Whole School Evaluation
REPORT

Scartleigh NS
Saleen, Cloyne,
Co. Cork
Uimhir rolla: 17600S

Date of inspection: 8 December 2011
1. Introduction

Scarlelgh National School is situated in the village of Saleen in East Cork. The school caters for boys and girls from junior infants to sixth class and also has three classes for pupils with autism. The school is under the patronage of the Apostolic Administrator, Archbishop Dermot Clifford. The school has experienced considerable growth since the last school report was written in 2002, and enrolment stands now at 315. During the whole-school evaluation inspectors observed teaching and learning in eleven mainstream class settings, in five support teaching settings and in three classes for pupils with autism. 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 board of management and parents are very supportive of the school.
- The principal adopts a strong and purposeful leadership role.
- The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is very good and very good standards in literacy and in numeracy have been achieved.
- The pupils are friendly, courteous and cooperative.
- The school plan provides excellent guidance for practices and procedures at classroom level.
- The staged approach to addressing pupils’ learning needs is addressed in an effective manner.
- The provision for special needs education is praiseworthy.

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- Staff is advised to analyse standardised test results to identify trends and to inform teaching and learning.
- Staff should develop a whole-school approach to problem-solving in Mathematics.

3. Quality of School Management

- Board of management members are allocated specific tasks and duties are fulfilled with due care and commitment. A financial report is presented at each meeting and accounts are certified externally. The board is committed to the ongoing development of the school and has spent considerable time in addressing the current and future accommodation needs of the school due to the rapid growth in pupil numbers.
• The principal adopts a strong and purposeful leadership role. He is committed to developing a supportive and inclusive environment. His commitment to the development of literacy throughout the school and to provision for special needs education (SEN) is worthy of particular mention. Posts assigned to the in-school management team address the priority needs of the school. These duties are fulfilled competently and conscientiously. A report on the completion of management duties should be presented to the board at the end of each year.

• The school is maintained in good decorative order. Entrance areas, corridors and classrooms are decorated attractively. The school garden is a productive educational resource. It is maintained and cultivated through the cooperative efforts of parents, teachers and pupils. The school is very well resourced in educational equipment and in information and communication technology. The school has invested wisely and generously in a wide range of reading material to promote literacy throughout the school. Careful consideration is given each year to the deployment of teachers.

• The parents are very supportive of the school. They fundraise extensively and support a variety of school initiatives. A wide range of after school activities are organised for pupils at a nominal fee. Communication with parents is most effective. Management is advised to utilise the wider parent voice in the development/review of school policies. Results from parent questionnaires indicate that the vast majority of parents feel the school is well run and are very satisfied with the quality of teaching and learning.

• During the evaluation the pupils were courteous and responsive. The pupils are managed effectively by teachers in a caring and empathetic manner. A spirit of inclusion and respect is promoted throughout the school. Mainstream pupils are taught how they can help and support SEN pupils. The establishment of the “Good Morning Group” is a praiseworthy feature of school life. The pupils are commended on their high attendance rate. Results from pupil questionnaires indicate that they are well supported by their teachers both academically and socially.

4. Quality of School Planning and School Self-evaluation

• Whole-school planning practices are well developed and most informative. The school plan provides excellent guidance for practices and procedures at classroom level. Staff might usefully consider changing the format of the cuntas míosúil to support consistency and continuity in the implementation of the school plan.

The staff regularly engages in the process of school self-evaluation. To date a review of the school plan and a development of literacy initiatives across the school have been undertaken. In building on this good practice an action plan is recommended for developing current and future initiatives.

• School authorities provided evidence that, in compliance with Primary Circular 0061/2006, the board of management has formally adopted the Department’s Child Protection Guidelines for Primary Schools. Evidence was provided to show that these child protection procedures have been brought to the attention of management, school staff and parents; that a copy of the procedures has been provided to all staff (including all new staff); and that management has ensured that all staff are familiar with the procedures to be followed. A designated liaison person (DLP) and a deputy DLP have been appointed in line with the requirements of the guidelines.
5. Quality of Teaching, Learning and Pupil Achievement

- The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is very good. The interactive whiteboard is used imaginatively and productively in complementing pupils' learning. The results from standardised tests in literacy and in numeracy indicate pupils are making very good progress. Teachers embrace both assessment for and of learning in their practice. The staged approach to addressing pupils' learning needs is addressed in an effective and efficient manner. Practice in assessment could now be developed further by analysing results on a whole-school basis to identify trends and to inform teaching and learning.

- Baineann na hoidí leas fónta as an gcur chuige cum arsáideach sa Ghaeilge. Tá an-chuid rannta agus amhrán ar eolas ag na daltaí agus baineann siad an-taitneamh astu le linn na haithriseoireachta. Cuirtear cumas labhartha na ndaltaí chun cinn go rianúil agus tá éagsúlacht leathan sna straitéisí a chleachtar. Cleachtar grúpobair agus obair bheirte go fónta agus tá sé ar chumas na ndaltaí ceisteanna a chur agus a fhreagairt. Moltar córas measuainithe a thabhairt ina mbeadh cáinínmeanna cinnte san obair ó bheal leagtha síos do gach leibhéal.

Léann na daltaí an téacsleabhar go cruinn agus le líofacht. Moltar ábhar léitheoireachta sa bhreis a aimsiú chun suim agus scileanna na ndaltaí a chur in iniriú.

Tá tús maith déanta chun fonn na scribhneoireachta a chothú. Tá dea-shamplaí de scribhneoireachta chruthaithe agus fheidhmiúil sna cóipleabhair agus cláraítear an obair scríofa go hordúil ar an iomlán.

_The communicative approach is utilised consistently in Irish. The children know a wide range of verse and song and derive great pleasure in performing. The pupils' language skills are developed consistently and a wide range of strategies is practised. Pupils engage regularly in group work and in pair activity and they have the ability to ask and answer questions. An assessment process is advised where defined developmental steps in spoken Irish is documented._

_Pupils read the textbooks accurately and fluently. The acquisition of additional reading material is advised to develop the pupils' interests and skills further._

_Worthwhile efforts are in place to develop pupils’ skills in writing. There are good examples of creative and functional writing in copybooks and overall the work is recorded neatly._

- The quality of teaching and learning in English is very good. Lessons are linked creatively to other curricular areas and have a clear focus. Discreet oral language is developed effectively throughout the school. Poetry is exploited to varying degrees and it is recommended that all pupils get the opportunity to recite poetry.

The pupils' literacy skills are developed effectively from an early age. The teaching of literacy is embedded in a broad language-experience approach and reading is promoted regularly as a pleasurable past-time throughout the school. Staff has introduced a number of valuable initiatives such as Literacy Lift-Off and Building Bridges of Understanding in developing the pupils' skills. Productive use is made of story, of big books and of the novel.

The standard of writing is very good and pupils are encouraged to write in a variety of genres. Writing is exploited effectively across a number of curricular areas. There is a
good focus on presentation and on developing good handwriting techniques. Pupils’ work is corrected regularly by teachers with positive and developmental comments recorded.

- The quality of teaching and learning in Mathematics is very good. Lessons commence productively with oral mathematical activity. Rhyme and song is used to good effect to reinforce concepts. Concrete material is used effectively to complement teaching and learning. Mathematics rich environments are created in classrooms. Active child-centred learning is promoted regularly through use of group/pair activity. There is a good emphasis on problem-solving in some classes and this good practice should be extended throughout the school. The language of Mathematics is explored effectively in some classes. Overall there is a good standard of recording in copies. Staff should reach a consensus on how to achieve a consistently high standard of presentation.

- A wide variety of lessons is taught effectively by teachers in Geography. From an early age pupils are introduced to aspects of their locality and to the wider world. Mapping skills are taught at each level, ranging from a basic introduction to more advanced skill development. Aspects of horticulture growth are explored consistently and pupils are encouraged to care for the environment. The appointment of pupils as “Energy Angels” is very innovative. The school is commended on achieving two Green Flags. Ireland’s physical features are explored consistently and project work is used effectively to expand pupils’ knowledge.

6. Quality of Support for Pupils

- The learning support/resource (LSRT) team is resourceful and efficient. The quality of individual education plans are sufficiently detailed, with clear targets set. Collaboration on individual education planning between the LSRT team members and with class teachers and parents is excellent. All of the teachers utilize a combination of one to one and small group withdrawal together with in-class support in the form of co-teaching and station teaching.

The special needs assistants are most attentive to and supportive of pupils and support is managed effectively by teachers.

An Cuan, Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Unit
The varied needs and mixed abilities of the children in the designated classes for children with autism are addressed competently and professionally. The quality of individual education plans (IEP) is very good and they include detailed pupil profiles. There is a clear focus on skills development. This is a well equipped facility and pupils have access to a wide range of curriculum experiences. The classes are well organised and well run. Integration of pupils with ASD to mainstream and ‘reverse’ integration is successful. A range of suitable assessment strategies is used to monitor and review progress. In both LSRT and in the provision for autism it is recommended that assessment criteria are built into the process of target setting.

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Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management
Area 1  Observations on the content of the inspection report

The Board of Management and staff would like to thank the inspection team for the courteous, thorough and professional manner in which the recent whole school evaluation was conducted.

The Board accepts the identified strengths and recommendations contained in the report and will continue to plan accordingly.

The school is committed to continuing to strive for best practice in its provision of teaching and learning in an inclusive and caring environment.

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

While the Inspection team acknowledged that standardised tests already inform literacy and numeracy planning, the advice on analysis of trends will prove most useful. Work on problem-solving and higher order questioning in mathematics will continue to form part of long-term, whole school planning.