



SCOIL FIONNTÁIN NAOFA

Agreed Report of the Board of Management 28th November 2022

A meeting of the Board of Management took place on Monday, 28th November 2022 in the school.

‘Living Our Ethos’

Mr. Johnny Watson as Religious Education Co-ordinator reported on the ‘*Living our Ethos*’ heading:

- We had an Opening of the School Year Mass at the end of September. This was celebrated by our parish priest Fr. Paddy Byrne;
- A ‘*Garden of Remembrance*’ was created for the church for the month of the Holy Souls;
- We will have a liturgical celebration of Christmas on Tuesday, 20th December at 7p.m in Shanahoe Church. All members of the school community and their families are warmly invited to attend.

Treasurer’s Report

Agnes Kerwin in her role of Treasurer of the Board of Management gave the Treasurer’s Report at the meeting:

- The true bank balance of the school’s current account as of 28th November 2022 was given;
- The school is now set up for online banking with AIB IBB. This has really streamlined accounting practices at school level. Going forward, as many payments as possible will be made by bank transfer as opposed to by cheque.
- Accounts for the school year 2021-2022 were submitted to McMahon and Co. Accountants in Kildare town on 1st November 2022 for audit. Barry Whelan expressed his thanks to Micheál Delaney for the inordinate amount of work that he undertook in preparing the accounts for audit.

Principal’s Report

The Principal’s Report was given by Barry Whelan.

Child Safeguarding

- All newly appointed staff members have undertaken the ‘*Child Safeguarding E-Learning Programme*’ with Tusla and provided

certification to the Principal/DLP. All existing staff completed this course in November/December 2021 and provided certification for same;

- All staff (including teachers, SNAs, the bus escort and the secretary) will engage with the ‘*PDST Child Safeguarding E-Learning Programme for all School Personnel*’ on Friday, 2nd December as part of Croke Park Hours
- The Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) programme will be taught in term 2 of this school year as per the provisions of our revised S.P.H.E Policy. The RSE Plan/Policy was reviewed this term in line with best practice as outlined in supporting documentation from the Health and Wellbeing team of the P.D.S.T, RSE Manuals and curriculum guidelines. Input and feedback was sought from teachers, parents (PA members as representatives of the parent body) and the Board of Management;
- In line with our two year plan for S.P.H.E, the RSE programme will be taught in full to all classes after the Christmas holidays. We are currently doing an inventory of resources for the teaching of R.S.E;
- Johnny Watson will teach the RSE programme to 1st & 2nd class as a means of ensuring that each two year grouping/class band is taught the correct programme for their class levels;

Anti-Bullying

- The annual review of the school’s Anti-Bullying Policy using the standard checklist was undertaken at the meeting of the Board. Notification of the annual review can be accessed here <https://shanahoens.weebly.com/anti-bullying-policy-annual-review.html>;
- The school’s reviewed/revised Anti-Bullying Policy can be accessed here <https://shanahoens.weebly.com/anti-bullyinh-policy.html>
- The annual whole school Anti-Bullying Week was held in mid-October;
- Barry Whelan and Gillian Burnell are availing of in-service in Restorative Practices methodologies with Laois Education and Support Centre and this will be rolled out across the school in due course. ‘*Restorative Questions to Address Harm*’ have been factored in to the revised Anti-Bullying Policy as a starting point for using Restorative Practices at school level.

Admissions Notice/General Admissions

- Our Annual Admissions notice for the school year 2023-2024 has been approved by the patron;
- As per our Admissions Notice, we can begin accepting applications for admission for the school year 2023-2024 from the 5th January onwards for a period of three weeks, up to the 26th January. This notice and associated

forms will be displayed on the relevant section of the school website and the school community will be informed of same.

School Self-Evaluation (SSE)

- After Maths, Science will be our next focus for SSE. The SSE Report and Improvement Plan for Maths can be accessed here:

<https://shanahoens.weebly.com/school-self-evaluation-sse.html>

Active Schools

The following updates were provided by Johnny Watson (Deputy Principal) and Active School's Co-Ordinator:

- The PE Policy has been reviewed as part of the Active Schools Initiative (by Johnny Watson);
- Playground leaders have been chosen. They keep the PE equipment organised during break times and ensure that all children, especially infants have someone to play with;
- The Active Flag committee has been chosen with representatives from 1st – 6th class: meetings take place every two weeks focusing on ideas for initiatives and updating the Active Flag Notice Board. They also relay updates to the various classes.

Initiatives include:

- Cumann na mBunscol Football
- *'Feel Good Friday'* which focuses on particular themes: i.e: *'Spooky Workouts'*, World Cup soccer tournaments and a *'Santa Walk'*;
- Active Break Daily challenge with all classes;
- Tag Rugby in association with Leinster Rugby for 1st – 6th Class;
- Hurling in association with Shanahoe GAA;
- *'Walk on Wednesday'*: 1.6km loop around the triangle.
- Surveys have been completed by parents focusing on the subject of PE, with surveys to be completed by pupils over the next week. Data generated will be kept in the Active Schools folder;
- Self-Evaluation is being carried out at the moment on Physical Education by Mr. Watson with checklists being kept in the Active Schools Folder;
- Johnny Watson is attending webinars once a month to keep up to date with the renewal process for the Active Flag.

Green Schools

The following updates relating to Green Schools were provided by Kris Cahill (Assistant Principal 2) and Green Schools Co-ordinator:

- We are working towards achieving our Green Flag for biodiversity;
- An initial survey of previous awareness and knowledge of biodiversity has been carried out, and Kris Cahill is in the process of analysing data/findings. This information will be used to formulate our Green Schools action plan;
- 2nd-4th classes will make our map of our school grounds, so we can highlight areas of development for biodiversity;
- Permission slips have been gathered allowing pupils to participate in the 'Picker Pals' Environmental Awareness and Care initiative. This will form part of the process of renewing our flag for managing waste.

Student Council

Our Student Council have been involved in the following activities since the start of the new school:

- Consultation in terms of a focus group for the gathering evidence stage of the SSE Process for Maths;
- Organisation and promotion of the 'Team Hope Christmas shoebox Appeal' at school level;
- Teaching the Junior Classes how to play playground games using the new markings that were laid during the Summer months

Heritage in Schools

- Heritage in Schools specialist Beth Murphy worked with us for two full days during November to prune our existing Willow tunnel and to create a new Willow dome in the school grounds, using the surplus foliage from the existing tunnel. The pupils were very engaged in this project and meaningful lines of integration were opened up between the Science and Maths curriculum i.e calculating the circumference of the base of the new dome using relevant formulae and the construction strand of the Visual Arts curriculum. One of the two visits was free as it coincided with 'Science Week'.

Maths and Science Weeks

- Events were planned across all classes for 'Maths Week' (mid-October) and 'Science Week' (mid-November). Pupils from all classes engaged in

different learner experiences in Maths and Science. As part of Science Week, 5th & 6th Class visited Birr Castle and Demesne for a Biodiversity workshop with Dr. Catherine McGuinness. It tied in very well with the theme of the Green Schools flag namely biodiversity that we are working towards achieving this year.

Readers' Theatre Project

- Our Reader's Theatre project that we are working on in collaboration with Holy Family Junior School, Portlaoise and Scoil Bhríde, Knockmay was presented at the Teaching Council showcase Féilte at the start of October. It was well received. We are being supported this year by Dr. Tara Concannon-Gibney lecturer in literacy in the DCU Institute of Education, Drumcondra to develop the project further. Using funding provided as part of the Researchers in Residency bursary from the Teaching Council, together with additional funding provided by Laois Education and Support Centre, Barry Whelan has engaged the support of Frances Harney former primary school teacher, Speech and Drama teacher, dramatist and playwright to work with the pupils to further develop the project. Frances' expertise will add an enhanced dimension to the project. The hope is the Frances will be able to commence work on the project in the new calendar year.
- The initial phase of the project (2021-2022) focused on the senior classes writing readers' theatre scripts using Irish myths and legends as a stimulus and sharing these 'texts' with younger classes. The plan now is to do this with local folktales and there is great scope in this regard in the local area.

Primary Ensemble Project with the National Concert Hall

- Barry Whelan applied for a place for the school band on the '*Primary Ensemble Project*' with the National Concert Hall. We are one of only ten schools nationally to be chosen to participate in the project-8 are in the greater Dublin area and one is in Cork. Kris Cahill attended in-service for the project in the National Concert Hall prior to the October midterm break. Brendan Breslin from the Royal Irish Academy of Music will visit the school on the 29th November to provide the first workshop as part of the project. There will be additional workshops between now and the end of March. Our participation in and engagement with the project will culminate in the school band playing on the main stage in the National Concert Hall on Tuesday 28th March. Parents will be invited to attend, with a total of fifty tickets being allocated to the school.

Paediatric First Aid Course

- All staff members including the SNAs and the bus escort attended a 2.5 hour paediatric first aid course in conjunction with Ballacolla and Clough National Schools in Ballacolla GAA Complex on 13th October as part of Croke Park hours. It was very comprehensive and the facilitation was excellent.

The Pushkin Trust

- Barry Whelan attended in-service for the Pushkin Trust in Baronscourt Demesne outside Omagh on the 20th and 21st November. Barry Whelan reported that it was a very informative weekend. The overarching theme of Pushkin this year is '*Reforestation of the Imagination*' and the pupils in 5th & 6th class will engage with different cross-curricular learner experiences under the umbrella heading of this theme. The pupils will have two free creative workshops in term two with facilitators from the Pushkin Trust, to include a dance and environmental day. The pupils will also have a '*Pushkin Day*' during which they will travel to Baronscourt Estate. There will also be a day in the school in which they will showcase their work connected to this year's theme.

Tracing our Past-Scoil Fionntáin Naofa, Shanahoe

- Our folklore and local History Collection '*Tracing our Past-Scoil Fionntáin Naofa, Shanahoe*' has been published by Modern Printers in Kilkenny. 250 copies were printed at a cost of €1,550. There will be an official launch of the collection in tandem with our '*Celebration of Christmas*' on Tuesday, 20th December 2022 at 7p.m in Shanahoe Church. Former Principal Mr. David Brickley will officially launch the collection.

Beacons Model/Teaching Council

- Laois Education and Support Centre has been approached to assist with an OECD led pilot study on Local School Engagement in Ireland's Education Policy Development (building on the success of the BEACONS model, The Teaching Council are the lead Irish partner). Many other agencies are involved, e.g. the Department of Education, NCCA, NCSE, Unions etc. Preliminary work by the OECD has identified underdevelopment in the Irish Education system of a middle layer in education and the potential usefulness of developing the role of Education Centres / ETBs in facilitating local engagement and collaboration on issues in education. We have been invited by Catherine Doolan Director of Laois Education and Support Centre to participate in the event. This event is one of eight in the

pilot study and Laois is the only education centre selected for this study. Laois Education and Support Centre is keen to showcase the potential to develop the role of Education Centres in facilitating local engagement and discussion, strengthening schools' voice in policy development. It aligns well with our work within SSE. Barry Whelan, Kris Cahill and two sets of parents and pupils will attend the event on Wednesday, 30th November.

School Lunches

- Barry Whelan had a query from some parents about engaging a company to provide school lunches on a daily basis. Barry Whelan is liaising with 'The Lunch Bag' and 'Fresh Today' regarding this.

Change of Electricity Supplier

- The school has changed from SSE Airtricity to Go Power as a means of reducing our overheads in this regard.

Sonas Class

- Michéal Delaney and Barry Whelan updated the Board of Management with regard to the Sonas class and explained that works were nearing completion.

Administrative and Organisational Policies

The following Administrative and Organisational Policies were ratified at the meeting by the Board of Management:

1. Special Educational Needs (SEN) Policy;
2. Anti-Bullying Policy

The Special Educational Needs (SEN) Policy can be accessed here:

<https://shanahoens.weebly.com/special-educational-needs-policy.html>

The Anti-Bullying Policy can be accessed here:

<https://shanahoens.weebly.com/anti-bullyinh-policy.html>

Curricular Policies

The following curricular policies were ratified by the Board of Management:

1. Relationships & Sexuality Education (RSE) Policy;
2. Physical Education (P.E) Policy.

The Relationships & Sexuality Education (RSE) Policy can be accessed here:

<https://shanahoens.weebly.com/rse-planpolicy.html>

The Physical Education (P.E) Policy can be accessed here

<https://shanahoens.weebly.com/pe-planpolicy.html>

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