

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

- The Principal is a visionary and charismatic leader, who has worked strategically and consistently to move the school forward. In this process, he is ably supported by both the deputy principal and the in-school management team. (*See Principal's note below)
- The curriculum provision is very good and has been planned and structured to ensure that the school provides the best educational opportunities for its student population and the wider community.
- The school provides an excellent care system for its students that is child centred and ensures that a whole school approach is adopted towards supporting and guiding students to achieve their potential.
- The school is to be commended for its efforts to introduce systems for evaluating its own performance, which contribute to ongoing school improvement.
- Maximum use is made of resources within the school and the success of the board and school management in securing additional resources has contributed greatly to the development of the school and the educational provision for its students.
- There is a positive atmosphere and environment in the school. The relationship between staff and students is good and lessons are conducted in an atmosphere of mutual respect and loyalty. The commitment of the staff and students to promoting positive behaviour is evidenced by the quality of the interaction between students and the friendliness and courtesy they display to the teaching and ancillary staff and to visitors.
- Teachers work consistently hard and well and are committed to the pastoral and academic progress of their students.
- A particular strength of the school is the quality and range of extra-curricular provision both in sporting and cultural activities. Parents value this additional support provided for their children and express high levels of satisfaction at the inclusiveness of the activities and the deliberate reduction in activities in examination years to facilitate students increased academic emphasis.
- There is a very strong culture of professional development among staff. While largely the responsibility of the individual, the management of the school strategically recognises the need for professional development, and to this end has developed systems to support teachers in developing their personal and professional competencies.
- The school places priority on and adopts a structured approach to school development planning. Considerable time and effort have been invested in developing action plans to progress the priorities identified and the inclusion of teaching and learning as a current priority is to be commended. The whole school approach to promoting literacy which involves all teachers taking responsibility for the development of literacy skills in their subject area.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

- The school has many important strengths including the strong leadership and guidance of the management team; the commitment and hard work of the teachers; the positive and loyal relationships that exist between staff and students and a culture of consensus in decision-making. It is encouraged to continue to recognise and value these strengths as a framework within which it can successfully manage change within the context of the school, as may be identified through its ongoing self-evaluation and review processes.
- The school has made progress in improving its links with parents as part of the wider school community. The inclusion of parents in the consultative process of the latest development planning process, in addition to the work undertaken through the HSCL arrangements provide a structured opportunity to further develop the role of the parent body as a support to the work of the school.
The quality of the in-class learning environment can sometimes vary. In some classrooms and specialist rooms there are attractive displays of students' work. However, while appealing murals are displayed in other classrooms, these do not reflect the students' recent or current work. These innovative approaches already evident in the school could be enhanced and revisited to improve the use of classrooms as learning resources.

*Principal's note. There are many forms of school leadership and probably to some extent it is true to say that each is unique to the School Principal himself/herself. The approach I have taken since commencing in this position in 1984 has been very much on the lines of distributed leadership. Accordingly, I see myself very much as part of a team. I am not sure that the visiting Inspectors picked up precisely the extent of distribution of responsibility that is in practice here. In my view, the role of the school Principal is to ensure that leadership is provided on each and every issue the school faces, though not necessarily by himself/herself. Accordingly, the leadership role here is variously filled by a range of members of staff including most notably the Deputy Principal and on other occasions Assistant Principals, Counsellors, School Secretary etc. depending on the issue involved. So, in this regard I think the WSE report doesn't capture accurately the situation here. There is certainly some vision and charisma among the team of people working here and indeed many other qualities and attributes. It is wrong to attribute them to me.

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