



Spiritan Education Trust Office Report Board of Directors' Meeting January 2020

Spiritan Chaplaincy.

#In December, Ronan met with the lay and Spiritan chaplains in Rockwell in a support capacity. The two chaplains are developing their ministries. However, developing appropriate supervisory practices is important for both. In January 2021 the contract for the Spiritan Chaplain will be reviewed as per the agreement with SET and Province.

The Office has also met with all other school chaplains (lay and Spiritan) who continue to develop their work and ministry in the schools.

SET Education Sub-Committee.

The committee met on January the 7th and considered the issues below.

- Whose responsibility is it to address the issue of Junior Schools- the congregation or SET?
- Are our schools charities? Legally and ethically?
- Can the model currently used by some of the C.o I. schools work for us? - ie- a campus board responsible for both Senior and Junior schools.
- We should not be afraid of reservations which may be articulated by some of the stakeholders although consultation with those stakeholders is essential in any restructuring.
- There are ethical considerations to be addressed re Willow Senior. How comfortable would we be if the current situation in relation to Willow were to come under public scrutiny?
- What is the relationship between SET and the BoM's of our schools?
- Do we need a governance document to redefine and clarify that relationship?
- Who controls the money? Schools, Trust or the congregation?
- Given the demographic of the congregation, a structure must be put in place which protects our charism and future proofs Spiritan education in Ireland.
- How do we support Rathcoole in any meaningful way?

- Are there opportunities for us as a trust to extend our mission beyond the schools for which we are currently responsible?

SET/Spiritan Parish of Bawnogue.

The SIFM office will facilitate the parish parents evening for confirmation. SET will also lead a primary school leadership programme for 5th class nearer Easter.

SET/Webinar for Middle Leaders.

From our analysis of the webinar we discovered that a number of people failed to engage fully on the 20th November. This was disappointing and these individuals were written to. In consultation with the other trusts we decided to reopen the webinar for a further 24 hours as otherwise their project partners could be negatively impacted. One individual from a Spiritan school was not given the opportunity to access the webinar again as her engagement in the Middle Leaders' programme had raised other concerns. She was informed of this by the E.O. and told she could reapply next year.

Global Citizenship Education and Ethos Teachers' working committees.

Both teacher's group will meet again in January and Early February. The GCE committee will focus on the upcoming showcase event as well as a new initiative in the area of student leadership training. 4/5 students from each of the schools will be invited to attend a leadership programme in GCE on March 5th/6th. The Teachers' ethos committee will continue to look at the area of teacher engagement with ethos. There will be two presentation at the next meeting. Peer ministry and Spiritan in the curriculum.

Legal Advice.

On Tuesday the 17th of December, The Chair, The Company Secretary and the E.O attended a meeting with Eversheds to explore the options available to us re the status of the Junior schools and to consider the proposals from MHC re the same. It was agreed that we would have a response prior to our next board meeting in January.

SET Ethos Sub Committee.

A meeting of the subcommittee is planned in February and before the next BOD meeting.

Confirmation Retreats/ Spiritan student facilitation.

SET will facilitate Confirmation retreats for St Mary's Junior School and St Michael's Junior School in the last two weeks of January. Since September, SET facilitated the supervision and training of a Spiritan Seminarian Levis Kapchanga in the area of retreat facilitation. Levis is currently attending the Shekina retreat programme (Level 7 programme). As part of his course assessment, Levis will lead both Confirmation retreats for St. Mary's junior school on January 27th and 28th.

SET/Parents' presentation.

SET will be facilitating parent presentations for parents of confirmation students in Willow over the next number of weeks.

Cross- colleges Spiritan Student Workshop.

On Wednesday January 9th a group of students representing Blackrock college, Templeogue College, St Michael's College, St. Mary College and Holy Ghost prep School (USA) gathered in Blackrock College to explore Spiritan Schools in the future. This exploration pursued the question; what would a Spiritan school look like in the future based on the seven Spiritan core values?

A process was prepared by the Spiritan Education Trust to aid student voices to be heard. This process included appropriate facilitation.

Schedule

Duration: 3 hours.

9.00am - Prayer/Reflection.

9.15am - Welcome and introduction to the day

9.25am - Energizer.

9.30am - Small Group work - Exploring values. Walking debate method

10.00am – Contract & communication skills.

10.15am – Break.

10.30am – Task: Planning a Spiritan school for the future. See Appendix one

11.30am – Presentation of the project.

12pm - Close.

Conclusion of findings.

- It was clear from the student feedback that the priority for all participants was that the Spiritan school community should be environmentally sustainable. This gathering of Spiritan students suggested that all schools should support an environmentally friendly planning and design process

today and in the future. The final presentations included the use of wind turbines, solar panels etc.

- Another main finding was the inclusion of a visible faith structure (personal and community). The inclusion of a chapel, reflective spaces, memorial gardens were high priorities for students.
- Community was emphasised as a theme for students. Large areas for mixing as a school community was significant and not just class social area.
- Community was not just about the school community but also the community beyond the school. One suggestion was a night shelter/food distribution centre based on the school campus. The sports pitches were strategically located to enable community access outside of school hours.
- A specified Classroom was not a priority, however themed areas of the school were mentioned as a method to promote academic subjects.
- Sporting activities was high on the agenda for students with a clear emphasis on the diversity of games available to the student community.

Observations/Conclusions.

The Facilitators were agreed that there was a common understanding of Spiritan education from all schools. Some students were able to articulate this understanding better than others, but it was present in all.

All students have a real sense of urgency around the issues of climate change and environmental injustice. This was matched with the high regard the students placed on community. This identification of community included building relationships both inside the school community and the local community.

At a time of reduced faith practice in Ireland, it was interesting to hear young voices express the visible inclusion of faith spaces within the schools' structures of the future.

Finally, SET would like to thank Mr Patrick O'Neill, (TY Coordinator, Blackrock College) for his kind invitation to the rest of the Spiritan secondary schools on this day. It was Patrick's own initiative to contact SET which led to the development of this day.

Annual School Reports.

All of our schools apart from one (with the permission of the E.O.) have submitted their Annual School reports and the process of meeting with the Principals and submitting a response is almost complete. This exercise has given us the opportunity to “shine a light into our schools” and to agree where action is required. The advice from Ronan and Tom J. in respect of their areas of responsibility has facilitated a discussion with the schools which helps us to ensure that we fulfil our role as trustees.

The meetings conducted with the principals have been cordial and positive. It is significant that all of the School Reports have been an agenda item at BoM meetings and our response has been to the BoM as well. This ensures that the BoM is informed about school policies and also that the relationship between the Principal and Board is such that the principal fulfils his role under Article 22 to keep the BoM fully informed about school activities.

Rockwell College.

New concerns continue to come to light re Rockwell especially in relation to adequate supervision of students. All of these are being managed by the commitment of an energetic and responsible board.

The biggest challenge continues to be the inadequacies of the Senior Management Team.

Templeogue College.

The major issue referred to at our last meeting has been resolved, due primarily to the generosity of the principal and her determination to establish and maintain clear lines of accountability between herself and her staff.

There remain many other challenges but progress is being made on all fronts.

A meeting was held on Tuesday the 14th of January between representatives of the BoM, the E.O. of SET and representatives of the Property and Finance Office to consider the optimum use of the swimming pool in Templeogue.

Dates for Diary.

January 20th, 21st, 22nd St. Michael’s Junior School Confirmation Retreats.

January 22nd Middle Leadership, Dublin 4.30pm.

January 23rd, 24th Competency-Based Interview Training

January 27th St Mary’s Junior School-BoM Training.

January 27th, 28th, St. Mary’s Junior School Confirmation Retreats.

January 30th SET Teachers Ethos working group.
February 10. St Michael's Anniversary Concert in the NCH.
February 12th SET Global Citizenship Education Lead teachers meeting.
February 14th. 5 Colleges Dinner, Clayton Hotel.
February 18th. Education Sub-Committee meeting. 5pm.
February 24th SET BoD meeting. 6pm.