

**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna**  
**Department of Education and Skills**

**Whole School Evaluation**  
**REPORT**

**Shronell National School,**  
**Shronell, Lattin, Co. Tipperary.**  
**Uimhir rolla: 15008A**

**Date of inspection: 7-3-2012**



**A N R O I N N | D E P A R T M E N T O F**  
**O I D E A C H A I S | E D U C A T I O N**  
**A G U S S C I L E A N N A | A N D S K I L L S**

## 1. Introduction

Shronell NS is a co-educational primary school situated outside the village of Lattin, Co. Tipperary. The school enrolls pupils from junior infant to sixth-class levels. 74 pupils are currently enrolled in the school. The school's mission statement places significant emphasis on the holistic education of children in a safe, happy and co-operative environment. The board of management of the school was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and recommendations of the report, and the response of the board will be found in the appendix of this report.

## 2. Summary of Findings and Recommendations for Further Development

### **The following are the main strengths of the work of the school:**

- The school is well managed by a diligent board of management.
- Effective whole-school planning practices are in place and a number of very good curricular and organisational policies have been produced.
- The principal provides effective leadership and fosters an inclusive and co-operative atmosphere among the school community.
- Dedicated teachers work conscientiously and collaboratively.
- Very good standards of teaching, learning and pupil achievement were observed during the evaluation.
- Pupils are commended for their excellent behaviour and their enthusiastic participation in class.

### **The following main recommendations are made:**

- It is recommended that the current approach to recording pupils' progress be reviewed to facilitate ongoing self-evaluation and to promote further continuity in pupils' learning.
- The extension of in-class support, including early identification and intervention strategies in the infant classes, is recommended.
- Moltar tuilleadh béime a leagan ar fíorleabhair agus ar scríbhneoireacht saoráideach chun scileanna na ndaltaí a fhorbairt a thuilleadh fós.

*It is recommended that increased emphasis be placed on real books and free-writing to develop pupils' skills further*

## 3. Quality of School Management

- The school is well managed by a diligent board of management that is committed to the ongoing development and progress of the school. School accounts are carefully maintained and are audited once in the term of each board of management (every four years). It is recommended that the accounts be submitted annually for external certification or audit. The board has placed very good emphasis on the ratification of school policies recent years. Effective communication is maintained with the school community through the publication of termly newsletters.

- The principal provides very positive and effective leadership. She fosters a co-operative school atmosphere and is keen to promote the role of the school within the community. She has overseen the successful implementation of many worthy curricular and organisational projects since her appointment in 2007. The principal is ably supported by a dedicated deputy principal who fulfils her responsibilities attentively. In further developing the in-school management structure, formal meetings should be scheduled to ensure the changing priorities of the school are continuously addressed, including the prioritisation of curricular aspects for development. The in-school management team is further supported by the third member of the teaching staff, who makes a significant contribution to the development of a variety of school initiatives.
- The school building and environs are maintained to a very high standard. The provision of a wide range of resources, including Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is very well advanced in the school. A strong team spirit exists among the teachers who share a sense of commitment and collaboration. In addition, the school benefits greatly from the valuable work of the ancillary staff. The book-rental scheme in operation is commendable. To further enhance communication with the broader community, the school is considering the establishment of a school website.
- The parents' association and the wider parent body are very supportive of the school. Effective communication exists between the school and the parents' association and parents remain informed of their children's progress and of relevant school matters. Opportunities are provided for parents to contribute to the development and review of policies. The parents' representatives interviewed as part of the evaluation expressed their satisfaction with the education provided and with pupils' achievement. Their positive comments were similarly reflected in responses to the parents' questionnaires.
- The pupils in this school are very courteous, display a positive attitude to learning and engage enthusiastically in school activities. Classroom atmospheres are positive and respectful. Pupils' responses to the questionnaire were very positive and indicate that pupils like coming to school, feel safe in school and enjoy their classroom work.

#### **4. Quality of School Planning and School Self-evaluation**

- A comprehensive range of curricular and organisational policies has been collaboratively prepared. Many of the plans provide good detail regarding curriculum implementation at each class setting. Policies are regularly reviewed and updated with the assistance of a 'policy-tracker' system.
- All teachers prepare long-term and short-term plans and there is evidence of good preparation of resources to complement pupils' learning. Where classroom planning is particularly effective, it reflects whole-school curriculum plans and clearly identifies the intended learning outcomes for pupils.
- Teachers engage in school self-evaluation practices, including the development of a three-year school-improvement plan as per the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy, which incorporated the views of parents and pupils. Pupils' achievement on standardised

tests are carefully recorded and analysed. To build upon this good work, staff and management are encouraged to engage with the school self-evaluation material recently published on the department's website.

- Confirmation was provided that the board of management has formally adopted the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* without modification and that the school is compliant with the requirements of the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

## 5. Quality of Teaching, Learning and Pupil Achievement

- Cothaítear dearcadh dearfach i leith na Gaeilge tríd an scoil agus is inmholta mar a n-úsáidtear an Ghaeilge mar theanga bhainisteoireachta sna rang sheomraí. Cothaítear scil na héisteachta go córasach agus múintear réimse leathan rann agus dánta go tairbheach. Moltar na straitéisí éagsúla atá in úsáid chun an Gaeilge labhartha a chur chun cinn, 'Lá Gaeilge' in aghaidh na seachtaine agus ábhair diospóireachta sna hard ranganna san áireamh. Léann na daltaí le brí agus le cruinneas agus sroichtear caighdeán maith i scríbhneoireacht na ndaltaí. Moltar tuilleadh béime a leagan ar fíorleabhair agus ar scríbhneoireacht saoráideach chun scileanna na ndaltaí a fhorbairt a thuilleadh fós.
- *A positive attitude to Irish is fostered throughout the school and the use of Irish in the daily management of school life is praiseworthy. Listening skills are purposefully developed and a wide range of rhyme and poetry is beneficially taught. Praiseworthy strategies are employed to promote spoken Irish including the weekly 'Irish Day' and senior pupils' debating exercises. The pupils read with fluency and have attained a good standard in writing. It is recommended that increased emphasis be placed on real books and free-writing to develop pupils' skills further.*
- English is well taught throughout the school. The pupils' emerging reading and writing skills are effectively developed from an early age with productive engagement in phonics programmes, vocabulary extension exercises and commendable pre-writing activities. Pupils' skills are further enhanced in middle and senior classes, with good standards observed throughout. Pupils are provided with worthwhile opportunities to engage in independent writing and writing in various genres. Greater emphasis should now be placed on the celebration of pupils' writing through display. A wide variety of reading material is available and class novels feature in middle and senior classes. Pupils benefit positively from their participation in a number of reading activities, including, Building Bridges and Shared Reading. Discrete oral language lessons are linked productively to other curricular areas and have a clear focus. Good penmanship, grammar and spelling are promoted throughout the school and are evident in the high standard of recording in pupils' copybooks.
- The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in Mathematics is of a high standard. Maths-rich displays have been created in the classrooms and concrete materials are used productively to reinforce pupils' learning. Pupils participate enthusiastically in the practical activities and lessons are appropriately supported with a variety of resources. To further develop the current good practice, it is recommended that greater opportunity be afforded to the discussion and analysis of mathematical concepts and their application to everyday situations, relevant to pupils' own experiences. In the junior class,

mathematical language and early mathematical concepts are consolidated and extended appropriately. The majority of pupils throughout the school display very good competency with regard to mental computation, while problem-solving skills among senior pupils are appropriately developed. Pupils' written work is presented neatly and monitored carefully.

- Music is taught to a high standard. Teachers ensure breadth and balance is achieved across all strands and pupils receive additional tuition from an external tutor. Pupils participate in a wide range of enjoyable musical activities and are taught to play the tin-whistle. Musical literacy is undertaken and pupils purposefully explore the musical elements. Pupils' singing is accompanied by productive percussion work.
- Overall, very good standards of teaching, learning and pupil achievement were observed during the evaluation. Teachers employ a variety of effective teaching and learning methodologies and a range of resources is purposefully utilised to support the pupils' learning. Strong emphasis is placed on interactive teaching with effective use of group teaching and differentiated learning. Pupils' independent-learning skills are well developed, and are supported by the commendable 'learn and earn' (*foghlaim agus tuill*) initiative. Considering the multi-class nature of the classrooms, greater attention to differentiated learning and to the regular reinforcement of learned material is advised.
- Teachers employ a variety of formal and informal assessment techniques to assess and record pupils' achievement and examples of pupil self-assessment is a commendable feature in one particular setting. The *Middle-Infant Screening Test* is administered to pupils in the second term of the Senior Infant year. Standardised tests in Mathematics and reading are administered annually to pupils in middle and senior classes, and the results are carefully analysed. It is recommended that greater use be made of this data to facilitate the deployment of teaching resources and to inform differentiated teaching and learning approaches. Teachers are encouraged to review the current approach to recording pupils' progress with a view to facilitating ongoing self-evaluation and the promotion of continuity in pupils' learning throughout the school. Information on pupils' achievement is communicated clearly to parents at the annual parent/teacher meeting and in the end-of-year report.

## **6. Quality of Support for Pupils**

- Supplementary support is conscientiously provided to selected pupils by a part-time resource teacher and a shared learning-support teacher, who is based in a neighbouring school. The teachers approach their work in a professional manner and have developed caring relationships with the pupils. Individual Education Plans (IEPs) inform the teaching and learning and pupils' progress is carefully monitored. The majority of support is provided on a withdrawal basis, either individually or in small groups and is complemented with some in-class support. The extension of in-class support, including early identification and intervention strategies in the infant classes, is recommended. The special needs assistant provides valuable support and contributes effectively to the special education programme.

*Published, June 2012*

# **Appendix**

**SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT**

**Submitted by the Board of Management**

**Area 1 Observations on the content of the inspection report**

The BOM of Shronell N.S wish to thank the inspector for the thorough, professional and courteous manner in which the WSE was carried out. The board is encouraged by the reports' recognition of the commitment and dedication of the principal, staff, board and parent's association, and the positive outcomes for our students that have ensued. The board appreciates the findings in relation to its role in the overall management of the school and will continue to promote the very high standards that currently exist.

**Area 2 Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.**

The Board and staff will use the WSE report and its findings as part of the school's on-going process of self-evaluation and planning and will explore ways in which to increase in-class support in all classes.