Summary of our Self Evaluation Report and Improvement Plan

F.C.J. Secondary School, Bunclody is a co-educational school with a current enrolment of 1040 students and 80 teaching staff. The school provides the Junior Cycle, an optional Transition Year Programme, the established Leaving Certificate and an optional Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme.

Our Self Evaluation Report and Improvement Plan

We are currently completing the third year of a three-year school improvement cycle where our targets include:

- Student Motivation to Learn (Senior Cycle)
- Staff Wellbeing
- Communication in our School

In the last year August 2025 – June 2026 we have been monitoring and refining our targets for the third SSE cycle by reviewing:

- The revised Learning to Learn Module developed to help 1st years become independent, self-directed learners.
- The effectiveness of the team building and staff wellbeing strategies implemented in the last 12 -month period.
- The effectiveness of the use of VSware to improve communication flows between senior management and teaching staff.
- The effectiveness of the student voice strategy implemented as a Pilot project during this cycle in Sept. '23.

1. Target 1 Student Motivation to Learn

1.1 Student Reflection Journal

- Following our review findings from the student Reflection Journal (April '25), we decided to revise our Learning to Learn module to encourage reflection on learning at the earliest possible stage in secondary school.
- The revised module encouraged students to periodically reflect on their learning in their various subjects through a traffic light system.

- It also encouraged students to review their learner habits.
- The revised learning to Learn module was delivered by the pastoral care teachers to all 1st years during the academic year '25 – '26.

2. Target 2 Staff Wellbeing

2.1 Staff Bonding

- Owing to scheduling difficulties in Aug '25 we were unable to hold our two - hour team building activities but we continued with the staff barbeque hosted by the senior management team.

- We introduced a social area with soft seating in the staffroom in sept '25.

3. Target 3 Communication in our school

Upcoming Events on VSware

- Following our review findings of the previous year, we decided to continue with this strategy to maintain the flow of communication between management and teachers about school activities (matches, assemblies, trips and visitors) which can cause disruption to teaching and learning.

4. SURVEY/RESEARCH FINDINGS:

4.1 Student Motivation to Learn

- In March '26 we surveyed the seven pastoral care teachers on their experience of delivering the Learning to Learn module.
- All teachers felt that the module was beneficial to their students, but students who engaged more with the activities achieved greater benefits.
- Students enjoyed learning about Multiple Intelligence Theory, Growth Mindset, Learning Styles and Graphic Organisers.
- Teachers felt that it would be beneficial to incorporate a planning and review sheet for the November and Summer exams.
- Teachers also felt that giving students more time in class to work on using mind maps or graphic organisers would help students to become better learners.

4.2 Student Voice

- In Aug ’23 we undertook a pilot project to evaluate the benefits of incorporating student voice in the planning for teaching and learning in 5th year.
- Following that pilot in April ’24 100% of teachers felt that the strategy implemented improved student motivation and participation in class.
- At the same time 95.7% of students felt that including student voice in teaching and learning was important.
- In May ’26 85% of teachers surveyed felt that they would use student voice in the classroom to improve teaching, learning and assessment.

4.3 Staff Wellbeing

- In April 2026, 77% of staff were in favour of continuing the team building and bonding activities for the following academic year.
- 81% of staff wanted the new social area in the staffroom to remain at its current location.
- Staff recommended that a free coffee machine be introduced to the staffroom to enhance wellbeing.
- Staff also requested the return of the staff work room as soon as possible.

4.4 Communication in our School

- 100% of staff surveyed felt that the “Upcoming Events” posted by management on VSware was effective in improving communication flows within the school.
- 100% of staff felt that the posting of “Upcoming Events” should continue on VSware.
- Staff recommended a VSware calendar be introduced to allow for longer range planning of school activities, trips etc.
- Staff also recommended that the VSware calendar could facilitate greater transparency re project/assessment/CBA/AAC deadlines.
- The flag system on VSware for vulnerable students was commended by staff.

4.5 Potential Future SSE Targets

As this is the last year of the current cycle, we asked staff to recommend areas of school life that they felt we might focus on in future plans.

The following are the areas suggested:

- Homework
- Discipline in Class
- Social Areas for Junior Students
- Student Resilience
- Meeting Deadlines
- Organisational Skills
- Activities for Non-GAA enthusiasts
- Student behaviour/respect/Language
- Getting students to use teacher feedback to improve learning

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

- We conducted teacher surveys.
- We conducted student surveys.
- We conducted Parent surveys.
- We conducted progress meetings with the SMT and the SSE committee.
- We held focus groups with students.

This is what we are currently working on:

a. Continuing to embed formative feedback, differentiated homework and common standard of differentiated house exams.
b. Continuing to support and encourage students as Independent Learners using our learning to Learn Module with 1st years.
c. Developing staff Wellbeing initiatives in the school.
d. Enhancing the physical environment of our school for the wellbeing of the school community.
e. Encouraging student motivation and engagement in learning.
f. Improving communication and the flow of information within our school
g. Continuing to use student voice to assist teaching, learning and assessment in the senior classrooms.

This is what you can do to help:

- Encourage your son/daughter to achieve his/her potential in all curricular areas.
- Engage in conversations about their learning with your son/daughter.
- Read and discuss the feedback offered by teachers to your son/daughter in school reports.
- Encourage your son/daughter to reflect on the quality of their work and their level of effort and achievement.
- Engage in conversations with your son/daughter about goal setting, revision planning and reviewing performance/attainment.

Here is some information about how we are carrying out our work and about what the Department of Education and Youth 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**.

This year we had 166 school days, from 22nd August 2025 to 29th May 2026. 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 we had **5** parent/teacher meetings and **4** staff meetings, all in line with the Department's regulations.

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 informed all parents about them and how we follow them. **YES**

Our Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is **Mr Brendan Daly**

and our Deputy DLP is **Ms Una Osborne**

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 on: **11th Sep. 2025**

We keep accurate attendance records and report them as required. **YES**

We encourage high attendance in the following ways:

We have developed a supportive, positive learning environment.

We support and plan for the needs of the individual child.

We foster positive relations with parents and offer personalised support.

We reward full attendance at our Annual Awards

We acknowledge full school attendance (5/6 years) at our Annual Awards

This is how you can help:

Discuss with your son/daughter the value of regular school attendance.

Highlight to your son/daughter the disadvantages of missing classes.

Where possible organise medical/dental appointments outside school hours

Encourage your son/daughter to be punctual for school.

Contact the school if problems arise.

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**