

**ANNUAL SCHOOL REPORT 2016–2017  
FOR PARENTS' ADVISORY COUNCIL AGM  
(14 September 2017)**

**Loreto College, Mullingar**

Significant Developments over the past year:

- Our IT curriculum for all first years was rolled out again in 2016-17 and has been hugely successful. This initiative will continue for all first year classes this year.
- A wonderful set of modules on scratch computing and coding was delivered through Athlone Education Centre to all first year students. The school was selected as part of a Google sponsored initiative for girls in the STEM subjects.
- Two of our teachers completed a Diploma in Teaching Chinese Language and Culture at UCD. Forty Transition Years and fifth year students sat exams for a Level 1 certificate in Chinese Language & Culture and all achieved over 80% with many achieving over 95%.
- Three of our teachers completed a summer course in 'Wellbeing and Happiness' in preparation for the introduction of *Wellbeing* as a Junior Cycle subject.

- Results

Leaving Certificate results were distributed to 122 girls on Wednesday 16 August. Results were very well received by students and teachers. This was the first year of the new grading system where H1/O1 = 90+%; H2/O2 = 80-89%; H3/O3 = 70-79%; H4/O4 = 60-69% etc.

Statistics show a steadily improving trend over the past three years:

The percentage of students achieving 300+ points has risen from 52% in 2015 to 59% in 2016 to 68% in 2017.

38 students sat the LCVP examination. Results were very good with 26 out of the 38 students including their LCVP as part of their points total for college.

Leaving Cert results were exceptional this year with 17% of our students achieving over 500 points including four students

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over 600 points. The three girls who achieved the maximum of 625 points have been well highlighted in the local media.

GCSE Physical Education results were also issued in late August and the five students did extremely well student; A = 3 students: A\* = 2 students.

Girls who took on leadership roles in the school and who were involved in music, sport, choir, justice and peace groups, Vincent De Paul society, Students' Council achieved excellent results and they left Loreto very well-rounded young women with a very broad skill set. We take pride in the academic success of our graduates but also in their ability to be active responsible global citizens.

Junior Cert results were distributed to 149 girls on Wednesday 14 September and were absolutely excellent. The vast majority of subject results are far in excess of the national norm, which is very good news for all. The first change in grading came into place for English with students receiving Distinction 90%+, Higher Merit 75-89%, Merit 55-74%, Achieved 40-54% and Partially Achieved 20-39% instead of the more familiar ABCD

Congratulations to all students on these achievements.

Our Annual Awards Ceremony will take place on Friday 13 October where we will honour the academic achievements of our students for the last academic year.

- New Teachers

Elizabeth Percival – Biology, Maths & Science;

Claudia Hyland – Maths and Science;

Samuel Carroll – English, Special Education & Wellbeing;

Louise McEntire – Special Education;

Sharon Dillon – French & Business.

Clare Geraghty – Business, Geography and Special needs teaching.

New Special Needs Assistant- Suzanne Delemare Scally

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- Very successful trips to Paris, Barcelona and our exchange school in Gunzburg, Germany took place during the year.
- The Library/Information Technology Room is nearing completion and we are being strongly considered for funding by Mullingar Rotary Club to assist the completion of the project. The Board of Management at its meeting last night gave a strong financial commitment to enable the completion of the work as top priority. It was hoped to move Reception and the entrance for parents visiting the school to the original convent door during the last academic year but it is high on the agenda for completion before Christmas.
- The 'Breakfast Club' that was established with the help of Loreto Special Projects funding has continued in the last academic year and is particularly popular in the winter months with the girls who arrive very early to school.

### Summer Projects 2017

- The front hallway around Reception was painted as well as two classrooms – B4 and B13. B15 was divided to make two classrooms B15 and B17 – painted and new carpets and equipped with computer, data projector etc as well as 60 new desks and chairs. Carpets were cleaned on B corridor; B21 was painted and new carpet fitted; new lockers were purchased for the 1<sup>st</sup> yr locker room at a cost of €7,000; several corridors were painted and carpet tiles were fitted outside A14.
- Blinds will be fitted on all remaining windows on the C Corridor over the next few weeks.
- Thirty new computers were purchased for the Computer Room using DES ICT funding.
- Two manholes in the grounds had to be reinforced having collapsed under the pressure of lorries and buses at a cost of €800 per manhole + VAT.

### Enrolment

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Our first year enrolment has remained steady at 148 students. A survey of the demographics for the next number of years indicates that the school should be able to serve the needs of the community with an intake of 150 girls each year for the foreseeable future.

- Health Promoting Schools

Another great example of cooperation amongst our school community is our Health Promoting Schools initiative. The committee composed of teachers, students and parents have done amazing work. We welcome the expertise of parents in the different elements of the HPS programme. We look forward to a wide variety of initiatives throughout the year in terms of fitness, nutrition, women's health issues and general wellbeing.

- School Improvement Plan – Phase 3

Teachers are moving ahead with strategies for Assessment for Learning as the third phase of our School Improvement Plan. The focus is on 'sharing the learning intention' and 'establishing success criteria'.

- Finance:

Finance remains a major concern and the extra costs of the new building and the addition of the convent pose ongoing problems in terms of day to day expenses and general maintenance. Heating and electricity expenditure has been extremely high and great reductions in these bills have been achieved over the last year. Capitation has been cut every year recently and there are no plans to restore capitation grants to pre-recession levels. Because of inequities in funding, it is unfortunate that voluntary secondary schools like ours need to ask parents for voluntary contributions to fund the basic day to day running of our schools.

- Pedestrian Crossing/Traffic Management

The new traffic system and pedestrian crossing as well as the gate onto the canal have greatly improved student safety in the school grounds and on the main road. However we are still anxious to improve safety and encourage parents to park in the nearest public car parks especially in the evenings. Parking is very limited in the grounds of the school and chaos is created if people park in the wrong place.

- Induction of first years and other new students.

First year students with special needs and girls who joined the school from a distance or who didn't know any other students were invited for an induction week before the school officially opened organised by Guidance Counsellor, Ms Sinead Hyland ably assisted by SNA Ms Barbara Keena. They were afforded a wonderful opportunity to familiarise themselves with the school and were given tips on study skills and organisational methods. Girls from other year groups joining the school also attended and found the experience most beneficial as they would be the only 'new girls' in their classes. The three hour morning sessions each day were a huge success and the programme has become an annual event.

- **Supervised Study**

In the past two academic years and in consultation with the Parents' Advisory Committee, the school has recommenced the provision of supervised study after school. There was an excellent uptake from all year groups and study will hopefully continue throughout the new school year. The uptake for this year is in the region of fifty students. Supervised study is available from 4.15pm to 6.45pm on Monday to Thursday at a cost of €15 per week, payable per term, in advance. Supervised study is also being offered on Friday from 1.30 to 3.30pm.

- **Transition Year** was a huge success last year with the highlight being the production of 'Grease'. Seventy two students opted for TY in the last academic year and that number has risen to eighty three for this year. December will see our production of 'Grease' on stage. Parents were hugely helpful last year and we would hope for similar support this year.

- **Retirements**

This year we lost three of our most experienced and highly respected teachers opted for non-compulsory retirement this summer under HRA. We wish good health and happiness to Sheila Cox, Teresa Brady and Sinead Gilligan on their retirement and I acknowledge their huge contribution to the school over many years in the area of Music, Irish and French respectively.

- Posts of Responsibility in the school have dropped considerably over the past number of years and it is very difficult for schools to continue to function. Since 2009, the school has lost two Assistant Principal positions and thirteen Special Duties positions which have had a devastating effect on activities and efficiency in the school. Due to delays with DES circulars, our three vacant Year Head positions can't be filled and teachers are performing duties in these areas voluntarily while we await permission to advertise and appoint.
- Staff  
All of the activities and achievements outlined in this report are only possible because of the huge commitment and spirit of generosity that is endemic among all staff members here in Loreto College. All aspects of sporting and other extra-curricular activities are reported to the Parents' Advisory Council at the monthly meetings.
- Appreciation  
The school is hugely appreciative of the work undertaken by the parent nominees on the Board of Management. The commitment and involvement of Ms Anne Lordan and Mr Joe Sullivan is very much appreciated and their personal support to me has been immense.  
Special thanks to the officers, Sally Ann O'Donnell, Tracy Johnston and Charlotte Maguire and all members of the committee for their involvement in the Parents' Advisory Council over a number of years. I look forward to working with the new committee during the next academic year.  
Former chairperson Ms Breda Ward finished her last year on our council and it was a pleasure to welcome her back in late August to deliver staff training on CPR and AED.  
I take this opportunity to thank all parents for their support of the school and its development. I urge you to maintain a strong involvement in school life as we continue in partnership to provide the best possible educational opportunities for our girls.

Marése Bell  
Principal