

**REPORT
TO THE PARENT
BODY**
**on the school year
2008- 2009**

Mercy Secondary School Mounthawk

Report to the Parent Body
on Teaching and Learning in Mercy Mounthawk
for the academic year 2008-2009

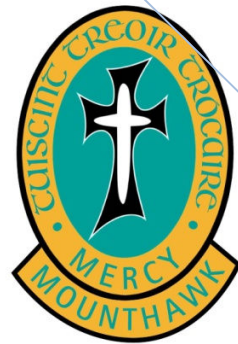


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INTRODUCTION

This report is issued to parents of the school on a yearly basis with the intention of keeping our parents informed of developments and progress in the school during the past year.

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 document 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.

SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

Mr. John O’Roarke

This is the 3rd year of the 3 year plan under the current Board of Management which took office in October 2006. This plan will terminate in October ‘09 with the change in Board of Management on October 15th. The incoming Board of Management will initiate a new 3 year plan prioritising issues for the development of the school and the educational opportunities we offer here up to 2012.

As you are aware from previous issues of this report, the school 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. This report will seek to summarise the review of the current school plan with particular emphasis on the developments in the past year.

(i) Staff and Resources

1.a Plant and Resources

1.a.i extension

The Board has continued to contact the building unit of the Department of Education in relation to the extension. It has been indicated that we will receive a technical visit by department inspectors to report on the needs of the school. In the meantime, the Board is exploring the possibility of extending the canteen facilities in the school.

1.a.ii ICT

We continue to extend the use of the ‘e-portal’ system with teachers using the system to input results for the Summer house exams. The full use of the system which would allow access by parents to the results and timetables of their own children in the school has been delayed due to problems with broadband. We hope to address this issue with the introduction of Broadband 100 (see below).

In relation to ICT development, the school applied for the Broadband 100 initiative by the government and was successful in this application during the summer. We await developments in the tendering process over the coming year and look forward to being able to sort out a number of issues in the school in relation to computer access, e-portal use and the use of Moodle.

Moodle is an online virtual learning environment which will allow teachers and students to interact on-line with teachers posting exercises and students submitting work on-line. It will also allow for teachers

to post class notes on-line thus cutting down on photocopying costs. Moodle can be accessed through the school web site www.mercymounthawk.ie

The school web-site continues to evolve. You will notice a Parents page with the school newsletters and reports available on-line. We will also be posting up school policies in full on the site in the coming year.

1.a.ii stock

The school has put in place a new computerised stocktaking process to track and monitor resources in the school. The new system will be fully operational in the 09/10 year.

1.b Staff

Joining the staff in 2008/9 were John Dowling and Andrew Fitzpatrick. Mr. Jim Fitzgibbon retired at the end of '08. Mary Daly and Con Moynihan have taken up positions in other schools. Rose McCarthy, Mary O'Connell, Assumpta Power and Marie O'Connor retired during '09.

The school participated in a Department of Education project in mentoring new teachers. 2 new teachers in the school were matched with two existing teachers in their subject area and all four participated in the project. It is hoped to use the learning from this project to further develop the system for mentoring new teachers in the school.

The news of the increase in pupil teacher ratio to 19:1 from 18:1 was a major blow and has had a significant impact on the staffing schedule in the school for the 09/10 academic year. We had to curtail the provision of Spanish for incoming 1st year students and the provision of Applied Maths and Religion as an exam subject in 5th year.

(ii) Pastoral care and Guidance

ii.a Pastoral Care

The Volunteer Community Mentoring programme continued last year under the auspices of the Home School Community Liaison scheme, KDYS and Partnership Trá Lí. Thanks to those volunteer mentors who gave of their time to students over the year. Despite losing our DAS status, it is hoped that a number of volunteer mentors will continue to work with students in the school in '09/10.

ii.b Behaviour Code

The review of the Behaviour code was begun in 08/09 in accordance with the directive from the NEWB (National Education Welfare Board, which has responsibility for overseeing attendance in schools). The school code was audited and reviewed in consultation with the Parents' Council and the Students' Council and work began on a draft of the new code taking into account the provisions of the NEWB guidelines which will be completed in 09/10.

ii.b Guidance

The Guidance policy review was completed last year and the policy was ratified by the Board of Management.

(iii) Community

iii.a Enrolment policy

Due to significant changes in the pattern of enrolment in the Primary Schools in Tralee and the recent trend toward coeducation in several of the schools, there has been a very significant change in the pattern of registration for enrolment for Mercy Mounthawk, with many more people looking for places than are available. This has led to the need for the Board of Management to review the enrolment policy, a process which took place throughout the 08/09 school year. The new enrolment policy for the intake of September 2011 will be available in the 09/10 school year once ratified by the Trustees and the Board of Management.

iii.b Students' Council

The Students' Council undertook a number of initiatives during the past year. They inaugurated a First Year Fair Night where in conjunction with the 1st year parents' night when over 20 clubs and societies set up stands so that new 1st year students could join the various clubs.

The Council ran a talent competition the 'M Factor' which raised over €1000 for the Nova's Homeless Charity.

They also organised and ran a science quiz for 1st years for Science Week and a time capsule including memories and photos of 1st year students which will be returned to them in 6th year.

iii.c Home School Community Liaison

Last year we received news that that Home School Community Liaison scheme was to be lost to the school with the loss of our HSCL coordinator, Con Moynihan. Following this news and the failure of a letter writing campaign to reverse the DES decision, a group of parents came together to take on a number of the elements of the service previously run by the co-ordinator. The group hopes to continue running the Maths for Fun programme, Paired Reading, the Breakfast Club and our Parenting Courses. This generosity of time and personal commitment is a great contribution to sustaining the quality of education and service in the school.

iii.d Yellow Flag Project

In 08/09 the school participated in the 'Yellow Flag Project' in conjunction with the Department of Education. The project focused on the integration of students from differing ethnic backgrounds into the school and involved a range of students in the school in a variety of events throughout the year. The school hopes to embed a number of the activities as part of the usual programme of the year, from 09/10 forward, in order to sustain the good practices that the project explored.

iii.e Budget Cuts.

The year was dominated by the news of the budget cuts and in planning to try to respond to a very changed budgetary reality.

GRANTS: The loss of the grant for Ty and for LCA is a major hit on those very parts of the curriculum which enrich the choice and education of those students who opt for these courses. The loss of such grants is a retrograde step in education. In response, the burden will again fall on parents to supplement the cost of these programmes. The loss of the book grant is unforgivable and again school management and the parents' council set up a book donation scheme to ask for books so that those students who needed them could be assisted.

DONATION SCHEME. In response to the cuts in the budget, the school launched a voluntary donation scheme of over €250 on which there is tax relief as the school is a charity. The scheme will run in 09/10.

(iv) Curriculum / Teaching and Learning

iv.a Teaching Methodology

In terms of in-service, the focus for the year was on Assessment for Learning. Full staff in-service was provided during the year on the topic by the SLSS (Second Level Support Service). A group of 14 teachers met on a regular basis throughout the year as part of a pilot project to explore the use of the methodology in their classes. Evaluation of the experience at the year-end was very positive and a report on the project was submitted to the SLSS. The project will continue into 09/10.

iv.b Curriculum Provision and Timetabling

In 07/08 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. Following the success of this initiative this class continued into 3rd year and another group began in second year in 08/09.

Following the timetable review in 07/08 a double period for PE was introduced into 1st year in 08/09 in response to DES circulars and we will continue next year (09/10) to introduce the double period into 2nd year.

ii.b Literacy and Numeracy

The Special Needs Department trained in the use of the new testing pack from the Department on language acquisition for New Comer Students. We have adopted the testing materials for use in the school and will be moving to design programmes to match the ability levels of the students in the 09/10 academic year.

(v) Ethos

v.a Religion Department

The main development during the year was preparatory work on a new in-house course for teachers on faith development. School management worked with the faith development officer in CEIST (our Trustee body) in developing the course which will be delivered during the 09/10 school year.

v.b Health Promotion

The Health Promotion Committee ran two themed weeks during 2008/9 as part of the programme to promote healthier lifestyles in the school.

v.c Social Justice

As in previous years there were several collections and fundraising events for local and international charities with over €30,000 being collected in the school during the year.

As part of the twinning project with Brother Beausang School in Nairobi, 6 more students and 2 teachers travelled to Kenya in summer '09 for the immersion part of the project. These students will speak to the classes in the school on their experiences there and help promote a sense of the responsibility we have in helping their fellow students in another part of the world who do not have the facilities and services they we enjoy here.

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENTS '08-09

Sean Coffey

Introduction

The ongoing commitment to professional development amongst the staff continued apace in this academic year. The initiatives outlined below are programmes, recognised by members of staff as worthwhile for both our students and ourselves as teachers. The Learning Schools Project, now in its third year, continues to offer both a stimulus to and a methodology for, the development of school-based initiatives in curriculum. The number and variety of the developments, targeted at developing all as members of a learning community serve to remind us once more of the capacity for growth which continues to be a hallmark of our school.

As the sixth years prepared for their Leaving Certificate, staff emphasised the importance of “smart study” A significant number of students in sixth year again availed of the three hour study in school, the Year Head for sixth years held regular Study Network gatherings at lunch time, the various academic departments organised extra tuition for students at lunch and after school which were well attended.

Gifted and Talented.

Now completing its second full year, this programme, which began as a staff initiative, built upon by a management accessed in-service focuses on differentiating the learning experience allowing students in the same classroom to experience their learning at their own pace. This year the staff working group, supported by the S.E.S.S. developed and shared materials to support this procedure. These materials were then shared and developed by staff for use in First and Second Year classes

In 2009/10 a number of staff intend to pilot a system where a selection of students will have individual teacher guidance to support the fulfillment of latent academic ability. This academic mentoring programme will target a number of students in the Junior Cycle with the aim of improving academic performance towards a correlation with previously achieved attainment.

Assessment for Learning.

This year, following a whole-staff in-service delivered by S.L.S.S. a working group of fifteen teachers began to explore piloting this internationally recognised pedagogical approach. Centred on the democratisation of learning, the AFL principles include student feedback systems, higher order questioning, peer and self assessment, comment-only marking, and shared learning intentions. Operating from monthly "shared experience" meetings, a cross section of classes, levels and year groups were introduced to the approach. Reported feedback has been extremely positive and grade increases, greater student engagement and clear feedback on pace and methodologies were identified through evaluation. Clearly of value in our school is the manner in which this process encourages student self responsibility for their own learning, the sharing of the learning intention in particular assists students to focus on the "why?" of each activity in a lesson. Furthermore we are now beginning to explore the links evident between this programme and the gifted and talented programme which continues to evolve in the school. In 2009/10 we plan to continue this process and endeavour to mainstream its use through the subject departments.

Compacting the Curriculum

Several members of the History and Geography Department of the school, under the leadership of Ms. Martha Brassil have worked on producing a compacted workbook to assist Junior Certificate students in learning the key elements of their exam programme. In 2009/10 this workbook approach is to be further streamlined with the support of the S.L.S.S.

In 2009/10 a number of staff intend to pilot a system where a selection of students will have individual teacher guidance to support the fulfillment of latent academic ability.

Newly Qualified Teachers Pilot Project

Two newly qualified teachers were offered the opportunity to become involved in a programme being piloted by University College Dublin. The project involved mentor support for these new teachers by experienced members of the Science and Maths Department in Mercy Mounthawk. Their experience was probed and assimilated and used to allay the concerns of the new teachers. The mentor role also involved training for the mentor teachers and allowed these teachers gain insight into more recently developed methodologies through the focused interaction with the NQT's.

Learning Styles Project 2009/10

In conjunction with I.T.T. and L.I.T, the Shannon Consortium have linked with Mercy Mounthawk and Castletroy College to assist the learning process in our senior classes.

Targeting fifth year students, this pilot project will, through an online questionnaire, identify how best each individual student learns. This information will be shared with the students and with each of their teachers. In an age where multiple intelligence is now a given of educational theory, it remains a

disappointing anomaly that many of our academic subjects and their consequent assessment methodologies continue to focus on the skills of memorisation and fact-recall. Nevertheless opportunities such as this learning styles pilot project offer students and teachers the opportunity to broaden how we teach and learn in the classroom. Staff in-service on how best to structure lessons, in the light of particular information, will also be made available.

ROINN NA GAEILGE '08 –09

Múinteoirí Gaeilge:

Nora Brosnan, Kieran Costello, Breda Cronin, Mary Crowley, Eileen Kennelly, Mairead McAuliffe, Rose McCarthy, Caitlín Ní Dhúbhda, Eibhlín Ní Shúilleabháin, Bernie O’Herlihy, Emily O’Keeffe, Assumpta Power, Mary Reidy, Eileen Revington, Lola Scollard, Sr. Siobhán Ní Churtáin, David Horan (ionadaí do Rose McCarthy)

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 agus ar úsáid na teanga mar phríomh mheán chumarsáide is teagaisc i ngach rang Gaeilge chomh mór is ab’fhéidir é sin a dhéanamh.

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. Eagraíodh Réamh Bhéaltrialacha do lucht na hArdteiste mar ullmhú do na Béaltrialacha Oifigiúla, a bhí ar siúl 23 – 27 Márta.

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

Seachtain na Gaeilge.

- Sheol Caitlín Ní Dhubhda Seachtain na Gaeilge sa Scoil ar an 9ú Márta nuair a labhair sí ar an Idirchum le daltaí uile na scoile, á spreagadh chun Gaeilge a labhairt i rith na seachtaine.
- Eagraíodh Tráth na gCeist do dhaltaí na céad bliana. Bronnadh trófaíthe ar na buaiteoirí agus na leas buaiteoirí. Bhain an chéad bhliain taitneamh as Tóraíocht Taisce chomh maith le seisiún amhránaíochta sa Rang bunaithe ar Dhlúthdhiosca John Spillane ‘Songs we learned at School’.
- Ghlac daltaí céad, dara is cúigiú bliana páirt i gComórtas Ealaíne bunaithe ar Sheanfhocail. Cuireadh na hiarratais ar teaspáint ar Sheastán Seachtain na Gaeilge sa Scoil agus ansan go dtí Comórtas Náisiúnta Seachtain na Gaeilge.

- Bhain daltaí dara bliana sult freisin as Ceardlann Rince a cuireadh ar siúl dóibh i Halla na Scoile.
- D'fháiltigh an 3ú bliain roimh an scríbhneoir Ré Ó Laighléis, a thug caint dóibh ar a shaothar úrscéalaíochta is gearrscéalaíochta.
- Bhain daltaí 4ú agus 5ú bliana an-sásamh as dreas cainte leis an bpeileadóir agus múinteoir Gaeilge Pól Ó Gealbháin. Cúrsaí spóirt is Gaeilge a bhí faoi chaibidil.
- Chuaigh lucht na hIdirbhliana ar thuras go Gaeltacht Chorca Dhuibhne. Bhain siad taitneamh agus tairbhe as cuairt ar Ionad an Bhlascaoid , Séipéilín Gallarais, Cill Maolcéadair agus ar shéadchomharthaí eile an cheantair.

Gradam Gaeilge

Bronnadh Gradam Gaeilge '09 ar Chríostóir Ó Loingsigh, dalta Ardteiste, buaiteoir i gComórtas Aiste Ghaeilge i measc lucht na hArdteistiméireachta.

Díospóireacht Ghael linn

Ghlac Crístín Ní Mhaoláin, Eve Ní Chonchúir agus Cassie Nic Eileagóid, daltaí 3ú bliana páirt i gComórtas Díospóireachta an Phiarsaigh. Bhuardar an dá bhabhta tosaigh agus shroiseadar an Chraobh Réigiúnach.

Scoláireachtaí Gaeltachta

- Bronnadh ocht leath scoláireacht, luach €435 an ceann, ar dhaltaí sa chéad, dara agus cúigiú bliain. Thug Coláistí Chorca Dhuibhne Teo. iad seo dúinn de bharr an líon daltaí ón Scoil a fhreastail ar Chúrsaí Gaeilge leo i Samhradh 2008.
- Chuir Coláistí Chorca Dhuibhne Teo. oíche eolais ar bun sa scoil i Mí Márta do thuismitheoirí a raibh spéis acu sna Coláistí Samhraidh.
- Bronnadh dhá scoláireacht, luach €870 an ceann ar dhaltaí cúigiú bliana. Fuaireamar iad seo ón gClár Access, Coláiste na hOllscoile, Corcaigh agus Coiste na dTuismitheoirí.

Club Gaeilge

Leanadh leis an gClub Gaeilge, leathuair a chloig ag am lóin uair sa tseachtain don 5ú agus 6ú bliain. Lucht na 6ú bliana is mó a d'fhreastail air agus bhaineadar tairbhe as.

Inseirbhís

D'fhreastail dhá dhuine dhéag de mhúinteoirí na Roinne seo ar lá Inseirbhíse 'Múineadh na Gaeilge', a reachtáil An tSeirbhís Tacaíochta Dara Leibhéal ar laethanta éagsúla i rith na bliana.

Comhar na Múinteoirí Gaeilge

D'fhreastail Caitlín Ní Dhubhda agus Sr. Siobhán ar Chruinniú a d'eagraigh Comhar na Múinteoirí chun eolas a roinnt ar Mhúinteoirí faoi cheartú Páipéirí Gaeilge Ardteiste 2008.

MEÁNSCOIL NA TRÓCAIRE, CNOC AN tSEABHAIC

ACTION PLAN ON :Gaeilge 2009 - 2010

Cur le hObair na Bliana seo caite - Labhairt agus Úsáid na Teanga a leathnú sa Scoil

<u>PLANNED ACTION</u>	<u>BY WHOM</u>	<u>TARGET DATE</u>
Club Gaeilge – leath uair a chloig gach seachtain ag am lóin don 5ú agus 6ú bliain .	Brid Ní Chróinín, Nóra Uí Bhrosnacháin, Ciarán Ó Coistealbha, Máire Ní Riada, Eibhlín Ní Chionnfhaola, Eibhlín Ní Shúilleabháin, Lola Scollard, Caitlín Ní Dhubhda, Sr. Siobhán.	An Scoil Bhliain
Breis úsáide a bhaint as an gClár Fógraí Gaeilge- Fógraí faoi imeachtaí scoile. Seanfhocal na Seachtaine a chur air .	Grúpa ón Idirbhliain i bhfeighil É a mhúineadh do gach Rang an tseachtain sin.	An Scoil Bhliain
Úsáid a bhaint as prionsabail AFL- Assessment for Learning mar straitéis. Fógraí as Gaeilge ar an Idirchum a spreagadh .	Eibhlín Ní Chionnfhaola agus múinteoirí toilteanacha eile Bainistíocht na Scoile Múinteoirí toilteanacha.	An Scoil Bhliain An Scoilbhliain, go háirithe Seachtain na Gaeilge

An Fáinne a Bhronnadh.	Gheobhaidh Sr. Siobhán eolas faoi.	Seachtain na Gaeilge
Bia chlár as Gaeilge a chur sa Bhialann .	An Idirbhliain.	Seachtain na Gaeilge

ENGLISH DEPT REPORT '08-09

Ms. Eileen Revington

Members of Department

Eileen Revington, Anne Gallivan, Linda Kane, Ronan Redican, Elaine Costello, Michelle Mangan, Noirin Sheldon, Pauline Burke, Kay Bunce, Frank Fell, Noirin O'Connor, Mary McGillycuddy, Marie O'Connor, Mairead O'Mahony, Mary Daly, Sinead Thornton, Martha Brassil, Cora McElligot, Sherma Carey, Nora Quane

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

The English Department became an early victim of the budget cuts. A planned outing to see a performance of King Lear in Cork had to be cancelled, to the intense disappointment of parents, teachers and students.

Drama Performance

Ms. Mairead O'Mahony of the English Department directed a highly successful student production of *The Field* which ran for three nights in Siamsa Tire. Students from 2nd, 4th and 5th year took part.

Ms. O'Mahony's 4th year group produced some scenes from *Philadelphia, Here I Come* at the end of year show.

Creative Writing

For the fifth 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 and 5th years. Entries were of a very high standard. Prize giving took place in the school library on Friday 24th April. The prize winning entries were published in the annual yearbook.

Creative Writing Group

The creative writing group continued to meet at lunchtime under the guidance of Ms. Pauline Burke. The group was expanded to include several new members from 4th and 5th years. Many of the students involved with the group submitted articles to the school yearbook. Local poets have attended some of the meetings along with Noel King, a representative of Doghouse Publishers.

Debating News

Mr. Redican's Concern debating team of Conor Cleary, Patrick Fitzgerald, John O'Donnell, Rosie O'Dowd and Sarah Guerin worked tirelessly and represented the school with great distinction.

School Magazines

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.

MATHS DEPARTMENT REPORT '08-09

Mr. Pat Lyne

Department Members:

Patrick Lyne, M. Bowler, S. Glancy, M. Reidy A. Clarke, M. Daly, M. Enright, B. Farrell, S. Kissane, M. Leen J. Lynch, M. McAuliffe, A. Mc Ellistrim, S. Mc Carthy, E. Mangan, M. O' Connell, T. O' Hanlon, B. O' Sullivan, N. Raymond, M. Reidy, P. Stack, S Hegarty, A Fitzpatrick J. Dowling

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 15 students participating over the academic year. The programme was run with small groups of 3 to 5 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 honours and ordinary level classes.

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 of ordinary level maths teachers expressed concern about a number of students that were in danger of failing. Mr Coffey, Mr O’Roarke and Mr Lyne held meetings subsequently with these students to highlight the significance of their poor performance and to outline to them the consequences of failing 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 Wednesdays and Fridays with Mr Dowling. Also after school classes were organised on Tuesdays and Wednesdays with Mr Fitzpatrick and Mr Culloty.

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.

All members of the Department want to wish the Leaving Certificate students well as they complete their final preparations for their examination.

Maths Week 2008

Maths Week Ireland ran from 11th - 18th October 2008. 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 were eight rounds of questions for teams of three students. Fifth year students **Michael McCarthy, Sean Brophy** and **Diarmuid Reen** of Mounthawk claimed first prize. This is the schools third year in a row winning this competition. Well done to all students and staff involved!

I.M.T.A. Higher level Leaving Certificate Quiz

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.

I.M.T.A. First year maths Quiz

A total of 60 first year students took part in this quiz. It was the first year of the event and there were lots of very high scores. **Michael Grimes** and **Donal Mullins** were selected to represent the school in the Munster round of the competition and both did very well.

In-Service

Name	Date	Topic
Sheila McCarthy	February	Junior Cert Higher level Geometry

Areas to be addressed

- * 1st year- It is important that the marking scheme be applied rigidly to the summer exam.
- * 2nd year -Students that wish to do honours be assigned to classes early in the academic year.
- * 3rd year- All classes to be aligned back to back to allow ease of movement.
- * 4th year –It is important that the classes are divided in accordance with academic ability
- * 5th and 6th year - There is a big issue with attendance and this needs to be addressed early in the new academic year
- * LCA booklets to be photocopied for the students for next year.

LEAVING CERTIFICATE APPLIED '08-09

Ms. Ena Harty

Teaching Team: Sr. Bernadette Costello, Sr. Nora Flynn, Michelle Mangan, John Dowling, Sinead Thornton, Cora McElligott, Suzanne O'Halloran, Ray Hickey, Sharon Glancy, 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.

Goals

1. To prepare students for transition from the world of the school to that of adult and working life.
2. To recognise the talents of all students and to provide opportunities for developing personal responsibility, self-esteem and self-knowledge.
3. To ensure that all the Leaving Certificate Applied students complete the programme to the best of their ability.
4. To prepare students as well as possible for whatever career path they select.
5. To provide a congenial learning environment where both students and staff work together in a positive manner.
6. To raise the profile of the Leaving Certificate Applied programme.

Positive Aspects of the Year

1. Fifteen students completed year 2 of the Leaving Certificate Applied programme.
2. Twenty two students completed year 1 of the Leaving Certificate Applied programme.

3. A Leaving Certificate Applied Core Team was in place. The members of the core team are: Sr. Nora Flynn, Ms. Michelle Mangan and Ms. Ena Harty.

Activities Undertaken

1. 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.

2. Year 2 students organised colours day fundraising event in aid of sending invalids to Lourdes.
3. In Social Education, Year 2 students completed the Contemporary Issues task.
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. Year 2 students completed practical examinations in Engineering, Hotel Catering & Tourism and ICT. They also completed oral examinations in Irish, English and Spanish.
7. As part of the Music module, Year 2 students travelled to Cork in November to attend a performance by Cork Pops Orchestra.

8. Year 1 students completed tasks in Drama in January which involved students reading and analysing the play *Sive*, creating costumes, posters and set boxes based on the play.
9. As part of the Graphics & Construction module year 1 students completed tasks which involved producing various wooden for their task which was examined in May.
10. As part of the Vocational Preparation & Guidance Enterprise task, the year 1 students formed two mini companies. They designed and produced cards, magnets and key rings.
11. In English & Communication Year 1 students carried out an investigation into food prices in the canteen. This involved a survey, a typed report and presentation of findings. They also carried out an investigation into the effects of smoking and displayed their results on a notice board.
12. Work experience was timetabled for Year 1 on Tuesdays and on Wednesdays for Year 2 students and was monitored by Sr. Nora Flynn and Seán Geary.

Future Plans

1. To hold a meeting with parents and students in September, so as to emphasise attendance, completion of assignments and tasks.
2. To establish a student mentoring system and have regular meeting with parents on an individual basis.
3. To consider the possibility of implementing a Leaving Certificate Applied Awards system so as to encourage attendance, positive good behaviour, work ethic, etc.
4. To attain higher, consistent attendance at work experience.
5. To promote attendance throughout the two-year programme.
6. To establish and coordinate submission dates for key assignments and emphasise to students the importance of meeting deadlines.

7. Improved management and planning of student tasks. To try to get the student to be more organised and plan their task more efficiently so as to avoid panic as the deadline approaches. To look at computer access for typing of tasks. To schedule meetings of teachers involved in tasks.
8. Greater access to computers to facilitate research, completion of key assignments, tasks and the practical performance reports.
9. To promote positive, good behaviour in the classroom.
10. To establish and develop a Leaving Certificate Applied section within Moodle.

Conclusion

We are proud to have fifteen 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 2009.

L.C.V.P. REPORT '08-09

Mr. Frank Fell

L.C.V.P. offers our students the opportunity to enhance their CAO points through achieving at Merit or Distinction level in this eighth subject. As a large percentage of the overall grade is decided by submitted course work, the programme offers motivated students a distinct opportunity

Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme students took part in a visit to a local business enterprise in Dingle, Murphy's' Ice-cream. This was part of the Enterprise Education Module. It helped our students realise the importance of both innovative and enterprising characteristics required to run a business. They worked in teams, learned how to communicate effectively within the group and had an opportunity to put a range of questions to the owners. It was a good success and helped establish a business and commercial link which is vital to the L.C.V.P. programme.

The speaker who visited the group was Sr. deLourdes of Vincent DePaul. The students learned how this voluntary organisation is structured, how it is funded and how it contributes to the local community.

The L.C.V.P. enterprise activity carried out was a Fourth Year Table Quiz which was organised and run by L.C.V.P. students. It was very successful and all proceeds were donated to the local branch of St. Vincent DePaul.

L.C.V.P. students did very well in recent exams and the extra points were used by many in securing their third level place. This programme combines the virtues of academic study with a strong focus on self-directed learning, enterprise, work and the community. It is "Education for Life"

TRANSITION YEAR PROGRAMME

Mr. Shane Kissane

On Friday May 22nd 105 transition year pupils gathered to celebrate the completion of what proved to be a busy and exhaustive year of learning, entrepreneurship, social justice and innovation, environmental awareness as well as personal development through music and drama.

Transition Year continues to benefit from the combination of enthusiasm and expertise evident in our students, our school staff and indeed the broader community in Tralee. Throughout the year the students were engaged in a broad spectrum of activities which will undoubtedly be of benefit to themselves and their communities in the months and years ahead. From an academic perspective, the students once more received a taster programme offering each student the opportunity to experience all of the subjects available at Senior cycle in the school. Assessment methodologies were once more a diverse combination of exam, written presentation, oral peer presentation, project work and end of year Portfolio assessment which continues to blossom as a method of assessing this diverse year.

As already mentioned the students were engaged in a broad spectrum of activities during the year. This diverse programme seeks to inculcate an enthusiasm for self-directed learning in our students, enriching character and imagination as they work. Events throughout the year included:

Hill walking, scuba diving, rock climbing, manual handling, a celebration of Mercy Foundation Day with mass in Balloonagh church, business boot camps, coastal awareness with Coastcare including a beach clean up, visits to the dump, the water treatment facility in Listowel, a local wind farm and Dingle ocean world.

The students also attended a number of plays including *The Cripple of Innismean*, *Married to the Sea*, *The Importance of being Earnest*, *Animal Farm* and *Waiting for Godot*. The students participated in

classes which developed singing, drumming and dancing as well as practical instructions in fashion design and successfully re-energised old outfits from home.

The students also endeavoured to raise the profile of Fair Trade in the school and organised the “best attended gig ever” in the KDYS in Tralee. The associated Banana Party for the first years went down a storm with hundreds of bananas being donated by Fyffes.

Each student learned CPR and used their “Annie the Mannequin” to help train their parents and family at home. The Irish Heart Foundation donated 105 mannequin packs including booklet and DVD to the school for which we will raise funds by going on a sponsored trek around the lakes and mountains of Killarney. Twenty students received GAA coaching and refereeing certificates after attending an in school programme over a number of months and these pupils will go on to issue instruction to schools and clubs in the coming year.

The students took part in the **Young Social Innovators (Y.S.I.) programme** and entered two group projects namely:

“Car safety Investigators” (C.S.I) entered the “Making our world a safer place” category and researched the issue of safe driving with an emphasis on the wearing of seat belts and how this impacts on the severity of injuries in road traffic accidents.

“Fur or Against ” who raised awareness of the cruelties inflicted on animals reared in farms for the production of furry items for the fashion industry entered the “Making the world fair and just” category.

Both groups had great success at the national YSI showcase in the R.D.S. in Dublin in May and out of 142 schools present each Mounthawk group won outright in their category. With only eight categories in the competition it was a fantastic achievement to take home two winning trophies.

The students involved in environmental awareness groups fared just as well in the **Eco-Unesco Young Environmentalist Awards** held in the Mansion house in Dublin on May 20th, with the “Lets go Environmental” Group winning the “Senior climate Change “ award and the “On your bike “ group winning two awards; the most creative display award and the “highly commended” plaque.

The Mounthawk Transition Year students who involved themselves in projects with an enterprising bent were delighted to win Munster’s premiere award for entrepreneurship namely the “A.I.B. and UCC+ TRIZ cup for innovation and entrepreneurship” for their idea to provide refrigeration to poorer countries without the need for electricity by using common gases, old radiators a few pipes and sunshine. Twelve schools from Munster took part with Mercy Mounthawk being chosen as overall winners.

Two students (Sarah Guerin and Damian Sharpe) won best idea at the Kerry County Enterprise awards in the Meadowlands hotel in Tralee in April for their “Ding Dong Doorbell” idea which aims to have callers to an empty house photographed and said photograph sent to the house owners mobile phone. This innovation also won the “best use of technology” award at the Scifest at the ITT this year.

One of our students, as part of her mini company, designed and published a Spanish workbook for primary schools which she sold in three schools in the Tralee area with more schools expressing interest for the coming academic area.

GEOGRAPHY DEPT REPORT '08-09

Ms. Margaret Leen

Department Members:

Margaret Leen, Nora Quane, Mairéad McAuliffe, Bernie o’ Herlihy, Frank Fell, Margaret Bowler, Stella o’ Shea, Sinead Thornton, Nora Quinlan, Eileen Revington, Aidan o’Shea, Caitlin Ni Dhubha

Junior Cycle

First years began their study of geography, second and third year classes continued their studies. Some of our second years enjoyed a school tour to Barcelona 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.

Transition 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.

These included:

- Hill walks.
- Trip to Dingle Peninsula.
- Trip to Gortbrack organic farm.
- Environmental workshops facilitated by Eco UNESCO.
- Individual projects on member states of the E.U.
- European youth parliament in Cork and Dublin.

Fifth/Sixth Years.

We had five fifth year and five sixth year classes studying geography in 2008-2009. 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 fieldtrip at Banna during May 2008. This was very successful and our students have now submitted their fieldwork, which is worth an important 20% of the final exam.

Our present fifth years undertook their fieldtrip in May 2009 in Ballybunion. The title of the topic is '*Geomorphic processes of Erosion in a Coastal Environment*'.

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.

Purchases.

We purchased four Ranging Poles, a weather vane and an anemometer this year. These items will assist in the execution of effective field work.

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 2006 – Ordnance Survey of Ireland Trailmaster CD for computer in-service.
- February 2007 Geofis in-service, a resource developed by NUIG and the Geography Resource Services.

HISTORY DEPT REPORT '08-09

Ms. Mairead O'Mahony

JUNIOR CYCLE

At Junior Cycle the syllabus was followed and completed in all classes.

The impact of the government cutbacks, in terms of S&S were discussed at length. It was felt that the teaching of the course would be impacted by the difficulties in going out of the school on trips that would enhance the learning of all students, but in particular weaker students.

Teachers continued with the projects on "People in History" in first and second year and the worthwhile nature of this work was again emphasised.

TRANSITION YEAR

There was agreement that focusing the course around key personalities and Case Studies from the 5th year History Syllabus would be continued next year and those teachers involved with 4th years would meet during the T.Y. meeting next September.

It was also felt that there needed to be more focus on the academic in 4th year and that two class periods a week was very little when invariable this became one due to trips and out of class activities.

SENIOR CYCLE

Teachers were happy with the content of the book being used at Senior Cycle but there were concerns about the loss of the Book Grant Scheme and its impact given that it would be necessary to buy four history books over the course of the two years in Senior Cycle.

The lack of in-service was mentioned particularly because the in-services are excellent.

Again there was a discussion around the impact of the cut backs. It was felt that trips to the library are essential for introducing the Research Study topic, particularly for weaker students

SPANISH DEPT REPORT '08-09

Ms. Gillian O'Carroll

We have completed a very successful year in the Spanish Department. There were a number of specific events that helped to promulgate the language in the school. We had the facility of a Spanish Assistant – Jose Luis Rodriguez. He did class presentations on specific themes, i.e. Christmas, Festivals, Food, Bullfighting and Spanish Culture. He also taught selective small groups and was particularly helpful when it came to the Leaving Certificate Oral exams. Jose also conducted Mock Exams. The oral examiner was most complementary of the standard.

We have decided to continue using Primer Paso 1 and 2, and Vamos A Escuchar for 2nd and 3rd year classes. We are retaining La Pluma for 5th and 6th year classes, along with El Espanol Bien Hablado. We are considering a text book for Transition Year classes.

Mrs. Daly and Ms. Fitzgerald attended a workshop in Dublin on Saturday May 9th. The presentation was given by Jose Cabello and focused on the link question. It was most informative, beneficial and a stimulating experience to share ideas with other teachers of Spanish.

Ms. O' Carroll and Ms. Fitzgerald attended a 12 week course in UCC for teachers of Spanish. The course included the introduction to a Virtual Learning Environment, with teacher-orientated instruction. It is hoped that access to this Virtual Learning Environment will be made available to schools in the near future.

We discussed disruptive pupils who are continuing to study languages, in spite of having failed language in the 1st year exam. We are concerned that these groups of disruptive students will have a negative effect on diligent students and will impact on the uptake of Spanish in 5th and 6th year. This could have a ricochet effect on the overall academic achievement of the school at Leaving Certificate.

Finally, 3rd years enjoyed a turrón and tortilla party and similar ideas were discussed for next year.

FRENCH DEPT REPORT '08-09

Ms. Kay Bunce

DEPARTMENT: Kay Bunce, Sr. Joan, Nora Brosnan, Mary Reidy, Noirin 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 4/02/09 to 12/02/09. Papers were provided and corrected by an external company.
- Oral exams took place from 30/03/09 to 3/04/09. One examiner conducted these exams and pupils were happy in general with their own performance. Mock orals were also provided.

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.
- The annual TY trip to Paris took place from 5/02/09 to 9/02/09 and was a great success. The TY pupils were accompanied by eight teachers including Ms Lola Scollard who represented the French department.

ASSISTANT

Native French teacher Elise Berne was assigned to the school as French assistant for the year and she took up her duties at the end of September. This was a welcome and valuable resource as Ms Berne was involved in all class years and helped pupils individually with oral skills. This was especially beneficial to sixth years in preparing for their oral exams. In addition to this, Ms Berne worked in the classroom with French teachers and helped with a variety of language activities.

EXTRA CURRICULAR

FRENCH THEATRE

On 25/03/09 seventy senior cycle pupils enjoyed a visit from the French School Theatre company. A French play was performed which lasted one hour. The play was a comedy and included minor roles for some pupils. These roles were prepared in advance as classroom activities, enabling the acquirement of new vocabulary and language structures. The play was a great success as it was very enjoyable and beneficial.

FRENCH FILM CLUB

This was run by Ms. Helena Thibaud during lunch break once a week in the first term and several subtitled French films were shown.

RECOMMENDATIONS

EXTRA ORAL CLASSES FOR SIXTH YEARS

At the end of year department meeting teachers expressed concerns about the continuity of the above classes in the present economic climate. However all feel that with increased class sizes and mixed ability classes, such classes are a vital component of the language timetable. It is the only opportunity to work on each pupil's oral skills individually as such skills cannot adequately be acquired in a group setting. At present the oral component is 25% of the overall mark. Therefore the extra classes are a necessity.

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- More provision for liaising with resource teachers.
- Some language geared ICT in-service during staff days.
- Storage space for CD players in a designated language classroom.
- Teacher input in the formation and alignment of classes.

GERMAN DEPT. REPORT '08-09

Ms. Aine Clarke

Department Members :

Aine Clarke, Breda Cronin, Stella O'Mahony, Lola Scollard, Caroline Horgan (covered Stella O'Mahony's maternity leave).

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 first year German Class (S O'Mahony/C Horgan) followed the usual 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 directions & buildings.

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

The three third year classes (A Clarke, 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

There were two class groups this year (S O'Mahony). Class 1 consisted of students that have 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 one mixed ability group (A Clarke) that covered the course work set out for the year.

6th Year

All sixth year students – Higher Level class (A Clarke) and Ordinary Level (B Cronin) 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.

This year the school participated in the twinning of Tralee town with Frankfurt Höchst in Germany. The School Principal and the Head of the German Department – Aine Clarke attended the official launch of the twinning at Siamsa Tire in March 2009. There was a delegation from the Friedrich – Dessauer - Gymnasium (FDG) in Höchst, headed by Walter Piroth at the launch. Initial links/partnership between the two schools have commenced with a penpal programme, which is now operating for the 2008/09 Fifth Years. Two students from the (FDG) – Anna Colvin and Melanie Saß participated in the German Centre Rose of Tralee Finals. There is regular contact between the teachers in both schools and there appears to be good interest / co-operation.

SCIENCE DEPT REPORT '08-09

Dr. Noel Raymond

Outside events:

[Irish Science Teacher's Association \(ISTA\) Annual Senior Science Quiz.](#)

In November, 2008, Deborah Leahy, Alana Clerkin, and James Sheehan came **second** in the Kerry Final and qualified for the all- Ireland in Trinity.

[Irish Science Teacher's Association \(ISTA\) Annual Junior Science Quiz.](#)

30 teams from all over the county took part in the ISTA Junior Science Quiz, sponsored by the Kerry Group, which took place in the IT Tralee on the 25th March 2009. Mounthawk teams led from the start and took 1st, 2nd, 4th and 5th places.

The results were : 1st place – Catherine Mannix, Donnacha McGarry, Eve O’Connor and Brian Sheehy. 2nd place –Kynan Delaney, Cara Enright, Laura Fitzgerald and Conor Higgins. 4th place – Strahinya Grubjesic, Ling Lan Xue, Dorotejea Bogdarovic and Ryan Higgins. 5th place – Ciara Finnerty, Mairead Leen, Risalat and Ashling Shalvey.

Tralee Presentation School /Lee Strand Annual Science Quiz.

37 teams from all over the county took part in the Annual Junior Science Quiz, sponsored by Lee Strand, which took place in Presentation Secondary School Tralee on 2nd April 2009. The quiz was in aid of the Kerry Rape Crisis. Third, fourth and fifth year teams from each school battled for the prestigious award. Mounthawk teams took 1st and 4th places.

The results were : 1st place – Cara Enright, Conor Higgins and Catherine Mannix. 4th place - Donnacha McGarry, Eve O’Connor and Brian Sheehy.

Scifest 2009

24 teams from all over the country took part in the the National Scifest competition, sponsored by DairyMaster, which was held in the IT Tralee on the 6th May 2009. The investigation on “ Handy Hygiene” by Tim Farrell and Richard Raftery, demonstrated that poor washing techniques leads to the transmission illnesses such as MRSA, flu and the Swine Flu. Using their student- friendly DVD. they showed how efficient hand washing can increase its effectiveness by over 50%. They want to spread the word not the germ! They certainly will not be washing their hands of the problem for a while!!

They came 2nd in the overall winners receiving Crystal and a substantial cash prize!

Sarah Guerin and Damien Sharpe won the Technology award with their innovative “ Ding Dong Bell” .

Development of Science:

1. All Senior Biology classes were brought to Killarney National Park and carried out Mandatory Fieldwork under the supervision of an expert field biologist. *This will continue throughout 2009-2010.*

2. The Senior Chemistry classes were brought to the ITT to carry out Mandatory Practical Activities under the supervision of a Senior Lecturer and 2 Laboratory Assistants. *This will again take place throughout 2009-2010.*

3. The Science Dept was very busy on Open Day (Nov 9th 2008) with many of the Science Teachers as well as the current students helping out with the numerous experiments. *This will again take place in Nov 2009.*

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 (22) carried out a number of exciting experiments including exploding cannons, chemical tea, iodine snakes and making homemade lava. *This will continue throughout 2009-2010 and will involve the current members working with next year's First Years.*

4. Powerpoint class notes, Tests and Video clips in Biology, Physics and Maths were prepared for the use of all teachers and made available on the Science computers through the Moodle network.

BUSINESS DEPT. REPORT '08-09

Ms. Una Carey

Department Members

Sister Nora Flynn, Eleanor Mangan, Aisling O'Connor, Una Carey, Martina McAuliffe, Gillian O'Carroll and Cora Mc Elligott.

Business Studies Teachers Association of Ireland (BSTAI) Events

The BSTAI ran a number of events during the year which the 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.

An evening with John O'Connor for the students was also attended by the teachers. The evening focused on the Applied Business Question relevant to this year's Leaving Certificates.

6th Year Business Students

6th Year Business Students were also invited to attend a Revision evening hosted by John O'Connor. This offered students a very valuable session; revision of essential material, Applied Business Questions,

exam technique, timing, style of answering etc. The students found it an excellent aid to their Business study.

LCA 1 Enterprise Task 2009

We divided the class into three groups -

Group 1 (11 students)

A fund raising event was held for a student in the class who is going to Hollywood in Summer '09 – “Hollywood here we come”

Tickets were printed and a raffle was held. The students had various roles in the event on similar lines to a mini-company. It was very successful.

Group 2 (7 Students)

A mini-company was set up to make and sell cards for mother's day – C.F.M.D. It went well but it was very difficult to compete price wise with the cheaper cards available in the discount shops in town.

Group 3 (5 students)

These students set up a mini-company to sell key rings and magnets for mother's day.

There was not great demand for these so they switched the logos to those of soccer teams. This change of strategy yielded a far higher sales level. They put great effort into selling their product and were really committed to their task.

It was a great learning experience for each group but unlike other years students had very little money to spend. The students highlighted that next year's goods will have to be a low cost product.

The students realised that even if you have a really good product people only buy essentials in recessionary times. It was their determination and hard work that paid off - even staying in extra lunch-times to sell their products.

The LCVP Business Activity

The LCVP fundraiser was held on the 1st May 2009 from 2.00 to 3.45 in the balcony in the Gym. It was in aid of the Kenya Project and the LCVP organised a quiz which would involve all the 4th years in the school. They called the quiz 'Confusion' and it was a wonderful experience for all of those involved because they had never being involved in a quiz before. Each student in the class had to call to various shops around Tralee to see if they would donate a spot prize in aid of the event and all of these were raffled, excluding those which the 1st, 2nd and 3rd winners received. Spot prizes such as MP3 players, clothes vouchers for €30, hair vouchers, hampers, books, book vouchers, chocolates, biscuits and may other items were donated. The students really enjoyed and loved the responsibility of being involved in

a committee and having to ensure all tasks were completed efficiently and on time. We raised €186.14 from the event which Gillian O'Carroll was delighted with for the Kenya Project.

Young Entrepreneur Programme

The Young Entrepreneur Programme is a joint venture between Jerry Kennelly, the Institute of Technology Tralee and Shannon Development with a vision of empowering young people to consider life as an entrepreneur at an early stage. The students learn the skills of entrepreneurship, creating their own business plans, financial reports and the completing of a formal exam.

The year kicked off with Blue Sky Day, which gave the students the opportunity to meet some of Ireland most successful entrepreneurs, Denis O'Brien, Brody Sweeney and Michael Carey, to name just a few. Later in the year students attended The Business Boot Camp Day and a Business Plan Work Shop Day. Professional help and advice was available for the students at every step of the way.

Two of our students, Ethan Cronin and Karen Moynihan were short-listed among the final 15 Business Plans in Kerry. Ethan went on to get a 'grilling' from a panel of judges that included real life 'dragon' Sean Gallagher – A fantastic experience! Ethan represented himself and the school superbly.

RELIGION DEPT REPORT '08-09

Ms. Teresa Sheehy

Members; Teresa Sheehy, Mairead McAuliffe, Veronica Hunt, Ronan Redican, Linda Kane, Sr. Nora, Sinead Thorton, David Horan, Elaine Costelloe, Sherma Carey, Margaret Lucy, Ann McElligott . Caithlin Ni Dhubhda.

Junior Classes

The First years, Second years and Third years followed the Religious Education curriculum. First Years celebrated Mercy Day Mass on 24th September in the School Gym. This was an enjoyable occasion for all involved. Opportunities for prayer, including evening prayer for Advent and Lent, were provided for the students in the school oratory throughout the year and students were offered the Sacrament of Reconciliation in the season of Advent or Lent. Third year students prepared for their Junior Certificate exam and completed their Junior Certificate Journal.

Second year students attended a talk on Relationships and Sexuality by Kay Griffin, HSE.

Fourth Years

The fourth years followed the Transition Year programme based on the theme of 'searching'.

Seven students participated in the re-enactment of the 'Station of the Cross' on Good Friday in St. Brendan's church as part of the Easter celebrations. This was a very rewarding and worthwhile experience.

A group of students who were involved in the Young Social Innovators project organized a mass in memory of those who have died on the roads and some students linked with the Diocesan Advisor, Helena Connolly, and took part in liturgies throughout the year. A special youth mass for all transition years was celebrated in Balloonagh church during Advent. This was an enjoyable experience for all.

Students had an opportunity to get involved in community work by cleaning up St Brendan's cemetery.

Two of the Transition Year class and four fifth years have been selected to represent the school in Nairobi for two weeks immersion experience at Brother Beausang school. Students have been involved in fundraising to sponsor the education costs of a number of students in the Embulbul school.

Senior Cycle.

Religion was offered as a Leaving Certificate subject once again this year. Twenty students opted for this subject in fifth year.

Fifth and Sixth Years followed the non-exam Religious Education curriculum.

Fifth Years participated in a one day retreat, held in the school gym. The Sacrament of Reconciliation was offered on the day. This proved to be a worthwhile and positive experience for all. The retreat was provided by Net Ministries.

Fifth Years attended a talk on Relationships and Sexuality delivered by Jane Lewis.

Sixth Years received the Sacrament of Reconciliation in Advent. After Easter they concentrated on preparing their Graduation Mass which was celebrated on May 15th in St. Brendan's Church. The theme they chose was 'memories'. This was a most uplifting experience for all involved.

One of the Liturgical highpoints of the year was the Carol Service, which was held on 10th December in St Brendan's Church.

Social Action Projects

To increase students' social awareness for justice, students were involved in fund raising activities throughout the year, raising £20,236.30. This was given to a number of charities. At Christmas the annual food appeal was launched for St Vincent de Paul. The students contributed generously as always. Some of our senior students are involved in the "Vinnies Army" and this is greatly appreciated by the adult members of St Vincent de Paul.

CAREER GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING REPORT '08-09

Sr. Bernadette Costello, Ms. Betty Farrell

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 2008/2009

The Guidance curriculum is divided into two components:

- Formal
- Informal

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/Effective Teaching Methodologies

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

* 6 class periods for administration of DAT's

2 class periods for DAT's feedback

** Full day Study skills seminar was organized for this year group

6 class periods for the administration of DAT's

2 class periods for administration of Rothwell Miller

2 class periods for DAT's feedback

*** all students were prepared for and offered the opportunity to avail of a Mock

Interview situation

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 e.g. 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, and from the HSCL teacher 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.

The Differential Aptitude Tests (**DATs**) is administered in fourth year to assist career and subject choice. These are followed by the **Rothwell Miller 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 including LCA2. Tests results are returned and interpreted in Guidance classes and during individual appointments with students.

Leaving Certificate Students (2008) were tracked and past students welcomed to speak to students or given support if requested. Student profiles are maintained and retained. Folders of student work are also retained.

S.P.H.E. DEPT. REPORT '08-09

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.

Health Promotion

We held two theme weeks this year on mental health. There were lunch time workshops on reflexology, homeopathy, nutrition and relaxation. Fifth year and TY students held a Mental Health Forum for first and second year students. Students also organised a very successful club's day in the hall.

Members of the committee met with canteen management on a regular basis to review our healthy eating initiatives.

WOODWORK AND CONSTRUCTION REPORT '08-09

Mr. Diarmuid Murphy

Another year has come and gone and another good year for the students doing woodwork and construction. At the start I would like to thank all the students and teachers for their work throughout the year and a special thanks to Miss Dempsey who took over from Mr. Murphy for four months.

1st years worked regularly on many projects and judging by the quality of the work the future of the subject is in good hands, well done to all the boys and girls involved and we hope to see you next year.

2nd years have progressed very well in the subject and have prepared themselves well for the junior cert. Quite a number from the three classes were involved in design and the standard of artefact was very good. Some of the artefacts deserve mention, the nike artefact, the sculpture and the music piece .

3rd years have completed their study for the junior cert. and their projects are on display for marking and I have no doubt but that they will get on very well. The choice of project this year ranges from towel holders to stools, clocks, mirrors and musical instruments. Well done to all of you and good luck in the exams.

5th years have been knuckling down to the work required for the leaving cert. and quite a bit of practical work was also done. The ground work has been laid for next year, well done to the two classes and their teachers.

6th years are finished their course and projects and heading into their exams. The projects again this year were of a very high standard from round towers to models of houses, tables, chairs and cabinets. Well done to you all and the best of luck in the exams.

Tech. Graphics and D.C.G 08/09

There is a huge uptake in junior cert. graphics as is shown by the six classes who do it in first year. We hope that you all enjoyed your time doing graphics and that most of you keep it on next year. The second year students obviously enjoy the subject as record numbers are now doing it and getting on very well.

Third years are preparing for the exams and we would like to wish the boys and girls all the best.

5th years have embarked on the new course and have got a good grounding in "solid works" or the options in the course.

6th years have completed their course and projects and are ready for the exam. The project was a lot of work but the standard of design, computer drawing and finished portfolio was wonderful to see and I think anyone who sees these agree that they are a credit to you all. I must mention here that not alone did the students do huge work but also their teachers Mr. Colgan and Mr. O'Sullivan...well done everyone!

ENGINEERING REPORT '08-09

R. Hickey

The '08/'09 school year saw more students being examined at Junior and Senior Cycle in Metalwork and Engineering than hitherto in Mercy Mounthawk. Also we were very happy with the results being

obtained in these subjects at both Junior and Senior cycle as the high grades were more than double the national average.

In-service:

Once again 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. It was not as well organised. this year as it was in previous years with very little or practical value being offered to teachers who had travelled a long way to obtain material on projects and the special topic for Leaving Cert, that could assist them with exam classes.

3rd year Metalwork

There were two junior cert classes this year. Both students and teachers were very happy with the projects set by the examinations commission. Students at higher and ordinary level were asked to manufacture a Model Aircraft. The projects were very interesting and challenging and kept the students busy right up to the deadline. 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 years Higher Level group were asked to design a Model Fairground Carousel, and the Ordinary Level group were asked to design a Dune Buggy. This year, we emphasized the fact that the project could only be worked upon during timetabled classes and that deadlines were met. This put an extra push on the students to be organised and work diligently while in class. 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.

Leaving Cert Applied

These students were also kept busy having to complete two modules, eight key assignments and a design project of their choosing from a list of three provided the product of which they would be interviewed on.

We are quite happy with the uptake of the subject in first year, but we can't emphasize enough the importance of taking Technical Graphics along with this subject.

In our department we are continually looking at ways to improve (1) our working environment, in terms of organisation and safety and (2) the delivery of the subject, and have found the use of a data projector, laptops and the appropriate software to be a huge advance in this respect.

ART CRAFT AND DESIGN REPORT '08-09

Ms. Catherine Harnett

Art, Craft and Design are three inter-dependent disciplines. Each involves a different way of thinking: Art emphasises ideas, feelings and visual qualities, Craft emphasises the right use of tools and materials, Design emphasises planning, problem-solving and completion using drawing as a means of thinking.

These unite in the basic human drive to shape the world, for functional purposes, and to express and communicate ideas and feelings. The contribution of art to life is a unique and enriching experience for all.

Art, Craft and Design provide a unique part of the education of the whole person, through heart head and hand, enabling the person to shape his or her world with discernment, and to understand and appreciate the work of others. The benefits of an education in Art, Craft and Design for a student at this development stage extend far beyond a competence in the subject itself. Art, Craft and Design education develops a number of important personal qualities, particularly those of initiative, perseverance, sensibility and self-reliance.

The syllabus framework is designed for the full ability range in Junior Cycle.

The core syllabus consists of:

Drawing-figure and object drawing

Painting

Printmaking

Graphic Design

Modelling

Carving

Construction

Craft-batik, ceramics, packaging, soft sculpture, model making, block printmaking etc.

Support Studies.

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.

LEAVING CERTIFICATE PROGRAMME

The following is the outline suggested by the Department of Education.

Observational Studies

Imaginative Composition or Still Life

Design or Craftwork

History and Appreciation of Art

FIFTH YEAR

The history of art is introduced as a major part of the syllabus. The history of art makes up 37.5 % of the final leaving cert result.

Students also covered drawing 12.5 %, still life 25% and design or craftwork 25%. The percentages represent the proportion of marks allotted to these areas in the leaving cert exams.

SIXTH YEAR

Students are prepared for their Leaving Cert exam.

Still Life, Design and Figure drawing were focused on this year.

Study in the area of History of Art continued.

Students visited an exhibition in Siamsa Tire as part of their course work.

L.C.A.

- In the first term we covered the following module-“Posters”
- In the second term we covered the following module-“Blockprinting”
- Throughout the year we studied past exam papers for the end of year written exam.
- In the third term we completed a task based on pottery.
- A detailed written report.

Students were well represented in many local and national competitions.

HOME ECONOMICS REPORT '08/09

Ms. Mgt. Lucey

Department Members:

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

1st Year

1st Year programme was a lively and colourful approach to Home Economics. It covered all core areas of home economics i.e. food studies and culinary skills, textile studies, health, social and consumer skills. It provided an academic and practical foundation for those students wishing to continue the subject to Junior Certificate level. For those who pursue it for one year only, they benefited from valuable knowledge and skills to promote them with a better quality of Life. Active learning was encouraged.

2nd & 3rd Year

Activity-based learning was further encouraged in 2nd & 3rd year, through individual and group cookery assignments, textile and craft work. Craft and textile projects were displayed at the Open Day and this has rekindled an interest in traditional craftwork in the school. Food Studies enables pupils to understand food in relation to optimum health.

4th Year

The Food Safety Authority programme "Safe Food for Life" was completed and examined. On completion, certificates were awarded to all students.

5th & 6th Year

Home Economics-Scientific and Social is an applied subject combining theory with practice in order to develop understanding and solve problems. It focused on the acquisition of knowledge and the development of skills and attitudes that enabled students to take control of their own lives at present and in the future, whether it is in the home, in the world of work or other life situations. The wide range of learning experiences to which the students were exposed, allowed them to be flexible and adaptable. Sile Kelly from Bord Bia gave a presentation and practical demonstration to 5th year students in November '08 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. 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. Journal work for Leaving Cert 2010 was completed in May 2009.

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 in 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.

MUSIC DEPT REPORT '08-09.

Ms. Mary Crowley

Department members:

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.
- 6th Year Graduation Mass in May.
- The music department was also involved in the audition process for the musical "Grease" to be staged in January 2010.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION REPORT '08-09

Ms. Eileen Kennelly

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

Curriculum

First years students had a double PE class this year. Activities taught included dance, gymnastics, basketball and volleyball. The new Junior Cycle PE syllabus is now being taught in the School.

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.

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. Students can choose to take a study option if they so wish during PE time.

Continous Professional Development

Mr. O'Shea and Mr. Costello attended a two day in-service in Mayo on the introduction of the revised Junior Cycle PE syllabus