An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

Whole-School Evaluation
REPORT

St Enda's Community School
Kilmallock Road, Limerick
Roll number: 91446G

Date of inspection: 21 January 2011

AN ROINN OIDEACHAIS AGUS SCILEANNA | DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SKILLS

WHOLE-SCHOOL EVALUATION

A whole-school evaluation of St Enda's Community School was undertaken in January 2011. This report presents the findings of the evaluation and makes recommendations for improvement. During the evaluation, the quality of teaching and learning in four subjects was evaluated in detail, and separate reports are available on these subjects (see section 7 for details). 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.

INTRODUCTION

St Enda's Community School was founded in 1973, under the trusteeship of the Bishop of Limerick and the City of Limerick Vocational Education Committee, as a multi-denominational, co-educational school. It participates in Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS), the Department's action plan for educational inclusion. Consequently, the school benefits from a full-time home school community liaison co-ordinator, a Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP) demonstration library and librarian, and a School Completion Programme (SCP) service. It is also supported by a University of Limerick (UL) intervention project called "Class of 2014," the Oscailt Dormant Account Programme, and the Bluebox creative therapies project. St Enda's Community School is one of the schools which operates the Limerick Area Post-Primary Schools' Common Application procedures.

Four key factors appear to have shaped the school as it now operates. First, the school's enrolment began a steady decline approximately fifteen years ago. The factors that have contributed to this include the establishment of a new post-primary school in an area from which students had previously enrolled in the school, the extension of an existing school in county Limerick with bussing services available for city students, media representations and public perception of Southill, a decline in the size of the primary school population in the Southill area, and regeneration-related family relocations. An increased first-year intake enrolled in the school in September 2010 and another increase in numbers is expected on the basis of CAS applications to the school for September 2011. Primary school enrolment figures in Limerick city and county indicate that post-primary numbers will increase in coming years. The school could benefit from these increases.

Second, the school has gone through eight key personnel changes within the senior management team over the past decade. Third, in recent years, there have been difficulties with the operation of some of the school's boards of management. This was due to a lapse in nominations from the trustee bodies and to a lack of synchronicity between the starting dates of the boards of management and of the VEC, resulting in waits for some VEC nominees to the school's board of management after local elections. Fourth, Limerick Regeneration Masterplan's vision for a "single educational campus at a central location to accommodate primary and post-primary provision in the new Southill" has been welcomed and contributed to by the trustees. As part of that campus, the trustees and board hoped that the school's sports complex would be refurbished as a community and school facility. However, there is no certainty as to whether St Enda's will be the site of an envisioned Limerick southside educational campus.

On the first day of the whole-school evaluation, the board had to close the school's sports complex due to serious structural issues with the building that constituted health and safety risks. It is important to acknowledge the impact of that decision on the whole school community and particularly, on the senior management team.

1. QUALITY OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

1.1 Characteristic spirit of the school

It is evident that the various elements of the school community share an ethos of care, a mission statement, a motto and an understanding of some of the challenges and opportunities facing the school. They also communicate a desire to see a school of increased student numbers with a greater mix of students from the city and from outside it. To move the school forward, all stakeholders need to discuss and agree a shared, realistic vision for the school. This should involve: identifying those elements of inherited policies, procedures, and traditions from the school's past operation that are still fit for purpose; seeking new approaches to those aspects of school life that are problematic; harnessing the supports available to the school in a more strategic, effective manner; and establishing realistic targets and criteria for assessing progress to internally develop the school over the coming years. It is recommended that the board take the lead in doing this.

1.2 School ownership and management

The trustees see their role as guiding the long-term future of the school and demonstrate support for it in a number of concrete ways. The practice has been established of sending minutes of board meetings to the trustees and this is commended. This should inform the trustees about the general school plan and specifically about policies relating to the admission and participation of students in school life, as is recommended in the *Guidelines on the Role of Trustees in Community Schools*, published by the Association of Community and Comprehensive Schools (ACCS). It should also provide the trustees with a greater sense of internal school action-planning and progress. It is suggested that a more visible presence from the trustees in school life would provide greater support and direction to the school. An annual meeting with the board to discuss its progress and upcoming plans and the establishment of an annual formal occasion where the trustees could meet staff, parents and students would help significantly to achieve this.

It was reported that there have been historical difficulties with the establishment of some boards of management and with turnover of nominees impacting on the operation of those boards. For example, at the time when the current senior management team took over, there had been a gap of six months when a board operated but was not properly constituted and had no chairperson. Formal correspondence from the principal to the trustees had to be sent to initiate the establishment of the current board. The trustees are aware of this history and have responded to it appropriately, particularly through the appointment of an experienced educationalist to act as chairperson and through establishing regular briefing meetings with that chairperson. The current board is properly constituted and comprises members with broad expertise and with strong local-community links. It was reported that the board occasionally engage in self-learning by inviting presentations from individuals or groups working in the school to inform decision-making. However, the board is not operating as effectively as it needs to be. For instance, due to the fact that nominees have separately resigned from the board and have been replaced at different times, there is uncertainty as to the end date for the current term of the board. This needs to be clarified to facilitate transition planning from the current to the next board and the timely replacement of nominees. While some members of the board sit on school boards for other school sectors, and have received training for those sectors, the current board as a corporate body has not received any ACCS training. Furthermore, only two members of the board have completed child protection training. ACCS and child protection training for the board need to be organised as a matter of urgency.

The board's decision-making procedures are clear and decisions are made with the best interests of the school community at heart. Board members are committed to the school and demonstrated this through their attendance at a high number of meetings in relation to the school sports complex during the 2010/11 school year. The chairperson and the principal have invested considerable time and effort in seeking solutions that would save the sports complex. The chair's role in this work is particularly commended. However, the board needs to communicate more effectively with the school community. It is advised that a brief, agreed written report on the outcomes of board meetings be provided to staff and to the parents' council after each board meeting. Also, members of the board need to have a more visible presence in the life of the school, for example, at open nights for prospective students, at JCSP celebrations, and possibly through an annual meeting with the teaching and support staff.

In relation to its developmental priorities, the current board is largely reactive. In part, this is due to governance difficulties inherited by the board in relation to the sports complex. The board now needs to initiate a process where all stakeholders would discuss and agree a shared, realistic vision for the school. Based on that work, it should then agree an implementation calendar with the principal and school planning co-ordinator at the start of every academic year in relation to annual whole-school planning targets. Recommendations from this whole-school evaluation report should be addressed through this process. As a regular agenda item for board meetings, progress on the agreed targets should be sought. If the board feels that inadequate progress is being made in relation to targets, it will need to pursue this issue. To aid the communication and implementation of agreed targets and strategies, the board can consider inviting the deputy principal to join it as a non-voting recording secretary, as provided for in *Tagairt: A Manual for Boards of Management and Principals of Community and Comprehensive School* (page19).

1.3 In-school management

The in-school senior management team consists of the principal and deputy principal. At the time of the evaluation, the principal had been in role for two years and four months, having joined the school on her appointment to this post. The deputy principal had been in her senior management role for a similar length of time to the principal, having previously served as a member of staff for over thirty years. It is important to acknowledge that with the retirement of a number of post holders in recent years and the moratorium on replacements, extra duties have been taken on by the deputy principal and principal to facilitate the day-to-day management of the school, thus reflecting their commitment to the school. As the senior management team, the principal and deputy principal engage in ongoing communication, planning, and problem-solving and consider they have made some progress in improving staff morale.

The deputy principal models good practice in her leadership of people and of learning. She has a very good personal knowledge of students, has built effective personal working relationships with staff and students, and is well-respected. She critically reflects on and reviews her practices, is open and enacts changes that improve students' learning, and manages the organisational aspects of day-to-day school operation within her remit effectively.

To date, a range of factors has contributed to make the principal's role in leading teachers, other staff, and students challenging. These include the frequent senior management changes before her appointment, the school's low enrolment, ongoing challenging student management issues, and uncertainty over the future of the school and its sports complex. Also an ongoing industrial relations dispute over specific, historical work practices concerning some ancillary staff was in progress at the time of this evaluation.

The principal has been concentrating on introducing new systems into school life, the implementation of which have been supported by many staff members. While investing energy in such school improvements is very important, leadership of school improvement needs to be built on a foundation of the leadership of people. It is recommended that the principal return to this area of her leadership and deepen her skills of teambuilding, of conflict resolution, and of engaging in evidence-based self-evaluation.

The principal has achieved successes in leading the school as an organisation, such as getting a properly constituted board of management set up, leading the establishment of a very committed DEIS team and providing ongoing support to their work, leading the establishment of health and safety procedures for the school, enhancing the school premises and equipment, updating documentation for prospective parents, and engaging in school promotional visits to primary schools. It is evident that information gathering to support the development of the school's DEIS plan in four specified areas of school life is taking place. However, outside that process, key elements of leading the school as an organisation such as gathering, retrieving, and managing other information to support whole school planning and decision-making; making internal communication more effective; and strategic planning and prioritising skills are still in need of significant improvement.

With regard to the principal's role in the leadership of learning, it is commended that the principal led the successful lengthening of the school day to provide students with their minimum entitlement to tuition time and some other changes in student management practices. However, significant areas for development still exist here. The implementation of consistent, positive whole-school student management practices are urgently needed to ensure a safe and positive learning community. While acknowledging that changes in the personnel of outside agencies makes continuity challenging, leadership to maximise the use of available resources from outside agencies to create the conditions for optimum learning requires further development as a matter of urgency. Also, strategic leadership needs to be shown in identifying school readiness for particular curricular programmes and in reducing the overload of disconnected short-term initiatives and projects which encroach on teaching time each year.

Progress has been made in developing a middle management structure in the school. Written job descriptions have been agreed through consultation between senior management and post holders, the practice of annual post holder reports has been established, and a weekly meeting of senior management and the three assistant principals is now timetabled to facilitate discussions on aspects of school life. A review of the schedule of posts should now take place in order to ensure that the school's current and emerging priorities for development are being clearly supported by the posts. Short accounts of the main duties of the principal, deputy principal, and middle management members should be included in a staff handbook because the duties assigned to senior and middle management are not currently clear to all staff members. Annual review meetings with post holders should also incorporate discussions about individual supports needed by post holders. In some cases, additional training or the rotation of assignments may need to be a topic for discussion. It was reported that the rotation of duties was part of the middle management culture of the school in the past and this practice should be returned to in a manner that is mutually respectful. Some rotation of duties is vital to the future functioning of the school, given how its needs will continue to change over coming years.

Progress has been made in developing the school's external communication mechanisms through an updated school prospectus, website and newsletters. However, the formal communication of information internally is poor. Evidence was gathered during the evaluation that projects in which some staff members and students were heavily involved were not known to other staff members. This is a significant deficiency when such projects are directly relevant to those teaching related subjects. Gathering, recording, and

disseminating such information would support better outcomes for teaching and learning. While notice boards and notes in pigeon holes in the staff room, staff meetings, and occasional requests from the principal for feedback from staff at break times are the main communication methods with staff at present, other mechanisms need to be developed. As a matter of urgency, a staff handbook needs to be created to ensure transparent communication of key information about school life, the school calendar, school policies, and the roles and responsibilities of all members of staff. The homework journal should be significantly further developed to communicate key school policies and procedures to parents and students. A school's information and communication technology (ICT) intranet/shared drive, on which details of school initiatives and projects can be saved, needs to be established so that all staff members can familiarise themselves with that whole-school information. Finally, there is significant scope for improvement in the communication of day-to-day information to staff and students through the assembly structure and the intercom system.

Teachers are facilitated to attend continuing professional development (CPD) courses. However, further work needs to be done to create a culture of learning in the school. Management needs to create structures to ensure that the outcomes of professional development undertaken by individuals are shared with departments or with the whole staff in a manner that fosters the integration of new ideas into teaching and learning. Also, in the light of the school's need to maximise the skill set of its existing staff, given its current over-quota context, management should strategically use a formal audit process to plan and encourage whole-staff, group, and individual CPD to meet the identified needs of the school.

The school strives to include the diversity of students through its admissions practice for first years. However, the deferred enrolment of students with special educational needs, as stated in the admissions policy, should be reviewed. Ratification and review dates need to be added to the policy and the trustees are encouraged to ensure that the policy also meets with their approval. The school's admissions procedures and practices around potential transfer students require review. For example, it is evident that the board has refused enrolment to some potential transfer students on the grounds that they already have a school place. However, this preclusion is not listed in the admissions policy as one of the grounds on which enrolment can be refused.

The management of students' behaviour is one of the priority areas for development in the school. It is acknowledged that a small number of students demonstrate challenging behaviours within the school community. However, these students are not helped by a situation where those involved in student management appear to adopt independent approaches. For example, whole school implementation of the role of class tutor is uneven. Similarly, the roles and practices of year heads are not documented and there is a lack of consistency in their management of students' behaviour. Likewise, class teachers do not use the comment system underpinning year heads' monitoring of students' behaviour in a consistent fashion. It was reported that depending on the individual teacher or year head involved with a particular student on a particular day, different consequences can follow for the same types of misbehaviour.

Clear leadership needs to be shown by senior management in supporting staff through a root-and-branch review of their behaviour management skills, practices, and procedures before coming to consensus on how they want to operate a consistent, positive student management system into the future. One element of this process has already begun. Draft policies in line with the relevant National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB) guidelines have been developed in relation to a code of behaviour, sanctions, and suspension and expulsion. The work done so far is of very high quality. It is recommended that, as a matter of urgency, all three draft policies be moved towards ratification, so that they can be

included in student journals and in a staff handbook for the coming school year. Ultimately, it is likely to be the implementation of those policies in a whole-school transparent manner that will achieve improved student management within the school. The preparation of an implementation plan, encompassing the code of behaviour, disciplinary and pastoral student management systems, and the school's short-term positive rewards provision to support these policies will be vital. Given that SCP and NEWB personnel have offered to pro-actively support student management within the school, such offers of support should be harnessed. For example, SCP's offer to run an in-house suspension centre in the school should be considered, as a way of sanctioning misbehaviour while keeping students on track with their learning. Also, the Education Welfare Officer's offer to operate early intervention conferences before students reach the threshold of twenty days unaccounted absence from school should be utilised. It is recommended that the board of management and senior management prioritise the preparation and enacting of this implementation plan as one of their key priorities for the coming years. Finally, the external support agency working with the school in relation to student management should be invited to make presentations to the board and staff on the resources and training that can be sought to support the development of an implementation calendar and thus the improvement of student management and support in the school.

The student council makes a meaningful contribution to aspects of school life. Its work is acknowledged in the school newsletter and is publicised on notice-boards on a school corridor and in the staff room. Students were positive about the liaison teacher's support of them and about the principal's consultation and listening to them. A very strong sense of council members' pride and commitment to the school and appreciation for efforts by individual teachers to help students develop their interests and talents was voiced during the meeting with the council. Given that the council only represents fifth and sixth year students at present, it is recommended that the council be broadened into a group representing all year groups through an agreed democratic process and that external training for council members be accessed. Helpful resources in this regard include www.studentcouncil.ie and the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) hosted on www.pdst.ie . It is also recommended that the board seek to support the student council by ratifying its constitution when drafted and by seeking updates on its work from time to time. In particular, student council members' work as mentors to first year students is highly commended. It is suggested that this be affirmed by the board.

Year heads are primarily responsible for monitoring students' attendance, through their assembly work, and for following-up on morning absenteeism through phone calls. Progress has been made in improving afternoon attendance through the recent requirement that students stay in school for lunch and by the deputy principal's monitoring of it. However, attendance remains a significant area for improvement for the school. A three-pronged approach now needs to be taken. First, the principal needs to follow up on a May 2010 agreement to invite the SCP to set up a breakfast club in the school. Second, absenteeism needs to be followed up daily through phone calls or texts. This is not happening consistently at present. Third, a short-term rewards scheme needs to be set up and administered where students reaching an agreed percentage of attendance would be affirmed. In the longer term, the school could consider operating in-house suspensions, with the assistance of the SCP, to support the educational progression of students who need to be sanctioned for particular acts.

In relation to student retention, good sensitive home-visit support for students at risk of early school leaving is currently taking place through co-ordination between the education welfare officer (EWO) and the home-school-community-liaison co-ordinator.

A few very committed parents have constituted the parents' council in recent years. The parents' council supports the work of the school by giving feedback to draft school policies

and to suggested changes to school life when invited and by fundraising. The school supports the parents' council through references to it at open night, in newsletters, and in letters sent home in school bags, and by providing the home-school-community-liaison co-ordinator as a link person to attend meetings, organise annual general meetings, and organise training when requested. To date, the parents' council has communicated to the board through the home-school-community-liaison co-ordinator, who is also a teacher nominee on the board. It is recommended that communication with the board now be formalised with the parents' council writing to the board on areas of interest and concern to it. In turn, a brief, agreed written report on the outcomes of board meetings should be provided to the parents' council after each board meeting.

Standard school communication channels are in place with parents. These include teacher comments and some merit stickers on student journals, termly letters from year heads, open and registration nights for parents of first years, JCSP and graduation celebrations, school reports, parent-teacher meetings, and newsletters. A further whole-school communication mechanism yet to be utilised is the mobile phone texting service installed in September 2010 but unused as of the time of the evaluation. Very regular phone calls and termly questionnaires from the "Class of 2014" co-ordinator seeking parental feedback are highly valued by the parents of third-year students. Among the home-school-community-liaison co-ordinator's practices to build links with parents are home visits, organising coffee mornings and celebrations of student and parent learning, distributing a parent-focused newsletter, promoting parent education courses, and organising in-school parent and student learning initiatives. Despite the operation of these formal communication mechanisms and the work of the home-school-community-liaison co-ordinator and "Class of 2014" co-ordinators, the strengthening of the partnership with parents is an aspect of school life still requiring significant development. It is acknowledged that the lack of engagement in school life by some parents is outside of the control of the school. However, two factors within school control should be addressed. First, it is stated that senior management operates an open-door policy to facilitate ongoing communication between school and home. However, evidence was gathered that some parents do not feel that school management manages the issues brought to its attention effectively. Second, positive occasions when parents come to the school need to be better utilised by senior management in terms of relationship building and information dissemination to the wider parent body. Members of school management and staff should organise short oral inputs and oral feedback sessions or questionnaire administration to gather feedback from parents on proposed draft school policies or changes to school life at such events.

The home-school-community-liaison co-ordinator is very active in establishing links between the school and outside agencies and relevant health bodies to support students' needs in terms of induction, progression, retention, and transfer. However, as was recommended in an evaluation of the school's JCSP conducted by the Inspectorate in 2009, the school needs to more effectively harness the supports being given to students in the school by other agencies. For example, the principal needs to make better use of the SCP and NEWB service available to the school in this regard and needs to record and follow through on decisions made and agreements reached with such outside agencies to maximise outcomes for students. Also, given the educational needs of the student population, the absence of a special educational needs co-ordinator means that the supports that could be availed of by students with special educational needs from outside agencies are not being accessed as effectively as they could be.

The work of establishing links with community agencies is devolved to the home-school-community-liaison co-ordinator by senior management. The co-ordinator's reports on the services offered by those agencies, key contact persons, and projects being run by the school with the support of those agencies should be incorporated into the draft whole-school guidance plan, as well as being saved on a shared ICT drive/network for all staff to

familiarise themselves with them. At present, the chaplain's weekly meetings with the parish priest and membership of the local parish counsel and liturgy team help link the school with the local community and support information gathering on particular students at risk. Leadership of learning would be enhanced if senior management were to become more familiar with these structures and supports working with the school. Such knowledge and understanding would also enable senior management to reduce the overload of disconnected, short-term initiatives and projects encroaching on teaching time each year by prioritising students' involvement in projects that directly support whole-school teaching and learning targets agreed in the DEIS plan.

1.4 Management of resources

Thanks to changes in the school timetable led by school management last year, the school complies with regulations in respect of minimum weekly tuition time for students. School calendars made available during the evaluation detailed dates for staff meetings, parent-teacher meetings, whole-school in-service, and holiday closure arrangements but not opening and closing arrangements for the school year. Hence, it was not clear whether the school complies with regulations in relation to the annual provision of 167 teaching days. Future school calendars should address this issue.

As it is currently over-quota in relation to teacher allocation, St Enda's is required to provide for students from within its existing teaching pool. Also, the school has to apply to the Department every year to secure part-time hours for the subjects in which it lacks specialists. Considerable effort and skill has been demonstrated by senior management in running a broad curriculum in this context. Also, it is evident that additional teacher resources are generally being used for the purposes for which they were allocated.

To ensure that future staffing of the school continues to meet curricular and other requirements, careful planning will be required. For instance, a very low number of those teaching Mathematics in the school are subject specialists. Long-term planning of staff requirements should seek to increase the number of teachers who are registered to teach Mathematics in the school. While acknowledging that a questionnaire is administered to staff annually to gather their subject and programme preferences, greater use should be made of the data collected, particularly in relation to utilising in-house pastoral and English as an Additional Language (EAL) expertise.

The turnover of teaching staff is a particular feature of current school life, due to retirements, illnesses, and part-time teachers with only a few teaching hours leaving when they secure more teaching hours in other schools. As a result, subjects are occasionally delivered by two or three teachers to a particular junior or senior cycle class group. Hence, comprehensive staff induction needs to be an element of staff support. While a few documents and an orientation talk are provided to new staff by senior management currently, the process needs to be strengthened through the preparation of a staff handbook and the acceleration of subject-department planning.

The contribution that staff from other agencies working in the school, on specific projects or in support of particular students, can make to school life and school improvement is restricted. The induction and ongoing support of these co-professionals should be part of senior management's human resource strategy. The aim should be to ensure maximum sharing of relevant professional expertise and knowledge along with planning for the incorporation of effective strategies employed by those co-professionals into whole-school policies and practices. In particular, the establishment of a breakfast club in conjunction with SCP, as agreed by the principal at a meeting in May 2010, should be prioritised to positively encourage school attendance. Also, the range of SCP initiatives that could be run to support students should be reviewed, in relation to additional options outlined in *School*

Completion Programme: Guidelines towards Best Practice. Furthermore, the Class of 2014 co-ordinator's offer of customised in-house CPD days for staff should be taken up, to help mainstream the successes achieved by the programme before it ends.

The school has very good teaching and student-support facilities. The maintenance of the school building is of a very high standard and this helps to create a positive teaching and learning environment. The display of student and parent-focused materials by the home-school-community-liaison co-ordinator, the JCSP librarian, and other teachers also contributes to this atmosphere. The JCSP demonstration library is the vibrant heart of the school, promoting personal reading in a comfortable, student-centred way. However, the closure of the school's sports complex is a significant loss to students' curricular and extra-curricular learning and to the local community. The school's physical education (PE) teacher is highly commended for immediately sourcing alternate venues and activities so that students' PE programme could continue when the sports complex was closed. Office staff also helped by setting up bussing arrangements to support that programme and the principal accessed Department of Education and Skills funds to implement it. The ongoing task of planning and managing an off-site PE programme should now be supported by a planning team, including a member of senior management, to consider issues such as appropriate whole-school timetabling, health and safety needs such as field-trip supervision arrangements, and accessing support from the SCP and other agencies to help with the day-to-day management of the programme.

The school is equipped with appropriate and up-to-date high quality material resources to support teaching and learning. Subject departments are generally well-resourced. It is commended that a formal system for keeping stock of existing resources has been established in the school.

A safety officer and safety representative are appointed, they meet weekly, have completed relevant training, and a safety statement for the school was ratified in December 2010. Risk assessments involving all employees should be conducted to underpin the safety statement. Setting up a safety committee, as described in *Guidelines on Managing Safety and Health in Post-Primary Schools*, would facilitate school employee consultation on, and implementation of, arrangements to promote and develop safety, health and welfare at the workplace, and help monitor the effectiveness of those measures. Finally, developing additional school policies such as those identified on page thirty-two of the *Guidelines* would further support the school's health and safety performance.

There are good ICT resources in the school and the principal has been pro-active in sourcing additional equipment and software to support teaching and learning, and in availing of a bulk-buying scheme organised by the City of Limerick VEC to purchase computers at more economical rates. An ICT co-ordinator who engages in day-to-day maintenance of the ICT infrastructure to facilitate teaching and learning, has redeveloped the school's website, and has prepared a draft whole-school ICT plan. Appropriate use is made of ICT in school administration, in guidance, and as a learning and teaching tool in some classrooms. A school intranet or shared drive now needs to be established and an audit of staff ICT training needs should be conducted and analysed. Peer-sharing of expertise by individual teachers would meet a number of staff training needs identified. An ICT team, including teachers from different subject areas, needs to be established to help plan and manage the school's ICT needs into the future, and to help further develop the draft ICT plan, so that it can be progressed to ratification by the board. Finally, the school should also consider moving toward the electronic generation of school reports to facilitate ongoing analysis and tracking of students' examination attainments.

2. QUALITY OF SCHOOL PLANNING

2.1 The school plan

Senior management has appointed a school planning co-ordinator to help advance whole-school planning and it has established weekly meetings of the core teachers of students with special educational needs, and of the school's three assistant principals. The school is required to prepare a detailed action plan to improve student outcomes as part of its decision to participate in the DEIS programme. Good progress had been made in developing the school's DEIS plan under four areas and some progress had been made in implementing the plan. The school planning co-ordinator has exhibited dynamism, professional learning, and vision in leading baseline-data gathering, target setting, and the identification of strategies to develop the school's performance in the DEIS target areas of attendance, literacy, examination attainment, and partnership. A DEIS planning team and a student management strategy team have been convened occasionally. Consultation with the board, staff, parents, and students has also taken place occasionally.

At the time of the evaluation, St Enda's did not possess a school plan. While a range of policies has been developed over time, only one policy had been brought to the current board for ratification during its three-year term. Poor whole-school awareness of the school's policies was encountered during the evaluation. It is important to acknowledge that very limited handover and preservation of school planning documents seems to have taken place during the changes in senior management over the past decade. It was clear from previous subject and programme inspection reports that school planning was taking place over at least the past six years. Yet, policies seem to have disappeared with the various changeovers in school management. This situation now needs to be rectified. Senior management should ensure that information is systematically gathered, managed and communicated to support school life. It is recommended that an audit be conducted of all school policy documentation created by, or in the possession of, any staff members and that these documents be gathered and saved electronically on a shared drive of the school's ICT network, to aid school planning and communication. After moving policy drafts through whole-school review, updating and ratification, they can then be used selectively to facilitate the creation of a staff handbook for existing and new staff, to provide better information to parents and students through the student journal and school website, and to help create a school plan, as required under the Education Act, 1998.

Once all stakeholders have been led through a process of discussing and agreeing a shared, realistic, positive vision for the school grounded in its specific student, staff, and parent contexts, whole-school planning should be driven by an annual action-planning cycle. All staff should be involved in identifying possible annual planning priorities. Then those priorities can be listed and all staff asked to rank them, leading to the selection of two or three areas for planning development for the school year. This work will constitute the creation of the developmental section of the school plan. Parents, students, and the board should be made aware of the selected planning target areas for each academic year. The DEIS planning model should then be used to achieve progress in those selected areas. It will be important that task teams be given a defined brief, relevant in-house baseline data, templates for recording minutes of their meetings, and ongoing support and advice by the school planning co-ordinator and senior management. Consultation with the stakeholders should take place during the year as necessary in relation to the specific planning targets. A mid-year review of work done, of supports needed and of projected timeframes for completion should be included in the process as well as end-of-year reports on progress to the school planning co-ordinator, the entire staff, and the board. Such an action-planning approach should foster greater whole-school awareness and ownership of the planning targets set for each academic year, should shape planning for whole-staff CPD, and should lead to improved implementation of the plans and policies drawn up.

Plans and policies will have little value unless they are implemented on a transparent, whole-school basis and are monitored and reviewed on an on-going basis. There will need to be collective responsibility for the implementation of agreed policies and procedures among all staff and school management. It will also be important to monitor and review the impact of these policies on students' experience and on their learning outcomes.

Confirmation was provided that, in compliance with Post-primary Circulars M44/05 and 0062/2006, the board of management has formally adopted the Child Protection Guidelines for Post-primary Schools (Department of Education and Science, September 2004). Confirmation was also provided that these child protection procedures have been brought to the attention of management and school staff; that a copy of the procedures has been provided to all staff; and that management has ensured that all staff members are familiar with the procedures to be followed. The procedures now need to be brought to the attention of parents without delay. A designated liaison person (DLP) and a deputy DLP have been appointed in line with the requirements of the guidelines.

3. QUALITY OF CURRICULUM PROVISION

3.1 Curriculum planning and organisation

St Enda's offers the JCSP, the Leaving Certificate (LC), and the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP). The Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) used to be provided but was discontinued in 2008 reportedly because the 90% candidate attendance requirement, project work requirements, and other issues were not being met by a number of LCA students. An optional Transition Year (TY) was under consideration in the school at the time of the evaluation.

Despite its small current enrolment numbers and its over-quota staffing position, the school is successful in providing a broad curriculum to meet the needs and interests of its student body. Students' interests and strengths are carefully catered for through senior cycle options, in particular. For one senior cycle class group whose members are not studying French for LC but who want to complete the LCVP, an *ab initio* French class has been organised as required and this is good practice. Also, the fact that all junior and senior cycle students are timetabled for a double PE class every week is noteworthy, supporting students' physical and holistic development. Senior management's commitment to providing students with a menu of options each year is commended.

When the current senior management team took over in September 2008, its members inherited a timetable where first years were assigned to two streams which were not concurrently timetabled for any subjects and where the students were placed in different class groups for optional subjects. Hence, movement between levels for some subjects was blocked and those two classes never had a chance to integrate socially. It is commended that the current senior management team changed this practice of strict streaming so that all junior cycle students (except for the legacy third-year group) are now mixed for optional subjects and for Social, Personal & Health Education (SPHE) and that English, Irish, and Mathematics classes for the two groups are concurrently timetabled, thus creating the possibility of movement between levels. However, the current practice of assigning students on entry in first year to small foundation level Mathematics classes is still in need of review. So too is the reportedly limited movement of junior cycle students into classes appropriate to their ability in English, despite the fact that those classes are concurrently timetabled. In the short to medium term, the opportunities offered by team-teaching should be utilised by the school. In the long term, the creation of mixed-ability groupings in first year should be trialled.

In the September 2010 timetable, tuition time for students was increased to twenty-eight hours per week. One of the unfortunate outcomes of that change is the loss of timetabled Guidance for junior cycle students. Given that some elements of SPHE and Guidance are common, it is recommended that there be strong ongoing collaboration between the guidance counsellor and SPHE teachers. Opportunities to deliver specific elements of guidance on a planned, intermittent basis should also be explored.

An evaluation of the school's JCSP conducted by the Inspectorate in 2009 found that students were benefiting from the programme. Progress has been made on some of that report's recommendations such as improving reporting arrangements from key staff members to the principal, increasing weekly instructional time to the twenty-eight hour minimum, DEIS planning, developing a whole-school homework policy, and organising in-service on whole-school literacy strategies. One of the key recommendations yet to be implemented should now be addressed as a matter of urgency. Under the overall management of the principal, a steering group for JCSP needs to be established. Convened by the JCSP co-ordinator, the group should include the guidance counsellor and a representative teacher from each JCSP class group, chosen to include as wide a range of subject areas as possible. The primary role of this group should be to link with the teachers of JCSP students with regard to teaching and learning, to set achievement targets for JCSP students, and to monitor students' academic progress. This group should be charged with responsibility for drafting the JCSP plan.

Historically, the school offered a TY programme and some discussion is under way around offering this programme once again. While the merits of a carefully planned and delivered TY experience for students' holistic development and maturation are well recognised, substantial evidence gathered during the evaluation shows that the school community is not an appropriate point of readiness to run a TY programme. Senior management needs to manage its existing resources carefully, particularly given the fact that the school will be losing some education support hours in September 2011 and is likely to be facing the redeployment of some staff members under the Croke Park agreement. Hence, it is recommended that consideration of the re-introduction of TY be a long-term objective in the school action plan for improvement, to be reviewed when there can be more certainty about the core team planning and delivering the programme and when student numbers increase to the point that allocated hours can be spread between providing a TY programme and a sufficiently wide range of fifth-year subject options for those students who don't choose to do TY.

Historically, the school offered Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) courses but a management decision a number of years ago led to the phasing out of this provision. Ideally, the trustees and board would like to see PLCs offered on the St Enda's campus again. In recent years, exploratory talks were held on this issue between the school's liaison trustee (City of Limerick VEC) and the chairperson of the board, and between the principals of Limerick College of Further College and the current principal of St Enda's but with no firm outcomes. It is recommended that school management make the re-introduction of PLC provision a long-term goal in its action plan for improvement, to be attended to after internal school improvement issues have been addressed.

3.2 Arrangements for students' choice of subjects and programmes

The subject choice process in the school is designed to maximise access to options for all students. However, students' access to levels in junior cycle English and Mathematics is sometimes inappropriately restricted, as described on the previous page. In addition, there is a need for a formal process to be set up whereby a change of level (upward or downward)

is signed off on by a parent, teacher, and guidance counsellor before it is authorised. Also, it is recommended that the levels at which students are studying subjects be recorded in the school report template from now on.

Appropriate guidance is provided to students to assist them in choosing subjects and programmes. Guidance is also provided to them on the implications of these choices. ICT is used effectively to assist students in making their choices.

Parents are informed when subject choices are being made by their children but there is evidence that they are not given sufficient timely and comprehensive information on the options available. It is suggested that more use be made of JCSP celebrations, parent-teacher meetings, and the school website to provide this information.

3.3 Co-curricular and extracurricular provision

A wide range of co-curricular and extracurricular activities is provided each year, including JCSP initiatives, sporting tournaments, a school choir, charity fundraising events, activities to support the "Class of 2014", one-off events offered by outside agencies or facilitators, and physical activities by the organised by the school and by the SCP. Teams train in soccer, basketball, athletics, rugby, and hurling and students also participate in swimming classes and in a First Tee Golf Programme. However, the simultaneous scheduling of homework clubs and of after-school physical activities should be reviewed to ensure maximum participation in both types of activities. Running some recreational activities at lunchtime might help. Scheduling recreational activities after homework clubs or on opposite days to homework clubs could also be considered.

Certain school personnel have been very active in bringing literacy projects promoted by the Southill Local Education Committee to life in the school. Through the experience of such projects, individual students, teachers and certain classes have created teaching and learning materials to support studied texts, and have engaged in an intercultural twinning project involving penpal letters, Skype conversations with secondary students in South Africa, the construction of an authentic township shack, dance, drama and drumming workshops. The invitation of sporting role models to launch such initiatives has also increased interest and attendance at such events. Hence, a number of key strategies for promoting whole-school literacy have been developed by individual personnel in the school. However, due to the poor communication of information within the school, a number of staff members teaching related subjects are not aware of the nature or the teaching and learning strategies being employed in these co-curricular activities. Once established, a school ICT intranet or shared drive would enable the uploading of details of such projects for access by all. In addition, greater strategic leadership of learning by the principal needs to be shown in reducing the overload of disconnected short-term initiatives and projects encroaching on teaching time each year. All co-curricular experiences should match needs identified in the whole-school DEIS plan. They should also further develop the teaching and learning skills of serving school staff.

4. QUALITY OF LEARNING AND TEACHING IN SUBJECTS

4.1 Planning and preparation

The quality of individual teachers' planning for the lessons observed was good, with exceptional good practice observed in a few instances. Where teachers had also prepared visual, digital or aural stimulus materials to support learning, students responded very well. In this context, JCSP library support for sourcing subject-specific materials was highly commended by inspectors. Evidence that experiential learning opportunities, both inside

and outside the school, were being used to enhance students' learning was gathered in some of the subjects evaluated. The use of ICT was observed in a small number of lessons. Given the variety of learning styles and of student ability in the school, subject departments should plan on much greater integration of ICT into teaching and learning activities across the curriculum.

It is commended that provision has been made by school management for the special educational needs team to meet regularly. However, the other teachers of St Enda's rarely formally meet together to plan their work. Senior management now needs to organise more formal meeting opportunities for all subject departments. Subject departments should agree formal co-ordination structures involving rotation of roles and records of meetings should be kept. As a regular item on the agenda of such meetings, teachers should share teaching and learning methodologies that they have found effective and also new ideas from CPD sessions. Those methodologies could gradually be compiled into a valuable resource for use by all members of departments. Inviting individuals within the school community who are outside the subject department to share relevant skills and strategies could also be undertaken from time to time.

While subject-department planning has been developing in the school, there is a need for this development to accelerate. This was a key finding of the evaluation of the school's JCSP conducted by the Inspectorate in 2009. This whole-school evaluation report also finds that, in general, weak levels of progress had been made in the preparation of subject department plans for the subjects evaluated. Programmes of work need to be further developed in four ways. First, subject content and skills should be planned in time-bound units that address agreed learning outcomes for the particular year group. Second, information on methodologies should feature more strongly, particularly in relation to active learning and differentiation. Third, strategies to specifically promote students' literacy and numeracy skills, as agreed in the DEIS plan, should be included. Fourth, departmental assessment procedures should be agreed and formalised. The appended inspection reports provide subject-specific advice to support departmental plans for the subjects evaluated.

4.2 Learning and teaching

The overall quality of teaching observed in lessons ranged from fair to good, with some excellent practice in evidence in a few instances. Teachers were well prepared and had planned well for lessons. In general, the learning intention was clear and students engaged and participated well in the planned teaching and learning activities.

Lessons began with a range of routines including roll-call and a review of both homework and previous learning. Methodologies were largely teacher directed, with teachers maintaining students' attention through lower-order questioning and by setting a variety of written tasks for students to complete. However, some practices which required students to take responsibility for their own learning were also observed such as teaching literacy through storyboarding, brainstorming, games, group tasks, pair work, playing songs, and some natural co-operative learning opportunities in practical classes. To develop such active learning methodologies across the curriculum, a number of recommendations are made. For example, both closed and open questions should be employed and teachers should leave adequate wait time after questions for students to formulate an answer singly or in pairs. Also, pair and group work, differentiation, team teaching, and investigative work should be used more consistently.

Classroom management was observed to be generally very good and a positive atmosphere assisted in the creation of many good quality learning environments. Where a personalised

approach to learning was adopted by teachers, students responded well to the topics for study and to the resources and strategies used by the teachers.

The quality of students' learning ranged from fair to good, with scope for improvement. Factors noted to be impinging on students' learning were significant literacy difficulties in some classroom settings and the fact that some teachers' approaches were so shaped by the need to maintain control and to engage in narrow examination preparation that they were often at the expense of developing students' subject-specific skills and attitudes. In relation to the development of students' literacy skills, the use and display of keywords and the display of commercial posters in classrooms were commended by inspectors as very positive strategies. In a few instances, where the readability of textbooks was an issue for students, teachers prepared differentiated worksheets to support students' learning and this was good practice. The display of students' work is also recommended in both English and mathematics classrooms as a means of building self-esteem, audience and challenge for students. No perceptible focus on the development of numeracy skills across the curriculum was observed in the subject evaluations. Agreed whole-school strategies for developing students' literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum are now recommended, as part of the school's DEIS plan and implementation programme.

4.3 Assessment

A range of assessment modes is used to monitor students' achievement and progress. Feedback to students was a constant, in-class activity in many of the lessons observed. Incorporating more peer and self-assessment practices into classes would further deepen students' engagement with learning, critical thinking skills, and confidence.

Homework was assigned in the majority of lessons observed. In some subjects, students' copybooks provided evidence of comment-based marking by teachers, indicating a diligence on the part of teachers in terms of providing students with written feedback regarding their work. A number of homework clubs that support student learning operate in the school or are accessible to students in the local area. The homework journal is used extensively by teachers to communicate with parents and a draft whole-school homework policy has been prepared.

Formal house examinations are organised at Christmas for all year groups and for first-year, second-year and fifth-year students at the end of the academic year. In addition, first-year students undertake an assessment in October. Students in third year and in sixth year participate in mock examinations in the early spring. The school adopts a systematic approach to arranging reasonable accommodations in certificate examinations (RACE). All parents receive reports on their children's progress twice per year, with parents of first year students receiving an additional progress report after mid-term. It is recommended that the format of the school report be updated to clearly show the correct names of subjects and to include SPHE in the subject list.

It is reported that attendance at parent-teacher meetings is quite low. Subject inspectors encountered some confusion from the teachers they interviewed and from documentation provided by the school as to whether one or two such meetings are organised annually and as to the particular year groups being supported by these meetings. It has been confirmed that meetings take place twice a year for all year groups. This should be clarified in all school planning documents, including the staff handbook, school calendar, and newsletters for parents.

Re-testing of students in the areas of literacy and numeracy is planned for the 2011/12 school year. With a view to emphasising that literacy and numeracy development has a place in all students' learning, findings and trends from these tests should be shared in an

appropriate way with all staff members with responsibility for the progress of the students concerned. This should be part of DEIS planning. It would serve the school well to devise an over-arching assessment policy that would promote a systematic, strategic and collective approach, to sharing, interpreting, responding and revisiting both quantitative and qualitative assessment data.

5. QUALITY OF SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS

5.1 Inclusion of students with additional educational needs

Students and parents spoke with pride about very high-quality whole-school and teacher-and-student relationship supports for students with physical and special educational needs. Among the practices in place to meet the needs of students identified with special educational needs are a weekly meeting of the core team of teachers working with these students, a draft special educational needs policy, some limited "one plan, one student" work, the use of standardised and diagnostic tests to determine learning, and the organisation of therapeutic supports outside the classroom for some students. However, in the context of an above-average percentage of such needs in the school, co-ordinated whole-school responses now need to be formally developed.

The appointment of a co-ordinator for special educational needs should be given serious consideration. The establishment of a student register to track the utilisation of resources allocated and the re-introduction of team teaching practices would assist in optimising resources available to the school. To promote whole-school responses that would benefit all students and act as a driver of school improvement, it is recommended that a member of senior management, and other members of the DEIS planning committee attend the weekly meeting of special educational needs teachers. As well as examining effective teaching, learning and assessment practices, these meetings can address how best to support the key agent of change, the mainstream teacher. They can also act as monitor of the range and impact of initiatives, including behavioural supports and academic supports, and be alert to any possible fragmentation of provision. Plans to extend retesting practices regarding literacy and numeracy would also support efforts to improve students' achievement and attainment in the classroom. An inspection report, specific to an evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning in the provision for special educational needs is appended to this report.

There are a number of students with English as an additional language (EAL) in the school. It is recommended that the school identify serving staff with relevant modern language expertise for some EAL support work and that it encourage them to engage in relevant professional development work, including accessing relevant materials from the PDST, the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA), the English Language Support Teachers' Association, www.elsta.ie, and the publication *Learning in 2+ Languages* which can be accessed in the *Supporting Learners* area of the website www.ltscotland.org.uk.

Moreover, it is recommended that an intercultural policy be developed. It should outline clearly the modes of support for EAL students, the importance of students' home languages, EAL-specific assessment tools and practices, the management of communication between mainstream teachers and teachers withdrawing EAL students for support, class assignment protocols to ensure that students have appropriate peer language role models to help them develop their English language skills, and relevant guidance information.

5.2 Guidance and student support in the whole-school context

The school makes full use of the guidance hours allocated to it. Appropriate guidance is provided to students to assist them in choosing subjects and programmes in a guidance suite with good access to ICT. The guidance counsellor is in regular contact with key members of staff including the year heads, chaplain, core special educational needs teachers, and home-school-community-liaison co-ordinator. A well-developed draft of the whole-school guidance plan has been prepared. Links with local businesses, through the Junior Achievement Business Programme and the programme co-ordinator, with access officers in the local universities and the "Class of 2014" co-ordinator are being harnessed to support students' progression to further study. Students stated that they appreciated the guidance counsellor taking them on local open days and organising individual meetings for them with admissions officers to help support them in planning to take up further study.

A key finding of the evaluation was that the school's current guidance programme focuses primarily on educational and vocational guidance, with little room for personal guidance. A more balanced programme, addressing students' personal needs as well as their educational and vocational guidance needs, should now be developed and delivered. Areas for future development in relation to personal guidance include the establishment of a self-referral process for students to the guidance counsellor, and the formal agreement of the roles and responsibilities of the guidance counsellor and chaplain in relation to individual counselling. Also, it is suggested that the guidance counsellor, chaplain, and professionals providing behaviour support, various therapies, and life coaching should meet on a termly basis to facilitate the sharing of experiences and strategies that work with students and to further develop the personal guidance element of the whole-school guidance plan.

The guidance counsellor's role in promoting progression also needs to be strengthened over the coming years. Systematic tracking and recording of students' destinations after leaving school is needed to support DEIS planning and to provide the guidance counsellor with a pool of potential visiting speakers. In particular, past LC scholarship award-winners should be invited to contribute to school life on a more regular basis. Providing parents with more timely and comprehensive information to support students' choice of subjects, levels, and programmes will also support progression.

Class and year groups have been assigned to individual teachers who act as class tutor or year heads. Tutor roles are mainly concerned with checking student journals for comments to aid year heads' monitoring of student behaviour. It is recommended, that as part of the implementation plan for the code of behaviour, the function of, and methodologies used within, tutor classes be reviewed. Relevant professional development training and resources should be requested from the external agency working with the school on student management issues, to develop a consistent, positive approach to supporting students' welfare through tutor classes.

The focus of the work of year heads is on the operation of daily ten-minute assemblies to take attendance and check comments in student journals and on behaviour cards and to follow-up on student management issues during the first class of every school day and in response to specific incidents during the day. As already recommended in the JCSP report, the school should review the effectiveness of its assemblies. In some instances poor leadership is evident in these assemblies. It is recommended that structured planning among those delivering assemblies be required so that they are consistently delivered as positive motivational experiences, incorporating short-term rewards for attendance and improvement. Training and resources to facilitate this change of practice are available from the external agency working with the school on student management issues. Senior management needs to ensure that this retraining and change in delivery takes place.

A transition programme to support incoming first-year students operates in the school. Elements of it include an open night for prospective students and their parents; a coffee

morning for parents of incoming students; an afternoon where incoming students increase their familiarity with the school environment and pick their optional subjects; visits by the guidance counsellor to primary schools after students have accepted their places; a first-day orientation with the relevant year head, the deputy principal and principal; and on-going home-school-community-liaison co-ordinator links with parents and external agencies working with in-coming first years. It was reported that the adult mentors, the chaplain, and student mentors link in with first years during their first few weeks at school. To improve the effectiveness of the transition programme, visits by a teacher with special educational needs expertise to primary schools, to support the needs of incoming first years, could be considered. As part of student induction, a teaching programme needs to be incorporated where the code of behaviour would be explicitly taught to all students through the tutor/year head structure, supported by senior management and the guidance counsellor, the special educational needs team, and reinforced by all classroom teachers. This work should involve approaching the elements of the code using different methodologies and in different formats so that students can understand the words and concepts used in the code. Training and resources to facilitate this change of practice are available from the external agency working with the school on student management issues.

A student care team is established and meets weekly to share information about students at risk. While relevant information is exchanged at care team meetings, they operate in a reactive rather than a pro-active way and neither an at-risk watch list nor planned interventions to support those students are formally communicated to the wider staff. It is recommended that the care team assist in the development of individual plans for at-risk students so that the emotional and academic supports being put in place are recorded, co-ordinated, and reviewed to determine whether these supports are working successfully or need to be changed. The JCSP co-ordinator should also be added to this team. Also, the care team should also lead the development of whole-school critical incident response policy and procedures and should contribute significantly to the completion of the whole-school guidance plan.

6. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

The following are the main strengths identified in the evaluation:

- The current board is properly constituted, has good links with the trustees, and is committed to supporting the school.
- As the senior management team, the principal and deputy principal engage in ongoing communication, planning, and problem-solving.
- The school has very good teaching and student-support facilities, is equipped with appropriate and up-to-date high quality material resources and ICT equipment, and subject departments are generally well-resourced.
- Supports of particular benefit to students in the school include its participation in the JCSP Demonstration Library Project, the Class of 2014 project, and the home-school-community liaison programme.
- The school planning co-ordinator has exhibited dynamism, professional learning, and vision in leading baseline-data gathering, target setting, and the identification of strategies to develop school performance in the DEIS target areas of attendance, literacy, examination attainment, and partnership with parents.
- The school is successful in providing a broad curriculum to meet the needs and interests of its student body. The subject choice process in the school is designed to maximise access to options for all students.
- The quality of individual teachers' planning for the lessons observed was good, with exceptional good practice observed in a few instances.

- The overall quality of teaching observed in lessons ranged from fair to good, with some excellent practice also in evidence in a few instances.
- Classroom management was observed to be generally very good and a positive atmosphere assisted in the creation of many good quality learning environments. Where a personalised approach to learning was adopted by teachers, students responded well to the topics for study and to the resources and strategies used by the teachers.
- Meetings of the student care team and of the core teachers of students with special educational needs take place weekly to discuss students at risk.

As a means of building on these strengths and to address areas for development, the following key recommendations are made:

- The board needs to ensure that all stakeholders engage in a process of discussing and agreeing a shared, realistic vision for the school.
- A calendar for the achievement of identified school development targets should be agreed annually by the board with the principal and school planning co-ordinator.
- An implementation plan needs to be prepared to improve student management in the school, focusing on priority areas such as the code of behaviour, morning absentee follow-through, disciplinary and pastoral student-management systems, and the establishment of short-term positive reward systems across the school.
- The principal, with the co-operation of the board of management, should take specific actions to raise the levels of leadership being provided to the school community. Good starting points for this would be making internal communication and strategic planning more effective and maximising the supports available from outside agencies for the benefit of students.
- *Child Protection Guidelines for Post-primary Schools* should be brought to the attention of parents without delay.
- Higher student achievement should be promoted by developing subject department planning, by the more consistent use of active learning and differentiation by teachers, by agreeing whole-school targets and implementing whole-school strategies to develop students' literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum, and by improving internal communication and use of data relevant to student progress.
- A more balanced guidance programme, addressing students' personal needs as well as their educational and vocational needs, should be devised and delivered.
- The functions and methodologies of tutors, year heads, and the care team need to be reviewed and the relevant professional development training opportunities and resources available through the external agency working with the school on student management issues need to be utilised to the full.

Post-evaluation meetings were held with the staff and board of management when the draft findings and recommendations of the evaluation were presented and discussed.

7. RELATED SUBJECT INSPECTION REPORTS

The following related Subject Inspection reports are available:

- Subject Inspection of English – 14 January 2011
- Subject Inspection of Special Educational Needs – 18 January 2011
- Subject Inspection of Social, Personal & Health Education – 19 January 2011
- Subject Inspection of Mathematics– 21 January 2011

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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

As a point of information, the board responding to this report has only been in place since the first term of this academic year 2011/2012. Only two members of the current board were on the board in situ when the Whole School Evaluation took place.

Overall the board of management was happy with the WSE process and wishes to acknowledge the cooperation and commitment of the senior management team and staff in facilitating the inspection with professionalism and flexibility. They wish to thank the Department of Education and Skills for providing the school with the opportunity to review its practices and progress to date and acknowledge the dedication and support of the Inspectors.

The report is reaffirming for the board of management and acknowledges the good practice and positive contributions of the senior management team, the teaching staff, parents and student council. It provides helpful insights and recommendations which will support the school in driving its mission to help each child reach his/her potential in a safe, caring and disciplined environment.

The board welcomes comments on the strengths and good practices re
-The school environment being a credit to all and the warm and welcoming school atmosphere.
-The excellent provision of an impressive range of co-curricular and extracurricular activities.
- The board's clear decision making procedures and the support and good links with trustees.
-The senior management's commitment to the school and their ongoing communication, planning and problem solving.
- The development of middle management team and the commitment of the assistant principals.
-The meaningful contribution of the student council and their sense of pride in and commitment to the school.
-The provision of a broad curriculum and good ICT resources.
-Good classroom management and positive atmosphere and quality learning environments.
-Child protection compliance.
-The good teaching and student support services and the positive teaching and learning environments.
-The many supports of benefit to students including SEN team, pastoral care team, JCSP programme, SCP, HSLC, mentoring programmes and Class of 2014 UL.
-Sound health and safety provision.

The board of management wishes to point out that all student misbehaviour is well documented and commends the restorative approach by senior and middle management and staff to misbehaviours in the school.
-The board of management acknowledges the additional stresses imposed on senior management and PE Department as a result of the sudden closure of the sports complex on the first day of the WSE.
-The board of management is concerned that the provision of a broad curriculum will be extremely challenging in the light of recent cuts, in particular the career guidance teacher, redeployment and proposed DEIS cuts will have a detrimental effect on the students' education.

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 following have been undertaken since the inspection:
-Comprehensive teacher handbook provided in September and under ongoing review.
-Ratification of following draft policies including Homework, Literacy, Numeric, Code of Behaviour, Admissions, Critical incident, Internet Acceptable Use Policy, Child Protection Policy and Child Protection Guidelines for Post Primary Schools.
-Formation of new board of management in September and ACCS training provided in November 2011.
-Presentation of one and three year School Improvement DEIS plans to BOM.
- New Student Council formed with representatives from all years. Student Council formally invited by board of management to attend and report at BOM meeting.
-Parents' Council training provided by National Parents Council. Supported by principal and HSLC.
-Promotion of PT meeting with parents. Improved attendance at PT meetings by 33%.
-Chairperson attended JCSP Christmas celebration and principal addressed parents re attainment, exam preparation and parental links and supports as in DEIS plan. Increased communication and correspondence with parents.
-Senior Management attended ePortal demonstration. Electronic attendance and results, under review
-New NEWB strategy re referrals reviewed with year heads and senior management.
-SEN coordinator newly appointed with agreed responsibilities. Senior management on SEN team.
-Subject planning meeting 8 hours scheduled for year. Guidelines provided and led by senior management and discussed with staff, additional information in staff handbook provided and promoted. Updates provided by senior management on best practices and new DES programmes.
-PE planning and support provided by senior management. Triple PE classes provided and SNA support.
-Assembly reviewed by senior management and assistant principals. Agreed guidelines in handbook. Awards to students for attendance, behaviour and achievements agreed and included in handbook
-Tutor role reviewed and guidelines in handbook further ongoing review planned and NBSS support.
-Critical incident policy in new hand book and lead by care team.
-Child Protection Annual Review in December 2011. New guidelines approved and policy ratified and brought to attention of staff and parents' council. Whole staff training prioritised.
-LDS Forbairt course being attended by senior and middle management team.
-Student journal developed includes code of behaviour.
-Staff audited in terms of CPD. ICT in the classroom prioritised by staff and full days training provided in November 2011.
-Induction of all new staff members with new handbook and ongoing support provided.
-NBSS supports maximised to meet needs of school. Introduction of Catch up and Read and Friends for Life with in-service for four teachers.
-CPD provided to whole staff by NBSS in August on the implementation of the code of behaviour.
-Restorative practice programme further developed and two teachers and principal attended in-service. Agreed by staff to implement restorative practices with ongoing review.
-Texting service for parents in operation.

-Excellent presentations made by staff, former students and board of management representative on the school's Open Night in October 2011. The presence of trustees and board of management members was appreciated by the staff and parents.
-Comprehensive training for all board of management members was provided in November 2011.
- There was evidence of excellent cross-curricular involvement in the JCSP pre Christmas concert.
-Agreed written reports from BoM meetings provided for staff and parents through their nominees on the board.
-An arrangement to ensure that all stakeholders will engage in a process of discussing and agreeing a shared realistic vision for the school will be a prioritised item on the agenda for a BoM meeting for February.

The Board will carefully consider all the recommendations contained in the Whole School Evaluation report, with a view to their implementation, in light of the needs and resources of the whole school and in consultation with the partners in the school. Promoting high quality teaching and learning and continuing to work towards achieving excellence in every aspect of the education provided in St Enda's is a priority for the board.