
6: THE CORE: MISSION, VISION, FUNDAMENTAL AIMS

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6: THE CORE: MISSION, VISION AND FUNDAMENTAL AIMS

Mission, vision and aims are the core of the School Development Planning process. They encapsulate what the school stands for and what it is trying to achieve. Accordingly, they serve as terms of reference for all the operations of the planning cycle, providing:

- ◆ a context for the operation of **Review**
- ◆ a direction for the work of **Design** and **Implementation**, and
- ◆ a yardstick for the process of **Evaluation**

The purpose of this unit is to:

- I. Outline the key elements of mission, vision and fundamental aims
- II. Suggest approaches to developing a mission statement
- III. Suggest approaches to reviewing a mission statement
- IV. Suggest further resources

I. Mission, Vision and Fundamental Aims:

The school's statement of its mission, vision and fundamental aims articulates why the school exists, what it wants to create, and what it considers to be the fundamental purpose of education.

School's Mission

The mission represents the overall raison d'être of the school. The mission statement comprises a core message:

- ◆ School's original purpose
- ◆ The values that the school stands for
- ◆ The reason for the school's continued existence

School's Vision

The vision represents the desired future. It outlines general principles and is aspirational in nature.

School's Fundamental Aims

The fundamental aims are broad statements of educational goals. They relate to the promotion by the school of the intellectual, physical, social, personal, spiritual, moral and aesthetic development of all its pupils. They provide a clear focus for the school.

- ◆ They must be set within the school's mission and vision
- ◆ All stakeholders must articulate aims within the broader context of mission and value

In relation to fundamental aims a school may refer to **Section 9, Education Act, 1998** for guidance.

Why might a school wish to articulate mission, vision and aims?

In this era of change, the development of a school's mission statement represents the school's readiness and willingness to take charge of its own affairs and to manage change positively in the light of its vision. The school's mission statement is the basis of a school's policies and practices. There is no doubt that the values and beliefs that guide the life of the school have important implications for all choices and decisions that have to be made in developing a school plan.

The purpose of the mission statement is:

- ◆ To give clear direction to the work of the school
- ◆ To inspire the school community with a common purpose
- ◆ To provide a framework from which policies and priorities can be derived
- ◆ To establish a reference point against which the school can evaluate the success of its activities

The mission and vision of a school cannot be simply handed from one group to another. They must be developed and clarified through a process of shared reflection on the values, beliefs and aspirations of the school community. They will reflect the school's efforts to reconcile often-conflicting values within the school community. An awareness of personal values within the school community is important. A school can accommodate a range of values provided there is a range of core values everyone can support. Values whether conscious or unconscious are at the centre of our actions. The time spent in exploring our own individual and collective values is time well spent and will affect everything else we do in the school.

When to address the mission, vision and aims?

The School Development Planning process often begins with the Core: the formulation of Mission, Vision and Aims. Some schools, however, find it more helpful to begin with the Review and to allow their understanding of their mission, vision and aims to become enriched and clarified through participation in the planning process, and through reflection on the local, national and international context factors that will influence the shaping of the school's future.

If it is decided to postpone the preparation of a formal statement of mission, vision and aims until a later stage in the planning process, it would be advisable at an early stage to identify the shared values on which the school will base its review and developmental work. This clarification and elaboration of the guiding principles is an integral part of the planning process.

See also *School Development Planning: An Introduction for Second Level Schools*, Chapter 2.

II. Developing a Mission Statement

The development of a mission statement is a challenging process for schools because it involves a process of reaching consensus on core values and guiding principles. Once this consensus has been reached it is expressed in the mission statement.

Key steps in drawing up a Mission Statement

- ◆ Identification of personal values with the staff
- ◆ Discussion of values in the light of the educational philosophy and values expressed by the Trustees
- ◆ Consensus on staff's core values
- ◆ Drawing up of a draft statement by a school committee as a basis for consultation
- ◆ Consultation with school partners
- ◆ Redrafting in the light of the responses received, followed by further consultation and redrafting if necessary
- ◆ Achievement of consensus leading to ownership of the mission statement by the school community
- ◆ Ensuring that the mission is delivered in action
- ◆ Reviewing mission statement after a period of time

Developing a Mission Statement: Activities and Sample Worksheets

This section presents a selection of **Core Activities** and sample **Worksheets** which may be helpful to schools in organizing the process of Developing a Mission Statement and Clarifying Values.

Core Activities 1, 2 and 3 are activities for Developing a Mission Statement. Schools may use whichever of the 3 activities best suits their needs.

Core Activity 4 is a Values Clarification exercise which may be used to establish a working position in relation to values and guiding principles, if a school has decided to postpone work on a formal mission statement. Alternatively, it may be used to initiate the process of formulating a mission statement.

Activity 1: **Developing a Mission Statement**
Worksheets: **Staff Questionnaire on the School's Original Purpose:**
 Open-ended questions
 Staff Questionnaire on the School's Present Purpose:
 Open-ended questions

Activity 2: **Developing a Mission Statement**
Worksheet: **Staff Questionnaire to Identify Core Values:**
 Open-ended questions

Activity 3: **Developing a Mission Statement**
Worksheets: **Staff Questionnaires:**
 Open-ended questions

Activity 4: **Values Identification and Clarification:**
Worksheet: **Identifying and Prioritising Fundamental Values**

CORE ACTIVITY 1

DEVELOPING A MISSION STATEMENT

INFORMATION SHEET

Instruments:

- ◆ **Staff Questionnaire on School's Original Purpose: Open ended questions (Worksheet 1.1)**
- ◆ **Staff Questionnaire on School's Present Purpose: Open ended questions (Worksheet 1.2)**
- ◆ **Pages of flip-chart**

Procedure:

Individual Reflection 1: (10minutes)

- ◆ Individuals reflect on Questionnaire on School's Original Purpose **(Worksheet 1:1)**
- ◆ Individuals record their responses

Group Discussion No. 1: (20minutes)

- ◆ Staff are broken into groups to discuss their individual responses and agree a group response
- ◆ Group responses to the Questionnaire for the plenary session are recorded on a flip-chart

Plenary Session 1:

- ◆ Feedback on the flip charts from each group is read out by a member of each group and it is then displayed on a wall.
- ◆ Responses in common are identified and recorded

Individual Reflection 2: (10minutes)

- ◆ Individuals reflect on Questionnaire on School's Purpose Today **(Worksheet 1:2)**
- ◆ Individuals record their responses

Group Discussion No. 2: (20minutes)

- ◆ Staff are broken into groups to discuss individual responses and agree a group response
- ◆ Group responses to the Questionnaire for the plenary session are recorded on a flip-chart

Plenary Session 2:

- ◆ Feedback on the flip charts from each group is read out to the whole staff by a member of each group. It is then displayed on a wall beside their first sheet.
- ◆ Feedback from the two questions is compared and similarities and differences between the School's Original Purpose and the School's Purpose Today are identified
- ◆ On the basis of this comparison the key values to guide the school in the future are identified and recorded on a flip-chart
- ◆ Staff are then asked how they can reinforce and develop further the values identified. Suggestions are recorded on a flip-chart

FOLLOW-UP:

At the end of Activity 1 arrangements are made to advance the development of the mission statement:

- ◆ A committee is established to draw up a draft mission statement based on the core values identified
- ◆ The committee circulates the draft mission statement to the individual members of staff for their views
- ◆ The committee revises the draft statement in light of the staff responses and presents it to the whole staff at a meeting
- ◆ The committee draws up of a draft statement as a basis for consultation with school partners
- ◆ Consultation with school partners takes place
- ◆ Redrafting occurs in the light of the responses received, followed by further consultation and redrafting if necessary
- ◆ Consensus is achieved, leading to ownership of the mission statement by the school community
- ◆ Steps are devised to ensure that the mission is delivered in action
- ◆ A time-frame for the future review of the mission statement is established

CORE ACTIVITY 1 WORKSHEET 1.1

Staff Questionnaire on School's Original Purpose

Here we are in _____ (name of school).

When the school was established, someone had to ask the following questions.

Please write the answers you believe would have been given at that time

1. Why is a school necessary in this area?
2. Whom will the school serve?
3. What service will the school provide?
4. How will the service be provided?
5. What will be the key ideals, beliefs and values upheld by the school?
6. What will distinguish us from another school and what will make us unique?

CORE ACTIVITY 2

DEVELOPING A MISSION STATEMENT: CORE VALUES

INFORMATION SHEET

Instrument:

- ◆ Questionnaire to enable the staff to clarify and identify the core values to be expressed in the mission statement

(Activity 2 Worksheet)

Procedure:

Individual Reflection: (10 minutes)

- ◆ Each staff member is asked to identify 2 core values to be included in the mission statement

(See Core Activity 2 Worksheet)

Plenary Session: (20minutes)

- ◆ Feedback from each member of staff is recorded on a flip-chart

FOLLOW-UP:

At the end of Activity 2 arrangements are made to advance the development of the mission statement:

- ◆ A committee is established to draw up a draft mission statement
- ◆ The committee studies the feedback and notes the key values emerging and prepares a draft mission statement based on these values
- ◆ The committee circulates the draft mission statement to the individual members of staff for their views
- ◆ The committee revises the draft statement in light of the staff responses and presents it to the whole staff at a meeting
- ◆ The committee draws up of a draft statement as a basis for consultation with school partners
- ◆ Consultation with school partners takes place
- ◆ Redrafting occurs in the light of the responses received, followed by further consultation and redrafting if necessary
- ◆ Consensus is achieved, leading to ownership of the mission statement by the school community
- ◆ Steps are devised to ensure that the mission is delivered in action
- ◆ A time-frame for the future review of the mission statement is established

CORE ACTIVITY 2 WORKSHEET

Questionnaire to Identify Core Values

Please identify and record **2 values** you would wish to be included in the mission statement.

1 _____

2 _____

In choosing your 2 core values you might consider questions such as:

- ◆ What motivated you to become a teacher?
- ◆ What are the key qualities you wish to encourage in your students?
- ◆ Why do you think this school exists?
- ◆ What are the main educational principles that guide the daily life of the school?
- ◆ Could you name three things that the school values highly in students?
- ◆ Could you name three things that the school values highly in teachers?
- ◆ Could you name three things of which your school is most proud and say what values are implied in them?
- ◆ What symbols and signs do you see in the school that represent important school values?
- ◆ Why do you think parents send their sons or daughters to this school?
- ◆ Would you send your children to this school? Please explain why or why not

CORE ACTIVITY 3

DEVELOPING A MISSION STATEMENT: NEEDS AND VALUES

INFORMATION SHEET

This activity explores the **needs** of pupils, staff, parents, the local community and society and also the **values** that the school seeks to develop in the whole school community.

Note: For this activity it is recommended that a Trustee representative is present.

Procedure:

Staff are broken into groups according to the following criteria:

- Group 1: To include Principal and Deputy Principal
- Group 2: To include Trustee representative
- Group 3: To include staff members who are on the Board of Management
- Group 4: To include staff members who are parents

Group Discussion: (25 minutes)

- ◆ Each group is asked to discuss the following questions:

- Group 1: I am the Principal/Deputy Principal.
List one or two things I expect for **myself** from the school community.
List one or two things I want for **this** school community.
- Group 2: I am a Trustee Representative
List one or two things I expect for **myself** from the school community
List one or two things I wish for **this** school
- Group 3: I am a Staff Member of the Board of Management
List one or two things I expect for **myself** from the school community
List one or two things I expect for **our pupils** from the school community
- Group 4: I am a Parent
List one or two things I expect for **myself** from the school community
List one or two things I want for **my children** from the school community

(Note: This Activity can be extended to include further groups to represent, for example, Teaching Staff, Support Staff, Pupils, Past-Pupils, and so on)

Plenary Session 1: (20minutes)

- ◆ Feedback from the different groups is reported and noted on flip-chart

Individual Reflection: (10minutes)

- ◆ Staff members are asked to reflect individually on the feedback from the groups and then to choose 2 words that they believe should be included in Mission Statement

Plenary Session 2:

- ◆ Individual responses are called out and are recorded on flip-chart pages that are displayed around the room

FOLLOW-UP:

At the end of Activity 3 arrangements are made to advance the development of the mission statement:

- ◆ A committee is established to draw up a draft mission statement
- ◆ The committee studies the feedback and notes the key values emerging and prepares a draft mission statement based on these values
- ◆ The committee circulates the draft mission statement to the individual members of staff for their views
- ◆ The committee revises the draft statement in light of the staff responses and presents it to the whole staff at a meeting
- ◆ The committee draws up of a draft statement as a basis for consultation with school partners
- ◆ Consultation with school partners takes place
- ◆ Redrafting occurs in the light of the responses received, followed by further consultation and redrafting if necessary
- ◆ Consensus is achieved, leading to ownership of the mission statement by the school community
- ◆ Steps are devised to ensure that the mission is delivered in action
- ◆ A time-frame for the future review of the mission statement is established

CORE ACTIVITY 3 WORKSHEET

Needs and Values of the School Community

Please discuss the task assigned to your Group from the perspective of the role that your Group has been asked to assume for this Activity:

Group 1: I am the Principal/Deputy Principal

List one or two things I expect for **myself** from the school community.

List one or two things I want for **this** school community.

Group 2: I am a Trustee Representative

List one or two things I expect for **myself** from the school community

List one or two things I wish for **this** school

Group 3: I am a Staff Member of the Board of Management

List one or two things I expect for **myself** from the school community

List one or two things I expect for **our pupils** from the school community

Group 4: I am a Parent

List one or two things I expect for **myself** from the school community

List one or two things I want for **my children** from the school community

(Further Groups may be added, as appropriate)

CORE ACTIVITY 4

VALUES IDENTIFICATION AND CLARIFICATION

INFORMATION SHEET

Instrument:

- ◆ **Identifying and Prioritising Fundamental Values** (Activity 4 Worksheet)

Procedure:

Individual Reflection: (10minutes)

- ◆ Staff members are asked to reflect on the values that they think are important for the school and to prioritise 2 values

Group Discussion No. 1: (20 minutes)

- ◆ Staff are broken into groups to discuss individual responses
- ◆ Each group prioritises 3 fundamental values

Plenary Session 1: (20minutes)

- ◆ Prioritised values are presented by a member of each group and recorded on a flip-chart
- ◆ Staff are asked by facilitator to describe different values in action

Group Discussion No. 2: (15 minutes)

- ◆ Staff are again divided into groups to identify how the values identified could be reinforced

Plenary Session 2: (20minutes)

- ◆ The responses are presented by a member of each group
- ◆ The responses are recorded on a flip-chart

CORE ACTIVITY 4 WORKSHEET

Values Identification and Prioritisation

Please identify 2 values that you think are important for the school:

1. _____

2. _____

In choosing your 2 values, you might reflect on the values inherent in the school's approach to the following areas:

- Personal Development
- Social Development
- Pastoral Care
- Academic Achievement
- Discipline
- School Administration and Organisation
- Extra-Curricular and Co-Curricular Activities
- Religious Formation and Ritual
- Home-School-Community Links

III. Reviewing the Mission Statement

Reviewing the mission statement involves determining the relevance and validity of the existing mission statement.

Question to be considered:

- ◆ What aspects of the mission are still relevant?
- ◆ In the light of the changing needs of today's society, what needs to be renewed in, added to, or omitted from the mission statement?
- ◆ How is the mission being lived in the school community?
- ◆ How do school policies and documentation reflect the mission and vision?
- ◆ How does the curriculum reflect the values of the mission?
- ◆ How does the management of the school reflect the values and beliefs expressed in the mission statement?
- ◆ How do relationships within the school and between the various parties in the school community reflect the mission statement?
- ◆ How does the school's mission reflect the needs of a complex multicultural society?

The Review can be done through a simple survey inviting the community to respond to the mission statement. The previous questions could provide a starting point for exploring the school community's perceptions of the current statement and identifying aspects that are in need of development.

Reviewing a Mission Statement: Activities and Sample Worksheets

This section presents a selection of **Core Activities** and sample **Worksheets** that may be helpful to schools in organizing the process of Exploring and Reviewing a Mission Statement in Action.

Core Activities 5 and 6 are activities for Exploring and Reviewing a Mission Statement. Schools may use whichever of the 2 activities best suits their needs.

Activity 5: **Exploring Mission in Action**

Worksheets: **Exploring the Area of Relationships**
Exploring the Area of Curriculum
Exploring the Area of Management
Exploring the Area of Home-School-Community Links
(4 Worksheets of Open-ended questions)

Activity 6: **Exploring Mission in Action**

Worksheets: **Questionnaire on the Area of Relationships**
Questionnaire on the Area of Curriculum
Questionnaire on the Area of Management
Questionnaire on the Area of Home-School-Community Links
(Closed questions)

CORE ACTIVITY 5

EXPLORING MISSION IN ACTION

INFORMATION SHEET

Instruments:

- ◆ Exploring the Area of Relationships (Worksheet 5.1)
- ◆ Exploring the Area of Curriculum (Worksheet 5.2)
- ◆ Exploring the Area of Management (Worksheet 5.3)
- ◆ Exploring the Area of Home-School-Community Links (Worksheet 5.4)
- ◆ Documentation in the School:

Policy Statements on areas such as:

- Enrolment
- Pastoral care
- Discipline
- Curriculum
- Special needs
- Professional development
- Computer education
- Homework

Other Documents such as:

- Staff handbook
- Reporting formats
- Prospectus
- Newsletter
- School magazine

These lists are not exhaustive

Procedure:

Group Discussion:

- ◆ Staff members are divided into groups to examine documentation relevant to the whole school community and to each individual area to see if it reflects the values and beliefs expressed in the Mission Statement. (Each group is assigned one of the 4 areas listed above under **Instruments**)
- ◆ Groups identify concrete evidence of the values expressed in the Mission Statement in the major policy documents of the school
- ◆ Groups identify any discrepancies between the values expressed in the Mission Statement and the values implied in other school documentation

- ◆ Each group considers the operation of the school's Mission in the area of school life assigned to it. The group reflects on the questions on the relevant worksheet and prepares agreed group responses, highlighting:
 - Aspects of the Mission Statement that are not reflected in the life of the school
 - Aspects of the Missions Statement that require amendment or development in the light of changing needs

Plenary Session:

- ◆ Feedback from the groups is reported
- ◆ Key areas of concern in relation to (a) Mission Statement (b) School Policies and (c) School Practices are identified and prioritised

FOLLOW UP:

At the end of Activity 5, arrangements are made to address the areas of concern that have been prioritised. These arrangements may include the establishment of Task Groups.

CORE ACTIVITY 5 WORKSHEET 5.1

Exploring the Area of Relationships

Key question:

Do the values and beliefs expressed in the school's mission statement allow for relationships that are life-giving?

Explore:

- ◆ Is there evidence that relationships in the school recognise the dignity and worth of the individual?
- ◆ Do personal development programmes in the school assist students to understand the nature of relationships and acquire the necessary skills to build effective relationships?
- ◆ Is there evidence that the values and beliefs of the mission statement influence the behaviour and outlook of students?

CORE ACTIVITY 5 WORKSHEET 5.2

Exploring the Area of Curriculum

Key question:

Does the curriculum reflect the distinctive values and beliefs expressed in the mission statement?

Explore:

- ◆ Does the school demonstrate equality of access to the curriculum for all students?
- ◆ Does each subject area have in place a policy which has clear reference to the school's mission statement or which clearly reflects the values expressed in the mission statement?
- ◆ (You may be given a copy of the Mission Statement and School Aims and asked to highlight aspects of each to which their subject contributes, etc. The idea is that teachers reflect on their subject in relation to the fulfilment of Mission and Aims)
- ◆ Is there evidence that organisational structures are in keeping with the mission statement?

CORE ACTIVITY 5 WORKSHEET 5.3

Exploring the Area of Management

Key question:

Are the school's stated beliefs and values reflected in the management of the school?

Explore:

- ◆ Are the school's processes for communication and decision-making in accord with the mission statement?
- ◆ Is there evidence that staff needs and skills are supported through the professional development policy and programme?
- ◆ Is there evidence that the school has a process in place to monitor progress towards the achievement of the school's mission, aims and goals?
- ◆ Is there evidence that the mission statement is a priority in the management and operation of the school?

CORE ACTIVITY 5 WORKSHEET 5.4

Exploring the Area of the Home-School-Community Links

Key question:

Do the school's values and beliefs encourage an **effective relationship** between the school and the **school community**?

Explore:

What evidence is there that the school interacts effectively with

- ◆ Home
- ◆ Local Community
- ◆ Other agencies

CORE ACTIVITY 6

EXPLORING MISSION IN ACTION

INFORMATION SHEET

Instruments:

- ◆ Questionnaire on the Area of Relationships (Worksheet 6.1)
- ◆ Questionnaire on the Area of Curriculum (Worksheet 6.2)
- ◆ Questionnaire on the Area of Management (Worksheet 6.3)
- ◆ Questionnaire on the Area of Home-School-Community Links (Worksheet 6.4)

Procedure:

Advance Preparation for Staff Meeting:

- ◆ From the range of materials provided, questionnaires appropriate to the school's current concerns are chosen.
- ◆ The selected questionnaires are completed by staff members in advance, so that the collated responses will be available at the Staff Meeting.

Plenary Session:

- ◆ A report on the collated responses to the questionnaires is presented to the staff

Group Discussion:

- ◆ Staff discuss the collated responses in groups
- ◆ Groups identify any discrepancies between the values expressed in the Mission Statement (the ideal) and the values implicit in the responses to the questionnaires (the actual)
- ◆ Groups highlight
 - Aspects of the Mission Statement that are not reflected in the life of the school
 - Aspects of the Missions Statement that require amendment or development in the light of changing needs
- ◆ Each group prioritises three areas of concern that have emerged from reflection on the questionnaire responses

Plenary Session:

- ◆ Feedback from the Group Discussion is shared. Group priorities are collated on flipcharts to produce an agreed list of suggested areas for development
- ◆ Areas for immediate attention are chosen from the agreed list

FOLLOW UP

At the end of Activity 6, arrangements are made to address the areas of concern that have been prioritised. These arrangements may include the establishment of Task Groups.

CORE ACTIVITY 6 WORKSHEET 6.1

Questionnaire on the Area of Relationships

Please rate the following statements on a scale of 1 to 5 by ticking the appropriate box.

Scale:	5=Excellent	1=Very Unsatisfactory	Avoid over-use of 3
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Effectiveness indicators	5	4	3	2	1
1. There is good leadership in the school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. There is a good understanding and a collective ownership of the school's basic goals.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Generally, decision-making and policy formulation on important matters endeavour to follow democratic principles.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Policies on important practices and procedures are well developed and there is a coherent approach in their implementation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Role definitions within staff are clear and are known. There is a good level of shared responsibility in the general running of the school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Between management and staff and among the staff generally there is a good level of trust and openness.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. There are clear and effective means of communication so that, in general terms, staff are in a position to "know what's going on".	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. A good and inclusive social atmosphere exists in the staffroom.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. There is a committed and professionally alert teaching staff.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. The school has definite policies to promote the personal and professional development of those in management positions and of teachers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. There are recognised and positive ways of helping teachers who have difficulty in coping in the classroom.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Effectiveness indicators	5	4	3	2	1
12. The school's policy on student discipline and pastoral care helps to maintain an orderly and relaxed atmosphere conducive to good teaching and good learning.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. The school's total curriculum recognises the abilities and needs of all students and affords all students some level of inclusion and affirmation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. There are high, though realistic, expectations of students in regard to academic achievement.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. There is good communication with parents and a good level of rapport exists between the school and parents.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

CORE ACTIVITY 6 WORKSHEET 6.2

Questionnaire on the Area of Curriculum

Please rate the following statements on a scale of 1 to 5 by ticking the appropriate box.

Scale:	5=Excellent	4	3	2	1=Very Unsatisfactory	Avoid over-use of 3
Effectiveness indicators	5	4	3	2	1	
In my school						
1. The total curriculum seeks to recognise the needs of all students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2. The total school curriculum (classroom and beyond) enables the expression and development of a great variety of talents.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3. The curriculum offered at every level is sensitive to the degree of 'readiness' of individual students and of groups of students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4. The value system permeating the curriculum reflects a real respect for the dignity of humans.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5. The curriculum is 'student-centred' rather than 'subject-centred'.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
6. In implementing the curriculum, teacher identification with class groups takes precedence over subject specialisation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
7. Implementation of curriculum affords all students hope for some success in achieving objectives.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
8. There are policies and practices to diagnose and to cater for the specific learning difficulties of students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
9. All subject areas have definite policies and programmes for remediation and extension.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
10. Assessment and reporting procedures tend to promote the self-esteem of all students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
11. There is real justice and consistency in the application of assessment and evaluation procedures throughout the school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
12. The curriculum in action is in harmony with the stated curriculum and with the school's stated philosophy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Effectiveness indicators	5	4	3	2	1
13. In curriculum review, an effort is made to canvass student opinion.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. Students have confidence that the curriculum offered prepares them effectively for transition beyond school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. Students are provided with adequate resources to enable them to study chosen areas of curriculum effectively.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

CORE ACTIVITY 6 WORKSHEET 6.3

Questionnaire on the Area of Management

Please rate the following statements on a scale of 1 to 5 by ticking the appropriate box.

Scale:	5=Excellent	4	3	2	1=Very Unsatisfactory
Avoid over-use of 3					
Effectiveness indicators	5	4	3	2	1
1. Board members are generally aware of the authority and responsibility of the Board.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Board members are aware of the manner in which the Board functions vis-a-vis the role of the school principal.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Board members are given adequate notice of meetings and are given adequate briefing on matters for discussion at meetings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. The set agenda for meetings is appropriate matter for the Board.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. The Board regularly includes policy and development issues in its agenda.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. All members have the opportunity to participate fully in Board meetings.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. The Board strives to achieve consensus agreement in its main decisions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Decisions made by the Board are, in general, implemented satisfactorily.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. In its administration of school finances, the Board ensures an equitable distribution among vying needs within the school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. The Board recognises that staff development is an important factor in school effectiveness.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Board members have a common understanding of the school's ethos and strive to promote that ethos.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. There is good understanding and cooperation between the Board and the school's trustees.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. The Board actively promotes good rapport between parents and the school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. The Board thinks strategically about the school's future and develops policies and plans accordingly.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. The Board is a real help in the management and leadership of the school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

CORE ACTIVITY 6 WORKSHEET 6.4

Questionnaire on the Area of Home-School-Community Links

Please rate the following statements on a scale of 1 to 5 by ticking the appropriate box.

Scale:	5=Excellent	1=Very Unsatisfactory	Avoid over-use of 3
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Effectiveness indicators	5	4	3	2	1
In my school, Management and Teachers:					
1. Set a priority on good communication between home and school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Endeavour to establish good rapport with the parents generally	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Readily take the initiative to contact parents when their child is involved in serious misbehaviour or shows continuing signs of maladjustment in school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. With due sensitivity, endeavour to become aware of home conditions which might adversely affect a student's behaviour in school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Are generally aware that some parents of 'troublesome' students may themselves have had a bad experience of school and so may need to be encouraged to trust the school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Seek to be in touch with the social milieu in which the students live.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Encourage students to join clubs, use local amenities etc., which promote an active and positive use of leisure time.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Acknowledge significant events in the local community and, as appropriate, link the school to community projects and celebrations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Facilitate and encourage pastoral visits to the school by local clergy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Through newsletters to home and the use of local media seek to promote a positive public image for the school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Effectiveness indicators	5	4	3	2	1
1. Through newsletters and special letters, parents are kept well informed on the general life of the school and on issues of particular significance.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Formal opportunities are provided to enable parents of beginning students to learn of general policies and to meet school personnel.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Appropriate signs and suitable reception facilities are a help to putting parents at ease on a special visit to meet principal or teachers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Student 'report cards' are designed to include a range of progress indicators and their careful preparation for dispatch to parents is a high priority.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. The format of parent-teacher meetings encourages dialogue and builds trust between school and home.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Opportunities for social interaction between teachers and parents are built into the school calendar.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. It is practice and custom to invite parents to events of special significance, e.g., inauguration of student leaders, career guidance meetings, graduation functions, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Parents are invited to help in school-organised 'extra-curricular' activities, e.g. musicals, debates, games, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Parenting Programmes are offered to parents of first year students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Parent input and reaction is sought in developing some school policies, e.g. discipline policy, policy related to personal development programmes for students, policy related to school uniform, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. There is a Parents' Association or some similar structure to formalise parent-school interaction and partnership.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. The Board of Management promotes good management practices and contributes positively to the special character and the effectiveness of the school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

We are grateful to Aengus Kavanagh, FSP and to the Patrician Brothers Generalate, for their generous permission to reproduce these questionnaires from Aengus's book *Secondary Education in Ireland: Aspects of a Changing Paradigm* (1993)

IV. Suggested Further Resources

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V. Notes

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We are grateful to Aengus Kavanagh, FSP and to the Patrician Brothers Generalate, for their generous permission to reproduce questionnaires from Aengus's book *Secondary Education in Ireland: Aspects of a Changing Paradigm* (1993) in this Unit.