BANDONBRIDGE N.S.

SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION AND SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2026/2027

Self-Evaluation Report and School Improvement Plan

1. Introduction

Bandonbridge N.S. is a 7-teacher school in a town setting Under Church of Ireland management. The Patron is the Bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross. Bandonbridge NS is a Droichead school with 4 members of staff currently trained to carry out Newly Qualified Teacher induction and mentoring.

Enrolment has been falling in recent years from 220 in 2019/20 to 162 in 2026/27. It is likely that the school will lose another class teacher in 2027/2028 resulting in a change from an administrative principal to a teaching principal.

Approx. ¼ of the students travel by school bus from the surrounding area and the far side of town. At least 50% of the students come from families where English is not a first language.

The school was granted 95 hours of SEN teaching and 10 hours of EAL teaching for 2026/27. This is a significant change in EAL hours from last year when there were 25 hours of EAL teaching. This has had consequences for the number of students that can be supported with language acquisition by the teachers with responsibility for EAL.

There are 8 classrooms in the school, 7 for whole class teaching and one for group Support/EAL Teaching. There are 2 small rooms for support teaching. Currently, one SET uses the Principal's office as a classroom; this is unsustainable. The GP room is used by the afterschool childcare provider Lyons Den from 1pm onwards daily. A shipping container is used to store PE equipment and other large items. PE is primarily an outdoor activity, but the GP room can be used with restrictions (due to its size) on wet days until 1pm.

The school participates in local sports events when available: Cork Primary School Sports, cross country, rugby blitzes etc.

Hot school meals were introduced in autumn 2024 and a pod housing a combined fridge/oven, sink and work surfaces installed on the school grounds. The contract for the provision of school meals will be reviewed in spring 2027.

In recent years efforts have been made to improve the overall appearance of the school. It has been painted inside and out. Wall murals brighten up the exterior wall of the school grounds and in the sheltered area. Playground games and activities have been painted on the tarmac are. Overgrown trees and shrubbery have been removed or cut back.

All mainstream classrooms and both SET rooms (as well as the Principal's office currently being used for support teaching) have digital panels. There are some laptops and 16 iPads with a charging box for classroom use. A new office computer was purchased for the school secretary who currently works 6 hours per day. New staff laptops are to be purchased with the digital learning grant from 2025/26. One will be needed for the new Principal and one for the SNAs to use. Existing staff laptops will need to be repurposed/ refurbished for classroom use.

The exterior area has a grass area to the rear of the school; this cannot be used from late autumn to early spring due to poor drainage. There is a tentative plan to replace the grass with an all-weather surface. The Parents Association, in collaboration with the Board of Management, is putting aside any excess funds raised for this long-term project. Should grants become available, the Board of Management will apply to support this project. However, realistically, this could take 10-15 years to achieve.

The school submitted a Design Team report to the DES for approval to put in a planning application for a new build to facilitate 2 Special Needs classrooms and associated facilities. Amendments have been made by the design team to comply with the DES request to reduce costs. The principal has indicated to the SENO and the DEY that the Board of Management would like to proceed with opening a special class in 2027/28 using the empty classroom. This would allow the principal to continue in an administrative role.

The Board of Management submitted an application for an emergency works grant to resolve plumbing issues at the rear of the school. It has been more than a year and this application has yet to be reviewed by the DEY. Additionally, a CASWS application was uploaded to OLCS to replace existing windows at the end of their serviceable life to remedy excessive condensation and mould within the older classrooms. This application has yet to be processed by the DEY and it is also more than a year since the application was uploaded.

1.1 Outcomes of our last improvement plan from 2025/26 with summary of previous/ongoing plans.

Ongoing Plans:

1. School Attendance

School attendance has continued to be a problem since the original National Attendance Campaign in 2023. The school has enrolled in the Anseo programme for 2026/27. A School Attendance Team (SAT) has been established, and monthly meetings are held to analyse school attendance using the Anseo Tier reports from Aladdin.

Concerns:

- No real improvement despite interventions and strategies trialled in recent years

- Rise in school reluctance due to anxiety (this is frequently linked to neurodiversity)
- Unexplained absences
- Increase in number of days missed due to family travel and holidays, health appointments in home countries for some families which can lead to extensive absenteeism

Strategies implemented:
- Anseo Action Plan in place
- Statement of Strategy for School Attendance

2. Wellbeing (not curricular)

The Wellbeing Committee meets regularly and plans termly events to promote physical, social and emotional wellbeing. They maintain records of surveys and successes and report these at staff meetings and using the school blog. The committee includes school attendance in its agendas and provides feedback to the SAT.

3. Digital Learning introduced in 2019

The AUP and Home Use of Assistive Technology are being revised to reference the usage of AI in the teaching and learning of the school, as well as for administration use. See also the Digital Learning Plan 2026/27.

4. Education for Sustainability

Teachers include ESD in lessons where relevant and instil ESD values. The Green School committee leads the way with initiatives which fulfil the ESD expectations as well as the An Taisce aims. The Green Code reflects these initiatives.

The Principal has applied for an ESD grant towards creating an outdoor classrooms and associated resources. Additionally, an application for funding will be made through the Irish American Partnership's Outdoor Play and Learning programme grant.

Previous SSE/SIP areas and targets:

5. Music Focus on upskilling, sharing knowledge, providing opportunities for shared performance, Dabbledoo subscription

6. Fundamental Movement Skills

7. Maths Monitoring of new curriculum and finalising whole school plan, use of new resources and playful learning experiences

8. English Drafting of whole school plan for English completed, Focus on comprehension strategies (implemented over the past 2 years) – Building Bridges of Understanding programme in use as a resource.

1.2 The focus of this evaluation

We undertook self-evaluation of Irish teaching and learning during the period **September 2025** to **May 2026**. We evaluated the following aspect(s) of teaching and learning:

- Informal assessment of the teaching and learning of Gaeilge in the school, particularly focussing on spoken Irish both informal and formal
- Reviewing resources and teaching methodologies – effectiveness, inclusion, language awareness, interest level etc.
- Surveying attitudes to Gaeilge teaching and learning – slideshows on teacher responses and student responses (2nd – 6th class)
- Discussion of the results of these surveys with teachers and with the students who participated

2. Findings

2.1 This is effective / very effective practice in our school

- Most teachers feel satisfied with their own competence with spoken Irish and skills to teach Irish
- Teachers use a variety of methodologies when teaching Irish and tailor the lessons to suit the abilities of the students in their classes
- Teachers recognise that playful learning, interactive activities, games, role-play and relating the language to the everyday experience of the students works best; this tallied with the students' responses
- More than half the students surveyed were either positive or neutral in their attitude to Irish and more than 60% expressed confidence in their ability to speak Irish

2.2. This is how we know

- Teachers and students surveyed and results analysed
- Observation and engagement
- Feedback from parents during meetings

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

- Increase in use of informal Irish throughout the day: greetings, instructions
- Teachers speaking to one another in Irish so that students hear it in use
- Increase in times when teachers provide experience of spoken Irish to the students: reading stories to the students, TG4 and Cúla4 programming, music and songs in Irish etc.
- Consider breaking the lessons into shorter units: many EALand SEN students struggle to focus for long
- Teaching phonics and identifying common spelling patterns in Irish: aoi = long e sound, eog/óg, inn/ainn sounds like ing, fidh/faidh sound like hig. Understanding the importance of the síniú fada: páiste/paiste, fear/féar, mala/mála, briste/bríste, lón/lon, solas/sólás, sean/Seán
- Primary focus on spoken Irish – less reading and writing; interactive activities, games, role-play and drama, modelling and practising conversations, outdoor activities through Irish etc.
- CLIL/FCÁT engagement: visit by Eric Duggan to brief teachers on what this might look like and the available resources on Oide https://oide.ie/GaelAonad/baile/plean-gnimh-don-ghaeilge-t2/fcat-bunscoil/acmhainni-agus-imeachtai/
- Use of Is Féidir Liom Action Plan for Irish in English-medium schools https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/2f2e9823/IrishInSchoolsReportEnglish_s_P.pdf
- Sourcing other programmes for comparison with Abair Liom but also use of other online resources to move away from one set scheme
- Integration with other subject areas: i.e. using English and Irish names of native trees, flowers, animals etc. Interspersing Irish words into history and geography, placenames, Irish surnames and their meanings, displaying posters in both English and Irish, incorporating hymns, dramas and prayers into assemblies/church services

3. Our improvement plan

On the next page we have recorded:

The **targets** for improvement we have set

The **actions** we will implement to achieve these

Who is responsible for implementing, monitoring and reviewing our improvement plan

How we will measure **progress** and check **outcomes** (criteria for success)

As we implement our improvement plan we will record:

The **progress** made, and **adjustments** made, and **when**

Achievement of targets (original and modified), and **when**

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Bandonbridge N.S

September 2026 – June 2027

IMPROVEMENT PLAN CO-ORDINATOR:	Fiona Giles and ISL

Overall Aim: To improve students' confidence, competence and enjoyment in speaking Irish (Gaeilge labhartha) by creating regular, meaningful and enjoyable opportunities to use the language throughout the school day.

TARGETS	• By June 2027, all classes will incorporate at least five opportunities daily for students to use informal Irish outside the formal Irish lesson. • By June 2027, increase the percentage of students reporting that they feel confident or very confident speaking Irish by at least 15 percentage points from the September 2026 baseline by redoing relevant aspects of the survey • By June 2027, at least 80% of students will demonstrate progress in their ability to ask and answer questions and engage in short conversations appropriate to their class level • By June 2027, every class will engage in at least three structured, interactive oral Irish activities each week, in addition to everyday informal language use • By January 2027, implement a whole-school progression of everyday Irish phrases, with each class explicitly teaching and revisiting at least five agreed phrases per month • By June 2027, all classes will integrate spoken Irish into one additional curricular area.

ACTIONS	**Who?**
1. Ensure that students are exposed to spoken Irish regularly throughout the day: hearing teachers speaking to one another in Irish, listening to Irish songs, watching programmes on Cúla4, storytime using picture books from the class library or online etc.	1. Teachers
2. Is Féidir Liom and Pócaí na Gaeilge shared with all staff	2. Principal
3. Supportive resources for parents shared	3. Principal
4. Attend and share information CLIL webinars	4. Deputy Principal/Language Co-ordinator
5. Access resources for CLIL on Oide website and plan for Irish lessons to teach the necessary vocabulary and phrases. Teach the warm-up of a PE lesson through Irish using the vocabulary learned.	5. Teachers
6. Teachers to incorporate these strategies into their planning: *a. Daily greetings, classroom instructions, requests, praise, roll call and playground interactions.*	6. Teachers

b. *Regular pair work (obair bheirte), role-play, language games, supportive feedback and opportunities to speak without fear of making mistakes.* c. *Introduce a weekly conversational theme, practise questions and answers daily, and provide structured opportunities for partner conversations.* d. *Language games, drama, outdoor learning, songs, movement activities, digital resources and cooperative learning.* e. *Develop a graded bank of phrases, introduce Frása na Seachtaine, display useful language around the school and encourage consistent modelling by all staff.* 7. Promote the Irish language as a living, vibrant language during lessons but also during parent-teacher meetings and at events attended by parents 8. Assess resources available to support the teaching of Irish language skills and purchase any necessary games and equipment for Irish teaching and learning 9. Provide opportunities for CPD in Irish proficiency and teaching strategies as required	7. All staff 8. Principal and BoM 9. Principal and BoM

MONITORING:

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EVALUATION APPROACH and TOOLS:

- Students independently use familiar Irish phrases in everyday school situations, with increased frequency recorded through teacher observations.
- End of year student surveys demonstrate increased confidence, while teacher observations indicate greater willingness to participate in oral activities.
- Students demonstrate improved conversational skills through teacher-designed oral assessments, checklists and observation.
- Weekly planning reflects regular active oral-language opportunities, and student feedback indicates improved enjoyment and engagement.
- Students demonstrate increasing familiarity with agreed phrases and use them appropriately across different school settings.
- Fortnightly planning and teacher reflections demonstrate regular cross-curricular Irish use, and students respond confidently to familiar instructions.

NECESSARY ADJUSTMENTS THROUGHOUT IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS:

- Each class teacher will need to assess their own class/individual students' readiness to address new learning

TARGET	ACHIEVED:			
By June 2027, all classes will incorporate at least five opportunities daily for students to use informal Irish outside the formal Irish lesson. ,	**Yes**		**No**	
By June 2027, increase the percentage of students reporting that they feel confident or very confident speaking Irish by at least 15 percentage points from the September 2026 baseline (survey to be completed in May 2027)	**Yes**		**No**	
By June 2027, students will demonstrate progress in their ability to ask and answer questions and engage in short conversations appropriate to their class level (informal teacher assessment/observation)	**Yes**		**No**	
By June 2027, every class will engage in at least three structured, interactive oral Irish activities each week, in addition to everyday informal language use	**Yes**		**No**	
By January 2027, implement a whole-school progression of everyday Irish phrases, with each class explicitly teaching and revisiting at least five agreed phrases per month (from Abair Liom Teacher Books)	**Yes**		**No**	
By June 2027, all classes will integrate spoken Irish exclusively into PE during warm-up time.	**Yes**		**No**	