teachers plan for assessing students' attainment of the learning intentions of the lesson, or series of lessons, using both assessment of learning and assessment for learning.	Class teachers SNA's AEN Coordinators SSE coordinator	• Teachers use data from the Special Needs Coordinator and VSware to understand students' learning needs better. • Year Heads and Class Tutors communicate with students who have AEN, EAL students, and those with general difficulties to ensure their Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are implemented. • Teachers tailor interventions based on students' unique learning needs, interests, and abilities. • Class Tutors and Teachers actively engage with students' opinions, interests, and contexts, adjusting teaching methods accordingly. • Teachers offer a variety of activities and strategies to challenge and support all students in their learning. • Teachers participate in professional development to effectively integrate digital technologies into teaching and assessment strategies.	Regular review and evaluation of student progress. Regular ongoing review and assessment of the process throughout the year.	

Targets	Actions	Persons / groups responsible	Criteria for Success	Progress and adjustments	Targets achieved
Teachers value and engage in professional learning, with particular reference to the revised Senior Cycle, and professional collaboration **LAOS – Teachers' Collaborative Practice, Domain 4 page 33** **Digital Learning Framework for Post Primary Schools Page 9 & 10**	To relaunch Peer Observation Programme with focus areas (e.g. questioning, differentiation) To provide collaborative planning time each term To initiate the use Teaching & Learning Logs to reflect on shared practice	SSE Coordinator Subject Coordinators Peer Observation Volunteers	• Increased staff participation in peer observation • Shared strategies evident in classroom practice • Formal drafting of the criteria and acceptable boundaries for this initiative.	Gather staff feedback on peer observation cycle Review and refresh focus areas as needed Showcase impact during staff days Build time for reflection into department meetings	

Targets	Actions	Persons / groups responsible	Criteria for Success	Progress and adjustments	Targets achieved
Students demonstrate the knowledge, skills and understanding required by the post-primary curriculum **LAOS – Leading School Development Domain 1 page 27**	To integrate ESD themes across CSPE, Geography, Science and RE To coordinate a dedicated ESD Week showcasing student & School led initiatives To partner with Green Schools Council for cross-curricular activities To make ESD a core priority within a named post-holder's role	Green Schools Coordinator Subject Coordinators ESD Team Student Leaders	• ESD themes visible in curriculum and planning • High engagement with ESD Week events • Strong student voice in sustainability initiatives • ESD formally included in post-holder duties	Review ESD Week and cross-subject participation Use student feedback to plan future events Ensure long-term visibility and action through post review Evaluate impact via student and staff surveys.	

Targets	Actions	Persons / groups responsible	Criteria for Success	Progress and adjustments	Targets achieved
Foster a commitment to inclusion, equality of opportunity and the holistic development of each student **LAOS –Leading Learning and Teaching Domain 1 page 35**	Continue to develop a working group to coordinate whole-school strategies on attendance To analyse attendance data each term to identify trends To engage with students and families where concerns arise To recognise and promote positive attendance To embed attendance goals in Year Head and Tutor planning	School Attendance Working Group Year Heads Class Tutors HYLS SEN Team EWO Principal & Deputy Principal Pastoral Care Team	• Positive attendance trends visible in data • Early intervention strategies in place • Students express awareness of attendance importance • Increased communication with families	Monitor impact of recognition strategies Adjust supports based on engagement levels Include attendance updates in pastoral team reviews Evaluate communication effectiveness mid-year	