

**Annual Report of the Board of Management to the Parents of St. Joseph's Secondary School,
Foxford for the School Year 2007 – 2008**

The purpose of this Annual Report to Parents is to provide a summary of information on the operation of St. Joseph's Secondary School in line with the requirements of the Education Act.

The Report serves as an addition to the information provided on this website, the various Newsletters issued by the school, letters to Parents, the Information Booklet provided to all Parents in August of each year, the School Prospectus and information provided to Parents on Open Nights. The following summaries are now provided to Parents, members of the school community and members of the wider community.

1. School Enrolments and Staffing

School enrolments continue to grow with numbers now reaching 340 students. There are 28 Whole time teacher equivalents (WTE's) permitted by the Department of Education and Science (D.E.S.) and there are 31 teachers on the staff at present. Two Special Needs Assistants, a full-time Secretary, a full-time Caretaker, a part-time Payroll Secretary and Contract Cleaners are also employed by the Board of Management. Trends in primary school enrolments in our catchment area indicate a school population of 400 pupils within 3 - 4 years.

2. Trusteeship, Management and Representation

St. Joseph's welcomes the appointment of its new Trustee, Bishop Brendan Kelly, Bishop of Achonry who was ordained in January 2008. He replaced Bishop Thomas Flynn, now retired Bishop of Achonry to whom the school community is greatly indebted for his long service to St. Joseph's.

The Board of Management is in its second year and it is chaired by Very Rev. Fr. Thomas Mulligan. It meets monthly and it is constituted in line with the Articles of Management for Secondary Schools.

The Board is supported by an active Parents Council which meets once to twice a term. It comprises of representatives of Parents of current students in the school and it is chaired by Mrs. Liz McHale. The Student Council is elected annually and it comprises of student representatives from each year in the school.

All of these bodies played a highly supportive and active role in the school in the school year 2007 – 2008.

3. Financial Management and Accounting

The financial management of the school is conducted under the JMB/AMCSS Guidelines and is in strict compliance with D.E.S. requirements. The School Accountant is Mr.

James Hughes who audits the school accounts annually for the Board of Management. The accounts are in turn examined by the Finance sub-committee of the Board of Management, which reports to the Board.

The accounts of the school are computerised and are operated on the TAS Books system. In the school year 2007 – 2008 the school operated on a small surplus. However, school finances continue to be tight and require prudent financial management.

4. *Academic achievements*

The Board of Management recognises and applauds the outstanding academic achievements of students in the Junior and Leaving Certificate. The teaching and support staff are highly commended. St. Joseph's is now rated in the top 120 schools in the country (Irish Independent December 2008) for the percentage of its students who proceeded to Third Level in 2008 (86.4%). The Board notes in particular the performance of students with special education needs and it commends highly these students and their teachers. The support of the DES and the State Examination Commission in achieving these results is acknowledged and appreciated.

5. *Extra-Curricular Activities*

Participation in extra-curricular activities in St. Joseph's reached a very high level in 2007-2008. The Board of Management acknowledges the participation of students, teachers, staff and parents in these activities.

There were notable victories in GAA, County Juvenile Champions 2008 and Connaught Senior Champions 2008.

There were also victories in Basketball, both Girls and Boys which are commended.

A number of athletes reached the All Ireland Finals having qualified at the Connaught Championships.

Whilst it is impossible to mention all of the extra-curricular activities taking place in the school, the Board notes the success of the Transition Year Tour to Barcelona, the TY Pantomime, 1st Year Tour to the Aran Islands, the Annual Sports Day organised by the Student Council and the achievements of students in music competitions such as Fleadh Cheoil Mhaigh Eo, Connacht Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann. Note is also made of fundraising by students for charitable purposes. The Board wishes to congratulate also participants in the BT Young Scientist and Technology Exhibition and the school team which achieved 2nd Prize in its category.

It commends these students and their teachers.

6. *Green Flag for environmental awareness*

The raising of the Green Flag by the school trustee, Bishop Kelly in May was a highlight in the school year. It marked the culmination of a determined effort by students, teachers, parents, Board of Managements and the local community to achieve this award for the

school. The ceremony was attended by the school community and many members of the wider community. The Board notes the positive effect that this award has had on the school community and in the homes of students of the school.

7. *School Development Planning*

The school continues to engage actively in the process of School Development Planning. All of the partners in the school are consulted in regard to school planning and policy and there was engagement by all in 2007 – 2008.

The Board commends the Principal and Staff for the development in the School Plan.

A review of the Posts of Responsibility took place during the school year and the revised Schedule of Posts and consequent duties are now in place. The SPHE/RSE Policy was revised and a new policy is now in place. A review commenced also of the Homework Policy and this review is ongoing.

The publication of the many policies and developmental sections of the School Plan is being examined by the staff and Board of Management. It is hoped to publish the School Plan in a reader friendly form on the school website in the near future.

The Board and Staff have identified that the Code of Behaviour of the school is in need of review in the next school year 2008-2009 in line with the recently published documentation and Guidelines from the National Education Welfare Board.

8. *Matters of Concern for the Board of Management*

Given the increased enrolment in the school and the projected rise in the student population, the Board is concerned at the lack of accommodation in the school. Application for an extension to the rear of the main school building was made in October 2005. The Principal and the Parents Council continue to communicate with DES on the provision of this extension. Political support has also been sought from TD's and Ministers.

The Board of Management is also seeking the appointment of a Music teacher in the school given the increasing number of pupils taking music in the school. This matter will be pursued with DES in 2008 – 2009.

9. *Conclusion*

The Board of Management wishes to express its appreciation to the hard working dedicated and committed staff of St. Joseph's led by the Principal, Mr. Brendan Forde. It also commends the involvement and work of the Parents Council, Student Council and members of the community who actively support the school in many ways. The students of the school are deserving of special mention for their excellent behaviour, co-operation, their academic and extra-curricular achievements.

The Board is happy that the religious ethos and characteristic spirit of the school is being promoted loyally and the work of the Sisters of Charity, who founded the school is being developed into the future. The motto of the school is "*Caritas Christi Urget Nos*".

The school is under the trusteeship of the Bishop of Achonry. The Board of Management wishes to acknowledge the commitment of the Trustee to the school. The Board thanks the Trustee for his continued support and interest in the school.

The Board for its part strives to uphold the Catholic ethos of St. Joseph's and to fulfil the Mission Statement of the school.

Mission Statement

“St. Joseph's Secondary School is a Christian community committed to educate students at secondary level in a caring atmosphere of honesty, sincerity, justice, mutual respect and tolerance in partnership with the Board of Management, Staff, Parents and members of the wider community. The school strives to give every pupil the opportunity to develop his/her unique and special talents”.

Signed by the Chairman on behalf of the Board of Management:

Chairman of the Board of Management

Date: _____