



REPORT TO THE PARENT BODY on the school year 2007-2008

Mercy Secondary School Mounthawk

Report to the Parent Body
on Teaching and Learning in Mercy Mounthawk
for the academic year 2007-2008

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INTRODUCTION

This report is issued to parents of the school on a yearly basis as part of the process through which we endeavour to keep our parents informed of developments and progress in the school.

Each household receives a copy of the twice yearly Newsletter at Christmas and again in the summer. The newsletter contains an update on many of the extra-curricular and co-curricular activities in the school. This more formal report focuses on reports on curricular and school planning issues, and as such, is designed to complement the newsletter.

We hope you find it informative.

John O’Roarke, Principal.

1. SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

summary of developments - John O’Roarke

This is the 2nd year of the 3 year plan under the current Board of Management which took office in September 2006. This current plan will run until 2009.

The plan is divided in 5 main sections: (i) Staff and Resources, (ii) Pastoral Care and Guidance, (iii) Community, (iv) Curriculum, Teaching and Learning and (v) Ethos.

(i) Staff and Resources

1.a Staff

The staff induction manual was updated during the year and an updated induction session took place for new teachers at the start of the year. A teacher peer mentoring system has been established for new teachers in the school. In 08/09 the school will participate in a pilot project run by UCD in the development of mentoring for newly qualified teachers (NQTs). Two newly appointed teachers and two senior teachers will be involved in the project.

The ‘Dignity in the Workplace’ policy was completed and ratified by the Board of Management.

Joining the staff in 2007/8 were Veronica Hunt, Stephen Colgan, Aidan O’Shea and Caithlin Ni Dhubhda.

1.b Plant and Resources

The ‘e-portal’ system has been installed and has been piloted in LCA. Teachers of this course were issued with PDAs giving wireless access to the server in order to allow them to use the system to input class attendance. A number of teachers also used the e-portal system to input results for the summer house exams. It is intended that in-service will be provided for teachers in 08/09 to increase the number using the system to input data.

In relation to ICT, the introduction of ICT progressed in the teaching of Mechanical Drawing and the new Design Communications Graphics course using the ‘solidworks’ software package.

(ii) Pastoral care and Guidance

ii.a Pastoral Care

The pastoral care policy has been substantially redrafted during 07/08 and will be completed by December 2008 for ratification by the BOM.

The Volunteer Community Mentoring programme which began under the auspices of the Home School Community Liaison, KDYS and Partnership Trá Lí, allowed a number of students to benefit from the

support of volunteer mentors who journeyed with them through the year. Feedback from the students and mentors indicated that the programme was effective in providing support for students and will continue next year.

ii.b Guidance

The Guidance Counsellors' Department Plan was finalised and approved by the Board of Management. It identified rationale and curriculum content of the guidance programme from first year to sixth year.

'Be Real Game' was introduced for the first time to Transition Year students. As a life /work exploration programme, the 'Be Real Game teaches students that a person's career is holistic and a continuous process of decision making. By allowing students to experience a simulation of adult life and work, the programme puts careers and citizenship learning into a context that makes it relevant.

The school was asked by DCU to assist in establishing Irish norms for CAT 3 level E and F (Cognitive Abilities Test).

(iii) Community

iii.a Students' Council

As an innovation in 08/09, the students' council ran a clubs morning in the gym. The morning provided an opportunity for new 1st year students to sign up for clubs and sports and activities and addressed the issue of students not being too sure of what was on and when it was happening.

The student council had a significant involvement in raising money for our twinned school – Br. Beausang in Nairobi. They were involved in ticket sales for the Greyhound night and in the various fundraising events that took place during the year.

iii.b Home School Community Liaison

A full range of activities took place under the auspices of the Home School Community Liaison programme ranging from paired reading to Maths for Fun, to parenting and personal development programmes for parents and community mentoring. A full outline is available in the Summer newsletter.

iii.c Parents' Council

As part of our programme of responsible socialising last year, we emphasised for parents the importance of vigilance on the internet. A significant amount of teenage socialising takes place in the virtual world and parents need to be aware of the possibilities, challenges and dangers that this new environment brings. In 07/08 the Parents' Council ran a number of information evening and workshops for parents on the internet and on internet protection software. These evening proved very popular and will be continued in 08/09.

(iv) Curriculum / Teaching and Learning

iv.a Teaching Methodology

Following on the in-service last year from the SESS (Special Education Support Service) on differentiation in the classroom, subject teachers focused on differentiation in the mixed ability 1st year classes during the year. This work was supported through the Pilot Project on the Learning school. (cf. below)

iv.b Curriculum Provision and Timetabling

In 06/07 a class was established in 2nd year to allow for the provision of a reduced curriculum for those students who required it on the basis of their IEPs. This class sat their Junior Cert in summer 08 and judging from the results obtained by the class, this initiative has been a successful one. For instance out of the 15 students in the class, in core subjects like Geography, 7 achieved an A in ordinary level, while in History, one student achieved an A grade and 11 students achieved B grades.

iv.c Exam results

Leaving Certificate

The Leaving Certificate class of 08 achieved excellent results. 151 students did the L.C. (L.C. + L.C.V.P.) Of this cohort, 15 students achieved over 500 points – 10% of the cohort which was up from 8.28% in '07. One student, Sarah O'Carroll, gained 600 points in the examination.

40 got between 400 and 500 points... 26.4%, giving a total of 36.4% of the students gaining over 400 points, again up on the figure from '07. 45 Students got between 300 and 400 points...29.9% giving a total of 66.2% of the students gaining over 300 points.

In L.C.A. 3 students achieved a Distinction, 12 got Merit and 2 were awarded a Pass, figures which correspond to those in '07: 3 Distinction, 14 Merit and 2 Pass.

We extend congratulations to all the Leaving Certificate class and their teachers on these results and particular congratulations to Sarah and her family.

Junior Certificate

We were also very proud of our Junior Certificate students. Two students gained full marks with 11 A grades. A further 4 students achieved 10 A and 1B grades.

Considering maths as a representative core subject, the grades across the ability levels were very good. In all, 228 students sat maths at Junior Cycle: 91% got an honour as against 80% nationally. 26% got A against 16% nationally. No student failed higher level as against 3% nationally. Only 1 student failed maths in the cohort at pass level as against 7% nationally. We are pleased that the procedures in place to identify the correct level for students to take a subject seem to be working.

Results in other subjects were similar, for instance there were 12 A's in Art, 13 A's in English, 20 A's in Irish and 24 A's in Maths.

iv.d Supervised Study

The introduction of a 3 hour study session for 6th year students on 07/08 worked well according to feedback from students. This provision will continue in 08/09. Numbers applying for the 2 and 3 hour sessions have increased for the new academic year. Costs will remain at 07/08 levels.

iv.e Gaeilge - a new emphasis on the spoken language

A pilot initiative in the school to emphasise spoken Irish in the curriculum took place during the year. Timetable provision was made for 1st year students to have a conversation class 'ciorcal cainte' at their own ability level, once a week. It was found that the reconstitution of classes proved difficult, especially since it took some time for teachers to get to know the conversation level of new students in 1st year. It was decided, therefore, that for the coming year each teacher would dedicate a class a week to conversation with their own group in 1st year.

iv.f Transition Units

The school was accepted last year as a partner school in an initiative by the NCCA (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment) to develop programmes in Transition Year which will be vetted by the Council and, if accepted, allow for national accreditation by the Council.

A unit in Business and Enterprise which has been developed in conjunction with the ITT, Breda O'Dwyer and Ernst and Young and Co, as well as a unit in Development Education in conjunction with KADE were run in Transition year last year. Feedback from students and teachers through the TY end of year evaluation on the units was very positive and the units will continue in 08/09.

iv.g Pilot Project on the Learning School

In 07/08, a group of 10 teachers were involved in a pilot project run by the Teacher Education Section (TES) of the Department of Education and Science and the local education centres, including the Education Centre Tralee, to explore the development of a learning school culture among teachers in the school. The intent of the project was to explore the structures and supports that would facilitate the involvement of teachers on the staff in learning new methodologies and approaches for the classroom.

From the perspective of the school, the project focused on exploring the structures that would best facilitate the development of a Learning Culture and shared praxis among teachers in the school. We explored the use of reflective practice by the teachers and the feedback from the teachers in the project, as part of the evaluation, was very positive. While teachers found the opportunity of sharing best practice to be very useful, there is a real difficulty in finding time for meetings. The group was very willing to meet at lunchtime for the duration of the project, but this would not be sustainable on a long term basis. The greatest challenge in pursuing shared praxis by teachers is the difficulty in creating meeting time for teachers a national issue that will have to be addressed by the DES.

iv.h Working with Gifted and Talented students

As part of the Learning School Project, teachers chose to focus on the use of methodologies in working with mixed ability classes in 1st year. The teachers, in subjects such as Maths, Science, English, and History, explored the use of different methodologies in addressing the different educational abilities of students in their 1st year classes. The work focused mainly on challenging the more able students in

these classes, who, oftentimes, need greater challenge and more targeted activities. During the year the NCCA produced a set of guidelines on Promoting Learning for the More Able Student. Teachers used these guidelines as a support for their work. They also developed some materials for use with more able students in the classes. A report on this project will be published by the Department of Education in 08/09.

In the 08/09 school year, teachers from the school will continue to work with the SESS, to develop resource materials for more able students. These teachers will be working with the 2008/9 1st year classes in developing these materials and testing their effectiveness, work that will surely benefit all the students in the classes involved. The school hopes to develop a section in the SEN on our provision for Gifted and talented students covering issues such as identification, support and tracking.

iv.i Extra-curricular and co-curricular activity

Feedback on the results of a review of extra-curricular provision was given to teachers at the August meeting in 2007 and the findings provided the basis for the development of policy in the area. It is intended that a draft of the policy will be completed by Jan 09.

As part of the redraft of this new policy, consideration is being given to the connection between co-curricular activity and the curriculum itself. Through the Learning School Project, the importance of curriculum enhancement became apparent again and again in the work with Gifted and Talented students. This led to the promotion of involvement by these students in the newly formed science and creative writing clubs as a way to further their enthusiasm and love of learning in these disciplines. We believe that so much more can be done by encouraging students to get involved in the co-curricular activities on offer, in particular the Science Club, the Creative Writing Club, the Maths Club agus Club na Gaeilge, whose activities directly challenge members to a broader and deeper engagement with the subject area. Likewise, involvement in art competitions, the school choir, musicals and drama equally benefit students in developing a love and ability in these subject areas.

(v) Ethos

v.a Health Promotion

The Health Promotion Committee ran two themed weeks during 2007.8 as part of the programme to promote healthier lifestyles in the school. In 07/08, the focus was on Healthy Socialising and maintaining good sexual health.

Last year the school was recognised as a Health Promoting School by the HSE. A plaque was presented to the school at a ceremony in April by Ms Shirley O'Shea, Senior Health Officer for the HSE. It was a privilege for the school to receive this acknowledgement and a further impetus for us in the continuation of our work. In 08/09 the emphasis will be on sustaining and promoting good mental health among our students.

v.b Social Justice – the Kenya Project

As in previous years there were several collections and fundraising events for local and international charities .

Last year it was decided that in order to develop awareness of social justice issues, the school would be twinned with a school in Kenya, and thus the Kenya Project was born. The project was progressed during the year with the choosing of a school in Kenya – Br. Beausang in Nairobi with whom we have now twinned. We have committed to raise €15,000 to build classrooms there and a further €15,000 to send 6 students to Kenya as part of the immersion element of the project. Despite events in Kenya earlier in 2008, the students travelled there during the Summer and learned a huge amount both about the country and themselves. These students will promote the project and the responsibilities we all have regarding social justice in the school in the coming year.

v.c Intercultural Education

The guidelines produced by the Department of Education on intercultural Education were given to all teachers in the school and Ms Cronin who has a post of responsibility for intercultural education facilitated a seminar during the March Staff Day on the guidelines. Teachers have been encouraged to integrate elements of intercultural education in the subject as is possible.

2. CAREER GUIDANCE & COUNSELLING PROVISION

Mercy Mounthawk provides guidance classes to every class group and students are introduced to career planning from 1st years. Some classes are timetabled and others by arrangements with individual teachers. Provision is balanced between junior and senior cycles.

Guidance Curriculum for 2007/2008

The Guidance curriculum is divided into two components:

Formal Guidance

The formal Guidance curriculum is delivered using two forms of intervention employing a number of methodologies:

1. Individual contact of a personal counselling nature and careers/vocational guidance
2. Classroom guidance delivered in regular weekly classes / rotating modules/ class group or year group intervention as required

Informal Guidance

The Informal Guidance programme consists of liaising with other Teaching Staff/Management to promote cross curricular links and to enhance the development of a whole school policy in relation to the delivery of the Guidance Plan. Meetings with Parents/Guardians form an integral part of Informal Guidance.

Grouping of Students

Students participate in the Guidance programme in their year group

Class organisation and provision

Year Group	Teaching Methodology
1	Class group/year group intervention 2 times/year x 35 mins
2	Class group/2class group intervention once per term x 35mins.
3	Class group intervention once a term – 2 nd term is for 2 class periods
4	Weekly class x 35 mins
5	Class group intervention once per term *
LCA1	Weekly class x 35mins
6	Weekly class x 35 mins **
LCA2	Weekly class x 35 mins

- * Full day study skills seminar was organized for this year group
- ** all students were prepared for and offered the opportunity to avail of a Mock Interview situation
- Additional class/year group intervention was arranged as required

Guidance activities that assist students make informed choices include:

- Personal counselling
- Group counselling
- Assessment using psychometric instruments and inventories
- Career information: Career Library, classroom, personal vocational guidance interviews, attendance at career events, guest speakers.....
- Use of Information Technology eg. Qualifax, career web sites etc.
- Personal and social developmental programmes.

Counselling is a key part of the school guidance programme, offered on an individual or group basis as part of a developmental learning process and at moments of personal crisis. Counselling includes personal, educational and career or a combination of these

Aims:

- Provide a framework for the delivery of the school's guidance programme
- Ensure a structured response to students' personal, social, educational and career needs
- Have an inclusive programme providing for the juniors, seniors, non-Irish nationals, special education needs etc of all students
- Include all guidance activities in the plan: classroom sessions, Vocational guidance interviews, attendance at career exhibitions, open days, assessments, personal counselling, meeting with management, parents, staff groups, support agencies etc

Assessment & Achievement

Testing is administered by the Guidance Counsellors to support students, assist student profiling, inform decision making and provide experience for students.

All in-coming first years completed the CAT – level D, a standardized, norm-referenced assessment which screen for literacy and numeracy competence. Together with information from feeder schools, this information is used to identify students who are in need of learning support and those students who need to be academically challenged – cf. *'Learning School Project'*

The Careers Decision Making (CDM) is completed in 3rd year to assist subject choice and to LCA2 to assist career choice.

The Differential Aptitude Tests (DATs) is administered in fourth year to assist career and subject choice choices.

These are followed by the Rothwell Intertest Inventory in fifth year and the DATs for students who chose not to do fourth year.

Careers Interest Inventory (CII) is administered to all sixth year students. Tests results are returned and interpreted in Guidance classes and during individual appointments

Leaving Certificate Students (2007) were tracked and past students welcomed to speak to students or for support as required.

Student profiles are maintained and retained. Folders of student work are also retained.

3. HOME SCHOOL COMMUNITY LIAISON

LINKS WITH LOCAL PRIMARY SCHOOLS

First years '07

On May 16th a table quiz took place for incoming first years to assist their transition from primary to secondary school. The quiz was organised by the Local Committee with the help of transition year students. The standard of answering was very high with the winning team from Spa National school victorious by a single point. Ardfert National School took second place, while Holy Family took the third prize. Thanks to quiz master Sr. Maureen and to the primary schools for their participation.

'Okay Let's Go' Programme

In conjunction with the K.D.Y.S the Okay Let's Go programme was run this year to assist pupils in the transfer from primary to secondary school. There was great participation in these evenings with lots of questions and discussion. We are confident that those who participated in this programme will benefit when they come to our school in September. Thanks again to all who took part.

Home Visits

I will continue with my home visits in September. Please contact the school if you would like a visit at anytime. To those homes I have visited in the past year I would like to express my thanks for your hospitality and commitment to your children's education and I look forward to working with you in the year ahead.

Breakfast Club

The Breakfast Club has been going well since its introduction last year. The programme is proving very popular and those taking part enjoy the variety of foods available. We expect to continue with the Breakfast Club in September.

Volunteer Community Mentoring Project

This project emerged last year from the Local Committee of the HSCL. The project provided 18 young people with a volunteer mentor for the past year. The role of the mentor was to guide and support the young person through the school year.

The evaluation of the project, carried out in May, clearly showed that the work of the volunteer mentors was beneficial for the students involved. The mentoring had a positive impact on the confidence and self-esteem of the students and helped reduce the likelihood of some of the students dropping out of school.

The project was overseen by the KDYS and funded by Partnership Trá Lí. The steering committee also included the Tralee Volunteer Bureau, Department of Education & Science and Mercy Mounthawk Secondary School.

At this stage it is hoped that sustainable funding can be sought for the project which will allow it to carry on its good work with young people in our community.

4. ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

Members of Department

Eileen Revington, Jim Fitzgibbon, Sean Coffey, Anne Gallivan, Linda Kane, Ronan Redican, Elaine Costello, Michelle Mangan, Noirin Sheldon, Pauline Burke, Kay Bunce, Frank Fell, Noirin O'Connor, Mary McGillicuddy, Marie O'Connor, Mairead O'Mahony, Mary Daly, Sinead Thornton, Martha Brassil, Cora McElligot

Curriculum

Course work carried out in accordance with Department of Education guidelines in all year groups. Work was done by the department members on strengthening the emphasis on differentiation across the curriculum, particularly in 1ST year. – cf. English School Plan.

As always, emphasis was placed this year on providing extra-curricular and co-curricular activities to support the development of literacy and appreciation of literature across the school.

Drama

On Thursday 13th September 30 Leaving Certificate students attended a performance of "Othello" by Janus Theatre Company in the Briery Gap Theatre, Macroom, accompanied by E. Revington and N. Sheldon.

90 Leaving Certificate students attended a performance of "Philadelphia, Here I Come" in the Everyman Palace in Cork directed by Alan Stanford and accompanied by E. Revington, N. Sheldon, S. Coffey and R. Redican.

On Thursday 7th February 90 2nd year students attended a performance of "Romeo and Juliet" in Siamsa Tire Tralee, accompanied by E. Revington, E. Costello, M O'Mahony, M McGillicuddy, and M. Mangan.

Creative Writing

For the fourth consecutive year, the English Department ran a creative writing competition in conjunction with Book Week/Library Week. Sponsored by the Parents' Council, the competition was open to 1st, 2nd, 4th and 5th years. Entries were of a very high standard. Prize giving took place in the school library on Tuesday 4th March in conjunction with a poetry reading by three local poets. The prize winning entries were published in the annual yearbook.

A Sixth Year Student, Katie McNiece was highly commended for her poem, Cancerous, in the poetry festival which took place in Limerick in October.

Creative Writing Group

Because of the wealth of creative writing talent in our school as evidenced through submissions to the annual parents' council creative writing competition, we decided to set up a Creative Writing Group. We were very fortunate that local poets Noel King and Tommy Frank O'Connor offered to help us establish the group who met weekly on Wednesdays at lunch time. Students brought samples of their work with them which they read to the group. The group then discussed the different pieces of work explaining what they liked even making suggestions as to how the work could be improved. Students brought a range of fantastic work to the group from short stories to poems of many different forms and styles and everybody enjoyed listening to each other's work.

Next year, we intend on opening the group up to new 4th and 5th years and will continue to meet weekly at lunchtime. The students also want to contribute their favourite pieces to next year's school year book. Noel and Tommy Frank have offered to come in again in September when we are getting started which will be very useful. We hope that the writers group will continue to grow over the next few years.

Debating News

Congratulations to Hayley Moore, Nicola Moore, Rosie O'Dowd and John O'Donnell for reaching the quarter finals of the Concern All Ireland Debating Competition. Having debated 7 motions and coming eighth out of 150 teams is a magnificent achievement. The Team was narrowly defeated by the eventual winners of the competition, defending champions Athlone Community College.

Hayley Moore's public speaking skills were used to great effect when she became Ireland's young Ambassador of the 21st century in a competition organised by the Lion's club.

Congratulations to Patrick Flanagan, Rosie O'Dowd and Yana Makliassova, who won the Kerry heat of the Forum on Europe debate. The team defeated five other schools to represent Kerry in the Munster final. The team came second in the Munster round.

School Yearbook

This year's yearbook, under the editorship of Ms. Mangan and her 6th year committee, was a great success. It included the 4th year magazine. It also contained the winning entries in the Creative Writing Awards as well as individual articles, poems and short stories.

5. MATHS DEPARTMENT

Department Members

P. Lyne, M. Bowler, S. Clancy, Á. Clarke, M. Daly, M. Enright, B. Farrell, S. Kissane, M. Leen J. Lynch, M. McAuliffe, A. McEllistrim, S. Mc Carthy, E. Mangan, M. O' Connell, T. O' Hanlon, B. O' Sullivan, N. Raymond, M. Reidy, M. Stack, P. Stack

1st Year maths

Prior to entry to school all first year students were administered the Drumcondra maths exam. During the first week in school all students sat the Vermon maths exam. All first year students followed the common programme of work as agreed by teachers at the end of the previous academic year. The program of work included chapters 1 to 15 from their text book "New Concise Maths 1". All first year students sat a common 1 hour summer exam.

Maths For Fun

Mr. Moynihan and Ms Daly continued to coordinate the "The Maths for fun programme" with up to 25 students participating over the academic year. The programme was run with small groups of 6 to 8 students. While the programme helped these students that were weak at maths, it also helped them develop their social interaction skills. This program continues to be a great success.

2nd Year Maths

Second year students continued to work on the course material set out for the year.

3rd Year Maths

All Third year maths students completed the course work with their teachers and all members of the Department want to wish them well as they complete their final preparations for their Junior Certificate Examination.

4th Year Maths

Students were timetabled for 4 classes per week and the students were divided into 4 classes groups. 4.1 and 4.2 were mixed ability classes while 4.3 and 4.4 were divided into honours and pass.

5th Year Maths

Students were organised into Higher, Ordinary and Foundation classes immediately on receipt of their Junior Certificate Results. A total of 9 classes were formed. Two honours classes were formed with every student that wished to do honours being provided with an opportunity to do so. Six ordinary level classes were created, each class was of mixed ability and had similar numbers. A foundation class was also formed for students that had selected foundation at Junior Cycle.

6th Year Maths

Sixth year students continued to work on the Leaving Certificate syllabus. There were two honours maths classes, five ordinary level classes and two foundation classes. At a maths meeting after the results of the mock exams a number ordinary level maths teachers expressed concern about a number of students who were having real difficulty at ordinary level. Mr Behan and Mr Lyne held a meeting subsequently with these students to highlight the significance of their poor performance and to outline to them the consequences of not achieving a pass grade at ordinary level maths. A letter from the principal was sent home to the parents of these students. In a further step to try and address the situation additional maths classes in conjunction with the UCC Access program were provided for this cohort of students at lunch-times on Tuesdays by Ms. Hegarty.

Mr Paud Murphy, Advising examiner for Higher Level Leaving Certificate maths (paper 1) was invited to give a talk to the two honours leaving certificate classes. This was very worthwhile and the students benefited greatly from it.

Maths Week 2007

Maths Week Ireland ran from 15th - 19th October 2007. The purpose of the week was to promote an understanding, awareness and appreciation of mathematics. During the week, Mr. Lyne coordinated the - PRISM contest. The contest featured two separate mathematical challenges, one for pre-Junior Certificate and post-Junior Certificate candidates. Emphasis was on ingenuity and problem-solving skills rather than knowledge of the school curriculum. Several students did very well and were called for maths training in University Limerick in conjunction with the Maths Olympiad.

Also during math's week a two hour quiz for Higher Level Mathematics students was held at the Institute of Technology Tralee. There was eight rounds of questions for teams of three students. Sixth year students Elsie Ronan, Gavin Fitzgerald and Daniel Finnegan of Mounthawk claimed First prize. This is the schools second year winning this competition.

I.M.T.A.

The annual IMTA quiz for higher level students was held in the Institute of Technology Tralee and 2 teams comprising of four students represented the school. Both teams did exceptionally well. Emily Brick, Kate Cregan, Caoimhe Casey and Sarah O' Carroll claimed first place and went on to represent Kerry in the National round. While Elsie Ronan, Kilian Kallee, Sean Enright and Peter Wheeler claimed 3rd place.

Staff In-Service

Name	Date	Topic
Mary Daly	22 nd November '07	Leaving Cert Higher level

Sheila McCarthy		Trigonometry
Sharon Glancy	25 th February '08	Induction course for new teachers of honours Junior Certificate.
Jemma Lynch		

6. ROINN NA GAEILGE

Múinteoirí Gaeilge

Nora Brosnan, Kieran Costelloe, Breda Cronin, Mary Crowley, Jim Fitzgibbon, Eileen Kennelly, Máiréad McAuliffe, Rose McCarthy, Eibhlín Ní Shúilleabháin, Bernie O'Herlihy, Assumpta Power, Adrienne Quane, Mary Reidy, Lola Scollard, Sr.Siobhán.

Múineadh an Ghaeilge sa tSraith Shóisearach agus sa tSraith Shínsearach faoi mar atá leagtha síos i Siollabas na Roinne Oideachais agus Eolaíochta. Deineadh gach scil teanga, éisteacht, labhairt, léamh is scríobh a fhorbairt de réir achmhainn na ndaltaí.

Cuireadh béim faoi leith ar labhairt na teanga agus ar úsáid na teanga mar phríomh mheán chumarsáide is teagaisc i ngach rang Gaeilge.

Chomh maith leis na téacs leabhair is na dlúthdhioscaí a ghabhann leo baineadh úsáid as ábhar léitheoireachta breise ar nós Staighre, Dréimire, Foinse agus as Scannáin TG4 mar áis foghlama.

Cuireadh múinteoirí Gaeilge ag múineadh Staire, Tír Eolais, Creidimh, Corp Oideachais agus S.P.H.E. do ranganna áirithe sa dara bliain. B'é an cuspóir a bhí leis seo ná go n-úsáidfí roinnt Gaeilge i riaradh na ranganna san chomh minic is ab' fhéidir é. Chinnteodh sé seo go mbeadh an Ghaeilge in úsáid níos forleithne sa scoil.

Músclaíodh suim sa Ghaeilge agus grá don teanga taobh amuigh den seomra ranga tríd na hiarrachtaí seo a leanas:

Seachtain na Gaeilge.

Sheol an scríbhneoir Maidhc Dainín Ó Sé Seachtain na Gaeilge sa Scoil ar an 7ú Márta. Lean sé le seisiún cainte, scéalaíochta is ceoil le daltaí 5ú bliana.

- Eagraíodh Tráth na gCeist do dhaltaí na céad bliana. Ghlacadar go léir páirt i gceann éigin de na ceithre babhtaí agus bronnadh trófaíthe ar na buaiteoirí agus na leas buaiteoirí.
- Ghlac daltaí na céad, dara is cúigiú bliana páirt i gComórtas Ealaíne bunaithe ar Sheanfocail. Cuireadh na hiarratais ar teaspáint ar Sheastán Seachtain na Gaeilge sa Scoil agus ansan go dtí Comórtas Náisiúnta Seachtain na Gaeilge. Bhuaigh Louise Ní Shúilleabháin duais sa Chomórtas san.

- Bhain lucht na dara bliana sult freisin as Ceardlann Rince a cuireadh ar siúl dóibh i Halla na Scoile.
- Chuir daltaí ceoil sóisearacha na scoile Seisiún Traidisiúnta ar fáil – ceol, amhránaíocht is rince , a chuir árdú meanmain ar an lucht féachana.
- D'fhreastail lucht na hIdirbhliana chomh maith le daltaí 5ú is 6ú bliana ar 'An Triail', a léirigh an Compántas Drámaíochta Fíbin i Luimneach.
- D'fháiltigh an 3ú bliain roimh an scríbhneoir Ré Ó Laighléis, a thug caint dóibh ar a shaothar úrscéalaíochta is gearrscéalaíochta.

Gradam Gaeilge

Bronnadh Gradam Gaeilge '08 ar Cháit Ní Chréagáin, dalta Ardteiste, buaiteoir i gComórtas Aiste Ghaeilge i measc lucht na hArdteistiméireachta.

Díospóireacht Ghael Linn

Ghlac triúr daltaí 3ú bliana páirt i gComórtas Díospóireachta an Phiarsaigh. Bhuadar an dá bhabhta tosaigh agus shroiseadar an Chraobh Réigiúnach. Bronnadh plaic deas an duine orthu.

Aoi Chainteoirí

Chomh maith leis na haoi chainteoirí, Maidhc Dainín Ó Sé agus Ré Ó Laighléis (a luadh faoi Sheachtain na Gaeilge) thug Mícheál Ó Muircheartaigh caint spreagúil do chuid de dhaltaí na 6ú bliana.

Club Gaeilge

Cuireadh Club Gaeilge ar bun ag tús na bliana do dhaltaí céad bliana. Leathuair a chloig ag am lóin uair sa tseachtain a bhí i gceist. Eagraíodh gníomhaíochtaí éagsúla dóibh faoi stiúir na múinteoirí Gaeilge.

Leathnaíodh é taréis na Nollag agus cuireadh Club Sóisir agus Club Sínsir ar bun – daltaí céad is dara bliana sa Chlub Sóisir agus daltaí 5ú is 6ú bliana sa Chlub Sínsir. B'é an cuspóir a bhí leis ná gníomhaíochtaí taitneamhacha tré Ghaeilge a chur ar fáil do na Sóisir agus grúpa comhrá neamhfhoirmiúil a chur ar fáil do na Sínsir mar ullmhú don Bhéaltrial.

Scoláireachtaí Gaeltachta

- Bronnadh ocht leath scoláireacht, luach €399 an ceann, ar dhaltaí sa chéad, dara agus ceathrú bliain. Thug Coláistí Chorca Dhuibhne Teo. iad seo dúinn de bharr an líon daltaí ón Scoil a fhreastail ar Chúrsaí Gaeilge leo i Samhradh 2007.
- Bronnadh dhá scoláireacht eile, luach €798 an ceann ar dhaltaí dara bliana. Fuaireamar iad seo ón gClár Access, Coláiste na hOllscoile, Corcaigh.

Inseirbhís

D'fhreastail cearthar múinteoirí ar lá Inseirbhíse 'Múineadh agus foghlaim na Gaeilge sa Chéad Bhliain – Cur Chuige Cumarsáideach', a reachtáil An tSeirbhís Tacáíochta Dara Leibhéal .

7. RELIGION DEPARTMENT

Department

Mairead McAuliffe, Sr. Nora, Ronan Redican, Teresa Sheehy, Elaine Costello, Veronica Hunt, Sherma Carey, Emily O’Keeffe, Rose McCarthy, Sinead Thornton, Margaret Lucey, Anne McElligott, Suzanne O’Halloran, Linda Kane and Anne O’Shea Daly.

Curriculum

The **first years** followed the Junior RE Syllabus. They were involved in the planning and the celebration of Mercy Day mass on 24th September. Throughout the year the Religion Teachers provided students with opportunities for prayer in the Prayer Room. They celebrated the Sacrament of Reconciliation during the season of Advent.

Second years continued the Junior RE Syllabus. Opportunities for reflection were provided during the year by RE teachers. The Sacrament of Reconciliation was offered to the students during Lent.

Third Years completed the syllabus and the Junior Certificate Journal. They were prepared for the state exam. They received the Sacrament of Reconciliation during Advent.

Senior Cycle

Fifth and sixth years followed the school’s religious education curriculum. The fifth and sixth years celebrated the Sacrament of Reconciliation during the season of Lent and Advent respectively.

Retreats were arranged for fifth years in the second term. This was a great success. Sixth years were actively involved in the planning and preparation of their graduation mass in May

Social Action Projects

Second year students were involved in the “Christmas Shoebox Appeal”. A collection for St. Vincent de Paul was carried out during Christmas Week. The whole school was involved in this. As a Department we actively supported the Kenya project in the school this year. The social justice talks in relation to the upcoming immersion experience in Nairobi given by the fifth years at Assemblies were developed in RE classes throughout the year.

8. HISTORY DEPARTMENT

Department

Mary Deenihan, Theresa Sheehy, Máiréad O' Mahony, Assumpta Power, Aoife Fitzgerald, Michelle Mangan, Ronan Redican

Junior Cycle

The prescribed syllabus was followed and completed in first, second and third year classes.

In first and second year some classes completed projects based on key historical figures from the Junior Cert. course in preparation for the "People in History" section of the Junior Cert. paper. At our last meeting (May 2007) we felt that this project work was very worthwhile as it helped to focus the students on key parts of the course.

At the meeting in May we also looked at, and discussed, the proposed changes to the Junior Cycle Syllabus. We agreed that the proposals made were very sound ones as they would address the fact that the course, at present, is extremely long. We completed the questionnaire that accompanied the proposed syllabus changes.

Transition Year

Those teachers involved in teaching Transition Year focused on three key historical figures and events from history, for the year. We thought that this had worked well. It is planned that those teachers given Transition Year History on their timetable for next year would meet next September.

Transition Years also visited their local museum and gallery when exhibitions of a historical nature were taking place. They were assessed at the end of the year on a project submitted, based on one of the historical figures or events covered during the year.

Senior Cycle

The prescribed syllabus was followed and completed by all 5th and 6th year students.

The new book used this year is working well and we will continue with it next year.

Teachers attended in service during the year and felt it was very worthwhile and informative, particularly in relation to the new section of the course coming online for '08/'09.

5th year students were taken on a trip to the local library to learn how to find and reference books for the Research Topic part of the course. Teachers praised the librarian whom the students found very helpful and it is hoped that the incoming 5th years will be brought on a similar trip early on the next academic year.

9. GEOGRAPHY DEPARTMENT

Department Members

Margaret Leen, Nora Quane, Mairéad McAuliffe, Bernie O’Herlihy, Frank Fell, Margaret Bowler, Stella O’Shea, Sinéad Thornton, Nora Quinlan, Eileen Revington.

Junior Cycle

First years began their study of geography, second and third year classes continued their studies. Some of our second years enjoyed a very successful trip to Madrid which incorporated various aspects of social, economic, urban and regional geography. Third years completed their coursework and all members of the department wish them well as they complete their final preparations for their Junior Certificate Examination.

4th. Year

This year our transition year theme was *‘The Kingdom of Kerry’*. We studied the physical, economic and cultural geography of Kerry. Transition Year pupils undertook many activities relating to geography including:

- Hill walks.
- Trip to Ballybunion beach and cliffs.
- A trip to a wind farm to study Renewable energy.
- A trip to Dunsink Observatory.
- Trip to Killarney National Park.
- Individual projects on member states of the E.U.
- An educational trip to Paris.
- Environmental workshops facilitated by Eco UNESCO.

Congratulations

We wish to congratulate 5th Year student Ben Mc Gilton, who was chosen to represent Ireland in the European Youth Parliament in April. He presented information on the Common Agricultural Policy. His next meeting is in Liverpool during the summer.

5th. and 6th. Years.

We had five fifth year and four sixth year classes studying geography in 2007-2008. This is a testament to the popularity of the subject at senior cycle level.

The new syllabus introduced in 2004 has brought with it many changes. These included a change in content, an increased emphasis on geographical skills, a major change in the examination format and the introduction of a fieldwork study as a compulsory element of the course and a component of the terminal exam.

Our present Leaving Certs. undertook their fieldwork in Ballybunion last September. This was very successful and our students have now submitted their fieldwork, which is worth an important 20% of the final exam.

Some of our fifth years went to Banna in May and the rest of our fifth years will undertake their fieldtrip in September 2008 in Banna. The title of the Fieldwork topic is '*Geomorphic processes of Transportation and Deposition in a Coastal Environment*'. Some of our fifth year students also did a fieldtrip to Brandon to study features of Glacial Erosion.

We wish all our Leaving Cert students the best of luck in their exams. We trust that the geographical skills they have learned will be of use to them.

Staff in-service

- Members of the geography department have attended in-service to coincide with the introduction of the new leaving cert syllabus introduced in 2004-2005.
- November 2007 – One day in-service for all senior cycle teachers on fieldwork.
- March 2008 - One day in-service for teachers teaching the revised syllabus for the first time.
- March 2008- one teacher was nominated to attend an in-service on the Scoilnet Maps web site which was delivered in conjunction with the National Centre for Technology in Education. This site will provide on line access to all Ordnance Survey of Ireland maps and aerial photographs.

10. HOME ECONOMICS

Department

M.Lucey, A.McElligott, S O'Halloran, M O'Connor

Curriculum

1ST Year.

The first year programme was very successful, our aim being to equip students with lifelong skills. All students completed a Home Economics programme which included aspects of theory as well as practical skills. As a result of their knowledge of nutrition they were able to take an active role in "Healthy Eating" week in February 2008.

2nd & 3rd Years.

Activity based learning was encouraged through individual and group cookery assignments, textile and craft work.

4th year.

Nine students from Transition year took part in a cookery course with young adults from St. John of God's school. The course ran over an eight week period and was very enjoyable as well as interesting to both groups.

Each Transition year group completed an eight week Home Economics programme which included practical work, consumerism, hygiene and food safety modules.

As part of Transition year, students set up a mini company. Many of these companies were based on the food and drink industry. The students used the skills they gained in Home Economics to run a successful mini company.

5th & 6th Year.

Sile Kelly from Bord Bia gave a presentation and practical demonstration to 5th year students based on the products of the Irish Food and Drinks Industry. It was extremely successful as the practical element supported the study of meat at Senior Cycle.

John O'Connor from 5th year took part in Tesco "Young Chef of the year" competition. While he did not have success at National level, he was highly commended for his effort.

Cotter's catering staff demonstrated to Senior students the setting up of a HACCP system. Students found it very helpful seeing it in action as well as studying the system.

Open Day.

A large group of students from the Home Economics took part in the activities during Open day. Some students set up a power point presentation on all aspects of the subject. Others produced a delightful display of finished textile and craft work.

Those interested in food technology carried out some tests on food products while the culinary department produced some very tasty dishes throughout the day.

All in all, the Home Economics department had a very successful year.

11. SCIENCE DEPARTMENT

Department:

Curriculum

Curriculum was followed as per department outlines in each year group.

Number of student who sat the Junior Certificate in Science 2007:

139 (Higher)

56 (Ordinary)

Competitions and Events

Senior ISTA quiz – 3 teams entered in Kerry Section. One team came 2nd place and therefore represented Kerry in all Ireland in Trinity (David Ruane, Elsie Ronan and Michael Kelliher).

Kerry Junior ISTA quiz – 5 teams entered. One team came 2nd place (Daragh Kneeshaw, Sean Brophy Knott, Amy Phelan and John Prendergast).

Science Festival in Limerick – 6 groups entered. One team 2nd in Technology category (Cathal O'Donnell and Tom McCarthy). One team 1st in Senior Biology category (Finbarr Hussey and Fearghall Fitzgibbon). One team 1st place in Life Sciences category and 2nd place in overall winners (Cara Enright, Catherine Mannix and Sarah Buckley).

BT Young Scientist - Cara Enright, Catherine Mannix and Sarah Buckley short listed for Royal College of Surgeons Award.

School events

1. All Senior Biology classes were brought to Killarney National Park in May of 5th Year or September of 6th Year and carried out Mandatory Fieldwork under the supervision of an expert field biologist.
2. The Senior Chemistry class was brought to the ITT to carry out Mandatory Practical Activities under the supervision of a senior lecturer and 2 laboratory assistants.
3. The Science Dept was very busy on Open Day (Nov 9th 2007) with many of the Science Teachers as well as the current students helping out with the numerous experiments.
4. The Science Club ran as normal at lunchtime in order to improve First Year students' involvement in and love of practical work. The members (20) carried out a number of exciting experiments including exploding cannons, chemical tea, iodine snakes and making homemade lava. The club enjoyed a trip to ITT during Science Week.
5. During Science week both poster and essay competitions took place. The poster competition was won by Jordan Costelloe and Cathy Stack. The essay competition was won by Cathal O'Donnell.

12. SPANISH DEPARTMENT

Department

Joan Daly, Aoife Fitzgerald, Gillian O'Carroll.

Curriculum

- In the classroom pupils from First to Sixth year were prepared to become competent in the areas of Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing with a view to completing Junior and Leaving Cert. exams at Higher and Ordinary level.

- Department meetings were held throughout the year.

- The orals were held in April. In preparation teachers gave mock orals to the students during their free time.

- The Spanish Department prepared displays and posters for Open Day.

- Projects were completed by 4th years who researched aspects of Spanish and Hispanic life and culture. They also reviewed Spanish and Hispanic films with cultural and social themes.

- A new Senior Cycle book "*La Pluma*" was introduced to the Fifth year classes.

- First years enjoyed researching for their end of year projects on Spanish lifestyle, personalities, Royal Family, food and history.

- Second years were given the opportunity to visit Madrid and the surrounding historic towns of Toledo and Segovia. They also visited El Escorial and the Valle De Los Caidos, Franco's final resting place.

- Mock papers were ordered for Junior Cert and Leaving Cert classes and were corrected externally.

- A successful foreign exchange took place during the summer between fifth year students in Mounthawk and a school in Salamanca, Spain.

- We look forward to the extension of our Department as we welcome a Spanish Assistant in September.

13. FRENCH DEPARTMENT

Department: Sr. Joan, Kay Bunce, Nora Brosnan, Mary Reidy, Nóirín Sheldon, Anne Gallivan, Marie O'Connor,

JUNIOR AND SENIOR CYCLE

- In the classroom the curriculum was followed with a view to proficiency in the four key language skills of Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking, the latter skill being mainly geared to Senior level in preparation for Leaving Certificate.
- Mock exams were held for Third and Sixth year pupils from 31/01/08 to 7/02/08. Papers were provided and corrected by an external company.
- Oral exams took place from 14/04/08 to 18/04/08. Two examiners conducted these exams and pupils were happy in general with their own performance. In the preceding weeks, teachers voluntarily dedicated their lunch breaks to provide extra tuition to pupils and mock orals were also held.
- A visit to Siamsa Tire to see the French film, Comme un Image was enjoyed by Fifth year pupils on 26 /09/07 accompanied by teachers Noirin Sheldon and Kay Bunce.

TRANSITION YEAR

A variety of classroom activities were carried out. In addition to traditional language classes, students worked on and enjoyed other French related activities such as:

- Viewing French films and videos.
- French calendars. The beginner's French class worked on the creation of a large French calendar which provided a visual aid to class and enabled pupils to work on core beginner vocabulary such as days, months and numbers.
- Project work. A variety of projects were prepared on cultural topics such as tourism, food, sport, music, fashion, film, literature and general culture in the French speaking world. These projects formed part of their TY portfolios and were assessed at the end of the year. Some projects were displayed during French week.
- The annual TY trip to Paris took place from 3/02/08 to 7/02/08 and was a great success. The TY pupils were accompanied by eight teachers including Ms Lola Scollard who represented the French department.

FRENCH WEEK

The French department decided to hold a French promoting week in the school from 21/04/08 to 25/04/08 entitled "La Semaine de la Francophonie. The event was high impact both visually and aurally featuring a poster display on the French speaking world, a large banner in the GP area, bearing the above title, a model of the Eiffel Tower and all school signage was translated into French in addition to daily French addresses over the intercom. Activities were as follows:

- The week was launched by French native and owner of French Flair shop, Mr Patrick Wolf. Mr Wolf gave a presentation on aspects of French life to Second year pupils.
 - A traditional French breakfast was enjoyed by the 135 First years studying French.
 - The canteen was decorated in French national colours, the menu was translated into French and there was a daily special offer.
 - A French chef organised a crepe making and sampling activity for Fourth years.
 - The French Theatre for schools company gave performances for Junior and Senior classes,
 - A poster competition was organised celebrating such aspects as French food, fashion, music, sport, history and lesser known countries of the French speaking world. Prizes were vouchers for French Flair.
 - French was celebrated in all classes by activities such as listening to French CD's watching French films and decorating First year classrooms.
-
- French week was considered a great success overall as it raised awareness of and interest in diverse aspects of French life and culture.
 - It is hoped that the week might positively influence pupils to continue to study the language.

French Assistant

The news of the allocation of a French assistant for 2008-2009 was welcomed by all and it is hoped that this temporary addition to the French department will be very beneficial to all concerned.

14. GERMAN DEPARTMENT

Department Members

Aine Clarke, Breda Cronin, Stella O'Mahony, Lola Scollard, Emer Griffin

All academic years were exposed to various language skills with emphasis on those integral to the learning of a language i.e. Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking.

1st Year

The two first year German Classes (A Clarke & L Scollard) followed a common programme of work as agreed by the teachers at the end of the previous academic year i.e. up to and including the topic of hobbies. All these students sat a common exam and a common marking scheme was agreed by all teachers.

2nd Year

Second year classes (A Clarke & B Cronin) continued to work on the course material set out for the year. As these classes were of varying ability, the topics and level of grammar covered varied.

3rd Year

Both third year classes (S O'Mahony & B Cronin) completed the course work with their teachers and all the members of the Department want to wish them every success as they complete their final preparations for their Junior Certificate Examinations.

4th Year

This year there were two class groups. Class 1 consisted of students that never studied the German language – timetabled once weekly and Class 2 consisted of students that had studied up to the Junior Certificate – timetabled three times weekly.

5th Year

This year consisted of a High Level class (A Clarke) and Ordinary Level (B Cronin) that covered the course work set out for the year.

6th Year

All sixth year students – Higher Level class (A Clarke) and Ordinary Level (S O'Mahony) completed the course work with their teachers and all members of the Department want to wish them well as they complete their final preparations for their Leaving Certificate Examinations.

The German Department in conjunction with The Irish Film Institute also provided the opportunity for the Senior cycle classes to see the German film – “Stille Sehnsucht”. Over 60 students availed of this opportunity which proved to be an enjoyable and educational experience.

The school also participated in the Annual German Language Debating Competition organised by the GDI. Our team was James Sheehan, Leanne O’Connor, Victoria King & Grace O’Reilly. They debated the topic “The Summer Holidays are Too Long in Ireland” and were debating against Intermediate School, Killorglin in the first round of the competition. Despite a good showing by all our students, they were narrowly defeated. Well done to the students who represented the school in this competition and special thanks to Pauline Burke for her help in preparing our team for the competition.

15. METALWORK - ENGINEERING

Department Mr Ray Hickey, Mr. Brian Harkin. Mr Michael O’Sullivan

The ‘07/’08 school year began with the installation and commissioning of a new Harrison M300 Lathe. This takes some of the pressure off the students in preparing pieces for practical exams and projects. The purchase of a foot operated Guillotine has also proved invaluable allowing us to cut sheet materials quickly and accurately. We also had a spray booth installed with a built in extractor and extended the existing fume extraction hood. A new arc welder and MAGS welder were also acquired giving us the opportunity to weld aluminium. But, the greatest change of all is the installation of a data projector and screen, opening up lots of new possibilities for us, allowing us access to a wealth of teaching resources both on the web and through other acquired media.

In-service

There were a number of day in-service courses for teachers of practical subjects, with the continuation of the T4 CDG seminars. These were reinforced with weekly night classes in Solid works (the new CAD package introduced to schools) organised by the various subject association groups for teachers wishing to improve their skills in this area. I also attended the ETTA (Engineering Technology Teachers Association) conference in Mullingar last November. This was an excellent event where the Young Engineer competition is judged from a large selection of engineering projects representing each county, also there is a trade show, workshops, seminars and the ETTA AGM.

3rd year Metalwork

Mr. Harkin was the teacher of this year's Junior Cert Metalwork class. They had their work cut out for them with challenging but interesting projects at Ordinary and Higher Level. The ordinary level students had to build a Steam Roller and the higher level students were asked to build a Quad bike and design a steering mechanism for this. On completion of the project the students undertook a three hour practical exam in May and have yet to take the 2hr written exam in June, which is 50% of their overall result.

6th year Engineering

The structure for Leaving Cert. Engineering is similar to that of the Junior Cert. Again there is a substantial project which the student must design. This may be designed at home and built in class between the start of November to the 1st week of March. This year's higher level group were asked to design a Portable Materials Handling Device, for a building site, which could lift materials to different levels. The Ordinary Level group were asked to design a racing car. These students also had a practical exam in May which was 6hrs long and a 3hr theory test in June which counts for 50% of the marks.

Engineering Award

This is the first year there was an Engineering Award presented at the Student Awards night. The recipient of the award was a very deserving 6th yr student, Damien Barrett. Damien is a very diligent, cooperative, organised, polite and helpful student. He also designed and manufactured a fine Forklift for his Engineering Project which was completed well before the department specified deadline. I would like to wish him, and indeed all students of metalwork and Engineering, every success in future career choice.

16. PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Department: Ms. Norah Quinlan, Ms. Eileen Kennelly, Mr. Sean Coffey, Mr. Kieran Costello and Mr. Aidan O' Shea.

Curriculum

First years had a double PE class for half the year. Activities taught included dance, gymnastics, basketball and volleyball. From September 08 all first year students will have a double PE class for the full year as the school is introducing the revised physical education syllabus.

Second year students had a forty minute PE class during the year. Activities taught included tennis, rugby, gaelic football, unihoc, athletics and rounders. From September, second years will also have a double PE class per week.

Third year students had a single PE class during this past year and will continue to do so in the coming school year. Students this year were taught hockey, badminton, Olympic handball and soccer.

Transition year students always have a double period for PE. This year as well as participating in school based activities they spent a number of weeks at the leisure centre in Banna. They were also involved with the Institute of Technology sports department in orienteering activities.

Fifth and sixth year students have a single PE class per week with the emphasis being on participation and on encouraging engagement with recreational activities. Sixth years can choose to take a study option if they so wish during PE time.

Continous Professional Development

All department members will attend a two day in-service in Mayo on the introduction of the revised Junior Cycle PE syllabus in September 08.

Ms. Kennelly, Mr. Coffey and Mr. Costello attended a Junior Cycle in-service day in Tralee in February.

Mr. O' Shea attended an orienteering in-service in Killarney in May.

17. S.P.H.E.

There are fifteen teachers on the SPHE team. The coordinator is Eileen Kennelly.

Curriculum

SPHE is a compulsory subject at Junior Cycle. Students deal with a wide range of issues. These issues are addressed in ten modules, each of which appears in each year of the three year cycle.

The ten modules are: Belonging and Integrating, Self-management : A sense of purpose, Communication skills, Physical Health, Friendships, Relationships and Sexuality, Emotional Health, Influences and Decisions, Substance Use, and Personal Safety

Staff in-service

Ms. Aileen Fitzgerald, Regional Development Officer, SPHE Support Service, spent a day in the school in October. She met with school management, the coordinator and with the SPHE Team. The focus of the in-service was substance use.

Health Promotion

The School was granted the Health Promoting School Award by the HSE in April. The award was a milestone on the way to promoting healthy living among the school community.. This year our health promotion themed weeks focused on responsible socialising, an issue identified by the student council in the school as a challenge for students each and every weekend. The workshops and talks focused on the challenges of socialising responsibly in today's society. Topics covered included drinking and drug abuse, drinking and driving and the best ways to remain safe on internet social sites

18. BUSINESS DEPARTMENT

Department Members

Aisling O'Connor, Sr. Nora, Eleanor Mangan, Martina McAuliffe, Una Carey, Gillian O'Carroll, Cecelia O'Neill, Cora McElligott.

Staff in-service

The BSTAI ran a number of events during the year which members of the Business Department attended. Analysis of the Leaving Certificate Business and Accounting exams and the marking schemes was held in October and later on in the year we had an evening dedicated to the analysis of the Junior Certificate Business Studies paper and marking scheme.

We also organized an evening with Leaving Certificate Business author John O'Connor for the teachers where he concentrated on the Applied Business Questions relevant to this year's Leaving Certificates.

The branch also organised Ms. Mairead Finn to spend an evening with us discussing "Methodologies relevant to Leaving Certificate Business", which was an excellent and very informative evening.

6th Year Business Students

The Business Department organised for John O'Connor, the author of their Leaving Certificate Business textbook, to come and do a Revision Session with the 6th Years in preparation for their exam. He went through ABQs, and focused very much on exam technique, timing, style of answers and exam preparation.

6th Years also had the opportunity to attend a Revision Seminar with Mairead Finn in the IT. This was very well attended and the students found it very helpful for their revision.

Transition Year Business Related Activities

This year saw the launch of the "Young Entrepreneur", a new programme run in conjunction with the ITT. It is a non-profit organisation dedicated to illustrating the validity of entrepreneurship as a career choice. The group of students involved began the year with The Blue Sky Day, where they had the opportunity to meet and listen to many famous Irish Entrepreneurs, including Jerry Kennelly of Stockbyte, Brian and Eamon Fallon of Daft and Pdraig O'Ceidigh of Aer Arann. The students then began a course of study in entrepreneurship. They sat an external exam in January. In February then met again for the Business Boot Camp, which provided students with the opportunity to avail of the advice and mentorship of the entrepreneurs. They had a Business Plan workshop in April and Submission of Business Plans in May.

Two 4th year groups also entered the YES Mini-Company Programme run by Kerry County Enterprise Board and came first and second in Kerry. The group that came first went on to represent Kerry in the National Finals in Tullamore in May.

A group of 4th Year students were also involved in the “Build a Bank” Competition. The students had been interviewed by Colm Cooper and Bernadette Daulthon from the AIB, Tralee. They opened a school bank and ran it very successfully over the year. They took part in the regional finals where they won the award for “Best Exhibition”.

LCVP Business Activities

The two 5th year LCVP classes had a very busy year with their Enterprise Module. Both groups made a visit out to Lee Strand Co-operative to see the working of a production plant. They also had local entrepreneur, Alison Boardmand from Unique Voice in as a guest speaker to discuss entrepreneurship in a Questions and Answers style session. The class went on to organise their own enterprising activities. One class held a Table Quiz in aid of Kerry Hospice and the other class organised a Colours Day in aid of Cystic Fibrosis.

LCA Enterprise Task

Two companies were registered and set up by the students in LCA (Leaving Certificate Applied) as part of their course. Each company consisted of 8 students and each student had a particular role to play in the company. This allowed them to learn how to set up and register a company, become familiar with what each job entailed and to see how enterprises are run. One group set up a company called Magnets Limited, this company made and sold personalized magnets for Mother’s Day, while the other company was called Candles Limited and they made and sold luxury candles and cards for Mother’s Day.

Both companies made a profit and the students learned a lot about enterprise and their own personal strengths. The students also felt that it gave them a huge amount of knowledge on how to set up their own businesses in the future.

19. ART

Curriculum

FIRST YEAR

First year is an introductory year where students are introduced to the basic elements of art craft and design. They generally have a double and a single class of art. Students covered drawing, painting, graphic design, craftwork, and printing and support studies.

SECOND YEAR

Building on skills and knowledge gained in the first year, pupils are encouraged to improve and experiment with techniques and materials. Pupils are introduced to the Junior Cert course and to the concepts of support studies and preparatory work. Pupils generally have a double and two single classes. Second year students covered drawing, painting, 3D work, craftwork, graphic design and support studies.

THIRD YEAR

Students are prepared for the Junior Cert Exams. This involves a project, which starts in October and ends in May. There is also a drawing test in May. The project is theme based and consists of preparatory drawings, painting, graphic design, 3D work and a craft, accompanied by relevant support studies. This project makes up 75% of the students grade, the other 25% goes to the drawing test. Third year projects will be on display around the school and in the art rooms for the Open Day in November.

Many wonderful projects were produced this year.

FOURTH YEAR

Since art is an optional subject some pupils in fourth year may be taking art for the first time. Therefore lessons are kept simple and interesting but flexible enough to allow the more experienced pupils to excel. This year students covered object drawing and life sketching.

L.C.A.

- In the first term we covered the following module-“Jewellery”
- In the second term we covered the following module-“Photography”
- Throughout the year we studied past exam papers for the end of year written exam.
- In the third term we completed the following craft-“Lino”. This also included a detailed written report.

FIFTH YEAR

The history of art is introduced as a major part of the syllabus. The history of art makes up 38% of the final leaving cert result. Students also covered drawing 12%, still life 25% and design or craftwork 25%. The percentages represent the proportion of marks allotted to these areas in the leaving cert exams.

COMPETITIONS 07/08

1. Credit Union Poster Competition. 1st in Ireland-Áine Daly 1st year.
2. Credit Union Photography Competition. 12 photographs were chosen for a calendar. Susan Browne 6th year-one of the 12 people's photos picked

Some students entered the Texaco Art Competition.

3. Community Games Art Competition.
Senior Section-1st in Ireland-Boys section: Colin Horgan 4th Year

Junior Section-1st in Ireland Girls section: Sarah Prendergast 2nd Year
5. Pioneer Art Competition. Senior Section-1st in Ireland-Dora Bogdanovic-2nd Year
Junior Section-1st in Ireland-Áine Daly-1st Year

2nd in Ireland-Risalyat Khusalnova-2nd Year

3rd in Ireland-Claire Goddall-2nd year
6. Tyre Stop Competition-1st in Munster-Sarah Prendergast-2nd Year

20. MUSIC

Department.

Ms. Mary Crowley, Ms. Sharon Glancy.

Curriculum.

1st Year students followed the Department of Education and Science Junior Certificate Music syllabus, with emphasis on the four core activities of Performance, Composition, Aural Skills Development and Music Analysis. All 1st Year music students travelled to Cork city and enjoyed a lunchtime performance given by the Cork Pops Orchestra. This incorporated many aspects of their classroom learning. Many 1st Year students were involved in the Irish music performances in the school during Seachtain na Gaeilge.

2nd and 3rd Year students followed the Department of Education and Science Junior Certificate Music syllabus within the classroom, with emphasis on the four core activities of Performance, Composition, Aural Skills Development and Music Analysis.

All 4th Year students completed an eight week module in Music entitled “Choral Music in my Community”. Students got the opportunity to explore choral music activities and resources in Tralee and its environs. Apart from classroom activities, students undertook activities such as

- Interviews
- Attending musical events
- Researching local choral music groups/associations in which they may have had an interest.

All 5th Year and 6th Year students followed the Department of Education and Science Leaving Certificate Music Syllabus, with particular emphasis on the core activity of performance.

Leaving Certificate Applied, Year 2 students, were offered a module in Arts Music. They also attended a recital in Cork by the Cork Pops Orchestra.

Extra-Curricular Activities.

A number of music activities were open to all students during the year.

The School Choir and Orchestra took part in a number of events including

- Mercy Day Mass in September
- 1st Year Parents’ Evening in October.
- Open Day for incoming students in November.
- Annual Carol Service in St. Brendan’s Church in December.
- School Musical, “South Pacific” in January 2008.
- 6th Year Graduation Mass in May.

Other extra-curricular music activities included:

- Successful participation in the National Jam Competitions and broadcast of same on Network 2 in October.
- Workshops for senior students in composition. Completed compositions were recorded by the National Chamber Choir of Ireland in Dublin.

21. LEAVING CERTIFICATE APPLIED

Teaching Team:

Sr. Bernadette Costelloe, Sr. Nora Flynn, Michelle Mangan, Aoife Ryan, Sinead Thornton, Cora McElligott, Suzanne O'Halloran, Ray Hickey, Linda Kane, Ena Harty, Nora Quinlan, Ann O'Shea Daly, Mairead O'Mahony, Margaret Bowler, Tadgh O'Sullivan, Stephen Colgan, Brian Harkin, Kieran Costello, Seán Geary.

Positive Aspects of the Year

1. Sixteen students completed year 2 of the Leaving Certificate Applied programme.
2. Sixteen students completed year 1 of the Leaving Certificate Applied programme.
3. In order to encourage good behaviour and a more congenial learning environment among year 2 students, the year head and the LCA coordinator in consultation with the students devised a set of class rules, which was signed by the student and parents. This proved successful and improved behaviour in the classroom.
4. A Leaving Certificate Applied Core Team was established. The members of the core team are: Sr. Nora Flynn, Ms. Michelle Mangan and Ms. Ena Harty.

Activities Undertaken

1. Year 1 students attended a Fáilte Ireland exhibition in The Castle Hotel, Macroom. The students found this a valuable and worthwhile event.
2. As part of the Vocational Preparation & Guidance module, Year 2 students had the opportunity to avail of the following:
 - ITT Open Day* – This type of experience is an incentive for students to pursue a PLC and progress to third level
 - Careers Fair, Brandon Hotel* – Stands and speakers with information for Leaving Certificate Applied students was available.
 - FAS* – students visited the local centre and received information on apprenticeships
 - Mock Interviews* – this was optional but available to those who were interested.
3. Eight LCA 1 students successfully completed the FAS Safe Pass course.
4. Year 2 students organised a fun teacher v student fundraising basketball match in aid of St. Vincent de Paul, which raised approximately €300

5. Year 2 students as part of the Vocational Preparation & Guidance module visited Tralee Community Development Project, Rock Street. Also a local representative from SIPTU gave a talk to the students.
6. In Social Education, Year 2 students completed the Contemporary Issues task. A guest speaker from Allied Irish Bank gave a talk to the class regarding banking and finance as part of the Taking Charge module of the Social Education course. They also completed the necessary form to register to vote.
7. In ICT, Year 2 students completed task in January. They produced websites on various topics such as computer storage, career directions for LCA students, local area, fitness, etc.
8. For the practical coursework element of the Craft & Design course, Year 2 students designed and printed a lino print.
9. For the practical achievement task Year 2 students took the driver theory test or attended out of school activities such as First Aid Course, Beauty course, dressmaking course, etc.
10. Year 2 students completed practical examinations in Engineering and ICT. They also completed oral examinations in Irish, English and Spanish.
11. As part of the Leisure and Recreation module the year 2 students went to Banna Leisure Centre once a week for four weeks. They took part in swimming, soccer, astro turf, used the fitness equipment and overall found it to be a very enjoyable experience.
12. Year 2 students participated in a mock Leaving Certificate Applied oral interview in English & Communication, which was video recorded by Department of Education & Science technicians. The video will be used for training purposes by the Department of Education & Science.
13. Year 1 students completed tasks in Drama in January which involved students coming up with their own ideas for a movie/play. They wrote their own script, drew storyboards, acting it out and video recorded and edited it. They also took part in theatre games which helped them improve their communication and acting skills. This also improved their self-confidence and their ability to express themselves through movement.
14. As part of the Engineering module year 1 students completed tasks which involved producing various pieces including CD Rack, bird feeding table, model cannon, window boxes, decorative book shelves etc. for their task which was examined in May. Many of the students integrated their task with Graphics and Construction Studies.
15. As part of the Vocational Preparation & Guidance Enterprise task, the year 1 students formed two mini companies. One group designed and produced cards and candles. The other group produced and sold key rings, magnets and certificates. Both groups based their enterprise task on the Mother's Day theme. The task went well, the enterprises made a profit and overall it was a worthwhile learning experience for the students.
16. In English & Communication Year 1 students integrated with the enterprise module in Vocational Preparation & Guidance. The students went on a visit to Dell Computers, Limerick where they were given a talk, a multimedia presentation and a guided tour of the premises.
17. As part of the Hotel, Catering & Tourism course, the year 1 students chose International/Ethnic cookery as a theme for their task. Each student investigated the culture of a country and cooked two dishes from that country.
18. As part of the Consumer Science module a proprietor of a beauty salon visited the students in class. Prior to the visit the students prepared questions to ask her. The students enjoyed it and spoke enthusiastically about the visit.

Conclusion

We are proud to have sixteen of our students complete the two-year programme. The programme has been worthwhile and of immense benefit to these students. We wish our Year 2 students well in their final examinations. We look forward to working with our present Year 1 students and the incoming Leaving Certificate Applied students in September 2008.

22. TRANSITION YEAR

Core Team 2007/8

Sean Coffey, Elizabeth Farrell, Noel Raymond, Eileen Kennelly, Pauline Burke, Ronan Redican, Shane Kissane, Cora McElligott, Sherma Carey, Gillian O'Carroll, Aoife Fitzgerald, Aisling O'Connor

Introduction

In 2007/8 94 students were offered places in Transition Year. As in previous years applications for participation were set against the Criteria. In a number of cases a student interview was deemed necessary prior to the offer of a place.

The TY programme continues to benefit from whole staff support for its ideals and practical realization and while 60 staff taught timetabled lessons many more supported the co-curriculum in the programme. Twelve teachers volunteered their time as Core Team teachers. The Core Team ensure proper planning and execution of activities such as the Portfolio Assessment, the Parent-Teacher-Student meetings and the End of Year Show.

As always management commitment allowed flexible timetabling, access to appropriate structural resources and teacher availability to run the programmes' co-curricular elements. During 2007/8 the programme benefited hugely from a timetabled weekly meeting involving the Coordinator, Assistant Year Head and a member of the Core Team which focused on key matters such as attendance and specific commitment and engagement issues.

Curriculum

The breadth of curriculum continues to be a strength in the programme. This year we continued with an element of pre-selection in subject areas which students were not in a position to select at senior cycle. This year we introduced two new timetable elements. By blocking the Young Innovator Project with an Entrepreneurship programme (being piloted in Kerry schools) a Transition Unit on the Millennium Goals (which was written by KADE and tied in to our Kenya Project) and a Media programme we were able to offer students the opportunity to be involved in an area of interest without detracting from the integrity of the school year. This was a particular success. Similarly we created a triple taster afternoon which allowed the students the chance to sample African Drumming, Dance, Sign Language, Organic Gardening and in collaboration with the K.D.Y.S. a Personal Development programme.

Co-curriculum

Likewise the breadth of the co-curriculum was seen as a strength in the programme. Great staff commitment to these extras continues to be the core of their successful implementation. This year our involvement with a variety of Special Needs groups was identified as particularly

successful. In particular engagement with the ITT in providing the Halliwick water confidence programme for young people with Autism was worthwhile. Also the collaboration with Breannain Services in the Easter Parade and with Tralee Stars in providing coaches for the Special Olympics group in Tralee and the work with the Stop and Stare Drama Group allowed our students' great opportunity for personal growth

The timetabling of the co-curricular elements was slightly modified in 2007/08 with a focus on planning Activity Weeks. While this was initially successful it was ultimately overwhelmed by the volume of activity in the programme. Once more in 2008/9 we will seek to rebalance this area. Also at a timetabling level, involvement with the NCCA in the piloting and development of Transition Units allowed certain co-curricular activities become part of the mainstream curriculum.

In relation to the development of the Portfolio Assessment it was felt that every endeavour should be made to clarify its process and product for all incoming students and their parents at the earliest opportunity. Toward that end we instigated a Parent/Student Portfolio Night held on the first evening of the new term, where the 2007 class displayed their work for the incoming class and their parents. While this was a success and should be repeated in 2008/9 it should not be held on the evening of the first day of a new school year!

The format of the Parent Teacher meeting has also been examined in relation to its effectiveness for Transition Year which sees the student involved in 28 subject areas. In March 2008 we piloted a Student-Parent-Teacher Progress Review linked to the students' Portfolio Work and a feedback sheet circulated to each teacher. Rather than meeting with all his/her teachers, the parent and student met with a member of the Core Team and examined the overall engagement with the programme. This proved hugely worthwhile. It engaged the parents as partners in the process and put the student at the center of the discussion. Many frank interchanges led to real learning for all involved. We intend to use this system next year but immediately after Christmas. Also each of the ten Core Team members has chosen to mentor ten students. In order to place a structure on the volunteering each student must sign up each extra-curricular activity with their mentor. This will assist in developing a picture of engagement levels for each student.

Conclusion

In overview the 2007/8 Programme was most successful. Portfolio Assessment continued to develop, the cohesion of a Core Team system also continued. New co-curricular and timetabling initiatives added much opportunity for both staff and student alike. Finally an excellent Review meeting set the scene for further development in the coming Academic Year.

23. LEAVING CERTIFICATE VOCATIONAL PROGRAMME

Department

In Mercy Mounthawk the LCVP team includes Mr. Fell, Ms. Carey, Ms. O'Connor Ms. McAuliffe, Sr. Bernadette Costello and Ms. Farrell.

Both the fifth and sixth year classes took part in visits out to a local business, Lee Strand Creamery and invited local entrepreneur, Alison Boardman of "Unique Voice Translation and Language Service" to address the classed. Alison set up this company to meet the needs of a growing multi-cultural community and corporate market. This was a great opportunity to research and investigate a local enterprise on our own doorstep.

Enterprise Activities carried out by the students include a First Year Table Quiz, which proves very popular among all the contestants-all proceeds were donated to Kerry Hospice. The fifth years also ran a very successful "Colours Day" and gave all the proceeds to Kerry Hospice.

All of the 6th year L.C.V.P. class did very well in their recent exams and many are using their extra points attained from L.C.V.P. to secure their third level place.14,086 students sat the L.C.V.P exam in 2007. 11,448 (81%) used it as their sixth subject when applying to the C.A.O.