# OUR SELF-EVALUATION REPORT 2024/2025

This year, our school has made significant strides in enhancing the educational experience for our students. Our primary focus has been on three key areas: improving attendance monitoring and reporting, integrating digital citizenship into a structured digital skills curriculum for 1st-year students, and empowering our staff with innovative techniques to enhance students' memory recall and incorporating it into the classroom. By prioritising these initiatives, we aimed to foster a more engaged, responsible, and academically successful community. This report outlines the progress made and the impact of these improvements, demonstrating our commitment to continuous growth and excellence in education.

## Wellbeing: Attendance

The increased accuracy of roll submissions allows us to closely monitor student attendance throughout the school day. Year heads will notify parents if a student accumulates 15 days of absence. Additionally, if a student reaches 20 days of absence, we are required to follow the school's reporting procedure to TUSLA.

## Digital Citizenship and Digital Skills

Last year, we introduced a digital skills course into the first-year curriculum. Considering student feedback and our vision for our students, we have now emphasised digital citizenship in this year's course. We increased the awareness of global citizenship amongst the 1st year group, along with developing their digital skills.

Vision Strategy Statement:

*"Sutton Park School is committed to realising the potential of digital technologies to enhance learning, teaching and assessment, so that our students can develop a broad set of 21st Century skills which enable them to become responsible global digital citizens."*

- A Digital Drop-in clinic was set up and led by TY students to help 1st,2nd and 3rd year students with any Digital Skills issues.
- 1st year focus group displayed global citizenship awareness with the AUP, Anti-Bullying week, Machine learning, bias, Ethics, AI, Safer Internet week.
- The 1st years noted that the most memorable parts of the course were signing the SIFT wall.

**Teaching and Learning: Retrieval Practice**

This year, we advanced the retrieval practice target set last year. We concentrated on boosting staff confidence in using it by hosting a CPD session with Kate Jones. From there, we focused on embedding various techniques into regular lessons. After evaluating the target's impact in November, we adjusted it based on student feedback. The target now emphasises using retrieval practice specifically at the beginning of lessons for the remainder of the year.

- Students demonstrated a good understanding of what retrieval practice is and the benefits of it to their learnings as part of the focus group.
- 96% of staff are using retrieval practice methods in most of their lessons.
- 84% are using it at the start of the lesson while others are integrating it throughout the lesson if that suits their subject/topic better.
- 100% of teachers believed that retrieval practice was having a positive impact on students' learning.

The identified benefits of retrieval practice include enhanced memory retention, especially for students with additional needs, and increased active engagement in learning. It helps students understand their learning journey and is useful for revising and consolidating knowledge. Students gain confidence and a better understanding of subject material, recognising the importance of reviewing previous topics. For teachers, it aids in sequencing, planning, and refining explanations. Additionally, it fosters autonomy and independence within a range of subjects.

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

We conducted numerous surveys and focus groups involving different student cohorts, faculty members, year coordinators, administrators, and parents.

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**This is what we are now going to work on:**

**1. Retrieval Journals:** Student responses to retrieval journals were mixed, with most not using them. To address this, a Retrieval Journal review group has been formed to boost their use among students in the 2025-2026 academic year.

**2. Attendance:** Encouraging and guiding parents to take an active role in ensuring absences are recorded accurately.

**3. Reminder to sign in and out**: Year heads and class teachers need to remind students to use the device at school reception.

**4. Continuation for new staff members**: Staff will be given CPD on retrieval practice and the role it plays in our classrooms to maintain this high uptake and the benefits that both staff and students are seeing.

**5. AI:** Staff CPD focused on leveraging AI for lesson planning and promoting the ethical use of AI among students.

**This is what you the parents/ guardians can do to help:**

**1. Attendance:** Submit accurate absences for your child. Please check the time and days are correct with reasons.

**2. Reviewing class material:** Encourage techniques such as brain dumps, mind maps, and one-page summaries to actively review class material. 5-minute reviews of a specific topic, 5 times over the course of weeks or months. Regularly reviewing the same content will embed it into their long-term memory. Simple questions like "What did you do in English today?" can also reinforce recall.

**3. AI:** As AI tools become more accessible, it's important for students to learn how to use them effectively. We encourage parents to have conversations with their child about responsible AI use. We want to guide students to use AI as a tool for thinking, not a substitute for it. A helpful reminder:

**"If you use AI to support your learning, you're growing. But if AI does your work, you're not learning."**

Here is some information about how we are carrying out our work and about what the Department of Education and Skills requires us to do.

### *School time and holidays*
The Department requires all post- primary schools to have **166 school days** each year.
This year we had school days, from August 22nd 2024 to May 30th 2025. 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** / NO

The Department sets out arrangements for **parent/teacher meetings and staff meetings**.
This year we had 6 parent/teacher meetings and 7 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** / NO
All teachers know about the *Procedures,* and we have told all parents about them and how we follow them. **YES** / NO
Our Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is **Ronan Walsh** and our Deputy DLP is **Deirdre Mullen**.


### *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** / NO
We reviewed (and updated) our admissions policy on: May 2025.
We keep accurate attendance records and report them as required. **YES** / NO
We encourage high attendance in the following ways: Pastoral care system, School Counselling, Specific Timetables, Student Reports, Attendance Monitoring,
This is how you can help: Support in this area not required at this time.


### *Positive behaviour for a happy school*
The Department requires schools to have a code of behaviour and asks us to consult parents and children about it. We do this. **YES** / NO
Our code of behaviour describes and supports positive behaviour. **YES** / NO
We have a very clear and high-profile anti-bullying policy in our school. **YES** / NO