

## Maryhare School, Newbury, England



### Team for visit:

Liam O'Dwyer	CIDP CEO
Tom Sweetman	OMP Architect
Maura Buckely	CIDP Board
Lilian Molloy	CIDP Board
Fr. Gerard Tyrrell	Head Chaplain
Shirley Higgins	St. Mary's Teacher
Elizabeth McLafferty	St. Mary's Teacher

### Dates of visits:

26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> November 2008

### Contact at facility:

Tony Shaw School Principal / Deputy CEO of Maryhare

### **Description of services provided at the facility:**

Primary School

Secondary School

Pre school music academy

Training facility for teachers of the Deaf and audiologists and pre school teacher training

Laboratories making and repairing hearing aids and ear moulds

Assessment centre with multidisciplinary team of psychologists, speech and language therapists and audiologists

Training mainstream teachers in speech therapy

Training market providers of cochlear implants and hearing aids and the sale of same

School funded by government and subsidised through its business ventures

### **Description of the facility itself:**

Mixed facility with new buildings beside old. Some of the accommodation was very dated but from the outside very beautiful. All new buildings have been purpose built to the highest standards of design regarding acoustics, use of space and colours – a number of courtyard settings had been designed to foster outdoor meeting spaces. Maryhale has 150 staff and 240 students.

### **Exterior:**

Attractive red bricked exterior set in over 100 acres of land with football, hockey and all weather pitches and tennis courts.

### **Interior:**

Auditorium, gym, swimming pool, media laboratories, art and music, IT and art workshops all to a high standard, excellent restaurant. Interiors varied in relation to the activity being pursued, some rooms were new and of a high standard of fit out, others very old fashioned.

### **Environment:**

Attractive wooded environment, well planted in an old English garden manner. Facility made up of large number of old Georgian buildings and new buildings designed to match the originals.

### **Lessons for Village Project:**

- Need a business model to fund the running of the village project
- Need an assessment centre on site of new village
- Clear focus on oral education and preparation for university
- Provision of training side by side education is an added bonus for the school
- Facilities need to be open to hearing community
- Teachers qualified as teachers of the Deaf in three years (MSC)
- Schools cannot be all things to all people
- Create campus effect for senior students
- Multifunctional auditorium is important
- Strong emphasis on sports, art and music
- Very strong emphasis on grades to access University

### **Positives for inclusion:**

- Assessment centre and cochlear implant unit vital
- Child centred approach important
- Use art to brighten up the buildings
- Need for strong PR initiative
- Auditorium
- Hearing aid and mould laboratory
- Teacher training facility
- Pre school
- Residences for visiting teachers, students and parents
- Strong emphasis on assessment at the point of entry to the school and continuing assessment for added value
- New technology system required for the schools
- All rooms organised with acoustics in mind

**Negatives to be avoided:**

Renovation of old building for children  
Extreme views on oralism and ISL  
Uniforms

**Summary:**

Great visit, effective system of education with a total focus on the medium of English and attainment of university places. Entry is via assessment only and they take only those they can work with. Good use of auxiliary companies to raise funds for the school. While the school is oral only the children all sign very easily during the breaks and lunch which is positive. The principal teacher was enthusiastic and very welcoming and keen that CIDP and Maryhare work on projects together. He offered our teachers an opportunity to come to Maryhare for an internship.



## Other Comments from the group:

### Environment:

The school itself seemed to be a busy and lively place and the pupils seemed to be confident and happy. There was a sense of pride in the school as well as a desire to impress. This is a private fee paying school that offers places to deaf children whom it feels can benefit most from its type of education. So it can select who it takes and it makes no apologies for its method of education because parents have the choice to send their children there or to other types of deaf schools.

Lovely countryside environment

Caring and supportive (staff very professional)

Happy atmosphere in dining room and classrooms

Set in a rural area on approximately 130 acres of land - Huge potential

Beautifully landscaped

Woodland

Long scenic drive to the school

Very tranquil looking

Posh!!

Set in approximately 130 acres which enabled land to develop.

Would be concerned about late at night for safety of Deaf walking around the area, there are a lot of dark places.

The general atmosphere around the school is very pleasant and the students appear very happy and motivated. The parkland setting of the grounds make it feel very open and spacious even though the buildings are clustered together in a courtyard fashion. The buildings are all low rise being single and 2 storeys in heights. There is a slight village feel externally but internally it is very institutional.



## **Lessons for Village Project:**

I think Mary Hare do a fine job of branding the school. The PR and fund raising office have certainly done their work when it comes to promoting the image of a very successful academic school and support organisations. The signage it uses on its promotional literature and buildings is clear and recognisable. The Deaf Village project could certainly learn from this.

Mary Hare as well as being a school is also a national charity and it also has a foundation and a number of partnerships with industries that generates another source of fund raising and income.

Mary Hare is a co-ed school and the mixing of boys and girls seems to be beneficial.

The residences are set far apart and there is a good mix of activities in the school and in the local town to occupy the pupils spare time.

Accommodation for parents – in Maryhare parents can come and stay in cottage provided in the school grounds and it also has an area for caravans.

Essential to be clear what our philosophy is.

If we chose 2 philosophies, centres must be separate (but I think this is what we are trying to get away from).

Many of the teachers have Educational Audiology qualifications, but all work in teaching as well as audiology.

Good technical support.

Speech and language therapists on site all day every day - 4 people, Wow!

Smartboard interactive boards in every room.

Group aids working in every room (children carry around their equipment in specifically designed bags.

Ongoing and regular professional development for teachers/staff.

School should become involved in education of teachers and other professionals working in the Deaf Education arena.

Acoustics, Auditorium, Red bricks both outside and inside (should be taken into consideration),

Landscaping

Excellent arts building which was used by local public, this would bring in income.

Good use of facilities with locals to firstly bring in extra income and create awareness of Deaf culture and community.

Build up good relationship with locals therefore breaking down barriers between hearing and Deaf communities.

Use all resources to their full potential, don't just have them being unused for half the year when the school is closed

Avoid institutional style of design.

The use of technology in teaching aids is very important.

Students feel safe and are highly motivated.

Business type approach to running the facility.

Feeling of close-knit community.

Connection with outside community.



## **Positives for inclusion:**

The co-ed nature of the education.

The academic and practical preparing of the pupils for higher education.

The fostering of school identity and the partnerships with outside interests that would be financially mutually beneficial.

The branding of the school and its various interests.

The marketing of its skill basis and the courses it runs for interest parties.

Qualified teachers

Outside school hours care staff helping children with homework

Good behaviour, kindness and respect for others is rewarded in school

Advice and support service

Success in exams

Deaf Band (Maryhara band performs at Albert Hall)

Good technological equipment

Treating the village project as a facility for the wider community.

Positive promotion of the village.

Treat the village as a business enterprise - use any opportunity to market itself and plough profits back into the village project.

Acoustics in classrooms

Set up of auditorium and its technology

Boys and girls together

Training services

Community involved

Fund raising

Very important to involve hearing local community to get rid of the impression of 'the Deaf and Dumb School', people in Cabra call St. Joseph's this name.

Use of facilities will bring in extra income which can enhance resources for students and other facilities.

Teachers in St. Mary's are excellent teachers but we need to take back the power and tell parents and students we are experts in our field of education.

The Arts Centre is a great success and encourages links with the outside hearing community.

This relationship with the local community is very important to the success of the school.

Inventive in generating additional income streams.



## **Negatives to be avoided:**

This is an exclusive school that is highly selective of its pupils. Its method of teaching is an oral method only. This model is unacceptable and has proven itself not to be the best model for Ireland.

The school did not see its role including the communicating and fostering of Deaf Culture or Language.

I saw only one student that had a physical disability and wondered if this was due to the school's selection process.

It is interesting that while the alumni section of its school magazine mentions the high academic achievements won by its past pupils there are no past pupils on the present teaching staff.

At one class a teacher was speaking too fast for my liking, pupils were depending on hearing aid to understand him.

Poor layout / design of buildings / classrooms / residential rooms

No church

Deaf not being employed because of speech.

Very few Deaf adults working here.

No sign language used by staff at any time

Total rejection of sound and audiology - this is important to a huge majority of parents of Deaf children.

Making the village exclusive - The Deaf community is too small to sustain the project in the long term.

I didn't like the 6<sup>th</sup> formers accommodation

Residences set up

No place of worship in Maryhara (we should have it here)

Exclusiveness

Do not have it elusive from the community, involve everyone as much as possible, it must not be kept for just one particular group.

Do not disregard sign language, speech or signed English. Each has an important role to play in culture.

Residence - rooms are small and cramped and they don't all have showers just a bath with shower head.

I felt they were very impersonal especially in the common area, very institutionalised. St. Joseph's in

Cabra is much better, more homely.

The site is not wheelchair friendly.

Approach to running the school is a bit too business like.

Selective in their enrolment process.

Poor investment in the buildings.

Not much sporting facilities (new one planned).

4 / 6 students per room – too many.



## **Summary:**

The trip was worthwhile. The nature, size and intellectual ability of deaf children in Ireland would not allow for such a select model of Education. The visit confirmed for me the need for an educational policy that would cater for the individual needs of each pupil and that was bi-lingual.

Maryhara Schools believe in the use of spoken English.

It focuses on developing the language of pupils.

It has very good technological equipment which plays an important part in the development of speech and grammar skills.

Students go home on Friday returning on Monday mornings, spending 4 nights at school.

I found the visit to the school very interesting.

This visit was a fantastic opportunity to see a dedicated facility. It provided us with great ideas for school development and promotion. It clearly showed us the necessity of having a clear aim for education.

If we decide to use old buildings we could return there to get more tips. Although Tony said he would love to build a new school. We must recognise the value our teachers bring and the necessity to have a clear continuing professional development policy.

I found the visit to Maryhara very interesting. Very surprised that Mr. Tony Shaw stayed with us throughout our visit, bearing in mind he is the Principal but had time for us. He was so gracious.

I thought Maryhara was situated on such a beautiful setting, nice mixture of new and old buildings. Boys and girls seem to be happy and friendly.

Acoustics - Wow!

Auditorium – Fantastic

Classrooms old - same with bedrooms - not great

Only flaw I found is Maryhara is too exclusive

Too much focus on exam – success – results

Too much pressure on students?

Too much focus on speech

Even though there is a high rate of success there I applaud them but Deaf teachers are discouraged to work there!!

Very impressive school setting.

The school needs to have firm view for school policy and stick to it. We need to have same view as Maryhara, we are experts in our field of education and people need to accept us e.g. there should be no choice over wearing the audiological equipment and children must be made wear hearing aids.

Parents need to accept school philosophy and not undermine it.

Train teachers in making ear moulds so we can do it in-house so we are not self reliant and therefore have access to fixed equipment immediately.

Train teachers in audiology for assessing students and their hearing aids, there is a need for an audiology manager within the school environment.

Bring cochlear implant assessment and speech training onto campus to ensure children are getting consistent auditory training from specialists.

If school is going bilingual all staff need extensive training in ISL and Deaf culture, one class a week or two week block is not enough.

Use the expertise within the school to train other teachers and people in schools around the country.

A very successful school in that it has a very high academic level – 20% higher than national average.

It has a limited goal – get students to university!

Very focused on a limited agenda.

