

Lusk J.N.S.

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Annual Report Lusk JNS 2021/2022

Please find below the end of year school report for the school year 2021/2022.

The emergency period in schools in 2020, 2021 and 2022 required a huge amount of change and planning in schools for health and safety reasons. This document provides an insight into the many achievements and developments of Lusk JNS, St MacCullin's during the school year 2021/2022, in spite of the upheaval in all schools as a result of Covid 19.

Health and Safety

Response Plan for Covid 19

During the school year 2021/2022, the Covid Response Plan was adhered to by all staff and pupils in the first two terms until the late in the second term. Some of the measures included in the Covid Response Plan were as follows:

- Social Distancing
- Classroom pods
- Yard bubbles
- Split yard times
- PPE: Mask wearing, increased hand washing and hand sanitization
- Increased ventilation measures

Curriculum Development

1. Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and Well Being

School Plan for SPHE

Our SPHE School Plan was redrafted during the school year in 2019, following a year of re-evaluation of, and reflection on the practices in the school. It also involved consultation with both the current Departmental guidelines in regard to SPHE and RSE, and with the staff.

As a working document, the curriculum plans are continually reviewed and updated and continue to be a focus during team planning and staff meetings.

FUN FRIENDS (1st and 2nd Classes):

Friends is an evidence-based programme, recommended by the World Health Organisation, that builds emotional resilience in children by teaching them the coping strategies required to deal with the everyday stresses of day to day life.

The Fun Friends programme is specifically designed for young children and runs over 11 to 12 weeks. Each session must be delivered by a trained facilitator. There are three staff members trained in the FRIENDS programme in the school and so, all of the 2nd class groups received the training during the first term of the school year 2021/2022. The programme was delivered to all of the 1st class groups in the 2nd/3rd terms of the 2021/2022 school year.

Development of Sensory Spaces:

The development of Sensory Spaces within the school was a big project which was undertaken in the 2021/2022 school year. The project was funded by the Voluntary Contributions so generously donated by parents. The sensory spaces are now up and running and benefit all pupils for a number of reasons i.e.

- The provision of space for movement breaks for whole class groups
- The provision of safe spaces where children can be supported to calm and regulate i.e.
 - By reducing sensory overload
 - By providing the necessary sensory input for students requiring increased stimulation to enable the regulation of sensory and emotional needs
 - By incorporating mindfulness activities to facilitate self-regulation and support social and emotional learning
- Areas developed in the school include the following:
 - Motor skills trail
 - Bounce and balance station
 - Calm corner with sensory drawers
 - Talk and touch corridor
 - Play 'aistear' area
 - Sensory balcony:
 - Water play
 - Sand play
 - Games
 - Art

School Yard:

During the first and second term of the 2021/2022 school year, and as a result of Covid-19 emergency measures, each class had a specified space on the school playground in which they spent their break times. However, space for each class group was limited.

As a result, the school invested in sports equipment, specifically for use during yard time for each class group. Each class received a large bag containing a variety of PE equipment which was rotated between the classes each week. This resulted in a more enjoyable break time for the children. Children were also taught yard games and encouraged to play these during the unstructured times.

Well Being Month:

Well-being month took place in June 2021.

Each class group focused on 'gratitude', as well as meditation.

'Inclusion Assembly'

Our annual inclusion assembly took place on 5th and 6th May 2022.

To celebrate Inclusion at Lusk JNS, the children made beautiful paper chains. These chains were created in order to highlight the uniqueness of every child in the school, and also the strength and beauty that is created when joined together. This culminated in very special assemblies on Thursday 5th and Friday 6th May. All children and staff took this time to appreciate how individually unique each person is. Children dressed up in colourful clothes to represent the variety of differences and interests that people have. The students explored how individual needs can impact the life of a child. However, no matter what physical or neurological differences are present, all children can be supported when working and playing together.

On the day, the children were invited to make a donation to two chosen charities: Join our Boys Trust (www.joinourboys.org) and Friends of Autism and ADHD (Skerries & Balbriggan). The school was able to make a donation of €245 to each of the two charities as a result.

Student Council

Lusk JNS values the voice of its pupils in contributing to the development of school life. During the year 2021/2022, Lusk JNS formed a new student council which comprised of 2nd class pupils. The council was extremely beneficial in that the children gave invaluable insights into the thoughts and the feelings of the pupil population in the school.

2. SESE

The School Plan for History, Geography and Science was updated and redrafted during the school year 2021/2022 as a result of ongoing review, evaluation and teacher consultation during the year and during the previous two school years.

3. Language 1: English

Literacy Standardised Testing

- Standardised testing took place in May (Maths and English reading).

Results of Testing:

Results indicated that scores were slightly below average. The effect of blocks of time away from school during times of key literacy development continues to have an impact.

- **Implication for School Year 2022/2023: Focus on Literacy Development**
During the next school year, Lusk JNS will be emphasising whole school approaches to the development of literacy skills in all children.

PLC training days

- The staff in the school engaged in two half day training sessions which focused on the new Primary Language Curriculum.

Fine Motor Skills/Handwriting

Handwriting was the focus of our **School Improvement Plan** in the previous SSE cycle. There was a focus on the development of fine motor skills in all classes, particularly in Junior Infants, in order to increase hand/shoulder strength to support the development of appropriate pencil grip, letter formation and handwriting skills. The following whole school practices have become embedded in the classroom practices of Lusk JNS as a result:

- A pre-writing programme has been developed and put in place in Junior Infants with a concentrated focus on fine motor skill development in the first term. This programme precedes the beginning of formal handwriting in Junior Infants, which begins now in the 2nd term only. Teachers have reported a better degree of 'readiness' in the children as a result and less problems in handwriting skills developing.
- Cursive script has become standardised across all classes and streams
- Samples of both cursive script and reading script on display in each room

4. Language 2: Gaeilge

Seachtain na Gaeilge

The school is focused on Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), backing up the Department's 20 year strategy for the Irish Language 2010-2030 and the associated Action Plan 2018-2022, which is committed to exploring partial immersion in Irish in schools and early years settings.

We are embedding the practice of teaching certain strands of PE through Irish each year, in addition to the teaching of well known children's stories through Irish.

Seachtain na Gaeilge took place from the 10th to the 16th March. Children tried their best to speak as much Irish as possible during the week and their efforts were noted by teachers. Activities during the week included Biongó, damhsa, gníomhaíochtaí as gaeilge and so much more. We finished the week with a 'lá lán glas' where children could come to school wearing anything green.

5. STEM (Science, technology, Engineering and Maths)

Maths

- Standardised testing in 1st and 2nd classes took place on week of 9th and 16th May (Maths and English reading).

Results of Testing:

- Results of Standardised Testing indicates that children's scores fell above the national average in numeracy.

Science:

- As part of the development of SESE, there was a focus on the standardisation of the science curriculum across class levels.

- In addition, the standardisation of science experiments across streams was also agreed. The school is currently building up resources for each stream so that the materials and resources required for the experiments are available.

6. Special Education Teaching

Special Education Team

During the school year 2021/2022, the Special Education Team supported the children in our school in a wide variety of ways including in class support (e.g. power hour, station teaching for maths), in addition to small group support of literacy and numeracy, social, emotional and behavioural development, language skills development and motor skills development.

7. Physical Education

Sport's Day

The school's sport's days took place on June. The children took part in a fun filled day, taking part in a range of sporting activities. Focus was on participation and enjoyment rather than winning.

Child Protection

The school's Child Protection policy was reviewed and updated in December 2021. Our Child Protection Safety Statement and Risk Assessment documents are on display in our school foyer and in every classroom in the school.

Anti-Bullying

The annual review of the anti-bullying policy and its implementation was reviewed during the Board of Management meeting on 14th September 2021. Our anti-bullying strategies focus on the prevention of bullying by adopting school wide practices that promote a caring and nurturing environment.

Our annual anti-bullying campaign ("one kind word" week) took place in October 2021. Children engaged in specific lessons on playing "kindly" with each other and what specifically that meant. This is an activity that was extended and encouraged beyond anti-bullying week.

Website:

Lusk JNS launched its new website in March 2022 (www.luskjns.ie) as a means of sharing information about school life and communicating with the wider school community in regard to school policies and procedures. It also offers parents/guardians an insight into the activities of the children at school via photographs and videos.

Ethos

Christmas

The children raised money for St Vincent de Paul through donations that were made on the school's Christmas Jumper Day.

Sacraments

The First Holy Communion celebrations which took place on June 12th 2022. Children worked very hard with their teachers and the Parish Pastoral Council in preparing for these special sacraments during the school year. The 1st class choir provided the music for the Communion ceremonies.

Junior Infant Visit

An information webinar for the parents of the incoming Junior Infant pupils took place on 15th June. The Junior Infant teachers spoke about what to expect in Junior Infants in terms of day to day school life and curriculum.

Lusk JNS welcomed the incoming Junior Infants for the 2022/2023 year at an open day on 21st and 22nd June. Each child got a chance to visit their classroom and meet some of the teachers.