Bandon Grammar School

School Self-Evaluation Report and School Improvement Plan
2025 – 26

1. Introduction

Bandon Grammar School is a co-educational boarding and day school committed to the holistic development of all learners. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that supports academic excellence, student wellbeing and inclusive participation. The Board of Management, senior leadership team and teaching staff maintain a strong focus on self-evaluation and improvement, ensuring alignment with the *Looking at Our School (LAOS) 2022* framework and the National Strategy for Literacy, Numeracy, Digital Learning and Wellbeing.

During the 2025 – 26 academic year, the School Self-Evaluation (SSE) process continued as part of a structured improvement journey that builds on previous cycles (2022 – 23, 2023 – 24 and 2025 – 26). This phase of evaluation focused on consolidating existing strengths while targeting specific areas of development under the domains of Teaching and Learning, National Wellbeing Goals, National Curriculum Goals (AEN) and Digital Literacy.

The SSE process involved consultation with staff, students and parents through surveys for staff, students and parents and year-head, SENCO, Digital Leader feedback meetings. Data from internal assessments, student progress tracking and classroom observation feedback also informed this evaluation.

This report outlines the focus areas selected, the progress made, the level of impact observed and the school’s next steps as it moves into the 2026 – 27 SSE cycle.

2. Focus of Evaluation (2025–26 Priority Areas)

The areas selected for evaluation during the 2025 – 26 academic year were informed by the outcomes of previous SSE cycles, targets set out in the 2025 – 26 School Improvement Plan, emerging national policy requirements and ongoing consultation with staff and students. Each priority area is aligned with the Looking at Our School (LAOS) 2022 quality frameworks and relevant national strategies.

The focus of this SSE cycle was on consolidating improvement initiatives already underway, evaluating their impact on practice and outcomes, and identifying clear next steps to inform planning for 2026 – 27.

A. Teaching and Learning (LAOS Domains 1 & 3)

During 2025 – 26, the school prioritised the continued enhancement of teaching and learning through:

- The consolidation of formative assessment and Reflective Assessment Practices.
- The use of academic tracking data (Athena) to support early identification of students who may be underperforming and to inform targeted supports.
- The expansion of Senior Cycle curriculum provision, with the introduction and evaluation of Computer Science and Politics & Society.
- Supporting informed subject choice through First Year and Transition Year taster modules.

This focus aimed to strengthen student engagement with feedback, promote data-informed practice among teachers and ensure a broad, responsive curriculum offering.

B. National Wellbeing Goals (LAOS Domain 2)

In alignment with the National Wellbeing Framework, Bandon Grammar School continued to prioritise student and staff wellbeing through:

- Continued implementation and review of the Wellbeing Policy, ensuring it supports a whole-school, preventative and inclusive approach.
- Monitoring the impact of the mobile phone policy and Acceptable Use Policy on student wellbeing, engagement and behaviour.
- Continuing the development of a respectful and inclusive school culture through the Respect Programme, expanding staff involvement and student reach.

- Sustaining a strong network of pastoral care and wellbeing supports across the school community.

The wellbeing focus sought to evaluate the effectiveness of existing structures and ensure that policies translated into positive lived experiences for students.

C. National Curriculum Goals – Additional Educational Needs (AEN) (LAOS Domains 1, 2 & 3)

To support equitable participation, inclusion and progression for students with Additional Educational Needs, the school focused on:

- Strengthening progression tracking through the continued use of standardised assessments, including WRAT V and PPADE testing.
- Developing more consistent approaches to Student Support Files through enhanced collaboration between Key Teachers, SENCO and subject teachers.
- Promoting student voice in AEN planning and review processes.
- Ensuring that support practices remained inclusive and embedded within mainstream teaching and learning where possible.

This focus aimed to build on existing strong SEN structures while improving consistency and clarity in planning and review.

D. Digital Literacy Goals (LAOS Domains 3 & 4)

As part of the school's ongoing commitment to digital innovation and national digital learning priorities, emphasis during 2025 – 26 was placed on:

- Embedding and evaluating digital portfolios in Transition Year, aligned with the new TY Programme Statement.
- Continued implementation and review of BYOD and the Acceptable Use Policy, particularly at Senior Cycle.
- Building staff and student capacity in the effective use of Microsoft platforms to support learning, communication and assessment.
- Supporting leadership and sustainability through the development of digital learning roles and structures.

The digital literacy focus aimed to evaluate the impact of digital initiatives on teaching and learning and inform future development of student digital skills, including emerging areas such as AI literacy.

3.A. Teaching and Learning (LAOS Domains 1 & 3)

General Summary of Findings

During the 2025 – 26 academic year, Bandon Grammar School continued to strengthen teaching and learning practices through a focus on subject provision, formative assessment and the use of academic tracking data. Progress was made in the rollout of new Senior Cycle subjects and in embedding Reflective Assessment Practices. The use of Athena data further supported early identification of students requiring academic support.

Strengths and Effective Practices

- The introduction of Computer Science and Politics & Society at Senior Cycle represents continued curriculum expansion and responsiveness to student choice.
- First Year and Transition Year taster modules supported informed subject selection.
- 97% of students surveyed in First Year thought having tasters was a good idea and 95% of parents surveyed think BGS should continue to offer option subject tasters for 1st year students.
- Athena academic tracking is embedded across year groups, supporting data-informed decision-making.
- Staff engagement with Reflective Assessment Practices for assessments. Staff overwhelmingly acknowledge that feedback is important for learning but that perhaps the method wasn't always fitting.

How We Know

- Uptake data from Senior Cycle subject selection (September 2025):

	2025 – 26	2026 – 27
Computer Science	8	11
Politics & Society	14	15

- Athena reports reviewed by Senior and Middle Leaders and intervention meetings for underperforming students (87 students) to discuss strategies for improvement. Principal's Certificate of Excellence awarded to overperforming students (44 students).
- Staff feedback form indicated that 95% of staff think reflections positively impact learning outcomes

Future Considerations

- Ensure continued promotion and monitoring of uptake in new Senior Cycle subjects and monitor their uptake at Senior Cycle.
- Strengthen consistency in the use of Reflective Assessment Practices across all departments with the introduction of subject specific reflection sheets/aids for classroom assessments.
- Use Athena data more systematically to inform intervention planning and teaching strategies.

Overall, these developments have strengthened the school's capacity to use data-informed approaches and reflective practices to support student achievement and engagement.

Recommendations for 2026 – 27 School Improvement Plan

- Review and consolidate the implementation of Computer Science and Politics & Society at Senior Cycle.
- Further embed reflective assessment practices for all classroom assessments
- Develop clearer protocols for using Athena data to inform classroom practice and targeted supports.
- Promotion of Teaching and Learning strategies through Research Ed due to take place in BGS in September 2026, with further engagement from teams of staff and the use of a 'one-pager' T&L newsletter for shared practices.

3.B. National Wellbeing Goals (LAOS Domain 2)

General Summary of Findings

During the 2025 – 26 academic year, the school maintained a strong focus on student wellbeing through the continued implementation of the Wellbeing Policy, updated mobile phone policy, and expansion of the Respect Programme. An updated Wellbeing Policy was finalised, shared with the school community, and embedded as part of a whole-school approach.

Strengths and Effective Practices

- The Wellbeing Policy is operational and embedded into whole-school practice.
- The Respect Programme Phase 2 expanded staff involvement and student reach.
- The phone policy continues to reduce classroom disruption and support student focus.
- A wide range of co-curricular and extracurricular opportunities support student wellbeing.

How We Know

- A fully updated Wellbeing Policy has been completed, adopted, and shared with students, staff and parents, reflecting a whole-school approach with stakeholder input.
- Student wellbeing survey data shows improved communication of supports has led to increased student awareness of: wellbeing supports, who to go to for help, and feeling supported
- The mobile phone policy continues to reduce classroom disruption and support student focus, with a reduction in phone usage during class time and across the school. Ongoing monitoring, including records of phone confiscations, shows decreasing trends. Less than 1% of parents survey disagree that the out of sight phone policy supports pupils' wellbeing during the school day.
- Staff participation in Respect Programme Phase 2 and expression of interest for phase 3 with the Respect Programme team growing to 16 people.
- Feedback from Tutors, Year Heads and Student Support Teams.

Future Considerations

- Survey data shows a contrast between student dissatisfaction (35% negative responses) and strong parental support (less than 1% disagree). This highlights the need for improved student-focused communication about the rationale for the policy
- Continue refining and monitoring the impact of phone policy with a focus on clear and consistent communication of its purpose

- Strengthen communication with parents regarding wellbeing initiatives.
- Further embed student voice and awareness of wellbeing planning and evaluation.

Overall, these developments have supported a positive and inclusive school environment, where student wellbeing is consistently promoted through whole-school practices.

Recommendations for 2026 – 27 School Improvement Plan

- Further promote the reasons for and benefits of no phone use in school.
- Continue expansion and consolidation of the Respect Programme.
- Develop additional opportunities for student leadership in wellbeing initiatives.
- Re-integrate the 5th year mentor programme for 1st year students.

3.C. National Curriculum Goals – AEN (LAOS Domains 1, 2 & 3)

General Summary of Findings

Support for students with Additional Educational Needs (AEN) remained a key strength during 2025 – 26. The school continued to develop robust systems for assessment, tracking and collaboration between SEN and subject teachers. Increased attention was given to student voice and progression tracking.

Strengths and Effective Practices

- Continued use of WRAT V and PPADE assessments to inform provision.
- Collaboration between Key Teachers, SENCO and subject teachers supports consistency of support.
- Students with AEN are well integrated into mainstream learning environments.
- SEN structures promote early identification and responsive intervention.

How We Know

- Assessment data from WRAT V and PPADE testing.
- Parental feedback and SEN review meetings.
- Records of Student Support File development.

Future Considerations

- While SSFs were completed and uploaded, their use as live working documents varied across departments; further standardisation is required.
- Increased use of student voice in target-setting and review processes.
- Continued CPD for staff on inclusive classroom strategies.

Overall, these approaches have enhanced the consistency and effectiveness of support for students with Additional Educational Needs, supporting their inclusion and progress in learning.

Recommendations for 2026 – 27 School Improvement Plan

- Strengthen and standardise Student Support Files across year groups.
- Develop shared digital access to AEN strategies for staff through a centralised platform.
- Continue targeted assessment and monitoring of student progression.

3. D. Digital Literacy Goals (LAOS Domains 3 & 4)

General Summary of Findings

Digital learning continued to develop in a structured and strategic way during 2025–26. The introduction of digital portfolios in Transition Year and continued review of BYOD practices supported student digital competence and independent learning.

Strengths and Effective Practices

- TY digital portfolios supported reflection, skills development and alignment with the new TY Statement. Strengths with the Sway portfolio included using a medium that teenagers found effective to express their memories and reflections of the year, specifically images and and ability to personalise. The sway also provided an effective way to assess the TY statement areas, with specific reflection questions linked to these.
- Topics in the Microsoft package were broken into relevant topics including Word, Excel, PowerPoint. These topic areas will still be used going forward.
- Digital classes in TY provided focused development of ICT and Microsoft skills.

How We Know

- We interview students at the end of year using their TY Digital Portfolio (Sway). There is a specific set of questions assigned and marking criteria. Students have one class each week to prepare this with a specific outline to follow to enable these reflections.
- The Microsoft content was too much we know this from reflection in tutor group time. Also, from a TY tutor meeting with TY Coordinator in feedback time.
- Surveys relating to BYOD use at Senior Cycle for parents and students. The students of 84% of parents surveyed availed of BYOD for Senior Cycle with 66% of students using their device daily. 94% of students surveyed identified that they avail of BYOD.

Future Considerations

- Further refine TY Digital Portfolio (Sway) approaches in Transition Year and continue with the SWAY one class per week and follow the same format.
- Continue developing staff and student capacity in safe and effective digital and AI use.
- Consider writing own Microsoft program more relevant to our TY students
- Use survey feedback to guide adjustments to BYOD implementation.

Overall, these initiatives have supported the development of students' digital competence and reflective skills, while informing a more focused approach to digital learning.

Recommendations for 2026 – 27 School Improvement Plan

- Develop a revised IT / digital skills programme incorporating AI literacy. Timetable both classes again and write our own Microsoft module so learning and assessment can be more meaningful. Module to include Word, Excel Basics, PowerPoint, AI use, referencing for Senior Cycle projects.
- Continue evaluation of BYOD and AUP impact on teaching and learning.
- Increased staff confidence in using Microsoft platforms and consistent approaches to Microsoft Teams

4. Development Plan Integration

As part of the initial phase of the 2025 – 2035 Development Plan, planned improvements to physical infrastructure and learning environments have commenced. This includes the development of a new library and study space, designed to enhance student learning and independent study. The planning and design process has incorporated student, teacher and leadership voice, reflecting the school's commitment to collaborative decision-making. This also reflects the approach outlined in the Development Plan, which is informed by stakeholder consultation, survey data and ongoing SSE processes.

Initial challenges, including the relocation of student lockers, were addressed through consultation with students, demonstrating the effectiveness of student voice in school planning. In addition, development plans for the English corridor, including classroom redesign and enhanced learning spaces, are progressing to support more flexible and interactive teaching and learning environments.

These developments align with the school's strategic aim to provide modern, adaptable learning environments that support evolving curriculum demands and the holistic development of all students.

At this stage, these developments represent the initial phase of implementation of the 10-year Development Plan. Their impact on teaching and learning will be monitored and evaluated as the new spaces become operational, and this will form part of future SSE cycles.

School Improvement Plan 2025 – 26

Targets	Actions	Persons / groups responsible	Criteria for success	Progress and adjustments	Targets achieved
Teaching & Learning					
Introduction of new subjects at Senior Cycle – Politics & Society and Computer Science	Enable teachers to avail of training required. Offer subject tasters as part of the Transition Year Taster Programme	SLT, Guidance and allocated teachers	Successful roll-out and uptake of Computer Science and Politics & Society at Senior Cycle	**September 2025:** Computer Science: 8 Politics & Society: 14 **Projected September 2026:** Computer Science: 11 Politics & Society: 15 Tasters for both new subjects run through TY Programme Rotation modules.	Achieved and ongoing
Academic Tracking through Athena to inform review of student progress.	Continued use of Athena and uploading of results to identify students and their achievement	Academic Tracking Coordinator, Teachers, Tutors, Year Heads, SLT	Identification of students who are potentially underperforming Use of appropriate exam results to feed into the data	The new software facilitates a more efficient review of students progress and therefore enables us to meet more students throughout the academic year and from more year groups. UNDERPERFORMING STUDENTS ; - 24 students from form 3 - 18 students from form 5 - 19 students from form 6 - 15 students from form 2. - 11 students from form 1 OVERFORMING STUDENTS; Principals Certificate of Excellence; - 6 certs given to form 3 - 9 certs given to form 5 - 10 certs given to Form 2 - 11 certs given to Form 6 - 8 certs given to Form 1	Achieved and ongoing
Embed reflection strategies across departments through controlled roll out and staff buy in	Re-introduce Assessment Reflection sheet	Class teachers	Reflection strategies to be used on an ongoing basis.	Analysed feedback and staff overwhelmingly acknowledge that feedback is important for learning but that perhaps the method wasn't always fitting.	Partially achieved but adjustment to be made in 2026-27

				Proposal to combine a general reflection sheet with a subject specific section and that it be used for all classroom assessments.	
Wellbeing					
Finalise Wellbeing Policy	Update and share Wellbeing Policy with the school community	Wellbeing Coordinator	A fully updated Wellbeing Policy is completed and formally adopted Policy reflects a whole-school approach and input from all relevant stakeholders Increased student awareness of: Wellbeing supports Who to go to for help	Wellbeing Policy 25_26 Policy shared with students, staff, and parents via website Improvement in survey data (2025/26): Increase in "Very much so" responses for: Knowing who to go to, Feeling supported	Achieved with annual end of year review. Adjustments made to: Improve clarity of supports Strengthen communication of access routes
Review phone policy impact on student wellbeing	Implement policy consistently	School community	Less phone usage in class and around the school Decrease in phone confiscations Increase in wellbeing of students	The SSE review confirmed that the mobile phone policy was the area of greatest student dissatisfaction in 2025/26 (35% negative responses) Over 95% of parents agree that the out-of-sight phone policy supports pupils' wellbeing during the school day.	Greater emphasis will be placed on clear communication with students The school will continue to monitor: Student feedback Trends in phone confiscations Additional opportunities will be explored to: Promote appropriate phone use Reinforce the wellbeing rationale of the policy
Respect Programme – roll out phase 2 with a second cohort of teachers involved.	Facilitate meeting of Respect Programme – Phase 2 teachers within the timetable Introduce module on Respect Programme to 1st year and 4th year Encourage staff to get involved and better understand Respect Programme	SLT SLT & Teachers & RP Leader RP Team and Leaders	Increased interest from staff in Respect Programme	RP boards provided free information to staff year-round. Mentoring Programme enhanced connections between year groups 1 and 4. Mentoring Programme gave confidence and presentation skills to F4 students. CP workshops were enjoyed by staff and created a thirst for information	Achieved and ongoing
AEN					
Strengthen progression tracking and student voice in AEN planning	Use of assessments and Athena to monitor student tracking.	SET, SENCO	Survey students PPADE Testing for Form 1	PPADE results uploaded to student profile on VsWare. Testing of F2 +5 students completed- WRAT 5	Transparent communication of student standardised testing

			WRAT V Testing for Form 2 and 5		Useful to monitor and identify students who may be eligible for RACE at LC
Develop Student Support Files through collaboration between Key Teachers and subject teachers.	Collect targets from subject teachers to feed into SSF by Key Teacher.	Key Teacher + SENCO + Subject teachers	Development of SSF in collaboration with Key Teacher and classroom teachers	Files completed and uploaded to the Drive, accessible to all teachers	Centralised communication of all student targets. All SSFs completed and accessible to all necessary staff
Digital Learning					
Embedding digital portfolios in TY, informed by TY Statement	Promote use of the ePortfolio as part of the TY Programme	TY Coordinator + TY Core Team + Teachers of TY	Completed ePortfolios at the end of TY 2025-26	2 digital classes implemented 1. Portfolio class 2. Microsoft skills class both taught by TY Tutors who will administer assessment of both	1. Assessment of Digital portfolios in the format of an interview. Good use of time to embed new TY statement and reflection for TY students. 2. Microsoft program to be adjusted for next year, will include referencing for senior cycle and develop more user friendly model, including AI use component.
Ongoing review of BYOD throughout academic year with all stakeholders	Review change in AUP for students.	DL Leader + SLT	Survey senior cycle students	The students of 84% of parents surveyed availed of BYOD for Senior Cycle with 66% of students using their device daily. 94% of students surveyed identified that they avail of BYOD.	Achieved. Further promotion with parents and students for upcoming academic year.
*Building capacity of newly appointed Digital Lead/IT Coordinator	Appoint and delegate Digital Learning tasks	SLT	Digital Leader/IT Coordinator appointed	Supported transition Role developed	Achieved.

School Improvement Plan 2026 – 27

Targets	Actions	Persons / groups responsible	Criteria for success	Progress and adjustments	Targets achieved
Teaching & Learning					
Consolidate and review Senior Cycle Computer Science and Politics & Society	Review uptake data and student feedback. Support subject planning and CPD. Continue TY taster modules.	SLT, Subject Teachers, TY Coordinator	Sustained or increased uptake for both subjects. Positive student feedback. Subjects timetabled as stable Senior Cycle option		
Strengthen use of Athena data to inform teaching and learning	Agree whole-school protocols for reviewing Athena data. Use data at Year Head and department level to inform interventions.	SLT, Year Heads, Tutors, Teachers	Regular data reviews take place. Targeted supports implemented and monitored. Evidence of improved student engagement or outcomes.		
Develop subject specific reflective assessment practices across departments to include a template/bank of tools	Agree shared expectations for assessment reflection. Integrate Reflective Assessment Practices into classroom assessments.	SSE T&L Team, Department Coordinators, Teachers	Reflective Assessment Practices evident in most classrooms. Positive feedback from teachers and students on learning conversations.		
Research Ed participation and learning to enhance strategies for teaching and learning in BGS.	Rollout of Research Ed at BGS. Promotion of specific workshops/themes to reflect future T&L developments or initiatives in BGS. For example, checking for understanding. SSE T&L Team will trial one strategy from ResearchEd workshops and report on impact at the end of term.	BGS Research Ed Team, Teachers, SLT	Staff attendance at Research Ed Distribution of one-pager T&L strategy, for example: checking for understanding Department feedback on strategy. At least one strategy trialled by Core Team members and impact on Teaching and Learning evaluated.		
Wellbeing					
Improve Student Awareness and Access to Wellbeing Supports	Continue promotion of supports through: Assemblies, SPHE, group mentoring for juniors and tutor time. Develop role of mentor with more visibility for tutorials and lunch-times. Reintroduce idea of ‘One Good Adult’ and students being clear on one adult in the school they would be comfortable talking to.	Wellbeing Co-ordinator, SSE Wellbeing Team, Chaplain, Year Heads	Increased percentage of students who can accurately identify at least one support person who they would be comfortable seeking help from. Reduction in “unsure” responses in survey questions. Improvement in “Very much so” responses (not just overall positive). Increase positive responses to 80–90% in: “I know who to go to”. Reduce negative responses to below 5%.		
Consolidate and extend Respect Programme across the school	Continue Phase 2 implementation. Review impact at Junior and Senior Cycle.	RP Leaders, SLT, RP Team, Teachers	Increased staff participation. Positive student feedback. Respect Programme embedded in school culture.		

	Provide staff sharing opportunities.				
Improve Student Experience of the Mobile Phone Policy	Improve communication of: Purpose and benefits of the policy	School Leadership, Wellbeing Coordinator, Teaching Staff, Student Council	Increase student positive responses from 65% to 80%+. Reduce student negative responses from 35% to below 15%. Reduction in phone confiscations		
Re-integrate 5th Year–1st Year mentoring programme within the school's tutorial system.	Smaller, committed group of 5th Year students to act as mentors. Integrate mentoring sessions into the existing tutorial system. Organise scheduled group meetings with mentors throughout the year. Introduce a trial lunchtime support system, where mentors are available at designated times for informal check-ins with 1st Year students.	Wellbeing Co-ordinator, 1st Year Tutors, 1st Year Head, Teachers	Increased satisfaction among 1st Year students, measured through surveys with specific improvements in responses indicating that mentoring is: "More useful" "More consistent and regular" "improved transition experience". Higher levels of engagement between mentors and 1st Years via tutorials. Positive feedback from mentors regarding clarity of their role and confidence in carrying it out.		
AEN					
Standardise and embed Student Support Files (SSF) across year groups	Develop shared SSF template. Ensure collaboration between Key Teachers and subject teachers. Review targets regularly.	SENCO, SET Team, Key Teachers, Teachers	SSFs in active use. Clear, shared targets evident. Improved consistency of classroom supports.		
Strengthen student voice in AEN planning and review	Introduce structured student feedback at review points. Include student goals in SSFs where appropriate.	SENCO, SET Team, Key Teachers,	Students can articulate supports and targets. Student feedback informs planning.		
Continue targeted assessment to support early identification and progression tracking	Continue WRAT V and PPADE testing. Use results to inform supports and monitor progress.	SENCO, SET Team, Teachers	Assessment data used effectively. Clear evidence of progress tracking and intervention planning.		
Streamline shared digital access to AEN files and strategies for staff.	Update the centralised digital folder on the BGS Staff Teams with updated strategies; train staff on access and use.	SENCO, SET Team, Key Teachers, Teachers	All teachers can access AEN strategies; usage monitored through SENCO check-ins.		
Digital Learning					
Review and refine TY Digital Portfolio (Sway) programme	Review portfolio structure and assessment approach. Align with TY Statement of Learning.	TY Coordinator, Digital Learning Lead, TY Tutors	Improved quality and consistency of TY Digital Portfolio (Sway). Positive student feedback. Clear assessment criteria.		

Develop a revised IT / digital skills programme incorporating AI literacy.	Redesign IT skills modules. Module to include Word, Excel Basics, PowerPoint, AI use, referencing for Senior Cycle projects. Include AI ethics, safe use, and academic integrity in module content.	Digital Learning Lead, SLT, Digital Portfolio Teachers	Programme delivered to Transition Year groups. Students demonstrate improved digital competence. Students demonstrate understanding of safe and appropriate AI use in assessments.		
Continue evaluation of BYOD and AUP implementation	Survey Senior Cycle students and staff. Review classroom practice and impact on learning.	Digital Learning Lead, SLT	Clear evidence of effective BYOD use. AUP reviewed and updated as needed.		