



**ST STITHIANS COLLEGE**

**REPORT: SCHOOL IN A MIRROR  
An Evaluation of St Stithians College**

**Overseen by the Independent Quality Assurance Agency (IQAA)**

**SEPTEMBER 2007**

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## EVALUATION TEAM / MENTORS APPOINTED BY IQAA

<b>Team leader</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>Mentor</b>
Stephen Lowry	Rector	
Gayl Kennedy	St Stithians Junior Preparatory	Margaret Rudolph
Ray Van Gass	St Stithians Boys’ Preparatory	Brian Williams
Kim Roberts	St Stithians Girls’ Preparatory	Paul Channon
Andrew Baker	St Stithians Boys’ College	Margaret Edwards
Karen Prinsloo	St Stithians Girls’ College	Libby Huggett

## **INTRODUCTION: A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF ST STITHIANS COLLEGE**

### **Introduction**

1. Name of the School: St Stithians College, comprising five constituent schools, each with its own discrete administration and facilities and a number of shared services and facilities.
2. Physical Address: 40 Peter Place, Lyme Park, Sandton.
3. Postal Address: Private Bag 2, Randburg 2125.
4. Evaluation Team: each school appointed an Internal Evaluation Team with a coordinator. The coordinators of each team, together with the Rector constituted the St Stithians College IQAA Evaluation Committee.
5. IQAA appointed a mentor for each of the schools at St Stithians College.

### **General Profile of the School**

#### **Brief history**

6. St Stithians College, a Methodist Church School, situated on a 105 hectare estate on the border of Randburg and Sandton, owes its existence to the dream and foresight of three men – Gilbert Tucker, a Johannesburg chartered accountant, and two of his clients, William Mountstephens and Albert Collins. Cornishmen Collins and Mountstephens funded a Trust for the building of a Methodist school, named after Collins' birthplace of Stithian in Cornwall. The land was purchased in 1943 and the decision to build the College was made in 1951. Two years later, in 1953, the Boys' College and Boys' Prep opened their doors.
7. When the College celebrated its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1993, the concept of a "Second Foundation" was mooted. The following year, Council decided to go ahead with the building of a Girls' College and Girls' Prep School (initially known as St Stithians Collegiate), which was opened in 1995.
8. Today, St Stithians College is a village of five schools, comprising a Boys' College, Boys' Preparatory School, Girls' College, Girls' Preparatory School, and a Junior Preparatory School, (founded in 2001).

#### **Social, economic and cultural profile**

9. Historically, St Stithians opened its doors to a racially divided South Africa, and was hamstrung by the apartheid legislation that prevailed at the time. The College was an exclusive, whites-only, private school, whose pupils were drawn from the wealthier echelons of Northern Johannesburg society. In the late 1970's, following the Soweto uprising against Bantu Education, the College, in defiance of the educational legislation, welcomed pupils from all race groups into the school.
10. It remains a strategic imperative of the College to change the demographic profile of the College. At present, the pupil and staffing profile is predominantly white, but in the last 10

years significant inroads have been made to increase the number of black learners (across all the grades) and to recruit educators and staff from other race groups (see table below). In addition, a number of foreign students from African states beyond the Limpopo River, China and Korea are to be found in the College's boarding houses.

<b>Race differentials (black includes, African, Coloured, Indian)</b>	Numbers	% of total
Black learners	545	21.5
White Learners	1984	78.4
TOTAL	2529	100
Black teachers	40	14.7
White teachers	233	85.3
TOTAL	273	100
Black senior Management (Rector, Heads, Deputies, Directors of Shared Services).	1	5
White senior Management (Rector, Heads, Deputies, Directors of Shared Services).	19	95
TOTAL	20	100
Black Middle management (HOD / Director / Grade head)	2	5.7
White Middle management (HOD / Director / Grade head)	33	94.3
TOTAL	35	100

11. The College recognises that the high tuition fees charged by independent schools, makes it impossible for many students from the broader community to attend schools like St Stithians College. Hence, in its annual budget, the College allocates funds amounting to about 5% of turnover to provide scholarships to talented learners, from all race groups, from less privileged backgrounds.
12. Recognising that diversity goes beyond race and economic means, the Inclusion Model was implemented at St Stithians College in 2001. The point of departure for the model is a belief that all learners can learn. Focussed academic support is offered by specialist Learning Support Staff. Accessibility ramps have been installed in the Boys' & Girls' Colleges for wheel chair bound students.
13. At Saints, education is seen as a lifelong experience and the College's role is teaching the whole child, both in and outside the classroom. The teaching of leadership skills and attitudes so that our learners become responsible citizens, committed to the wellbeing and upliftment of the broader South African community, is a central feature of the curriculum at the College.

#### **Evaluation Process at St Stithians in 2007**

14. All team leaders praised the mentors appointed by IQAA to assist St Stithians College with its evaluation process.

15. The mentors were clear about not “sweating the small stuff” and clear about identifying and flagging the big issues for follow up and recommendations. It was noted that, in all of the teams, there was a good spirit of team work and co-operation and that possibly it was the team members who benefited most from the IQAA process.
16. In particular, it was noted that the staff members who do not serve in a formal leadership capacity, for example a School Executive, benefited substantially from participating as a member of the team.
17. A number of the schools are looking at exploring some form of observation process, beyond the formal evaluation process, as a form of professional development. This arose, particularly, as most of the staff appear to have enjoyed the process and any fears of being observed did not materialise amongst other staff members.

### **School development plan**

18. Each school has reported on the evaluation process and the results of that process are included in this report. There is also a set of recommendations made by the school-based IQAA team at the end of each report.
19. The campus report and its recommendations will be tabled with the College Executive. The Executive will then develop a campus wide school Development Plan, including timeframes to be implemented in the New Year.
20. Each school report will be tabled with the relevant School Executive Committee. Likewise each School Executive will develop their school development plan in line with recommendations made in the report.
21. Both the campus and the school IQAA teams will remain functional to monitor the implementation of both the campus and the school development plans.

### **Suggested Evaluation Process at St Stithians in future**

22. The table below outlines how St Stithians College intends to conduct the “School in a Mirror” Evaluation process over the next few years, ensuring that the school covers all aspects of the Evaluation over a two, and then three year cycle. This will be reviewed, however, in the light of the costs involved.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Focus Areas of Evaluation (Focus Areas 7, 8 and 9 to be incorporated as either part of 1 or 3)</b>
2007	Teaching and Learning
	Attainments and Progress
	Functioning of the School
2008	Governance and Management
	Values and Society Involvement
	Distinctive Areas

<b>Year</b>	<b>Focus Areas of Evaluation (Focus Areas 7, 8 and 9 to be incorporated as either part of 1 or 3)</b>
2009	Teaching and Learning
	Attainments and Progress
2010	Functioning of the School
	Governance and Management
2011	Values and Society Involvement
	Distinctive Areas

23. The Evaluation team agreed that Focus Areas 1 (Teaching and Learning) and 2 (Attainments and Progress) will be evaluated and reported on at school level. It was agreed that Focus Area 3 (Functioning of the School), should be reported at both a campus and school level, although some elements apply only at a school level and *vice versa*.

## FOCUS AREA 3: FUNCTIONING OF THE SCHOOL (CAMPUS)

### Introduction

1. The College runs smoothly, with well structured policies and procedures, clearly communicated and implemented. Most of the policies suggested by IQAA in Appendix 1 of *School in a Mirror: guiding instrument for internal evaluation of schools*, exist at the College.
2. The review team noted that perhaps many staff are not aware of the policies, although they generally do know where to find them when they need to. The policies are posted on the College's intranet. The review team also noted that there are still some policies that have not yet been developed and adopted at the College. However, there was a process, both within the College Executive and the Skills and Equity Committee (SEC) of the College, which allowed for the continual review of existing policies, as well as the drafting / developing of policies that are still required.

### Laws and regulations are available

3. *These are clearly displayed where necessary and implemented:* It is noted that the Skills and Equity Committee ensure that the legislation that is supposed to be displayed for the information of staff is placed for all to view on notice boards or wherever relevant. Further, it is noted that all of the College's policies take cognisance of any legislation in that particular area, for example the Occupational Health and Safety Act, Basic Conditions of Employment Act, the Employment Equity and Workplace Skills legislation.

### Finance

4. *An annual budget is drawn up and approved by the Council (governing body).* A number of people questioned the perceived fairness of the allocation of funds across the five schools.
5. *Good annual and long term financial planning ensures the viability of the school.* It is suggested that the longer term capital expenditure planning could be better controlled, although the College still needs to ensure that there is enough flexibility to meet contingencies that suddenly arise in any given year.
6. *There is good management and control of finances, with the books audited annually.* It is generally agreed that there is good financial management and controls at the College. Audited financial statements are tabled at Council meetings and approved by Council on an annual basis.
7. *There is adequate provision for insurance of every kind necessary.*
  - The review committee was of the opinion that there is not adequate insurance for personal belongings of staff members on campus, for example when vehicles may be damaged due to vandalism.
  - It was noted that many academic staff members are unaware of the process to be followed when making claims against workman's compensation for injuries sustained on campus although management is, and often makes application on behalf of service staff at the College.
  - It was noted that the school needs a better process for medical claims made by pupils who are injured at the College and more clarity about whether a pupil's medical aid or insurance should cover particular eventualities.

## Facilities

8. *The College's buildings, grounds and facilities are adequate for the schools' purposes.*
  - 8.1. There was a range of perceptions, mainly negative, concerning the adequacy of facilities and how capital funds should be spent on those facilities. It was agreed that although decisions are made with sound reasoning, this is not always communicated effectively, particularly to staff. Staff, therefore, continue to harbour prejudiced opinions about the facilities on campus.
  - 8.2. Some of the concerns raised by staff and which, therefore, often filter out to parents, alumni and other stakeholders include:
    - 8.2.1. All the buildings cannot be upgraded, for example in the Boys' Prep or the Boys' College, because of the amount of money that has been spent on the building of the Girls' Schools over the last 12 years.
    - 8.2.2. There is a lack of venues for specialist teaching across the schools.
    - 8.2.3. A lot of the capital expenditure is currently being spent on the Boys' Schools, and staff do not necessarily understand the reasons for this.
    - 8.2.4. Shared facilities are not adequate, for example the Girls' Resource Centre, Mears Hall, the Aquatics complex and Astroturf pitch.
    - 8.2.5. Some of the venues are positioned badly for some of the users, for example the swimming pool complex is very far away from the Junior Prep.
9. Overall, however, there was agreement that the grounds and facilities are adequate for the schools purposes given the fee level of our clientele.
10. *The College's buildings, grounds and facilities are well maintained.* The schools' buildings, grounds and facilities are generally well maintained. It is noted, however, that the Operations Department is quite possibly severely stretched in delivering on the maintenance of the facilities. A question was raised about the increased demands on the Operations Department due to the building of new facilities. Failure to address this issue could have led to further stress on the Operations Department to ensure the maintenance of the facilities.
11. *School buildings and facilities cater for those who are physically challenged.* It is recognised that the College is unable to provide facilities to a broad range of physical disabilities amongst pupils and all staff. It was noted that significant improvements were made in the Boys' College in 2003, with a large amount of money spent on such improvements, when one of the College boys was confined to a wheelchair after a tragic accident. It was recognised, however, that the College's inability to deploy the financial resources necessary for such facilities will limit the College's ability to accept learners and staff with disabilities.

## Orderliness

12. *A code of conduct is in place, it is well communicated and agreed to by staff, children and parents.* Children and teachers are punctual for school, lessons, meetings and other activities. Attendance is regular and controlled, with lateness and absences followed up on by the schools. The timetable is well structured with a teacher allocated to every class for every lesson and provision is made for absent teachers. Behaviour and manners of staff and learners are of an acceptably high standard.

## Security

13. *The state and safety of school buildings is good and complies with laws and regulations.* It was recognised that the College does have safe school buildings that comply with laws and regulations. A campus Safety Committee with representatives from each of the schools, is charged with the responsibility of ensuring that all schools are compliant regarding Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) and other safety measures. The College's Planning and Development (P&D) Committee, (a sub-committee of Council), is involved in the planning and development of all new buildings and ensures that the College complies with the necessary laws and regulations.
14. *There are regular practised emergency evacuation procedures and fire drills.* Staff members carry out duties to ensure safety, including playground supervision.

## Health Care

15. It was agreed that there is sufficient support and provision for the emotional, physical, social and spiritual needs of the children and staff. There is a campus First Aid Committee, with representatives from each of the schools, that has developed a First Aid Policy, which includes processes and procedures for the handling of all first aid matters, both on site and on school outings and tours.
16. The College employs a full-time registered nurse, whose responsibility is first and foremost for the boarders of the Boys' College. She does, however, service the needs of the support staff regarding matters of health. The College is currently investigating the option of ensuring that her services are available across the campus.
17. The committee noted that the Chaplains and various types of psychologists and counsellors employed in the five schools are available to meet the emotional needs and support of the staff and pupils. The school has clear policies for dealing with bullying and with child, drug and alcohol abuse. The needs of boarders are well catered for.

## Workers' conditions at the College

18. It was noted that we had failed to canvass the opinions of the support staff regarding this evaluation and will make sure we do so in future.

## Recommendations

19. The cross-campus and school IQAA Teams will remain functional to monitor the implementation of both the campus and the school development plans.
20. *Development of policies:* the process of reviewing the College policies by the Skills and Equity Committee (SEC) and the HR Director will continue.
21. *An annual budget is drawn up and approved by the Council (governing body):* better communication of the annual budget is required.

22. *Good annual and long term financial planning ensures the viability of the school:* the process for reviewing the College's Facilities Plan and following the College's Policy ("Procedure for building projects") will be adhered to more strictly.
23. *There is adequate provision for insurance of every kind necessary:* the Rector will ask the Finance Committee to investigate insurance cover for the personal belongings of staff.
24. The Bursar is investigating the process for medical claims made by pupils who are injured at the College. He is also investigating what insurance cover the College should provide for pupils injured on site.
25. *The College's buildings, grounds and facilities are adequate for the schools' purposes:* There will be better communication all stakeholders concerning the allocation of funds for the development of the facilities at the College.
26. *The College's buildings, grounds and facilities are well maintained:* the ability of the Operations Department to keep pace with the new operational/ maintenance demands, arising from the construction of new facilities, will be factored into all new building plans at the College.
27. *School buildings and facilities cater for those who are physically challenged:* within the financial constraints, the College will continue to provide access for those who are physically challenged as and where necessary.
28. *Health care:* the College First Aid Committee will continue to explore the option of expanding the services of the professional registered nurse to the rest of the campus.
29. *Workers' conditions at the College:* through our relationship with the Trade Union that represents some of the workers (SACCAWU), the College Staff Forum (representing all staffing sectors) and the SEC, the College will continue to ensure that the conditions of service reflect the Christian foundation of the College.