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An Chomhairle  
Mhúinteoireachta  
The Teaching Council



# Looking at our Schools

## Laois Education Centre

### Wednesday 30 November

#### Participating Schools:

- Dunamase College, Portlaoise, Co. Laois
- Tobar an Léinn NS, Raheen, Portlaoise, Co. Laois
- St. Joseph's NS, Ballyadams, Co. Laois
- St. Brendan's CS, Birr, Co. Offaly
- Scoil Fionntáin Naofa, Shanahoe, Abbeyleix, Co. Laois
- Scoil Mhuire NS, Tullamore, Co. Offaly

#### Purpose of Event

The purpose of the event was to have open and inclusive conversations on issues surrounding education for the local community.

This event was part of a pilot study project supported by the European Commission in collaboration with the Teaching Council, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and a range of education stakeholders in Ireland.

The project as a whole aims to uncover ways in which local school community engagement can contribute meaningfully to national education policy development in Ireland.

The project team has partnered with the Burren College of Art (BCA) and the Centre for Effective Services (CES) to facilitate and evaluate the events.

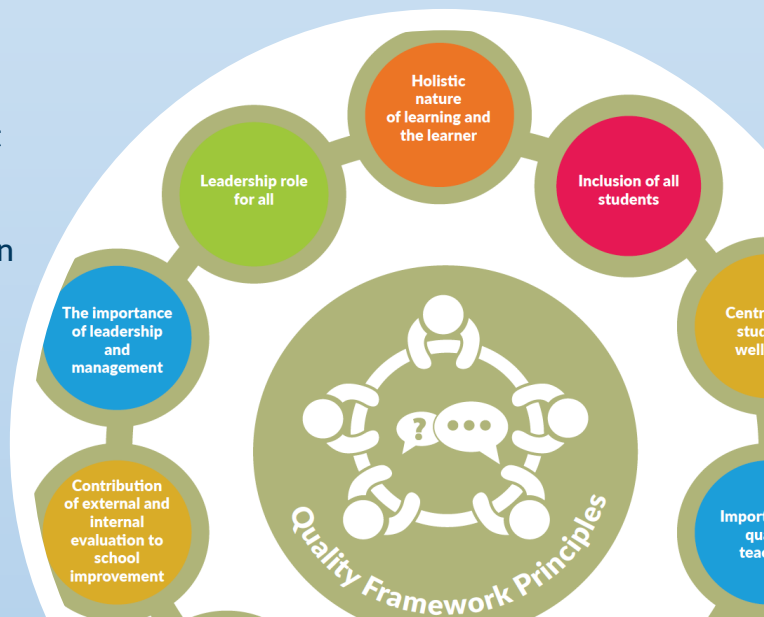
The event was supported by Laois Education Centre who co-ordinated involvement of local school communities.

#### Summary Report on Event

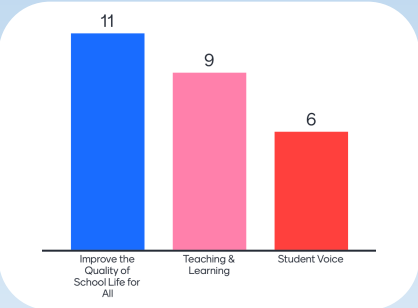
The following summary gives an outline of what was discussed.

Discussions were framed using four of the key principles from *Looking at Our Schools 2022*, concerning:

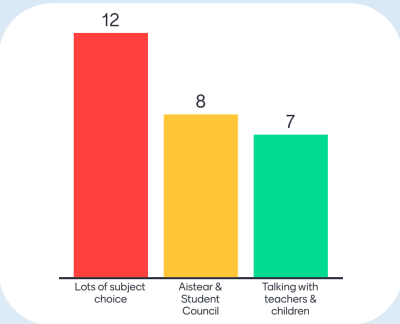
- A Broad Approach to Learning
- Inclusion of all students
- Students Wellbeing
- Students are active in their learning



**Check-in Question: What aspect of education would you most like our conversations to have an impact on?**  
*(top response categories shown)*



**A Broad Approach to Learning**  
*What is working well?*



**What could work better?**

The largest number of participants shared responses around the theme of an **Active playful approach with local autonomy**.  
*(examples of responses shown)*

More curricular autonomy based on school contexts

I don't like the new spelling program. I want more active learning.

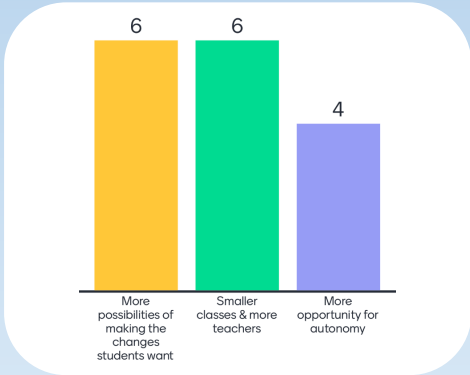
More active learning in older classes, more playful approach to learning

Encourage curiosity

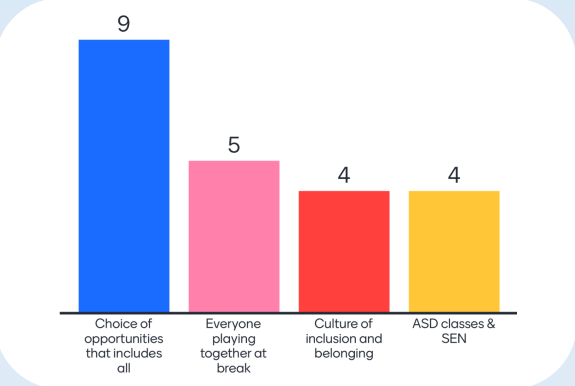
Not all academic approach

Life skills and lessons that relate more to students' hobbies and activities

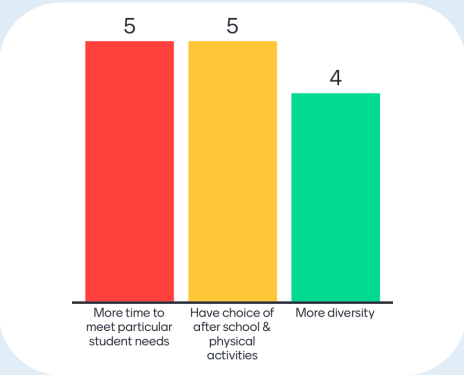
**A Broad Approach to Learning contd.**  
*How can it improve?*



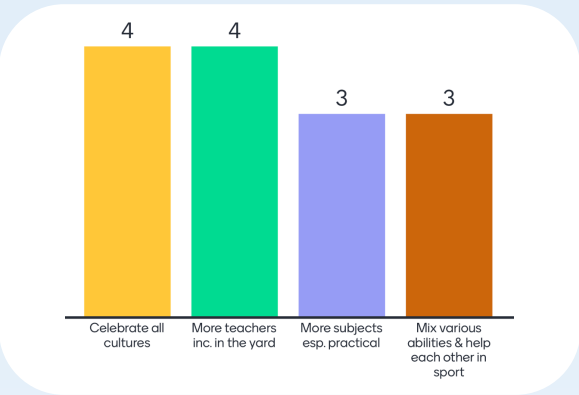
**Inclusion of all students**  
*What is working well?*



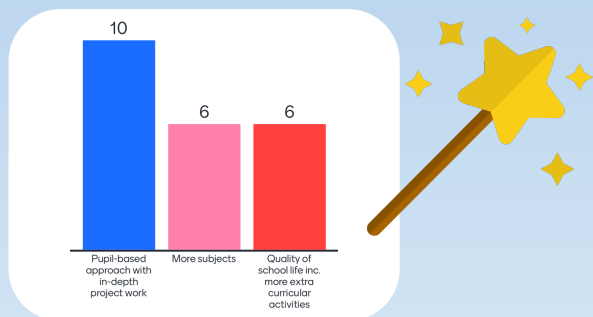
**What could work better?**



**How can it improve?**

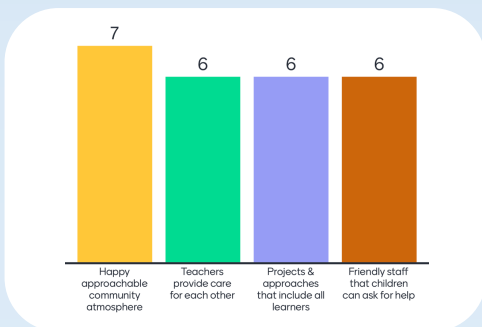


**If you had a magic wand, what is one thing in education that you would change?**



## Students' Wellbeing

### What is working well?



### What could work better?



### How can it improve?

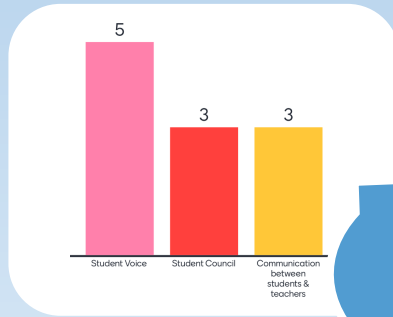
The most common area identified for improvement was to take a **Whole school open-minded approach to wellbeing.**

Teacher wellbeing impacts on student wellbeing. Look after all members of our school community.

A whole school approach on sharing good practice

More mindfulness in the classroom, time outside! A lot of teachers need more self-care!

**Students are active in their learning**  
**What is working well?**



Taking time to talk about what we feel works well

### What could work better?

The largest number responses came under the theme of **Time, clarity & listening in teachers' communications.**

Clearer communication with the kids. Specific questions.

Listen more, speak less!

### How can it improve?

The most frequently named area for improvement was the **Inclusion of all in every school.**

More inclusive cultures in all classrooms & schools

Include students in decisions

Allowing all in the school community to be heard

**Finally, if you had one thing that you would like to say to the Minister of Education, what would it be?**

Trust your teachers

Halt the initiative overload

No more homework every night

Listen to us kids! If school is meant for us - then listen to us!