WHOLE-SCHOOL EVALUATION

A whole-school evaluation of St Munchin’s College was undertaken in February 2010. 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 and in the provision for Special Educational Needs were evaluated in detail, and separate reports are available on these subjects and provision. (See section 7 for details). The board of management 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 Munchin’s College provides second-level education for boys from Corbally and the adjacent areas of Limerick city and county. The origin and history of St Munchin’s College link it to the development of the Roman Catholic diocese of Limerick from the last years of the eighteenth century to the present. St Munchin’s began as a major seminary and then, towards the end of the first quarter of the nineteenth century, became a minor seminary dedicated to providing second-level education as the diocesan college. Since the introduction of free second-level education, St Munchin’s College has continued to respond to change, broadening its curriculum and phasing out boarding in the last decade.

1. QUALITY OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

1.1 Characteristic spirit of the school

St Munchin’s College functions under the patronage of the Roman Catholic Bishop of Limerick. The aims of the school are stated clearly in its educational philosophy – a vision document that sets out how the school will fulfil its mission.

The statement of educational philosophy, formally adopted by the board of management five years ago, places the vision of the school firmly in the context of a rapidly changing society. This vision provides a strong basis for the school to respond to the reality of its core mission in the context in which it now operates.

The vision of the school is effectively communicated to the whole school community by the inclusion of the educational philosophy statement as a prominent element of the school web site and through other publications, including students’ journals. The overt inclusion of the statement in the aims and objectives expressed in some of the policy documents is very good practice. This approach should be followed in each policy, underlining consistency with the stated vision for the school. Liturgical events in the course of the year help to strengthen the sense of community and further support the realisation of the vision of the school. While there is a strong sense that the stated vision is shared and supported by all, there is evidence that an appreciable element of staff seeks to have a greater degree of active involvement in school development and the implementation of policy. It is important that the staff as a body feels a sense of ownership when facing the challenges facing the school. The sense of joint venture and collegiality within the staff should be further strengthened and given expression by the careful nurturing by management of opportunities for staff to take part in the processes of policy formulation and the further development of the school.

1.2 School ownership and management
Formation of the board of management is in line with good practice. The board consists of eight members, four of whom are nominated by the patron. Two representatives of the parents and two representatives of the teaching staff complete the membership. There is gender balance in the representation from each of the bodies in line with good practice. The present board, which was formed within the past year, includes members with experience over several years together with newly recruited members. Half of the members have served at least one other term. This provides for continuity and consistency in management.

There is regular communication between the board and the patron, particularly through meetings between the principal and the patron, where verbal updates on the running of the school are provided. The principal and the board have considered the provision of a more formal annual report from the board to the patron. This practice has much to commend it and should be adopted.

The board is fully compliant with relevant legislation, Department of Education and Skills circulars and accepted good practice. The members of the board are knowledgeable and well-prepared in relation to the completion of their duties and all have attended relevant training courses provided by the Joint Managerial Body for Secondary Schools (JMB) and Association of Management of Catholic Secondary Schools (AMCSS). Each member is supplied with a copy of the Manual for Boards of Management of Voluntary Secondary Schools to which they refer as needed.

Decision-making by the board is undertaken in a spirit of collaboration and partnership. The procedures followed are transparent and are designed to serve the best interests of the school community. Communication is of a high standard among board members and between the board and the teaching staff. Opportunities for interaction, including school events such as matches and musicals, are used to maintain and enhance relationships. The board members are known to the staff and this is a further aid to positive collaboration in the interests of the school.

The board involves itself in the consideration of school policies as they are set before it and then fulfils its role with regard to the adoption and ratification of each policy. On occasion, the board initiates the further development of policy as in the recent clarification of policy in the area of suspension and expulsion of students. Other partners in the school community also initiate action on policy development and review from time to time as in the case of the policies on uniform and mobile phone use which were brought forward for consideration by the teaching staff. However, in general the process of policy formation is reactive and lacks defined mechanisms for involving all the interested parties. It is recommended that a greater level of formality be brought to policy-development procedures. The date of ratification by the board of management is appended to many policy documents. Where followed, this approach is in line with good practice. The date for review of the policy is sometimes also included. The process of policy development should be further improved by adding the dated signature of the chairperson of the board to the policy on formal ratification and by stating the review process to be followed and the date for the next review.

A range of policies is in place including those on admission, child protection, behaviour and guidance. The board should adopt a schedule for an initial review of each of these policies, perhaps involving interested staff members, as a means of establishing the more formal procedure recommended. The board should continue the formalisation and drafting of policies, particularly in areas not yet included in the permanent school plan such as the draft guidance plan which needs to be ratified. It is also recommended that the school consider providing an inclusive policy to support the teaching and learning of students with special educational needs. Appropriate policy documents, that have been previously devised, could provide a useful starting point for this work. The school is advised to finalise
and ratify the school’s draft Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) policy. To this end, attention is drawn to the template available on the Department’s website, http://www.education.ie/home/home.jsp

The board has prioritised a limited number of areas identified for development. To the forefront of these areas is the school’s refurbishment plan. This development has been energetically pursued and is at the stage of preparation of tender documents. The prioritised development of the curriculum of the school has resulted in the introduction of a tailored programme for some current fifth-year students. To build on such positive developments, the board of management should urgently focus on the development in the school of a comprehensive, focused and detailed plan for school development. In the process of completing the developmental plan for the school, all areas of school organisation, including curriculum, staffing, student care, staff development and the changing context of the school should be considered in detail. Arising from this detailed consideration, a range of developmental priorities should be identified and strategies should be put in place for their achievement within an appropriate, clearly stated time. The School Development Planning Initiative website, www.sdpi.ie, provides guidance on the best approaches to take when continuing with such development in the school.

Communication between the board and parents is conducted mainly through the parents’ representatives. Formal communication should be enhanced by the provision of an annual report on the progress made in achieving aims and targets set out in the developmental plan for the school. It is very desirable that the board of management provide an annual report for parents, through the parents’ council, staff and the students’ council as envisaged in Section 20 of the Education Act 1998. It is suggested that the collating of the agreed reports from each board of management meeting would facilitate the provision of such annual reports.

1.3 In-school management

The school is facing a number of challenges. To the fore among these challenges is the changing social context in which the school operates which requires the school to embrace and celebrate necessary change. The school now caters for increased enrolment from its immediate surrounding population, including students from less-well-off backgrounds, who may require a greater diversity of curricular and other approaches. As a consequence, it is essential that the school continues to engage in ongoing reassessment of its role. This ongoing reassessment should lead to defined actions to ensure that the challenges are met in the most appropriate and effective way giving expression to the vision of the school.

The task of leading the school as a professional community towards the achievement of its vision must be given utmost priority by the principal and the senior management team. Given the appreciable progress made in furthering the plans for the refurbishment of the school building, it is now timely for the focus of senior management to move to broader school development issues. The priorities for leadership towards a clearer understanding and implementation of the vision of the school need to be identified. The school needs to move towards a more collaborative model that provides for greater engagement by teachers in exploring ways of meeting its responsibilities. The priorities identified can focus on providing structures and opportunities for teachers to engage with aspects of school development in which they are individually interested. It is essential, in the active pursuit of these leadership priorities, that middle management be fully involved through appropriate devolution of responsibility and distribution of leadership. It is also of utmost importance that the emerging sense of purpose be shared by the whole school community. It is envisaged by the management of the school, in line with good practice, that assistant principals would meet on a weekly basis. A class period is identified during which all assistant principals are available for this purpose. Some meetings have taken place.
However, these meetings should be given higher priority and they could also include some other staff members who have a central role in the development and implementation of policy, such as the Transition Year (TY) programme coordinator, the special educational needs coordinator or the guidance counsellors, some of whom may not hold an assistant principal post. These meetings of assistant principals could, in addition to dealing with the specific assigned duties of the middle-management role in the school, be tasked by the board of management and principal with exploring specific school-development planning matters. The meetings can provide an opportunity for the knowledge and experience of the teachers involved, to be brought to bear on mapping the way forward for the school. The aim should be to provide for the full expression of the sense of responsibility, shared by the whole staff, for the core work of prioritising outcomes for learners.

The principal and deputy principal collaborate successfully in managing the day to day operation of the school. Their respective management roles are clearly delineated and appropriate tasks are associated with each role. While the duties assigned to assistant principals and special-duties teachers are broadly consistent with needs of the school, it is noted that some very important areas, such as an appropriate role in school-development planning and contributing to policy development are not included in the assigned duties. However, many of the assigned duties relate directly to the care of students, including the duties of year head and class tutor, in line with good practice. There is also some evidence of change in the work assigned to post-holders in response to changing circumstances. This is a positive development. School management and teaching staff should regularly and collaboratively review the duties of post-holders in order to identify priority areas and to ensure that these are covered appropriately. In the context of the review, the arrangement whereby the coordination of some subject departments is linked to posts of responsibility duties should be reviewed. This arrangement stands in the way of the rotation of the role of coordinator and may in some instances lead to co-ordination being undertaken by a teacher who is not currently teaching the subject in question. Subject-department co-ordination will ideally be rotated between the subject-department teachers by agreement, perhaps on an annual basis. Following the review of post-holders’ duties, senior management, together with the board of management, should continually monitor the prioritised duties identified in the review to ensure to the greatest possible extent that essential services and supports for students are maintained.

Communication among management and staff in the school is often informal. While such informal communication is often very effective and appropriate, its effectiveness depends on cohesiveness, a collaborative approach, and a sense of involvement of the whole staff. It is essential that these qualities become characteristic features of the school at all levels, in the staffroom and in the school in general. More formal communication is facilitated by weekly announcements which are usually made at morning break on Fridays and other announcements as needs arise. Notice boards in the staff room, including electronic displays, provide for regular communication with staff and a staff meeting is held each term. The provision of a staff handbook should be examined to further facilitate the communication of relevant information. Such a handbook should be particularly helpful for teachers new to the school and will also provide a convenient reference for all staff. Structures for increased formal communication among teachers involved in particular aspects of the work of the school, such as the TY programme team, the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) team, the pastoral team and the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) team, should also be explored and implemented, where feasible.

There is evidence of good practice in some subject departments regarding the involvement of teachers in continuous professional development (CPD). However, in a number of instances, involvement by teachers in CPD has been low. It is recommended that clear and transparent planning be undertaken, at management, subject-department and individual teacher level, to ensure that opportunities to avail of appropriate CPD are availed of in an
equitable manner to provide for the professional needs of teachers and the educational and other needs of the school. It is suggested that whole-staff CPD should be used to raise the awareness in particular areas undergoing development in the school, such as SPHE.

Practice with regard to admissions is very good and reflects the stated educational philosophy of the school, grounded in principles of equality, diversity and inclusion. It is recommended that the good practice within the school, whereby all students, including those who may have special educational needs, are enrolled prior to application by the school for additional resources, be made explicit in the admissions policy and specifically in the section headed ‘Special Educational Needs’. The reference in the admissions policy that admission is dependent on such resources having been provided should be removed.

It is an accepted condition of the school’s participation in the free education scheme that all financial contributions made by parents are voluntary. However, parents are obliged to pay an administration fee of €50.00 per child on registration for first year. The imposition of an administration fee is inappropriate and therefore all references to such a fee should be removed from admissions documentation. The suggested contributions by parents of students in TY are also voluntary and should be clearly described as such, not as a ‘fee’ or an ‘amount payable’.

In matters of discipline, students are referred to class tutors, year heads and the principal or deputy principal as appropriate. Students are also given positive encouragement by teachers, class-tutors and by year heads. The broad expectations of the school with regard to what constitutes acceptable student behaviour are clearly communicated to all students and their parents in the ‘Code of Behaviour and Discipline’. This document gives the context in which the school undertakes, in partnership with parents, to further the development of students in line with its educational philosophy. The document builds on the importance of respect of students for themselves, their fellow students and the wider school community. However, the document does not include reference to any positive encouragements of good behaviour and refers only to suspension and expulsion as sanctions to be imposed. In practice, however, other sanctions in regular use include after-school detention and detention in uniform on Saturdays. A card system is in place to systematically record and monitor the details of all sanctions imposed by teachers. Such systematic recording and monitoring is good practice.

In line with good practice, the school is in the process of setting up a working group to audit present practice, to review the existing code of behaviour and to further promote positive student behaviour. It is reported that this working group will be representative of the pastoral-care team, the board, the trustees and teachers, and will include the principal. The work of the group will be guided by the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB) publication ‘Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools’ (NEWB, 2008), http://www.newb.ie/downloads/pdf/guidelines_school_codes_eng.pdf.

Following this audit and review, the code of behaviour should be extended, in collaboration with staff, senior management, parents and the student council, to record and emphasise the steps taken to reinforce positive behaviour. The code should also clearly define incremental steps to be taken in the event of a students’ failure to abide by the expected standards of behaviour. A major objective of the code of behaviour should be to obviate the need to resort to suspension of a student from class or from school for all but the most serious of lapses. The overall management of students, defined by accepted practice rather than in written policies, is an integral part of the day-to-day organisation of the school in which all teachers play a part. More detailed descriptions of the roles of teachers and all others involved in the implementation of the code of behaviour should be drawn up as an integral part of its review.
There has been an active, representative and well-organised student council in the school for some years. At the time of the evaluation the council had been in abeyance, due to the unavailability of a liaison teacher, but was due to resume within a month. The inspectors were, however, afforded the opportunity to meet students who had been active in the council in the previous year. It was evident that the council was effective and provided students with opportunities for involvement in decision-making processes that related directly to their lives in the school. These students spoke knowledgeably and with confidence of their role on the council. First-year students are not normally represented on the student council at present due to the holding of elections early in the year, before they have a chance to get to know each other. It is urged that the feasibility of electing first-year representatives, or perhaps holding all elections, later in the year, be examined. It is also suggested that the student council should consider the most effective ways to raise its profile within the school, beginning with the use of dedicated notice boards and the provision of a suggestion box for students.

The procedures in place for monitoring students’ attendance are based largely on the roll call in the first period in the morning and in the afternoon. These procedures are organised and systematic, and in line with good practice. Absences and late arrivals are notified to the office. A list of absent students is then prepared and posted in the staffroom for all teachers. The implementation of this system is included in the responsibilities of class tutors, and is monitored daily by the deputy principal or principal. The school is in the process of fully implementing short messaging service (SMS) communications with parents and it is planned to expand this service within the next year to include immediate notification of students’ absence. This represents good forward planning. However, to further improve the monitoring of attendance, the system for monitoring truancy from lessons in the course of the day, including early departure of students, should be more formal.

The parents’ council provides effectively for parents to be involved in the life of the school. The views of parents are sought on school policies and areas of organisation that affect their sons’ lives. The council is clear regarding its role; that it is not a channel for complaints or simply a fund-raising body, although it does involve itself in fund-raising for specific purposes outside of the activities of the school’s separate fund-raising committee. Members of the executive committee of the council, who include past students who are now in turn parents of students, display a very good knowledge of the organisation of the school and of the changes and improvements that have taken place in recent years. The council meets on a monthly basis, usually with a representative of the teachers present, and meetings are always attended by the principal.

Good practice is followed with regard to communication with parents. The school newsletter is an important channel of communication and letters to parents are included from time to time with other school correspondence. The parents’ council sees the imminent SMS messaging as a very welcome addition to the existing channels, which also include parent-teacher meetings and the use of students’ journals. The addition of pre-printed slips for defined purposes, such as explanation or notification of absence, in the back of the students’ journal has been a successful innovation in the current year. Parents expressed satisfaction with the openness of the school to contact from parents as needs arise. Annual parent-teacher meetings are held for each year group, in line with good practice. Parents are invited to various open-nights to deal with specific business such as choice of programmes and choice of subjects.

The school maintains contact with the neighbouring primary school and with the local girls’ secondary school, with which very successful annual musicals have been jointly produced for some years. Links with the wider community are limited to contact with some local charities and sports clubs that use the school’s playing facilities. Planned links with the community should be considered as part of the overall development plan for the school.
However, the school does maintain close and positive links with agencies including the National Council for Special Education (NCSE), NEWB and the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS).

There is some evidence of the emergence of a culture of review and self-evaluation in the school. This evidence is seen clearly in the annual review of the TY programme which, as is good practice, actively involves parents and students. Such good practice is an important aspect of management and it should be appropriately formal. Review and self-evaluation should be encouraged at all levels also forming a consistent part of subject-department management. As the process of review and self-evaluation is further developed and deployed in the school, it should also involve detailed consideration of the on-going improvement of outcomes for students.

1.4 Management of resources

The school timetable often makes provision for the required number of instruction hours per week for classes. It is noted, however, in the case of some classes in senior cycle, that a small number of study periods are included in the timetable. Since these periods do not constitute teaching time they cannot be included in the required twenty-eight hours to be provided for each student. It is essential that these periods be timetabled for instruction.

The school calendar is organised in line with the standardised school year published by the Department and complies with regulations with regard to the number of teaching days per year. Due to the commendable involvement of students in team sports at local and provincial level, and their notable success over the years, there are occasions when teams and many supporters attend matches during school time. It is recommended that the effect of these occasions on the amount of teaching time provided for students continues to be monitored carefully. It is also recommended that lessons be arranged for students who are not attending these matches. As stated above, study periods do not constitute instruction time.

The deployment of teachers is consistent with the teachers’ qualifications and complies with the Department regulations. While a number of the SPHE teaching team are relatively well experienced and have undertaken some training in the area of SPHE, other members are new to the subject and have not engaged in any training. Best practice indicates that all teachers should have completed the minimum, two-day, introductory training provided by the SPHE Support Service in advance of being deployed to teach the subject. This needs to be considered by management in the future deployment of staff.

Additional teacher resources are generally accessed and utilised for the purposes for which they were allocated. However, it was noted that the 0.45 whole-time teacher equivalents (WTE) allocated to the school for the teaching of English as an additional language to a small number of students was not being used for this purpose at the time of the evaluation due to the students concerned not being present. The use of allocated resources under such circumstances should be carefully recorded and transparently accounted for. If there is no serious likelihood that the students concerned will return to the school the Post-Primary Teacher Allocation Section of the Department should be informed that these teaching resources are no longer required.

There is a general understanding in the school that the deployment of teachers across junior and senior cycle and for higher level and ordinary level is by rotation in a fair and equitable manner. This is good practice. It is recommended that the practice of rotation of teachers in this manner be established in all subject departments.
It is recommended that the school review the manner of class formation in junior cycle. Consideration should be given to all classes being of mixed-ability in first year. There is a need for concurrent timetabling in English, Mathematics and Gaeilge for all classes in second year and third year to provide appropriate flexibility in the assignment of students to classes. This is expanded upon in the English and Special Educational Needs subject inspection reports that are appended to this WSE report.

The school is facing a period of change in its facilities and curriculum, an instance of which is the addition of teaching facilities for Technology in the planned refurbishment of the school building. Such change has implications for the strategic development of the staff team if its benefits are to be fully realised. It is recommended that school management, in line with the vision of the school, identify future staffing needs and clear priorities for the development of teacher resources.

The accommodation in the school buildings is maintained to an acceptable standard and is appropriately utilised in meeting the needs of the school community. The planned refurbishment and extension will facilitate the school in meeting the wider needs of a changing school community including the diversification of the curriculum and the efficient meeting of the educational needs of all of the students. The success of the board and senior management and their dedication with regard to the improvement of the facilities are acknowledged.

The teaching spaces within the school are, at present, organised on the basis of student-based classrooms. While this has advantages in minimising student movement between lessons, it limits opportunities for the provision of enriched subject-specific learning environments and the convenient storage of teaching materials is not facilitated. It is recommended that the possibility of providing some subject-based classrooms be examined.

Good progress has been made, under the guidance of the active Information Technology (IT) coordinator and coordinating committee, in integrating information and communication technology into teaching and learning, most notably in Design and Communication Graphics (DCG) and also in Art. Audits of ICT equipment have been conducted and planning has been undertaken for the further development of the ICT infrastructure and its usage. Department grants, disbursed through the Technology Subjects Support Service, have provided for ICT development in DCG. The success of a student in a design competition held by an internet search company provided funding for a significant amount of additional ICT equipment used for learning and teaching purposes. To continue with this good progress, it is urged that the use of ICT for teaching and learning be introduced into all curricular areas as soon as feasible. It is noted that development goes beyond the provision of hardware and software, although this is a necessary prerequisite, and involves the development of teaching and learning methodologies and strategies which has a wider remit in school development.

It is a cause for concern that issues related to health and safety in the science laboratories highlighted in an earlier subject inspection report had not been addressed at the time of this evaluation. It is also noted that organisation for the maintenance of good health and safety practices throughout the school, including review and regular up-date of the health and safety statement, should be addressed. The health and safety statement should be an active document in the life of the school and should be consulted regularly to ensure compliance. It is recommended to the board of management, given its responsibility for the implementation of recommendations contained in the Science subject-inspection report, that the health and safety statement be reviewed as a matter of urgency. The sections of ‘Review of Occupational Health and Safety in the Technologies in Post-primary Schools’ (State Claims Agency, Department of Education and Science, 2005), available on
http://www.education.ie/servlet/blobservlet/review_oh_safety_tech.pdf, which deal with the organisation of health and safety procedures in schools are relevant and should be consulted in detail when undertaking the review.

The grounds and buildings of St Munchin’s College are a very important feature of the Corbally area, forming a natural link between the city and the river which they adjoin. The school has taken an active interest in maintaining the visual amenity of the approach to the building while taking steps to enhance safety for students using the entrance drive. The planned refurbishment envisages the further enhancement of this aspect of the school. It is urged, as a means of further involving students in the appreciation of their surroundings and as a timely focus on the full realisation of the potential of the school and its surroundings, that involvement in the Green-Schools programme, http://www.greenschoolsireland.org, be considered.

2. QUALITY OF SCHOOL PLANNING

2.1 The school plan

The permanent section of the school plan includes a range of policy documents that are in line with statutory requirements, Department circulars and other guidelines on good practice in areas including the admission of students, code of behaviour, bullying and critical incidents. These documents have been prepared collaboratively, often by voluntary committees of staff members who express interest in the particular policy area and give generously of their time in completing the task. The documents have generally been formally adopted by the board. However, such committees have been formed on an ad-hoc basis and do not form part of an overall school-development planning structure.

There is some level of engagement in planning at each level within the school. In order to derive full benefit from this engagement, a formal school-planning co-ordinating structure should be established. This structure should include a co-ordinating group or committee, which should include senior management, should provide a clear and agreed direction for school planning and development in line with priorities agreed by the board and should co-ordinate the activities of the various interested parties. The group should be enabled and facilitated in its work by the leadership and vision of senior management and the board of management. Thus, planning in the school, including the process of policy development and review, should have clearly defined mechanisms and be fully and collaboratively representative of all the interested parties including the patron, the board of management, in-school management, staff, parents and students. To achieve this, the involvement of each of the interested parties should be formalised to a greater extent to provide for consultation, review and amendment of school policy and planning. The developmental priorities already identified by the school should be expanded to include the full range of priorities that arise from consideration of ‘Looking at Our School – an aid to self evaluation in second-level schools’ (Department of Education and Science, 2003), available on the internet at http://www.education.ie/servlet/blobservlet/insp_looking_at_self_evaluation_second_level_schools.pdf?language=EN.

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 were brought to the attention of management, school staff and parents; that a copy of the procedures was provided to all staff and that management ensured that all staff were familiar with the procedures to be followed. A designated liaison person (DLP) and a deputy DLP were
appointed in line with the requirements of the guidelines and were approved by the board of management.

It is recommended, in order to ensure that the provision for child protection remains current, that a copy of the school’s child protection policy and procedures, including the names of the current DLP and deputy DLP be again circulated to all staff. At the time of the evaluation, two members of the board were about to take part in a further training course on the implementation of the child protection guidelines, in line with good practice.

There is some evidence of the formulation of action plans focused on the achievement of identified planning priorities. This evidence is seen in the provision of a tailored curriculum for a specific group of students in senior cycle. In this case, a plan was devised following an investigation of the feasibility of introducing the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) programme to meet the educational needs of students. In line with good practice, the Second-Level Support Service (SLSS) was welcomed to the school to work with the staff in exploring the possible introduction of the LCA programme. A coherent plan emerged that saw the students being offered four subjects together with the core of English, Gaeilge and Mathematics, for which they join their fellow students in other classes. A similar action-planning approach should be adopted regarding other priorities in the developmental section of the school plan. School management reports that the tailored curriculum introduced following the action planning has been successful to date. The success of the implementation of this plan should be reviewed collaboratively at the end of the current year with the involvement of teachers, parents and students. The feasibility of providing the LCA programme to meet the educational needs of some students should continue to be kept under review and the level of interest among students and their parents should be monitored.

3. QUALITY OF CURRICULUM PROVISION

3.1 Curriculum planning and organisation

The curricular programmes offered by the school, delivered in line with the respective programme requirements and guidelines, are Junior Certificate, the TY programme, Leaving Certificate and LCVP. The subject range of the school is broadly representative of each of the curricular areas. Progress has been made in introducing technology subjects over the years with the addition of Technical Graphics (TG) and more recently the extension of this subject to Leaving Certificate with the introduction of DCG. The sciences are well represented in the curriculum with Chemistry, Biology, Physics and Applied Mathematics on offer. This is good practice. The range of subjects also includes Art Craft Design in junior cycle and Art in senior cycle. Physical Education (PE) is not included in the senior cycle curriculum outside of the TY programme. It is strongly recommended that PE be included in the curriculum up to Leaving Certificate to provide appropriately for the educational needs of students.

The range of subjects and programmes should be kept under review in order to assure their continued appropriateness to the needs and interests of the students. Such ongoing review of the curriculum is closely linked to School Development Planning. It is recommended that issues pertinent to curriculum development be discussed, perhaps by a sub-committee of the School Development Planning Policy committee, and that suggestions for consideration in the review of the curriculum be presented to senior management and the board of management. The success of the TY programme should be used as a springboard for further diversification, both in the curriculum and in the teaching approaches being adopted. The school timetable provides appropriate teaching time for each subject in line with syllabus guidelines and best practice.
3.2 Arrangements for students’ choice of subjects and programmes

Good practice is followed regarding students’ access to programmes and subjects. From the beginning of second year, junior-cycle students are provided with two choices, respectively between Art Craft Design and TG and between French and German. All students study both European languages through first year while they study both Art Craft Design and Technical Graphics for a half year. This provides all students with experience of each optional subject before making subject choices which is good practice.

At the end of junior cycle, each student is given the option of following the TY programme. In addition to meeting the students’ broader educational needs, this programme includes an opportunity to experience some optional subjects in preparation for making subject choices later in senior cycle. Students in TY study modules of each of the sciences and each of the business subjects. However, it is reported that those students who have opted for Technical Graphics in junior cycle almost always continue with DCG and those who opted for Art Craft Design almost always continue with Art when faced with this choice of subjects in TY. Similarly, students who opted for French or German in junior cycle stay with these choices in TY and do not experience the other subject. To address this pattern, consideration should be given to providing experience of each of the senior-cycle optional subjects to all students in TY to further support subject choice at this level. The curriculum of the TY programme in the school has been commendably innovative in introducing students to areas, such as cooking, that they might otherwise not have the opportunity to study. Such innovation in the curriculum is very good practice.

The provision for support and guidance in making subject choices is generally effective. Information is provided for parents at an open-night for incoming students in first year. The teachers of TG, Art Craft Design, French and German talk to students in the course of first year concerning their subject choices and students are given information about the process of choice towards the end of first year. While there is consultation with parents at this stage, if any issue arises, it is recommended that all parents be fully, formally and collaboratively involved in the process.

The students choose subjects for senior cycle towards the end of third year or TY. The full list of optional subjects is made available. Subject-option bands are then devised based on the choices expressed by the students. It is reported by senior management that almost all students are provided with their first preferences in this way, which represents good practice. Effective guidance and support are provided for students and parents as part of this subject-choice process before the initial subject-choice forms are completed to indicate the students’ top six preferences. The guidance counsellor and the teachers of the optional subjects meet the students on a designated day and present them with information regarding the salient features of each of the subjects and the implications of the choices being made. An information evening for parents is provided. Students may accompany their parents to this session, if desired, and guidance and information are presented regarding TY programme choice and fifth-year subject choice. The principal, deputy principal, guidance counsellor, TY co-ordinator and the year head for fifth year attend and contribute to this meeting. Differential aptitude and cognitive ability testing are provided in third year to help inform students as they consider their options for senior cycle. When students begin studying their chosen optional subjects in fifth year, it is reported by senior management that there is some flexibility in relation to allowing students to change a subject choice. Exercising flexibility in this context, in consultation with the student’s parents and the subject teachers, is good practice.

3.3 Co-curricular and extracurricular provision
The school provides for a wide range of activities and opportunities for the enhancement of learning beyond the formal curricular sphere. The range is broad and diverse and facilitates the wide range of interests and talents of students. The activities range from the school choir to the *F1 in Schools* competition, from debating in German, Irish and English to outdoor pursuits and also include considerable involvement in a range of team sports most notably rugby football. The production of an annual musical show jointly with the neighbouring girls’ secondary school remains a highlight, not just for the two schools but for the whole community. The impressive commitment of the school to co-curricular and extracurricular provision reflects very well on the spirit of service that is characteristic of the staff and the school as a whole. The parents expressed great appreciation of the opportunities for wide and varied involvement which are presented to their sons, who themselves also pointed to this aspect of the school with great satisfaction and appreciation.

4. **QUALITY OF LEARNING AND TEACHING IN SUBJECTS**

4.1 **Planning and preparation**

Almost all subject departments evaluated during the whole-school evaluation have a co-ordinator. In some instances this role is rotated among the members of the department, a positive practice that should be extended to all departments. While formal subject-department meetings are held in some instances, this means of collaboration is not in place in other subject areas. Such meetings should take place in all subject departments as a means of providing the necessary structure to facilitate teachers in each department to work as a team. The good practice of recording minutes, which is undertaken by some departments, should be extended to all subject departments to provide clear evidence of the decisions made and to document progress. There is evidence that subject-specific teaching resources have been developed and compiled. This is good practice that should also be extended to all subject departments.

Subject plans have been developed in the subjects evaluated. In all instances, collaborative review and further extension of the plans is recommended. Best practice is observed when subject plans align teaching methodologies, resources and programme content, when intended learning outcomes are identified and when programmes of work are delineated on a term-by-term basis. In addition, cognisance should be taken of syllabus guidelines where topics should be taught sequentially to build on previous learning. The programmes of work in the TY programme should also be further extended in line with this best practice. Where necessary, these TY programmes of work should provide a better bridge from the learning in Junior Certificate to that in Leaving Certificate. In one instance, it was recommended that references to the Leaving Certificate examination be removed from the programme of work in TY. Opportunities for skill development in areas such as presentation, creativity, research and organisation should be facilitated and included in the TY programme plan, as in all subject-department plans.

While links between the special educational needs department and other subject departments are generally good, it is urged that these links be further developed to facilitate sharing of good practice with regard to the differentiated use of the most suitable teaching methodologies, strategies and approaches given their importance in supporting students’ learning.

Planning by individual teachers and preparation for lessons was very good in almost all the subjects inspected. Preparation included the development and collation of PowerPoint presentations, video clips, handouts and photographs, all of which impacted positively on the quality of teaching and learning.
4.2 Learning and teaching

Good teaching and effective learning were observed over the course of the whole-school evaluation. Overall, students displayed solid understanding and good knowledge of the concepts and content being taught. The positive atmosphere that existed in most classes stemmed from respectful interpersonal relations between teachers and their students. Students’ efforts and contributions were frequently affirmed and the commendable practice of encouraging students to develop their thoughts further and to explain their rationale was observed in a number of areas. In one instance, students’ requests for clarification were welcomed. This further extension of student-teacher interaction is welcomed and its wider application is strongly encouraged. Opportunities for interaction among the students themselves were common and stimulated student engagement. In cases where the need for more effective classroom management strategies were identified, it is recommended that teachers establish, in consultation with students, ground rules that ensure that students listen to each other during interactive tasks.

Pair work and group work, apart from questioning, are the main active learning strategies employed. All the subject inspection reports accompanying this WSE report call for greater and more varied use of these and other co-operative learning approaches. In this regard, exploration of peer-assessment strategies at www.ncca.ie would be worthwhile as would reference to the Special Education Support Service website www.sess.ie. In one subject area the positive impact students’ presentations had on their fellow learners was noted. Teachers are encouraged to consider the merit in developing the practice of note making in pairs. Indeed widespread implementation of such strategies across all subject areas would be a worthwhile development. In their implementation of more diverse methodologies, teachers are asked to consider the benefits accruing from working collaboratively in a team-teaching partnership. Not only has team-teaching proven itself to have a positive impact on students’ learning, but it also supports teachers’ professional learning. The re-arrangement of the traditional classroom layout as a means of facilitating higher participatory learning in some subject areas is also recommended.

Questioning was used to good effect, mainly to develop lesson content and to ascertain prior knowledge. It also served to stimulate student participation. Good practice was noted where students were given sufficient time to respond, and where there was a mix of direct and open questions. Effective use of higher-order questioning was observed in some classes. Lessons were well structured and, in general, were appropriately paced. Very good practice was observed during lessons where the learning intention was shared with the students at the outset of the lesson. Teachers in all subject departments should adopt this practice as it invites students to share responsibility for achieving the desired learning outcomes. A simple strategy, such as noting the planned learning intention on the board at the beginning and revisiting it at the end of the lesson, would be of benefit to both teacher and student in assessing the effectiveness of students’ learning. Indeed, teachers are asked, when planning their lessons, to ensure they allow sufficient time for questioning at the end of the lesson to determine the extent to which these planned learning outcomes were achieved.

Samples of students’ notes and written tasks were reviewed in the lessons observed. In most instances students had been assigned a variety of tasks. However, in a number of the subject inspection reports attached to this WSE report, the inspectors express concern regarding the storage and presentation of students’ work. In one report, a lack of consistency across the department with regard to the monitoring of written work is noted. It is strongly recommended, that each department agree a common approach to the organisation, layout and storage of copybooks and folders. The importance of establishing good note-making practices and implementing routines for the organisation of written work
in copybooks and folders cannot be overestimated. Such copybooks and folders can serve as invaluable revision aids for students as they contain a detailed record of personal learning.

In general, teachers make good use of a range of teaching resources. Of particular note is the use of visual stimuli such as photographs, film clips and newspapers which promote student engagement. Whiteboards are used, in line with good practice, as is ICT in some instances and audio extracts have a positive impact in some lessons. The expansion of the print-rich and visually-stimulating environment of the classrooms is recommended in a number of the subject inspection reports. This could be achieved through the display of students’ work as well as summary and revision aids that detail items such as key words, key quotes, frequently-used expressions, ground rules, diagrams and grammatical points.

4.3 Assessment

In almost all subject areas a range of assessment modes is used to assess students’ advancement and attainment while the SPHE inspection report identified assessment as an area in need of further exploration and work.

Classroom observation and interactions, facilitated by teacher monitoring of assigned tasks and in-class questioning, combine with more formal assessment practices in order to inform teaching and determine students’ learning. The more formal assessment practices provided for include the assignment and correction of homework exercises; the issuing of project work to students; the provision of class-based topic tests; and, where applicable, the organisation of oral examinations. Students’ project work was noted as being of a very good standard, and providing evidence of a good level of ICT skills.

In addition to the above approaches to assessment, formal examinations are arranged at Christmas for all students, and in the summer for all non-examination classes. First-year students sit an extra formal examination at Easter. The examination classes are also provided with the opportunity to sit mock examinations. The school operates a systematic approach to arranging Reasonable Accommodations in Certificate Examinations (RACE) and it is reported that students can also access these when sitting mock examinations. This is good practice that should be continued. In some subject areas and in some year groups, common assessment is used. This is good practice on a number of grounds, but particularly as it ensures consistency with regard to the implementation of the subject plan. This good practice should be extended across all subject areas and across all year groups. Some consideration should also be given to the need to differentiate assessment modes to take account of the variety of students’ strengths and abilities. The mode of assessment employed in the TY programme was described as excellent in one subject where a credit system for the completion of assignments, projects and other activities has been implemented.

Standardised tests have recently been introduced for students enrolling in first year. This should be followed by relevant diagnostic testing so that students’ achievement, particularly in the areas of literacy and numeracy, can be determined. The retesting of students should also be considered. Such practice will support a whole-school approach to improving learning outcomes, particularly if the results of standardised and diagnostic tests are shared, interpreted and discussed with members of the general teaching staff.

Some subject departments have agreed guidelines on the amount and type of homework that should be set for students in different year groups. These departments have agreed to differentiate homework tasks to meet the needs of particular students. This practice is encouraged across all subject departments.
In the main, students’ work was presented to a high standard in well-maintained journals, copybooks, workbooks and laboratory notebooks. This work was well monitored in some subject areas while this was identified as an area for development in other subject areas. The provision of concluding comments as part of the monitoring of students’ work, intended to support further learning, was highlighted as good practice when observed. It is recommended that this strategy be employed to a greater extent as a means of further encouragement of students.

Students’ progress and achievement are communicated to home on a regular basis. This is facilitated on a day-to-day basis through the student’s journal and over the course of the school year through the issuing of school reports twice-yearly for students in non-examination classes and three times per year for students in examination classes. In addition, annual parent-teacher meetings are organised for each year group. Parents are also facilitated, on request, to meet with teachers.

While acknowledging that management conducts an analysis of the results of certificate examinations, it is recommended that subject departments conduct an independent analysis and that the results of this work should inform the planning of the subject department.

Teachers are asked to give some consideration to the benefits that would accrue from implementing Assessment for Learning (AfL) strategies in the classroom. CPD input on AfL would help to develop consistent school practice in this area. Subject departments may find the website of the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) useful in this regard, as well as a publication of the Junior Certificate Schools Programme (JCSP) support service entitled ‘Between the Lines’.

5. Quality of Support for Students

5.1 Inclusion of students with additional educational needs

St. Munchin’s College has a range of practices in place to support the inclusion of students with additional educational needs, including those students identified with special educational needs (SEN). Teachers were seen to care for all their students. The school has an appointed co-ordinator with another staff member seeking to gain postgraduate qualifications in special education. A core team work closely with one another to provide additional support in a range of suitably flexible, progressive and responsive ways. Liaison between subject departments and the core members of the special educational needs support team is good and the use of individualised student plans is commended. Continued recognition of the key role of the mainstream teachers will assist in improving the quality of planning and preparation engaged in by the school. Further engagement by mainstream colleagues with this core team of teachers combined with opportunities to access professional learning would also add to the quality of learning experienced by students in St. Munchin’s. The school values its interaction with parents and external agencies in supporting students’ learning. It particularly values the good work undertaken by the special needs assistants.

In seeking to further improve upon existing good organisational practices for inclusion, it is recommended that the school give serious consideration to all classes being of mixed-ability in first year with concurrent timetabling being introduced in English, Gaeilge and Mathematics for all classes in second and third year. The school may wish to consider incorporating existing documentation relating to additional educational needs into an overarching inclusion policy. A register of resources, including the impact of these resources upon student learning, is also recommended. Extending the use of standardised and diagnostic tests to gauge learning and inform teaching should also be considered. To
achieve these goals time will need to be set aside for the co-ordinator to meet with relevant personnel, both internal and external, on a weekly basis.

An accompanying report, specific to an evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning in the provision for SEN is appended to this report.

5.2 Guidance and student support in the whole-school context

The central essential characteristic of student care in St Munchin’s College, acknowledged by the whole-school community and reflected in the daily life of the school, is the involvement of the whole staff in the care, support and guidance of students. While all teachers play a role in the care and support of students, particular roles are filled by class tutors, year heads, the two guidance counsellors, the full-time chaplain, who is employed and funded by the Diocese of Limerick, the deputy principal and the principal. Some work has been done on defining these roles. In line with good practice, it is reported by the school that a whole-school student support policy is in preparation. It is recommended that this work be expedited to provide a whole-school guidance plan that is developed collaboratively by staff and management and that encapsulates the involvement of each element of the school community in the care, support and guidance of students. The formulation of this plan, as distinct from the Guidance department plan, lies not just with the guidance counsellors but also with the whole school and is an integral part of school-development planning. Further information on whole-school guidance planning can be accessed at http://www.ncge.ie/reports/Pl_Sch_Gui_prog_leaf.pdf. Looking at Guidance (DES, 2009) outlines many examples of good practice in Guidance and is an essential reference in the process of whole-school guidance planning. It may be accessed at http://www.education.ie/servlet/blobservlet/insp_looking_at_guidance.pdf?language=EN.

The organisation and delivery of the whole range of student care, support and guidance measures should be integrated into the whole-school guidance plan. Additionally, the specific contents delivered in SPHE, RSE, Religious Education and Guidance throughout the school need to be made explicit. It is recommended that the close contact between the SPHE team and the Guidance team be enlisted in the context of undertaking the development recommended in the report on SPHE attached to this evaluation report. It is acknowledged that SPHE is provided for all junior cycle students in accordance with the requirements of Circular M11/03, being timetabled as a discrete, stand-alone subject for one period each week. Also in line with good practice, RSE in junior cycle is planned and delivered as part of the school’s agreed SPHE programme. The delivery of RSE in senior cycle is not provided for and this needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency. In this context, school management’s attention is drawn to Circular 0027/08, as well as to previous relevant circular letters, M20/96 and M4/95.

While an ex-quota allocation for Guidance from the Department of 1.09 WTE was in place at the time of the evaluation, it was not clear that this allocation had been used fully for the intended purpose. It is essential that this be clarified and transparently presented in the relevant school documentation, specifically in the guidance-department plan.

The school chaplain plays a full role in student care and support and is an active and committed member of the pastoral-care policy group together with the principal, a guidance counsellor and the SPHE co-ordinator.

Adequate facilities are provided for the delivery of guidance, within the recognised limits of the general facilities of the school. The guidance counsellors are each provided with offices which are suitably arranged and equipped for the required purpose. Appropriate access to ICT is provided for guidance provision within the guidance offices and in the
computer room. Appropriate protocols and practices are in place with regard to confidentiality and the secure storage of information.

In line with good practice, the coherent guidance-department plan includes reference to the educational, personal and vocational elements of guidance that are provided for in the guidance programme. Structured guidance programmes are delivered to all students. A variety of methodologies is used for the delivery of guidance in informal and formal settings. While there are clear advantages to using unplanned opportunities for the delivery of guidance classes, such as the absence of a teacher in normal and unavoidable circumstances, it is urged that Guidance contact be more formally arranged. Delivery in a classroom setting could be achieved through timetabling or on a planned intermittent basis.

Effective delivery of student support depends on consistent and structured communication among all the staff, and particularly between the teachers centrally involved in the provision of student support. It is recommended that a more formal student-support team be identified. This team should meet regularly, perhaps weekly. These meetings should include those staff members with direct involvement in the organisation and delivery of student support, such as the Guidance Counsellor(s), Chaplain, year head representatives, SEN coordinator and senior management. A principal aim of the student-support team should be to become ever more proactive rather than reactive in dealing with the challenges facing the school in meeting the support and guidance needs of students.

6. **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT**

The following are the main strengths identified in the evaluation:

- The members of the board of management are knowledgeable and well-prepared for the completion of their duties.
- Good progress has been made regarding the refurbishment of the school building.
- The principal and deputy principal collaborate successfully in their respective roles.
- The duties assigned to assistant principals and special-duties teachers are broadly consistent with needs of the school.
- Practice with regard to admissions reflects the stated educational philosophy of the school grounded in principals of equality, diversity and inclusion of students.
- There has been an active, representative and well-organised students’ council in the school for some years and students spoke knowledgeably and with confidence of their role on the council.
- The procedures in place for monitoring students’ attendance are coherently organised in line with good practice.
- Good progress has been made, in integrating ICT into teaching and learning.
- Policy documents have been prepared collaboratively, often by voluntary committees of staff members who express interest in a particular policy area, and they have been adopted by the board.
- The subject range of the school is broadly representative of each of the curricular areas and technology subjects have been successfully introduced.
- The school provides for a wide range of activities and opportunities for the enhancement of learning beyond the formal curricular sphere and this reflects very well on the spirit of service that is characteristic of the staff and the school as a whole.
- Good teaching and effective learning were observed over the course of the whole-school evaluation.
- The whole staff is involved in the care, support and guidance of students.
As a means of building on these strengths and to address areas for development, the following key recommendations are made:

- The board of management should focus on the development of a comprehensive, focused and detailed plan for school development.
- The task of leading the school as a professional community in implementing its role in response to changing circumstances must be given utmost priority by the principal and the senior management team.
- It is essential, in the active pursuit of leadership priorities, that middle management be fully involved in school development planning through appropriate devolution of responsibility and distribution of leadership.
- Formal school-planning structures should include a co-ordinating group or committee to provide a clear and agreed focus and direction for school planning and development, and the appropriate engagement of post-holders, in line with the priorities agreed by the board.
- All reference to fees should be removed from admissions documentation and voluntary contributions for students engaged in the TY programme should be clearly described as such.
- The code of behaviour should be reviewed and should include more detailed descriptions of the respective roles of those involved in its implementation.
- It is essential that the minimum of twenty-eight hours of timetabled provision for each student consist of instruction time and do not include study periods.
- It is recommended that the health and safety statement be reviewed as a matter of urgency.
- In seeking to further improve upon existing good practices serious consideration should be given to all classes being of mixed-ability in first year, with concurrent timetabling in English, Gaeilge and Mathematics for all second and third year classes.
- A whole-school guidance plan should be developed collaboratively by staff and management that encapsulates the involvement of each element of the school community in the care, support and guidance of students.
- It is essential that the allocation provided by the Department for guidance is both used in full for the intended purpose and that this is transparently presented in the Guidance department plan.
- A more formal student-support team should be identified, should meet regularly, perhaps weekly and should include those staff members with direct involvement in the organisation and delivery of student support.
- As a matter of urgency, RSE needs to be delivered in senior cycle as is already the case in junior cycle.

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 – 3 February 2009
- Subject Inspection of Gaeilge – 23 February 2010
- Subject Inspection of Science – 24 February 2010
- Subject Inspection of Social, Personal and Health Education – 5 March 2010
- Subject Inspection of Special Educational Needs – 22 February 2010

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Appendix

School response to the report

Submitted by the Board of Management

Area 1: Observations on the content of the inspection report

The Board of Management wishes to acknowledge the professionalism and courtesy of the Inspectorate in the manner in which the evaluation was carried out. The Board notes the joint union directive that was in operation at the time of the evaluation directing staff not to attend scheduled meetings during the time of the evaluation. The Board welcomes the positive affirmation of the school as a caring community. In particular the board acknowledges the positive contribution of the teaching staff, parents and student council to the report and the school. The Board notes with pleasure the acknowledgement contained in the report of how learning has been enhanced by the willingness to go beyond the formal curricular sphere, and how this reflects on all involved. The Board has noted the comments in relation to the time allocation for English as an additional language and will put in place systems to ensure that the recording of same is more transparent. It also noted that the hours granted as additional teaching hours are generally accessed and utilised for the purpose granted, and that the school has practices in place which support the inclusion of students with additional educational needs. The Board is committed to continue to encourage and support all members of staff in Continuing Professional Development.

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:
The school moved to teacher based classrooms in the 2010/2011 academic year.
The gas and electrical isolation switches in the science laboratories were installed in the summer of 2010.
A copy of the child protection guidelines and details of the Designated Liaison and Deputy Designated Liaison have been circulated to all staff in the academic year 2010/2011.
The RSE Policy has been sent to the trustees for review and approval, and the school is actively engaged in organising the delivery of RSE to senior cycle.
The allocation by the Department of Education & Skills of 1.09 WTE is fully allocated to guidance in the current academic year.
The reference to the provision of resources in the admissions policy under the area of special needs has been removed.
The meeting of Assistant Principals is held on a weekly basis and includes other relevant members of staff.
A whole school guidance plan is currently being formulated.
The school has committed to using ePortal to enable better reporting of attendance and punctuality of students.
The school has established further links with the wider community through Transition Year projects in the current academic year.
Each subject Department has held and documented subject meetings.
A staff handbook is currently being developed.
A review of posts of responsibility is currently underway with a view to the appropriate
devolution of responsibility and the distribution of leadership throughout the middle
management team.

The following are planned:
A co-ordinating group for school planning will be established.
The school will look at the introduction of mixed ability in all first year classes in the
academic year 2011/2012
The school will look at concurrent timetabling for Irish, English and Mathematics for the
year 2011/2012
The reference to fees will be replaced by voluntary contribution in all cases.
A group comprising the various partners in the college is being established to review the
code of conduct and discipline of the college and the Health & Safety Policy.
The school will look at the development of assessment for learning strategies as a whole
school approach.
The school will become involved in the Green Schools Programme.
It is hoped that the school can include Physical Education up to senior cycle in coming
years.

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 of the whole
school and in consultation with the partners in the college community.