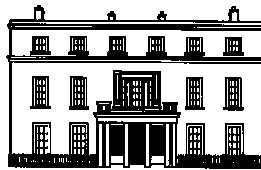


**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna**  
**Department of Education and Skills**

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

**Coláiste Éamann Rís**  
**Callan, County Kilkenny**  
**Roll number: 61510R**

**Date of inspection: 22 January 2010**



**AN ROINN | DEPARTMENT OF**  
**OIDEACHAIS | EDUCATION**  
**AGUS SCILEANNA | AND SKILLS**

## WHOLE-SCHOOL EVALUATION

A whole-school evaluation of Coláiste Éamann Rís was undertaken in January 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 was evaluated in detail, and separate reports are available on these subjects (see section 7). 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

Coláiste Éamann Rís was founded by the Christian Brothers in 1868. This order has had a long-standing relationship with Callan since well before that date, with the birthplace of Blessed Edmund Rice being at nearby Westcourt. Appropriately, when the secondary school for boys was opened in the town, it was named after the order's founder. The original school was situated in West Street, where it remained until the move to a new building on the present site in 1983. In 1991, the school appointed its first lay principal and also its first board of management. The Christian Brothers remained as trustees of the school until September 2008, when the process of handing the school over to the Edmund Rice Schools Trust (ERST) was set in motion. That process is now substantially complete.

The school enrolls students from a catchment area stretching towards Mullinahone and Grangemockler and from approximately six surrounding parishes, while being the main education provider for boys from Callan itself. As the sole provider of second level education for boys in Callan, the school currently has an enrolment of 200 students. Enrolment has fluctuated somewhat over the years, but has been relatively stable in the past ten years. Callan's proximity to Kilkenny, the improved road networks locally and growing competition for enrolments from larger boys' schools in the city have all been identifiable factors affecting the growth of the school in recent years. Significant increase in Callan's population has been predicted, with Kilkenny County Council's local area plan showing a one-third increase between 2002 and 2006 alone, although the impact of any population rise locally has not yet been felt in post-primary schools in the town.

### 1. QUALITY OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

#### 1.1 Characteristic spirit of the school

There is a strong sense of the ethos of the founder of the Christian Brothers in Coláiste Éamann Rís. In seeking to ensure the retention and enhancement of this ethos, the school engaged in significant consultation before defining its mission statement in 2003 as:

*Coláiste Éamann Rís, Callan, is a Catholic school inspired by the vision of Edmund Rice. The central purpose of the school is the religious, moral, physical and social education of the student in an atmosphere of Christian care and concern.*

While the school's characteristic spirit has evolved over the years, the involvement of ERST in the overall governance of the school today is important. ERST seeks to ensure the continuation of Catholic education in the Edmund Rice tradition and maintains a keen focus on matters of governance, ethos and development, and finance. ERST team members have visited the school, provided leadership training for senior management, and appropriately tailored training for newly appointed teachers and students' councils nationally. All major

school policies are examined by ERST with a view to assisting the school in ensuring that the ERST ethos and school's mission statement are unifying threads in all such policies.

The characteristic spirit of the school is evident in many facets of school life beyond links with ERST. The prominence given to religious instruction in the timetable, the religious symbols throughout the school and the use of prayers at assemblies and meetings are intrinsically linked to the Catholic ethos. Similarly, the school's commitment to numerous charitable activities is very much in keeping with the spirit of Edmund Rice, while the prominence given to pastoral care of students has been an important support to staff and students. The school also has strong links with Edmund Rice centres at Westcourt and with Mount Sion in Waterford, while the parish of Callan provides a volunteer chaplaincy service, offering an important religious and pastoral presence as required.

## **1.2 School ownership and management**

While Coláiste Éamann Rís remains in the trusteeship of ERST, immediate school management has rested in the hands of a board of management for nearly two decades. Each board is appropriately appointed for a three-year term of office, with the current board in its second year of operation. The board is satisfactorily constituted, with four nominees of the trustees, two parents' representatives and two staff representatives. The school's principal acts as secretary to the board, with one of the staff representatives acting as a recording secretary at meetings, which is in line with approved procedures. Informal reporting procedures are in place to keep staff and parents informed by agreed oral reports. It is recommended that the board should publish the school plan and a short written account of annual progress on matters relating to the operation and performance of the school, school development, policies and other matters. This annual report could be published quite readily through insertion in an annual newsletter or on the school's website. The website would also be a useful vehicle for promoting awareness among the school's stakeholders of any relevant policies which are contained in the school plan.

The board has been able to draw on considerable management and educational expertise in its make-up, and reports near full attendance at most meetings. The details of the minutes of these meetings testify to the commitment of board members to their management duties. Board members have all attended training provided by the Joint Managerial Body (JMB) for secondary schools and by ERST, and some board members are serving their second terms of office. In addition, two board members are due to attend refresher training in some key areas of policy in the near future, which is good practice. Board members interviewed showed a fine understanding of the running of the school, and expressed strong regard for the work of the in-school management team and school staff. Very good lines of communication exist between board members and the school, ranging from formal meetings to less formal contact through phone and text messages, and the attendance of board members at a very real, human level at times of both celebration and sorrow at the school.

The board has maintained close contact with the national and local ERST support network. Financial matters account for a lot of the work of the board, to the detriment of developmental work. ERST representatives have acknowledged the school's position in discussions with the inspection team and recognise the need to bring clarity to the situation. Assurances have been given by ERST that the board's concerns will continue to be dealt with as a matter of priority.

Minutes of board meetings show that board members have been very busy with issues of policy development, finance, staff and student management. The statutory obligations on the board to make provision for the preparation of a school plan and other requirements have been met. As the Child Protection Guidelines were adopted by the previous board, it is suggested that the current board should also move to re-adopt the Guidelines, and this has

been agreed. The significant work being done on a regular basis by the board, allied with the on-going discussion with ERST regarding the school's finances, has made it difficult to focus on long-term or strategic planning. It remains very important that such developmental planning be prioritised, with a view to identifying the different possible scenarios for the school's future, and to set targets within fixed and realistic timeframes.

### **1.3 In-school management**

As the school is relatively small, formal in-school management duties are performed by the principal, deputy principal, three assistant principals, three special duties teachers and a programme co-ordinator. An additional range of student-management tasks, such as class-tutor and year-head roles, are filled by several volunteers from within the remaining staff, which is a very commendable support to the day-to-day running of the school.

The principal and deputy principal have given a substantial amount of service to the school. The present principal has been in his position since 2006, while the deputy principal is in his eleventh year in the role. Both principal and deputy principal fulfil significant teaching duties in addition to their management roles, with the principal teaching eleven periods per week and the deputy teaching nineteen periods. The size of the school also means that it is not possible to have a supervision-and-substitution rota covering all possible slots on the timetable, so senior management team members make themselves available for such duties as well. The consequent time commitment of both senior management team members to the smooth running of the school from day to day is very significant and their work ethic is deserving of the highest praise.

While an important level of interchangeability is maintained in the roles of principal and deputy principal, there are also quite clearly defined duties attached to each post. The deputy principal concentrates on matters of student behaviour (including filling a year-head role), supervision and substitution. He is also involved in pastoral care, the collection of money, fundraising and monitoring attendance on a weekly basis, with the valuable assistance of the school secretary. The principal deals with matters relating to general finance, Department of Education and Skills returns and allocations, timetabling and contact with external agencies such as the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB) and the Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO). The principal has carried his previous post as facilitator of school development planning into his current position and also acts as the school's co-ordinator of learning support. These two roles represent significant additional duties for any school principal. Both principal and deputy principal share pastoral and disciplinary roles as required, and generally attend meetings of the parents' council. They do not hold formal meetings together but are in constant contact throughout each day. This is the most practical working arrangement in the face of significant time challenges for both incumbents.

The principal and deputy principal have a very strong working relationship and a shared approach to leadership. The very significant in-class and other duties, which both have undertaken for the good of the school and to provide as full a range of opportunities for students as possible, are highly commendable. The challenge facing the senior management team remains one of making time for scoping out future directions for the school. Their current vision is a very practical one, revolving around the maintenance of the quality of education which the school provides. They are acutely aware of the impact of static enrolment figures, education cutbacks, moratoria and embargos. As a result, there has been increased pressure and responsibility placed on the shoulders of senior management in recent years, making it very difficult indeed for them to focus on future planning. Both incumbents share a clear idea of the need to maintain and expand the curriculum, add to the range of qualified personnel available to the school and improve current facilities. The devolution of some of their existing duties, in areas like class teaching, policy development

and education-support co-ordination, would significantly enhance the ability of senior management to plan for the future.

The duties undertaken by assistant principals consist of: equipment co-ordination, including information and communication technology (ICT); books, transport and extracurricular co-ordination; and the co-ordination of Religious Education (RE), pastoral care and public relations. Special duties teacher posts include health and safety, examinations secretary, lockers and student awards. Some posts do not provide opportunity to develop a range of managerial skills and in some instances personnel are limited in their current posts. A review of the post structure was completed some years ago and it is acknowledged, by senior management and a number of post holders, that the current schedule does not meet the school's middle management needs. When the new schedule of posts is implemented, it is urged that the areas of school development planning co-ordination and learning support be given priority.

Good levels of informal communication are evident, and management has supported continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities for teachers to a significant degree. In several instances, CPD has been arranged as a direct result of recommendations from subject inspection reports and has included both externally sourced and in-school training, which is good practice. The induction of new or substitute teachers is supported by documentation in the teachers' handbook and by individual mentoring by senior management or subject teachers.

Turning to management of students, the school has a broad admissions policy which reflects the spirit of Edmund Rice in its inclusivity: this matter will be further discussed in Section 2 of this report. All students have a class tutor, whose role is mainly pastoral, and a year head who focuses more specifically on behaviour matters. Year head and class tutor roles are filled on a voluntary basis by staff members or sometimes by post holders, while a programme co-ordinator acts as both co-ordinator of Transition Year (TY) and TY year head. The role of academic advisor to students involves various individuals ranging from tutors and year heads to subject teachers, the guidance department and senior management personnel all acting in this capacity. It would be worthwhile specifying more precisely those staff members with responsibility for monitoring academic progress.

The code of behaviour has a well-defined set of sanctions based on a 'ticket' system, and clearly set out policies on suspension and exclusion are also in place. In recent years, good work has been undertaken in balancing the potentially negative aspects of a sanctions system with the promotion of positive behaviour. This review is ongoing, having been initiated in late 2005 and involved all school partners in the process. Strategies discussed, and later adopted, include a rewards system, certificates of commendation which are sent home, and annual prize-giving. The new NEWB Guidelines on Student Behaviour offer an excellent further opportunity for the school to reinforce the positive aspects of its code of behaviour, in consultation with the other stakeholders in the school community. The management of access to the school's toilet facilities by students is a challenge which is met through a combination of monitoring and staff judgement.

A students' council operated successfully at the school until 2008. This council was properly constituted, representative of all year groups and accessed training on a regular basis. Management is acutely aware of the requirement on the board to encourage and facilitate the establishment by students of a students' council, and of the desirability and positive impact of a formal student voice in the school. A group of students representing all class groups at the school was met during the evaluation and included a number of former students' council members. The students had a strong sense of pride in their school and attested to significant involvement in the development of a range of school policies, as well as practical decisions about uniform, jackets, bathroom facilities and other matters. It is

recommended that steps be taken at the earliest opportunity to make arrangements for the re-election of a student council. School management has already agreed to progress this matter.

The school maintains a commendable degree of contact with parents. Regular communications are facilitated by letter, telephone or, in some instances, by text message. Formal parent-teacher meetings are held for each year group annually. It is recommended that the school consider having these meetings with students present as well, at least in senior cycle, as a means of furthering students' engagement in their own progress. Parents consulted during the evaluation were very happy with the level of contact from the school, and with the availability of teachers, tutors, year heads and senior management. The school's parents' council was established in 1992 and is a highly supportive group, which meets regularly and maintains very thorough minutes of its activities. The council has a good complement of members and is keenly aware of the curricular and financial challenges which face the school. The council has played a major role in fundraising initiatives for the school, ranging from bag-packing to cookery demonstrations, and has also been involved in discussion of draft school policies. Parents were very positive about the school and its management, and commended the efforts undertaken to ensure the availability of the broadest range of subjects.

School management is commended for the range of links which have been established with community and outside agencies. A genuine culture of school support for community and charity initiatives like *L'Arche*, *Bóthar*, the Marie Keating Foundation and the Society of St. Vincent de Paul has been fostered. This culture is very much in keeping with the declared ethos of the school. Strong collaborative engagement with the Kilkenny GAA County Board has been of mutual benefit and helped enhance the school's sporting facilities to a considerable degree. It is also commendable that the school's hurling facility has been made available to a neighbouring second-level school for training purposes. Many of the school's stakeholders have referred to the desirability of having an indoor sports facility on site, and it remains unclear whether possible avenues of local co-operation can assist in meeting this need in the immediate term.

Historically, the school operated a wide-ranging programme of night classes but this has been curtailed in recent years due to financial constraints and operational difficulties, including the availability of similar classes in other community locations. The parents' council has been proactive in organising visiting speakers on areas such as motivation, substance misuse, suicide awareness and study skills. All members of the school community are aware of the need to look at ways of maintaining and enhancing access to facilities in the locality for curricular and extracurricular activity. A number of stakeholders, including students, consulted during the evaluation were very supportive of the idea of furthering cooperation with other schools, to help maintain or broaden the curriculum and extracurricular activities further. Discussion among relevant stakeholders and timetable synchronisation would require early consideration in any such moves.

#### **1.4 Management of resources**

Instruction time at Coláiste Éamann Rís meets the requirement of twenty-eight hours per week set down by the Department of Education and Skills. The timetable is structured around four full days of nine periods each, and a shorter Friday with six periods. Subjects governed by Department circular, such as Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE), are appropriately timetabled. Some tightness of provision is evident in core subject areas in the junior curriculum but the overall timetabling is very good. It is characterised by good lesson distribution throughout the week, concurrent timetabling of core subjects and flexibility in the formation of class groups in order to ensure the delivery of as wide a range of subjects as possible. This challenge has been met very successfully, with a relatively small teaching team of eleven

full-time personnel and a number of other teachers on contracts of indefinite duration and in temporary whole-time or part-time posts.

In terms of general staffing needs, the school's lack of a qualified teacher of Physical Education needs to be rectified at the earliest opportunity. The school has successfully applied for a small number of curricular concessions in order to maintain key subjects on the timetable, which is commended. It is suggested in the context of the delivery of French that an application could also be made under the language *assistant* scheme and management has agreed to give this active consideration. Beyond that, it is reaffirmed that the maximum levels of support which the school management in its own right can put in place to support curriculum delivery and the general running of the school have been activated. Also, the school is commended for its use of Department funding and often its own resources, to ensure that support staff are provided to an optimum level. The school has a part-time caretaker, and a secretary who works officially until lunchtime each day but often beyond that and provides an impressive organisational and, indeed, pastoral service to the school community. The school has also been proactive in applying for special-needs assistants (SNAs) when the need has arisen, and there are two SNAs currently on staff. The local Catholic parish provides a chaplaincy service on a voluntary but very committed basis.

The present school building is situated on the northern edge of Callan, close to the bypass on the Kilkenny side of the town. It sits on an eleven-acre site, which is sufficient to hold two sports fields and a set of dressing rooms, tarmacadam play areas, car-parking space and front greenery. Significant capital spending has occurred in recent years to refurbish the roof, windows and other aspects of the plant, with support from the Department's Summer Works Scheme and other initiatives. The school continues to use a three-room prefabricated building for classes, although this building is near the end of its anticipated lifespan.

The central school building is now twenty-seven years old and was found to be very well maintained, with fine levels of visual display, tidiness and cleanliness throughout. In addition to regular classrooms, there are specialist facilities for Science, Metalwork, Art and a joint room for Technical Graphics and Woodwork. Pressures of space have meant that the designated computer room has had to double as a regular classroom, while the library is substantially accommodated in another classroom, but is neatly kept. A well laid out staffroom is supportive of teachers' needs, with storage space and a small number of work areas for those teachers who do not have base classrooms. Students' lunchtime facilities are quite sparse and, given the limitations of time for lunch and also restrictions on some classes going out for lunch, it would be worth considering the provision of bench seating for students. Office space is at a premium and is largely clustered close to the central assembly area. Management is commended for the manner in which relatively small spaces have been used to optimum effect, including the renovated secretary's office, rooms for counselling and learning support, and office bases for the principal and deputy principal.

The equipment levels in specialist rooms are very good and a credit to management and staff. The school has been able to provide a good degree of ICT for students' use through Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) funding, Department grants and most recently a set of laptop computers under the *t4* initiative. Students have reported relatively good access to the computer facilities and Broadband quality is generally good locally. Some upgrading of the core stock in the designated computer room may be required shortly, while financial constraints have meant that a hoped-for roll out of ICT use in classrooms has been limited to date. It is good to note that ICT and equipment provision, and the website, come within the remit of an AP post-holder and this should support the augmentation of such provision, ideally in regular classroom and teaching contexts, when resources become available. Exploration of ways in which ICT can become part of

mainstream lesson delivery ought to be considered, even within the current constraints, and should certainly be part of any developmental planning undertaken.

Overall building and resource maintenance is very good and is supported by a health and safety post holder, who has responsibility for updating the school's safety literature. In addition, management has been proactive in sourcing an appraisal of the school's facilities from such a health and safety perspective and plans to implement any recommendations of the Kilkenny Fire Service are well advanced. Good signage and regular fire drills are also a feature of school life. Some of the safety provision in specialist rooms has been highly commended in subject inspection reports and in the recent appraisal, and where safety advice was given in previous subject inspection reports, it has been taken on board or is in the process of being actively addressed by the relevant subject teachers.

## **2. QUALITY OF SCHOOL PLANNING**

### **2.1 The school plan**

Formal school development planning was initiated in Coláiste Éamann Rís around 2000, with the current principal then acting as the planning co-ordinator. At that stage, responsibility for the planning process remained largely with the co-ordinator. He took on the task of drafting school policies, a number each year, and these were brought forward to the board of management, staff, parents and students for observation and amendment, as deemed fitting. Ultimately, the policies returned to the board for ratification and a copy of each adopted policy was forwarded to the Christian Brothers and latterly to ERST. When the co-ordinator became school principal in 2006, no appointment was made to the planning position, so school development planning remained chiefly in the portfolio of the principal, along with his many other duties. This is an onerous responsibility and ought to be reviewed.

A more collaborative approach to the pre-draft work on school policies has not been possible to date, with the exception of work completed on areas such as whole-school pastoral care and guidance, and in subject planning. However, all board members, staff, parents and students who have spoken of their involvement in the planning process have been loud in their praise of the degree of consultation and accommodation of their viewpoints which has occurred. An appropriate range of staff planning days has been held over the past number of years, with a solid focus on training in key areas like safety, reviewing posts of responsibility, the Child Protection Guidelines and preparation for whole-school evaluation. Some of these sessions have taken place at the school itself, while others have been facilitated at Kilkenny Education Centre.

As intimated earlier in relation to the board of management, it is essential for the school community to reflect and identify a set of realistic development priorities and include these in the school plan itself. The significant demographic change locally, ongoing challenges of providing quality education in the context of the school's size and a constrained financial climate are all current factors which the school planning process will need to take on board. It would be preferable to have this development planning happen *ab initio* through a partnership approach, with the identification of development priorities by the board and other school partners supporting an action plan for the future. Such development planning could look at issues like enrolment, facilities, curriculum, personnel, teaching and learning. Despite challenges, it is important to look to the future with a positive and cohesive viewpoint. Working groups and, where necessary, sub committees might be the optimum means of facilitating such strategic planning. It is not in the school's interests to place such a responsibility on a few shoulders. Such planning activity in itself is also an important means to promote the incremental engagement of potential future leaders of the school.



The school plan presented at the outset of the evaluation contains a very comprehensive set of school policies, with some thorough and finely tuned policies in a total of eighteen distinct areas of school life. These policies have been inspired by models of good practice elsewhere, by the school's ethos, legislation where relevant, and by the school's own experience. For example, a draft policy on dealing with critical incidents is currently contained in the staff handbook, which is a good means of ensuring staff awareness, and is based on the school's own experiences of dealing with critical incidents in the past. The policies examined also show a good culture of reflection and review with several policies having been re-examined since their adoption and, in many instances, review dates for current policies already identified. The minutes of meetings of the parents' council, board of management and staff all attest to the fact that such reviews have taken place on an ongoing basis. There is a keen awareness of the need to update policies as circumstances dictate, such as the mobile phone policy needing to take account of technological advances and the school uniform code needing to factor in warm-weather attire. This is very good practice. In some cases, policies have the dates of initiation and also of review identified. It would be useful if the outcomes of any reviews were clearly identified in any subsequent versions of such policies, as was the case with the religious education policy. Older versions of policies should be filed away to avoid confusion.

In terms of further policy development, the principal has identified the completion of whole-school guidance planning and of a policy on special educational needs as priorities. These are sensible aims. The guidance plan, based on a team model, was challenged by the pressures of finding time for meetings and discussion until it was revived in recent months. The special educational needs policy ought to be examined using the collective expertise of those involved in inclusion strategies from initial drafting through to completion. Management has stated that the school's admissions policy has been frequently updated but it is in need of further refinement. It is recommended that the wording of the current admissions policy should be reviewed, as some phrases within it could be interpreted as discouraging of the admission of students with certain needs or in certain circumstances. In fact, the school's enrolment policy is fair and open.

In the past three to four years, the school has embraced subject planning on a formal basis. Yearly or termly outlines of work are included in the subject folders. Some subject departments have produced handwritten documents while others have moved to electronic format. The collation of termly and yearly plans in electronic format would more easily facilitate collaboration and amendment as required within and across subject departments. In several subject areas, good engagement with the principles of assessment for learning (AfL) was noted, while in others, such practice was not evident. It would be a very important support to subject planning if a whole-school approach to embedding assessment-for-learning practices was taken, perhaps stimulated by a formal staff training session.

Currently, some subjects include a TY plan in their subject folders, while others include it in the TY folder only. Having outline TY plans in one central folder, including plans for school-generated modular courses, would better facilitate an overview of the programme. It would also support planning for possible co-curricular or cross-curricular opportunities and consideration of a more uniform approach to TY assessment, ideally to include consideration of portfolio assessment, oral presentation, peer assessment and other issues pertinent to TY planning. Planning in TY was praised in some of the subjects evaluated because of a focus on the recommended principles of TY: activity-based learning and cross-curricular contexts for learning. In other subject inspection reports, it was specifically recommended that these elements, as well as the need for further opportunities for learner-autonomy, were specifically recommended for development. In this regard, consideration could be given to using some of the transition units available on [www.ncca.ie/transitionunits](http://www.ncca.ie/transitionunits).

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, school staff and parents; that a copy of the procedures has been provided to all staff; and that management has ensured that all staff are familiar with the procedures to be followed. A designated liaison person (DLP) and a deputy DLP have been appointed in line with the requirements of the guidelines. Staff and board training in Child Protection was concentrated around 2006 and it has been agreed that a re-adoption by the current board of the guidelines will be addressed shortly. It is commendable that two members of the current board are due to attend training in this important area shortly. It would also assist in keeping new staff up to date with required procedures if a reference to the guidelines was included in the very helpful staff handbook.

### **3. QUALITY OF CURRICULUM PROVISION**

#### **3.1 Curriculum planning and organisation**

Management deserves commendation for the degree to which the curriculum has been maintained to an optimum level. In addition to core subjects, and compulsory junior cycle subjects like History and Geography, there is a very impressive range of subjects on offer. French is available to all classes, although its optional nature from the start of second year has created some complications in terms of TY provision later. Science is taken as a core subject in junior cycle and students can progress to Agricultural Science or the Physics-Chemistry combined syllabus in senior cycle. Similarly, Business Studies is available in junior cycle and branches out into Economics and Business in senior cycle for those students who wish to pursue study in this area. The availability of Art, Materials Technology (Wood), Metalwork and Technical Drawing in junior cycle and of follow-on subjects in most of these disciplines in senior cycle is again testament to a subject range which many larger schools would struggle to achieve. Maintaining this subject range has involved considerable work, including teaching commitments from senior management, having teachers timetabled for maximum class-contact time and merging some class groups where necessary. This latter strategy has been employed where subjects, such as History, are taught in modular fashion in the main, and this is relatively satisfactory.

A number of examples of good curricular thinking were noted at the school. The school has also taken an informed decision in relation to the provision of religious education for a total of three periods per week in all classes but not as a subject for the certificate examinations, partly to preserve the more pastoral approach in a non-examination context. Although German is no longer available at the school due to a staffing change, the other modern European language (French) is offered in TY and in the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) for students who did not opt to study the language for Junior Certificate. It is undeniable that maintaining the range of subjects and levels is a significant challenge for the school. Co-operative ventures with another school previously mooted are worth pursuing as these could help expand curricular options in subjects such as Music or Biology. Such a move would also ensure viable numbers in class groups, especially in senior cycle.

Subjects are taught to all levels. The school has a mixed-ability policy in place in junior cycle for most subjects, with Irish, English and mathematics classes being banded according to aptitude after initial mixed-ability periods in first year. Banding in these three subjects has been retained after some reflection, including review of the recommendations of a previous subject inspection report which favoured a longer period of mixed-ability teaching. The possibility of retaining mixed-ability class formations in these subjects

through to the end of first year remains deserving of annual review. In senior cycle, all examination subjects are taught to ordinary or higher level, or foundation level in core subjects, if required. It is normal practice for most senior cycle subjects to be taught in mixed ability contexts, apart from core subjects which are concurrently timetabled, and students at Leaving Certificate level are encouraged to stay with the higher level course for as long as possible before making a final decision. This is commended. Timetabling is managed by the principal, with the assistance of a board member, using the Facility system. An annual survey of staff is carried out, to identify preferred teaching subjects, levels, classes and a number of other issues which impact on timetabling. This is sensible practice.

### **3.2 Arrangements for students' choice of subjects and programmes**

As a voluntary secondary school, Coláiste Éamann Rís offers the compulsory junior cycle curriculum set out in the *Rules and Programme for Secondary Schools*. In addition, all first-year students take French, Science and Business Studies as core subjects and are asked to select two subjects from a set of four optional subjects: Art, Materials Technology (Wood), Metalwork and Technical Graphics. There is some flexibility in how these subject options are offered, and a chance to sample all four options is also given to students in first year. From second year, students are asked to narrow their curricular choices further, with French and Business Studies now entering the options. Science remains as a core subject through to Junior Certificate but it has not been feasible to provide formal computer studies or guidance lessons for junior classes. The school is making optimum use of staffing and other resources to offer the widest possible curricular options to junior students.

In senior cycle, students have a wide range of programme options. They may enter an optional TY, pursue the established Leaving Certificate curriculum or, if they have an appropriate subject combination, they may pursue the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP). This is a very good range of options, and the provision of a Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) programme would not be sustainable, given enrolment figures and the student cohort. Whether taking the established Leaving Certificate or LCVP, students are asked to select four optional subjects from a range of ten, and it is commendable that this suite of option blocks is adapted annually to best fit students' stated preferences.

Good levels of consultation have been established with parents on the matter of subject and programme choices in senior cycle. These have included formal information sessions on the various programmes and subject options, given by the principal and co-ordinators of the LCVP and TY programmes. In addition, guidance personnel and subject teachers are available for informal or one-to-one discussions with parents and students. This is commendable practice. Provision for guidance lessons in senior cycle is somewhat complex in timetabling terms, with LCVP students having Guidance while others have RE, and non-LCVP students having Guidance while the others have Enterprise Education. This complexity seems unavoidable, given the limited allocation the school has for Guidance and Counselling. However, there is a strong argument for a greater emphasis on formal career guidance input, ideally through timetabled lessons in TY, a more precisely defined input at junior cycle level and the inclusion of the guidance department at the information meeting for parents. Accordingly, while recognising the degree of non-class time being devoted to student guidance and the limited timetable allocation available, there is a need to revisit how Guidance fits in the regular timetable.

Both senior cycle programmes on offer, LCVP and TY, are satisfactorily offered, with required timetable provision for link modules in the LCVP in place. It is good to note that each of the programmes has a designated co-ordinator, with the TY co-ordinator also retaining the overall programme co-ordinator role which provides for a time allocation for such co-ordination duties. Both programmes are well co-ordinated and include calendars of activities, work experience opportunities and opportunities for student feedback. The TY

programme contains a good balance of regular subject provision, including sampling possibilities, a range of non-examination subjects and modules and a wide range of activities which will be discussed in the next sections.

### **3.3 Co-curricular and extracurricular provision**

A very important element of both TY and LCVP programmes consists of out-of-school activity. In both programmes, work experience modules are provided. In LCVP, students are encouraged to choose placements in line with their thinking on future careers and are expected to show a commitment by accepting some of the work-placement during school holidays. TY work experience is undertaken in two blocks of two weeks each. Good contacts with local employers have been maintained over the years and there is significant input from the guidance department in the setting up of work experience opportunities for students. LCVP students undertake very meaningful career investigations and the school's TY students are involved in an important mentoring programme with junior students, entitled 'Four to One'. A very significant range of other activities also takes place within these programmes, with visits to the National Ploughing Championships, outdoor pursuits centre, the courts and historical sites in the locality and a very worthwhile chance to learn cookery skills in TY. A trip to the *Corca Dhuibhne* Gaeltacht proved to be of cultural and social benefit to students in recent times and other activities have permeated the delivery of French, including a French breakfast event and drama. The commitments of the guidance counsellor to the *Gaisce* programme in TY, and of the LCVP co-ordinator to using the enterprise programme for charitable activity also deserve great praise.

A wide range of general co-curricular activity takes place at the school, often involving high levels of teachers' own time. The school has had a strong tradition of organising tours to a very wide variety of locations, invariably with significant educational and cultural learning opportunities for students. This is highly commended. A range of visiting speakers has been factored into co-curricular provision at Coláiste Éamann Rís. Within the senior programmes, especially in TY, visiting trainers in sport, self defence, diet, first aid, driver education, CPR and other areas are facilitated, many offering certification for course completion. The school has forged important links with the Gardaí, through the Garda Roadshow and also a visit from the Gardaí to enact a mock arrest and prosecution, which was very well received. Outside of programme activities, students have participated in a business quiz with considerable success and in a number of charitable fundraising activities previously alluded to, which have undoubtedly helped to forge links with the community and heighten the sense of the Edmund Rice ethos in a very tangible way. If it is feasible to explore co-curricular opportunities with a neighbouring school, a focus on activities like public speaking, debating, drama and other academic co-curricular activity could prove beneficial.

In terms of extracurricular activities, sport is undoubtedly a central force within the school. Hurling is the main sport played, with great successes having been achieved on a number of occasions in the Rice Cup for under 14 hurling, and a much-cherished victory in the Leinster Schools Senior A Championship which saw a number of players on the school team subsequently represent Kilkenny at All Ireland level. A number of staff members put significant personal time into training school teams in hurling, and also in soccer, and the school supports a range of other sports like badminton, handball, athletics, golf and rugby. TY also provides access to a fine and eclectic mix of sports including tasters of American football, Olympic handball, cricket and other sports. Extracurricular activity is complemented by good display areas around the school which highlight the successes of school teams over the years. The school has also been loud in its praise of local clubs and of the Kilkenny County GAA board for ongoing and very practical assistance to school sport. A post-holder has responsibility for ensuring that opportunities to highlight school activities are maximised in the local press, this being another vehicle to develop public relations.

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

### **4.1 Planning and preparation**

Across the range of subjects that formed part of the evaluation, teachers meet as subject departments to engage in collaborative subject planning. The process is facilitated by senior management through scheduled subject planning meetings. Some subject departments have established a rotating subject co-ordinator to best facilitate the process and this is recommended for all departments, where appropriate. Two or three formal subject planning meetings take place each year. In most instances, minutes of these meetings are maintained and this is recommended for all. Minutes show consistent and worthwhile planning and review of organisational issues, and in some instances extend to teaching and learning.

For some areas, wide-ranging subject plans have been drawn up. For others, teachers have agreed common programmes of work that are then used as a basis for individual schemes of work. It would be profitable if a structured approach was adopted and the former was established in practice in all subject departments. In order to further advance subject planning, teacher groups should focus on developing their plans in terms of specific learning outcomes for the range of class groups, levels and programmes. Learning outcomes should sequence the development of students' skills, knowledge and attitude in subjects. Planning with a focus on developmental learning outcomes would ensure all subject departments increase focus on approaches and resources best suited to teaching and learning and on approaches for the assessment of students' competence.

### **4.2 Learning and teaching**

Evaluation activities included the observation of lessons in English, French, Irish and Science, and included lessons in all programmes and at all levels. Opportunities were taken to interact with students and to review their written work. Separate subject inspection reports for English, French and Irish are appended to this report. The Science report has already been published.

There was variation in the standard of teaching and learning in the lessons observed and across the subjects evaluated and a variation in the structure and pace of lessons. In the majority of instances, teaching was very good and competent but there were a minority of instances when teaching standards were poor. However, much good practice was noted in many areas and there were some instances where very effective practices were used to support teaching and learning. In many instances, inspectors reported positively on the enthusiasm, knowledge and conscientiousness of teachers. In other instances, where areas for development were noted, teachers were receptive to the specific suggestions made.

Some inspectors noted that teaching methods used were varied and teachers endeavoured to choose methods that were appropriate to the group as well as the learning task, and clearly considered it important to know students' learning styles and needs. Many very good examples of active learning and students working in groups to complete assigned tasks were cited in some of the reports. In the majority of cases, individual and group support was very good and differentiated teaching practices were in evidence. Many teacher-directed lessons were deemed to be successful but in other instances there was insufficient opportunity for students to be guided toward effective learning. In some lessons, there was an emphasis on students' reproducing material. While these provide opportunities for valuable practice for students, it was noted that lessons were most effective when students were more actively engaged in the learning process and the range of activity was varied and interesting. It is recommended, therefore, that there should be more extensive use of active learning methodologies so that an appropriate balance between teacher input and student activity is achieved and maintained in all subjects.

There were many good examples cited in inspection reports of a productive emphasis on an integrated approach to learning and the progressive development of students' skills, including scientific investigative skills, writing skills and the development of different language skills. In most lessons, very good connections were made between previous learning and the new topics for study. Some recommendations were made on the further promotion of a more integrated approach to the teaching of different language skills. The use of the target language as the language of instruction and communication was very good in some language lessons observed but there was scope for considerable development of students' oral skills in many other language lessons and suggestions were made for the extension of the practice in other lessons. It is recommended that a whole-school policy be developed on the use of the target language in the classroom.

Student learning and attainment varied but perceptive, knowledgeable and confident student contributions were noted in many lessons observed. Questioning featured strongly in lessons, with teachers mostly mixing question types and spreading questions across a broad range of students. Very good practice was noted where teachers invited and affirmed a range of opinions, and used follow-on questions effectively so that students had to support and justify their answers. Praise was given for lessons where students were challenged to come up with solutions to problems posed. Students' application to learning opportunities was commended in a number of instances. Some recommendations were made with regard to developing in students an organised approach to their learning and to the development of critical thinking skills. An upward trend in the uptake of higher level in the certificate examinations was noted in some subjects and this is encouraging. It is suggested that the monitoring of attainment in the certificate examinations should form part of the annual subject department planning and review process.

A warm rapport between teachers and students was evident in the vast majority of lessons and teachers are commended for the level of concern and good humour shown in classroom interactions. The prevailing atmosphere in most lessons was purposeful and productive. In a minority of lessons, disengaged students presented a challenge and this may need to be met by changing approaches. Lesson objectives were set out at the start of some lessons and learning was reinforced by key aspects of lessons being summarised at the conclusion. It is recommended that this good practice be extended and to optimise the benefits of this practice that teachers should communicate the objectives in terms of the proposed learning outcomes as this will make students aware of teaching and learning as shared responsibility.

In many instances, classroom resources were used very well. In other instances, it was recommended that a range of inexpensive and readily available resources that give a real life context to learning be developed for the subject. The learning environment in classrooms was enhanced with displays of many very useful subject-specific posters and examples of student work. The board was used effectively, providing helpful visual reinforcement of key points. There was scope for the use of ICT in some lessons and when resources become available this should be addressed.

### **4.3 Assessment**

Formal in-house examinations are held at Christmas and summer with pre-examinations for third-year and sixth-year classes in February. In some of the subjects evaluated, common assessments are used where appropriate and their use was commended. Oral examinations are facilitated for senior cycle students in the languages evaluated and teachers were commended for their collaboration in organising these. These should be extended for all students in all year groups, as should some of the student-centred approaches mentioned in TY planning above. Class tests are also administered by individual teachers on a regular basis. Parents get reports on students' progress following formal assessments through

written school reports and at scheduled parent-teacher meetings held annually for each year group. Contact with parents is also enabled through the use of the student journal.

At individual subject levels, the vigilance of teacher monitoring of students' participation and levels of attention was noted. The amount and neatness of work in students' copies was noted positively. In the majority of lessons, homework was regularly assigned and corrected, although there were varying practices employed in the correction of homework. Some disciplines have been more successful than others in the setting of challenging homework assignments and individual recommendations were made in this regard.

## **5. QUALITY OF SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS**

### **5.1 Inclusion of students with additional educational needs**

The school provides good support for students with special educational needs. Students likely to need additional supports are identified prior to entry through visits to local primary schools by the principal and pre-testing carried out by the guidance department and a former staff member. Formal re-testing does not occur during the years of post-primary schooling after entry: this position should be subject to review. However, a good degree of flexibility has been evident, with students facilitated in making personal approaches to teachers where additional supports may be made available. Six willing teachers take students in small groups or at one-to-one level for learning support or resource hours. The school's allocation for learning support, 0.5 whole-time teacher equivalents, and resource hours, as recommended by the SENO, are combined for this provision.

The commitment of the teachers and SNAs consulted during the evaluation, and their sensitivity to the needs of their students, was impressive. Some very good examples of supports being put in place for students with specific learning or physical needs were observed during the evaluation and deserve the highest praise. A good culture of developing individual education plans for students needing additional supports has been established and the resources allocated are fully used. Despite space being limited, very good efforts have been made by management to accommodate rooms for support work. Whole-staff training in a range of areas has been provided by school management, assisted by NEPS personnel, and some staff members have attended specialised training days in specific areas, including dyslexia, mixed-ability teaching, AfL, individual education plans, dealing with the gifted child and supporting and managing student behaviour. Teachers involved in learning support tuition have met formally roughly three times a year. Well-kept minutes show that team members have discussed issues of practical concern, including individual plans, confidence building and spelling and literacy skills. Good relations have been established with the visiting teacher service, the SENO and with NEPS.

The school's relatively small size allows for a degree of informal support and facilitates a student-friendly approach. The school is now urged to review its current approach to supporting students with special education needs. The co-ordination duties in this area currently rest with the principal and it would be better if these could be devolved to a staff member or small team interested in the area, ideally in return for a small time concession taken out of the school's specific allocation for learning support. The acquisition of formal certification in resource or learning support work by a nominated staff member would also support provision at the school and would restore what the school had in the past. The school itself has acknowledged the need to develop a formal special needs policy. It is recommended that such a policy could be considered under the umbrella of an overall school policy on inclusion, as anticipated in the Education of Persons with Special Educational Needs (EPSSEN) Act. Thus it could act as a guide to the school not only in its special needs planning but also in areas like admission and participation of students with special education needs. The demographic and social context of Callan itself has meant that

relatively few students with identified English-language needs have required additional supports from the school. Where such supports are required, it is important that the issue of placing students in age-appropriate classes remains paramount and that if banded classes are deployed, a student's general ability rather than ability in English at entry point be given due consideration. The development of an overarching inclusion policy could contain reference to such strategies for supporting students with language needs.

The school does not qualify for the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) programme. However, Callan is situated close to a relatively disadvantaged area and draws students from a wide social and economic base. The small and close-knit nature of the school community has been a tremendous support to students from disadvantaged backgrounds, with a strong culture of looking out for people permeating management and staff, including non-teaching staff. The school seeks a voluntary contribution from students but stresses that it is voluntary and is not linked to enrolment. This is acceptable. Other charges sought are itemised as clearly as possible and invariably cover materials for specific subjects. No charge is levied for access to other school facilities like the computer room and sports facilities, while the fee for lockers is reasonable and optional. School management and staff are very aware of the social and financial needs of some of their student cohort and a very strong culture of informal and confidential support for disadvantaged students, which can include important roles for ancillary staff at times, is praiseworthy. The previously proposed inclusion policy could be a good means of formalising the school's good practice in areas of social inclusion, and could take account of the informal good practice employed in the school community to date.

Parents have generally been very satisfied with the levels of communication they have received from subject teachers, class tutors and year heads, and from senior management as required. One potential area for improving contact between the school and home is the student journal. It may be possible to include some details in the journal in relation to the code of behaviour, including an explanation of the discipline structure built around a form of 'ticket' system. Other possible insertions could include a blank template where names of year heads, class tutors, guidance counsellor and other support personnel could be listed once they are finalised each year. Similarly, a copy of the school calendar and clearly identified space for communication between parents and teachers as the need arises could be factored into any redesign of the journal. Ensuring that each date section has adequate space for possible homework tasks to be noted, and clarity on who should sign the homework section are other small points which could be considered if the school is in a position to update this important means of home-school communication.

## **5.2 Guidance and student support in the whole-school context**

Whole-school guidance planning commenced at Coláiste Éamann Rís in recent years. Good collaborative approaches to this important aspect were adopted, with a committee formed following an in-service session on Guidance as a whole-school activity in 2007. This committee met approximately seven times and gave an interim report on progress to the previous board of management. It is unfortunate that circumstances, some of them outside of the school's control, prevented this committee from bringing its work to the ultimate fruition of a guidance plan and it remains an important and immediate target to aim for as a whole-school development aim. A significant amount of written planning material and meeting records has been retained by the guidance department. While much of this is of a reflective and individual nature, it includes a degree of content which merits inclusion in the overall guidance plan.

The school's allocation of 0.5 whole-time teacher equivalents for Guidance and Counselling is based on its enrolment. This presents a challenge in finding adequate timetable opportunities for the delivery of Guidance, as well as time for individual counselling, as needed. It is important that timetabled guidance provision be constant for



students from TY onwards. The current arrangements are less than satisfactory in this regard. A commendable degree of informal, or *ad hoc* guidance classes are provided to some junior class groups but again there is a need to formalise student access to Guidance at times of subject selection in first year and third year, and programme selection in third year or TY. For 2010-11, the guidance department is proposing a formal class intervention for three class periods per year for each class in junior cycle, and this would be an important step towards a more formal approach in this important area.

In many respects, the size of the school has encouraged close informal teacher-student mentoring across the school and, in reality, this involves senior management and all staff, both teaching and non-teaching. The time commitment given by guidance and other personnel to student counselling is substantial. So too has been the commitment to achieving post-graduate qualification and training in reality therapy, bereavement counselling and other important areas of student support. Involvement continues with the first-year induction programme and previously mentioned *Gaisce* programme and work-experience organisation. The school is proactive in facilitating the attendance of its guidance personnel at local cluster meetings on Tuesdays. The facilities viewed for student guidance and counselling during the evaluation were good, and included a computer room with good access to Qualifax careers information and a counselling office, with additional one-to-one sessions being held in another room in the school when required.

Attendance monitoring is carried out in the school on a daily basis and the figures are analysed weekly by the deputy principal and secretary. Overall, statistics for attendance, including absences over the statutory twenty-day threshold which must be notified to the NEWB, are encouraging. Some individual students have been identified as significant absentees and because of the size of the school, the overall figures are somewhat skewed. It was confirmed that the NEWB has been notified of any cases of excessive absenteeism and it has also been observed that the weekly assembly is used as an opportunity to remind students about matters of behaviour and attendance. This is good practice. It is good also to note that the principal gives regular updates to the board on matters such as overall attendance rates, and to the board and parents' council on numbers of suspensions imposed. The board has also fully engaged with any challenges to school policy in relation to enrolment, and at times on matters of student behaviour or parental concerns. The school has sought to maintain the Edmund Rice inclusive ethos in the challenging areas of attendance and discipline, using many avenues to support student attendance, even where individual cases have been difficult. Management has also expressed a preference for occasional suspension as a sanction, rather than seeking exclusion of any student. The formal inclusion of guidance personnel in follow-through on student management issues, including suspensions, would be a worthwhile additional support, if practicable.

A very committed pastoral care team operates at the school and has provided very important service in day-to-day student management and also in times of crisis which have challenged everyone in the school community. The core team meets a number of times each year and a highly developed pastoral care policy was formally ratified in 2008. Much thought has gone into this policy. It points to the importance of good relationships between staff as well as between staff and students. The policy also details the SPHE modules being covered, including the module on Emotional Health, and the role of guidance counselling in the school and how it facilitates access to personal development programmes, among other things. Moving towards a documented policy on Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) in senior cycle should be an important area for development.

The pastoral care personnel dovetail their work very well with the school chaplaincy and have done tremendous work in commemorations, linking with Ossory Youth Service and supporting the school's efforts to promote positive behaviour, including a series of merit certificates, rewards and awards. The availability of a chaplain has also helped ensure that

all times of Christian celebration and reflection, and events like school Masses and graduation ceremonies have a spiritual dimension, in keeping with the school ethos. A previous support, paid for by the Christian Brothers, had allowed for a six-hour allocation of time for home-school-community liaison work by a staff member. While this was later withdrawn due to budgetary constraints, and the school is not entitled to a Department-sanctioned resource for such work, the pastoral care team and whole school community are to be commended for the level of support which is offered to students.

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

The following are the main strengths identified in the evaluation:

- There is a very strong sense of the Edmund Rice Ethos in everyday school life.
- The board of management is properly constituted and very supportive of in-school management and of the school generally.
- The senior management team is extremely conscientious and hard working, and carries out a very substantial range of additional teaching and other duties.
- The system of class tutors and year heads is a good support to student management.
- Staff commitment to curricular and extracurricular delivery and to student support is praiseworthy.
- The school has developed and maintained its facilities very well.
- A very thorough range of policies reflecting the characteristic spirit of the school is in place.
- Good levels of consultation have been employed in the finalisation and review of school policies, although the voice of the student council needs to be reactivated.
- Links with parents, the wider community and outside support agencies are strong.
- A very wide range of subjects is available in both junior and senior cycles.
- A good choice of senior programmes is provided by the school, along with some very good educational opportunities within each of these programmes.
- Strong traditions in extracurricular activity are very evident.
- Very good progress has been made in subject planning in recent years.
- A good standard of teaching and learning was observed in most subject areas, characterised by very positive teacher-student interaction.
- The learning support needs of students are well catered for at the school by management and teachers.
- The needs of students from disadvantaged educational backgrounds are well looked after.
- Good pastoral and student support structures are highly commended.

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

- The board and school community are urged to focus more on strategic and developmental planning.
- Consideration should be given to the publication of core elements of the school plan and a report on progress with school planning activity in an annual report to parents.
- The clarification of outstanding management issues between the board and ERST needs to be prioritised.
- A restructuring of the current schedule of posts of responsibility is urged.
- The devolution of responsibility for drafting school policies is necessary.
- Whole-school guidance planning and the development of a formal special educational needs policy require attention.

- Avenues of cooperation with a neighbouring second-level school should continue to be explored, to enhance curricular and co-curricular opportunities.
- The school needs a qualified teacher of Physical Education.
- A more cohesive approach to TY planning, including individual subject planning within TY, is recommended.
- Where poor standards in teaching have been found, teachers are urged to employ active learning strategies, a greater variety of stimulus materials and more use of the target language, where relevant, in lessons.
- The appointment of a special educational needs co-ordinator should be prioritised.
- A more structured approach to in-class guidance provision should be taken, as per the draft guidance plan.

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 Science – 19 March 2009 (published 28 January 2010)
- Subject Inspection of French – 18 January 2010
- Subject Inspection of Gaeilge – 20-21 January 2010
- Subject Inspection of English – 21 January 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 of Coláiste Eamann Rís Callan would like to record its appreciation to the Inspectorate for their courteousness, diligence and professionalism during the course of the inspection and congratulates all students, teachers, ancillary staff, management and parents/guardians on this endorsement and affirmation of the good practice and quality of the education provided in Coláiste Eamann Rís Callan. We say thanks for the support, work and role of our Trustees ERST, Staff, Students and Parents during the WSE.

Specifically we welcome positive affirmation re;

- a) The very good overall quality of “Teaching and Learning” in the school.
- b) The commitment, effectiveness and knowledge of the Board of Management.
- c) The collaborative management style involving all the stake holders.
- d) The professionalism of the middle-management team.
- e) The whole staff involvement in decision making.
- f) The effective systems for care of students, discipline and attendance monitoring.
- g) The active and significant role played by the Parents’ Council in Policy development and addressing the funding problems faced by the school.
- h) The school buildings and surroundings.
- i) The collaborative planning of the subject departments.
- j) The holistic education on offer; a broad curriculum, co-curricular and extra-curricular programme.
- k) The wide range of subjects and levels on offer especially considering the size of the school.
- l) The standard of co-ordination of the LCVP and TY programmes.
- m) The provision of subject sampling in first year and TY.
- n) The ‘student choice based’ range of subjects on offer in the school.
- o) The commitment to students with special educational needs.
- p) The obvious care for students that permeates all aspects of school life from teaching staff, SNA’s, school secretary and school caretaker.

The recognition of the extremely hard working and conscientious senior management team and their cordial and effective working relationship.

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

- a) In June the Board of Coláiste Éamann Rís published an annual report to parents and this was distributed to parents along with the summer results and newsletter.
- b) The Student Council was reformed in last term of 2009/2010 and is now actively participating in school life.
- c) The School applied, as advised in the WSE, for a French Language Assistant but was unsuccessful
- d) The Guidance plan is complete and ready to go the Board off Management. All classes from TY up are timetabled for Careers and arrangements are in place for all Junior classes to receive three classes with the Guidance Counsellor per school year.
- e) Admissions Policy: The Board of Management notes the comments made in relation to our admissions policy and is actively reviewing this policy. The revised policy is now ready to go to the school's stakeholders.
- f) In relation to the comments on Irish the Principal will ensure that a coordinator for Gaeilge is appointed and rotated on a regular basis.
- g) The Board welcomes the recommendation that we appoint a full time PE Teacher. Given adequate resources and a properly equipped gymnasium we will be happy to follow through on this once all other essential subjects are catered for.