

St. Michael's College C.S.Sp. Promoting the Spiritan Ethos through our Proposed Development Plan.

St. Michael's College was founded in 1944 by the Spiritans and is widely acclaimed as one of the best schools in the country. Over the intervening years as pupil numbers increased, facilities have been built and expanded accordingly. The loss of the Spiritan Community in St. Michael's was felt acutely by all those associated with the College and for the current management presented a challenge as to how we would continue to promote the Spiritan ethos which had been an integral part of the school from its foundations. We believe that the response of successive Boards combined with the dedication of the in-school management team supported by ordained Chaplains has ensured that the Spiritan ethos is very vibrant and at the core of what we do and offer to each boy and his family who attends the school.

The core values of Spiritan education inform and inspire our educational approach in St. Michael's College. When a pupil is admitted to the College, he and his family become members of a strong and supportive faith community where Catholic ideals – love of God and one's neighbor, a deep respect for God's creation, and a desire for social justice – are fostered. Parents who choose to enroll their sons as pupils of the College are committing to a strongly ethos-based educational environment for their children, where we seek to combine the very highest educational standards with a concern to nurture each boy's faith. Parents choose a Spiritan education at St Michael's for their sons as it is a values rich and a faith based school. They appreciate the community aspect of life in St Michaels. ¹This choice on the part of parents is made in the context of many recent societal challenges and a strong trend towards increasing secularization in education. We are aware that sometimes our challenge is to bring the Word of God to those "who have scarcely heard it".² But generally, our parents express a strong desire to impart the Christian values which they themselves hold to their children, and they say that School-based religious instruction, preparation for the Sacraments, and ethos-based charitable activities are of vital importance in this regard. Parents tell us that without the benefit of these, and without the sense of Christian community that permeates the School, they would have difficulty in meeting the spiritual needs of their children.

Those needs are as great in our School population as in any other. It is acknowledged that in general, our pupils are drawn from comfortable socio-economic backgrounds; however, in many cases their families are choosing to make significant personal sacrifices in other areas in order to meet educational costs and provide their children with what they perceive as the best educational environment. The introduction of a Bursary Program in partnership with a local DEIS primary school reflects a commitment to broaden the socio-economic background from which the students attend. This was a response to the Spiritan Ethos and Faith Development Appraisal Report 2015³. Where cases of hardship are manifested the College Boards take decisions in keeping with the Spiritan ethos in support of the best interests of child and his family. The College's Mission Statement is a lived reality in the decision making process at Finance Committee meetings and at Boards of Management meetings. Many of the same

¹ Findings from St Michaels College Senior School Spiritan Ethos & Faith Development appraisal 2015 Report P5

² Spiritan Guide for Education p 9 at 1.2

³ St Michael's College Senior School Spiritan Ethos & Faith Development Appraisal Report 2015 p9

difficult issues arise in our School population as in others – physical and mental health issues, disability and bereavement all present challenges to the faith of pupils and their families, who value the support of our Christian community at difficult times in their lives. We teach our pupils to turn to their faith for strength in times of need.

Thus, we strive to educate our pupils to become the best people that they can be – and hopefully, in due course, the best husbands and fathers, with a strong sense of involvement in their community. Our impressive record of educational achievement over many decades has meant that many of our past pupils have attained senior positions and become leaders in various strata of society, and we hope that this will continue into the future. This makes it all the more imperative that they should have a strong moral compass to guide their future decision-making, and in particular, a clear vision of their responsibilities towards those who are less fortunate and who did not enjoy the same opportunities.

While justifiably proud of its traditions, the School needs to significantly enhance the quality of its facilities to continue the standard of excellence which has become its hallmark. “Spiritans Educational works are committed to excellence in teaching and instruction both in and out of the classroom”⁴ and this commitment to excellence is very evident in the 10 year Master plan with its three distinct elements

- Junior School Development
- Senior School Development
- Redevelopment of Swimming Pool

In order to ensure that the existing facilities and resources promote the Spiritan ethos, a Campus Ethos committee has been established which will comprise of the Principals, Deputy Principals and staff members in both schools along with Fr. Paddy Moran C.S.Sp. and Mr. Ronan Barry (SET). One of the primary aims of this group will be to establish links with the local community to allow opportunities for engagement with the Spiritan ethos.

In building new facilities for the Junior and Senior Schools, we are providing resources which support both the aims of our Mission Statement and both schools curricula which will enhance the educational opportunities for all current and future pupils from Preschool to Sixth Year enabling us to provide an “all-round educational experience which helps persons find their way in life”.⁵ The proposed plan encompasses the values of Spiritan education and will enable us to identify and transmit them, from one generation to the next.

Holistic and Person- Centred Education

Academic Excellence

The Junior School T Block consisting of a prefabricated building accommodating six classrooms fails to meet current educational guidelines or dimensions and the thermal performance of the building fabric falls significantly short of current standards. The size of some of the classrooms lends to potential health and safety concerns. The school is without ancillary teaching accommodation with no General Purpose room, Music or Library spaces

⁴ Spiritan Guide for Education p 13 at 2.6

⁵ Spiritan Guide for Education p 13 at 2.6

which inhibits the school's ambitions to deliver the prescribed curriculum. The existing staffroom is inadequate in terms of layout and size and has only natural light through skylights. The new building will include six new classrooms built according to DES standard with superior layout and facilities. The size of the rooms will allow for easy movement by teachers and pupils and will have wet areas, storage and display areas. Pupils availing of Learning Support/ Resource teaching will receive the required help within the main building in properly furnished classroom environments. As a school, we are particularly mindful of our responsibilities towards those pupils who may be experiencing difficulty, whether academic or otherwise, in school life. We are committed to providing them with all necessary supports to achieve their potential. The special needs of pupils are met in a respectful and sensitive manner. Thus, we strive to teach all our pupils that in a Christian community, we all have a duty to care for and assist those who are experiencing difficulties or who have additional needs, who are equally our brothers and sisters in Christ.

The development of a General Purpose Room will provide a space for the school community to join together regularly. It is envisaged that this area will be used for whole school assemblies, as a place where pupils can listen to visiting speakers and for evening meetings. The strong tradition of drama and choir in the school will be further enhanced by the use of this space for rehearsals which will also serve as location for music lessons. Our choir, in particular, makes an important and valuable contribution to our School life, enhancing religious ceremonies and other special school occasions throughout the year. Participation in choir gives the boys the opportunity to learn age-appropriate hymns of praise to God and is a joyful and enthusiastic expression of their faith. Their involvement also introduces them to sacred music and hopefully may encourage many of them to participate in choirs later in life. We have been very fortunate to have several musically-talented staff members over recent years who have trained the Choir to a high standard, but the absence of a readily available rehearsal space has, to some extent, curtailed the development of the School Choir, which is drawn from several classes. It is hoped that the new development may offer significant opportunities for the Choir to develop further and to explore new opportunities."

The inclusion of a library is particularly important in the light of the stress the curriculum lays on the need for a variety of reading materials to complement the use of reading schemes. The library will be large enough to accommodate all pupils from a particular class visiting simultaneously. Containing both fiction and non-fiction sections, it will give pupils the opportunity to read both for pleasure and to gain information, and thus, develop both literacy and data collection skills.

Academic excellence is a hallmark of our schools. The Boards are mindful of their responsibilities to 'give witness to the vision of the Spiritan Mission'⁶ to evangelise and provide moral guidance. As well as this they are also aware of wishes of Francis Liebermann who viewed the importance of education 'not only from the point of view of moral training but also from the point of view of intellectual and physical formation that is to say, in teaching agriculture and the trades' (*N.D.VIII*, 248)⁷ It is therefore a matter of great importance for Boards to be mindful of preparing students for life beyond St Michael's College. To this end the Boards are concerned with providing boys with the best possible vocational and professional training in order to prepare them for their lives after they leave St Michael's. In so doing the Boards

⁶ Report of Mission Audit, Peter McEvoy 2014 page10

⁷ Liebermann cited in the Spiritan Guide for Education page 9

provide the best possible instruction in facilities that are fit for purpose. Presently there are six hundred and fifty students attending the senior school. The facility underwent a major redevelopment in 2000 at a time when it catered for five hundred and twenty students. Subsequent alterations by the Boards to the plant allowed for additional students to attend the school.

Recent curricular initiatives in response to student needs placed additional pressures on space and resources. Such innovations include the introduction of Agricultural Science for three senior year groups and well as twelve classes other science subjects in 5th and 6th year. Science is a compulsory subject at junior cycle which requires some science classes taking place in classrooms. The proposed development will provide one additional science lab to add to the existing five labs. (One of which is a converted classroom and not fit for purpose) This is the minimum requirement to satisfy demand. The expansion of the Learning Support Department for which the school was highly commended in the 2015 ‘Spiritans Ethos & Faith Development Appraisal’ as being in keeping with the core values of Spiritan Education⁸ has seen a more than doubling of the Special Needs hours allocated to the College since then. There has been a corresponding increase in the space required to meet the needs of these the most venerable of our students. The new spaces provided in the redeveloped block of the senior school in addition to acquiring a property at 11 Merion View adjacent to the school staff canteen will provide rooms for a Teachers Resource Room where teachers can avail of up-skilling as envisaged in the DES’s provision of professional teaching time as part of the Junior Cycle Framework. There will be a dedicated space to be used for SLAR meetings and subject department meetings. These will take place as part of teachers’ commitment to the use of their discretionary Croke Park hours. A room will be provided for oral assessments and interviews in the JCF assessment process. Parent meetings can be facilitated with the Counseling team or the Learning Support Team. The promotion of Communication Design and Graphics is a subject that requires a specialist space to ensure that students get the best possible experience. The redevelopment will provide a new Technology Suite and will support the provision of CDG as well Computer Science, which is commencing (2020) it will also support the coding classes presently taking place.

Faith Development

From their earliest days in the College, the students’ faith is nurtured and fostered. The boys are introduced to the Spiritan ethos through Assemblies, class Masses and opportunities to receive the Sacraments. We welcome the opportunity to engage with the Spiritan retreat teams in both Kimmage Manor and Ardbraccan. The new General Purpose room in the Junior School with its catering facilities and easy access to the College Chapel will be used to facilitate retreats for parents/ grandparents of the student body as well as the wider community. We look forward to working with the Spiritan retreat teams to develop this initiative.

A Community of Respectful Relationships Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation

A central tenet of the Spiritan educational ethos is an appreciation of all of God’s creation – a love of all humanity, respect for all living creatures and a sense of awe and wonder at the natural world around us. Our new development will enable us to nurture these important values in a way that has not heretofore been possible.

⁸ St Michael’s College Senior School Spiritan Ethos & Faith Development Appraisal Report 2015 p3

The inclusion of a Science Room supports the SESE curriculum and our “Green Schools” programme. It provides a space where children can engage in practical investigations and thus become equipped with strategies to develop both conceptual and procedural understanding of science. Pupils will also have the opportunity to engage in activities which enhance the school environment while also developing the concept of custodianship from an early age. We have a Green School’s committee in the school and this year the Parents’ Association are also taking Care of the Environment as their focus.

We are keenly aware that “an important task of Spiritan education works is the integration of the social dimension into learning programme that involve creating awareness of the deeper structural causes of oppression, poverty and the destruction of creation”.⁹ Over the past number of years, members of the teaching staff have attended Development Education meetings organised by SET. On returning to the school, these teachers have taken responsibility for devising a curriculum based on the 18 global goals. Each class, over the course of the year, engages with one of these goals. A display based on the work is put up in the school which is read by boys from other classes and visitors alike. We have also hosted a Development Education workshop for pupils from the other Spiritan Junior Schools. The addition of the new General Purpose room will allow us to host more internal workshops throughout the year and will also enable the boys from the three Spiritan Junior Schools to meet together to work on themes from Development education and to grow as conscientious citizens. Currently due to a lack of space this is not possible.

The action plan based on the slogan ‘thinking globally but acting locally’ has resulted in the inclusion of development education in the senior school’s timetable as well as it being integrated across the curriculum. Dev. Ed. along with the Green Schools program will see it having its own dedicated space in the new building. Development Education gives boys opportunities to engage with real life problems and experiences of people in the developing world. Students are engaged in projects such as water conservation and harvesting, procuring a waterless urinals and composting canteen waste to reuse on the College grounds. Energy conservation sees them take responsibility for researching and procuring equipping a classroom with LED low energy lights. The Green Schools Committee is committed to replacing and replenishing planting the school grounds with environmentally friendly plants as well as the provision of an eco-garden. This assists the food source for the newly developed College’s Apiary. Students intervene in a positive way with their local community by organising a monthly beech clean with parents. This is in keeping with the promotion of the Spiritan values of Justice, Peace and integration of creation ‘core foundations stones in the Spiritan tradition’¹⁰

The elderly in our community are involved in a project every Monday evening with TY students who teach them how to use technology. They are guided in how use their mobile phones, laptops and iPad in one to one sessions and in small groups. Relations with the wider Spiritan community have been enhanced by the work of the Chaplaincy team who are proactive with Duquesne University and the visiting students in St Michael’s House. St Michael’s students have visited the house and have attended the annual Thanksgiving Celebrations which

⁹ Spiritan Guide for Education p12 at 2.4

¹⁰ Report of the Mission Audit, Peter McEvoy Mar 2014 page 5

have also been attended by the College's management and Leadership Team. An initiative by the History Department sees both sets of students collaborate on a history project.

A Spirit of Service and Sharing

Preferential Option for the Poor

At St. Michael's College, we have always sought to emphasize that Christ's teaching requires us to be mindful of the needs of others, and to be generous in assisting those in need. We provide the boys and their families with many opportunities to do this, by fundraising for various excellent causes, both within the Spiritan family and in the broader community. Our pupils always respond with great enthusiasm, contributing time and effort most willingly to these initiatives, and their families frequently surprise us with the scale of their generosity to charitable causes.

The Missionary tradition of the Trustees is seen an essential component of the ethos St Michaels. The Boards are mindful that 'the concept of mission defies neat and tidy definitions, precisely because it calls for an openness to new approaches to be devised which are appropriate to ever –changing contexts and new layers of meaning to be discerned from intelligent interpretation of the sign of the times'¹¹ The Boards' constant appraisal of the needs of the community are at the heart of our School Self Evaluation process. Our ability to reinvent and manage change is essential to keeping our mission relevant. The desire to provide infrastructure as outlined in our development programme is essential to the fulfilment of our mission. The Boards are mindful of their roles as custodians of a received tradition from past generations of teachers, students and congregational members. The use of iconography and images in the school serve to preserve and promote what is of value. There is a Special emphasis placed on charisma of Claude Poullart des Place and Francis Libermann in the school and images written sources of the founding father are easily accessible for all the students. The Brazil Immersion Trip presently is a major focus for students and their parents. Over two hundred and fifty students have part taken in the immersion process. Equally important is the fact that over thirty teachers have lived the missionary story by experiencing first hand overseas missionary work in Kenya, Ghana and now Brazil. The expansion of the process to the past pupils community is a plan for the future. This year a further €35,000 was sent to Fr. Pat Clarke in Brazil through the Kimmage Manor finance office. As well as money sent, the students have made over 20,000 eco bricks. The connections forged with the the Missions has been very important in building solidarity with the poor and encouraging future generations to reflect on how decisions made in the technological, scientific, business and political spheres can adversely effect the poor. This was clearly articulated in the writings of Libermann when he wrote "*If we abandon the schools we will destroy the future of the missions*'¹². Presently students in St. Michael's are tasked with the framing twenty two paintings from the prison artists in Ethiopia a project introduced to the students by Fr. Paddy Moran C.S.Sp. The Social Justice Committee is further evidence of a commitment to a Global vision and mission with the appeal to assist Fr Brendan Foley C.S.Sp in his Mission to assist unmarried mothers in Brazil.

¹¹ Report of the Mission Audit Peter McEvoy Mary2014 page5

¹² N.D. 1X cited in Spiritan Guide for Education p9

Jesus received financial patronage to assist him in his ministry¹³ (p13). In both schools there is a commitment to a “spirit of service and sharing” with those we work with and serve. From their earliest days here, the boys are encouraged to think of how fortunate they are and of the responsibility that they have to support others who through no fault of their own are not as fortunate. The emphasis is on giving not in charity but in justice.

The goal of ‘students taking over ship’¹⁴ is at the core of charity activities in St Michael’s. Active participating and immersion in the struggles of the less well-off is seen as the key to nurturing empathy and serves as a call to action in line with Spiritan values now and in the future. In Transition Year there is a long established soup run bringing food and clothes and care to the homeless in the city. Ten teachers as well as students take to the streets to serve the poor and talk to them. Students are committed to the St. Vincent de Paul charity who benefit greatly at Christmas time through various charity initiatives. Students give each year to Ozanam House, Gardener Street. This is run by Tony Rock (Past Pupil) with the money funding a special program for looking after inner-city children during the summer months. Students, teachers and parents distribute seventy hampers for needy families throughout Dublin. This program has been build up for many years. A history of the program is detailed on the brochure that all families receives each year.

Below is a breakdown of the works which are supported by the College.

**Year ended 31st August 2017 -
Summary**

Fr Pat Clarke Brazil	42,000.00
Ozanam House	9,500.00
Spirasi	6,412.55
Our Lady’s Hospice	3,000.00
Irish Cancer Society	2,615.00
St Vincent’s Foundation	2,500.00
St Vincent De Paul	2,174.39
A Little Lifetime Foundation	2,000.00
Others x 14	10,709.97
Chaplaincy trip to Brazil - costs	2,492.00
	83,403.91

¹³ Spiritan Guide to Education p 13 at 2.8

¹⁴ Spiritan Ethos & Faith Development Appraisal Report 2015 p9

**Year ended 31st August 2018 -
Summary**

Fr Pat Clarke - Brazil	36,247.88
Contribution to Bawnogue Teacher	10,000.00
Spirasi	11,200.00
Ozanam House	14,000.00
Make A Wish Foundation	3,636.00
Our Lady's Hospice & Care Services	3,000.00
St Vincent's Foundation	2,500.00
Crosscare	2,000.00
Other charities x 25	20,855.66
	<hr/> 103,439.54 <hr/>

It is hoped that as well as the immediate benefits to the groups and organizations named above, these activities on our part will develop in our pupils strong instincts of Christian compassion and generosity which will impel them to charitable involvement, and to work for social justice, throughout their lives.”

We hope that other aspects of our new development will also facilitate the forging of new and closer links with the community. We will explore the possibility of creating opportunities for interaction between our School and special educational facilities in our area, e.g. Enable Ireland Special School in Sandymount, St. Michael's House etc. We would hope that our General Purpose space might enable us to invite pupils from these schools to visit and partake in a suitable activity, e.g. viewing art work or watching a concert or play staged by our pupils. In the past these possibilities have been hampered by space constraints, but we are confident that our new building will provide a welcoming and accessible space within which new opportunities for social engagement may occur. We will explore these possibilities with the educational facilities concerned, with sensitivity towards the concerns and needs of their pupils and service users, and we trust that our pupils will also learn to adopt this approach to all such contacts.

With the new facilities available on campus the school will to facilitate local community groups to benefit from use of the swimming pool or other school facilities. Arrangements are currently being put in place to give Spirasi clients regular access to our existing swimming pool. With the redeveloped pool, it will be possible to continue this relationship with St. Michael's also committed to providing lessons and transport as required. We will offer our facilities to Sharks Special Olympic Swimming Club in St. Augustine's School, Blackrock for the benefit of their

pupils. The school has indicated that this would be of great value to their pupils especially those who wish to swim competitively. St. Michael's College offers two bursary places for boys in St. Patrick's N. S. Ringsend. This number will increase. With our improved pool, we will foster closer links with the school by offering a family swimming hour each week.

The provision of a new swimming pool will give the school an opportunity to present students an opportunity to add an aquatic component to the new Leaving Cert PE programme commencing in 2021. The space adjoining the pool will also provide a space to sports performance and nutrition as part of that new PE syllabus. There are one thousand students on campus at any given time in St Michael's with only one full size pitch at their disposal. The intention of the Board to provide an additional full size pitch in association with a local sports club sees the school forging links in the local community as well as provide a facility that will benefit a much broader group other than those who attend St. Michael's. The enhanced facilities will once again assist the board in linking with the local ETB and NALA (National Adult Literacy Agency) in applying Circular 46/00 which provides system of administration for community education in second level schools where the local adult community can avail of the facilities to access educational opportunities. A focus on this activity will be on second chance education especially focusing on literacy, numeracy and on those wishing to acquire English as a foreign language.

While we continue to maintain excellent educational standards, our dated and inadequate infrastructure currently fails to provide us with a satisfactory educational environment in which we can maintain our high academic standards or nurture each pupil's God-given talents, (particularly in the artistic/musical fields). We hope that our new development will help us to adopt a truly holistic approach and foster every aspect of our pupils' development, in keeping with the Spiritan ethos and philosophy which underpins our pedagogical approach

Lorna Heslin & Tim Kelleher

St. Michael's College C.S.Sp.

February 2019

