



Principal's Report to the PA AGM October 2011

Introduction

I would like to begin by once again thanking the members of the Parents' Association for inviting me to speak at your Annual General Meeting, to congratulate you on your work over the course of last year and wish your new officers every success in the year ahead.

The report that I give at this meeting attempts to cover the range of activities and issues with which the school has been involved over the course of the last year and to anticipate those for next year. As you know, I give a report to the AGM of the Parents' Association every year and, again this year, it will be uploaded on the school website www.stratfordcollege.

Ethos

Being part of the Jewish community Stratford College values and celebrates our Jewish ethos with our Jewish staff and students and our primary school. Our ethos is also pluralist and student centred and is promoted through the school curriculum and beyond eg list below and website. This year both schools hope to participate in Mitzvah Day ...a volunteer activity to raise funds for Focus Ireland and we hope that the parents will get involved with the spirit of this also.

- Awards Ceremony: Mr Ciaran Cuffe Minister of State
- Mr. Zoltan Zinn Collis; Mr Tommy Reichtahl, survivors of the Holocaust spoke to 2nd/3rd Year students and senior students respectively.
- Elaine Feldman Lecture: Science Week
- Attendance at National Holocaust Memorial Day Service in City Hall
- Israeli Independence Day; traditional middle eastern food.
- Web page
- Jewish Studies in-service

Activities - see school blog!!

- Awards
- French Table Quizzes
- Classical Table Quiz
- Science Week
- Seachtain na Gaeilge
- Continuing participation in and hosting of debating/public speaking competitions and exams
- Sponsored Walk
- Leadership Training Courses for Student Council
- 3rd Level Open Days
- Theatre Visits
- Field Trips in Geography/Art/Biology/Science
- SC hosted the production of My Fair Lady:
- Graduations
- An Gaisce:
- Sport



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Participation in basketball, tennis, athletics, circuit training, swimming, golf and TY sports programme. Last year's ski trip cancelled due to lack of interest

School Development Planning Overview 2010-11

This year we undertook a review of the following policies;

School Development Planning

- School Development Plan 2007-2010 (Reviewed) and 2010-2013 (Draft)
- Acceptable Computer User Policy
- Student Council Constitution
- E-learning policy
- Friends of Stratford Business Network
- Substance Abuse Information Meeting for Parents & booklet to all parents
- Development of Library as a curriculum resource
- Staff Handbook reviewed and revised.
- Parent's Handbook reviewed and revised.
- Shelley Buckspan & choir
- JC Jewish Studies in-service to be rolled out in October.
- School Marketing Committee
- Redesign of the school website.
- and were able to replace the windows at the back of the school with DES support

Whole School Subject Planning

- Guidance Plan
- PCs, desks, cabling and cabinets in all subject classrooms following receipt of DES IT grants.
- Updating of PCs x library; resource; Guidance
- In-service for use of ICT in classrooms.
- Members of staff continue to participate in SEC examinations and teacher mentoring.
- The Support Services and Agencies for SDP and Programmes have been reorganized into the Professional Development Support at Primary and Secondary Level (PDST)
- Subject & School Development Planning are facilitated by the Croke Park Agreement. We are reviewing such areas as Assessment for Learning; Special Education Needs; Literacy & Numeracy ; Posts of Responsibility & Open Day,

Code of Behaviour and Discipline

Almost all of detentions awarded were for punctuality and uniform which has resulted in the improvement in the standards of both. Punctuality has improved since texting of parents began 2 years ago.



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Attendance Report (Summary)

90% attendance. NEWB reports as relevant.

Curriculum

- **Junior Cycle Developments**

See the multimedia presentation below for developments to date.

http://www.ncca.ie/en/Curriculum_and_Assessment/Post-Primary_Educational_Multimedia/Junior_Cycle/Junior_cycle_developments/Multimedia_presentation/presentation.html

- **Leaving Certificate Reform – see <http://www.transition.ie>**

- **Jewish Studies**

The Department of Education and Science (DES) will be introducing Jewish Studies in-service through their support services next autumn to support the introduction of their new syllabus following the appointment of a national co-ordinator. The second years will be the first to sit the Junior Certificate exam in this subject next year.

- **Transition Year**

TY students will be experiencing **Chinese culture** and language through Business and Enterprise and **Israeli culture** through their Geography course next year.

Log on to Learn for senior neighbours of the school will also recommence in November where TYs will facilitate an introduction to basic computer skills. This is part of the **An GAISCE Award** and their overnight challenge took place in September.

- **Irish** (*Irish Inspection May 2011: report pending. Recommendations noted*)

A new marking system will apply to those taking the Junior & Leaving Cert in 2012. The marks at Higher and Ordinary levels in the Leaving Cert examination will be increased from 25% to 40%. Marks for the aural will be reduced to 10% at both Higher and Ordinary levels, which means that the written element of the paper will be worth 50% of the marks.

We have been preparing for this for several years by providing an oral exam option for Junior Certificate, oral exams for TY, 5th Year and an external mock oral exam for Leaving Certificate.

- **Classical Studies**

This year the revised Leaving Certificate Classical Studies will be sat by our students. It reduces the number of questions to six from eight and give more choice to the students – a long overdue improvement on a challenging exam paper!

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- **Music**

We are very grateful to **Ms Shelly Buckspan**, parent and musician, who has held a singing club on Friday afternoons since the beginning of January. Mobile Music has started individual lessons for students in singing, guitar and keyboards with a very good take up for the first term.

www.stratfordcollege.ie

IT

All subject classrooms have been provided with PCs and our new website is hosting Net vibes (web resources), Stratford Moodle and our school blog all of which are actively used. Some staff have expressed an interest in providing access to text books for students through our moodle site – this should help relieve the weight of schoolbags.

State Exams

- **Junior Certificate 2010**

54% achieved 9 + honours

- **Sixth Year Student Placement 2011**

Placement	Courses
University College Dublin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arts(x2) • Actuarial and Financial Studies • Commerce International
Trinity College	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medicine • Arts
NUI Maynooth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Music Technology
Dublin Institute of Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computer and Communications Engineering • Mechanical Engineering • Tourism Management
NCAD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Year Core Degree Studies
Dublin City University (DCU)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Journalism(x2)



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Ballyfermot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PLC – Portfolio Prep Course
Dun Laoghaire(IADT) or Leeds University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Film and TV Production
Rathmines CFE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PLC – Computer Programming
Dublin Business School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arts
Colaiste Mhuire - Marino	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BSc in Education Studies
Tallaght IT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Care Practice
Coogan Bergin Beauty Therapy College	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beauty Therapy
Stillorgan College of Further Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PLC – Media Foundation

1 student is looking at options for studying in the UK

1 overseas student is planning on doing an intensive English language course

98% have accepted Third Level places.

STAFF NEWS

Mr Roddy Cody has taken voluntary retirement. Mr Cody has worked here as Maths and Chemistry teacher for thirty three years and Deputy Principal since 1991. **Ms Lena Mulligan(SNA)** was made redundant but has since been re-employed by the SNA and **Ms Colleen Cryan** who was voluntarily redeployed. **Ms Siobhan Reynolds** has been appointed Deputy Principal and will be resuming her duties tomorrow.

And finally, **Mr Tom Hanley** has worked in Stratford National School for thirty eight years and has been Principal of SNS for thirty two. **Mr Barry Murphy**, a long serving member of Stratford National School, staff was appointed as Principal with effect from 1st September next.

Maintenance

- We will be commencing the replacement of the existing oil tanks and boiler for a gas boiler this term.

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- Resurfacing of the basketball courts.

Stratford National School

We continue to work closely with the primary school and urge the parents' associations of both to do the same.

Finally, the challenges facing us in 2011

- DES Budget December 2011: €350m reduction: threat to PTR; TY; Schools operating for less than 28 hours; additional hours; supervision for exam work; exit schemes etc. The environment is particularly challenging for fee paying schools in the midst of an anti fee paying media agenda.
- Curriculum review: JC Reform 2014. Implications for subject choice and provision
- Review of Points system: implications for LC.

Implications

Our greatest asset is our students who fill us with pride and delight in their confidence, love of learning and achievements. ...the building is a very empty place indeed without them and none of the above would mean anything unless they were part of it.

While the school must budget within constraints and plan for the future our focus on teaching and learning must not be lost amid all the discussions concerning financial matters.

Finally, it is very important that the parent body is involved in the school community, primary and post-primary and that it continues to seek ways in which this can be done in school and nationally, through its representative body, COMPASS.

I'd like to thank the outgoing committee of the PA for their hard work and their commitment and the initiatives that we began last year i.e the Friends of Stratford Business Network. I have enjoyed working with them and appreciate their approach and their sense of fun. I look forward to continuing this work and continuing to move the school forward in the coming year.