Additional Report: Whole School Improvement Plan Progress

Libermann Spiritan School, Templeogue

First Term Update – Academic Year 2025/2026 (September 2025 – January 2026).

1. Term 1 Overview (Sept 2025–Jan 2026)

During the first term of the 2025/2026 academic year, strong progress has been made in advancing our Whole School Improvement Plan, with particularly significant developments in structured literacy access, total communication, and staff capacity building.

Our wellbeing SSE/SIP focus, Relate, has become firmly embedded as a whole-school approach and is having a strong positive impact on the day-to-day implementation of language and communication across the school. Importantly, the two school improvement plans are now working in a highly complementary and reinforcing way.

2. Key Developments Since September 2025

A. Structured Literacy Access: Rainbow Readers

- Rainbow Readers were sourced and prepared for class use, supporting further development of structured literacy access across the school.
- Daniel Freeman (Support Teacher) organised these resources into a library of books for class teams, improving ease of access, consistency of use, and sustainability of implementation.

Impact to date:

- Improved availability of structured reading materials across class contexts.
- Increased capacity for staff to match reading resources to student need and pathway.

B. Whole-School Wellbeing Implementation: Relate

- Relate has become the school's central wellbeing focus for whole-school implementation and is now influencing all policy documents and planning.
- Relate is having a massive positive impact on daily practice, particularly in the areas of language and communication.
- The Language & Communication / Literacy SIP and Relate wellbeing SIP are now clearly complementing each other, strengthening consistency across routines, interactions, and learning environments.

Impact to date:

- Greater consistency in school-wide language, interaction style, and communication supports.
- Stronger alignment between wellbeing practice and communication development in classrooms.

C. Whole-Staff Training: Attention Autism (August 2025)

- All staff were trained in Attention Autism in August 2025.
- This training has had a profound effect on whole-staff understanding and involvement and has supported more consistent engagement in teaching and learning in a neuro-affirmative way.
- The training has strengthened shared practice and increased staff confidence in developing attention, engagement and communication through structured, motivating approaches.

Impact to date:

- Improved staff understanding of engagement and readiness for learning for autistic students and students with complex needs.
- Increased consistency in approaches used across classrooms and staff teams.

3. Policy and Planning Developments (Aligned with Relate + Attention Autism)

Significant policy and planning work has been completed this term to ensure that our whole-school documentation reflects and supports current practice:

- The Language, Communication and Literacy Policy was reviewed and updated to incorporate the impact of Relate and Attention Autism training.
- A dedicated Lámh Policy was developed to emphasise and formalise the school's commitment to whole-school Lámh implementation.

- The Language, Communication and Literacy Whole School Plan was reviewed to incorporate:
    - The principles of Relate
    - Primary, Junior Cycle, and Senior Cycle principles
    - The inclusion of Attention Autism bucket lessons as a structured engagement and communication support
- The development of a Lámh Whole School Plan further reflects the school's commitment to Total Communication, ensuring shared expectations and consistent implementation across contexts.
- Relate, as our wellbeing SSE/SIP, continues to complement and strengthen our SSE work in Language and Communication, supporting a cohesive whole-school approach.

4. Student Communication Supports: Communication Passports

- Work has been identified and prioritised this year to develop Communication Passports for all students.

This aligns directly with our SIP focus on strengthening consistency of communication supports across staff, settings and routines, and will support clearer shared understanding of preferred communication approaches, key supports, motivators, regulation needs, and AAC access.

5. In-School Capacity Building: See and Learn + Implementation Drive

- Daniel Freeman provided See and Learn training and support to staff as part of in-school capacity building.
- Having a dedicated support teacher actively driving implementation has had a huge impact on momentum and consistency in the rollout of our language and communication and literacy initiatives.

Impact to date:

- Increased staff confidence and practical skill in targeted approaches.
- Stronger whole-school consistency in literacy implementation, with improved support for class teams.

6. Summary of Progress (Term 1)

Overall, Term 1 has shown strong and meaningful progress in implementing the Whole School Improvement Plan. The most significant developments include:

- Increased structured literacy access through Rainbow Readers and improved organisation of resources.
- Strong whole-school embedding of Relate, positively influencing communication practice and policy coherence.
- Whole-staff Attention Autism training with clear impact on engagement and neuro-affirmative practice.

- Strengthened policy foundation for Total Communication through revised policies and newly developed Lámh documentation.
- Expanded staff capacity through See and Learn support and consistent implementation leadership.
- Clear next-phase work identified in the planned development of Communication Passports for all students.
- At the end of term one, a simple review audit of the SIP goals was carried out. This audit showed we are completing the school improvement goals we had set for the whole school.
- A teacher survey was carried out in November 2025 to further clarify the areas of focus as we progress through the SIP process this year.

Whole-School Language & Communication Survey (Teachers) Summary of Results (n=10)

Section 1: Class communication profile

- Teachers selected all options in Part 1, indicating classrooms include a wide range of communication needs and approaches, including:
    - pre-verbal/emerging communication
    - LÁMH + visuals
    - AAC users
    - verbal communicators

Key message: Whole-school approach must continue to support mixed and complex profiles, not a single "type" of communicator.

Section 2: Priority areas (Top 3 selections)

Across the 10 surveys, teachers selected priorities from: B, C, D, E, F, G, K, L.

- The most frequently selected priorities were:
    - C: Functional communication (needs/choices/help/break etc.)
    - D: AAC use & independence
    - E: Total communication consistency (staff modelling speech + sign + visuals + AAC all day)

Key message: Staff priorities are strongly centred on communication access and consistency, with a clear emphasis on AAC and functional communication.

Section 3: Whole-school focus (quick rating)

Highest scoring areas were:

- A: Attention & joint attention
- C: Functional communication
- D: AAC access & independence

Key message: Teachers are identifying foundational readiness skills (attention/joint attention) alongside functional communication and AAC independence as the most urgent whole-school needs.

Section 4: What would help most? (top supports requested)

Most ticked supports were:

- More visuals / ready-made supports (labels, schedules, boards)
- AAC support (modelling, page set-up, core words, prompting hierarchy)
- More time for targeted small group/1:1 communication work

Key message: Teachers want practical tools + in-class AAC support + protected time to deliver communication interventions consistently.

Section 5: Biggest barriers right now

Most reported barriers were:

- Time / timetable pressures
- Access issues with AAC (charging, mounting, availability, set-up)
- Also noted: student regulation/sensory needs affecting communication
- Staff confidence/training needs were also highlighted in your summary.

Key message: The barriers are mainly systems/logistics (time and AAC readiness), plus regulation needs that impact students' ability to communicate.

New classes do not have AAC yet

There is a need for staff training and inhouse support.

Not all iPads were being returned daily to the Joey and this was causing iPads to no charge for all

Section 6: One change with biggest impact

Staff request theme:

- More AAC training for staff

Key message: Teachers are asking for capacity-building, so AAC use is confident, consistent, and embedded across the school day.

More AAC training for staff

Section 7: WSE evidence (easy to collect)

- All options were selected by all teachers (i.e., teachers see value in collecting a wide range of evidence: photos, samples, tracking, portfolios, reading/writing levels).

Key message: Staff are open to evidence gathering—so long as it's simple, practical, and built into routines.

Overall Conclusions (what the data is telling you)

1. AAC is a whole-school priority (access + independence + modelling + consistency).
2. Functional communication (requesting, refusing, help, break, choices) is the clearest skill target.
3. Practical implementation is being limited by time and AAC readiness/logistics (charging, mounting, availability, set-up).
4. Staff are asking for training and hands-on support, plus ready-to-use visual resources.
5. Regulation/sensory needs are a significant factor in communication success and need to be considered in planning.

Suggested "Next Steps" to match the results (short and actionable)

- AAC access audit (charging stations, mounts, who owns set-up each morning, backup boards, "AAC ready" checklist).
- Whole-staff AAC training focused on modelling, core words, prompting hierarchy, and consistent routines.
- Ready-made visuals pack for each classroom (daily schedule, first/then, choice boards, help/break, feelings).
- Protected communication time (scheduled small group/1:1 slots) with simple tracking to show progress.
- Add a regulation + communication link plan (e.g., sensory supports + functional communication for break/help).