

1980 Span Magazine – Principal's Report

It is with mixed feelings that I set out my first brief report as Principal of Whitebridge High School. I share with you, the Staff and Students, many memories of my predecessor, Mr Barry Sievert. He had tremendous dedication to this school and a very real affection for it.

This year has seen two developments which are of great significance to education. First we have seen the fulfilment of a long felt need in the appointment of a full time Careers Advisor. Mr. Hunter, formally of the Social Science Staff, has taken up the position. As a consequence, much more time will be able to be devoted to this particular aspect of education. A second major step has been the advent of the Transition Education Scheme. This programme is designed to help pupils to take their place in the work force. Our school will make full use of this opportunity to develop a programme to meet our needs.

I am pleased to see that an active Work Experience Programme is in operation at our school. This programme has been of major assistance to our students in these times of uncertainty of employment. We are indeed indebted to the many employers who accepted our pupils as part of their work force and thus enabled them to gain invaluable experience at first hand in the field of their choice. The final choice of a vocation should thus be easier for our pupils when they leave school.

I would further commend to parents the interest elective activities which will be conducted for two weeks at the end of the year. The Department of Education is insistent that a meaningful program be conducted in schools during this period when final examinations have concluded. The opportunity is afforded for pupils to engage in activities not available in the regular school curriculum and we are again here seeking avenues of contact with the community. In these ways – transition education, work experience and interest electives, we are trying to have the schools seen as an integral part of the local scene.

This school has also taken advantage of the Education Department's "School-Based Initiatives Programme", and as a result, we have set up a "Multi-discipline Intervention Programme" in which a number of teachers are involved. The purpose of this unit is to assist those pupils who do not achieve in the general classroom teaching situation. These pupils are often a cause of stress to other students and to members of Staff. This programme allows remedial teaching to be carried out effectively and it is hoped that it will continue into the future.

The above mentioned activities must be seen in the correct perspective. They are examples of the ways in which we endeavour to give our pupils a broadly-based education. Our main purpose is, and must continue to be, the pursuit of academic achievement. It is our primary aim to prepare pupils for the School Certificate and the Higher School Certificate, to equip them to take their place in the community. Along with scholastic achievement, we want to develop such things as self discipline, self reliance, leadership qualities and a sense of identity with the school and with society.

It is my hope that parents will continue to interest themselves in the affairs of the school. Active membership of the Parents and Citizens' Association, attendance at sporting carnivals, assistance in the school canteen, contact with Year masters, attendance at Parent/Teacher nights – these are all avenues of involvement. I look forward to sharing with you in the development of this fine school.

1981 Span Magazine – Principal's Message

This year has been a time of consolidation: of continuing with practices and traditions long established; and of strengthening those innovations and changes that a new executive invariably makes. I quote as examples of things that have long been a part of the Whitebridge High School scene, the publication of this magazine which is the combined effort of so many people. I think too of the Senior Scholarship Scheme which is as well supported by the Parents and Citizens Association and others. I express my gratitude to the Parents and Citizens Association for the links forged in the past which have resulted in great benefit to this school and its pupils. Our school band is deservedly well known in the region. We have a long history of sporting successes and a tradition of sportsmanship. The academic attainments of our pupils continue to be of a high order. So I could continue quoting things that establish and build our traditions.

Perhaps more recent activities would include a change in the format of Speech Day when we have used the facilities of Gateshead High School to enable us to present the whole school to the parents and the community. Another recent innovation has been in the field of Transition Education where we have established courses. An endeavour has been made to make the transfer from Year 6 in Primary School to Year 7 in High School smoother and to affect a more accurate system of grading these classes. In this regard, I thank the Principals and Staff of our primary Feeder Schools for the close liaison we are building with them.

One of the things that many people have worked for over many years is the building of a multi-purpose centre in the school. This would give a tremendous

impetus to so many facets of school life. Such a building has now been sited and plans drawn up for its construction. By the time this report is printed, we hope to know when tenders will be called; we may even see work commence by the end of 1981.

In concluding my brief message, I would point out to all pupils that our efforts are directed towards giving you an education in the broadest possible sense of the term. This is your school. Be proud of it.

1982 Span Magazine – Principal's Message

It is again my pleasure to set down a few thoughts concerning the school for inclusion in this publication, and the first of these concerns this magazine: "Span" is your magazine. It is here that pupils offer contributions, express ideas, supply informative articles and generally exhibit their talents. Within the pages of this publication we can see and read about the many activities that go to make up the pattern of school life. Sporting, academic, literary and artistic contributions and the work of the various organisations within the school are recorded for all to see.

The Committee which produces "Span" is made up largely of school pupils and I congratulate them all on their splendid effort. It is my hope that every pupil will show their appreciation of the hard work performed on their behalf and obtain a copy of their school magazine.

One of the criticisms levelled at the large High School is that individuals tend to be overlooked. This can so easily happen if you as pupils do not become involved in the corporate activities of your school. There are many avenues for doing this. Active participation in sport is perhaps the most ready means by which you can pursue your interests, for though all cannot excel academically, each of you may participate in some sort of sporting activity.

The School Council, the Social Committee, the I.S.C.F. and other such bodies are always ready to accept willing participants. There is a place for everyone who wants to become involved. Make sure that you make the most of your opportunities while you are a member of this fine school.

1983 Span Magazine – Principal's Message

This year marks a milestone in the history of Whitebridge High School. From a small beginning in 1963, when the school opened with a staff of ten, we have grown to our present teaching staff of 74, an ancillary staff of 16 and 10 cleaning

staff, with a permanent canteen manageress. Our enrolment is at present in excess of 1100 pupils feeding in to the school from six primary schools, namely Charlestown, Charlestown East, Kahibah, Dudley, Redhead and Jewells. Our seven schools combine to form what is known as a "cluster" and we meet regularly under the Chairmanship of our District Inspector, Mr Tabart. In this way we form a community and within this framework our pupils can move from "K" to "12" with their education.

The passing years has brought with them changes in staffing personnel along with environmental changes. The last major addition to our school buildings was the multi purpose block housing the Library (more accurately known as the Resources Centre), Laboratories and classrooms. Our next addition should be the long-awaited multi purpose building which is basically an assembly hall/gymnasium.

Side by side with these additions there has been a steady process of development, progress, change of emphasis, re-thinking – call it what you will – of the educational processes. Indeed we are to see another re-structuring take place in the near future which will have far reaching effects, particularly in the Junior school. This follows what is known as the McGowan Report which is presently under close scrutiny and will shortly be implemented.

When this school opened its doors in 1963 the "Wyndham Scheme" was in its infancy, having commenced in 1961. In established schools in the region in the yea 1963 there were groups of students studying the new courses, and others working under the "old" system leading to the Intermediate Certificate, and to the Leaving Certificate at the end of five years of secondary schooling. The "new" system itself has since undergone many major changes in the light of experience and to adjust to the ever changing needs of our modern society. The external nature of the School Certificate was modified several times and school based curricula, assessment and internal testing and accreditation was introduced, with a Moderating Exam conducted in the subjects of English and Mathematics. There has also occurred a significant re-structuring of the Senior School Curriculum where the "Unit" system has been introduced along with courses designed by individual schools for their own pupils called "Approved Studies".

Now we are to face this latest development in the Junior school, that is Years 7 to 10, following the publication of the McGowan report. This aims basically to introduce much more school designed material; to allow for much more flexibility in the programming processes and in the selection of subjects by students; to remove the artificial barrier between the "Junior" and "Senior" school and thus to consider the educating process as a continuum; the expand the semester system

which exists already to some degree in our school; and to modify the method of accrediting and reporting pupil progress.

I must point out that the developments listed above will be introduced as a gradual process and only after parents and pupils have been fully informed on these matters. Examinations have not been abolished in this new system which will be implemented in 1985. The Higher School Certificate will continue in its present form and be examined externally as at present.

The proposed scheme calls for an ever-increasing degree of community involvement. I am confident that with the continued support and co-operation of parents this latest development in the education of our youth will operate successfully as indeed all of the other initiatives in which parents and students have been asked to participate. Only then will the benefits of these new developments be fully realised.

May the next 21 years in the life of Whitebridge High School be as productive as the last have been.

1984 Span Magazine – Principal's Message

It is the policy of Whitebridge High School to keep staff, parents and pupils well informed on the many and varied activities carried on by the school. We do this by means of assemblies, announcements, daily and weekly bulletins, the monthly "Gazette" which goes out to all parents by P&C meetings and by Parent/Teacher nights.

I recently heard the point of view expressed by a senior officer of the Department of Education that many of the "good" things, the innovations, the social and charity activities in which we engage, and our contacts with the community are for the most part unknown. Further it was pointed out that it is the taxpayer who provides the means whereby the education system gains its funds and thereby has its existence, and that not all taxpayers are pupils of pupils of pupils at school. There is a growing feeling that our system should be accountable – that people should know what we are doing in the schools. How do we then go about this business of information and accountability and how do we remove some of the misconceptions held about the educational process in general and this school in particular?

Our school has many programmes which are worthy of recognition. One that immediately springs to mind is our operation in which 22 interested citizens come to the school on four days per week to assist Mr Bullock with a programme of Remedial English and Mathematics for pupils with specific learning problems. If

their own child is not involved, how many parents and other members of the public know of this work, or the programme administered by Mr Boyd, particularly those for pupils with reading difficulties? How well known is Mr Lacey's Life Science programme? Are members of the public aware of the excellent liaison we have with our Primary Feeder Schools and the transition programme to enable the Year 6 pupils to be accurately placed in our school with a minimum of the traumas that are associated with the process?

Most parents are aware of our school band, but do they and the community at large, realise how much of their own time and effort, and that of Mr Kellaway, goes into their performances, often in public, a large proportion of which is of a "charitable" nature? The Mistress-in-Charge of Girls, Mrs Cosandey, has the wider function of Mistress-in-Charge of Pupil Welfare and has the assistance of the School Councillor and other teachers in promoting the well-being of our pupils. Again, do you, the parents know about this?

Our school reports set out in detail the academic progress of every pupil in this school. What we do not report on with nearly enough information and praise are such activities as the Choir, School Council, debating, active participation in sport and sporting carnivals, service to the Resource Centre, work experience and indeed the preparation of this magazine "Span". These are positive contributions to the total educational process and worthy of publicity and praise.

Gone are the days when schools could, and often did, operate in almost complete isolation from the "public". Modern education depends on community support and awareness, co-operation and in some instances, active participation. Our principal method of showing our "wares" is our Presentation Day. Please help us to develop other means. I urge pupils and parents to avail themselves of every opportunity to be part of the total school scene.

May I take this opportunity to thank Miss Fabian and all of those pupils and teachers who have worked so hard in the preparation of this magazine. Please read it carefully. It is another means by which we inform you of the activities of this school.

1985 Span Magazine – Principal...

This year's edition of SPAN again sets out an account of the many and varied activities in which the school is involved and I congratulate the members of staff and the students who have worked so hard to produce this publication. It is filled with information about school organisation. Our departing Year 12 feature prominently in its pages in recognition of their status in the school and as a memento for them of their school days. Numerous reports contain a wealth of

information on every facet of school life. Sporting personalities and events are graphically illustrated. Literary contributions from every "year" grace its pages. The combined and varied talents of many students are displayed. In short SPAN endeavours to capture the spirit of the school in its attempt to cater for the needs and aspirations of our pupils who represent a broad spectrum of the community.

I think that it is important for each and every pupil to ask themselves just what it is that they expect that the school will do for them. I am sure that each one has their expectations and while there will be a great number of common aspirations there will be also a wide range of individual needs to cater for. Today's schools are thus called upon to perform many roles in addition to that of satisfying the basic expectation of all students; that they receive a sound academic preparation which will enable them to be gainfully employed in the community. We are fortunate at Whitebridge High School to be able to meet this primary need by the provision of a wide range of subject options especially in the senior school where "other approved studies" are offered to cater for a range of interests. We are keeping up with the changes and improvements to the various syllabi and this is particularly evident in the field of computer studies where a network system has been set up.

However it is quite evident that the expectations of the community of the functions of the school go far beyond the academic one. Schools are expected to provide much more, and that which may be loosely termed "social" education is seen to be very much more the province of the school system. The building of leadership qualities and the presentation of opportunities for sport, social and community activities and education for leisure must form a part of the total school experience gained by our students. In the modern, progressive system there must be something to cater for the needs and interests of every pupil. This requires that every pupil should seek out these things as he or she progresses through the school. The publication of this magazine is one of the activities referred to. It is compiled by students, for students, from work submitted by students. I hope that you enjoy reading your copy of SPAN.