

ST. GERARD'S SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE WSE/MLL REPORT

The Board of Governors of St. Gerard's school wish to acknowledge the positive and affirming WSE-MLL report received following the inspection of St. Gerard's Senior School in April, 2011.

We would like to take this opportunity to make the following observations and comments:

1. OBSERVATIONS ON THE CONTENT OF THE INSPECTION REPORT

In the first instance, given the uncompromising priority afforded to promoting quality teaching and learning in St. Gerard's School, the following points made by the Inspectorate are particularly noteworthy:

- That "staff and management have the capacity and skill to provide an environment in which students will become independent and resilient learners";
- That "students had high expectations, were articulate, confident and responsive";
- That "in a significant majority of the lessons observed, the quality of teaching was good or very good and in some cases exemplary";
- That specific strengths noted included "well-planned learning activities, effective higher-order questioning, some excellent use of ICT, experiential learning strategies, purposeful class discussion, high expectations conveyed to students and developmental feedback to students";
- That learning support is "well supported and appreciated" within the school.

We consider the above five points to be of utmost and integral importance as they reflect the ethos of St. Gerard's which promotes student learning of a very high standard and which continuously strives to ensure that each individual pupil has the opportunity to fulfil their unique potential.

In the second instance, we are pleased that the Inspectorate noted, affirmed and has re-enforced the following hugely positive aspects of our school:

- That "a friendly homely atmosphere is evident in the school" and that "students have pride in their school";
- That "good democratic and administrative practices" have been developed, that the senior management team is effective and that the Principal is "an effective leader with a clear vision for the further development of the school";
- That "very good channels and methods of communication exist in the school";
- That "students have opportunities to articulate their views and avail of leadership roles";
- That there is an "excellent ICT infrastructure in the school"; and
- That the Board of Governors "evaluates its own practices and constantly strives to provide the best education possible for students."

Finally, we note with satisfaction that “almost all of the recommendations from previous subject inspections reports have been implemented”.

2. FOLLOW UP ACTIONS

The Inspectorate notes that the Board “is proactive in its duties, actively supports educational initiatives, is familiar with the day-to-day operation of the school and regularly evaluates its practices”. Furthermore, the Report notes that senior management, through the implementation of the five-year planning process, is “evaluating all aspects of school life”. In continuing to do so, and in order to ensure that we continue to provide the highest quality education for our pupils, the school notes the Inspectors’ “Recommendations for Further Development” and they are being given due and in-depth consideration by all relevant stakeholders.

Finally, the statement that “the school aims to produce ‘resilient learners’ in ‘classrooms of excellence’” and that “the school has the teaching staff, management and leadership capacity required to do this” sums up the vision of education in St. Gerard’s. Furthermore, the statement that “the [five-year] plan formulates the future vision for the school and its role as a caring and supportive learning community” affords us great satisfaction as we strive to ensure that St. Gerard’s continues to provide an education of excellence for all of its pupils, building on the “Key Findings” of this Report.