



ST STITHIANS  
COLLEGE

# ST STITHIANS BOYS' COLLEGE

## IQAA REPORT

2013

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## Appendices:

- Matric results
- Data for survey (IQAA analysis only)
- Statement of Professional Intent
- The Hedgehog Concept
- Theo Garran's speech to the school

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

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St Stithians Boys' College has undergone the IQAA process in order to evaluate the quality of education provided at our school. The evaluation process aimed to identify areas of strength and areas of weakness and to establish what can be done to improve the service we offer for the benefit of all stakeholders. External and internal evaluation was used to help us make judgements on the quality of our education, and to enable us to develop a future plan for the continued growth and development of the Boys' College.

### **The members of our team were:**

1. Peter Wright – Team Leader; Deputy Headmaster (Head of Academics)
2. Tracey Harvey – Head of History
3. Bridget Webster – Head of English; Report Writer
4. Cecelia Erasmus – Afrikaans department
5. Luke Hartley – Geography department and Head of Collins House
6. Heather Frankiskos – Head of Mathematics
7. Anne Bredenkamp – Biology department and Foundation Phase Director
8. Herman Bezuidenhout – Afrikaans Department and Head of Mountstephens House
9. Bruce Nozaic – Head of Science
10. Basie Viljoen – Head of Culture

### **External Mentor appointed by IQAA:**

Kevin Tait

### **Date of Evaluation:**

May 2013

## 2. GENERAL BACKGROUND

The Boys' College has:

- 2.1 778 students
- 2.2 66 members of teaching staff
- 2.3 7 members of administrative staff
- 2.4 9 members of professional support staff
- 2.5 A monastic school within a co-ordinate model. This model ensures 'the best of both worlds' and has added to the number of facilities on the ground which are shared.
- 2.6 The first school, along with the Boys' Prep school, built on the campus. Built 60 years ago and is the largest of the five schools on campus
- 2.7 Houses the Chapel in its main quad
- 2.8 We have two boarding houses- Collins and Mountstephens – 130 boarders
- 2.9 Model of the report is based on Core plus Boarding

St Stithians Boys' College is a progressive traditional school, founded to provide a liberal Methodist education. The commitment to Christian ideals starts with our three Chapel services per week, and is carried over into the pastoral care in tutor classes, such as the no-swearing campaign and the values campaign, and underpins our extensive community service programme.

The College falls in the higher bracket of Independent schools, in terms of fees. Many of our parents come from a 'wealthy' socio-economic group, but there is a range of socio-economic backgrounds. This diversity of socio-economic backgrounds has increased as the perception of the failure of government schools has increased

The school itself is lodged within an extensive estate, prime property, in the middle of Sandton, and as such, has beautiful grounds; it is often referred to as an 'oasis in the city.' There is extensive bird life, especially around the dams. There is also a large number of fields, two Hockey 'Astro turfs' and five swimming pools (including a diving pool). 30 members of staff stay on the property, in either staff accommodation or boarding facilities. This means that the school can offer its wide range of activities by using 'after hours.'

There are a small percentage of bursary-based students and the school has an active inclusion policy, with an Academic Support Department. Our excellent academic results of these inclusion boys is a result of the extensive academic support programme offered at the school for these inclusion learners. We also continue to have a small percentage of boys with significant physical challenges, including sight, mobility and hearing. There is a wide range of academic abilities in the student body.

The school strives to provide a busy, holistic education based on six pillars: academic, cultural, sporting, leadership, service and spiritual, and thus the school strives to live by its mottos 'One and All' and 'A South African School making a World of Difference.' This difference can often be seen in the extensive community service programme we have. There are extensive school-based activities such as: visits to Leeuwkop Prison and impoverished areas; Thandelwazi Saturday School, and also, boys are encouraged to initiate service projects of their own. The school strives to live by the philosophy that every boy will find his niche at the school, so a wide range of extra murals and cultural activities are available for the boys. The Academic Programme we run on Monday and Tuesday afternoons give the boys opportunities to seek help or extend their skills. Our recent introduction of the Reading Programme in Grades 8 and 9, to encourage a love of reading, has had very good results.

The constant thinking and re-thinking of our Leadership Programme (B2K) is to attempt to ensure that every boy who arrives as a Bezzant in Grade 8 leaves as a Knight in Grade 12. The five year programme comprises camps; modules in servant leadership, a 'Bush-school' experience and Adventure experience. These form the basis of our 'rites of passage.'

The staff has adopted a 'Statement of Professional Intent' and has developed a 'Hedgehog Concept', (based on the work of Jim Collins) which describes where we feel we can be world leaders. (See Appendix). The staff is a dedicated, committed staff, who strives to serve as role models and often go above and beyond the expected. We have a staff ratio of 11.8:1, and the low staff turnover speaks of a satisfied staff.

Saints Boys' is an unconventional school in that we are innovative and constantly seek to push the boundaries.

### **3. COMPLIANCE STATEMENT**

This was completed by the Headmaster without qualification and submitted to IQAA by the mentor.

### **4. AREAS OF OPERATION EVALUATED**

- 4.1 Teaching and learning and attainments
- 4.2 Functioning of the school
- 4.3 Boarding

### **5. MEANS AND METHODS USED**

- 5.1 Surveys
- 5.2 Interviews with: parents, learners, staff, the Headmaster
- 5.3 Focus groups
- 5.4 Class visits
- 5.5 Mentor visit
- 5.6 Analysis of policies
- 5.7 Grade 8 parents' barazza

### **6. OPINION SURVEYS**

- 6.1 Standard IQAA survey to: learners, staff and parents
- 6.2 IQAA survey- governance and finance
- 6.3 Survey of boarders

The compiled data from the survey is included in the Appendix. Except for the boarders' survey, the scoring of the responses to the questions was done by the IQAA office. All areas where there was a significant range in the responses were highlighted. Many of these areas were not surprising to the school, and gave quantitative affirmation to our anecdotal evidence

The recording and classification of the free responses to the survey was largely done by the team leader. The summarised results are also in the Appendix.

The major strengths and weaknesses highlighted by both parts of the surveys are raised in the next section, 'FINDINGS.'

## 7. FINDINGS

### 7.1.1 Focus Area 1: Learning and Teaching

Findings and recommendations based on:

- Classroom observations
- Staff, learner and parent surveys
- Focus Groups on:
  - Academic integrity and plagiarism (Heather Frankiskos, Anne Bredenkamp and a selection of boys)
  - Perception of bullying and academic dishonesty (Herman Bezuidenhout, Bruce Nozaic and staff)
  - Swearing, blasphemy and appropriate behaviour (Kevin Tait, Heather Frankiskos and a selection of SRC boys)
  - An open-ended Grade 8 parents' barazza

### 7.1.2 Findings: (throughout the report, the source of the evidence will be in parentheses)

Key Strengths:

- The learners are happy (boys' survey, parents' survey and staff's survey)
- High academic standards (boys' survey, parents' survey and staff's survey)
- Involvement outside of the classroom (boys' survey and staff's survey)
- Good pride in the school (boys' survey and staff's survey)
- Good progress is made (boys' survey)
- The staff is very knowledgeable about their individual subjects – excellent subject knowledge (class visit observation)
- Lessons are well planned (class visit observation)
- Almost all teachers had very good to excellent rapport with the boys (class visit observation)
- Good use of visual aids: PowerPoint etc. (Class visit observation)
- Diverse teaching methods and styles (class visit observation)
- A safe and focused environment for the boys (class visit observation)
- The introduction of academic afternoons and the reading programme (Interview with the Headmaster, David Knowles)
- Excellent matric results (Interview with the Headmaster, David Knowles)

Areas of concern

- Discipline is not as it should be (boys' survey)
- Theft (boys' survey and parents' survey) (*It should be noted that this evidence is to be read in the light of the great amount of lost property that is recovered every day, much of which remains unclaimed*)
- Dissatisfaction with homework given (boys' survey)
- Some boys are concerned that they are bored (boys' survey). This was not validated by classroom observations
- Some boys feel that not enough career guidance is offered (boys' survey). In fact, there are a number of counsellors available every day, and the school has a career assessment available to the boys
- Some teachers are perceived to be unapproachable by some boys (boys' survey)  
Some boys felt that the school counsellor is not easily accessible (boys' survey)  
Counsellors are available every day during school hours and after school
- Not enough co-operative work being done (class visit observation)

- A concern around cycle testing/testing slots (boys' survey and focus group)
- Lessons are too 'teacher-driven' (class visit observation)
- Not enough appropriate group work being done (class visit observation)
- Teachers are sometimes too quick to 'rescue' the boys (class visit observation)

*Note: the classroom observations were conducted at a time of significant trauma for the school, following the death of one of the Grade 12 boys. The evaluation committee felt that the need for establishing a good pace and momentum in the school contributed to the 'teacher-dominant' lessons that were observed.*

## 7.2.1 Focus Area 2: Functioning of the School

Findings and recommendations based on:

- Classroom observations
- Staff, learner and parent surveys
- Focus Groups on:
  - Boarding (Kevin Tait)
  - Bullying and academic honesty (Bruce Nozaic and Herman Bezuidenhout)
  - Interview with parents
  - Interview with the Headmaster: David Knowles

## 7.2.2 Findings:

Key Strengths:

- Excellent facilities (boys' survey and staff's survey)
- Good reporting system (parents' survey)
- Always launching new ideas (Interview with the Headmaster, David Knowles)

Areas of concern:

- Parents and staff feel they do not understand the role of the governing body
- Class size is too big in some instances (boys' survey, staff survey and observation during class visits)
- Some classrooms are too small for the class (class visit observation)
- Bullying: An area where the different constituencies differed in their opinion was around bullying, where the staff was significantly more concerned than the surveyed groups. This discrepancy was investigated in a focus group. It appears that what boys perceive as 'dissing' and joking, the staff sees as verbal bullying
- Appraisal system is seen as ineffective (staff's survey)
- There is a sense that there is some unfair discrimination at school. This was not reflected in the parents' or students' surveys. Again, we note that the staff seem to be very sensitive to these issues (see the bullet point on bullying) (staff's survey)
- The IT is not as effective or efficient as it should be (Interview with the Headmaster and free responses from boys, parents and especially staff's surveys)
- The lack of balanced perspective on the achievements of the school as a whole. There is an overly large impact on the school if one prominent team performs below expectations, which overshadows excellent achievements by other teams and sporting codes
- Influences on the boys from outside e.g. Social media, smartphones, swearing etc. (Interview with the Headmaster)

### 7.3.1 Focus Area 9: Boarding

Findings and recommendations based on:

- Focus group (Kevin Tait and Luke Hartley)
- Survey of boarders

### 7.3.2 Findings:

Key Strengths:

- Boarders enjoy their living areas and the facilities they have access to on campus.
- The Boarding Houses are well supervised
- Boarders feel safe in the Houses
- The boarding staff is well aware of the movements of the boarders and where they are at all times
- Boarding staff in residence provide good pastoral, disciplinary and academic care to each boarder
- There is good provision for study time and places available for all grades
- Contact with parents and friends outside of the school is allowed and encouraged
- Provision is made for religious observance
- The School ensures that no boarder is subjected to physical abuse
- The monitoring of the Boarding House by CCTV, but quick accessibility to CCTV footage by hostel staff is a problem that needs to be addressed
- Boarders enjoy the interaction amongst their peers and with the seniors in the Houses
- Food is of an acceptable standard, but sometime insufficient variety and options for halal requirements
- The demographics of the Boarding Houses have changed to more closely resemble those of the school and of our community

Areas of concern

- Laundry: not cleaning clothing properly and items of clothing are frequently lost.
- Bedrooms and toilet facilities need to be cleaned more thoroughly
- Outsiders entering into the Houses needs to be more controlled
- Individuals' belongings are being used without permission, particularly amongst the Grade 8s. There is a perception that boarders do not respect one another's 'personal space' and belongings
- Communication lines between parents and Boarding Houses
- Quantity of food is not always enough
- Travel arrangements for Boarders to sporting events during the week

## 8. RECOMMENDATIONS

### 8.1. Focus Area 1: Learning and Teaching

RECOMMENDATION	WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?	DEADLINE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Institute a junior cycle testing period</li> </ul>	P Wright and timetable committee	Jan 2014
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have a testing slot for option subjects which are timetabled over multiple lines. (e.g. History &amp; Life Sciences)</li> </ul>	P Wright and HODs	3rd term 2013
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing awareness of academic integrity (cheating and plagiarism)</li> </ul>	P Wright, HODs and all staff	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing awareness and Tutor-based lessons on swearing, values and appropriate behaviour</li> </ul>	M McConnachie, House Directors, all staff.	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Honour Council introduced by the prefects will address incidents on swearing, bullying and cheating</li> </ul>	M McConnachie, Head Boy	July 2013
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Theft- a great deal of property is not stolen; it is found in lost property. A new system of sorting and retrieving the lost property has been introduced. Cameras have been introduced near the lockers. Future, on-going vigilance will always be needed.</li> </ul>	Boys Senior management to communicate with Security staff	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Boredom – if lessons become more ‘learner driven’, this should lessen.</li> </ul>	HODs and Academic Support staff	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The school counsellors are always available; learners feel there is a stigma attached to seeing them.</li> </ul>	Student Support Department	Ongoing Campaign in early 2014

Further the following key strengths are to be fostered:

RECOMMENDATION	WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High academic standards</li> </ul>	Senior management HODs Staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Happy students</li> </ul>	All

## 8.2 Focus Area 2: Functioning of the School

RECOMMENDATION	WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?	DEADLINE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plans are in place to improve the IT. This will be an ongoing roll-out and discussion. However, there is a need to come to some principled/philosophical discussion soon, which will underpin the strategy going forward.</li> </ul>	Principle decisions: D Knowles, P Wright, P Mayers Roll out	October 2013  Continual
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is a need to recruit staff who are able to coach and manage Rugby. There is also a need to create a more balanced and holistic approach to our ethos. The evidence of recent cultural, academic and sporting results, in other disciplines and/or other teams, should not be entirely eclipsed by a single set of results, however prominent the team or sport. (Included in the Appendix is Theo Garren's speech delivered to the school during a Chapel service on this issue)</li> </ul>	D Knowles I Rickleton  D Knowles, senior management, all staff and boys	As opportunity arises Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bullying and theft - both these issues will need to be addressed constantly. The school will never be able to eradicate these issues, not turn a blind eye to them.</li> </ul>	Senior management Support staff	Ongoing

Further the following key strengths are to be fostered:

RECOMMENDATION	WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Excellent facilities</li> </ul>	School management Operations Department Planning, developing Committee All stakeholders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good reporting system</li> </ul>	P Wright Senior management HODs, staff, parents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Innovation</li> </ul>	All stakeholders

### 8.3 Focus Area 3: Boarding

RECOMMENDATION	WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?	DEADLINE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Barazzas will be held twice a year. The first one for the new parents in the House and the second for all parents</li> </ul>	L Hartley and H Bezuidenhout	1st January 2014
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A food committee with representatives from each grade will be established – not SRC members.</li> </ul>	L Hartley and H Bezuidenhout	Term 3 2013
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A task team will be set-up to evaluate the way forward with the cleaning and laundry services, with the possibility of a change of service provider</li> </ul>	L Hartley and R Swart	Done
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Houses need to remain locked during the school day and a register book needs to be established to register who has been in and out of the Houses</li> </ul>	L Hartley H Bezuidenhout Senior Management	New entry system Term 3 2013 then ongoing

### Reflection on IQAA 2007

In 2007 the Boys' College underwent an IQAA process. In the table below we have repeated the recommendations from that process and tried to capture the progress in that area in the intervening period.

	Recommendation	Progress
Focus Area: Teaching and Learning	All teachers to attend the Assessor's Course offered by the IEB (this process had begun and was due to be completed by March 2008)	Almost all of our academic staff members have been on the Assessor's Course, including those who have joined us since 2007. Like the Investment in Excellence course, we see this as a core part of our staff development early on in a teacher's time in our employment
	More classrooms should be equipped with newer technology	Data projectors are in all classrooms and we have several smart boards. Technologies have obviously moved on and this will always be a 'rolling ball.'
	All teachers should have classrooms big enough to accommodate all students comfortably.	We built the 'Krige Block' in 2010, which also enabled us to convert seven old classrooms into five bigger classrooms, with some office space. We have also tried to fit our smaller options into our smaller venues. However, there remains further work to be done.
	Students should be offered guidance through the tutor system on how to balance extra-mural activities and academic	A formal system to address this is in place through the Student Support department. However, many of our boys do not get the balance right.

	demands.	
	A better system of staff appraisal should be developed.	A new system of staff appraisal was adopted in 2008, and revised for implementation in 2012. There has been some resistance to it, especially as stated outcomes vis-à-vis a link to remuneration have not been achieved and have changed during implementation.
	Change rooms for staff, day boys and for visiting teams and coaches need to be built.	Change rooms for staff members were built into the HPC, showers/change room were built into the Krige block and the old change rooms revamped. However, more needs to be done.
	Easier access to the counselling department is necessary to enable students a greater sense of privacy.	The construction of the Krige block facilitated this.
Focus Area: Attainments and Progress	More listening exercises to be given to students in all subjects, not only the languages.	This has largely been addressed only through the speakers' programme, in which various outside speakers – authors, journalists, sports people – address the boys.
	Students should be encouraged through group work to develop a greater respect for the opinion of others.	Only partially addressed, in the formal curriculum and in our B2K programme.
	The unacceptability of plagiarism should be reinforced by all subject teachers and through the Head of the Resource centre.	A policy was drawn up with respect to plagiarism (2009), and a new, swift method for dealing with academic dishonesty instituted (2010) – however the problem remains significant.
Focus Area: Functioning of the School	New system should be implemented as a matter of importance to monitor absentees and latecomers.	A new system was implemented (2008) and has been revised and relaunched (2010, 2011 & 2013).
	Reinforcement, through example and instruction, should continue to be made by all members of staff on the necessity of punctuality.	This was incorporated into our Statement of Professional Intent (2009-see the appendix) and is in our "Back to Basics" programme (2013.)
	Workshops on bullying need to continue with the junior grades.	These are continuing on an annual basis.
	Students should be encouraged repeatedly about the importance of using the lockers to house their belongings to minimise theft.	All day boys have individual lockers. The use of these must continue to be emphasised.
	Despite perceived problems with team selection in some sports, the team felt that parents and students need to respect the integrity and expertise of the coaches.	While this seems to slightly less of an issue, the team feels that parents and students need to continue to respect the integrity and expertise of the coaches.

Focus Area: Boarding	Laundry turnabout should be improved further.	The Laundry service was changed to Prestige who managed a 12 hour turn-around. However, there were quality issues with the new service provider and has now been changed to Sodexo, which has a 48hr turn-around which is better than the original, which was a week.
	A survey should be held amongst learners, parents of boarders and staff in order to identify specific areas of concern regarding food and dining hall conditions.	A food committee was established for the learners to have an avenue to raise their concerns. Parents are now sent the menu two weeks in advance. The conditions in the dining hall have improved significantly with the introduction of new furniture for the boys to sit around, as well as new and improved cooking equipment in the kitchen itself (2012.)
	More internet access and access to other forms of technology, such as computers should be made available, to enable boarders to have better access to information that will assist them in their studies.	Computer hubs have been set up in the houses and each desk has a computer point for boys who wish to bring their own computers to be able to have access to the intra-net.
	Medication in students' rooms should be made available: when a student is ill and has been prescribed medication by a licensed General Practitioner or medical specialist, they would like to be able to self-medicate in their rooms instead of having to go sister for each dosage through the day and night	National legislation has dealt with this issue.
	Have a prayer room in each boarding house for all denominations to enable boys to have a private and non-threatening space for private contemplation and reflection.	A Prayer room attached to Chapel has been made available.
	Supervision at the Aquatic Centre at the weekends.	The House- master on duty for the weekend negotiates a time with those who wish to use the aquatic centre. An hour a day is allocated to those who wish to swim.
	There should be more outside activities organised for the Boarders over the weekends	This service does exist, but boarders chose to stay on campus. Those who need to get off campus can ask the House-master on duty.
	With the revamp and renovation of the boarding houses, all emergency equipment and signage, which may have been removed, needs to be checked and where necessary, replaced.	All emergency signage and equipment was up-graded and replaced after the re-build.

## 9. GENERAL/OTHER FINDINGS

- Umalusi accreditation process needs to 'marry' with the IQAA process.
- It has been an affirming process
- There is a need to create a quality assurance culture. There needs to be ongoing evaluation and class observations that merges with the appraisal system at the College, the Umalusi accreditation and the IQAA process

The Boys' College has explored the seminal work of Jim Collins – his *Good to Great* idea – over the past several years. From this we developed our 'Hedgehog Concept' and our 'Statement of Professional Intent.' In many areas, we have seen the gathering momentum of the Flywheel (again a Collin's metaphor) move us from good towards great. However, in some areas, it is possible that complacency has allowed us to slip backwards (teacher dominance in lessons is a possible example; some further data is needed).

There are other areas, such as plagiarism, where much more work is needed to stem a tide affected by modern society and advancing technology. Processes like the IQAA evaluation enable us to see ourselves in a mirror, to note strengths and weaknesses and to enable us to plan remediation and celebrations.

Our thanks go to the Campus, IQAA team; the Boys' College IQAA team; all who were surveyed and gave us their opinions; the National IQAA office and especially Kevin Tait, our mentor, for his unfailing good advice and his steady perspective throughout the process.