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UPLANDS PREPARATORY SCHOOL

MENTOR REPORT

INTRODUCTION

School name: Uplands Preparatory School

Model: Comprehensive

Date of evaluation: 1-5 August 2011

Names of team leaders: Mr David Ernstzen – Intermediate and Senior phases
Mrs Alexia Frost – Pre school and Foundation phase

Mentor: Mrs Margaret Rudolph

RECEPTION AND TONE

The Mentor was made welcome at the school at the school and throughout experienced a positive and friendly attitude from all sectors of the school community. The Head, Mr Brett Frost, was particularly welcoming and supportive throughout the process which was much appreciated.

Initially, the staff was unsure of the implications of such an evaluation but after the process was explained in detail they were reassured.

RIGOUR AND EFFICIENCY OF THE EVALUATION

The team

One team representing all phases was selected. The Foundation Phase team leader had had an IQAA evaluation at her previous school and was familiar with the process. Some of the team members had attended an earlier training workshop, all had a copy and were familiar with the handbook "School in a Mirror"

After the pre-evaluation meeting the Mentor and Team leaders communicated by email.

Meetings

At the pre-evaluation meeting the Mentor was introduced to the team and given a guided tour of the school.

During the evaluation period there were detailed debriefing meetings every afternoon attended by all team members and the Head. The final meeting could, therefore, concentrate on the writing of the report.

Areas of operation

As this was a Comprehensive Evaluation the focus was on all the areas of operation.

Means and Methods

The team made use of all possible means to evaluate the school:

- *Opinion surveys*

The Opinion surveys were completed shortly before the evaluation and, unfortunately, soon after a difficult period resulting in some negative scoring. These scores were negated by staff comments in the focus groups.

- *Class visits*

The Mentor visited every class in the school accompanied by a team member. This included observing the sport in the afternoon.

- *Focus groups*

The team identified topics that they wished to unpack and these were discussed in detail by parents staff and pupils. Good suggestions were made and many formed the basis of the report.

- *Interviews*

The Mentor was accorded an opportunity to interview the administration staff and their modus operandi was explained in detail.

The catering and housekeeping staff were all interviewed and appreciated the opportunity to be included in the process.

The Estate Manager was able to demonstrate to the Mentor the magnitude of the building and grounds maintenance which is an important aspect of the school. The grounds staff were proud of their contribution to the running of the school

The Mentor was privileged to interview the School Chaplain who ministers to both College and Prep School pupils. A Chapel service with communion is held weekly with all Gr 4-7 pupils participating. The Chaplain is available for counselling.

ESTIMATION OF THE SUCCESS OF THE EVALUATION

The school is compliant with the ISASA requirements for membership.

The team identified and celebrated the strengths of the school. The areas of concern that were addressed correspond with the observations of the Mentor and are realistic. The recommendations are reasonable and should be easily implemented.

The staff seemed to have enjoyed the exercise and have indicated they would like the practice of self evaluation and class visits to continue.

GENERAL IMPRESSIONS GAINED BY THE MENTOR

The school has a proud history and much is reflected in the original home which, as Webster House, is the main building housing the Administration offices. A warm wood fire welcomes visitors in the reception office on cold winter mornings!

There is an emphasis on preserving the environment and it is noticeable that there is little or no litter, a pleasant experience, as is the concentration on the water – wise and indigenous gardens.

ENDORSEMENT OF THE INTERNAL TEAM'S EVALUATION REPORT

The Evaluators were conscientious and critical in their evaluations identifying positive and negative aspects and the process was efficiently and honestly carried out. The evaluation was completed bearing the needs of the pupils in mind.

I am pleased to be able to endorse the Evaluation Team's report and recommendations.

CONCLUSION

It was a great pleasure acting as Mentor for the Comprehensive Self Evaluation for Uplands Preparatory School which is a well run and happy school. It was a positive experience.

I should like to express my sincere appreciation to the Head Mr Brett Frost, the Team Leaders, the Report Writer and the Team, the Administrative and Teaching Staff, the Parents and Pupils for the time and effort they spent during this phase of the evaluation process and for their commitment in pursuit of what is in the best interests of the pupils at Uplands Preparatory School .

I wish the Head the Staff, the Pupils and Parents every success in their future endeavours to maintain and enhance the attributes of this fine school.

M J Rudolph
IQAA Mentor

2011-10-17