

Clifford, David, 1999, *The Catholic School: Towards a Strategy for Self-Evaluation*

ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

The aim of this research, in Salesian College, Pallaskenry, County Limerick, is to determine the quality of school life students experience and take with them for the rest of their lives. The focus of the study is to determine the degree to which the ideals set out in the college's mission statement are achieved in reality.

The school has undergone a series of transitions in the last twenty-five years; from an all- boys' to a co-educational school, from a boarding / day school to a full day school and doubled in size from 200 to 400 students.

The methodology, in this study, was a quantitative and qualitative completion questionnaire using seven performance indicators developed by Marcellin Flynn. All students from Junior Certificate (3rd year) to Leaving Certificate (6th year) were surveyed. 193 students completed the questionnaire of whom 148 (76.7%) added detailed comments.

Statistical analysis, ANOVA modelling and content analysis found that students have a well-developed sense of identity and boys regard school as very relevant for their future lives. In the case of girls, a perceived lack of parental ambition had a significant negative effect, it was also found that if the mother had received a third level education, there was a positive effect on the sense of achievement of daughters and a negative effect on sons. The students' perception of their own school work provided a means of differentiating all seven indicators. Students with a good perception of self scored highly in all indicators and *vice versa*. Girls and examination students have better relationships with the staff, but they also exhibit a greater alienation from school.

It is a conclusion of the author that the ideals set out in the mission statement are achieved. However, the transition from an all-boys' to a co-educational school has not been fully realized.