



**ST STITHIANS  
COLLEGE**

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**Report: School in a mirror**

**An evaluation of St Stithians College**

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

**August 2013**

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### EVALUATION TEAM AND MENTORS APPOINTED BY IQAA

TEAM LEADER	SCHOOL	MENTOR
Jill Wheater	Campus	Lynne Rivett-Carnac
Gayl Kennedy	Junior Preparatory	Cathy Ablett
Jakes Fredericks	Boys' Prep	Brian Williams
Kim Lowman	Girls' Prep	Margaret Rudolph
Peter Wright	Boys' College	Kevin Tait
Karen Prinsloo	Girls' College	Lynne Rivett-Carnac

## **INTRODUCTION**

1. Name of school: St Stithians College, overseen by the Rector and comprising five constituent schools, each with its own discrete administration and facilities and a sharing of campus services and facilities. Kamoka, the St Stithians bush school, is located close to Modimolle in the Waterberg and accommodates up to 56 students.
2. Physical address: 40 Peter Place, Lyme Park, Bryanston
3. Postal address: Private Bag 2, Randburg, 2194
4. Email address: [rector@stithian.com](mailto:rector@stithian.com)
5. Evaluation team: each school appointed an internal evaluation team with a team leader. The leaders of each team together with the Campus coordinator constituted the St Stithians College IQAA evaluation committee.
6. Mentors: IQAA appointed a mentor for each school including campus
7. IQAA model: The comprehensive evaluation model was used including distinctive areas for the College
8. Date of evaluation: The evaluation took place from March to September 2013
9. EMIS number: 151621
10. Affiliations: Independent Examinations Board, Round Square, ISASA
11. Umalusi accreditation: Confirmed candidates

## **DESCRIPTIVE BACKGROUND**

### **Brief history**

12. 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 in the United Kingdom. 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.
13. When the College celebrated its 40th 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 1996.
14. In 2013, as the College celebrates its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the Saints village comprises the Boys' College, Boys' Preparatory School, Girls' College, Girls' Preparatory School and a Junior Preparatory School (founded in 2001).
15. The College charter summarises the core principles underpinning the philosophy of the College as "Honour God, Honour Self and Honour Others". The College is committed to an extensive servant leadership programme reflecting both the key Round Square precepts and the biblical Fruits of the Spirit. The College has a

carefully considered set of educational philosophies, relating specifically to the education of boys and girls in separate schools, connected in a co-operative relationship. An important recent initiative has been the engagement with “Thinking School” concepts and approaches.

## Social, economic and cultural profile

16. 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.

17. Transformation is a strategic imperative of the College and is clearly reflected in the 2012-2015 strategic plan. The following table summarises the change in racial profile in students and staff since the previous IQAA evaluation in 2007. There has been a notable percentage shift in the black/white ratio in terms of student and staff representation, including middle management where both the number of posts and representation has increased. There has been no change in the racial representation in the senior management level.

Racial breakdown (black includes, African, Coloured, Indian)	2007		2013	
	NO	% of total	NO	% of total
<b>LEARNERS</b>				
Black learners	545	21	679	26
White Learners	1984	78	1905	74
TOTAL	2529	100	2584	100
<b>TEACHERS</b>				
Black teachers	40	14	67	25
White teachers	233	85	201	75
TOTAL	273	100	268	100
<b>SENIOR MANAGEMENT</b>				
Black senior Management (Rector, Heads, Deputies, Directors of Shared Services)	1	5	1	5
White senior Management (Rector, Heads, Deputies, Cross Campus directors)	19	95	20	95
TOTAL	20	100	21	100
Black Middle management (HOD / Director / Grade coordinators)	2	6	18	17

White Middle management (HOD / Director / Grade coordinators)	33	94	89	83
TOTAL	35	100	107	100

18. The College recognises that the high tuition fees charged by independent schools create many obstacles for students from a broader socio-economic 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.

19. In addition the Thandulwazi Maths and Science Academy, an educational programme run through the St Stithians Foundation, is helping to improve the quality of teaching of maths and science in the country. There were more than 1100 students enrolled in the Saturday School academy in grade 10, 11 and 12 in 2012, drawn from 160 schools in the greater Johannesburg area. Out of the 348 grade 12's in 2012, a 100% pass rate was obtained with 51% gaining a BD pass.

20. At St Stithians, education is seen as a lifelong experience and the College's role is to teach the whole child, both in and outside the classroom. The teaching of servant leadership is a central feature of the curriculum at the College, as are social awareness and an acceptance and understanding of diversity. The broad goal is to develop well balanced citizens committed to the upliftment and growth of the country. "To those whom much is given, much is expected" is at the core of the St Stithians educational philosophy.

## COMPLIANCE

21. St Stithians College is fully compliant with the ISASA requirements for membership. The compliance document was signed by then incumbent Rector, Mr Lowry, and the mentor Mrs Rivett-Carnac.

## AREAS OF OPERATION

The following aspects and themes were evaluated:

22. The **functioning** of the College on both a school and campus level, including the following areas:

- 22.1. Policies
- 22.2. Finance
- 22.3. Facilities
- 22.4. Conduct
- 22.5. Security and health
- 22.6. Health care
- 22.7. Communication

23. The **Governing body**, it's functioning and interaction with senior management.

24. **Professional support, administrative and operational staff** in terms of their perceptions of their working environment.
25. **Distinctive areas** of the College which translated into an evaluation of ethos, social awareness, church/faith, gender and the campus coordinate model.

## **MEANS AND METHODS**

26. Hard copy surveys, online Google surveys, focus groups and one-on-one discussions with cross campus directors, the Rector and the Chair of Council, were used to obtain evidence. All surveys were completed anonymously. (Appendix C to E)
27. Surveys were distributed to staff, students (grade 10, 11 and 12) and Council members; with virtually a 100% response rate. It was decided to distribute hard copy forms to parents to improve the response rate (there was a concern that online completion would be impossible to monitor) and these forms were manually analysed. The response rate from the parent body represented a valid sample and was defined as follows:
- 25% College parents
  - 60% Prep parents
28. A focus group was conducted on the coordinate model and consisted of 8 staff members from both Boys' and Girls' College and was facilitated by the IQAA mentor. A focus group was also conducted with the administrative and support staff.
29. In general, results from all stakeholders regarding the values survey were extremely positive confirming the strength of the ethos at the College and the awareness of the efforts made in terms of social awareness and environmental sustainability. The major shortcomings highlighted involved the nature and quality of gender relations and concerns around the validity of the coordinate model.
30. Results from the professional/administrative staff survey indicated the existence of a generally satisfied, happy staff. There were some concerns around salary, conditions of service and effectiveness of internal communication.
31. The results of the governance survey indicated a general satisfaction with processes from the College Council with several concerns raised by the senior management of the College. The Council felt that the review process of its own activities should be more rigorous and there should be more participation from members. The senior management's responses highlighted concerns about Council members understanding of their role, responsibilities and the broader educational environment.

## **FINDINGS**

### **32. Functioning of the College**

#### **32.1. Policies**

The College has a comprehensive set of policies governing the operation and smooth running of the campus. The policies are available both on the intranet and the College website. All the schools in the College are confirmed Umalusi candidates and are in the process of receiving full accreditation. The following policies are currently under review:

- Cyber communication
- Transporting of learners

#### **32.2. Finance**

The financial controls in the College are of an extremely high standard. An annual budget process culminates in approval by Council and this approved budget is monitored strictly by the Bursar's department and the Financial Committee. Excellent short and long term planning ensure financial stability for the College including the creation of an endowment fund. There is adequate insurance cover for all the needs of the College.

#### **32.3. Facilities**

The school buildings and facilities are adequate for the various schools' purposes. It is noted that there is an expressed need for a larger JP playground and hall, and a multipurpose hall for the girls' schools. Several classrooms and ablution blocks warrant refurbishment. All grounds and facilities are well maintained. Some of the facilities cater for the physically challenged but it was noted that many of the facilities are unable to cater for a range of disabilities. There is a campus facilities plan which envisages a number of large projects as well as renovation projects.

#### **32.4. Conduct**

All administrative and grounds staff are treated with respect and participate in functions where appropriate. All cleaning and catering services are contracted out to external suppliers. A code of conduct for students, parents and staff is part of the overall set of policies for the College and is available on the intranet. The general class size within the schools is acceptable, following the campus policy on class size.

#### **32.5. Security and safety**

The state and safety of all school buildings is good and complies with laws and regulations. Emergency procedures are practised regularly in all the schools and campus departments. There is an adequate number of

qualified first aiders across the campus. Adequate provision is made for the monitoring of all access gates, grounds and campus areas by CCTV and roving guards.

#### 32.6. Health care

Counsellors are available to provide emotional support to staff if required. Social activities are available for staff and the spiritual needs are catered for by the presence of 3 chaplains on site. The Campus Wellness committee is exploring employing the services of an occupational health sister to provide physical medical care and assist the uninsured support staff.

#### 32.7. Communication

Communication between parents, staff, students and the broader community is regular and effective and facilitated by the provision of campus and school newsletters, an active website and social media. Communication to the governing body is equally effective. Staff, students and parents approve of the direction of the College confirmed clearly by the results of the values survey. 98% of staff and parents understand and approve of the ethos, as do 90% of the students surveyed. Likewise there is a broad knowledge and understanding of the College charter.

The 2012-2015 strategic plan was developed and presented to all staff and departments and is available on the website for perusal by parents.

### 33. Governance and management

In addition to the schools survey, the St Stithians College Council and the senior management team (comprising the 5 Heads, Bursar and Rector) completed a governance survey (Appendix A).

In terms of governance, both Council and senior management agreed that the following was achieved to a high standard (75%+):

- 33.1. Frequency and length of meetings
- 33.2. Development of agenda, minutes and reports
- 33.3. High functioning sub committees
- 33.4. Availability and range of expertise
- 33.5. Fiduciary stewardship

A number of concerns were raised by senior management, specifically:

- 33.6. Council's understanding of its role and functioning and its ability to review its activities and performance. This point was also raised by Council members



- 33.7. Council’s ability, in certain instances, to communicate with the broader community and the presence of Council members at school functions
- 33.8. Council’s understanding of the broader educational environment in certain instances

It was noted in the parent surveys conducted amongst the schools, that there was a very positive response to questions about understanding the role of the governing body in the school.

#### 34. Professional support, administrative and operations staff

Results from the support staff survey (Appendix B) were extremely positive in terms of working environment (80%+), adequate resources, good relationships with teachers and learners, communication at all levels and a positive feeling of appreciation. The single area of concern was a need for more opportunity for training and development. These results were confirmed in the focus group discussions.

The operational staff were less satisfied with their working environment (71%) and expressed a concern around salary levels and conditions of service compared to similar jobs within the educational environment. The focus group discussions raised the issue of more effective communication channels and specifically a need for better facilities in which to gather for tea and lunch breaks.

#### 35. Distinctive areas and values research

A tailored survey instrument was created for St Stithians College to gauge how the various College constituencies perceived aspects of the unique nature of the College, as well as appreciation of some of the core values. The key results of this research among the stakeholders have been summarised below, highlighting the strengths and areas for concern. The column indicating “% agree” includes all responses under “strongly agree” and “agree”.

QUESTION	% AGREE	
<b>ETHOS</b>		
Q: Clear, well communicated value system governing policies, behaviour and decision making	92% +	<b>STRENGTH</b>
Q: Well established aims in line with vision and mission	95%+	
Q: Ethos caring and work oriented	95%+	
Q: Pride, morale, spirit good – students, staff motivated	93%+	

Q: Aware of contents of College charter	Generally 80%+ strongly agree – student body less aware	
Q: Clear, well communicated value system governing policies, behaviour and decision making	92% +	
<b>SOCIAL AWARENESS</b>		
Q: Values enshrined in constitution reflected in the College	90% +	<b>STRENGTH</b>
Q: Diversity actively promoted	90%+	
Q: Critical appreciation of environmental sustainability	97%+	
Q: Informed consciousness of need for service to others	97%+	
Q: Attitude and policies to discrimination visible on campus	85%+ 70%+ students	
Q: Understand College Transformation statement	70%+ 50%+ students	
Q: Support College Transformation statement	70%+ 65%+ students	

<b>CHURCH/FAITH</b>		
Q: I send my child to Saints because Methodist school ( <i>parents only</i> )	40%+	<b>STRENGTH</b>
Q: I attend church at least once per month	Council 40%, staff 75%, students 50%, parents 45%	
Q: Culture of servant leadership promoted throughout College	93%+	
Q: I work at Saints because Methodist school (staff only)	34%+	
Q: I work at Saints because based on Christian foundation (staff only)	75%+	
<b>GENDER EQUALITY</b>		
Q: Gender equality is actively promoted in my school/throughout the college	78%+ academic staff 71%+ prof support staff 67%+ BC students 56%+ GC students	<b>AREA OF</b>

Q: Gender equality is actively promoted between schools	64%+ academic staff 62%+ BC students 34%+ GC students	
<b>COORDINATE MODEL</b>		
Q: I fully understand the coordinate model	90%+ council 87%+ staff 65%+ parents 46%+ students	<b>AREA OF CONCERN</b>
Q: The College provides a number of coordinate activities for students	80%+ Council 71%+ staff 75%+ parents 44% BC students 64% GC students	
Q: Staff are fully committed to the coordinate model	61%+ staff 49% BC students 56% GC students	
Q: The coordinate model is spoken about often in my school	58%+ staff 25% BC students 35% GC students	
Q: The presence of the BC/GC College enhances the experience of school for BC/GC students (students only)	44% BC students 62% GC students	

The ethos, values and mission of the College is strongly supported by all stakeholders. Social awareness in terms of informed consciousness, service to the community, the promotion of diversity and environmental sustainability and opposition to any form of discrimination are confirmed as areas of strength. The College upholds its Christian ethos and is supported by a strong Christian framework both within the College and in the broader community.

The issue of gender equality across the campus is an area of concern particularly amongst the female student body. The coordinate model is understood by Council, staff and parents; less so by the student body. Within the schools the model shows a lack of commitment from staff and students, with the presence of the respective schools doing little to enhance the experience of the coordinate model.

The focus group discussion confirmed some of these perceptions (note, this is qualitative research):

- Perceived “disconnect” between the brand being marketed and reality
- A need from each school to sell their own “brand” of uniqueness and remain separate

- A desire to celebrate events that they do well together such as rowing, choir and drama
- A perception of gender discrimination, with the Boys' College still perceived to be the flagship school
- A desire for voluntary integration with boys' and girls' staff
- An expression that the model should benefit the school and not "water it down"

## RECOMMENDATIONS

36. Review of the 2007 recommendations:

2007 RECOMMENDATION	ACTION AND REFLECTION
36.1. Workers conditions: 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	The 2013 IQAA process took cognizance of the need to engage the professional support, administrative and operational staff in terms of their perceptions of their working environment. All these groups were surveyed quantitatively and qualitatively in focus groups, resulting in recommendations for changes in some aspects of their environment.
36.2. The cross-campus and school IQAA Teams will remain functional to monitor the implementation of both the campus and the school development plans.	The cross campus and school IQAA teams have met on a regular basis to ensure implementation of the 2007 recommendations. This has been a valuable committee in terms of monitoring the process and developing experience and expertise in self-evaluation across members of the schools and the campus.
36.3. Development of policies: the process of reviewing the College policies by the Skills and Equity Committee (SEC) and the HR Director will continue.	College policies are reviewed by SEC and the HR Director on a regular basis. In addition a "policy on policy development" has been created and a schedule of reviewing key policies adhered to. All the policies are available on the website and intranet (internal policies) and tightly controlled by the Rector's office.
36.4. An annual budget is drawn up and approved by the Council (governing body): better communication of the annual budget is required.	The annual budget is well communicated to all stakeholders in the campus newsletter and a public version is made available on the website. An annual information evening is

	scheduled for parents and one of the topics of discussion is an explanation of the budget for the year.
36.5. 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.	The process for reviewing the College Facilities plan and determining the priority and planning of Capex projects has been strictly adhered to in terms of the policy. This process is controlled and monitored by the Rector and all amendments and changes to the facilities plan are debated and agreed by the College Exco and approved by Fincom and Council.
36.6. 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.	The bursar has investigated this issue and the College is unable to realistically provide cover for personal belongings.
36.7. 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.	This issue was thoroughly investigated by the bursar and it was decided that the College would not provide accident cover for students and parents would be required to use their own personal medical aid. This decision has been successfully implemented. It was further decided that bursary students and students who do not have access to medical aid, would be assisted by the College.
36.8. The College's buildings, grounds and facilities are adequate for the schools' purposes: There will be better communication to all stakeholders concerning the allocation of funds for the development of the facilities at the College.	Development of facilities and buildings is well communicated to all stakeholders through newsletters, information evenings and to Council and committees through detailed project reviews.
36.9. 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.	The College continues to be a centre of excellent facilities with an ongoing programme of upgrading both buildings and grounds. The Operations Department takes full advantage of the holiday periods to undertake extensive maintenance and new development is well planned to cause the minimum of disruption. The department is ably assisted by an energetic Property and

	Development committee and the generous time of several committed professional parents.
36.10. 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.	The consideration of disabled facilities are included in all new developments on the campus. Whilst the older buildings still lack adequate facilities, continual upgrades are slowly ensuring that the campus is becoming a friendly place for the physically challenged.
36.11. 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	The College has recently decided to employ the services of a professional nurse to assist members on the campus, with particular emphasis on those staff members who are unable to afford extensive medical care.
36.12. 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.	Continuous dialogue with workers and staff on the campus and the presence of a caring, Christian community has ensured that all staff feel part of the Saints family and are committed members of the workforce.

### 37.2013 recommendations

Recommendation	Time line	Responsibility
37.1. The issues of gender and coordinate model need to be investigated further	July 2014	Rector
37.2. The Christian values need to remain at the core of the teaching model and the organisation. The recently established Church subcommittee is developing a spirituality statement for the College	December 2013	Council sub committee
37.3. The high level of social awareness needs to continue, particularly with the strategic goal of developing partnerships within the broader community and influencing the national development of education in the country	December 2014 in terms of partnership; rest "ongoing"	Rector / EXCO

37.4. Levels of effective communication need to be maintained and constantly improved to all stakeholders, particularly in the light of emerging social media trends	Ongoing improvements	Rector/ Marketing
37.5. Governance issues need to be examined with representatives of the Council and senior management	October 2014	Senior management/ Council
37.6. The issues presented by the operations staff will be further discussed with HR and an appropriate investigation proposed	February 2014	HR Director/Ops Director
37.7. The expressed need for more training and development by the administrative staff will be facilitated by HR and the relevant line managers	April 2014	HR Director/Dept Directors
37.8. Some dissatisfaction with the effectiveness of the appraisal system, as noted in the school reports, will be investigated by EXCO and monitored over a 3 year cycle	May 2014 and ongoing	Rector/EXCO
37.9. The facilities plan will take cognisance of the facility needs of the various schools in the annual capex projects	December 2013 for 2014	EXCO
37.10. "Thinking schools" and the "Leadership programme" were identified as key areas of strength across the schools and will continue to be a focus of innovation in all schools	December 2013 and ongoing	Rector and Heads

## CONCLUSION

38. The 2013 IQAA evaluation has been an extremely beneficial process for the College as a whole. There were many intangible benefits attached to the process, in particular the class observation process whereby many staff benefited from the experience of entering a different class environment.

39. The campus report and school reports will be tabled at the College EXCO and both campus and school development plans discussed.

40. The College IQAA team will remain functional to monitor the implementation of both the campus and school development plans.

## **THANKS**

All the team leaders were appreciative of the assistance and input provided by the IQAA mentors, in particular Lynne Rivett Carnac who led the IQAA team. Thanks need to be attributed to the College team leaders and their teams for the following such a rigorous process and committing themselves wholeheartedly to the process.