

St. Columba's School

*Education Audit Report
(Key Strengths of the School)*

26th March 2017

The Hearth Education Advisors

Research and advisory services provided by an experienced international team

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Education Audit

FOR: ST. COLUMBA'S SCHOOL

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Background

St. Columba's School is a highly acclaimed Christian Brothers institution, located in the heart of Lutyens Delhi. St. Columba's, which began in 1941 with a small complement of 32 students, now has 3,190 students. The school is celebrating its 75 years in 2016-17.

The Hearth Education Advisors is a leading consulting firm based between Europe and Asia, with offices in London and New Delhi. From its origins as a consortium of reputed professionals with expertise and passion for education, the Hearth has grown into a flexible and broad education consulting practice that delivers operational advice and innovative, research-led thinking.

St. Columba's School engaged The Hearth Education Advisors to conduct a detailed Education Audit that would lead to a School Improvement Plan.

The Education Audit Process

The team deployed by The Hearth for this project consisted of the following persons:

- Mr. Shashank Vira (Partner and Project Leader)
- Ms. Zelmira Koch Polk (Senior Specialist and International Partner)
- Ms. Suchita Ohri (Senior Consultant)
- Ms. Disha Malhotra (Research and Planning)

The audit was conducted in five parts:

- (a) Relevant tools and formats were developed after review of the initial documentation about the school (these included an online survey).
- (b) The online survey was kept open for responses from the stakeholders over a period from 15th October 2016 to 15th December 2016. There were 1,452 valid response sheets received from stakeholders.
- (c) The tools and questionnaires were sent to the school and returned to The Hearth along with other material, which included diaries, calendar, timetable etc.
- (d) The Audit Team visited the school on several days in November and December 2016 and spent time with the various stake holders. They conducted focused group discussions with different groups of stakeholders.
- (e) Following the initial study and analysis of data, a follow-up set of meetings were conducted in January and February 2017 by the Senior Partner of the Hearth for further clarifications and elaboration of certain areas.

The Hearth Education Advisors audit team would like to thank St. Columba's School, the School Management, Principal, Administrator/Headmistress of each wing, Staff- both Academic and Administrative, Parents, Students and Alumni for their support during the audit process. Mrs. Reena Bhatti, a former teacher of St. Columba's School, superbly fulfilled her role as liaison between the School and the education audit team and was instrumental in the success of the consultations.

Key Strengths of the School

St. Columba's School commissioned The Hearth Education Advisors to conduct a School Education Audit, leading to a School Improvement Plan. This voluntary initiative, by itself, reflects the greatest strength of the institution: the ability to introspect, lay itself open for review, with the sincere desire to hold on to what is good at the school and enhance that which needs to be improved.

The key strengths that the audit team found at St. Columba's School are:

- (1) The vision and history of the school
- (2) The school's policy on social inclusion
- (3) Dealing with learning differences
- (4) The staff at the school
- (5) The alumni
- (6) Location and campus
- (7) Leadership
- (8) Pride amongst the stakeholders

The vision and history of the school

St. Columba's School, with its origins in the education philosophy of Edmund Rice, and being a Christian Brothers institution, has a well-thought out vision. The school has received excellent inputs from generations of Christian Brothers (from Ireland, India and elsewhere) and this has resulted in deep traditions and a history of excellence. Through its experienced Principals and the inputs of the Ministries Office and the Provincial Leadership Team, the school receives academic and pedagogical direction from a team that has committed educators who know the school very well.

The school's policy on social inclusion

St. Columba's School believes in social inclusion and practices it by actively encouraging students from diverse backgrounds to be part of the institution. The boys come from different social and economic strata and this adds to the vitality of the community of the school.

Dealing with learning differences

St. Columba's School attempts to include students with high levels of learning difficulties through its Learning Centre and its Enrichment Centre. The focus on children with special needs is a key strength of the school.

The staff at the school

The faculty and other staff members of St. Columba's School are deeply committed professionals, with several having spent decades at the school. While there are challenges, due to the inclusive policy of the school, the search for excellence continues and the teachers aim to produce boys who are disciplined, well-spoken and caring. Additionally, the teachers feel they are well compensated and respected.

The alumni

St. Columba's School has a history of producing distinguished alumni, who have excelled in the fields of entertainment, politics, law, sports, business and military. Further, the alumni are keen to assist the boys and in the development of the school.

Location and campus

The School is centrally located in the heart of Lutyen's Delhi, on a large campus with several buildings and playfields. Its central location gives the school accessibility from all of Delhi.

Leadership

The quality of leadership found during the audit at St. Columba's School, from the Principal downwards, is outstanding. This will serve the school well in its development planning over the next few years. The school's Management Committee functions in a democratic fashion and is quick and effective in decision-making. There is a strong commitment to school development and improvement in the Management Committee

Pride amongst the stakeholders

All stakeholders, from alumni to the boys, from the Principal to the contract employees, have a sense of pride in their school. This is a great strength for St. Columba's School, as people involved with activities go to extra lengths to ensure that the institution is enhanced by their efforts.