

ST MARY'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL

INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

The following extract from the recent Annual Report to Parents is included in application packs in order to give candidates a flavour of the opportunities available for staff development.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHING STAFF : POLICY STATEMENT

St Mary's is concerned to support the professional development of its teachers in order to improve the quality of learning. The purpose of the policy is to: update and extend the professional skills of teachers; impart new skills and knowledge to teachers; raise the expectations of teaching staff; and serve the staff development requirements identified in the School Development Plan.

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT REPORT 2002-03:

(A Sharpe, Headteacher)

1. Use of INSET Days

The first two allocated days, in September and October of 2002, were used inline with the published three year plan. Therefore the first day included an update for staff on the recent examination successes, and time for departments to prepare for the academic year.

The second day commenced with a briefing on specific learning difficulties, and how these might be catered for: this was led by Janet Wren, a county adviser with expertise in this field. The following session was prepared by Mrs Hogarth and the mathematics department, and introduced staff to the methods of calculation promoted within the numeracy element of the Key Stage 3 strategy. The final session was a repeat of the workshops on literacy run by leading practitioners within our own staff – this repeated session allowed colleagues to visit more than one workshop. This was a highly successful day, and reflected the expertise of, and efforts made by our own staff.

The third INSET day was taken as a series of twilight training sessions under the ICT training programme funded by central government through the New Opportunities Fund. The quality of materials and support provided by the company contracted to train our staff was poor: after some abortive work we decided to dispense with this programme, and run our own in-house peer-to-peer course. This proved to be far more successful, and staff ICT skills were enhanced by this second approach.

The fourth INSET day was assigned for a moral/spiritual audit of the Key Stage 4 curriculum in the morning session, and departmental reviews of schemes of work in the afternoon session. However, a late decision by the local consortium of schools took away this time at the eleventh hour. The Key Stage 4 audit has been postponed to 2003/4, and the fifth INSET day was given to departments for their review work. The consortium time was spent listening to a guest speaker on the benefits of working in partnership, and then dividing into cross-consortium subject groups in order to foster curriculum links between institutions.

2. Leadership Group Training

This has involved three elements of training: the internal training was headteacher led, and included an off-site training session on the interpretation of data, and a joint approach to line management in the Autumn Term. The third element was a three day course on self-evaluation, which is OFSTED accredited.

3. Middle Management Training

Heads of Department attended a twilight session with Stephen Szeremenyi, a nationally recognised consultant on performance management. This proved particularly helpful in developing confidence in evaluating the performance of teachers.

4. Department Training

There has been a substantial investment in a programme of visits to each department by specialist advisers in each area of the curriculum. These focused on teaching and learning, and also schemes of work, in Key Stage 3. This specialist support, and the consequent feedback to managers, provided some of the most effective developmental work in the year, even though its prime function had been as a quality assurance mechanism.

5. Individual Staff Training

As always, individual courses are designed to meet a range of needs, including the realisation of school and departmental objectives, the meeting of performance management targets, and individual professional aspirations. This year's programme has included health and safety training and equipment maintenance courses for technicians, and training on internet use and school information systems for administrative staff. Support and teaching staff have also been involved in workshops run by the Connexions agency, whilst learning support assistants have taken part in literacy and numeracy training as part of the Key Stage 3 strategy.

Courses for individual teachers have also covered a range of topics. These have included AS/A2 examination briefings, induction courses for newly qualified teachers, and courses on effective transition from primary to secondary school. Courses on numeracy, on assessment and on accelerated learning have been attended as part of the school's focus on teaching and learning. Other courses related to the school's quest for acquisition of specialist status.