Educate Together:

An Inclusive Response To The Needs

Of A Pluralist Ireland?

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by

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AUTHORS DECLARATION

I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment on the programme of study leading to the award of PhD in Education is entirely my own work, that I have exercised reasonable care to ensure that the work is original, and does not to the best of my knowledge breach any law of copyright, and has not been taken from the work of others save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.

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ABSTRACT

Educate Together: An inclusive response to the needs of a Pluralist Ireland?

Ireland has undergone profound changes over the last twenty years. These changes have impacted on all aspects of Irish life not least in the area of compulsory education. Irish classrooms, reflecting the conditions prevailing in the broader society, have become more diverse environments during this time. This thesis examines how one element of the Irish education system, Educate Together, reflects this diversity in how it operates its curriculum, how it manages and evaluates its practices and how these actions are perceived and understood by a range of stakeholders. The research was informed by an EU wide research project into inclusion in European education systems.

Taking a case study approach and operating within an interpretive philosophical framework, the research gathered perspectives from parents and school principals from a number of Educate Together schools in Dublin and surrounding counties.
The views of representatives from a number of agencies working in the sector were also sought.

The main findings of the research focus on a number of themes including the training demands and provision for those going to work in Educate Together schools, the management and evaluation of curriculum processes and practices in a range of schools and the involvement of parents in the schools.

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For Cathy

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CCT: *Critical Communicative Theory*

CiCe: *Children's Identity and Citizenship in Europe*

CPD: *Continuous Professional Development*

CSO: *Central Statistics Office*

DCU: *Dublin City University*

DCU MIRC: *Dublin City University, Migration and Interculturalism Initiative*

NMS: *EU new member states*

NCCRI: *National Consultative Committee on Racism & Interculturalism*

NPPTI: *National Pilot Project for Teacher Induction*

Chapter 1 Overview of the Study

1.1 Introduction

As the phenomena of migration and globalization affect the fabric of so many societies, new challenges emerge in what were once mono-cultural and ethnocentric classrooms (Lopes da Silva and Villas-Boas, 2006, p.95).

The Irish Republic has experienced rapid and profound social change over the last 20 years, a phenomenon often referred to as the Celtic Tiger. This change both contributed to and is reflective of a similarly rapid change in the built and economic landscape in the country. These changes have consequences for the role and practice of education in Ireland and this research attempts to explore the form and extent of such change. It does so primarily by looking at how the Irish Education system accommodates the changes and challenges presented by a culturally diverse population from the perspective of an emerging provider of education in Ireland, the Educate Together movement, which purports, in its philosophy and practice, to provide inclusive, intercultural education where difference is celebrated and "where no child is an outsider".

The research involved 4 distinct interweaving levels of activity and in keeping with the emergent design and response characteristics of qualitative-based enquiry in authentic, real-life contexts, research carried out at one level informed other concurrent levels of research activity.

The research had its genesis in a Framework 6 Research Project entitled Includ-ED, which was conducted across the EU 27 countries by 14 institutions representing 13 countries between 2006 and 2011. Being a member of the Irish research team attached to this project, allowed for the development of the research presented here as Includ-ED informed the research process and acted as a scaffold or backdrop for this research. The Includ-ED research project, entitled 'Strategies for Inclusion and Social Cohesion in Europe from Education' was an EU Framework 6 project which ran from 2006-2011. The main focus of the Includ-ED research was on identifying those educational strategies, systems, policies and practices throughout the EU that contribute to overcoming inequalities and which promote social cohesion and on identifying those strategies, systems, policies and practices that create social exclusion in particular with vulnerable and marginalised groups. It did this by examining the

academic literature and policy documents from across the EU in order to identify such practices (Includ-ED, 2012). Part of the Includ-ED project remit involved an examination of how the research findings applied in national and local education settings. In Ireland, the Includ-ED findings were examined in a series of workshops, which took place over the lifetime of the project. These workshops featured participants from across all areas of the national education sector as well as inputs from distinguished academic and education experts and practitioners from abroad such as James Banks and Jagdish Gundera. The workshops examined how the Includ-ED findings were experienced from the perspective of a range of stakeholders involved in the broader Irish educational system and were informed by the contributions of the visiting academics and education practitioners. The intention was that the workshops, as well as serving as dissemination activities, would also identify strategies from European best practice, which might be applied in a range of settings in each of the participant countries. The workshops discussed a range of findings from the Includ-ED project and how they applied in the Irish context. The main findings from the workshops, and which are most relevant to this research, were in the areas of:

- **Diversity Recognition:** Includ-ED found that the participation of pupils from cultural minorities in the class promotes their recognition and that the invisibility of their cultural identities in the curriculum is not reflective of current societal realities. The Irish workshops identified examples of good practice from the research in this area and which could be applied in the Irish context. These included the use of a range of cultural artefacts in curricular approaches and a recognition and celebration of the range of religious expression found in classrooms.

- **Family and Community Involvement:** Includ-ED found that the participation of families and community members becomes a significant potential resource to enhance educational and social inclusion. The Irish workshops discussed these findings and suggested that in the Irish context the general consensus across groups was that there was not enough involvement of parents and community. The workshop considered the types of practices that enabled such participation and felt that a change in culture regarding

parental involvement in the schools was a necessary first step in order to enhance such involvement.

- **Inclusive practices:** Includ-ED found that Inclusive actions should be promoted in schools, especially for students from vulnerable groups in order to increase the school achievement of all students and improve inter-group relations in classrooms and schools. The research also indicated that separation into special programmes and schools, of students from ethnic minorities (e.g. Roma), second language learners (e.g. immigrants) and students with disabilities, increases dropout levels and racism.

The findings from the initial literature review conducted as part of the Includ-ED research, the subsequent dissemination of the review findings in the first Includ-ED workshop and the workshop outcomes led to the development of my research question, which was: how inclusive are Educate Together schools when measured against identified best practice across the EU?

Using a Case Study approach to address this research question, interviews were conducted with a number of Educate Together School Principals who had been invited to participate in the workshops. The Educate Together Principals had been included as participants in the Includ-ED project as it was felt that they worked with an education provider whose principles and professed practices were chiefly concerned with offering an educational experience, which reflected and understood diversity and difference. Educate Together was in theory a model of good practice in some of the areas that had been identified in the Includ-Ed findings. This theory however needed further exploration in practice.

Principals were chosen as the main research participants in the Case Study, as they seemed to be well positioned to answer questions relating to how the principles of an educational philosophy are managed and implemented in authentic education settings. It was felt that they would be best able to provide an overview of the practices in the schools and the measures used to maintain and evaluate the ethos and how this was given a practical dimension. They would have a commitment, as so called gatekeepers of the ethos, to try to ensure that such ethos was observed and practiced.

The Principals outlined how their school practices and policies seemed to mirror some of the Includ-ED research findings outlined above, such as the benefits to school going populations of diversity recognition, the benefits of increased parental

involvement in the life of the school and the use of culturally sensitive pedagogical approaches. While other schools might purport to have a similar culture and ethos, the following chapters will outline why Educate Together appeared in principle to match Includ-ED findings most closely as the clearly stated ethos for such schools states that "No child is an Outsider". The overwhelming majority of schools within the Primary sector in Ireland are denominational and must give priority to their own identified denominational group and ensure that the ethos of this denomination permeates the entire school day.

Educate Together was considered to be a suitable site within which to test the Includ-ED findings and progress this specific research thesis because the model of education it espoused emphasized the provision of an inclusive, participative and democratic educational experience.

From the outset of this research other potential research participants were also identified and these included parents/guardians and education professionals. Parents were considered as participants for a number of reasons. To begin with, Educate Together as a movement has been driven by strong parental involvement from its beginnings in the 1970s and parents continue to play a prominent and active role in Educate Together and its ongoing development. Secondly, and as a consequence of such parental involvement, one of Educate Together's core principles concerns a commitment to meaningful engagement with parents in all aspects of the school experience. In addition, the benefits to the child of increased parental involvement in the child's educational experiences within and beyond the school was one of the findings from the Includ-Ed research. The research found that this was particularly true of migrant children and their families and Educate Together schools had school going populations which had higher than the national average representation of children from such backgrounds.

As the Case Study progressed two other Includ-ED workshop-based activities took place in DCU over the lifetime of the project. These workshops were concerned with how the ongoing results of the Includ-ED research project applied in the broader education sector in Ireland. Particular emphasis was placed on the transformative strategies, which the project had identified in the European context and how they were being experienced in the sector and the outcomes from these workshops fed in to the ongoing case study.

The Case Study was also informed by the results of an on-line survey which sought to determine how some of the Includ-ED findings applied in Educate Together schools, and how these findings were experienced by teachers in these schools.

The findings from this survey were informative in that they tended to focus on the values and principles involved in teaching and learning in diverse education settings. The teachers spoke about the importance to their practice of working in such a value driven environment and about how these rather abstract ideas were given voice and action in their contexts. They identified those values that were important to them in their practice such as respect, inclusiveness, tolerance, democracy and celebrating differences and they gave examples of explicit and implicit practices, which allowed such values to be enacted in the schools. Examples of explicit practices included inclusive, non-discriminatory enrolments policies and the fostering of democratic partnerships with parents and students involved in school policies and decision making through parent/teacher committees and student councils. Implicit practices would include Teachers modeling the core values in their interactions with students and parents. Teachers were also asked to rate the extent to which positive attitudes and values that promoted inclusive practices in everyday activities existed in their school and they were asked to identify the specific activities within the school that promoted inclusive practices. Examples would be where children were encouraged to have a voice and to support one another academically and socially and inclusion was also prioritised among staff with teachers, principals, special needs assistants, caretakers and secretaries eating and socialising together. Examples of democratic practices in the schools included situations where children were often involved in making group decisions, in evaluations, in determining the direction their learning took and were involved in devising procedures for classroom management and models of positive behavior. Democratic principles were also enacted through the encouragement of parental involvement in the school. A number of instances of such involvement were outlined in the survey. These included involvement in a range of events and fairs in the school such as Intercultural Day and the Book Fair. Parents served on Boards of Management, helped out with administrative tasks, provided support to teachers in such areas as IT and were involved in assisting teachers in specific subject areas such as music and science. In some schools Parent reps had been appointed for each class.

This survey, while limited in its scope, was important in that it introduced another 'voice' into the proceedings, that of the teacher working in the Educate Together sector.

The outcomes from this survey fed in to the interviews being carried out as part of the Case Study and led to a further consideration of the role and relevance of values-based educational approaches. This raised a number of key questions regarding how such approaches could be articulated, managed and evaluated and these fed in to the interviews being conducted in the Case Study in the various school and contributed to the emergence and development of a number of other themes, which were informed by but separate from the Includ-ED themes, and these were considered, analysed and discussed.

These themes included:

- How Educate Together Schools accommodate the diversity of cultural and national identities found in its classrooms.
- How this diversity is represented in the curriculum's physical artifacts (school environments, resources and materials) and teaching and learning approaches.
- The experiences of parents/guardians of children attending Educate Together schools.
- The nature and extent of Teacher training provision for those who go on to work in Educate Together schools.
- As the Educate Together movement is predicated on a set of clearly and publicly articulated principles the research looked at how and if these principles were upheld, practiced, monitored and evaluated.
- The research also explored who was responsible for ensuring that the guiding philosophies of the ethos were enacted and embodied in the Schools internal and external activities.

The rationale for the use of Case Study and the selection of schools, Principals and parents as participants in this phase of the research will be outlined in further chapters.

The research took place at a number of different but concurrent levels. These levels of research activity cannot be seen as purely independent or discrete events, which occurred in a linear timeframe. They overlapped and intertwined throughout the

research process as is to be expected in such a qualitative approach. The relationship between each of the different research activities is represented in figure 1.1 below

Case Study 2007 — 2012				
Includ-ED Lit Review	Includ-Ed Workshop	Includ-Ed Workshop	Educate Together Survey	Includ-Ed Workshop
Includ-ED 2006 — 2011				
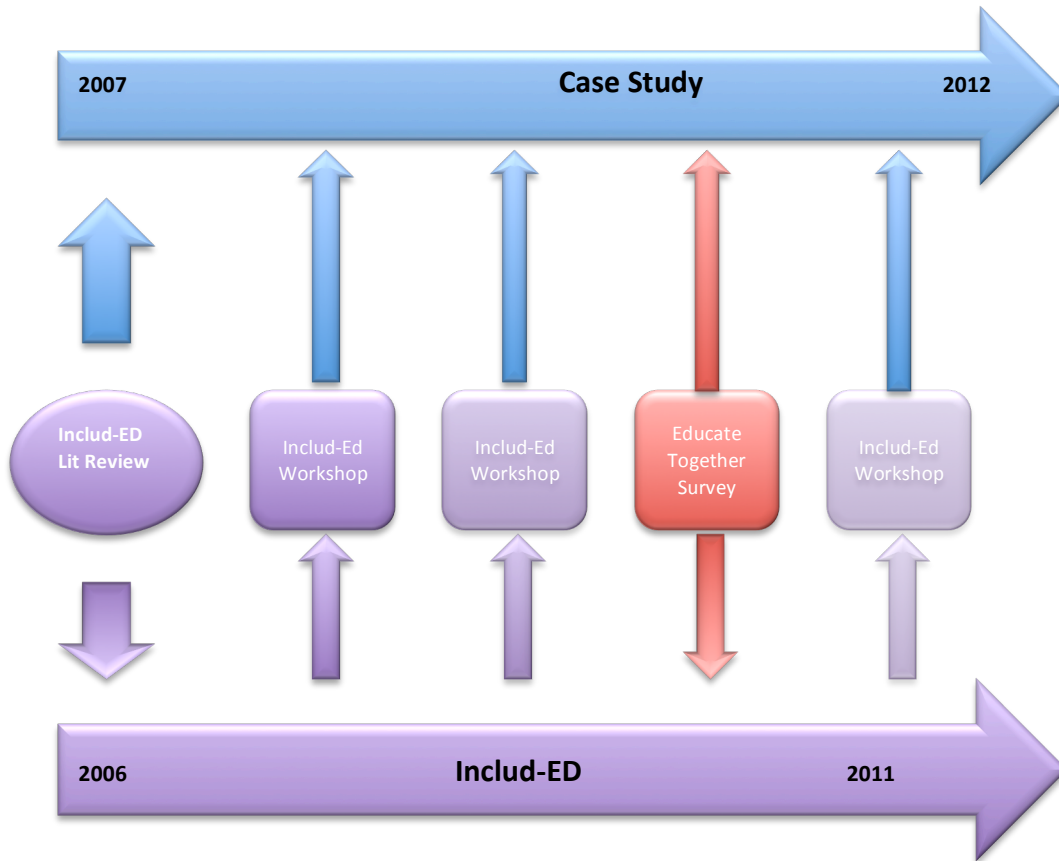
It should be noted that the research conducted in the Case Study did not purport to examine denominational schools or provide a comparison between the traditional and the emerging sectors. From the outset the stated aim of the research presented here was to explore the concept of plurality and inclusion within Educate Together schools, against the backdrop of a rapidly changing Irish landscape and from the perspective of best practice across EU 27 as highlighted by the Includ-ED research platform.

1.2 Professional and Personal Statement of Interest

The research, in attempting to answer the research question of how inclusive Educate Together is when measured against identified best practice across the EU, was undertaken for a variety of personal and professional reasons. As a professional educator and researcher for the last 17 years I have developed an interest in the area of social justice through education which has been informed by my experiences working in the School of Education Studies and my previous work in Community Development as a researcher and practitioner.

My background is in the arts with a particular emphasis on community arts. My Master's thesis was concerned with such arts practice and looked at political and artistic development in so called disadvantaged communities using an Action Research methodology. My experiences in the community arts sector highlighted the role and potential of social research approaches to effect change in meaningful ways. This work led to my involvement in an education and training programme for people with disabilities, which in turn led me to seek professional qualifications at third level. I have been working as a lecturer and researcher in the School of Education Studies in Dublin City University (DCU) for the last 7 years and have recently taken on the role of Chairperson of the Degree in Education and Training. I have always been interested in social development in disadvantaged contexts and my research in the School has reflected this. This research has concentrated on two distinct strands through a number of EU funded research projects: Curriculum Assessment in Vocational Education settings which concerned itself with curriculum development in vocational settings and the Includ-ED project which was concerned with Access and Inclusion in Education in national and European contexts. My interest in the area of intercultural education has led to me becoming a member of the DCU Migration and Interculturalism Initiative (DCU, MIRC) and I helped organize the cluster's Lecture

Series, which were held in DCU in 2010, and whose themes were broadly related to the focus of this research. I was also a member of the organising committee for a number of conferences in this research area in DCU.

As a lecturer and Programme Chair in the school of Education Studies in Dublin City University I also have a particular interest in curriculum studies: the interdependent relationship between schooling as an activity and cultural formation in society, research as agency and social impact as well as research for the purposes of knowledge creation. These research and practice interests and experiences relate to how education systems work at policy and practice levels and in particular in times of great change such as we are currently experiencing in Ireland. These in turn have led me to consider how some of the themes that have emerged in European and theoretical contexts have applied in the Irish education setting.

In addition to these personal and professional concerns the research was undertaken because of the relative lack of research into how the education system in Ireland has reacted to the changes that have taken place in the country over the last two decades.

Reflecting on these changes Leavy (2005, pp.159-160) points out 'the children who make up our classrooms represent much greater ethnic composition than has been experienced in the past'. However as Kitching (2006, p.2) points out this has occurred in a context where official discourse has 'intentionally or otherwise' denied culturally diverse realities in contemporary Ireland'. Kropiwiec and Chiyoko King-O'Riain (2006, p.4) claim that 'there has been comparatively little research that has been undertaken by or indeed focused on the views and perceptions of people from minority ethnic communities who already live in or have migrated to Ireland'.

Deegan (2003, p.64) adds that, despite a growth in responses to diversity and education at official levels in Ireland, 'paradoxically we know little about the tacit and taken for granted everyday realities of race, ethnicity, gender, class, beliefs, ability, and community, among other socio-cultural phenomena, in children's lives across classrooms, schools, families and communities'. While these views are explored in greater depth in the Literature review, it is important to identify at the outset, the paucity of research in this field.

The next section gives a brief outline of the forces that have given rise to the phenomena outlined above and the implications for the Irish education system. It explores the impact of globalization and changing migration patterns on Irish society

in recent times and sets these dynamics within the historical Irish experience of migration.

1.3 Research Context

1.3.1 Recent Social Change in Ireland

The Republic of Ireland has undergone a dramatic transformation in economic and social terms in the last twenty years, which has impacted on many parts of the society. During this time the country has experienced an economic boom, which saw an increase in wealth, employment and economic growth, which was followed by a subsequent period of rapid and extreme economic decline and these phenomena have been well recounted in various public media and publications (O'Toole, 2009; Cooper, 2010, 2011; Carswell, 2011).

One consequence of this transformation has been a change in the nature of migration to Ireland from a range of countries within and beyond Europe. This migration pattern was fuelled by a number of factors including a low tax regime, the country's geographical, political and social position relative to Europe and the United States of America and an increase in foreign direct investment and EU structural funds during the period. Other factors were the impact of a series of social partnership agreements between government, employers and Trade Unions, the low age profile of the population and ongoing high levels of investment in the Education system (particularly at 3rd level). The fact that English is the principal language spoken in the country and the Irish Government's decision to allow free movement of labour into Ireland from the ten new EU accession states in 2004 has also contributed to change. This final observation in particular had a great impact on the rate of migration into the country. According to Barrett et al 'in 2002, there were less than 25,000 nationals of the NMS (EU New Member States) living in Ireland. By 2006, this figure had reached over 120,000. As the total population of Ireland in 2006 was 4 million, nationals from the NMS made up 3 percent of the population in that year' (2008, p.2).

The 2006 Census revealed that 'there was a total of 420,000 non-Irish nationals living in Ireland in April 2006, representing 188 different countries. While the vast majority of these people were from a very small number of countries - 82 per cent from just 10 countries - there was also a remarkable diversity in the range of countries represented' (CSO, 2008).

This can be seen in the map below in figure 1.2 which shows the country of origin of Ireland's migrant population.
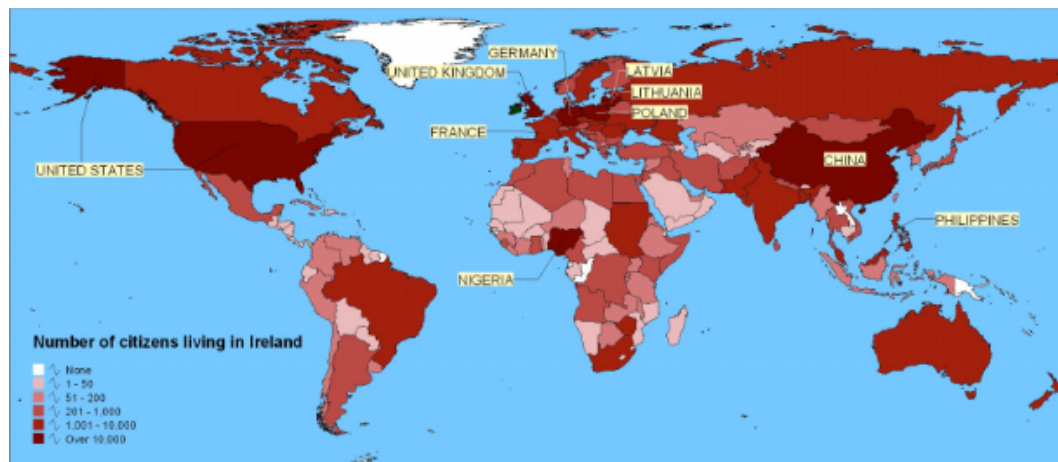
Figure 1.2: Country of Origin of Ireland's Migrant Population (CSO, 2008).

Early preliminary results regarding migration from the most recent population Census, which took place in April 2011, show that for the period 2002 to 2006 'derived net inward migration measured 191,000 for the four year period (or 47,800 on annual average basis). It has now fallen back again for this inter-censal period to 118,650 or an annual average of 23,730' (CSO, 2011). The preliminary report shows that for the Census period 2006 to 2011:

> the estimated net migration…is 118,650, which represents an annual average inflow of 23,730. This compares with the previous inter-censal annual average figure of 47,832. Unlike the 2002-2006 inter-censal period, where there was a clear pattern of net inward migration across each of the four years concerned, the pattern over the 2006 to 2011 period is markedly different. Ireland continued to experience strong net inward migration for the first half of the latest inter-censal period followed by a switch to net outward migration over the second half (CSO, 2011).

Ireland also has the fastest growing population in the whole of Europe and it is estimated by the now defunct NCCRI (National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism) in 2006 that by 2030, one fifth of the projected population of 5 million will have been born outside of Ireland (NCCRI, 2006, p.17). The 2011 Census shows that the current population of Ireland is over 4 and half million people. The Census report indicates that this 'recent inter-censal period (2006-2011) shows the highest natural increase at 45,000 persons per annum, with 73,000 births and 28,000

deaths' (CSO, 2011). Figure 1.3 below shows the changes in the general population over the last ten years.

Year	Population	Actual change since previous Census	Average annual percentage change since previous Census
2002	3,917,203	291,116	1.3
2006	4,239,848	322,645	2.0
2011	4,581,269	341,421	1.6

Figure 1.3: Change in population 2002-2011 (CSO, 2011).

The Preliminary Results report of the 2011 Census also records a very high rate of population growth when compared to such growth in Ireland's European neighbours: 'births and deaths combined give the natural increase in the population. With births of 363,500 and deaths of 140,700 over the relevant five-year period the resulting natural increase between 2006 and 2011 was 222,800 or 5.3 per cent of the 2006 population over the five years'. The Report goes on to compare these trends with developments in Europe where 'the rates of natural change per 1,000 population in the EU27 was 1.0 in 2007 and 1.2 in 2008. The corresponding rates for Ireland were 9.8 and 10.4 respectively' (CSO, 2011, p.11).

Figure 1.4 below, from the Census 2011 Preliminary report (CSO, 2011), outlines the changes in Irish population and Migration from 1956 to 2011.
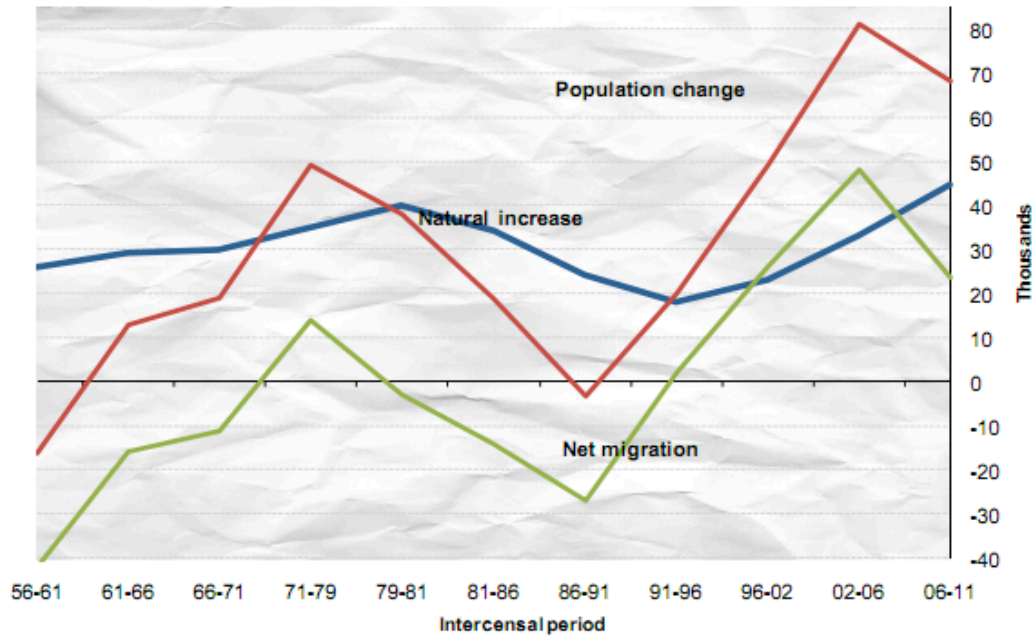
Figure 1.4: Components of population change (average annual figures) for each inter-censal period, 1956-2011 (CSO, 2011).

While it is true that the recent downturn in the Irish economy has had an impact on the pattern of migration, it is clear that Ireland is still presented with the major challenge of integrating people from a variety of different cultures, contrasting ethnic identities, different languages and a wide range of religious groups, while maintaining social stability and helping to foster inclusive citizenship of a new Ireland (Lalor and Mulcahy 2011, p.87).

1.3.2 Implications for the Education Sector

Many areas of Irish life such as transport and communication infrastructure, health service provision, and education were perhaps slow to react to the ensuing rise in the rate of inward migration, which has taken place over the last two decades. Murphy (2006, p.1) places these changes in a broader context suggesting that:

> as we stride into the twenty first century, there is a realisation that we have become a pluralist society, a society where individualism and subjectivism prevails. Increased levels of materialism and secularism have led some to comment that Ireland is on its way to becoming a 'post-Christian society'.

She claims that the education system has been the place where this 'cultural shift' has impacted most and that 'the school, a 'microcosm' of society and the medium through which culture is transmitted, has been undeniably affected by changing cultural contexts. Consequently, no major institution has been more subject to change than the

education system (Murphy 2006, p.1) with school being the place where 'younger citizens are introduced to the world outside their immediate family (and the place which) is particularly influential in shaping children's world views, expectations and aspirations' (Includ-ED, 2007(b), p.90). The Includ-ED research contends that education systems play a pivotal role in promoting respect for diversity and difference but can also be 'sites of confrontation where different values and world views collide and where majority values can undermine all others (Includ-ED, 2007(b), p.91). Lalor and Mulcahy suggest that in Irish education contexts the challenges presented by the rise in inward migration are of particular importance 'as our systems try to cope with immediate issues such as attempting to create intercultural classrooms in a system that is almost exclusively denominational and where the ethos of the school is underpinned by the predominant faith, in this instance Roman Catholic' (2011, p.99). However, changes in the Irish demographic landscape are part of the continuing narrative of diversity in Ireland adding to 'the rich diversity that always existed in Ireland' (Kropiwiec and Chiyoko King-O'Riain, 2006, p.4). Keogh (2003, p.3) suggests that while such 'cultural diversity is not new in Ireland…our response to that cultural diversity through the development of interculturalism is just emerging'. The nature of the changes in the Irish demographic landscape also differ from the experiences of other European countries:

> The recent and sudden shifts in immigration patterns have also resulted in a more complex mix than in other countries. The population of immigrant students is segmented into two distinct groups: those whose mother tongue is English…and those whose mother tongue is either another language or English but requiring English language support. The second group includes mostly children of immigrants who came over since the economic boom, starting in the mid-1990s and accelerating after EU enlargement in 2004, and a much smaller group of asylum seekers who are seeking residency rights (less than one in ten of all immigrants), Asians and Africans (Taguma et al. 2009, p.15).

Devine (2005, p.50) finds that this social transformation takes place in a country where, although 'there have always been some minority ethnic groupings in Irish society, including indigenous Travellers and a Jewish community, the vast majority of the population has traditionally been classified as white, sedentary and Roman Catholic'. Grabowska, (2005, p.28) focusing on this from a Polish perspective offers the view that these changes have made Ireland an attractive destination for immigrants

with the country being 'a perfect example of a new immigrant country in terms of changes in the international mobility of labour. It has undergone a complex transformation from a traditional emigration country into a modem, attractive immigration country'.

According to the Council of Europe (2008, p.29), the development of the ability to interact productively in a multicultural context is not intuitive but must be acquired and learned. The Council urges governments to include the management of religious diversity within the larger context of intercultural education. This is a challenge from an Irish perspective given the predominantly denominational ethos that prevails in the majority of Irish Primary schools. It is worthwhile to consider how such a system responds to the changed nature of religious representation in the country. The current figures available for membership of different religious groupings in Ireland, based on the 2011 Census, indicate that the numbers in these groupings have increased significantly based on the immigration patterns and the numbers of churches belonging to different faith groups opening up throughout Ireland.

The census figures revealed that the number of Muslim and Orthodox adherents increased significantly between the censuses of 1991 and 2002- the former more than quadrupling to 19,000 and the latter increasing from less than 400 adherents in 1991 to over 10,000 in 2002. Non Irish Nationals made up 70% of the Muslims and over 85% of the Orthodox faith who were usually resident and present in the State on Census night (CSO, April 8th, 2004). By 2011 the total numbers for religious groupings were as laid out in Table 1.1 below:

Roman Catholic	3,861,000
Church of Ireland	129,000
Muslim	49,200
Orthodox	45,200
Other Christian	41,299
Presbyterian	24.6
No Religion	269,800
Not stated	72,900

Table 1.1 Population of religious groupings, 2011

It is clear that Ireland remains a predominantly Catholic country but the changes that are taking place in other groupings cannot be ignored. The number of Muslims living in Ireland increased by 51.2% since 2006, while the number of people identifying themselves as having no religion increased by 44.8% in the same period. The % of 25-29 year olds who had "no religion" at 13% was the highest for any age group.

Hession and Kieran, (2005), believe that this increase in numbers declaring No Religion, year on year may in part be due to the influence of postmodernism and the rejection of absolute, universally valid, truth. This may indeed be part of the reason, but the dramatic nature of the figures indicate that the second largest grouping after Catholicism, fall into the category of having no religion. The stated percentage of Catholics in Ireland is 87%. This does not take into account the number of espoused Catholics who may not practice and who may favour a different type of education for their children. This presents a major challenge for the predominantly Catholic nature of Irish education.

Many schools in Ireland are de facto denominational (to a large extent Catholic) and this situation calls for particular attention to be paid to the needs of students of minority faiths. Although such pupils are not obliged to attend religious education, the issue of providing alternative religious education or a form of religious education, which embraces all faiths, needs to be considered.

The next chapter will attempt to place these changes in the Irish education system in their historical context. It will begin by examining the relationship between the Church and State in the area of educational provision since the foundation of the state. It will also examine how certain sections of society responded to this dynamic and how such responses led to the emergence of an alternative approach to education provision.

1.4 Structure and Outline of the Thesis

Chapter 1: Introduction and Background to the Research

This chapter briefly outlines the recent changes in the social landscape in Ireland and the consequences for education provision in the light of these changes. It outlines the research framework, the research question and the researcher's personal and professional interest in the area and the changes in the social landscape that serve as a background to the research. The introduction concludes with a brief description of the structure of the thesis, which outlines what is contained in each chapter.

Chapter 2: Educate Together: a response to changing times

The chapter explores how the changes outlined above have impacted on Education provision in Ireland and it considers the historical context within which these changes have taken place. It looks at the relationship between Church and State in education

provision in Ireland and how an alternative to more traditional approaches began to emerge. In particular it examines the evolution and role of Educate Together as an alternative model of Primary education in Ireland and addresses some of the challenges faced by the sector from a firmly established denominational system of education.

Chapter 3: The Literature Review

This chapter outlines the literature related to this research thesis including the philosophies underpinning Curriculum in Irish education, the role played by education in pluralist societies, how ideas such as diversity and identity are dealt with in the Irish system, international perspectives on teaching and learning in diverse settings, teacher training and preparation to work in such contexts in Ireland and the role of the State in setting the philosophical and practical context within which education in diverse settings takes place.

Chapter 4: Methodological Approach

This chapter outlines the methodological stance adopted by the researcher and why this was relevant and suitable to the research. The chapter also defends the interpretive approach taken and situates such an approach within the researcher's own philosophy of research. The chapter also considers the use of research in social settings and locates this within the broader debate about research theory, design and application. The chapter describes a research philosophy, Critical Communicative Research, which underpinned the Includ-ED project and which guided this research.

The chapter describes why a Case Study approach was used and includes a description of the particular ethical dimensions of research in these settings. The chapter also outlines the approach taken to data analysis in the Case Study. It discusses how the analysis was guided by a number of data analysis models and approaches and gives details of the data reduction, display and interpretation processes that were conducted. It also gives an outline of the attempts undertaken to ensure rigor in the research process.

Chapter 5: The Includ-ED research in the Irish context

This chapter describes how the focus of the research went from an international perspective (the Includ-ED project) through national settings (how the findings

applied in the broader Irish education context) and on to the local context (how the findings applied in Educate Together schools). It gives details of the findings from these elements of the research and shows the relationship between each of the phases and how they provided an ongoing context for the Case Study element of the research.

Chapter 6: Findings

Chapter 6 briefly looks at the findings from the Includ-ED workshops, their impact on the emergent themes as examined in the Case Study element of the research, and details the key findings from this, which featured interviews with parents and Principals from a number of Educate Together schools and education professionals and considered how the Includ-ED findings applied in these specific contexts. This chapter also describes the themes that emerged during the Case Study and how they related to the literature.

Chapter 7: Conclusions and Recommendations

Chapter 7 discusses the findings from the research with a particular emphasis on the Case Study. These findings were measured against Banks' (2011) 5-stage approach to inclusion in diverse educational settings and the chapter offers a series of conclusions and recommendations from these findings for further research and investigation.

Chapter 2: Educate Together: a response to changing times

This chapter will trace the development of the Educate Together sector, which emerged as a response to the social and cultural conditions, which prevailed in Ireland in the decades between the foundation of the State and the 1970s. It places the development of the sector in its historical context and looks at the forces, which gave rise to its beginnings and subsequent growth over the last forty years. It begins by looking at the complex relationship between church and state with regards to Education provision in Ireland.

2.1 Church, State and Education in Ireland

The changes outlined above have taken place within a societal and educational context that up to recent times could be characterised as mono-cultural, monotheistic and predominantly white. Historically, education is an area that was influenced and controlled by a particular denominational orientation namely the Roman Catholic Church.

The State's role in Education provision and management can be traced back to the 1830s and the publication of the Stanley Letter, which is broadly considered to be a key moment in education in Ireland. Lord Stanley was the Chief Secretary for Ireland and the letter outlined a framework for how education in Ireland might be organized under the British administration. The forces that led to this initiative were varied. Historically, education for the Catholic majority in Ireland had been greatly restricted by the Penal Laws. These laws forbade the setting up of Catholic schools and the education of Irish students abroad in Catholic schools but their repeal, in the latter stages of the 18th century, saw an increase in activity by a number of voluntary groups in the field of education.

British policy in the area of education provision in Ireland was concerned with the promotion of the English language and the Protestant religion (Coolahan, 1981, p.9) and the Administration tended to treat Ireland as a place of social experimentation where changes in various areas of life could be tested before their adoption on the mainland. Other factors which created the climate for Stanley's intervention were a greater involvement by states throughout Europe in education provision, pressure by Irish Parliamentarians for such a system to be introduced in Ireland and a general

interest in education in the broader population as was evidenced in part by the voluntary agencies mentioned above.

In 1831, Stanley proposed the establishment of a Board of Commissioners for National Education whose aim would be to look favorably on applications from the Established (Protestant) Church and the Roman Catholic Church to establish *jointly managed* schools. From the outset, pressure was brought to bear on the Government by the Churches to resist this joint initiative to such an extent that by the beginning of the twentieth century the vast majority of schools were under denominational Church management (Hyland, 1993, p.1).

Some of the provisions of the Stanley Letter did however have a lasting effect on the Irish education system particularly those aspects dealing with financial support from central Governments and the practice of autonomy being vested in local, usually denominational, management groups. Other elements that remain in some form in today's system concerned the role and responsibilities of the local management of schools. At this level, school buildings were often in the charge of local trustees and the patronage fell to individuals who took the initiative to set up the school in the first instance, usually the local clergyman. The manager was locally based and typically a clergyman who hired and fired staff, distributed salaries and took responsibility for the general running of the school. The situation whereby schools remained under the control and patronage of the individual denominational groups remained intact up to the establishment of the Irish State in 1922 and the newly formed State was reluctant to interfere in this state of affairs.

There are a number of reasons for this reluctance on the part of the Government to challenge the Catholic Church's hegemony in this area. At that time the Irish Government was faced with questions concerning the direction and ownership of the education system. The State's objective was to re-establish Irish culture after years of British colonial rule and it attempted to restore Irish culture through the education system. According to Coolahan (1981, p.40) 'inspired by the ideology of cultural nationalism it was held that the schools ought to be the prime agents in the revival of the Irish Language and native tradition which it was held were the hallmarks of nationhood and the basis for independent statehood'. Coolahan (ibid, p.40) adds that 'for many nationalists the main purpose of education in a free Ireland was the re-establishment of Gaelic civilisation'. Just as the British administration, during its time in Ireland during the nineteenth century, had regarded the school system as a vehicle

to 'serve politicising and socialising goals, cultivating attitudes of political loyalty and cultural assimilation' (Coolahan, 1981, p.4) so too did the new State intend to use the education system to promote its idea of what constituted identity and citizenship. Along with its attempts to restore the language and culture through the school system the Government was also dealing with issues regarding the ownership of schools.

The Catholic Church had long played a significant role in providing resources to maintain educational provision. It owned a considerable amount of resources in the field of education and the government was reluctant to challenge this dominance for a number of reasons. To begin with, the Church had the support of the vast majority of the people and was a major force in the life of the people, and exerted enormous influence and power. 'By this stage Irish politicians had learned the lesson that the church viewed the control of schooling as its prerogative' (Coolahan, 1981, p.73) and that 'even if any of the new leaders had other ideas it was very prudent in the context of an Ireland divided by civil war not to antagonise such a powerful entity as the Catholic Church' (ibid).

The new state had 'neither the political will nor the financial resources to challenge the power of the churches in education' which resulted in the creation of a mutually beneficial relationship between the Churches and the State (Drudy and Lynch, 1993, p.74). This relationship had a profound and lasting effect on Irish society. The mainly Catholic Church controlled education system was central to reinforcing and underpinning particular ideas concerning the formation of Irish identity. These ideas were to a large extent bound up in the promotion of a view of Irish culture defined mainly by its language, arts and sporting traditions under the all-seeing gaze of a very dominant Church.

This situation prevailed almost intact up until the mid-1960s. This period was another important time in recent Irish history. The notion of Irish identity and what it meant to be Irish were subjects, which were debated and reflected on at this time. 1966 saw the 50th anniversary of the 1916 Easter Rising, the event that is regarded as the beginnings of the journey towards independence. The country was also undergoing a degree of economic and social change during this time and described by the Taoiseach of the day, Sean Lemass, who, commenting on the 1960's forerunner of today's Celtic Tiger, offered the hope that 'a rising tide will lift all boats'. Changes in technology (the national television service, RTE, began broadcasting in 1961) and a

rise in visitors to the country resulted in a newfound sense of national curiosity and debate.

Other factors, such as the country joining the EEC in 1973, the return of many emigrants who had been exposed to a more pluralist and a more outward looking approach to life in other societies, and the provision of grant aided university education, resulting in a more educated, and more aware, younger generation, provided the conditions where the country and its people turned its gaze outwards, beyond itself and began to absorb and learn from the various movements and dynamics taking place in society at a global level at that time. The optimism of this time led to an overall increase in self-confidence in certain sections of the society which in turn led people to question previously held notions of authority and to challenge traditional forms of knowledge creation and control.

Such optimism however was tempered by some of those more traditional forces, which still prevailed. The school system was predominantly under the control of the Catholic Church. The role and position of the Church was further underscored by a number of developments in government legislation in this area at this time, which served to enshrine, protect and give recognition to the denominational character of national schools and the Churches influence in these matters. The publication of the 1971 National School Curriculum was also important in maintaining the strong influence of the Catholic Church in education practice. This document suggested that religious and secular education should be integrated and that such integration should permeate all aspects of the curriculum.

The combination of legislation and practical curriculum frameworks created great difficulties for those parents who did not wish their children to be educated in particular denominational settings or to attend religious instruction in the schools. In response to this, a number of parents began to enrol their children in Church of Ireland schools as it was perceived that the ethos of these schools was 'less pervasive than that of Catholic schools' (Hyland, 1993, p.3). One such school was the local Protestant school in Dalkey, a suburb on the south side of Dublin. The attempts by parents to enrol their children in this school would have a long lasting and profound effect on education provision in Ireland.

The next section will briefly describe the setting up of the Dalkey School Project and the practical and political problems involved in the development and growth of what emerged as an alternative approach to education provision in Ireland.

2.2 The Dalkey School Project: a new chapter in Irish Education

Educate Together, which provides a multidenominational, child-centred educational alternative to traditional denominationally based primary school provision, and which today operates Primary schools throughout Ireland, has its origins in the Dalkey School Project. The Dalkey School Project was established by a group of parents in that area who, frustrated in their attempts to enrol their children in the local Protestant School, and who did not wish to send their children to the local Catholic school, attempted to provide an educational setting, experience and ethos for their children, which would not be dominated by a particular denominational or religious philosophy.

A letter written in June 1974 (Dalkey School Project, 1976) by parents interested in setting up a form of multidenominational school in the area identified some key principles that should underpin the school. These principles outlined that the proposed school should be child-centred, co-educational, multi-denominational and with a management committee that would be predominantly democratic in character. These principles still remain at the centre of Educate Together's philosophy. Áine Hyland (1993, p.4), one of those involved from the outset in this initiative, gives a flavour of the practical and philosophical difficulties involved in what at the time was quite an audacious undertaking:

> The task confronting the Project was formidable. The National School System had been undisturbed for over a 100 years. There was an established equilibrium between the Department of Education, the Churches and the Irish National Teachers Organisation. There was a price for the Church's control of education. They provided sites for schools and they paid the local contribution towards the capital and running costs of their schools…the Dalkey School Project realised that the entry fee for any new partner into the network would be high and that it would have to fund-raise on a very large scale if it was to succeed in setting up a school.

The Dalkey School Project opened in September, 1978 in a building bought by a number of parents and other supporters. By 1984 the school moved to new, purpose built premises, funded in part by money that had again been raised by parents and

supporters. The Dalkey School project encountered considerable political and ecclesiastical opposition but despite this, it proved an example and inspiration for a number of other groups to establish similar schools in other areas.

1981 saw the opening of the Bray School Project (another area on the south side of the City) and in 1984 the North Dublin National School Project opened. This was significant as it was the first school to open on the north side of the city and it served to motivate others to set up schools on that side of the city. As more groups sought to establish similar schools the need was felt for an organization to coordinate and support the existing and emerging groups and in 1983 Educate Together was established as the representative body for the developing sector. In 1987, Mary O'Rourke became Minister for Education and she would prove to be very supportive to those groups wishing to follow in the footsteps of the Dalkey and Bray School Projects. That year saw the opening of three more schools with a further four more opening between 1988 and 1990.

As more groups became interested in establishing schools, 1990 saw the launch of the Educate Together Charter, which articulated those values and principles, which underpinned the Dalkey School Project and which from then on, would serve as the principles for the entire movement. Educate Together schools are founded and run on principles which are child-centred, co-educational, multi-denominational and democratic.

The establishment of a National Office in 1998 to represent the sector as a partner in the Irish education system was a major development in the growth in the sector as was the recognition by the Department of Education that an Educate Together patron could operate more than one school. The incorporation of the national body allowed for the development of centralised patronage and as a result all schools that have opened since 2000 are under the central patronage of Educate Together. In 1999, the State abolished the requirement for Educate Together schools to provide their own sites and to pay 15% of the building costs of any new school. This had been a major impediment to the development of new schools and its removal paved the way for more growth in the sector. Also the term Project was removed from school titles as it was now accepted that this initiative in Irish education was no longer considered to be a temporary measure.

There are currently 65 Educate Together Primary schools in 19 counties in Ireland and many more are in the planning and development stages. 2014 will be another

landmark year in the development of the Educate Together movement. That year three new second level schools will open. There are already ten other second-level start-up groups spread throughout the country and these developments mark a natural and long sought progression for the sector. In addition, Educate Together has made a number of contributions to the recent Forum on Patronage and Pluralism in the Primary Education sector in Ireland. The Forum was established by the Minister of Education and Skills in 2011 and was asked to report to the Minister on 'how it can best be ensured that the education system can provide a sufficiently diverse number and range of primary schools catering for all religions and none' (Coolahan, Hussey, Kilfeather, 2012). The report, published in 2012, made a number of recommendations relating to multi-denominational and other forms of education provision, which reflected the current realities in Irish society. The Forum heard submissions from across the spectrum of Irish society and noted that a number of key points need to be borne in mind when considering issues of school patronage. These included an increasingly diverse population and the need for a greater range of school types, which reflect such plurality of belief and custom, the constitutional protection for childrens' and parents' rights regarding school provision and international legal obligations in this regard. The Forum recommended that future Government policy in the area of education provision should focus on the provision of diversity among new schools for areas of rising population; that in areas where there is a sufficiency of schools for stable population needs, but where parental demand for an alternative form of school patronage has been identified that the transfer of schools from existing patrons to the State, for re-distribution to new patrons should be facilitated and finally Stand Alone schools, which serve a local community, may be enabled to respond more effectively when the pupil body incorporates children of a number of faiths and none, or parents who do not wish their children to receive denominational religious education.

2.3 Educate Together Principles and Charter

Educate Together was established to meet a growing demand in a country which is 'one of the few countries in the western world where children have no choice but to be segregated by religion during their primary schooling' (Hyland, 1993 p.20) and a country with according to Irwin (2009, p.na):

> a distinctly 'monocultural' tradition, (and where) recent significant immigration into Ireland has created a crisis in educational provision. Almost

uniquely in Europe, Ireland has a monopolistic denominational tradition in schools, with 99% of primary schools being denominational, with 93% Catholic and 6% Protestant. Only 1% of schools are multi-denominational.

Irwin also states that in Ireland, teacher training is dominated by the same denominational monopolistic tradition where 'all five of the Third Level Colleges of Education…are denominational, with four being Catholic and one Church of Ireland (when) Irish society and culture is experiencing radical change and heterogeneity, with increasing immigration and significant shifts in the attitudes of indigenous Irish people towards religion and the Church' (Irwin, 2009, p.na).

Educate Together schools employ over 1,200 staff and serve over 14,000 pupils. According to its publicity material, Educate Together aims to provide 'schools that recognise the developing diversity of Irish life and the modern need for democratic management structure…and guarantee children and parents of all faiths and none equal respect in the operation and governing of education' (Educate Together, 2010a) and offer educational settings which give educational experience to pupils which are 'multi-denominational i.e. all children having equal rights of access to the school, and children of all social, cultural and religious backgrounds being equally respected and co-educational and committed to encouraging all children to explore their full range of abilities and opportunities' (ibid, 2010a).

Educate Together schools are recognised by the Irish Department of Education and Skills, work under the same regulations and funding structures as other national schools and provide an educational environment which are, according to the Educate Together charter, guided by the following principles where the school:

> Is democratically run with active participation by parents in the daily life of the school, whilst positively affirming the professional role of the teachers
>
> Is co-educational and committed to encouraging all children to explore their full range of abilities and opportunities
>
> Is multi-denominational i.e. all children have equal rights of access to the school, and children of all social, cultural and religious backgrounds are equally respected
>
> Is child-centered in its approach to education (Educate Together Charter, (revised) 2010a).

Many of the principles underpinning the Educate Together movement owe their origins to the Dalkey School Project particularly those dealing with the ethical core

curriculum. This curriculum dealt with the then (and currently) publicly sensitive issue of the place and form of religious education within the curriculum and the life of the Primary school. The ethical core curriculum was a response by members of the fledgling movement to articulate how the school would deal with education about religion as opposed to the denominational orientation of schooling as proposed by the 1971 state curriculum where a religious sensibility, it suggested, should infuse the entire life of the school.

This core curriculum contains four key elements:

Moral and Spiritual Development, Justice and Equality, Belief Systems and Ethics and the Environment and these elements reflect the guiding principles outlined in the Educate Together ethos.

The belief systems element of the Curriculum addresses the diversity of religious expression currently found in Irish educational contexts. It does this by teaching about the major religions of the world without favouring or highlighting any one denomination. Schools celebrate a range of festivals from these religions and give students an opportunity to develop an understanding and awareness of religious difference and cultural expression in a supportive atmosphere. The schools attempt to integrate these celebrations into their wider curriculum activities and allow for other subject areas related to the festivals to be explored e.g. geography, history, art, drama and so on thereby enacting a form of Integrated Curriculum. This places these events in their wider cultural and societal contexts, increasing the understanding of the links between religious and cultural expression and the development of children's identities. This values a range of identities and attempts to dispel preconceptions and prejudice. It should be noted that Educate Together regards humanist, agnostic and atheistic viewpoints with the same degree of respect and these perspectives are also represented in the curriculum.

The Educate Together approach, as articulated in its charter, gives a commitment to recognising the plurality of religious expression, which it hopes will lead to a situation where

- Responsibility for religious formation of children is assumed to be that of the family and religious organisations, while the responsibility of the school is to provide a safe, caring and respectful environment for all children
- Children will have a strong and secure contact with their own identity and comfort in interaction with people of different faiths and persuasions
- Religious rights of all families are addressed without favour or discrimination

- No child is ever placed in a position in which they feel themselves an outsider in the school programme because of their family or individual identity
- The human rights of teachers and other workers in the school are addressed, as staff are never placed in a position in which they may be required to put forward as religious truth a viewpoint that they may not themselves hold (Educate Together, 2010b).

Educate Together expresses the view that by recognizing and celebrating diversity it enhances the cultural and educational experience of the child and prepares the child to live in, and contribute in a positive fashion to, a diverse society. Educate Together claims that this dynamic is underpinned by its approach to school management, governance, co-education and relationships between the school and the wider community. The Educate Together literature refers to how the schools are democratically run with high levels of parental cooperation and involvement in the schools' activities at all levels. This involvement takes many forms including participation in classroom activities, educational support activities such as paired reading, organization of extra-curricular activities, involvement in the artistic, musical, dramatic, linguistic or science and technology programmes run by the School, support in the delivery of the ethical curriculum and the maintenance of the school building and serving on Boards of Management and other school committees (ibid, 2010b).

By encouraging parental involvement to this degree and in these activities Educate Together maintains that the bond between the school and its immediate community is developed and preserved. In this regard it feels the school can then become a place that is central to the life and work of the community and people from a range of social, ethnic and cultural backgrounds are seen as valuable and active partners in the education process, who serve as role models for their communities and allow children from diverse backgrounds to have their identities equally valued and respected. These elements are important in contributing to positive academic experiences and performance.

Educate Together also claim that it is important that the child's voice is encouraged and facilitated in the running of the school and that this provides a valuable learning experience for the child by developing its understanding of the elements involved in management, negotiation and compromise in school and in broader settings thereby developing the child's understanding of the responsibilities involved in becoming an

active citizen. The dynamic between the school and its community and the participation of children in the running of the school which Educate Together in its principles and curriculum programmes attempt to develop are, it claims, examples of its democratic principles in action and provide more learning experiences for the child as a citizen in a diverse environment. These espoused principles have a strong resonance in the findings from the Includ-ED research.

Educate Together claims that its schools are co-educational in ways that go beyond just mixing boys and girls in the classroom and that through its curriculum approaches it encourages the range of abilities found in the classroom regardless of gender and in order to address gender based discrimination. While these assertions and claims are admirable in the context of inclusion, they need to be further explored through the research process. Educate Together has struggled since its inception with various difficulties particularly in relation to practical and intellectual support from Government and other relevant agencies in the State but, despite these obstacles, it has continued to outline a vision for the provision of educational opportunities for an increasingly diverse population.

As can be seen above, Educate Together makes a number of claims about and commitments to, education provision in diverse contexts. This research looks at the ways in which Educate Together delivers on some of those claims with particular regard to its principles and its curricular approaches. It is also worthy of note that while Educate Together espouses inclusive and intercultural principles, with the exception of the religious aspect of inclusion, it is only with the growth in the intercultural nature of Irish society that these principles are clearly tested.

2.4 Conclusion

It should be noted that despite the emergence of the Educate Together movement and its steady growth over the last two decades the influence over the education system enjoyed by the Catholic Church during that time has continued albeit in less visible forms than had historically been the case. Gleeson and Munnelly argue that 'the representatives of the official Catholic Church…have exercised enormous influence in Irish education (Gleeson and Munnelly, 2004, p.3). Drudy and Lynch (1993) point out that 'the churches (particularly the Catholic Church) because of their strong representation on policy making bodies, can have a considerable influence on curriculum development'.

Educate Together has emerged over the last 40 years as an alternative to such denominationally driven school provision. It began at a time when challenging an organisation as powerful as the Catholic church was in Ireland was not a popular idea that received much support from the mainstream society or from the State.

This chapter examined how and why Educate Together developed as an alternative model of Primary education in Ireland and outlined the many challenges faced by the sector from a firmly established denominational system of education. It detailed the many advances that the sector has experienced and outlined the possible future directions for the movement.

Educate Together seeks to provide an alternative to traditional education providers and was chosen as the site for conducting this research because of its claims to do this. Future chapters in this thesis will examine how successful it is in upholding some of the core principles it claims to abide by.

Chapter 3 Literature Review

3.1 Introduction to the Literature Review

This chapter will outline the approach taken to the review of the relevant literature in this research. It will describe the themes that were suggested by the research question and other factors. Literature reviews are conducted for a number of reasons. According to Silverman (2010), literature reviews 'should be used to display your scholarly skills and credentials (and) to demonstrate skills in library searching; to show command of the subject area and understanding of the problem; to justify the research topic, design and methodology' (Silverman, 2010, p.321). He outlines a series of questions, which could be used to guide the choice of topics for the review:

- What do we already know about the topic?
- What do you have to say critically about what is already known?
- Has anyone else ever done anything exactly the same?
- Has anyone else done anything that is related?
- Where does your work fit in with what has gone before?
- Why is your research worth doing in the light of what has already been done? (Silverman, 2010, p.321).

According to Torgerson et al (2012, p.217) 'literary reviews seek to consolidate existing theoretical and empirical knowledge on specific issues'. These considerations guided the approach to the literature. The themes for the literature in this research were suggested by a combination of factors such as the research question itself, the national context and conditions within which the research took place, the framework provided by the Includ-ED research project and the contexts within which the findings of this project were applied and tested.

This chapter involved reviewing literature concerning the orientation of Curriculum in Irish education, the role played by education in plural societies, how ideas such as diversity and identity are dealt with in the Irish system, international perspectives on teaching and learning in diverse settings, teacher training and preparation to work in such contexts in Ireland and the role of the State in setting the philosophical and practical context within which education in diverse settings takes place.

The review begins by examining ideas of Curriculum development in Irish education settings and some of the ideologies that underpin these.

3.2 Curriculum and Ideology in Ireland

What are the ideologies that underpin and inform Irish education policy and practice? Gleeson (2009) claims that Irish culture and education could be characterized by an anti-intellectualism, which pervaded these arenas and which resulted in a lack of intellectual independence or intellectual originality (ibid, p.14). Gleeson refers to various Ministers of Education in the 50s, 60s and beyond who did not regard education as having or needing an ideological or philosophical foundation or orientation (ibid, p.14). In speaking about the main socio-technical influences on the Irish education system, he refers to 'the prevailing technical paradigm, the neglect of philosophical and sociological analyses of education and of education research, the prevailing anti-intellectual bias and the priority given to education for human rather than social capital' (ibid, p.3). This anti-intellectual bias existed and may have had its antecedents in a cultural and social context where there is what Gleeson (2009, p.121) terms a 'rhetoric/reality dichotomy' and that this is evident in education where there are marked differences between what the State says it is going to do with regard to education and what the reality is in classrooms. He refers to the work of the OECD which spoke about this dichotomy in terms of a 'mismatch between the stated goals of education and the declared needs for substantial structural change on the one hand and substantial areas of school practice on the other' (Gleeson, 2009, p.121).

The lack of philosophical and ideological foundations and the apparent disjuncture between policy and practice leads to tensions within the education system and contributes to an ongoing debate in Ireland about the nature of education itself and the relationship between society and education. Gleeson (2009) writes about the frameworks within which education operates in global and local contexts. When Curriculum (education) is situated in the technical paradigm then knowledge is 'objective, abstract and independent of time and place' (ibid, p.20). The Curriculum in this regard is seen primarily as 'syllabus content' consisting of 'rules, procedures and unquestionable truths' where knowledge is 'value free and comes neatly packaged in subjects' (p.2).

When Curriculum on the other hand is regarded as a 'contextualised social process' (ibid, p.2) then education is seen as a force for emancipation and societal development, where according to Gleeson, the focus is on 'understanding, meaning

and interpretation'. Lynch (1992, p.14) claimed that 'Irish education has been guided for the last twenty-five years by the principles of human capital theory, informed by what might be called technical functionalism'. Gleeson (2009, pp.42, 43) argues that politicians liked to claim that one of the principal driving forces behind the so-called Celtic Tiger was investment in education and such investment in 'human capital' underpinned and was responsible in no small part for economic development and growth during that period.

O'Brien and Ó Fathaigh (2005, p.3) claim that in Ireland 'a strong belief in the linear relationship between high quality education, increased wages, and greater productivity has instrumentally focused the 'modern' state's main ideological commitment to education' (Coffield, 1997 in O'Brien and Ó Fathaigh, 2005 p.4). They refer to 'the positive acceptance and promotion of 'human capital' theory – a theory which espouses that individuals can make value-added contributions to the economy via their own education and training' which develops 'through a discourse of 'individualism', 'employability' and 'self-improvement'. They also speak about an alternative ideological approach which is married to the human capital approach and which they call 'the "social democratic" function of education'. In this case education concerns itself with promoting access to 'higher levels of equality of opportunity' where a person's 'qualifications, skills and experiences are primarily valued both for their own empowering merit and their contribution to a more just society' (O'Brien and Ó Fathaigh, 2005, p.4). Gleeson claims that the narrative about education in Ireland became 'coterminous with the theme of education and the economy' (2009, p.42) and that this was at the expense of 'cultural, language, civic competence and moral development as themes' (ibid, p.42).

Granville (2011, p.129) argues that this situation prevails in Ireland and that:

> At present, naked instrumental concerns about the economic dividends of curriculum are particularly strong. At a more individualized level, there are annual set pieces about the public examination system and points accumulation. But all these political and personal controversies are conducted around a shared (mis)understanding that curriculum consists of the specification of subjects and syllabus content to be 'delivered' by schools

Gleeson and Munnelly (2004, p.2) assert that in Ireland 'preparing young people for

the labour market is accepted as a key task of schooling, with particular emphasis on access to the more prestigious and lucrative careers through achievement in state exams and accumulation of 'points' for admission to third-level education' and citing various research sources find that the Irish education system is strongly influenced by a number of ideological forces of consensualism, competitiveness and individualism instrumentalism and the dominance of the technical paradigm (Gleeson and Munnelly, 2004, p.2).

The ideologies that inform Irish education provision serve to reflect and create a particular consensus around education being considered in terms of market forces and the provision of a skilled work force to drive economic activity. This is the context within which the recent changes in the social landscape need to be viewed.

Granville (2011, p.129) finds that:

> In Ireland…the nature of curriculum remains a largely uncontested and essentially unproblematic topic. The tradition of centrally prescribed syllabus, curriculum and assessment matters in primary and especially in post-primary schools has formed a consensus around an uncontested conception of curriculum.

Most of the observations outlined above relate specifically to the Second level system in Ireland and this is arguably the area of education, which receives more attention in the daily discourse in these matters and in the literature. The relationship between school/subject choice in second level and how these need to be considered in terms of future career and academic choices tends to dominate the debate in Irish education circles and reflects the dominant instrumentalist philosophy underpinning provision at this level. Although there is a general lack of connection between the primary and secondary school levels in the Irish system with regards to structure, content or pedagogical approaches it could be argued that the Primary school system in the country is directly or indirectly subject to the same forces that influence second level provision and cannot escape its influence. Irwin, speaking about the Irish Primary School Revised Curriculum of 1999, claims that the ideologies that underpin second level schooling are beginning to impact on practices in primary schooling and that this creates:

> clear and unresolved tensions between a 'constructivist' epistemology in some areas and a more 'realist' epistemology in others…Additionally, the recent turn towards a more 'performativity' based model with regard to assessment (in the WSE or Whole School Evaluation), begs the question as to how this more technicist model of assessment coheres with the more constructivist and

radical approaches to learning, which are meant to be integral to the implementation of the curriculum itself (Irwin, 2009, p.na).

The ideologies that underpin education systems have a clear bearing on what is taught in schools and what is valued in these environments. Education systems and practices help to create and reflect understandings of the types of societies we live in and aspire to live in and deal with concrete issues such as the relationship between learning and the world of work and more abstract concepts such as identity and belonging. This is no less important in the current, changing social landscape in Ireland where, as Waldron and Pike (2006) point out 'ideas relating to identity and belonging are central to the public discourse around citizenship that has emerged in Ireland and internationally in recent years. One thread of that discourse relates to the role of national identity in societies that are increasingly diverse and multicultural'.

The next section will look at the role of the education system in Ireland in the creation of identity and how such a system, underpinned by the forces outlined above, deals with such an elusive concept.

3.3 Education and Identity in Ireland

Despite what might be regarded in recent times as a move to a more secular society, the Catholic Church still exerts a high degree of control in the vast majority of educational establishments in Ireland and in the light of the changes outlined in the introduction this can lead to what Holland and McKenna call 'a clash of cultures between old and new, national and international, traditionalism and modernity and our sense of identity can appear to be under threat' (Holland and McKenna, 2005, p.16). Devine (2005, p.51) maintains that contemporary Irish thought places ideas of Irish identity within the context of 'the experience of colonisation' which regards identity as being based on resistance to imposition from the "outside" (Devine, 2005, p.51). Devine (ibid, p.51) goes on to state that that the construction of identity in such 'narrow and exclusionary terms' has 'been reinforced by a highly racialised state policy on immigration' which has 'actively sought migrants who fit in with the national 'norm' (white, and Catholic or Christian)' and 'simultaneously creating distinctions in the public mind between legitimate and deserving migrants (on work permits and visas) and those (mainly black or African) who seek access to the Celtic

Tiger economy through asylum and refugee processes'. Devine (2005, p.52) claims that schools are 'embedded in this social context and are often positioned at the coalface of dealing with the shifting realities of life. Teachers as a group are not immune to this social change, and bring to their work a series of discourses on ethnicity, immigration and identity that both reflect and are influenced by the norms and values prevalent in society at large'. The educational contexts, both local and national, within which these teachers work, are, Devine claims, 'also important as they marry national policy with local logics in the implementation of the curriculum in school' (ibid, p.52). She argues that the State plays a role 'through its immigration and educational policies, in framing teacher discourse in inclusionary or exclusionary terms, which positions minority ethnic groups as 'other', with direct implications for both teacher perception of and practice with migrant children in schools' (ibid, pp.55, 56). Devine (2005, p.51) adds that the State, as the dominant force in the field of power relations, through its actions (or inaction), creates conditions, which serve to reinforce or challenge stereotypes. Such stereotypes tend to reduce and simplify the 'other' in what are complex and dynamic arenas where relationships and identities form and this is no less true in the Irish context.

These views of Irish education and the role it plays in dealing with difficult and abstract concepts such as identity are relevant in the light of the recent changes in the Irish demographic and social landscape as they provide a background against which these changes can be viewed. Both the State and the Church tries to exert control over the education system, its organisation and practices and the processes it puts in place to prepare teachers to work in these environments. It is argued here that both Church and State view their roles in education through a set of ideological lenses, which perhaps do not adequately reflect the recent changes in the broader society or more specifically in the school going population.

The next sections will consider the literature on the role of education in reflecting and reacting to such changes and will begin by looking at the role of education in promoting a tolerant, plural and multicultural society and how curriculum can be used to challenge negative perceptions in these regards.

3.4 Education and the Promotion of Plural Societies

Kamali (2000, p.179) characterizes European nations as 'multicultural societies'. He argues that this multiculturalism features more in the national discourse and debate than in the realms of practice and policy in these countries. He claims that at Government and public sector level, Europe remains mono-cultural and that this mono-culturalism is a part of the systematic reproduction of an established social order' (ibid, p.179). He adds that such mono-culturalism 'is based on an ethnocentrism that has a long tradition in the Western worldview and is institutionalized in its political, judicial, educational and bureaucratic systems' and maintains that formal education plays an important role in the perpetuation of this mono-cultural order (ibid, p.179). This form of ethnocentrism has, according to Kamali, a long tradition in Western thought, political, social and education systems and practices and presents particular problems in a Europe, which is experiencing the phenomenon of growing multiculturalism. In particular he claims that Western Cultural Hegemony 'jeopardizes the existing social order. The integration of diverse immigrant groups into the host societies is not compatible with monoculturalism. However, such integration is much more urgent today than ever before' (Kamali, 2000, p.180).

What do these developments mean for multicultural societies when we consider the role of education and the transforming role that it can possibly play? Banks (2008) argues that the changes in global migration patterns and the resultant increase in diversity in what were previously relatively homogeneous, nation-states 'challenge liberal, assimilationist conceptions of citizenship' and that these factors cause such nation-states to consider how they can 'deal effectively with the problem of constructing civic communities that reflect and incorporate the diversity of citizens and yet have an overarching set of shared values, ideals, and goals to which all of the citizens of a nation-state are committed (Banks, 2008, p.130).

Banks et al (2005), in stressing the important role played by education in addressing what he calls these 'complex and divisive questions' (Banks, 2008, p.130), speak about the difficulties that multicultural states face in creating nation states that recognize and embrace diversity. They suggest that:

> only when a nation-state is unified around a set of democratic values such as human rights, justice, and equality can it secure the liberties of cultural, ethnic,

language, and religious groups and enable them to experience freedom, justice, and peace. Citizens who understand this unity-diversity tension and act accordingly do not materialize from thin air; they are educated for it (ibid, 2005, p7).

They add that maintaining such a balance between unity and diversity presents ongoing difficulties for multicultural states and if this dynamic is not present then 'unity without diversity results in hegemony and oppression, and diversity without unity leads to Balkanization and the fracturing of the commonwealth that alone can secure human rights, equality, and justice' (Banks, 2005, p.7). Osler and Starkey (2006, p.437) refer to a meeting of the Education Ministers from the OECD member states, which considered the tensions between diversity and unity. The meeting discussed the role of education in such contexts and offered that:

> the issue for education is how to develop…'democratic citizenship'—an outcome both linked to, and supportive of, social cohesion. Defining the qualities we might wish to see in citizens of democratic societies remains a political and context-dependent task. It might include qualities such as fairness, tolerance and a co-operative approach, recognition of the value of social norms, and a civic spirit. While education and informal learning, in isolation, cannot create model citizens, they can, alongside other factors, make a constructive contribution (OECD, 2004, p.4 in Osler and Starkey, 2006, p.437)

This situation prevails in a Europe where countries try, within and through their education systems and processes 'to address perceived tensions between the need to promote national unity (community cohesion) and the need to accommodate or support a diverse range of cultural communities within the nation state' (Osler and Starkey, 2006, p.442).

Banks argues that various racial, ethnic and language groups have, since the 60s and 70s, called for the right to participate in civil society while preserving the right to preserve and develop elements of their culture and language. He suggests that such groups have argued that society, through its educational institutions such as schools, colleges and universities should facilitate this by responding to 'the groups' cultural identities and experiences by reforming curricula to reflect their struggles, hopes, dreams, and possibilities' and that these institutions should also change their teaching strategies to become more culturally responsive to students from different racial, ethnic, cultural, and language groups Banks (2008, p.130).

The next section will look at the role played by such institutions in reflecting the range of diversity found in today's classrooms.

3.5 The Role of the school in Cultural Transmission

As outlined in previous chapters Ireland has undergone a series of changes, which have impacted on all areas of Irish life. Such change has brought a new diversity and possibilities but it has also led us to consider and question ideas of identity, culture and belonging. Previously taken for granted assumptions about what constitutes Irishness and the forces that go to create and sustain identity and culture are now being revisited and examined. These are important questions at any time and in any context but are currently particularly relevant in Ireland. How the State, through its various agents and institutions such as its education system, deals with these ideas and influences practice in these areas is worthy of consideration. The role of education in influencing culture and society and being influenced by the cultural and societal contexts within which it operates has long been a feature of educational and sociological discourse. Spinthourakis and Katsillis (2003, p.93) suggest that 'few would argue with the premise that education is based on the knowledge, beliefs and the values of a society. Through formal and informal means, the education system promotes the learning of elements of its culture to develop productive members of society'. Ross (2000, p.97) claims that:

> the ways in which the curriculum may influence social reproduction may be contested, but the fact that it does have an influence on the nature of future society is no longer an issue. The curriculum has a role in shaping future identities. If social identities and cultures were secure and static, then the role of education in this would not be at issue, but this is not the case in Europe, nor in much of the rest of the world.

Ross (2003, p.4) argues that education is a force for the transmission of cultural norms and ideals and that teachers, and their training and development, are areas which are worthy of consideration:

> education has a particular role to play in the maintenance of culture. Teachers are professionalised agents of cultural transmission. Schools institutionalise culture: the schooling process and the curriculum define what will be the culture of the next generation.

He goes on to argue that 'what we are doing is not neutral. Nor is it static: our societies are changing, and we are in the thick of the debate about what should be conserved and what should be different about tomorrow's society' (Ross, 2003, p.4).

The twin forces of instrumentalism and religious orientation that operate in Irish education contexts, and which have been referred to earlier in this chapter, are examples of how ideas of social reproduction and control play out in these settings.

Schools attempt to bring about such changes through their overt practices such as their curriculum content and pedagogical approaches but they also try to create change through the many elements that constitute the hidden curriculum. This next section will look at how this is experienced in Irish educational contexts.

3.6 Ethos and the Hidden Curriculum

The ideas outlined above refer to particular elements of schooling, school ethos and the hidden curriculum, which play a key role in the development of learner's social roles, understandings and orientations. Ethos, or the characteristic spirit or essence of a school, is a vital element in defining a schools sense of identity and mission. It plays a role in transmitting and maintaining hegemonic and cultural norms and is a core constituent element of what is commonly known as the hidden curriculum. Kelly (2005) maintains that the hidden curriculum, through which these cultural ideals are promoted, is hidden only from parents and students but is openly understood and embraced by the schools main actors namely the teaching and management staff.

Carr and Landon (1999, p.21) suggest that the hidden curriculum has been defined in many ways and offer the following as examples of the range of understanding of what constitutes it:

> 1. 'Unofficial expectations of the school conveyed by implicit ... messages' (Jackson, 1968)
> 2. 'unintended learning outcomes or messages' (Gordon, 1982)
> 3. 'implicit messages arising from the structure of schooling' (Illich, 1978)
> 4. 'consists of some of the outcomes or by-products of learning ... particularly those states which are learned but are not openly intended' (Martin, 1976)
> 5. 'collateral learning in the way of formation of enduring attitudes, of likes and dislikes' (Dewey, 1938)
> 6. 'the unadmitted normative or "moral" component of learning' (Greene, 1983)
> 7. 'inculcates certain skills, attitudes and values that benefit the ruling of classes in maintaining the present class structure of capitalist society' (a common radical view)

This is noteworthy in Irish educational contexts where according to Devine (2005) the role of the Church in promoting its own values and ethos through the school apparatus has been strengthened in recent times:

> with respect to the denominational status of most schools, for example, the absolute control of church authorities, which regulate and govern school practice in line with their particular religious ethos, has been tightened by provisions within the Education Act (1998) and more recent equality legislation (e.g. the Equality Act, 2004) (Devine, 2005, p.53).

If schools in Ireland at a management and policy level are in the majority of cases promoting a singular vision of the values that constitute Irish identity how are these values articulated or challenged at classroom level? Devine (2005, pp.54-55), voices concerns about a system where:

> members of the teaching profession tend to be white, Catholic and sedentary, and therefore very much embedded in the life world of the dominant ethnic group in Irish society. While Ireland has never been an entirely ethnically homogenous society, nonetheless the extent of change in recent years is unprecedented.

Kitching (2006, p.5) looks at how school systems can serve to exclude pupils from culturally diverse backgrounds in both policy and classroom realms. These practices would include:

> ability grouping and streaming practices, the use of culturally and linguistically biased…tests, teacher education institutions that have sent new teachers into the classroom with minimal information regarding patterns of language and social development among such pupils and a curriculum that reflects only the experiences and values of middle-class English-speaking pupils and effectively suppresses the experiences and values of culturally diverse pupils.

These conditions are also to be found in the classrooms in the broader European context with the Includ-ED (2007b) research offering similar examples of the detrimental effects of streaming and tracking practices, the benefits to be found in 1st and 2nd language acquisition support, the lack of other than dominant cultural indicators and role models in curricula and the inability of teacher training provision to equip student teachers with the necessary skills to meet the realities and opportunities found in diverse settings.

3.7 Teacher Education for Diverse Contexts

Leavy (2005) argues that the challenges of teacher education lie elsewhere and that 'the task of education faculty, then, will be to teach a white, monolingual, middleclass population of pre-service teachers to teach an increasingly diverse population of children' (Leavy, 2005, p.160).

This is particularly relevant in an Ireland where, due to the recent demographic changes 'the children who make up our classrooms represent much greater ethnic composition than has been experienced in the past' and where 'the homogeneity that once represented Irish society will soon be represented only in the annals of history. The influx of people of diverse nationalities…from a range of non-traditional backgrounds will make our classrooms increasingly diverse over time' (Leavy, 2005, p.159). She suggests that this situation offers both opportunities and challenges in the realm of teacher education and particularly in the preparation required by those teachers to 'meet the needs of and provide equitable learning opportunities for children in our classrooms' (ibid, p.159).

One of the challenges referred to by Leavy, lies in the perceptions of the teachers themselves in a time when teacher training programmes and institutions are becoming aware of the importance of teachers perceptions on diversity and in order to better plan and design courses that will prepare students to teach in diverse settings (Leavy, 2005, p.160). She refers to research, which finds that diversity is seen as a problem by pre-service teachers, that students entering teacher training courses can often have negative attitudes to children from cultural groups other than theirs and that these attitudes can potentially have a negative impact on such children's academic performance (Leavy, 2005, p.160). This research is significant in a context where, due to the entry requirements for teacher training establishments Ireland, 'it seems unlikely that the Irish education system will experience the advantages of a culturally diverse teaching population' (ibid, p.160). She also finds that there is a lack of experience on behalf of pre-service teachers of intercultural or multicultural education and that as these trainee teachers are from the dominant social group in the society that 'many teacher educators fear that prospective teachers may begin teacher preparation with attitudes that are not conducive to working with children of diversity'

(ibid, p.163). Leavy's own research in this area sought to determine pre-service teachers personal and professional beliefs about diversity and the extent of contact they had with people from diverse backgrounds. The results of the research, which was conducted with 286 first year pre-service teachers, found that there was a 'concerning lack of familiarity with other cultures' with such restricted experience of people from diverse backgrounds posing 'a significant challenge to educators whose task is the preparation of teachers to teach a diverse student population' (ibid, p.172). She claims that this is significant because studies she cites have found that 'most interaction with people of other cultures occurs during pre-service teachers' college years (Leavy, 2005, p.172). She argues that this situation calls for ways to increase access to the pathways to teacher education for people from diverse backgrounds as well as increasing the opportunities for multicultural experiences for those already training as teachers (ibid, p.172). Leavy's research also found that recognition of diversity in schools was important particularly with regard to having such diversity reflected in the faculty and teaching staff and that such staff should have experiences of working with students from diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds (ibid, p.172). She concludes by stating that the pre-service teacher cohort was white, middle-class, Catholic and female that this contrasted with the demographic profile of the typical education student and that such a profile posed a challenge to teacher educators. She suggests that a commitment to diversity should permeate the education system and teacher-training colleges must engage in examining their own and their students' attitudes to diversity and must try to overcome the under-representation of diversity in college of education faculty and students (ibid, p.174).

Ross echoes this and suggests that the:

> staffing of our schools conveys important messages about the culture that we wish to transmit. In an age when the notion of culture is becoming increasingly plural and diverse, we need to ensure that the teaching force – in both schools and in higher education institutions – reflects the composition of our society' (Ross, 2003, p.217).

He gives a number of reasons for this. As learning is 'a social process' then those 'who take on the role of teacher play a critical part in determining the social relationships within which learning occurs' (ibid, p.217). He speaks about the lack of visibility of members of ethnic communities in positions of power and authority in the wider

activities of societies. Teachers are 'the one face of civil society that every child will meet, every working day, through the whole of their formal education. It is therefore critical that this 'face' of civil power be seen, visibly and explicitly, to represent all of our society' (Ross, 2003, p.217) and that in order for the teaching establishment to reflect the linguistic, ethnic and religious diversity of our modern populations 'our educational system needs to be delivered by teams of professionals who can match that range, in their explicit practice and in their subconscious behaviour and attitudes' (ibid, p.218).

Sleeter (2004) echoes these views and referring to the America education system states that 'teacher race does matter and for reasons that include and extend beyond issues of cultural congruence in the classroom' because 'teachers bring to the profession perspectives about what race means, which they construct mainly on the basis of their life experiences and vested interests' (ibid, p.163) and that 'a predominantly white teaching force in a racist and multicultural society is not good for anyone, if we wish to have schools reverse rather than reproduce racism' (ibid, p163).

These ideas are important and necessary to consider in the Irish context particularly in the light of the recent and quite substantial change in the profile of the population and in terms of the diversity that now exists in classrooms. However, these suggestions from the literature must be considered from a number of perspectives. To begin with, the Irish educational context has been dominated by a particular denominational perspective in the areas of teacher training, school management and staffing and in the curricular frameworks that operate in the schools. The development of a teaching force that reflects the range of linguistic, ethnic and religious diversity that exists in Irish classrooms might be difficult to achieve in the short term at least, in such circumstances.

Another consideration would be that Ireland does not have the same history or experience of migration (such as that which has occurred here over the last twenty years) as exists in other Western democracies and has yet to develop an understanding or a systemic, coordinated response to such changes. These factors could militate against the early or easy adoption of the suggestions outlined above with regard to the constitution of the teaching force.

3.8 Teacher Values in Diverse Irish Schools

Devine (2005) also conducted research in Ireland into the perceptions and experiences that teachers had of the recent democratic changes in the country. Her analysis considered the role of the State's interventions through its policies on immigration and education and how these acted to frame teacher discourse in inclusionary or exclusionary terms (2005, p.55). The research explored how state policy in these areas impacted on teacher responses to migrant students and also looked at what she terms 'classed and racialised perceptions in teachers views' (ibid, p.56). Devine claims that these policies are 'underpinned by a particular concept of Irish/national identity, which positions minority ethnic groups as 'other', with direct implications for both teacher perception of and practice with migrant children in schools' (ibid, p.55). She found that the responses in the schools to the changes in ethnic diversity 'were on the whole *ad hoc* and tokenistic and frequently risked confirming the 'other' status of migrant students in the eyes of the majority Irish student population (Devine, 2005, p.59). There were similar findings with regards to how the schools dealt with religious diversity. Here, the research found that state policy 'through the construction and continued support of a state-sponsored denominational school system, framed how teachers dealt and worked with minority ethnic groups in both exclusionary and normalising terms' and that this lead, in some cases to a 'close interrelationship between denominational status and the implementation of the curriculum' (Devine, 2005, p.60).

Critically, the research found that there was an absence of direction from a policy perspective and that 'practice in schools derived from teacher's own initiatives and interest, rather than from an informed critically reflective approach underpinned by national guidelines and substantive state investment in the area' which in turn held 'implications for the 'othering' of migrant children in schools' (ibid, p.60). The research also found that 'teachers' concepts of different immigrant groups cannot be divorced from their own positioning as white, sedentary, Irish middle-class professionals, resulting in feelings of affiliation and sensitivity to those who most appropriated this norm' (ibid, p.64) and that such conceptions 'cannot be divorced from the conditions of their work, itself supported and legitimated by state action (or

inaction) which sets the conditions for change, challenging stereotypes and misconceptions, or alternatively reinforcing them by maintaining the *status quo* (ibid, p.64). The research concluded that state policies at the level of practice 'at their worst discriminate against specific migrant groups and at best do little to facilitate their integration into Irish society' (ibid, p.65). She added that the state's policy, in constructing white migrant identity in positive and legal terms and in contrast with the construction of Black, mainly African migrants as asylum seekers 'served to frame teachers' constructions of migrants on a continuum of otherness versus normality' with the attendant negative consequences of such 'othering' for those migrant children in the education arena (Devine, 2005, p.65). She regards the delay at that time in 2005 in developing national guidelines in the area of intercultural education as signifying a 'a *laissez faire* attitude' by the state to this area (which was) mirrored in the absence of the development of a national policy on immigration in Ireland as a whole, which in turn, 'is borne out by the failure to implement a programme of in-service training for teachers' (ibid, p.65).

The values that teachers bring with them into their work settings are forged by the society within which they live and work. Consideration of these values is important when dealing with contexts that are markedly different to teachers' experiences and training. The next section will look at these values from international perspectives and will consider frameworks from the work of some prominent academics in the area.

3.9 Teacher Values and Competencies: A Global Perspective

So what are the values and competencies that teachers need in order to work in these diverse contexts? The Council of Europe established the Education for Democratic Citizenship project in 1997, which sought to identify those skills and values necessary to become participating citizens. It also tried to identify how these skills are acquired and passed on to others. The project also identified a range of competencies that teachers would need in order to teach in the area of Democratic Citizenship. These skills and values include:

- Ability to see the problem from the learner's perspective
- Ability to see and accept similarity and difference between him/her and the learners and between the learners

- Respect for the rights of learners and sensitivity to their needs and interests
- Ability to see himself/herself, as well as the learners, as active parts of the local, national and global community
- Belief that things can be made better and that everyone can make a difference
- Ability to integrate his/her own priorities into a shared framework of issues and values, as well as to act on learners' decisions
- Willingness to admit mistakes in front of the group and to learn from them
- Ability to bring up and discuss openly the problems imposed by the hidden curriculum (Durr et al, 2000, pp.51-52).

Osler and Starkey (2005), in reviewing the literature on the international experience of Education for Democratic Citizenship (EDC), found six key concepts. EDC is designed to deal with school going communities, which are attempting to deal with the consequences arising from global injustice and inequality, globalization and migration, the decline in civic, social and political engagement among young people, the tendency to attribute the problems facing society as a whole to young people, the end of the cold war and the consequent need for education about democracy, its institutions and workings and finally the need for education to combat the rise in anti-democratic and racist movements and ideologies (2005, pp. 436, 437).

There are parallels between the EDC principles and the work of Banks and Banks (1995, p.156). They refer to teachers needing to develop a range of knowledge and skills in the area of multicultural knowledge. This knowledge they claim includes a range of concepts such as 'culture, immigration, racism, sexism, cultural assimilation, structural assimilation, ethnic groups, stereotypes, prejudice, and institutional racism' where teachers will 'use their understandings of these concepts to weave them into classroom discourse, help students describe their feelings and experiences, and draw linkages among different topics' (ibid, p.156). Banks and Banks (1995) refer to what they call an 'equity pedagogy' which provides a theoretical framework within which teachers can operate in these contexts. They define this pedagogy as 'teaching strategies and classroom environments that help students…attain the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to function effectively within, and help create and perpetuate, a just, humane, and democratic society' and they maintain that 'it is not sufficient to help students learn to read, write, and compute within the dominant canon without learning also to question its assumptions, paradigms, and hegemonic characteristics' (ibid, p.152).

Equity pedagogy is just one of the elements in what Banks (2011) regards as the five essential dimensions of Multicultural Education. According to Banks, a multi-dimensional approach is needed because today's diverse classrooms mirror the complex diversity found in society. Multicultural education approaches are concerned with the inclusion of content about diverse ethnicity and faith, the celebration of cultural and artistic diversity and dealing with issues of racism and prejudice. The five dimensions are:

1) Content Integration: this involves the use of examples, data, and information from a variety of cultures and groups to illustrate key concepts, principals, generalizations, and theories in their subject area or discipline.

2) The Knowledge Construction Process: this describes the ways that knowledge is created and how that process is determined by the context within which it occurs.

3) Prejudice Reduction is concerned with those lessons and activities used by teachers to help students to develop positive attitudes toward different racial, ethnic, and cultural groups

4) An Equity Pedagogy: An equity pedagogy exists when teachers modify their teaching in ways that facilitates the academic achievement of students from diverse racial, cultural, and social-class groups

5) An Empowering School Culture and Social Structure which describes the process of restructuring the culture and organization of the school so that students from diverse racial, ethnic, and social-class group will experience educational equality and empowerment (Banks, 2011).

This framework is interesting in that it takes a broad curricular approach and is not just confined to classrooms or individual learning environments. The principles espoused by Educate Together and which they claim to implement throughout the range of curriculum experiences in the schools would seem to reflect Banks model. Such a comprehensive model could also be considered in terms of teacher training provision in Irish contexts and the literature has already referred to the apparent lack of such focused and specific approaches in Initial Teacher training contexts in Ireland. Banks also speaks about the key role played by teachers in multicultural settings and how teacher values impact on students 'because they bring their own cultural perspectives, values, hopes, and dreams to the classroom they (teachers) are in a

position to strongly influence the views, conceptions, and behaviours of students (Banks, 1995, p. 333) and this is interesting in terms of the concerns raised by Devine (2005) and Leavy (2005) about teachers in Ireland and their experience of and training to work in diverse settings.

Chan (2007) suggests that there is considerable research showing the need for 'culturally-sensitive curricula that build on the experiences and knowledge that students of ethnic-minority background bring to a school context' (ibid, p.180). Curricula that reflect and understand the diversity found within modern classrooms is a key consideration in these contexts and is particularly relevant where, as Spinthourakis and Katsillis claim,

> the ethno-cultural profile of a society changes, so too the need arises to find ways of integrating the newcomers, balancing the transmission of the existing norms and values with the sometimes subtle and at others not so subtle nuances the newcomers bring to the existing reality in an effort to prepare for an integrated modern society of critical thinking and socially proactive citizens' (2003, p.93).

Lahdenpera (2000, p.201) adds that 'the various aspects of school activities, such as teaching, evaluation assessment and grading, operations and curriculum, educational materials etc, should reflect the multicultural composition of the student body'. He claims that teachers in multicultural education settings have acquired and developed knowledge and skills, via their daily activities that are required for working in such settings (ibid, p.205). In order for that hidden knowledge and expertise to become more visible, research needs to be conducted in areas, which, he contends, are central in this area. These themes or areas would include research into 'the teaching and the organization of the learning processes in multiethnic/multicultural schools and education' research 'to develop both interdisciplinary and subject-specific, multicultural and intercultural curricula and work procedures in schools' and research into ways of developing further 'the level of cooperation between the schools and the teachers, on the one hand, and the students' parents and the community, on the other hand' (Lahdenpera, 2000, p.205).

Those writing about matters concerning the composition of the teaching force, the teaching and learning resources, the arrangement of the built environment and the

skills and values needed by teachers and schools that operate in diverse settings are generally in agreement as to how best to implement and manage such ideas. The literature calls for a cohesive, cross-curricular, coherent and consistent approach to implementing such ideas if schools are to accurately reflect the diversity found in such settings. Embedding these approaches in all of the work the schools engage in is seen as the most effective way to ensure that such intercultural environments can develop. The extent to which these approaches are considered in Irish contexts and how successful the schools are in implementing them touches on some of the key themes of this research and some of the thematic areas suggested by Lahdenpera above would also be reflected in this research.

The literature has considered a number of themes, which were suggested by the research question and by the Includ-ED research project. These themes concerned the role of education in cultural transmission, the importance of teacher cohorts reflecting cultural diversity, the need for teachers to be trained to work in such diverse settings and the teacher values and perceptions in Irish education settings. These themes have also been considered in the context of the recent changes, which have taken place in the broader society. The review will conclude with a brief outline of the literature regarding the advantages to having diverse school populations and with an examination of Irish Government responses to this diversity.

3.10 Benefits of Diversity

Contrary to common misapprehensions, high rates of diversity do not contribute to greater levels of school failure. Research carried out by PISA (OECD, 2002-2005) revealed that 'the countries which achieve the best school results are those in which there is a higher level of diversity. It therefore becomes necessary to include positive cultural reference, which can act as models for children from the different ethnic groups present in schools'.

The Includ-ED research (2007b), suggests that a recognition and celebration of diversity tends to benefit the entire school community:

> cultural and religious diversity within school frameworks create wide benefits both for pupils from cultural minorities and for all other members of educational communities. When the process of cultural and religious recognition is not against pupils' learning, this diversity increases academic performances (Includ-ED, 2007b, p.5).

Findings from the Includ-ED research project suggest that in order to combat what it sees as the debilitating affects of selective educational practices it is important that 'diversity recognition should start in daily school life and be based on pupils specific needs' (Includ-ED, 2007b, p.43). However, the research points out that such cultural diversity is not reflected in the school system curricula at European and local, Irish levels and that 'various studies indicate that the existence of an ethnocentric perspective within the school context has grave consequences for pupils from cultural or religious minorities' (ibid, p46).

The Irish experience is not unique in the European context as according to Eurydice (2004, p.4) 'many European countries face the challenge of integrating various groups of immigrants resident within their borders for different reasons. Some such countries already have long-standing experience of policies for the integration of immigrant children in schools. Others have acquired this experience more recently or, where immigration is very recent indeed, have just begun to debate how their education systems should be adapted accordingly'. These themes play out in the broader global arena where Osler and Starkey (2006, p.436) point out that 'the processes of globalization and consequent migration are having a direct impact on communities and schools, and are increasing diversity in local communities'. Taylor (1994) also talks about the tensions that exist in multicultural societies between the need to accommodate the range of cultural identities in these societies and the need for national unity.

The distance between school and home life experienced by members of cultural and ethnic minorities is another factor worth considering. Ladson-Billings (1995, p.159) claims that 'for almost 15 years, anthropologists have looked at ways to develop a closer fit between students' home culture and the school' and their research has 'attempted to locate the problem of discontinuity between what students experience at home and what they experience at school in the speech and language interactions of teachers and students. These sociolinguists have suggested that if students' home language is incorporated into the classroom, students are more likely to experience academic success' (1995, p.159).

Campbell (2000) claims that 'students from bicultural backgrounds suffer from what is called home/school disarticulation where the norms, values, attitudes and beliefs of the family unit differ from those of the education system, thereby alienating the student and the student' hellos family from the education system' (p.35). She adds that being from a bicultural background is not in itself a disadvantage as 'it may heighten the individual's awareness of cultural differences between self and others and the fact that not everyone in the world has the same norms, values, beliefs and attitudes' (ibid, p.37).

The ways in which societies and education systems respond to diversity and difference is influenced by a number of factors. One of these is the ways that States, through their Governments, develop and implement policy. The language used and the philosophies informing this have bearings on how these policies are interpreted and practiced. The next section looks at how the Irish Government has responded to changes in the society through its policies and actions.

3.11 The State's Response to Diversity

The Irish states response to an emerging diversity in society and in schools at a policy and practical level is outlined in a range of publications and resources.

It is important to consider how these are articulated because the language used in the policy and practice arenas outlines Government philosophy in the area and is an expression of the type of society the State wishes to foster. In turn the language used in these processes becomes part of the general and accepted discourse in the area, informing opinions, reinforcing ideas, prejudices and stereotypes and impacting on practice and experience in the classroom and other key educational fora. It is important to note in passing the influence of the European dimension in this regard in that the Government's response to the increasing diversity in the State is based in part on examples from countries, which have a longer established experience and history of economic and political immigration. The Irish government's response could be said to be a mixture of elements of policies and approaches that are drawn from European and American models and practice and that such a response could not be characterized as cohesive, coordinated or strategic. It could also be argued in relation to policy in these matters in educational arenas that government approaches are

reflective of what Gleeson referred to as an anti-intellectual bias inherent in Irish education circles (2009, p.121).

Several Government publications and guidelines outline its position with regard to the current social realities and the ways some of these issues might be approached. One such publication, Migration Nation, an Integration Statement Issued by the Minister for Integration in 2008, speaks about a policy informed by the idea that 'Ireland has a unique moral, intellectual and practical capability to adapt to the experience of inward migration' (Migration Nation, 2008, p.7). Regarding education, the Integration Statement (2008, p.59) outlines the measures taken by the Irish government including the setting up of a dedicated Integration Unit within the Department of Education, the translation of information on the school system into other languages and in-service training for language teachers. However, it should be noted that some of these measures have been rowed back on in light of the recent negative change in the economy. In 2010, the Department of Education and Skills published its Intercultural Education Strategy 2010 to 2015. This strategy was concerned to ensure that all students experience an education that 'respects the diversity of values, beliefs, languages and traditions in Irish society and is conducted in a spirit of partnership' (Education Act, 1998) and that all education providers are assisted with ensuring that inclusion and integration within an intercultural learning environment become the norm. The Strategy was created in consultation with a range of actors and agencies working in the education sector and was a response to the changes that have taken place in Ireland over the last two decades. The Strategy has set itself what it calls high-level goals to be achieved by the end of 2015. These are to

> Enable the adoption of a whole institution approach to creating an intercultural learning environment
> Build the capacity of education providers to develop an intercultural learning environment
> Support students to become proficient in the language of instruction
> Encourage and promote active partnership, engagement and effective communication between education providers, students, parents and communities
> Promote and evaluate data gathering and monitoring so that policy and decision making is evidence-based

The Strategy advocates a whole school approach to developing an Intercultural education environment by building the capacity of those who work in such

environments and supported by a rigorous research-based approach to monitoring and measurement. The Strategy is supported by considerable financial and Department support but as of yet no details have been released with regards to interim progress towards these goals.

State policy in this area is also driven through various acts of the Oireachtas. The 1998 Education Act, for example, aims 'to make provision in the interests of the common good for the education of every person in the state' in a system that is 'accountable to students, their parents and the state' and which 'respects the diversity of values, beliefs, languages and traditions in Irish society and is conducted in a spirit of partnership' (Education Act, 1998, p.5). Other approaches in Ireland to policy in the area include the White Paper on Education 'Charting our Education Future' (1995) and the Education Act (1998). The Act outlines the responsibilities of the Boards of Management of schools particularly in relation to the establishment and maintenance of school ethos 'the board also has a responsibility for supporting and monitoring the characteristic spirit of the school, which is determined by cultural, educational, moral, religious or social values and traditions' (Education Act, 1998, p.19) with the paper setting out its view of ethos in a school being 'an organic element, arising, first and foremost, from the actual practices which are carried on in that school on a daily, weekly and yearly basis (Department of Education, 1995, p.11). The White Paper goes on to highlight the school's responsibilities to the broader community 'while each school may properly nurture and support its particular ethos, it is also obliged to acknowledge and reflect the principles and requirements of a democratic society, respecting the diverse beliefs and ways of life of others' (Department of Education, 1995, p.11).

The State's vision for education is further developed through its primary school syllabus which claims to offer an education which will 'enable the child to develop as a social being through living and cooperating with others and so contribute to the good of society' and 'to enable children to develop a respect for cultural difference, an appreciation of civic responsibility, and an understanding of the social dimension of life, past and present' (Primary School Curriculum, 1999, p.34). The Department of Education and Science in its Intercultural Guidelines 2006, states that schools are one

of the institutions that have a role to play in the development of an intercultural society' (NCCA, 2006, p.ii) based on 'a belief that we all become personally enriched by coming in contact with and experiencing other cultures, and that people of different cultures can and should be able to engage with each other and learn from each other' (NCAA, 2005, p.3).

According to the guidelines, schools play a crucial role in developing an intercultural society and have 'an important contribution to make in facilitating the development of the child's intercultural skills, attitudes, values and knowledge' where 'the development of Ireland as an intercultural society based on a shared sense that language, culture and ethnic diversity is valuable' (NCCA, 2005, p.4).

The guidelines offer direction on matters such as how to design physical environments, which are reflective of cultural and other differences found in the school population and ways by which teaching and assessment methodologies can be implemented that will foster diversity and develop cohesive intercultural experiences. The Guidelines have however been subject to criticism at theoretical and practical levels. Irwin (2009, p.na) claims that they are:

> Often ignored in practice while, even if operationalised, their theoretical and philosophical basis is more than suspect. Trying to please all ideologies–a mixture of Christian, traditionalist, liberal, egalitarian and Marxist–the documents seem to end up simply confusing teachers and students and pleasing no one.

He adds that while the Guidelines are a welcome intervention they suffer from a number of problems:

> First, its status as a 'guidelines' document means it can be conveniently ignored, if so desired. The current overload within the school schedule only reinforces this problem. Second, its theoretical approach of a kind of 'consensus politics' ends up eliding the issues of real 'intercultural' conflict. The positive challenge ahead is to develop these ideas at a more integrated curricular level, at both primary and second level (Irwin, 2009, p.na).

Bryan (2009) contests the effectiveness of Intercultural education itself in addressing some of the social difficulties it makes claims to tackle: 'Intercultural education, which is defined as 'a synthesis of the learning from multicultural education and anti-racist education approaches which were commonly used internationally from the 1960s to the 1990s' (NCCA, 2006, p (v)) is increasingly viewed as a key mechanism through which racism and racial inequality can be ameliorated in Ireland' (Bryan,

2009, p.297). She argues that 'racial inequality is more likely to be reproduced – rather than contested or ameliorated – through national and educational policies and practices which are purported to have egalitarian and anti-racist aims' (Bryan, 2009, p.298). These findings are based on her own research, which included a critical review of policy documents, textbooks and other materials designed for used with lower secondary school students in Ireland in addition to observations of classroom and school events and in-depth interviews conducted over a twelve month period at a large, co-educational, ethnically diverse school in a middle class area in Dublin (Bryan, 2009, p.299). The research sought to examine, as she describes it, 'how the 'local' discourse of multiculturalism is informed by broader political discourses emanating from the field of national politics'. She makes the point that intercultural education in Irish schools 'fulfils a political function of providing an educational palliative to minorities while pre-empting resistance, and muting consideration of alternative policy responses that would yield genuine egalitarian outcomes and effects for racialized minorities in Ireland' and that curricula about 'diversity and diverse cultural groups in the Irish context is, in effect, an effort to appease and accommodate minority groups' concerns about their lack of representation in the curriculum which prevents disruption of the status quo' (Bryan, 2009, p.300).

She suggests that 'contrary to intercultural education's egalitarian aims, policies and practices of this nature have the effect of abnormalising diversity and reinforcing the 'otherness' of minority students, of misrepresenting or ignoring their cultural identities, and of reinforcing erroneous assumptions about 'race', racism and the nature of difference more generally' (Bryan, 2009, p.298). King (2004, p.73) in speaking to the American experience, describes a 'dysconscious racism…a form of racism which tacitly accepts dominant White norms and privileges' suggesting that this is a 'distorted way of thinking about race compared to critical consciousness' and suggests that such ways of thinking 'justifies inequity and exploitation by accepting the existing order of things as given' (ibid, p.73). According to King if the effects of dysconsciousness are to be overcome then 'critical, transformative teachers must develop a pedagogy of social action and advocacy that really celebrates *diversity*, not just random holidays, isolated artifacts, or "festivals and food" (King, 2004, p.72).

This approach has been characterised in some Irish education contexts by the term 'sambas, samosas, and Saris' a pejorative phrase which is critical of an apparent preoccupation with the surface or symbolic expressions of diversity as opposed to the deeper, more meaningful aspects of such diversity.

3.12 Conclusion

The topics for the literature review as laid out in this chapter were suggested by the research question itself, the broader national contexts and conditions within which the research took place, the framework provided by the Includ-ED research project and the contexts within which the findings of this project were applied and tested.

The chapter involved reviewing literature concerned with the ideologies underpinning education provision in Ireland, the role of education in the formation of identity, international perspectives on teaching and learning in diverse settings and the advantages of such diversity to educational achievement, teacher training and preparation to work in such contexts in Ireland and the role of the State in setting the philosophical and practical context within which education in diverse settings takes place.

The next chapter will outline the methodological approach taken in this research.

Chapter 4 Methodology

According to Mouly, (1978, p.40), research is a systematic process involving the collection, analysis and interpretation of data in order to advance knowledge, promote progress, enable man to deal more effectively with his environment and resolve conflicts. Leedy (1997, p.3) suggests that research is 'the systematic process of collecting and analysing information (data) in order to increase our understanding of the phenomenon about which we are concerned or interested' with Stenhouse (1981, p.113) seeing research as 'systematic and sustained inquiry, planned and self-critical, which is subjected to public criticism and to empirical tests where these are appropriate'. Research could be described as a disciplined, rigorous inquiry, which attempts to understand the world and make public this understanding.

Such claims for research place a responsibility on researchers to conduct their work in ways that are fair, transparent, rigorous and thorough. One of the ways that researchers attempt to do this is by adopting and adhering to particular research traditions. These traditions and ways of working have been developed over centuries and research as an established discipline can be said to consist of a number of elements. These are sometimes represented in the form of a taxonomy or hierarchical classification. Research is informed at a fundamental level by a series of philosophical questions which deal with such abstract and disputed ideas as the nature of reality, the creation and public face of knowledge and the values underpinning relationships between people in various contexts. These philosophies give rise to particular research traditions (e.g. critical theory, feminist theory, positivism and so on) which follow from such positions and which use certain research approaches, examples of which (from a large number of approaches) would be case studies and action research. The final tier in the research hierarchy is occupied by research methods i.e. the ways in which we gather, analyse and interpret the data and these methods can take many forms such as interviews, observations, questionnaires etc.

Another important element that must be considered is that research in the social realm is concerned with gathering and rendering data or information about the *real* world, about the ways people conduct their lives, about their relationships and experiences, their artifacts and creations, the form and content of the communication between them and the ways that they engage with the physical and metaphysical world. In other words research is situationally bound (in this case, the Educate Together schools and

research participants who took part in the research), contextually bound (the changing social, economic and political milieux within which the schools operate), ethically bound (conducting research in such value-laden subject areas and culturally diverse settings requires a particular ethical awareness) and temporally bound (the research took place within a defined period of time) and researchers must be aware of and sensitive to these limitations, all of which applied in the research outlined in this thesis.

The chapter will begin by examining the particular challenges presented by the unique characteristics of the research context and will go on to situate the research question within a personal and professional framework. The chapter will present and defend the methodological stance taken to address the research question and will outline the methods chosen to gather, analyse and present data. The chapter will conclude with an examination of some of the ethical and political elements involved in this research.

4.1 Personal and Professional Framework

This research attempts to examine how the Irish education system, from the particular perspective of a relatively new provider, Educate Together, accommodates the diversity of belief, custom and ethnicity found in that system with a particular critical focus on how Educate Together puts in to practice the ethos and principles it espouses. It focuses on the experiences of parents and Principals in a range of Educate Together primary schools in Dublin and surrounding counties and also includes the views of a small number of practitioners, teacher educators and trainee teachers working in the area of Initial Teacher Education. The research seeks to answer the question of how a school system, specifically created as a response to an apparent lack of understanding of an emerging pluralism in Ireland, responds to such difference through its philosophy, management, teaching and learning as evidenced through its relationships with its principal stakeholders (learners, guardians, and principals) and through the ways by which it engages with its local and wider communities.

In trying to answer this fundamental question it was necessary to consider a range of ideas relating to cultural and intercultural understanding and how these are represented in education contexts. According to Abdallah-Pretceille (2006) teaching in intercultural environments raises some key questions:

> The relevance of the act of 'training', when dealing with an audience that is perceived or referred to as culturally different has become one of the key

issues of our time. What impact do cultural elements have? Must training and education be adapted? What does one need to know about the culture of the 'Other' or, more precisely, about the 'Other', in order to be able to teach him/her or, in other words, to help him/her learn? (p.475).

She maintains that the if we continue to focus on 'learning profiles according to cultural membership there is a risk that education and training will become culturalised by highlighting inter-group differences to the detriment of intra-group and inter-individual differences (p.476) and that we run the danger of negating the intercultural option 'which presents itself as a tension between singularity and universality' (Abdallah-Pretceille, 2006, p.476).

Culture, and how culture informs our notions of inter-culturality, is an elusive concept where it is difficult to arrive at a universal meaning. Campbell (2006) points out that people may identify with a number of different cultural groups, that those identities are subject to change and that they can retain their individual identity(ies) even as they move between different cultural contexts (p.31). Abdallah-Pretceille, (2006), echoes this when she asserts that 'our time is no longer one for nomenclatures or monads, but on the contrary for multi-coloured patterns, mixing, crossing over and contraventions, because every individual has the potential to express him/herself and act not only depending on their codes of membership, but also on freely chosen codes of reference' (p.478). Teachers need to be aware of how these changes and movements are represented in their classrooms and teachers' training based on 'supposed cultural models' (p.478) will only suffice 'as long as the representatives behave according to the identified norms and examples' (p.479). Problems arise when 'somebody does not fit, for one reason or another, into the expected framework, because the trainee is not necessarily the prototype of his or her group' (p.479). Campbell sees these problems exacerbated in a situation where, 'teachers are far more likely to be monolingual, mono-cultural and culturally encapsulated than their students' and where 'changing educational policies to acknowledge cultural diversity is relatively easy, but attempting to change teachers and teaching practices may be far more difficult' (Campbell, 2006, p.32). This is the situation that prevails in Ireland where teacher training takes place in colleges of education, which are run on denominational grounds and where, for a variety of historical reasons, the majority of trainee teachers are white, drawn from the settled community and of one religious

persuasion. These conditions prevail in a country with a growing diversity within the population and within primary school classrooms (Irwin, 2009).

The exploration of these themes presents the researcher with a series of complex issues when entering such intercultural education environments. How can research in these contexts provide the conditions where this multiplicity of meaning and identity can be articulated? What is the research approach that will best answer these questions and in ways that are fair and meaningful for the people who engage in the research?

Choosing such a methodological approach to any given research topic can depend on the particular paradigmatic or philosophical perspective of the researcher. The researcher can also be guided by ideas of pragmatism or utility: choosing the approach that is suited to the context or the approach that is more likely to prove useful to answering the initial research question. Creswell (1994, p.8) suggests that there are a number of factors, which decide a researcher's methodological approach:

> researchers bring to a study a worldview, an outlook, that favors the qualitative or quantitative ontological, epistemological, axiological, rhetorical, and methodological assumptions. For example, some individuals see reality as subjective and want a close interaction with informants. Others may be more comfortable with an objective stance using survey or experimental instruments. Undoubtedly this worldview may be affected by a second factor: training or experiences.

The choice of methodology for this research was guided by the researcher's experiences and education in research and by the appropriateness of the interpretive approach to this particular research question. My research work to date falls clearly within the interpretivist tradition. Previous research projects have looked at the creation of identity and citizenship in childhood education and these contexts lend themselves to a predominantly qualitative and interpretive approach. Qualitative research methods are well suited to addressing the myriad concerns and subtleties in topics of this nature as they allow us to mine the understandings and experiences of a range of relevant actors in complex scenarios and in ways that are deep and which provide meaning for these actors. As Cantrell (1990, p.5), in arguing for an alternative to positivist orientations, points out, 'the complex nature of education - entangled in interrelationships, replete with social, political, and economic context, and laden with values - demands that an alternative paradigm drive educational research'. The many contexts within which this research takes place *are* full of such a variety of notions

and values. The educational arenas where this research is located *are* complex and contested.

The research attempted to address a number of questions in such contested, value-laden, environments which are subject to a broad range of contextual influences and which are characterised by varied and complex interrelationships. The research looked at how the educational values espoused by an element of the Irish Education system, Educate Together, are understood, practiced and evaluated in a range of schools and from the perspective of Principals and parents in these schools. It looked at how these values are represented in the curriculum, not only within the formal curriculum but also within the 'hidden curriculum' where, as we have seen earlier in the text, values and identities are forged and negotiated. The research attempted to determine the parents' understandings of the philosophy and practice of Educate Together schools, and what informed their choice of such an education experience for their children. These are difficult questions to answer and, it is argued, probably best addressed by taking an interpretive approach.

Similarly, the research looked at these experiences from the perspective of those who manage the schools, the school Principals. How well equipped were they to meet the changes in the Irish education landscape? What type of training and preparation do teachers and principals receive in order to ready them to work in such environments and is such training adequate and ongoing?

As outlined in the introduction to the thesis, my personal and professional interest in the area has developed over the last 17 years through a range of experiences and understandings. This research, in both its topical concerns and its methodological orientation, closely reflects the broader themes that the School of Education Studies is concerned with in the areas of teaching and research namely Curriculum Development and Implementation, Curriculum Evaluation and Assessment in a variety of contexts and Social Disadvantage, Pluralism and Diversity. The School's research approach has been driven by a desire to critically engage with practitioners, stakeholders and policy makers in order to both reflect current realities in education in Ireland and beyond and to effect change in these domains based on an ideal of education as a force for positive social-change.

4.2 Theoretical Underpinnings

The recent changes in Irish society are arguably symbolic of broader social changes, which have taken place since the middle decades of the previous century. Baumann refers to the concept of 'Liquid Modernity' (2000). He contrasts this idea of liquid modernity with heavy modernity under a number of themes in order to explain the concept. With regard to the theme of 'Emancipation' for example, heavy modernity is concerned with, amongst other ideas, class politics allied to a Utopian vision of society, one that is created and shaped by designers and planners. Liquid modernity, under this theme, concerns individualization and the end of such Utopian ideals. Under the heading of 'Work', heavy modernity is Fordist, career oriented and concerned with welfare; liquid modernity is post-Fordist, characterized by rapid movement and flux and full of uncertainty. Liquid modernity speaks about the end of those certainties, ties and structures that have governed our lives and refers to living in an era of change, uncertainty, rapid movement and a constant imperative to make sense of that which is new and unfamiliar (Ray, 2007, p.68). If modernity could be characterized in some regards by what Ray (ibid, p.70) citing Baumann calls an 'assault on the nomadic' where citizenship was defined by 'membership of the paradigmatic modern institution, the nation-state…tied to permanent residence and settlement' then, Ray claims, Baumann sees in liquid modernity 'the revenge of the nomadic' evident in new forms of mobility such as tourism, new absentee landlordism in the form of transnational corporations, migration and a culture where 'whatever is smaller, lighter and more portable constitutes progress' (ibid, p.70). These notions of movement and change could be said to characterize modern European societies in the years leading up to and since the start of this century and this is reflected in the changing demographic landscapes in Ireland and in the country's classrooms.

The Includ-ED project is an attempt to investigate and measure the effects of how these changes impact in education settings. The project, which informed the initial stages of this research, operated within a Critical Communicative Theory (CCT) framework and this also served to guide the approach to this research.

The key postulates, or taken for granted assumptions, of CCT are, according to Flecha et al (2006):

1. The universality of language and action: language, action and communication are innate human characteristics and are therefore universal and this

communication should be conducted in ways that does not distort or serve to mislead.

2. People as transformative social agents: often, in traditional forms of research, the power and control is vested in those who are conducting the research. The critical communicative orientation however 'postulates the idea that, through dialogue, everyone can become an agent who can transform their context' and also 'distances itself from theories which are founded on impossibilities and deficits, and instead focuses on those which are based on the development of abilities and potential which recognise people as social agents in their own lives and contexts'.

3. Communicative rationality: this is the assumption that communicative rationality is the universal basis for these competences (language and action) and for egalitarian dialogue which uses language as a method for dialogue and for understanding.

Other postulates of the CCT are concerned with the notion of inter-subjectivity, where meaning in any given social-research context is arrived at through shared interactive, understanding and dialogue between those conducting the research and those who traditionally would have been regarded as objects of the research (Flecha et al, 2006, pp.3-5).

From these postulates it is suggested that the following are core elements of the approach:

- The importance of knowledge created through inter-subjective dialogue where researchers engage in a dialogue of equals with social actors to reach a consensus of meaning. The research attempted to engage in a dialogue of equals with Principals, parents and education professionals throughout the process. From the outset it was considered important to mine the understandings of the Principals with particular regard to the pivotal role they played in articulating an educational vision and in trying to ensure that such a vision was enacted and measured. The principles espoused by Educate Together include a commitment to providing an open, equal, participative and democratic learning environment at the heart of which would be a

commitment to meaningful, inter-subjective dialogue and it was felt that such a framework would be useful to examine such principles.

Similarly with parents it was felt that, "as language, action and communication are innate human and universal characteristics and that communication should be conducted in ways that do not distort or serve to mislead" their views and those of education professionals should be sought and respected. CCT was also important as it promoted ideas of equality and empowerment and it was felt that these values might be consistent with such a value-driven environment as Educate Together.

- The Inclusion of traditionally silenced voices, which seeks the active, meaningful involvement of the people whose reality is studied throughout the entire research process. Parents are key stakeholders in any compulsory educational context and this was no less the case in this research. Educate Together avers that it regards parents as essential players in their children's education so this research was an attempt to test the validity of these claims.

- Exclusionary and Transformative aspects of the research where scientific analysis is used to identify strategies that lead to social inclusion (transformative) and exclusion (exclusionary). Educate Together claims that it offers a set of educational experiences, which are transformative and inclusive (Educate Together Charter, 2010) and again this postulate of CCT offered a guiding framework within which to measure the veracity of such claims.

This methodology was used by the Includ-ED project but was also relevant and useful in my research context because as Flecha et al (2006, p.2) claim 'if current society is the result of profound changes which lead to new forms of describing and understanding social phenomena, research methodologies also need to consider the intersubjective relationships which take place in social interaction.' They speak about conducting 'complex analyses (in) multiple dimensions that are difficult to understand based on traditional research designs' and that 'we also require the dialogic perspective, which pays attention to processes of argumentation and communication, and the inclusion of the voices of the participants in the research' (ibid, 2006, p.2).

All of these dimensions were present in my research sites and they were also reflective of the broader thrust of the overall research question.

In other words, elements of this methodology seemed to fit well as a guide with my research question, participants, contexts and environments while also rhyming with my personal and professional orientation. CCT was considered to be a suitable philosophical framework to guide research into a context (Educate Together) whose ethos and practices are predicated on such transparent, democratic and egalitarian principles.

Before going on to outline what conducting research within an interpretive framework actually means it is important to examine why it is that research in educational contexts is informed by such philosophical perspectives, where these perspectives originated from and their relevance to us as educators. It is also important to trace the emergence of the chosen methodological approach in order to place such an approach in its historical and academic context and this is what the next section of this chapter attempts to do.

4.3 Methodological Context: Traditions and alternatives

Research in education, as in other arenas, is guided by a set of laws and governing principles. These laws or principles are commonly referred to as paradigms. Patton (1978, p.203) suggests that 'a paradigm is a world view, a general perspective, a way of breaking down the complexity of the real world'. Our actions in the world, including the actions we take as inquirers, cannot occur without reference to those paradigms: 'As we think, so do we act' (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.15). Patton (1978, p.203) elaborates on the nature of research based on paradigmatic stances by claiming that paradigms:

> Are deeply embedded in the socialization of adherents and practitioners: paradigms tell them what is important, legitimate, and reasonable. Paradigms are also normative, telling the practitioner what to do without the necessity of long existential or epistemological consideration.

Considerable time and energy has been devoted by members of the research and academic communities to the question of adopting and maintaining such paradigmatic stances in relation to conducting research and how these positions should determine approaches to research.

There can be said to be two dominant, and, from some perspectives, competing paradigmatic approaches to conducting social research. The traditional and more historically accepted paradigm, known as Positivism, has, according to Maykut and Morehouse

come to mean objective inquiry based on measurable variables and provable propositions…science is or should be primarily concerned with the explanation and prediction of observable events. It is the insistence on explanation, prediction, and proof that are the hallmarks of positivism (1994, p.3).

Positivism is based on the belief that a reality exists, which is external to our experience, a reality based on unchanging natural laws with the ultimate aim being to predict and control natural phenomena (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p.22). The logical consequence of such a 'realist ontology' leads the positivist to practice an objectivist epistemology which essentially governs the ways in which the inquirer must behave in putting 'questions directly to nature (which) allow nature to answer back directly' (ibid, pp.22-23). This objective stance informs the methodological approach taken by the inquirer who uses a 'manipulative methodology', which accounts for inherent bias and 'empirical methods that place the point of decision with nature rather than with the inquirer' (ibid, p.23). The most appropriate methodology in these instances is 'empirical experimentalism' (ibid, p.23) which is characterised by observation and measurement carried out in experimental contexts, which seek to test hypotheses and increase control.

These approaches are interested in reproducing results that can be transferred to other contexts with the predominant method of gathering data being the use of quantitative i.e. statistical, numbers-based approaches. Quantitative approaches are relatively easy to analyse because of their use of statistical techniques and are also relatively inexpensive to administer over a wide sample/area. Historically they have been more trusted and accepted in the scientific and broader community.

The positivist tradition has enjoyed a dominant position in the sciences but over recent decades, alternative approaches have emerged which have challenged Positivism's claims of suitability and usefulness as a means of conducting research in complex contexts. One such alternative is known as the interpretive paradigm.

The interpretive paradigm offers a range of methodological approaches or 'ways to do the research' which are perhaps more suited to working in complex settings such as are present in the case of this research. Choosing the appropriate methodological approach is subject to a range of variables such as, among others, the nature of the research question, the environment within which the research question will be applied, the degree of access required in the context and the nature and status of the potential respondents.

Lincoln and Guba identify a number of characteristics of research within the interpretive paradigm**.** They claim that these characteristics can be justified by their logical dependence on the axioms that undergird the paradigm and by their coherence and interdependence (1985, p.39). They suggest that the researcher elects to carry out research in the natural setting because of the belief that:

- Reality from the naturalist perspective cannot be understood in isolation from its context and…*contextual value structures* partly determine what will be found in the research.

- The *human as researcher* is best suited as a data-gathering instrument in social settings as s/he is capable of grasping and evaluating the meanings of the different interactions that take place in these contexts**.**

- *Outcomes can be negotiated* with the actors in the chosen context. This ensures a degree of democracy and participation.

- The research design can develop as the situation demands. It is *flexible and responsive.*

- The use of qualitative methods in this approach allows for more adaptability and flexibility. These approaches are better suited to dealing with the amount and depth of multiple reality perspectives and are more sensitive to the many value systems that may emerge (1985, pp.39-41).

This research considered the *'contextual value structures' operating in Educate Together schools* as it attempted to understand the multiple realities found in these contexts; it used the *'human as a data-gathering instrument'* in order to arrive at this understanding and, as Cantrell (1990, p.3) suggests, 'to uncover what people believe…to render meaning about their actions and intentions…(and to) interact dialogically with the participants'. She adds (p.3) that, in relation to values, 'interpretivists accept the inseparable bond between values and facts and attempt to understand reality, especially the behaviour of people, within a social context'. This was particularly true of my research context and question, which were concerned with the relationships between values, understanding and action.

4.4 Qualitative approaches

Qualitative methods, usually associated with the interpretive approach, are concerned with arriving at an understanding of lived human experiences, which take place in authentic, naturally occurring contexts, which are not manufactured or contrived. Qualitative research seeks to take into account people's feelings, thoughts, reactions and experiences of phenomena in these authentic environments and to take a holistic view of these experiences. It does this mainly through the use of language-based data gathering and presenting formats: interviews, focus groups, videos, alternative arts based approaches, photographs, observations and document studies. The use of such a variety of qualitative approaches allows the researcher to capture the complexity of these contexts and the richness of the experiences of those who live and work in them. Because of the political and practical elements involved and because of the unique nature and range of variables found in qualitative research contexts it can be less easy to generalise from local to global contexts and as a result qualitative research is best suited to small, local contexts; this, coupled with the ability of such methods to facilitate the capturing of the intricate and complex reality of peoples' lives, ensures that the approach is well suited to the nuanced environments found in intercultural education contexts in Ireland.

Qualitative research approaches take a variety of forms. According to Creswell (1994, pp.11-12) these include Ethnographies, Grounded theory, Phenomenological studies, and Case Studies where according to Creswell (1994, p.12) 'the researcher explores a single entity or phenomenon ("the case") bounded by time and activity (a program, event, process, institution, or social group) and collects detailed information by using a variety of data collection procedures during a sustained period of time'.

The next section will outline what Case Study research is, how it is conducted and why it was chosen as the research approach in this instance.

4.5 Rationale for using a Case Study approach

Case Study was chosen as the approach because it appeared to be suitable for the contexts within which the research was conducted and because of the flexibility it allowed in answering the research question.

According to Soy (1997, p.1) the Case Study is 'an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries

between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used'. Soy (ibid, p.1) claims that Case Study research 'excels at bringing us to an understanding of a complex issue or object and can extend experience or add strength to what is already known through previous research. Case studies emphasize detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of events or conditions and their relationships'.

By taking this approach 'the researcher aims to uncover the manifest interaction of significant factors characteristic of (a) phenomenon, individual, community or institution' (Berg, 2004, p.251). He (2004, p.251) suggests that this form of inquiry 'tends to focus on holistic description and explanation; and, as a general statement, any phenomenon can be studied by case study methods'. Atkinson et al (2003, p.164) find that 'the richness of Case Studies is related to the amount of detail and contextualization that is possible when only one or a small number of focal cases and issues are analysed. The writer's ability to provide a compelling and engaging profile of the case, with suitable examples and linkages to broader issues, is also very important'. Berg (2004, p.253) offers a range of skills that researchers need in order to conduct Case Studies. These include an inquiring mind and the willingness to ask questions before, during, and after data are collected and the ability of the investigator to listen and to assimilate large amounts of new information without bias. Adaptability and flexibility to handle unanticipated situations is also a valuable skill in using the method, as is a thorough understanding of the issues being studied.

According to Berg 'Case Studies involve systematically gathering enough information about a particular person, social setting, event, or group to permit the researcher to effectively understand how the subject operates or functions (Berg, 2004, p.251) allowing for 'extremely rich, detailed, and in-depth information (to be) gathered' (p.251). Day Ashley (2012, p.103) states that 'what may constitute a 'case' for empirical research is wide ranging: it may be individual, such as a teacher or student; an institution, such as a school; an event, project or programme within an institution; it may be a policy, or other types of system' and she suggests that 'the purpose of case study research might be to *explore* a phenomenon about which not much is known, or to *describe* something in detail (Day Ashley, 2012, p.102). She claims that Case Studies can go beyond the merely descriptive and can be used to measure and explain (Day Ashley, 2012, p.102). She also speaks about how research of this kind 'includes single case studies, and multiple case studies involving a small number of cases that

are often related in some way' (Day Ashley, 2012, p.102). These definitions of Case Study which emphasized flexibility and adaptability seemed to suggest that this type of approach was suitable in the research setting, involving as it did a broader case, Educate Together, and a series of multiple cases (the individual schools). Case Study allows researchers 'to capture various nuances, patterns, and more latent elements that other research approaches might overlook' (Berg, 2004 p.251) and these observations also applied in this research. The schools involved in the research served as a series of what Stake (2006) calls 'mini cases' and the small number of schools and the relatively small number of interviewees allowed for great detail to emerge and for emerging themes to be investigated across each site. The rationale and methods for the choice of schools and participants in the schools for this part of the research is outlined in section 4.8.

Umit (2005, p.4) suggests that data in Case Studies can be gathered using a range of methods. These include documents, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant-observation and physical artefacts. In this phase of the research some of the schools provided access to school documents and these were useful in giving an operational and historical context to the school and its processes. The main data gathering method used in the case study was semi-structured interviews and these will be discussed in the next section.

4.6 Data Gathering Methods

As has been outlined above, this research was conducted on a number of levels:

1.   The Includ-ED project and the findings from its initial stages

2.   The Includ-ED workshops, which sought to determine how these findings were experienced in the broad Irish Education context

3.   How the findings from Includ-ED applied in a specific sector of the Irish education system, Educate Together, and from the perspective of teachers in those schools

4.   A case study approach to see how these findings were experienced in a select number of Educate Together schools and from the perspective of the Principals and parents/guardians of school-going children in those schools.

Each of these research activities used a variety of data collection methods, which are widely used when conducting research in social settings and these will now be briefly outlined.

The Includ-ED research involved a large-scale desk-based research process, which looked at the literature in the EU on inclusive and exclusionary practices over the 10 years leading up to the beginning of the project. The research teams from each of the countries which participated in the project were given specific areas and themes to explore and this material was gathered from the analysis of documents, journals, book chapters and articles, government publications and other related forms of material.

The Includ-ED project involved an extensive and detailed trawl through the existing research literature in Ireland and Europe, which looked at aspects of education systems, policy and practice, which served to include and exclude disadvantaged communities from education. From this desk research a number of reports were compiled and published. The main outcomes from the research contained in these reports were then disseminated through a series of workshops, seminars and conferences held throughout the partner countries.

The data gathering method used during this stage consisted of a series of focus groups, which were held during these conferences in order to discuss various aspects of how the findings applied in Irish contexts. Focus groups were particularly useful in these contexts because they allowed a wide range of expert participants, who were used to working in these ways, to bring their experiences and knowledge to bear on a range of topics in a time and resource efficient manner.

An online questionnaire was also administered during the project to Educate Together schools to investigate, from the perspective of the teachers in those schools, the extent to which educational strategies that contribute to social cohesion, as identified by the Includ-ED project, were implemented in the schools. The survey combined quantitative and qualitative elements.

Questionnaires are not a principal method of data gathering in qualitative research, but they do allow a wide sample to be reached. One of the difficulties in using these methods is that in most cases responses are not compulsory and this was the situation in this case. The main limitation to this survey was that there were a small number of responses with only 30 teachers replying to the survey. However, bearing that limitation in mind, the survey results pointed up a number of interesting findings and these are outlined in Chapter 6. The surveys were administered using Survey Monkey

and analysed using Excel. The survey report and outcomes can be found in Appendix D1. The questions used in the Survey are in Appendix E1.

As outlined earlier, the outcomes from the workshops and the online survey fed in to and informed the interviews that were being conducted as part of the ongoing case study. The data gathering approaches used in the case study are outlined in the following section.

4.7 Data Gathering Methods in the Case Study

As referred to earlier, data gathering in qualitative research can take many forms. Methods include focus groups, interviews, participant and context observation, the use of video and photographic formats and document studies. Interviews are perhaps the most common form of data gathering method used in these contexts. During the case study, semi-structured interviews were the main method used to gather data. Semi-structured interviews allowed questions from Includ-ED, which were related to Educate Together settings to be asked. They also allowed for other material to emerge which participants felt was relevant or interesting.

According to Smith and Bower-Brown (2010, p.119) semi-structured interviews offer flexibility and allow the researcher to adopt a more natural, conversational approach. They also however, require a greater degree of skill than more structured interviewing approaches, as the interviewer must be alert to those responses that require further investigation and must be able to respond to those (Smith and Bower-Brown, ibid).

Interviews in general can appear on the surface to be relatively straightforward as they involve the normal conventions of conversations and involve, what Mears (2012, p.170), calls 'attempts to learn what another person knows about a topic, to discover and record what that person has experienced, what he or she thinks and feels about it and what significance or meaning it might have'. Mears warns that while this process appears to be reasonably straightforward and natural it also involves a great deal of work and attention to detail both in the preparation and execution (Mears, 2012, p.170). Interviews are favoured in research settings because they allow the researcher a unique insight in to people's understanding and experience, and can lead to greater understanding. Mears also highlights the drawbacks associated with this type of data gathering in that 'interview research is characterized by an emerging design, with data collection blurring into data analysis, countless hours devoted to transcription and no iron-clad rules of what constitutes sufficient data' (Mears, 2012, p.173). Because no

two interviews used the same set of questions and were of varying length and detail, the semi-structured interviews were also difficult to transcribe and to analyse and make sense of.

During this research, it was also hard at times to maintain the focus of the interviews, to constantly keep the bigger picture in mind, to be attentive to and mindful of the significance of each response. I was also conscious of making the most of my time with the Principals, as they were very busy professionals who were able to offer me only a limited amount of time and therefore time and theme management within the interview were very important elements of the process. The semi-structured interviews were quite difficult to manage. All of the Principals for example were able to speak with authority about a lot of topics, which, though interesting in the main, were not always sufficiently related to the topic I was exploring and this proved problematic on occasion: I wanted to ensure that the interview yielded as much valuable information as possible but I also did not want to appear to disregard what the respondents considered to be important information so this called for a quite diplomatic and respectful approach which at times was difficult to maintain.

As outlined above, interviews, because of their similarity to the conventions governing everyday conversations, can lead the interviewer to miss vital verbal and non-verbal cues and information. During the interviews it became apparent that the interviewer needs to have a battery of skills at their disposal: interviewers need to make on the spot decisions about what topics to develop, what leads to follow up, when to probe or when to stay silent. They also need to know how to read body language and mood, to be attentive at all times, to be patient and to be able to actively listen. All of this must be accomplished while ensuring that you get the answers to the questions you brought to the interview and the approach, while initially appearing to be straightforward and simple, requires tact, intuition, sensitivity and high levels of concentration.

All of the interviews with Principals took place in their respective schools and in their offices and most of them lasted for about an hour. They all took place during the school day. Parents were interviewed in a number of public meeting places and in my workplace. A set of questions, an outline of the research question and context, and plain language and consent forms were forwarded to each person in advance of the interviews. The context and research question were also explained at the start of each

interview and consent sought before each interview began and these are contained in Appendix F1.

4.8 Data gathering methods: the Ethical dimension

If we examine the principal characteristics of Qualitative research and the approaches used to gather and render information it can be said that such approaches concern the understandings that people arrive at about their contexts and their experiences and relationships in these contexts; it can also be claimed that at its heart Qualitative research contains an inter-subjective aspect (where people, through dialogue attempt to arrive at consensual agreement in shared contexts). These factors would suggest that how researchers conduct themselves before, during and after the research process is worthy of consideration. There was a clear ethical dimension to the Case Study approach in this research. According to Berg (2004, p.44) good research stands or falls on how well this ethical dimension is attended to and researchers 'have an ethical obligation to their colleagues, study population and larger society (because they) delve into the social lives of other people' (Berg, 2004, p.43).

Data gathering and analysis approaches in the Interpretive Paradigm are usually framed in conventional, dialogic, transactional terms using language based methods and approaches. Bowen (2005, p.215) warns that 'ethical concerns arise also because qualitative research offers considerable interpretive latitude to the researcher and the data are, on a whole, rife with personal opinions and feelings'.

Semi-structured interviews can, by virtue of their one-to-one format and semi-formal processes also create an illusion of cooperation, intimacy and collegiality. Because the process necessarily involves a transaction rooted in the every-day experience of both interviewer and respondent the interviewee can be less guarded and more trusting; this trust and a desire to please the interviewer can also arise due to the perceived differences between the interviewer (seen as the professional) and the interviewee and where according to Peled and Leichtentritt, (2002, p.148) 'research is a meeting point and a shared experience of people…who often differ in their social power, lifestyles and experiences, and in their understanding of and expectations from the research and its products'. In similar terms respondents may not understand the nature of the process.

I was conscious of all of these issues particularly when interviewing parents and some of these issues regarding expertise and authority were evident during the interviews.

To begin with they were not as comfortable or familiar as the Principals were with interviewing as a process. They were also anxious to give what they perceived as the correct answer to questions; some parents continually questioned their own knowledge and understanding of some of the ideas brought up in the interviews and this refers back to the notions of perceived differences in power and knowledge mentioned above. I had abided by the University's guidelines with regard to using plain language in my interview schedule and in all communications with the respondents. Notwithstanding this, issues still arose regarding the understanding of some of the language used in the general discourse in this area and which arose during the interviews e.g. ideas about Interculturalism, Multiculturalism, Assimilationism, Integration amongst others. Parents in particular (but not exclusively, some principals struggled with these ideas) had a limited understanding of some of these concepts, which, it could be argued, are central to an understanding of education in contexts such as Educate Together.

It is impossible to envisage or anticipate all of the ethical issues that can arise in any setting. The most any researcher can do is to prepare themselves before entering the research environment by familiarising themselves with the context, by identifying the cultural norms that prevail in such contexts, by adopting a sensitive approach and by abiding by professional and institutional guidelines.

4.9 Sampling

Decisions about what schools to choose for the case studies were guided by a number of factors. As outlined above, semi-structured interviews were chosen as the principal data-gathering tool as they allowed for detailed exploration of a range of themes. The amount of these, which could be usefully and realistically conducted, was limited by issues concerning access to busy professionals, the time involved in data transcription and analysis and the requirement to investigate research samples and populations that are feasible and accessible.

As outlined in the introduction, Educate Together was considered to be a suitable site within which to test the Includ-ED findings and progress this specific research thesis because the model of education it espoused emphasized the provision of an inclusive, participative and democratic educational experience. The research was not concerned with examining denominational schools or offering a comparison between the Educate Together and denominational sectors. The research focus from the outset was

on exploring the concepts of plurality and inclusion within Educate Together schools, against the backdrop of a rapidly changing Irish landscape and from the perspective of best practice across the EU 27 as highlighted by the Includ-ED research platform.

Choosing the schools was based on a combination of purposive sampling, which involves selecting research participants on the basis of particular characteristics that they possess which might be relevant or useful to addressing the research question and Snowball sampling where future research participants are suggested and identified during interviews and fieldwork with existing participants (Davies 2010, p.127).

The decision on what schools to target in the purposive sampling was guided by suggestions from a colleague with experience and knowledge of the Educate Together system, the history of many of the schools, and contacts established during the Includ-ED workshops which was attended by principals of Educate Together schools whose contexts and history was known to the Includ-ED team.

This provided a series of initial contacts and the Principals in those schools then suggested other schools and Principals to approach and offered helpful contacts in those schools (Snowball). Parents were contacted in a similar way. Contact was made with one parent who was suggested by an acquaintance who was aware of the research and the other parents were then contacted using the same Snowball effect. Similarly, parents also suggested that approaches be made to the particular schools, which their children attended and this resulted on two occasions on successful contacts being brokered by parents and which led to interviews being conducted.

The trainee Teachers and the professionals working in the education sector were contacted through professional networks and also through an element of Snowball sampling. A list of the schools and interviewees is provided in Chapter 6, the Findings chapter.

Principals were chosen for interview because of their unique position in schools as the interface between Educate Together's espoused ethos and the practice and mediation of that ethos in the schools. It was felt that they would be best able to provide an overview of the practices in the schools and the measures used to maintain and evaluate the ethos and how this was given a practical dimension.

They were also chosen because they maintained and developed the key relationships within the school and between the schools and its various communities and stakeholders. One of those stakeholder groups was the parents of children attending

the schools. A small number of those were chosen in order to investigate their experiences and understandings of Educate Together. Parents have been active in the Educate Together movement since its inception and play a prominent role in the movement. In addition, one of the key features of Educate Together schools is the encouragement and facilitation of a strong parental involvement in all aspects of the school's life therefore interviewing parents would provide an opportunity to examine this.

Consideration was also given to interviewing children attending the schools, and conducting interviews with teachers and carrying out observations both within the classroom settings and in the broader school environments. While it was felt that pupil and teacher interviews and observations would have yielded rich research data a number of practical and ethical concerns presented themselves and led me to reconsider adopting these approaches. A number of Principals expressed concerns about involving the teachers because of increasing demands being made on the staff to accommodate classroom interventions. The Principals acknowledged the importance of research in classroom settings and they were aware of the benefits to practice that these provided; however their schools received a lot of demands to facilitate researcher observations and requests from teacher training colleges for trainee teachers to observe classroom practice as part of their Initial Teacher Education school placement programmes. In this regard the Principals wanted to limit the amount of potentially disruptive interventions to the main work of the school. In order to do this the schools had put in place a series of processes, which were quite detailed and exhaustive and which I was informed would have been quite difficult to negotiate successfully. Having considered these factors I decided not to interview teachers in the individual schools, though their voice had been captured in the questionnaire, which sought teachers experiences of the Includ-ED findings in their settings.

Regarding the voice of the children in the research, the Principals in the early interviews anticipated a similar set of difficulties in securing permission from parents and Boards of Management to observe children in the classroom. These difficulties were practical (and similar to those outlined above regarding the teacher and related to disruption to core school activities) and ethical. Principals were not confident of securing permission from the parents to observe their children within the classroom

and in the broader school setting. Some Principals remarked that this situation was made more problematic because of the range of different cultural traditions represented in the schools. Other factors mentioned by the principals concerned problems experienced by some of the parents with regard to low levels of English language ability which in turn inhibited parental involvement in their children's education. Principals remarked that it was difficult enough to engage parents from other cultural and religious backgrounds in the day-to-day life of the school and they felt that trying to contact parents about allowing their children to be observed would be an even greater challenge. In addition the process' put in place by the Boards of Management of the schools regarding access to children were particularly and necessarily rigorous and again were offered as reasons why it might be overly difficult to engage with children during this research. A final element concerned the institutional ethical process, which operated in DCU. I felt that due to the culturally sensitive elements of the research context and question that it would have been extremely difficult to secure permission for the University to engage with children during this research. There is no doubt that the voice of the child in these contexts would have added depth to the process and chapter 7 contains some suggestions as to how best to capture the child's experiences in the schools in future research.

4.10 Data analysis

The approach to data gathering taken in the Includ-ED project and the application of its findings in an Irish context, have been outlined in the data gathering section of this chapter. The data analysis approach used in the Case Study, employed a combination of approaches suggested by the work of Creswell (2007) in the area of data analysis in Case Studies and a number of other, similar approaches such as those used by Miles and Huberman (1994) (Creswell, 2007, p.149). The reasons for using these approaches will be outlined in this section, which will attempt to trace the journey of the process used to analyse the interviews.

4.10.1 Data Analysis Approach in the Case Study

It could be argued that data analysis in qualitative research is a process that takes place at every stage of the research, and which, according to Bogdan and Biklen, involves 'working with data, organizing it, breaking it into manageable units, synthesizing it, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be

learned, and deciding what you will tell others' (1982, p.145). Its purpose is to ultimately reduce the large amounts of information gathered in the research process into understandable patterns and themes so as to make public the essence of such material. In data reduction the material needs to be rendered or reduced in order to assist the sense-making process.

Data reduction involves what Miles and Huberman (1994, p.10) describe as a range of processes, which include 'selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the data that appear in written-up field notes or transcriptions'. They claim that data reduction takes place even before the data are collected and suggest that 'anticipatory data reduction is occurring as the researcher decides (often without full awareness) which conceptual framework, which cases, which research questions and which data collection approaches to choose' (Miles and Huberman, ibid). In the final stages of the research process, data reduction happens 'through conceptualizing and explaining, since developing abstract concepts is also a way of reducing the data' (Punch, 1998, p.203). As can be seen, data reduction happens throughout the research process. In the middle stages of a research project, when the data is still being collected and is being simultaneously analysed, data reduction can take the form of creating data summaries, coding, finding themes, clustering and writing stories (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p.439).

Coding in qualitative data analysis involves organising the material in specific categories in order to understand, compare and retrieve and is according to Punch (1998, p.204) 'the foundation for what comes later'. He claims coding consists of two core elements: it is a form of analysis in itself and it is also the process that prepares the stage for further, deeper analysis. Punch states that 'codes are tags, names or labels and coding is therefore the process of putting tags, names or labels against pieces of data' (1998, p.204) which serves a number of purposes. The first is that the material can be organized in terms of storage and retrieval. These initial codes can then help in the process of further, more advanced coding which looks to identify patterns and themes in the data. In this way, coding satisfies the two definitions of the process set out above: the initial process organizes the material and is a form of basic analysis while also serving to prepare the ground for more higher-level, abstract analysis (ibid, p.205).

Data interpretation, the final stage in Miles and Huberman's approach to data analysis, consists of arriving at conclusions and verification of material. Data analysis,

as outlined above, is a process that tries to arrive at meaning; our efforts throughout every stage of the research are concerned with uncovering, understanding and communicating such meaning. Meaning and interpretation are seldom arrived at the end of a project or in neat and precise ways. They usually result from the constant interplay between the different but sometimes simultaneous and parallel processes of data analysis: data is continuously gathered, coded, displayed, reinterpreted, recoded and reordered. During these stages the material is constantly being rendered and interpreted to identify the emerging themes and to see how these fit with the original research question.

The benefits of qualitative methods in this research context have already been discussed but these methods can, because of their nature, present us with multiple meanings where interpretation requires care and precision.

Miles & Huberman, (1984, p.15) ask 'how can we draw valid meaning from qualitative data? What methods of analysis can we employ that are practical, communicable, and non-self-deluding- in short, scientific in the best sense of that word?'

Some writers have suggested frameworks to guide researchers in this area.

Creswell (1998) for example suggests that there are a number of key stages in the data analysis process such as sense making, organization and making public and that each of these involves a number of different activities including sketching ideas; taking notes; summarizing field-notes; working with words; identifying codes; reducing codes to themes; counting frequency of codes and relating categories. Creswell examines the work of Miles and Huberman (1994) and Wolcott (1994) among others and outlines how the approach advocated by these writers treat these key stages and these are contained in table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Data analysis strategies (Creswell, 2007 p.149).

Analytic Strategy	Madison (2005)	Miles and Huberman (1994)	Wolcott (1994b)
Sketching ideas		Write margin notes in fieldnotes	Highlight certain information in description
Taking notes		Write reflective passages in notes	
Summarizing fieldnotes		Draft a summary sheet on Fieldnotes	
Working with words		Make metaphors	
Identifying codes	Do abstract coding or concrete coding	Write codes, memos	
Reducing codes to themes	Identify salient themes or patterns	Note patterns and themes	Identify patterned regularities
Counting frequency of codes		Count frequency of codes	
Relating categories		Factor, note relations among variables, build a logical chain of evidence	
Relating categories to analytic framework in literature			Contextualize in framework from literature
Creating a point of view	For scenes, audience, readers		
Displaying the data	Create a graph or picture of the framework	Make contrasts and comparisons	Display findings in tables, charts, diagrams and figures; compare cases; compare with a standard

The three approaches share a number of common characteristics. In each case the data is firstly reduced and the meaningful sections extracted are named or coded. These codes are then aggregated into broader categories and themes, which in turn are then reproduced and displayed in graphs, tables and other forms for the purposes of comparison and communication (Creswell, 2007, p.150).

The data analysis approach used here was informed by combining elements of the three strategies outlined above. It was also guided by a similar model suggested by Creswell on how to conduct data analysis approaches in case study.

4.10.2 The data analysis process undertaken in this Case Study

The data analysis process undertaken in this Case Study was not linear or sequential. Analysis took place at all points of the research: data collection, transcription and

organization; reflection and note-taking; description and interpretation; and representation in what Creswell (1998, p.143) describes as a data analysis spiral: 'the researcher engages in the process of moving in analytic circles rather than using a fixed linear approach. One enters with data of text or images (e.g. photographs, video-tapes) and exits with an account or a narrative. In between, the researcher touches on several facets of analysis and circles around and around'. The various stages of the data analysis spiral consist of managing and organizing the data in files and units moving in to the next spiral involving reading, reflecting and note taking. This moves then in to the description stage, which involves classifying and interpreting the data and then moving in to the final spiral of activity where the data is visualized and represented in different forms.

The data analysis process also took account of Berkowitz's (1997) suggestion that when conducting qualitative data analysis the researcher should be asking the following questions

- What patterns and common themes emerge in responses dealing with specific items? How do these patterns (or lack thereof) help to illuminate the broader study question(s)?
- Are there any deviations from these patterns? If yes, are there any factors that might explain these atypical responses?
- What interesting stories emerge from the responses? How can these stories help to illuminate the broader study question(s)?
- Do any of these patterns or findings suggest that additional data may need to be collected? Do any of the study questions need to be revised?
- Do the patterns that emerge corroborate the findings of any corresponding qualitative analyses that have been conducted? If not, what might explain these discrepancies?

This constant spiralling of activity, of moving in, around and between the (constantly evolving and refined) research question, the data gathered and the analysis process was a feature of this research. Figure 4.1, adapted from Creswell's Spiral of Data Analysis (2007), broadly reflects the approach undertaken during the Case Study.
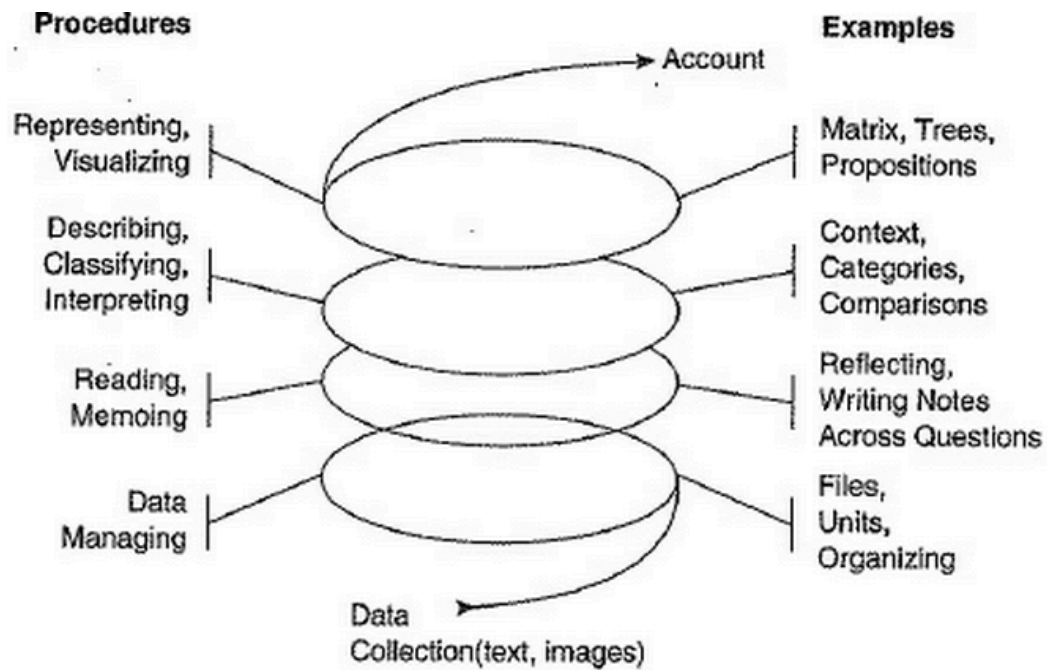
Figure 4.1 Spiral of Data Analysis (Creswell, 2007)

There was a constant to-ing and fro-ing throughout this phase of the research both within and between the interviews and the matrices which reflects Creswell's observations that 'the processes of data collection, data analysis, and report writing are not distinct steps in the process-they are interrelated and often go on simultaneously in a research project' (2007, p.150). This process also reflects what Folkestad maintains about data analysis:

> Researchers are continuously interacting between the respondents and the research tools. For each interview that is conducted more knowledge is possessed: not only about the phenomenon that is studied in itself but also about the interview guide as well. As the researcher becomes more experienced he or she will find several "buttons to push" in order to get the information that we are searching for (2008, p.4).

4.10.3 Data Reduction and Display

This section outlines how the data gathered in the interviews with the Principals, parents and professionals working in the area of education in diverse settings was analysed, reduced and displayed and the different stages that this process took.

Stage 1 involved conducting the interviews themselves. These were audio-taped which allowed for notes to be taken in the margins as the respondents answered questions and these notes formed initial impressions from which emerged some embryonic themes.

Stage 2 consisted of the transcription of the taped interviews. As these were being electronically transcribed, notes were also being recorded in the margins of the transcribed interviews.

Stage 3 involved reading the transcribed documents to identify and extract words and phrases which were related to the Includ-ED findings and which would form the basis of a series of sub-themes. During this part of the process it became apparent that other relevant ideas were emerging from the interviews. Creswell (2007, p.152) speaks about using a priori codes. He cites Marshall and Rossman (2006) who talk about a continuum of coding strategies 'that range from "prefigured" categories to "emergent" categories (p.151)'. Creswell suggests that if researchers do use a "prefigured" coding scheme then they should 'be open to additional codes emerging during the analysis' (p.152). The names of these codes and categories are derived from a number of sources and again mirror what Creswell suggests are common sources 'these codes can represent information that researchers expect to find before the study; represent surprising information that researchers did not expect to find; and represent information that is conceptually interesting or unusual to researchers (and potentially participants and audiences)'. This broadly describes what occurred during the various stages of this research: codes were suggested in advance by the Includ-ED findings at both national and international levels and surprising and interesting information and concepts, which were unanticipated, emerged during the interviews conducted during the case study.

In order to assist with future data storage and retrieval each line in every interview was given a number in order to trace extracted material back to its original source.

In **Stage 4** a matrix or table was created and the extracted words and phrases related to the Includ-ED findings in addition to those words and phrases which were suggestive of possible emerging sub-themes were copied into it as was the identifying page and line number information.

Stage 5 involved a reading of the material in the matrices in order to organize the sub-themes into broader families of themes.

Stage 6 involved these themes being organized into what Creswell calls (broad) 'patterns of categories' (1998, pp.148-149). According to Creswell this involves:

> taking the text or qualitative information apart, and looking for categories, themes, or dimensions of information. As a popular form of analysis, classification involves identifying five to seven general themes. These themes,

in turn, I view as a "family" of themes with children, or subthemes, and even grandchildren, subthemes represented by segments of data. It is difficult, especially in a large database, to reduce the information down into five or seven "families," but my process involves winnowing the data, reducing them to a small, manageable set of themes to write into my final narrative (p.153).

Phase 7: When the data was organized into themes and categories in the matrices, the material was re-read and notes were made in the margins. These notes served a number of purposes:

- They highlighted material that was particularly interesting and relevant (to the overall research question).
- The notes related the material to relevant material from the literature.
- They referred to similar or related material from other interview matrices, which in some cases confirmed and in others contradicted such material.

The following screenshots give an indication of what the process of data reduction and display involved. The first, figure 4.2, is a screenshot of an interview conducted with a Principal from one of the schools involved in the research. The coloured sections indicate instances of statements and ideas that were deemed to be relevant in relation to the research question as they occurred in the interview.
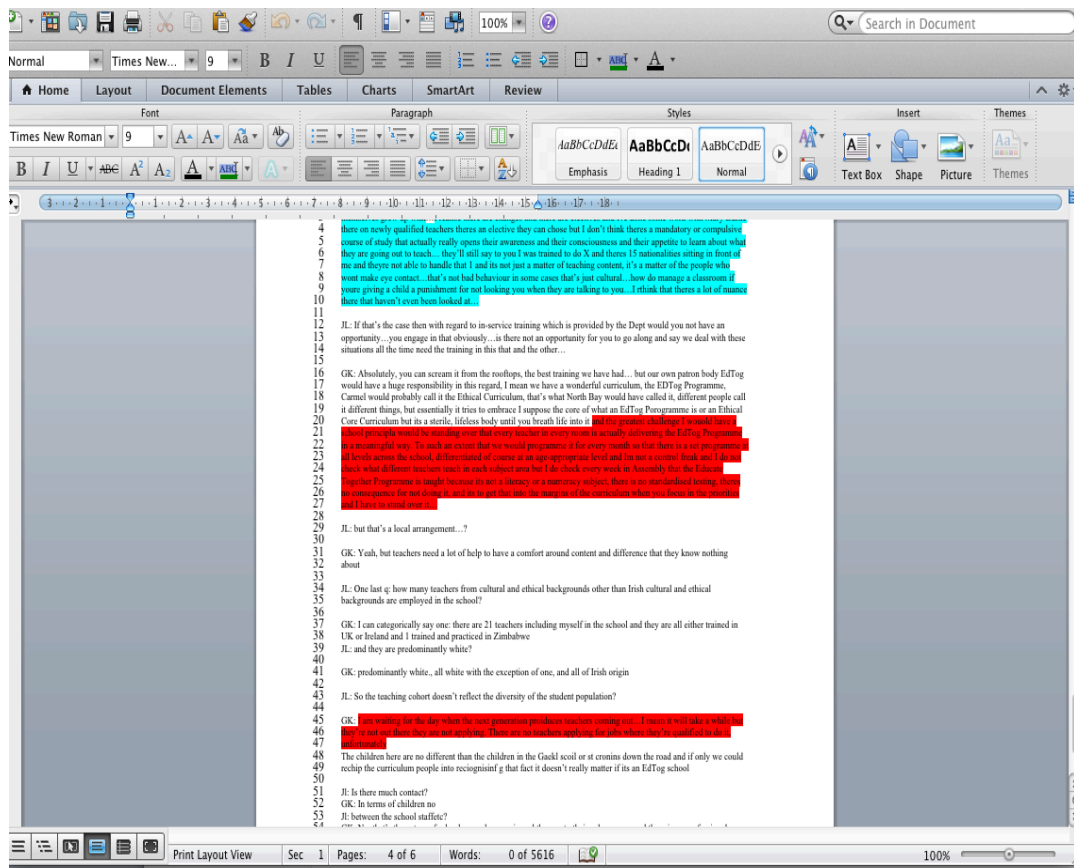
Figure 4.2 Colour coded interview

The next screenshot (figure 4.3) shows how the material from the interviews that was deemed to be relevant and interesting was reduced and re-presented in a matrix. The material was considered interesting and relevant on the basis of how it related to the Includ-ED findings and to other themes emerging from the interviews with other Principals and others involved in the research. These quotes were then grouped under particular themes and then these themes were arranged in to broader categories. This figure also shows instances of comments and observations that were made during this stage of the data analysis and which were recorded in text boxes in the margins of the matrix. These text boxes served to link the material to similar material from other interviews, to the literature and to the Includ-ED findings (see Appendix C, for interview matrices and coding framework).
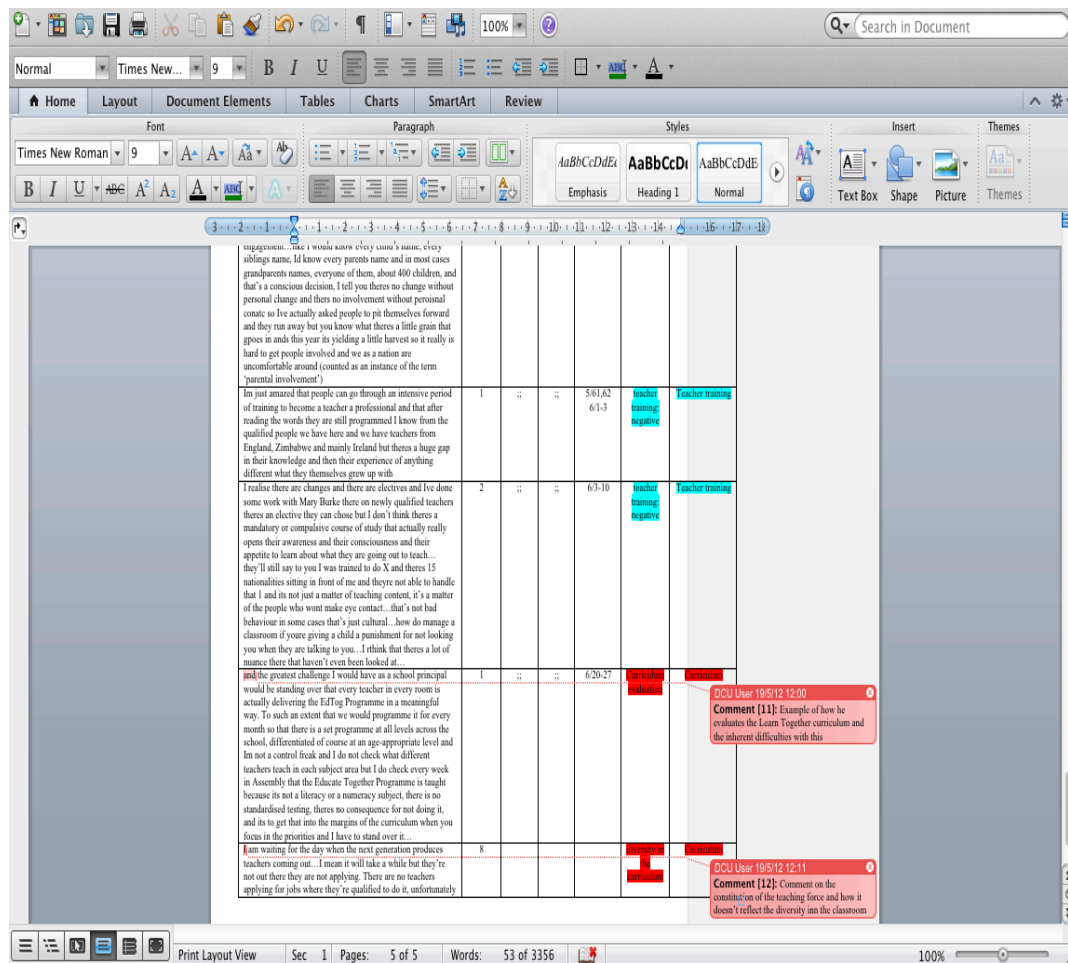
Figure 4.3 Matrix showing data reduction and display

Each matrix was accompanied by an outline of what the different codes, categories and colours represented and this is shown in the coding framework in figure 4.4 below:

Codes and categories

'Irish' is included under a number of codes and categories:

Irish included as part of the code 'Identity' and in the category Diversity & Access/inclusion and coloured pink.

Irish included as part of the code 'ethos' and in the category Curriculum and coloured red.

Irish counted under 'Irish classrooms' included as part of the code 'diversity in the curriculum' and in the category Curriculum and coloured red.

Irish counted as 'language' included as part of the code 'Language in curr terms' and in the category Curriculum and coloured red.

Language as a term is counted separately under different codes:

Language as an indicator of the code 'cultural diversity' and in the category of Diversity, Access/Inclusion and is coloured pink.

Language included under the code 'language' in the category Policy/Public Discourse and is coloured green

Language included as part of the code 'Language in curr terms' and in the category Curriculum and is coloured red.

Enrolment policy (general denoted as EP1), Enrolment policy (as response to access crisis/ issue/difficulty denoted as EP2), patron etc fall under the code of Access/Inclusion (in line with Includ Ed findings) and are all coloured pink. These in turn fall into the category of Diversity & Access/inclusion and are coloured pink.

Culture is counted separately under these different codes:

1. ethos 2. diverse cultural representation in the curriculum and fall under the catgory of Curriculum and are coloured red.

Culture is also included in the code 'culture in broader societal terms' and falls into the catgory of Diversity & Access/inclusion and are coloured pink.

Figure 4.4 Coding Framework (see Appendix C for a more detailed version)

These data analysis phases followed Miles and Huberman's (1984, p.21) suggestions regarding data display, reduction and interpretation which is a process that allows data to be organized in an 'accessible, compact form, so that the analyst can see what is happening and either draw justified conclusions or move on to the next-step analysis, which the display suggests may be useful in order to render material to make sense of it and *re*-present it in a public forum. The analysis process was also in keeping with what Hatch described as an ongoing 'synthesis, evaluation, interpretation, categorization, hypothesizing, comparison, and pattern finding' involving researchers engaging 'their own intellectual capacities to make sense of qualitative data' (2002, p.148).

During the data analysis I was also mindful of Mason's (1996, p.109) ideas on how to read data: literally in order to determine and uncover elements of style, form, content, layout; interpretively where the researcher engages in a sense making exercise of trying to determine what they think the data means and reflexively where the researcher looks at their understanding of their role in data gathering and interpreting.

The following is an example of how the raw data from the interviews was organized in to themes and categories. One of the findings of the Includ-ED research related to the benefits and challenges presented to the whole-school community of having a diverse school-going population, which I classified for the purposes of the research as the theme 'Diversity in the Curriculum'.

This quote was taken from an interview with one of the school Principals in response to a question on the challenges presented to the school and its community of having a diverse school population. The following is an extract from the answer

> I had parents who arrived from the xxxx School and who said their children were not to be taught music and I sat them down and I spoke to them and said to them I understand your beliefs but we are a school and we operate under the Irish curriculum system and music is one of our subjects and you cant tell me they're not doing maths; now technically speaking a parent can say they are not doing that subject but having spoken to them and having gone through everything they were satisfied that we took into consideration her faith, we took into consideration her beliefs but equally that we were obliged to provide that part of the Curriculum and she agreed that her child could partake in the music curriculum (Interview with Principal 5, page 3, lines 41-49 see Appendix B14)

From this quote I identified a sub-theme which was called 'parental involvement as an instance of the challenges presented by a diverse school-going population' and this sub-theme was then placed in the matrix and recorded as an instance of the theme 'Diversity in the Curriculum' and in the broader category (or group of themes) of 'Curriculum'. The following note was then attached to this quote and is an example of a further 'mining down' in to the material in order to relate it to other respondent's answers, to the literature and to the Includ-ED findings generally and particularly to the broader Irish context in order to arrive at understanding:

> Practical examples of the difficulties of trying to respect the diversity in the classroom and conflicts between different interpretations of what various definitions mean e.g. some parents operate on the basis that ET means ABC: anything but Christian. This ties in with what parent 5 (page 16, line 48-51) said about different understandings of concepts and philosophies: *'everyone has their own view about what diversity means. Everybody has their own view of what multiculturalism or interculturalism is, so I do think it can get to the stage where...you are catering for individuals needs and sometimes it is the strongest voice gets heard'* and also highlights the importance of getting the language right and communicating it to all the stakeholders. Ties in with material related to Diversity recognition from Includ-ED.

Figure 4.5 shows the category (or group of themes) of Curriculum and the number of themes such as Ethos, Evaluating the Curriculum and so on that are contained in this category. These themes were suggested by distinct but related responses to certain questions from respondents, which were regarded as sub-themes and are included in the shapes in the diagram. These sub-themes emerged from and in some cases are directly extracted from responses from those interviewed during the course of the research.

Family of themes/category: Curriculum

Diversity in the Curriculum

The traditional/state curriculum and how it is taught

The role of parents in the classroom

Benefits presented to the whole school population of diverse school/ethos

The challenges presented to the school of having a diverse school/ethos

Should the teaching staff reflect the diverse school population?

Language in Curriculum Terms

The range of languages
Difficulties in teaching a range of language
Difficulties presented to academic development by not teaching children in their 1st language

Ethos

Relationships between the school and the local community

The role of parents in the classroom

Distance between home and school cultures and practices

The intercultural classroom

Evaluating the Curriculum

The responsibilities/role of the Principal in this regard

Difficulties involved in ensuring that all elements are equally measured

Reproductive agent

The role of the State

The role of the Church

Patronage

Ethical Core Curriculum

Conflict between ECC and practices in the schools
How the traditional and Learn Together curricula fit together

Figure 4.5 The category Curriculum and its constituent themes and sub-themes

The approach to data analysis in this phase of the research outlined above was an attempt to ensure that the relationships made between the data gathered and the findings presented were reliable and consistent. Thorne notes that 'systematic, rigorous, and auditable analytical processes are among the most significant factors distinguishing good from poor quality research' and he suggests that findings be presented 'in such a manner that the logical processes by which they were developed are accessible to a critical reader, the relation between the actual data and the conclusions about data is explicit, and the claims made in relation to the data set are rendered credible and believable' (Thorne, 2000, p70). Levy also advocates such a rigorous approach and that it is the responsibility of the qualitative researcher to 'provide evidence of reliability by careful documenting of the data collection and

analysis process, hence the term "trustworthiness" is used to assess how reliable the results are, that is, can we trust that the results are a "true" reflection of our subject' (Levy, 2006, p.371). Mays and Pope (1995, pp.109-112) suggest that in order to ensure such rigour in qualitative research, researchers should be 'systematic and self-conscious (in) research design, data collection, interpretation, and communication' and that this can be achieved by creating 'an account of method and data which can stand independently so that another trained researcher could analyse the same data in the same way and come to essentially the same conclusions; (and) a plausible and coherent explanation of the phenomenon under scrutiny'. They also point out that the rigour of some qualitative approaches has been undermined because 'many qualitative researchers have neglected to give adequate descriptions in their research reports of their assumptions and methods, particularly with regard to data analysis' (pp.109-112).

4.11 Conclusion

Choosing the correct methodological approach is key to the success of any research study. This research took place at a number of levels, which involved a Europe wide project Includ-ED, and an attempt to understand how the findings from that research were experienced in the broader national education context in Ireland. A further level of research involved a deeper mining down into how those findings were experienced in a specific educational setting, Educate Together. Educate Together was chosen because of its appropriateness to the inclusive outlook of Includ-ED and because it is a relatively new educational movement which is trying to respond to a pluralist Ireland. This element was key to my question.

Includ-ED operated within a Critical Communicative Theory and this philosophy guided my approach to the research because of its interest in creating meaning through inter-subjective dialogue and by including previously unheard voices. Both of these elements were also important in my research setting. The Case Study conducted in a range of Educate Together schools, looked at how the Includ-ED findings and other emerging themes had meaning for particular schools and particular stakeholders in those schools. It is argued that case study was the approach that best suited the context and the research question.

The research question was concerned with how the educational values espoused by Educate Together are understood, practiced and evaluated in a range of schools and from the perspective of Principals and parents in these schools. The research question,

dealing as it did with such contested concepts as values and effectiveness, and the complex research environments it took place in, were best suited to qualitative approaches.

Figure 4.6 below outlines how the research narrowed from a global perspective down to a focused, specific local context.
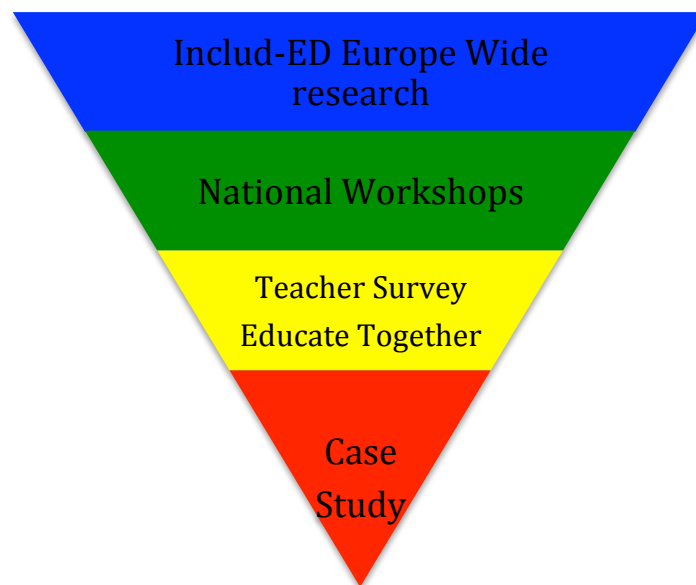
Figure 4.6 Levels of research

Chapter 5: Findings from the Includ-ED research project

As has been outlined earlier in this thesis, this research has its origins in an EU wide research project called Includ-ED. This chapter will begin with an outline of the scope and aims of the Includ-ED research project and give a brief overview of the findings from the project from a European perspective. It will go on to describe how the Includ-ED findings that were relevant in the broader Irish educational context, applied in this context. This fulfilled one of the requirements of the Includ-ED project namely to see how the findings of the research were experienced in broad national contexts. Another requirement of the project was to try to determine how the findings applied in more specific contexts and this led to the testing of the findings in the specific context of Educate Together schools. Teachers in all the Educate Together schools were surveyed using an online survey tool. This survey sought to determine the extent to which educational strategies that contribute to social cohesion, as per the Successful Educational Actions in the Includ-ED project, were being implemented in Educate Together schools.

Educate Together schools were chosen to test the findings of the Includ-ED project because the ethos which informs Educate Together schools and the practices employed in the schools to enact this ethos, are predicated on a philosophy which has inclusion and democratic participation at its center. The Includ-ED project was dedicated to looking at those practices and policies in European education systems that contributed to inclusion and which attempted to identify and overcome exclusionary practices.

These different levels of research fed into and informed the Case Study, which explored how the Includ-ED findings applied in selected Educate Together schools from the perspective of some of the major stakeholders working in the area of education provision in diverse contexts and the findings from this will be presented in chapter 6.

5.1 Includ-ED: Scope, Aims and Findings

The EU is concerned to tackle social exclusion at all levels of society and sees education as playing a central role in this task 'social exclusion affects a large part of the population in Europe and the need to define strategies based on education in order to address this situation has been highlighted' (Includ-ED, 2007(a), p.6). Includ-ED contends that according to the OECD's Pisa 2000 and 2003 reports there is a direct

correlation between lower socio-economic status and educational achievement and that education (Includ-ED, 2007(a), p.7).

Mindful of this, the principal focus of the Includ-ED research was on those educational strategies, systems, policies and practices that *contribute to overcoming* inequalities and which promote social cohesion and on those strategies systems, policies and practices that *create* social exclusion in particular with vulnerable and marginalised groups. The initial stages of the Includ-ED research (some of the outcomes from which are considered for this current piece of research) consisted of three elements.

1. A literature review of educational reforms, theories and policy developments in Europe with particular regard to the project's vulnerable groups (cultural minorities, migrants, youth, gender and disabled).

2. An analysis of those educational reforms in terms of their orientation, structure and curriculum

3. An analysis of educational outcomes in Europe taking into account three main concepts of school dropout, school failure and school performance (Includ-ED, 2007(a), p.8).

In general, the research was concerned with describing how school failure or success influences other areas of society such as employment opportunities, access to housing and health and participation in public spaces for members of the vulnerable groups targeted and for all members of society in general in order to allow the "scientific community" to dialogue with theory and practice in order to influence EU policy.

The research was concerned with examining the situation in each of the partner countries with regard to the core research theme; building on good practices that emerged during the research and advocating innovative strategies in the area and conducting research into prevailing social systems and processes in order to add to understanding and knowledge and then making this new knowledge public.

Figure 5.1 gives an overview of the Includ-ED projects main stakeholders and areas of interest.
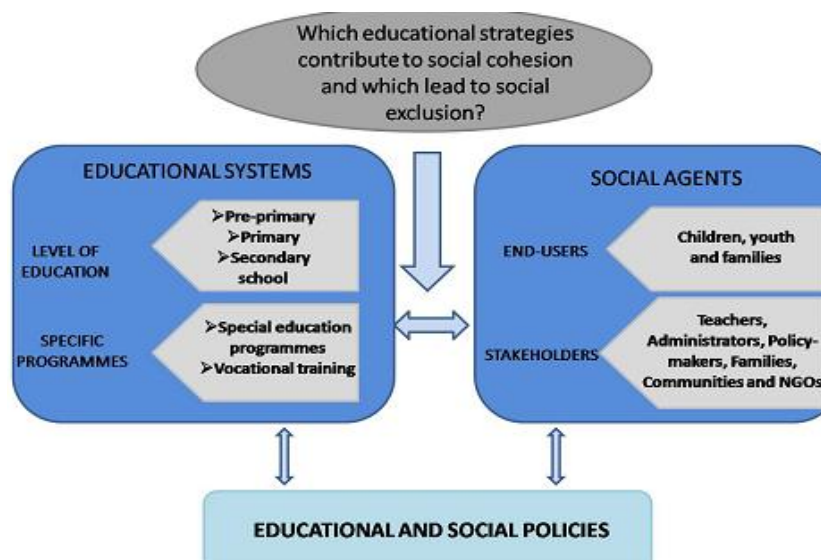
Figure 5.1 Overview of the Includ-ED project.

Over the lifetime of the Includ-ED project a number of principal research questions were answered under different project lines. These were:

- Which school systems and educational reforms have generated high rates of school failure and which ones generated low rates? (Project 1)
- Which educational practices (at the level of system, school and classroom) increase school failure and which ones lead to school success? (Project 2)
- How does educational inclusion/exclusion impact inclusion/exclusion from diverse areas of society such as employment, housing, health and political participation? (Project 3)
- How is educational inclusion/exclusion affecting most vulnerable social groups, particularly women, youth, migrants, cultural groups, and people with disabilities? (Project 4)
- Which mixed interventions between education and other areas of social policy contribute to overcome exclusion and foster social cohesion in Europe? (Project 5)
- How does community involvement in education contribute to strengthen connections between education and diverse areas of society? How do these mixed interventions contribute to social cohesion? (Project 6)
  (CREA, 2012b)

The findings from the initial stages of the research identified a number of themes. These were

- Access to and quality of education

- Gender

- School autonomy and use of resources

- Acquisition of "language of instruction"

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- Diversity recognition
- Family and Community
- Differentiation

5.2 Include-ED Irish Workshops

As part of the Includ-ED research a number of Conferences and other activities were held over the lifetime of the project throughout the partner countries including Ireland. These activities allowed the project team to report on and disseminate the project findings and activities and gave an opportunity to interested parties to speak about their experiences of the research findings from an Irish perspective; it also allowed these stakeholders to offer suggestions as to how some of the initiatives identified in other European education systems could be adapted to work in the Irish context.

As part of the process and in order to better tailor the research to an Irish audience it was decided by the Irish research team to concentrate on the last four themes outlined above for the first Conference, which was held in DCU in 2007. It was felt that these themes were the most relevant to an Irish audience and that we would be more likely to have a better response if the Conference was to have a narrower focus. After presentations by a number of invited speakers the delegates divided into workshops and were asked to consider the findings from the initial stages of the research, which focused on a review of the literature from across European education systems and to look at how these findings were experienced in the broader Irish educational context.

Each workshop was facilitated by a delegate whose work was related to their workshop theme including representatives from communities and agencies interested in the area of education in diverse contexts. The following section presents some of the main Includ-ED research findings that were discussed by the Conference workshop participants. The workshop outcomes are presented in greater detail in Appendix A.

It should be noted that the participants in the workshops were drawn from a wide range of organisations and interested individuals who were working in education contexts from across the entire education sector. In addition there were representatives from advocacy groups, support agencies, government departments, international scholars and politicians and most of these contributed to the workshops. The

workshop material outlined below concerns the experiences and understandings of these participants of how these themes played out across *the entire educational spectrum* in Ireland and not from the perspective of any one sector or education provider therefore it represents a snapshot of a national experience. Particular attention will be given to those themes that are directly relevant to the themes that emerged during the Case Study conducted in Educate Together schools and which form the main part of this thesis.

Family and Community Involvement

One of the main Includ-ED findings concerned family and community involvement. According to the research the participation of families and community members becomes a significant potential resource to enhance educational and social inclusion. Five different types of participation were identified by Includ-ED: Informative, Consultative, Decisive, Evaluative and Educative. Each of these referred to varying degrees of participation by parents in the schools activities and the research shows that Decisive, Evaluative, and Educative are the ones that most positively influence student success. In these types of participation, families are involved in the school at a higher degree and have a greater influence on school decisions (Includ-ED, 2009, p.56).

The research indicated that policies should be developed to create and/or increase the participation of families and communities in learning activities (with students or for themselves), curriculum development and evaluation, and school decision making and the research suggests that those types of participation have greater influence in students' learning than when they just participate in festivals or are just informed.

Participation of families from vulnerable groups (migrants, cultural minorities, students with disabilities) should be particularly encouraged as it relates to their children's academic success. Policies should be developed to promote family education programmes in schools (Includ-ED, 2009, p.65).

Workshop Findings on Family and Community Involvement

The workshops considered the current status of family and community participation in Irish Schools and found that apart from obligatory parent representation on the Boards of Management of schools and the involvement of parents in fundraising events, the general consensus across groups was that there was not enough involvement of

parents and community. The workshop considered the types of practices that enabled such participation.

The fact that parents can choose where their child goes to school (Article 42, Bunreacht na hEireann, 1937) means that parents can make a conscious decision about their child's education and are more likely to be involved. Contrary to the obligation of schools to have parental representation on Boards of Management it was suggested by some workshop participants that parents do not really have a voice. One comment suggested that the 'priest' is the facilitator of the board meetings and had more control. It was also suggested that lack of skills in dealing at Board level inhibits parent representatives from really having a voice. Socio economic background was also suggested as an inhibitor with one commentator suggesting that 'lower class parents are only called if there is a problem with the child' which links into another suggestion that the parents' own negative experiences of school in the past may contribute to a lack of confidence in approaching the school. A strong inhibiting factor was that the onus to involve parents and community is on the school itself and that they don't always have a welcoming approach due to pressures of time and lack of resources to get involved in activities outside the remit of already stretched timeframes.

Finally, a strong inhibitor is that teachers are 'terrified' of parents and that there are often conflicts of power involved with the 'teacher as professional vs parent as interested amateur'.

Recommendations to involve parents and community were summarised as follows:
- Change the approach of school to become more open to outside involvement.
- Change in culture of parent teacher meetings and other involvement.
- Examine school leadership and basic human relations.
- Demonstrate the value of parental/community involvement – role models.
- Up-skill teachers to facilitate dialogue in schools.
- Understanding the functions of education – move away from teachers as subject experts with no need for involvement of 'non experts'.

5.2.1 The Second Includ-ED Workshops 2011

In 2011 there was a second Includ-ED workshop that was held during the CiCe annual Conference, which that year was held in DCU. This conference invited a selection of participants from the 2007 cohort to try to determine how the major themes had been experienced in the intervening years in their own areas of responsibility. A number of themes were discussed and the following are of particular relevance to this research:

Theme: Diversity Recognition in school contributes positively to quality learning.

Theme: Family and community participation in education contribute positively to quality learning.

The outcomes from these workshops with regard to these themes will now be outlined. The workshop participants were asked to consider a number of questions under each theme and these and the responses to them are described in the following sections.

Theme: Diversity recognition in school contributes positively to quality learning

The workshop found that the practices that enabled recognition of diversity in Irish schools included the importance of recognizing the range and types of diversity that exist in classrooms and the need to normalise diversity. How teachers are taught and trained to work in diverse backgrounds was also regarded as important in this regard. The factors that inhibited the recognition of diversity in Irish schools included what one respondent called "the weight of history" and how difficult it was to escape historical and social norms and practices all of which, she contended, served to negatively influence how people regarded diversity in compulsory educational settings.

Theme: Family and community participation in education contribute positively to quality learning

The respondents felt that the practices that enabled family and community participation in compulsory education settings included an emphasis on training approaches that were inclusive and embedded. When discussing practices that inhibited family and community participation in Irish education respondents spoke about how the built environment and the content of teaching resources failed to represent diversity and that this served to impact adversely on family involvement in these settings.

In response to a question on what could be done to support family and community participation in schools respondents returned to the area of teacher training and the need for teachers to develop skills in dealing with parents from diverse backgrounds. Others went further and advocated that teacher training needed to be overhauled in terms of what trainee teachers learned about values and beliefs. Respondents found that policies should be developed around parental involvement, that parents should be allowed to become more involved in decision making and that changes needed to be made to the visible environment to reflect diverse communities and school going populations. The affect of this would be to show that the school was more a part of the community.

5.2.2 Workshop Outcomes Conclusion

The Includ-ED research project and the workshops, which discussed its findings in the broader Irish context tried to identify how practices that serve to exclude and practices that facilitate inclusion could be usefully applied in international and local contexts. This next section will look at an online survey, which asked Teachers in Educate Together schools to consider how the Includ-ED themes were experienced in their contexts. As outlined earlier, part of the remit of the Includ-ED project was to consider how the findings of the project applied in specific education settings in addition to their application in the broader education system. Educate Together was chosen as the specific setting as its inclusive and democratic principles seemed to make it a suitable location to test the Includ-ED findings.

5.3 Educate Together Teacher Online Survey

Teachers in all the Educate Together schools in Ireland were surveyed using an online survey tool. This survey sought to determine the extent to which educational strategies that contribute to social cohesion, as per the Successful Educational Actions in the Includ-ED project, were being implemented in Educate Together schools. This section will outline the findings form this survey with regard to their relevance to this research.

Questions and Key Findings

The survey began by asking teachers to consider a range of questions relating to the values espoused and practiced in their schools. When asked to consider the values promoted in their school, 'Respect' was cited by 64.7% of the respondents, making it the dominant core value expressed.

Others values cited were: Inclusiveness; Equality; Celebrating differences; Compassion; Empathy; Fairness; Tolerance; Democracy; Non-denominational/multi-racial; Child-Centred; Honesty; Friendship; Cooperation; Responsibility; Peace; Teamwork; Fair play; Sense of community; Justice; Parent/Teacher partnerships.

The teachers were then asked how these how these values were incorporated in to their educational practice. The responses included examples of both explicit and implicit practical application of the core values.

Explicit practices that promote core values

1. Inclusive enrolment: Acceptance of all faiths and none and inclusion of children with Special Educational Needs

2. Use of the Learn Together curriculum, which includes specific lessons on celebrating difference integrated within the learning objectives of SPHE and Drama

3. Core values promoted in the schools Code of Behaviour & Positive Language Policy

4. In class discussion of Core Values

5. Democratic partnerships: Parents and students involved in school policies and decision making through parent/teacher committees and student councils

Implicit practices that promote core values

1. Teachers modeling the aforementioned core values in their interactions with students and parents

2. Students engaged in co-operative group work, the aim of which is to draw out these values

3. One respondent spoke of these values being the "very fabric of school life" underpinning all decisions and informing planning, curriculum delivery, parental and community involvement and extra-curricular activities.

Inclusive Practices

Respondents were asked to rate the extent to which positive attitudes and values that promoted inclusive practices in everyday activities existed in their school environments. 82.3% said that attitudes and values promoting inclusive practice were strongly present in their school, 5.9% replied that these practices were only sometimes present and 11.8% responded that they were unsure as to the extent to which these practices existed in their schools. The respondents were then asked to identify the specific activities within the school that promoted inclusive practices and where these took place.

Activities that promoted inclusive values

The children throughout their school experience were exposed to and involved in many whole school activities that promote inclusion, for example, the children take part in the Yellow Flag programme for inclusion and various "Weeks" such as Human Rights week, anti-bullying week, friendship week and so on.

Inclusive practices were integral to the in-class experience according to the respondents. Classes were mixed in terms of ability and all children including those with special educational needs were taught within the one classroom, supported by a structure of team teaching. Where children with special educational needs were taught in specific units, these units were part of the school campus and integration was very strongly supported. Within the classes, children were encouraged to have a voice and to support one another academically and socially. Inclusion was also prioritised among staff with teachers, principals, special needs assistants, caretakers and secretaries eating and socialising together.

During recreation times, inclusive practices were promoted. Respondents mentioned the use of a lunch buddy system for children with Special Educational Needs so that exclusion was counteracted while others mentioned the promotion of "Playground buddies", children who ensure that no one was excluded during break and lunch times. Inclusive practices also extended to the parental community. Parents were encouraged to volunteer in classes. Groups for parents and toddlers were in place and some of the schools ran English classes for parents for whom English is an additional language while others included the community in the school through providing yoga and jewelry-making classes on the premises after school times.

Democratic Values

When asked if democratic values were promoted in their school, both with the curriculum and extra-curricular activities 100% responded with a "Yes". The respondents were asked to rate the extent to which these democratic values were promoted in their schools and 87.5% stated that they were "Highly promoted" at their school, 6.3% said they were "Sometimes promoted" and 6.3% "Unsure" as to their promotion. The respondents were asked to elaborate on the types of activities that took place within the curricular and extra-curricular areas that promote democratic values at their school.

Activities that promoted democratic values

At the whole school level, respondents mentioned again how children's voice and input was welcomed through their Student Councils, Comenius council and Green Schools committee. Respondents also mentioned assemblies where the school principal listened to the views of the children in relation to the school.

Respondents stated that class voting was a common occurrence. Children were often involved in making group decisions and coming to a consensus. If an election or referendum was coming up, it was used as a learning opportunity. Students were involved in evaluations and collaborated in the direction their learning took. Children were also involved in determining procedures for classroom management and models of positive behaviour.

Democratic principles were also espoused through parental involvement in the school. Respondents mentioned how parents discussed the Equal Status Act with the student council. Teachers and parents met regularly to discuss the children's progress and parent feedback was requested during policy formation. Respondents mentioned how children and parents were consulted on Codes of Behaviour and Healthy Eating policies and how, policy groups were formed that included staff and parents working together on draft policies that were then sent to the Board of Management. Parents were also involved in choosing class outings and the drawing up of the school sports, arts, music and drama programmes.

Diversity and Difference

When asked to what extent diversity and differences were accepted in the school, 82.4% answered that they were fully accepted. 11.8% of respondents said that in their

school there was some acceptance while a further 5.9% were unsure. The respondents were then asked to outline the activities or practices that showed that diversity and differences were accepted and valued in their school.

Activities that promoted acceptance of Diversity and Difference

At the whole school level the respondents listed activities that showed that diversity and differences were accepted in their school. They spoke about explicit projects, such as "Show Racism the Red Card" the "Yellow Flag for Diversity" and "International Day" that were incorporated into school life. Certain schools also had weekly school assemblies where acceptance of difference was promoted.

Respondents also mentioned that acceptance of diversity and difference was acknowledged by the overall school ethos where attitudes of "Zero tolerance" towards disrespecting others were fostered and new pupils were warmly received and welcomed. They spoke of an "ethos of friendliness and respect" wherein all staff, teachers, caretakers, secretary etc. were open and friendly from the front door in. In terms of the school environment, respondents mentioned how positive displays and posters and photos of families were displayed that reflected and supported diversity.

The respondents stated that diversity and difference was promoted in class through the teaching of the Learn Together programme, which encourages learning on various belief systems and customs of other faiths. Parents were involved in this programme and took part in dress up events, food days and language days. As well as the "teaching" of acceptance of diversity and difference the children lived this acceptance through the inclusion and integration of children with a range of special educational needs in the mainstream class.

Parental involvement

The respondents were asked how often parents were involved in decisions regarding the academic content offered to students. The majority, 41.2% answered that parents were involved "Sometimes", while 23.5% answered "Rarely", with only 17.6% answering "Frequently" or "Never". When asked subsequently how often discussions took place between staff, parents and other community members with regard to curriculum design, the majority of respondents, 35.3% stated that these discussions took place "Rarely", while 29.4% said they happened "Sometimes", 23.5% stated that they "Never" happen, while 11.8% stated that they happened "Frequently". The

respondents were then asked to elaborate on the opportunities that exist within their school for parental involvement.

Activities that promoted parental involvement

Respondents stated that parents were involved in whole school events such as Intercultural Day, The Book Fair, School Fairs, Green School events, Concerts and Shows. Parents were also part of the Board of Management structure and so were involved in the overall running of the school. Some respondents also mentioned how parents at their school assisted with administrative duties and offered IT support and training to teachers and other staff members.

In some of the respondent schools, there was a Parent Rep for each class. Parents also volunteered within classes, offering help to the teacher and sharing specific skills and knowledge in the areas of music, religious education, science, art and Drama.

The respondents were asked to describe any forums or processes that existed to facilitate discussion about curriculum design and evaluation between school staff and parents/other adults in the community. The following were given as examples of these:

- Policy committees involving parents and teachers
- PTA invite visiting experts to give talks which are attended by parents and teachers
- Working groups established to work on issues e.g. working group on how to teach non-religion in the school
- Policies online and comments welcome, policies presented to Board of Management
- Surveys, Questionnaires, Info meetings and Training days.

5.4 Conclusion

The survey identified how certain inclusive practices and values were experienced in Educate Together contexts and its findings particularly in the area of parental involvement, diversity recognition and the practice of inclusive values echoed the findings concerning good practices in these areas that were highlighted during the Includ-ED project in the broader international and national contexts. The findings from those contexts were explored further to see how they were experienced in a

specific educational environment whose values seemed to closely match those of the Includ-ED project and from the perspective of teachers in that context. These findings were mapped on to Educate Together schools as they were deemed to be a suitable environment to see how they applied in a specific context. However, it must be noted that despite this survey being available to all teachers in the Educate Together sector, the response rate was only 30. The findings must be viewed in this context.

The findings outlined above highlighted how inclusive and exclusionary practices operated and applied in a range of European wide, national and specific contexts. This served to gradually narrow the focus of the research from international through national to local contexts. The next chapter will discuss the findings from the Case Study element of the research, which focused on such a local setting.

Chapter 6: Case Study findings

This research investigated how an element of the Irish education system, Educate Together, responds in its policies and practices to a diverse school-going population. The research was prompted by the researcher's personal and professional values and concerns as an educator working on a teacher training degree in a School of Education in an Irish university and by the demographic and consequent social changes experienced in Ireland over the last 20 years. The research was guided by and builds upon, the findings from a European research project, Includ-ED, details of which were outlined in previous chapters in this thesis.

This chapter seeks to determine how those findings applied in a number of Educate Together schools based in Dublin city, county and adjoining counties. The research was conducted using a Case Study approach, which involved conducting a series of interviews with Principals from these schools as well as with parents of children attending the schools. In addition, a number of professionals working in the area of education in diverse settings and in the area of Primary school teacher training as teacher trainers and trainee teachers were also interviewed.

Principals were initially chosen to participate in this research because it was felt that their position within the school would provide an overview of the practices and relationships that exist within and beyond the school that other agents within these contexts may not have been able to provide. The role of the Principal in Primary Schools in Ireland could be seen as one which attempts to bridge the gap between educational principles and philosophies and educational practices and this was no less the case in Educate Together.

It soon became apparent from the interviews that Principals felt that part of their role was to uphold the ethos within the schools. Other roles that the Principals were also responsible for included the management of teacher recruitment processes, curriculum implementation and evaluation, oversight of deficit in training provision for NQTs and existing staff, management of the relationship between the schools and the communities, the keepers of the flame and the advocates for the Educate Together approach (and sometimes in a critical fashion).

Parents of children attending Educate Together schools were included in the research for a number of reasons. Parents, in the first instance, are obviously key members of any primary school's stakeholder community and this is probably nowhere more

evident than in Educate Together schools. Educate Together owes its origins in part to parents taking an active role in establishing an alternative to traditional education provision in Ireland in the 70s and this activism still characterizes the movement today. Parents have had a strong input and involvement in the establishment of Educate Together schools and in their on-going management and development. Parents are also currently very active in attempts to establish Educate Together second level schools.

Additionally parents and parental involvement in Educate Together schools is a core part of its philosophy and is one of its espoused principles as articulated in the Educate Together charter which outlines a role for parents in realising a democratic, participative school experience: 'a critical element of this lies in the involvement of parents and guardians in the educational process itself. This is achieved through the provision of support for the teacher inside and outside the classroom and in providing educational activities that are not available to the school in the normal way' (Educate Together, 2012).

Parental involvement as a concept is clearly outlined in the Includ-ED research and in particular in its 5 types of parental involvement, which were outlined in chapter 5. Parental participation in the research was also reflective of one of the key postulates of the Critical Communicative Theory approach, which highlights the importance of including previously overlooked voices in research conducted in social settings.

The final group of interviewees was drawn from representatives of agencies and organisations involved directly or peripherally with education in diverse settings in Ireland. These people were chosen as it was felt that they would provide an overview from the perspective of professional practice and thought.

Employees of Educate Together, elements of whose work responsibilities dealt with areas related to this research were also interviewed to provide insights into the elements of teacher training provision and evaluation processes. Finally, two Primary School trainee teachers were interviewed to look at the training they received to work in diverse settings. Table 6.1 gives details of the schools involved and the roles of the people who participated in the research.

Table 6.1: School locations and interviewee role

Role	Interviewee profile	School location and number	Reference
Parent	Female	Adj Dublin County, 1	Parent 1
Parent	Female	Adj Dublin County, 2	Parent 2
Parent	Female	Adj Dublin County, 3	Parent 3
Parent	Female	Dublin City, 4	Parent 4
Parent	Male	Dublin City, 5	Parent 5
Education Professional 1	Female	Teacher Training	EP 1
Education Professional 2	Female	Teacher Training	EP 2
Trainee Teacher	Female	Teacher Training college	TT 1
Trainee Teacher	Female	Teacher Training college	TT 2
Principal	Female	Adj Dublin County, 3	Principal 1
Principal	Female	Dublin City, 6	Principal 2
Principal	Male	County Dublin, 7	Principal 3
Principal	Male	County Dublin, 8	Principal 4
Principal	Female	Dublin City, 9	Principal 5
Principal	Male	Dublin City, 10	Principal 6
Principal	Female	Dublin City, 5	Principal 7
D Principal	Male	Dublin City, 9	DP 1

Semi-structured interviews were used in the case study and allowed a number of other themes, in addition to those suggested by the Includ-ED themes, to emerge. These themes were sufficiently different from the Includ-ED themes to warrant further examination and as they emerged from the early interviews they were incorporated into and explored in the later interviews. These themes included:

- **Managing and evaluating ethos in such a values driven education provision**
- **The role of the Principal in Educate Together schools**
- **Teacher training provision**

This process of engaging with emerging themes is a common occurrence when conducting qualitative research and analysis in this type of research can involve what Berkowitz (1997, p4-2) calls an 'iterative set of processes'. The other emerging themes that arose from this 'iterative set of processes' will also be discussed.

As Case Study was used as the methodological framework for the research, the data analysis was informed by Cresswell's (2007) approach to data analysis in Case

Studies combined with elements of a Grounded Theory approach to analysis (without of course adopting Grounded Theory as the research methodology). The data was also considered in terms of Banks' five dimensions of Multicultural education (2011). Banks argues that such a multi-dimensional approach reflects the diversity found in the classroom and in broader societal contexts. These dimensions, which were outlined in more detail in the Literature review chapter, are concerned with Content Integration; The Knowledge Construction Process; Prejudice Reduction; the development of an Equity Pedagogy and the creation of an Empowering School Culture and Social Structure (Banks, 2011).

As outlined in chapter 4 the data from the interviews was reduced and organized into a number of sub-themes, themes and categories. A range of categories emerged from the data and these contained just under 100 of these sub-themes, all of which were interesting and relevant but it is not possible to discuss and develop all of these categories and their sub-themes within the scope of this piece of research (see Appendix C for details of the Categories which emerged from the data). As a result, a decision was made to outline and discuss what were considered to be the most relevant of these categories to the research question and these, along with their themes and sub-themes, are presented below. The categories that emerged from the data that will be discussed in the remaining chapters are:

1: **Curriculum** (the themes and sub-themes from this category will be outlined and discussed in section 7.1)

2: **Teacher Training** and Continuing Professional Development (CPD). The themes and sub-themes from this category will be outlined and discussed in section 7.4.

Each of these categories contained a large number of themes and sub-themes and these will now be outlined and discussed in this chapter.

Throughout this chapter, reference will be made to interviews with the research participants.

6.1 Curriculum

The first category from the data to be considered is Curriculum. Curriculum in its many manifestations has been a common thread through this research. The following themes in table 6.2 fall under the category of Curriculum and each one of these and

the sub-themes found within them will be discussed in subsequent sections of this chapter.

Table 6.2: Category of Curriculum & attendant themes and sub-themes

Category	Theme	Sub-theme
Curriculum	*Curriculum as Reproductive and Transformative Agent in Society*	The influence of the State and other agencies on education provision
		The denominational orientation of teacher training.
Curriculum	*Ethos*	Parental choices and parental/community involvement
		The role and responsibilities of the Principal in Educate Together schools and the possible conflict between Educate Together's principles and practices
		The Ethical core curriculum and how it is taught
		The evaluation of the Learn Together curriculum (internal to the school) The evaluation of the Learn Together curriculum particularly the self-evaluation process initiated by Educate Together head office. The responsibilities and the role of the Principal in this regard.
Curriculum	*Diversity in the Curriculum*	How the official curriculum reflects the diversity in Irish society
		The values and skills required to teach in diverse settings
		Whether and how the teaching staff should reflect the diverse school population
		The intercultural classroom
		The benefits and challenges presented to the whole school population of having a diverse school/ethos.

In this section of the findings chapter concerning Curriculum as a reproductive and a transformative agent in society, the sub-themes relating to the influence of the state and other agencies on education provision in Ireland, and the denominational perspective of the Colleges of Education, will be considered together for the purposes of creating a more coherent and clearer narrative flow.

A discussion of Curriculum from a global perspective is perhaps a logical point from where to begin this section. Much has been written already about this subject in the literature so this section will be necessarily brief and will serve only to set a context within which the Educate Together curriculum can be discussed.

The section following this on Ethos will look at how some of these more global concerns and understandings of Curriculum are mediated in elements of the participating Educate Together schools' hidden curriculum and in their pedagogical practices and the section on diversity in the Curriculum will look at the nexus of ethos and practice in curriculum terms.

This chapter will trace a journey from macro through to micro contexts all the while taking in to consideration the Includ-ED perspective and the perspective of the various actors in the research process.

6.1.1 Curriculum as a Reproductive and Transformative Agent in Society

Broadly speaking, much of the literature on Curriculum concerns two different but related themes. The first would concern the technical aspects of curriculum referred to earlier in the text i.e. *how* to teach *what* to *whom*. The other dominant theme in the literature on Curriculum could be said to deal with the relationship between society and school, the constant interplay between the requirements placed by a society on its education system and the role played by schools in fulfilling these requirements.

The Irish State sees a very clear role for itself in the provision of education and what this education is meant to achieve in societal terms:

> The State's role in education arises as part of its overall concern to achieve economic prosperity, social well-being and a good quality of life within a democratically structured society. This concern affirms fundamental human values and confers on the State a responsibility to protect the rights of individuals and to safeguard the common good. Education is a right for each individual and a means to enhancing well-being and quality of life for the whole of society' (Charting Our Education Future: White Paper on Education (1995, P.4)

O'Brien and O'Fathaigh (2005, p.7) write about this from another perspective but which also underlines the claims made by the Includ-ED research:

> Thus, as many commentators note, education reflects and reinforces established patterns of social and cultural reproduction (e.g. Bernstein: 1977, Apple: 1982a, 1982b, Dale: 1989, Ball: 1990a, 1990b). Our education system both mirrors and produces notions of 'advantage' and 'disadvantage'. The latter concept is reflected in the connection between educational underachievement, conditions of poverty and reduced life chances.

The Irish Department of Education and Skills speaks about the relationship between society and education in its Guidelines on Intercultural Education (NCCA, 2005; NCCA, 2006). The guidelines, which were issued to all primary and secondary schools in Ireland, state that:

> Education not only reflects society but also influences its development. As such, schools have a role to play in the development of an intercultural society…an intercultural education is valuable to all children in equipping them to participate in an increasingly diverse society. Equally, an education, which is based on only one culture, will be less likely to develop these capacities in children (NCCA, 2005, p.3).

This is echoed in the Includ-ED material with regard to the value, role and relevance of education in general (as both a transformative and a reproductive agent) and intercultural education in particular, in increasingly diverse societies (Includ-ED, 2007(a).

Educate Together would regard itself as being located at the centre of this ongoing debate in Curriculum terms and would have particular views of the type of society it would like to foster and the ways in which its practices and policies can contribute to this. With regard to the role that Educate Together schools play in creating a particular type of society McCutcheon (2009, pp.176, 177) speaks about the complex and multi-layered nature of this in today's Ireland and the role played by the Principal in this process:

> For many ethnic minorities with only a foothold in Irish society and no experience of Irish education, the school Principal can be the very public face of the education system specifically, and the State, generally. This leaves the Principal in a very powerful but complex situation. On one hand positive interaction between the Principal and these families can succeed in bringing them into Irish society in a grounded and meaningful way…building a multicultural society based on understandings of the shared fate of the school and the common ground of robust citizenship could be hugely important for the future integration of these families into Irish society in terms that are equal and just…on the other hand, negative interaction between the Principal and these families could serve to alienate and reject them from the society in which they are now living.

McCutcheon's experiences serve as an example of the range of responsibilities that the Principal is expected to discharge and the sensitive and complicated contexts within which these take place. In addition to facilitating the involvement of migrant parents in this instance into the local school community and classroom activities this Principal also locates this activity within the broader societal context of building a multicultural society and a robust citizenship. This rhymes with observations made by a number of Principals interviewed during the course of this research. Principals see their role as being responsible for leading schools that are located at what Devine calls 'the coalface of dealing with the shifting realities of life' (2005, p.52). An example of this understanding of a greater, wider social responsibility that the school should have and that the Principal would be responsible for ensuring takes place would be Principal 4's suggestion that:

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the state's educational system should be provided directly by the state for the purposes of the state, for the purposes of the republic. Now, I would think that there should be, within that, room for the liberal notion of people being able to choose some aspects of their child's obligatory education to cater for either, their individual freedoms or group freedoms, but the bottom line, it should be working from a platform of state provision where the agenda of the state in regard to the important issues of justice and equality should be the central core of the free and obligatory education system of the country (Principal 4, page 9, lines 39-45).

However, he went on to speak about the tensions within the state Curriculum where it was felt that:

the national curriculum, even though it appears to be, on the front of it… reasonably denominational free…I think that even the notion…that religious education can't even be boxed into a period of time in the school day, the fact is that religious education can happen throughout the school day and inform each of the particular areas within it. I feel that that is unsatisfactory from a republic and state perspective (Principal 4, page 11, lines 53-55; page 12, lines 1-3).

This issue goes to the heart of one of the reasons why Educate Together was established beginning with the Dalkey School project in 1975. Hyland (1996), writing about the events that led to this refers to the 1971 curriculum guidelines which state that 'all schools were expected to offer an integrated curriculum where religious and secular instruction would be integrated…(and) even if religious instruction were separately timetabled, it could be assumed that a specifically denominational ethos would "permeate the school day" (Hyland, 1996, p.5).

This led to a situation where, according to Mulcahy (2002) 'the concept of integrating all religious and secular subjects as part of the school ethos in 1971 effectively meant that all primary schools were denominational in ethos'.

It could be argued perhaps that the strong denominational forces that prevailed at that time are still in evidence today in many areas of the Irish Education system including the area of Teacher Training. Principal 4 felt that Teacher Training takes place in institutions, which reflect and promote a particular denominational view and that this has been the case since the foundation of the State:

Throughout teacher education in Ireland, since the arrival of the Free State, the notion that teacher training colleges should be propagandising and making teachers ready for teaching in a school that is going to culturally transform the Irish population, the post-colonial Irish population into a mythological Irish identity that has got to do with Catholicism, Gaelic games, Irish language and

a few other things around that and there is a hangover of that in all the Irish teacher training colleges (Principal 4, page 12, lines 47-52).

Irwin (2009) writing about interculturalism and schooling in Ireland also refers to how:

> philosophical thinking regarding education within the Colleges of Education still comes under the remit of a denominational ethos...this structure seems at odds with a growing diversity within the population and indeed, within the primary school sector (Irwin, 2009, p.na).

An interviewee working in Initial Teacher Education, when answering a question on how the current state Curriculum responds to a diverse school population, claims that those responsible for devising and developing the Curriculum are concerned with maintaining the conditions outlined above *'I think that the curriculum developers in Ireland are probably very much coming from the status quo…their investment is in keeping things as they are so there has been no radical shake-up of the curriculum,* (EP 1, page 3, lines 32-35).

All of the Principals involved in this research had experience of working in the traditional, denominational sector and had for various reasons ended up working in the Educate Together sector. It is important to highlight that in the main they were not overly critical of the traditional sector and cited the positive aspects of the various curriculum developments that took place in the early 70s and late 90s in the Irish primary sector. However, some Principals also felt that the model used by Educate Together was perhaps more suited to the demands of the current society:

> I think they (Curriculum designers) have made some efforts towards meeting the needs of intercultural education. But, it wouldn't be, I don't think, quite adequate. That is my view from my experience of working both in the national schools and working in Educate Together, I feel the Educate Together model is better, it facilitates the intercultural needs better. I would be obviously biased in this but my experience would tell me, I think it is the model best suited to meet the needs of the new influx of all our multi-culture, the different cultures, the different religions, the different ethnic groups who have come into Ireland. I think we present that option to parents to choose (Principal 1, page 1, line 50-55; page 2, line 1-2).

As this research has referred to on a number of occasions, the role and involvement of parents in their children's education can be seen to make a positive contribution to the children and the communities they live in. Parents are committed to and attracted by Educate Together's ethos and practices and they maintain clear ideas about why they want their children to attend these schools and also how this type of educational

experience can contribute to society. One parent spoke about how she would like to see the Educate Together model applied across the education system in Ireland as it offers children opportunities to learn about and experience diversity:

> Just the way the children learn about different things and they learn to respect different cultures, religions in a positive manner. And to be confident in their own beliefs as well. Or where they come from. So I would like to see that in every school in Ireland. I think schools in general have a very important role in that and the ethical curriculum that Educate Together have, is quite a model for it, I would say (Parent 2, page 9, lines 48-52).

She also suggested that education in general and Educate Together in particular have a positive role to play in helping to create and respond positively to a diverse society:

> It is interesting now because there is so many children from different cultures and religions all over Ireland so, you know, every school is affected by it now. I suppose, until recently, a lot of schools were very monocultural…Educate Together certainly has a role there because they have so much experience. And, I think, the ethical curriculum, the Learn Together curriculum, is brilliant (Parent 2, page 9, lines 40-44).

The Council of Europe, in its Resolution of the Council on the response of educational systems to the problems of racism and xenophobia stresses the important role that education plays in addressing these issues: 'one measure of the quality of educational systems in a pluralist society is their ability to facilitate the social integration of their pupils and students' (Council of Europe, 1995, pp.1-3) and it would appear that Educate Together feels that it makes a positive contribution to that effort. However in a recent research project into how racism is tackled in Irish education contexts and referred to earlier in this text, Audrey Bryan, writing in 2009, sounds a critical note when she speaks about the difficulties presented in contexts where the 'discourse of interculturalism which permeates the local level of the school, is informed by broader political discourses which emanate from the field of national politics' (2009, p.298). Her research attempts to 'convey the extent to which the discourse of interculturalism intersects with, and is continuously framed, in nationalistic terms, and consider the 'othering' effect of this nationalist argumentation for racialised minorities living in Ireland' (ibid, p.298). She goes on to suggest that intercultural education in Irish contexts has:

> the effect of abnormalising diversity and reinforcing the 'otherness' of minority students, of misrepresenting or ignoring their cultural identities, and of reinforcing erroneous assumptions about 'race', racism and the nature of difference more generally. It is in this sense that I suggest that intercultural

education is, in fact, more likely to reproduce, rather than contest racism and racist ideologies (Bryan, 2009, p.298).

The inherent conflict between the apparently egalitarian aims of Intercultural education and the actual practice in Irish contexts while not a subject that was ever referred to directly in the interviews conducted during this research did however feature indirectly on a number of occasions and will be included in this chapter. It is also a theme that might usefully be returned to in future research in this area.

There were also a number of occasions where interviewees spoke about the obvious disjuncture between the espoused aims and principles of Educate Together (for example its promotion of democratic and inclusive practices) and the management of these schools in practical terms and this tension will be discussed in the section on Principals further on in this text. Incidentally, this conflict between the espoused and the enacted curriculums features quite prominently in the literature on Curriculum (e.g. see Stenhouse 1975).

6.1.2 Conclusion to Curriculum as a Reproductive and Transformative Agent in Society

There is an abundance of literature dealing with the relationship between school and society. The entire Includ-ED project for example is based around the idea that education acts in a reproductive and a transformative capacity in society. Educate Together as a movement owes its origins in part to the response of parents to the prevailing school system in the late 60s and early 70s in Ireland and the schools, which operate within a particular values framework, attempt through their practice and ethos, to create a democratic, participative environment with the child at its centre. Educate Together claims that it tries to reflect an increasingly pluralist and diverse society, and to foster the development of a particular view of society through the enactment of its ethos. How effective Educate Together is in promoting such a view of society is beyond the scope of this research. What can be said however is that its attempts to do so are limited by a number of factors. The first concerns the amount of Educate Together schools in Ireland and their locations. There are approximately 3,200 primary schools operating in the Republic of Ireland. There are currently only 60 Educate Together schools mainly based in large urban areas and in only 19 of the 26 counties in the Republic. The schools represent just over 2% of the total number of Primary schools in Ireland. Additionally, Educate Together has only begun to feature

at second level with plans to open three secondary schools in 2014. While it intends to open more second level schools over the coming years it will be quite a considerable time before it becomes even a marginal provider in this sector. This is another factor, which must be taken into account when considering the broader societal influence of Educate Together.

It is clear from the literature and communications that emanate from Educate Together and from the interviews with various stakeholders conducted during this research that the movement's ethos is pivotal to the identity and operation of the schools and it permeates all of the pedagogical approaches and relationships within and beyond the school. The ways in which that ethos is understood, practiced and evaluated and the extent to which the Educate Together schools, which participated in this research, manage to abide by these principles will now be discussed.

6.2 Ethos

There are a number of sub-themes in the data that fall under the general theme of Ethos. Some of these sub-themes were instances of both Includ-ED findings and emerging themes.

Before going on to look at these sub-themes it would be important to briefly look at the concept of 'Ethos' and how it is understood and practiced in educational contexts generally. Ethos, in these contexts, can be described as a set of values that permeate the school space and community and which inform how people behave and interact and is, according to Norman, 'the atmosphere that emerges from the interaction of a number of aspects of school life, including teaching and learning, management and leadership, the use of images and symbol, rituals and practices, as well as goals and expectations' (Norman 2003, pp.2-3). Educate Together, in its ethos self-evaluation for schools process documentation suggests that ethos of a school

> essentially describes its spirit and character. When we talk about Ethos we refer to both the taught Ethos and the lived Ethos. The taught Ethos is mainly covered by the Ethical Education Programme (Learn Together Curriculum in most schools). The lived Ethos refers to elements such as the atmosphere, environment, relationships, leaderships, supports, culture and attitudes (Educate Together 2011, p.43).

Ethos, or what Leeman (2003) calls 'school climate', can he claims, have a strong influence on the development of those skills that are necessary for living in a diverse society. He suggests that there are a number of aspects involved in creating such a

climate and these would include common values among school staff, the fostering of an atmosphere of trust, a fair and open conflict resolution process, active involvement of the students in the running of the school and in the schools pedagogical processes, a diverse school going population with opportunities for contact between different groups, cooperative learning in such diverse groups and a rejection of racism and discrimination (ibid, pp.37, 38).

These values are not dissimilar to the range of values spoken about by parents and Principals during this research as being central to Educate Together's work and ethos and examples of this will be seen throughout this section. Educate Together's ethos and values are underpinned by its Charter, which affirms the right to an education for children of all social, religious and cultural backgrounds, the entitlement of parents to actively participate in those decisions that affect their children's education, that multi-denominational schools should be treated like all other schools operating in the Irish education system and that the state should take into account the identity of such schools in policy matters affecting the establishment of schools (Educate Together, 2012).

During this research the ethos or elements of it were cited as reasons for some parents choosing to send their children to Educate Together schools and why, in some cases, Principals were committed to their work. All of the Principals who were interviewed, showed an understanding of the principles which informed the ethos, why these were important, how teachers needed to be trained in the area of the Educate Together ethos and how the implementation of such an ethos needed to be continuously evaluated and reflected upon. Principal 5 offered that *'Educate Together school(s) run on the Learn Together programme and so on. But it actually permeates every part of what we do'* (Principal 5, page 2, lines 21-22) and she would contend that *'the ethos of the school would fundamentally be the most important thing in my opinion'* (Principal 5, page 5, lines 25-26). Parents were also generally aware of and knowledgeable about the ethos of the schools and referred to it throughout the interviews:

> The big thing for me is the fact that the Educate Together schools work hard to go according to the motto which is 'learn together to live together' so they do a lot (to) help children to know that the child that is sitting beside them is maybe different to them in many respects but they can coexist in a peaceful way or in a way that respects both of their differences and allows them to get on together (Parent 3, page 2, lines 42-46).

Another parent commented that in her school *'so many people in that school choose that school for the ethos'* (Parent 2, page 10, lines 43-44) and that this shared understanding was a benefit to the school community when it came to tackling problems that arose in the school.

Preserving the ethos takes place at all levels of the schools operations and was regarded by the Principals as one of their chief responsibilities. Principal 4 states that even when hiring new teaching staff that:

> I do feel that you also do need to find teachers who have made some personal efforts both in college and perhaps outside of college to come to understandings of say, something like educational disadvantage that is not from the notion of charity towards people who are education disadvantaged but perhaps have no right to expect it (Principal 4, page 13, lines 5-9).

The ways in which the ethos is given voice in the schools were quite varied and differed from school to school. Principal 5 captures the essence of it here:

> We would say we are a co-educational child-centred, multi-denominational democratically run school. Those would be the four principles of Educate Together schools and in that then, within the multi-denominational strand in the school, we would integrate the ethical curriculum, which is the Learn Together curriculum, which has four strands. Ethics and the environment, moral and spiritual, equality and justice and belief systems. And the belief systems would be where the multi-cultural aspects would come in…(Principal 5, page 1, lines 44-49).

This Principal said that the school held an assembly every fortnight and that *'each assembly would (be) geared around an aspect of an implementation of part of the ethos and a part of the curriculum'* (Principal 5, page 2, lines 30-31).

The same respondent also went on to outline how the child lies at the heart of the Educate Together ethos, the role, relevance and eminence of parental involvement and how all of the schools activities are focused on and through a democratic ideal:

> Ok, the general principles of the Educate Together school is child-centred. Everything that is done in the school is centred around what's best for children. Then it's democratically run in its make up...the parents are involved in a great part of the schooling...there would be a student council in the school...democracy would have a big part to play in our school and we would teach about democracy (Principal 5, page 2, line 4-9).

This focus on ethos, its centrality to the work of the school and the importance of ensuring that the practices that give life to it are maintained is also commented on by another Principal:

I would say, too, as well, that over the years, we have recruited teachers, who, if you like, share a very big understanding of the challenging opportunities of teaching in a multi-cultural school. Having experience of doing so or even if they haven't got experience of doing so, have a disposition that is well thought out to doing so…I have given a lot of attention to things such as that…through my own studies…we have a parent body who are extremely willing to be involved in those collaborative processes. I mean, even the Board of Management who have an expectation that those…take place and we have invited ourselves and have established partnerships with outside agencies who also provide both the stimulus and catalyst and know-how as well (Principal 4, page 2, line 44-54).

This Principal's approach to the many elements involved in leading an Educate Together school was not untypical of the other Principals interviewed during this research. He spoke about the importance of enacting the principles upon which Educate Together was predicated and the importance of continuous evaluation of these processes. He also spoke about the value to the school of a commitment to continuous professional development and he understood the complex relationship between Educate Together schools and the emergence of a diverse and pluralist society. However, it would appear from the interviews that there are a number of concerns with regard to upholding and maintaining the ethos in the schools involved in this research. To begin with, ethos and values are intangible and abstract notions about which it can be difficult to arrive at consensus or understanding. In Educate Together schools these difficulties are exacerbated by the absence of dedicated courses on intercultural education on initial teacher education programmes and the denominational nature of the teacher training colleges in Ireland. This results in new teachers being unfamiliar with the approaches used in Educate Together schools and into which they bring values which are informed by the dominant, traditional narratives in society, narratives which may not be in step with the recent changes which have taken place in Ireland. Principal 7 referred to this and to the measures that were put on place to support newly qualified teachers

at each one of our staff meetings we have explored all the resources and all the key aspects of each strand so we have taken over 4 months, kind of an in-service within our own school to, obviously because teachers haven't had the training…so they are just getting familiar with this although they have come to the school for various reasons but some are more interested than others and some come because we are an Educate Together school. Certainly there would be one or two who wouldn't espouse the Educate Together model fully. So eventually they would probably move on because it doesn't sit as nicely with them as they would like, perhaps. And from their experience in the past

or their upbringing, they would have issues probably with openness, the parental involvement at times, it gets to be a little bit more than they would be used to in the past. So that could be an issue for them or the fact that there isn't a faith formation within the school day (Principal 7, page 2, line 24-35).

Principals also spoke about how it was not always possible at an interview to determine the level of understanding, awareness of or commitment to the principles underpinning provision in Educate Together schools.

Somebody who applies for an Educate Together school you're hoping in their opening letter there's going to be some sense that they've got a commitment …the presentation thing is another aspect of it, the interview itself and you're hoping through those very crude mechanisms that you'll get some notion that there might be a commitment here. It's not fool proof and when you get them into the system most of them really want you to work with them to help them develop in this regard and we certainly want to do that but it's a little bit ad hoc (Principal 6, page 4, lines 47-54).

What Principal 6 refers to as an 'ad hoc' process with regard to the relationship between teacher recruitment, ongoing professional development and maintaining the ethos was also referred to by a number of other Principals. They felt that trying to manage this difficult process went to the heart of the relationship between Principal and teacher. The Principals interviewed during this research felt that while they were responsible for articulating the ethos to the outside world, the individual teacher was ultimately responsible for ensuring that such an ethos was maintained in the classroom. Principals spoke about a number of measures they had taken to try to maintain the visibility of the ethos such as for example moderating the weekly school assembly of pupils and staff where themes relating to the core curriculum were discussed, but they also felt that it was not possible for obvious reasons for Principals to be able to see in to every classroom or to observe all of the interactions between teachers and pupils that happened on a typical school day.

Principals spoke about the amount of trust involved in the relationship between the Principal and the teacher in their respective schools and that teacher professionalism and integrity were central to the process of upholding the principles of Educate Together. The link between initial training, continuous, in-service development and recruitment of teachers would appear to be critical to the successful enactment of such ethos driven process's as operate in Educate Together schools and the shortcomings highlighted by all of the Principals particularly in these areas would be a cause for concern and should be addressed at a broader organisational level. It would be

important to consider how Educate Together might develop mechanisms to ensure that teachers had a greater involvement and sense of ownership with regards to how ethos was practiced in the schools. The impression given by some of the respondents in the research was that in some cases, because of the reasons outlined above regarding teacher preparation and training, Principals were reluctant or unable to yield some of that control to teachers. Principal 1 spoke about the difficulties in the nuanced nature of the relationship between teacher and principal

> And we are told we have to go into classrooms now. And it is part of teachers' de-privatisation of practice. Each teacher used to have their own individual little republic. I don't think that is a good thing. I think there has to be a balance. I don't think necessarily, all schools decide well this is our way of doing this and everyone must do it identically. I do think there is a space and an argument for children being exposed to a range of teachers with their range of different ways of doing things…but I don't think they should have completely autonomous republics (Principal 1, page 11, line 1-7)

Principal 1 also spoke about the sectoral expectations regarding the role and professional development of Principals and the practical issues involved in monitoring and managing teachers in this regard

> …(the Principals representative body)…are trying to push Principals into the idea where you have to sign off on teachers standards for their increments…I wouldn't like to see that coming in but I don't think you can have a cop-out either and say 'oh that's the teachers own decision'. It has to be collaborative. We are obliged, we have to collaborate now and to plan with our notes. I'm a little bit of a coward in it. Because I do, I would hate people looking over my shoulder. When I was teaching I used to hate people looking over my shoulder…
> (Principal 1, page 11, line 16-31)

The role and responsibilities of Principals in this regard would also need to be considered at a central organisational level and it would be helpful if these were supported by clearer guidance and instruction from Educate Together. A clear impression was given during the interviews with Principals that the levels of support from the Educate Together organisation in matters of this kind was inconsistent.

Another important feature of the Educate Together School movement is the emphasis and values placed on the role and involvement of parents. Much of the Educate Together literature focuses on the importance of parental involvement in the life of the schools and this also featured quite prominently in the research and will be discussed in the next section.

6.2.1 Parental Choices and Parental/Community Involvement

This section will look at two key ideas that emerged from the Includ-ED research and which also featured quite prominently in the school settings. These concerned the schools' involvement with the local community and the relationship between the school and the parents i.e. parental involvement.

Parental involvement in schools and the advantages that this brings to individual students and to the broader school community is a key feature of the Includ-ED research and also represents one of the themes that were explored in this current research. Overall the Includ-ED findings on parental and community involvement suggested that:

> The active and participative role of the families and the community in decision-making processes is directly related to positive academic results for learners. The democratic organisation of schools contributes towards this kind of participation.
>
> The promotion of success at school for children belonging to vulnerable groups is largely determined by the relationship established between the school and their family members.
>
> If participation is based on dialogue and equal relationships between school staff, families and other community members, it is consolidated and contributes towards the improvement of community learning and to the transformation of the environment (Includ-ED, 2007(a), p.33).

Educate Together also regards parental involvement and engagement with the local and broader communities as central elements of its ethos in action. Principal 4 claims that the encouragement and reality of high levels of parental involvement in the school is *'prompted by our ethos and prompted by an instinctive understanding that the closer the parents are involved in the education of their children, the better quality the education we'll see'* (Principal 4, page 7, lines 14-16) and that this involvement could also be traced back to that Principal's understanding of the Constitutional underpinning of parental involvement in the child's education: *'I suppose my understanding of education would be, now it is also in the Constitution, you know…(that) the parents are the primary educators of their children'* (Principal 4, page 7, lines 16-18). Educate Together encourages and facilitates parental involvement in its schools in a range of activities such as participation in classroom activities; organising of extra-curricular activities; educational support activities such as paired reading; help with the artistic, musical, dramatic, linguistic or science and

technology programmes and support in the delivery of the ethical curriculum; support in the maintenance of the school building and serving on Boards of Management and other school committees (Educate Together, 2012). Some of these were reflected in the topics raised by parents and principals during the interviews. In addition the following were also discussed: parental involvement in curriculum evaluation, parents as positive role models and parental involvement as a demonstration of a 'value in action'.

Parental involvement was encouraged in all of the schools involved in this research and there were many examples of how this was facilitated and appreciated by parents. One parent remarked on how this happens *'I think in our school the principal has created a very open climate where people are allowed to integrate and participate as much as they want. And that means you can give what you can to the school and to an extent, you can take if you want to take as well* (Parent 3, page 3, lines 54-55; page 4, lines1-2). Another spoke about the ease of access to her child's school *'well, the fact that you can just walk in. I mean, you can go in as a parent...you do notice that the parents are very involved and help out or might be doing things'* (Parent 2, page 8, 32-35). Parent 5 spoke about the level of parental involvement in his child's school and about some of the possible drawbacks to this: *'I'd say (parental involvement) in our school (is) high. Very little decisions get made without parent involvement'* (Parent 5, page 4, lines 22-23); this parent went on to say that because of this involvement that:

> things take a lot longer because they have to go through systems. It's a consultation thing but I think the best way is those newsletters offer transparency so people know things are coming along down the line. There are people who don't like it and they don't want that kind of involvement. People can opt out (Parent 5, page 4, lines 27-30).

Principal 5 outlines how this participation would happen: *'so, how do parents get involved? Every which way...the school would drive it, it is part of the underlying ethos of the school...I suppose I, as principal of the school, would encourage it greatly'* (Principal 5, page 9, lines 28-31). This Principal goes on to outline the various ways this was encouraged not only in school activities like for example participating in assemblies but also in the management structure of the school:

> The assemblies would revolve around the ethos, always. So, that is a fundamental part of the ethos being implemented to its fullest. In all the schools involved in this research, the parents are involved in policymaking in the school and procedural aspects of the school through the board of

management, through the parent representatives (Principal 5, page 9, lines 36-39).

This is mentioned by a parent in another of the schools who spoke about how parents were encouraged on a regular basis to get involved in the Board and the Management structure (Parent 5, page 4, lines 8-9).

Principal 4 spoke about the ways he tried to encourage and develop parental involvement through an open door policy where parents can come in to the school at any time, *through formal parent-teacher meetings, through meetings between staff where parents issues are raised and dealt with, through the development of a parents association and through a number of initiatives which involve parents working in the class assisting in the teaching process* (Principal 4, page 8, lines 12-35). All of the Principals and parents spoke about the high level and quality of parental involvement in the life of the school and how important this relationship was to their children's academic and social development.

Other practical examples of parental involvement in one of the schools participating in this research include a range of activities where *'parents would be involved in after school sports, they help with literacy in the mornings, they sit outside classrooms and they do reading with some children in the morning. They take little groups of children and help with the gardening project'* (Principal 5, page 9, lines 42 to 46).

The Includ-ED findings regarding the value to the child's learning that occurs when the school and the community have a dynamic democratic relationship (Includ-ED, 2007(a), p.4; 2007(b), p.23) is given expression in the active facilitation of parental involvement in the Educate Together schools, which took part in this research.

This relationship between the school, the home and the child was remarked upon by one of the Principals who spoke about how:

> we are all partners in education and it works on a triangulated basis of home, school and staff: so child, we have staff, parents and it doesn't work effectively if you take one of those out of it...the way I look at it, we borrow children for the time we have them (Principal 5, page 10, lines 13-16).

Parents were also aware of this set of relationships when deciding to send their children to Educate Together schools. They spoke about how the encouragement of meaningful parental participation was a manifestation of Educate Together's commitment to one of its core principles and was also something that attracted these parents to the schools in the first place. Other aspects of Educate Together's ethos and

practice informed parents' decisions to send their children to the schools. For example, some parents stressed the multi denominational aspect of Educate Together as being a deciding factor in sending their children to Educate Together Schools particularly in regard to their own current non-faith or because of negative religion-based school experiences of their own:

> it is multidenominational, non-denominational, we are a non-religious family, so I didn't want to have to put my children through the normal schooling system where they might have to be moved out of the classroom if there was religious instruction going on…I like the whole (approach) to teaching, the integrated curriculum and the way they regard the children as key players in their own learning (Parent 2, page 1, lines 42-45).

Each of the parents interviewed also cited a number of positive reasons for choosing Educate Together such as respect for diversity and experience of and respect for 'otherness',

> the big thing for me is the fact that the schools work hard to go according to the motto which is learn together to live together' so they do a lot to help children to know that the child that is sitting beside them is maybe different to them in many respects but they can coexist…in a way that respects both of their differences and allows them to get on together (Parent 3, page 2, lines 42-46).

In most cases it was a combination of (generally negative) faith-based and (in all cases positive) curriculum-based reasons:

> so then I started looking for an alternative which is when I heard about Educate Together and…I became deeply entrenched in the ethos … originally it was literally as an alternative to other schools and then the more I knew about Educate Together, the more involved in it (I became) (Parent 1, page 1, lines 55; page 2, 1-9).

Others mentioned the concept of inclusion as being something that made Educate Together an attractive destination for their children. In answer to a question about what was it about Educate Together schools that made them more appealing than traditional schooling Parent 1 responded:

> in a nutshell–inclusivity. They are very inclusive so, I mean, it's okay to be different, and everybody's different and that's brilliant and we should celebrate the difference and everyone should be equal without making an emphasis on it. And then, as well, for me, mainly in the teaching of it and the implementation of it is the curiosity, I think, children are encouraged to be curious as opposed to being told to stop thinking that way or this is what you need to learn… I think Educate Together encourages people, who are, by their

nature, critical thinkers' (Parent 1, page 3, lines 2-8; line 25-26).

For other parents it was a mixture of the co-educational and non-Catholic nature of Educate Together schools that they wanted their children to experience:

> we did want them to go to a co-ed school, that was very important to us but predominantly we chose it because we didn't want them to go to a Catholic school…we didn't want to go down the road of communion and all that so the fact that it was a multi-denominational school, was what really appealed to us (Parent 4, page 3, lines 43-47).

One parent spoke of his personal experience of a religious based education and how that combined with the appeal of the Educate Together ethos were factors in his decision to send his child to an Educate Together school: *'having an idea of what the curriculum that Educate Together had helped devise together, sort of, collectively and looking at the ethical curriculum, I really liked the sound of what and how they were going to deliver the national curriculum'* (Parent 5, page 2, lines 32-34)…*initially, it was about the religious thing. I didn't want one experience but if there had been other opportunities, I probably would have looked at those too but there wasn't'* (Parent 5, page 9, lines 28-30).

The same parent also spoke about this from the perspective of his professional experience and understanding as a teacher educator:

> I suppose, my professional experience had brought me into contact with a lot of primary schools…so I got a sense of what they were like…and I wasn't necessarily turned off by any of those experiences but there was still just one way and deliberately within their manifesto their mission and the way they are governed, their focusing on one particular religion and one way of looking at the world through that religious lens (Parent 5, page 3, lines 2-9).

6.2.2 Factors influencing parental choice

Recent research by the Irish Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI), into school sector variation in Primary Schools in Ireland suggests that parental choice with regards to schooling is a complex and contested arena. School choice, they argue, is made on the basis of awareness of alternatives, evaluation of such alternatives and access. Socio-economic background and educational experience of parents have a bearing on such choices and because of these factors middle class parents enjoy an advantage over low income and minority families. The ESRI contends that research shows that middle class families are more likely to be able to negotiate their way in what they regard as the mainly middle class structure of the

school system (Darmody et al, 2012, p.11) and that in Ireland parents choose schools after consideration of a combination of factors such as academic results, location and ethos and this would be in keeping with the findings in this research (Darmody et al, ibid).

The factors influencing parents in choosing Educate Together schools are also worth considering in the light of relationships between the school and its local community. According to some of the Principals involved in the research the very elements that make Educate Together attractive such as its apparent multi-denominational, inclusive and democratic nature can also serve to increase the distance between the school and its immediate community. Because some parents are attracted by these principles as opposed to making their choice of school on the basis of proximity and convenience this can result in a school-going population being drawn from outside the local community within which the school is located. This can lead to what one of the interviewees regards as a sense of disconnection between the school and its immediate community and this can serve to create a burden on the schools in their attempts to integrate into new and existing communities.

> Well, I suppose it is a choice school so it creates its own little difficulties for example, for any events we are not a local school so a lot of the children have to be driven to school, so you don't have that sense of community as much because, ok, some kids, they have neighbours living nearby and families living nearby but a lot of the kids they don't have anybody from the class living nearby, which is a shame really, while, if you go to the local national school, I'm sure they have loads of kids from their estate in the same class (DP 1, page 3, line 58-63).

It is also worth considering that some parents may not have chosen Educate Together schools solely for the reasons outlines above. According to Principal 7 (page 9, line 55) some parents choose Educate Together schools simply because they are good local, primary schools and these parents are not necessarily concerned with matters to do with ethos or specific philosophy.

Negative public perceptions of Educate Together can also cause the schools difficulties when trying to integrate in to communities and can also serve to perhaps stigmatise the schools and cause divisions within communities. Given the importance of school and community relationships to the development of children's academic abilities outlined above these are aspects of the system that need to be addressed at an organisational level.

6.2.3 Negative Aspects of Parental/Community Involvement

Most of the reflections from the parents and Principals with regard to parental and community involvement were framed in generally positive terms. There were however, a number of difficulties raised during the interviews with parents and Principals. There was a sense from a number of interviewees of either a lack of awareness of, or in some cases an indifference to, some of the wider concepts underpinning the schools' philosophy and practice. Ideas relating to what may be regarded as foundational aspects of Educate Together were not universally recognised or understood or indeed regarded as being of great significance.

Examples of this included a lack of consensus on the meaning of what multidenominational education is (e.g. some parents thought that the schools were actually non-denominational and some people used the terms of non and multi-denominational interchangeably). Parent 5, when asked about the challenges presented by having a diverse school population, claimed that there was a general lack of understanding about what it was that actually constituted an Educate Together school:

> Everyone has their own view about what diversity means. Everybody has their own view of what multiculturalism or interculturalism is, so I do think it can get to the stage where it is, you are catering for individuals needs and sometimes it is the strongest voice gets heard (Parent 5, page 16, lines 48-51).

Some parents felt that it was not necessary to understand some of these philosophical concepts as long as they had a broad understanding of what the schools had to offer and how they would be run. While on the surface this might seem quite surprising, that observation in itself perhaps makes assumptions about parental decisions. As outlined above it cannot be taken as a given that all parents are motivated by considerations of ethos alone.

Where the lack of shared understanding did become problematic however was in the area of communication between Principals and parents with regards to elements of the curriculum in practice and this is outlined below.

An issue mentioned by parents and Principals concerned the expression of religious identity within the school:

> There are people on the board this year adamant that the word Christ couldn't be mentioned during any of the Christmas celebrations that the school were putting together. There couldn't be any songs with any reference to any

religion within the Christmas play. I think to do anything at Christmas, you can't avoid some of those kind of things (Parent 5, page 17, lines 1-5).

One of the school Principals referred to similar incidents where there were disputes regarding how particular religions were represented in the schools activities and environment and she spoke about what she calls *'the ABC mentality, it can be anything but Christianity mentality'* (Principal 5, page 3, lines 30-31). Parent 1 also spoke about this issue.

> For the first time I've come into contact, particularly with the Catholic groups and it interests me that they feel excluded in our school. Because they are Catholic and that, to me, is the problem with multidenominational, is that there's a group in our school feeling excluded because everybody else is going 'oh we hate religion and we are non- religious', do you see what I mean – which is why, it is a hard thing to do because if you go too deep, you are putting too much emphasis on differences and that, as well, isn't great when you have kids because, you know (Parent 1, page 8, line 11-20).

These issues are interesting in the light of the type of society that is developing in Ireland and in respect to one of the Includ-ED findings, which recommends that school spaces should be secularised. It argues that:

> Europe…is highly diversified, not only in terms of culture, but also in terms of language, lifestyles and multiple religious traditions. The presence of this great plethora of identities in public spaces is not free of conflict and therefore requires a transformation of those spaces in order for people to be able to live together (Touraine, 1997 in Includ-ED, 2007(a), p.48).

This is echoed by research conducted by the ESRI (2010):

> Our findings indicate the importance not only of formal school structures but equally of the way in which issues related to the dominant religious and moral ethos can permeate all aspects of school life. Within countries, we found considerable variation in how schools treat religiously diverse groups within the student population. In multicultural societies, it is vital that schools are encouraged to ensure that parents and students of all religions and none feel that their beliefs are treated with respect (Smyth, Darmody et al. (2010, p.55).

This was an issue that also came to the fore in the research conducted by McNamara, Mulcahy and O'Hara (2012). They suggested that some Educate Together teachers and Principals were concerned with the overly theistic orientation of the belief strand of the Educate Together core curriculum and also about the lack of a shared understanding of the principles underpinning provision in Educate Together schools. This point was borne out by Principal 7 who spoke about the complex nature of people's beliefs and how some of the Educate Together schools overly concentrated

on the denominational aspect of the schools and this did not reflect the range of belief types in the community

> But I do think some Educate Together schools are so trying to make sure that they are multi-denominational that they are doing far too much on various denominations. Emphasising it far too much. There are schools where children do more about denominations, Educate Together schools, than in many Catholic schools, for instance. And it is not about the Jewish, the Christian etc. because there are so many other shades in between. And not all belief systems, first of all, have a god, have a place of worship. Some people never decide what their belief system is (Principal 7, page 9, line 43-49).

Other issues were raised regarding the difficulties the schools faced in getting parents to participate in the school and the difficulties encountered by the parents themselves in participating in school activities. For some parents this was mainly due to their status of being relative newcomers to the society. A Deputy Principal observed that in his school their involvement was compromised because the parents were:

> not as established yet or they don't have the whole network yet to say to get the kids looked after while they are doing something…they don't have their mother-in-law here who might be able to mind the kids while they go for a meeting for example, you know? If you have evening meetings it causes problems for some people to attend them (DP 1, page 6, lines 35-39).

A parent noted that while parental involvement was actively encouraged in her school that some barrier remained to parental participation:

> One of the things is that parents are able to become very involved. But sometimes at the beginning it is hard to find a way to do that unless you jump onto one of the big committees like the Board of Management. So it takes a while to find your feet maybe (Parent 2, page 10, lines 2-5).

A Principal spoke about the range of nationalities in the school and about the lack of diversity in his schools management structure and how he felt that this was an inhibiting factor when it came to the involvement of parents from other countries:

> we have 44 nationalities in our school yet our Board of Management with the exception of one until recently was exclusively white Irish…the composition of the PTA has begun to change to represent what's in the school community and that's the biggest challenge we have and there is a reserve and there is a reluctance and some of its around language and some is around just not knowing how things work and therefore the challenge is to identify the 1 or 2 who would actually lead the way and I think we are successfully doing it; if we are to wait for the letter going home to yield a rich harvest of diversity in school committees we may as well be shredding it; its through personal engagement…(Principal 3, page 6, lines 49-51; page 7, lines 1-9).

This observation that cultural and linguistic barriers were preventing participation featured in a number of other interviews. The problems around communication between school and parents who may not have well developed English language skills was offered as a reason for the lack of engagement of some parents:

> communication with parents, they don't understand the signs, the text messages, the newsletters. It is very difficult to have meetings…then the cultural differences obviously. It makes things very complicated at times, because…peoples' perceptions of school, of teachers, of corporal punishment, what is appropriate ways to communicate, men's attitude to women can differ (Principal 2, page 9, lines 48-55; page 10, 1-4).

A parent who also works in education remarked on the difficulties that migrant parents in particular face when it comes to communication between the school and home at even the most basic level of engagement:

> the language issue, parents don't feel even enabled to participate in that process or maybe they are uncomfortable within that class environment, they are speaking to their child in their own native language, they leave the classroom again, they don't get a chance to engage. They don't find out about these things (Parent 5, page 18, lines 20-23).

This ties in with the problems highlighted in this research about language difficulties and differing expectations regarding cultural expression between parents and Principals, which some Principals felt could be attributed to the diverse nature of the school population.

The distance between home and school cultures and practices can lead to greater, more long-term problems. There can be a negative effect on parental involvement if children develop linguistic skills superior to their parents and this can lead to the establishment of multiple identities on the child's behalf on the one hand and on the other hand a change in the power structure in the home. The attendant problems encountered by Principals when trying to establish contact with parents brought these tensions to the fore in some cases.

6.2.4 The Role and Responsibilities of the Principal in Educate Together Schools

An interesting theme that emerged strongly during the research but which was not related to the Includ-ED findings concerned the role and responsibilities of the Principal in Educate Together schools. Principals were involved in a wide range of practical and theoretical activities which included ensuring the ethos of the schools was implemented and evaluated, that relationships between the principal stakeholders

within the school were maintained and that the relationship between the school and the outside world were fostered and encouraged. Principals were also responsible for the more day to-day tasks of staff recruitment, engaging with outside agencies and overseeing enrolment policies. This section will deal with some of these issues from the perspectives of the Principals themselves, the parents of school going children and from the viewpoint of some of the relevant literature.

6.2.5 Leading the Ethos in Educate Together Schools

The role of the Principal in primary schools in Ireland is complex and multifaceted. According to a report commissioned by the Irish Primary Principals Network (IPPN) the role consists of a number of areas of responsibility. The Principal is expected to discharge these duties and to possess a range of characteristics that allow her to do so. According to the IPPN, Principals should provide leadership through 'the creation and communication of a vision of learning and development for the school in a way which creates the environment for pupils and teachers to maximise their development' (Hay report, 2002, p.2). The Principal is required to be involved in the area of teaching and learning through the creation of a 'learning environment (which) create(s) standards of excellence in learning for all pupils' (ibid, p.2). The Principal is also involved in the management of resources and people, which is concerned with the 'leadership, motivation, coaching and development of both teaching and non-teaching staff' (ibid). Other areas of responsibility include the development of policy in education and non-education areas, the effective administration of the school and the management of a range of external relationships, which relate to the wellbeing of the school (Hay report, 2002, p.2). The OECD, in its 2007 background report on Improving School Leadership in Ireland, suggested that in addition to these roles and in order to fulfil them, Principals needed to have the following list of competencies:

> Achievement Drive, Team Leadership, Strategic Thinking, Conceptual Thinking, Developing Others, Professional Expertise, Inter-Personal Understanding, Information Seeking, Financial Management Skills, Analytical Thinking, Challenge and Support, Impact and Influence, Initiative, Networking/Relationship Building (OECD 2007, pp.20, 21)

The OECD Report (2007, p.4) points out that 'it is clear that the impact of system and societal challenges falls heavily on the shoulders of the school principal and has consequences for the practice of learning-centred leadership in schools'. In addition to

these varied and detailed roles and competencies Principals were also responsible for developing and maintaining the ethos in their schools and it is in this regard that Principals would take on a greater leadership role. Bush talks about the differences between management and leadership in educational context

> By leadership, I mean influencing others' actions in achieving desirable ends. Leaders are people who shape the goals, motivations, and actions of others. Frequently they initiate change to reach existing and new goals ...Leadership...takes ...much ingenuity, energy and skill. Managing is maintaining efficiently and effectively current organisational arrangements. While managing well often exhibits leadership skills, the overall function is toward maintenance rather than change (Cuban, 1988 in Bush, 2007, p.392)

Devine and Swan (1997) in OECD (2007, p.43) claim that 'one of the most important factors contributing to the effectiveness of a school was found to be the principal who actively promotes a particular ethos or vision, an emphasis on positive staff relations, and open contact with the parent body'.

As outlined above, during the research Principals and parents constantly referred to the ethos, how it informed pedagogical approaches in the schools, how it was important from the perspective of the parents whose children attended the schools and how it made a contribution to the community and to the wider society.

There were however a number of issues which arose throughout the research with regards to the importance of the ethos to parents and then by extension the importance of how it was implemented and evaluated and by whom. Similarly all of the parents and principals interviewed spoke about the difficulties inherent in leading such value driven organisations, about the tensions between management and leadership in these contexts and the possible disconnection between these two concepts (management and leadership) and the principles upon which Educate Together was founded and was expected to run. Some parents saw problems with the enactment of democratic principles in an organisational context and this featured across a number of interviews. Some saw a conflict between the principles espoused by Educate Together and how these were implemented, managed and practiced in their schools. Parent 3 gives an example:

> The biggest difficulty I have is around the whole idea of democracy and the partnership. Now…my school happens to be quite good…but…I am speaking as a board member and as somebody who started a school, the hardest thing for me is actually generating what I think is a true feeling of democracy around decision-making in the school (Parent 3, page 7, lines 50-54).

The same parent also felt that:

> the most difficult thing in terms of meeting our Principal around democracy (is) created by the fact that we are established as a primary school under the national guidelines for primary schools in terms of say, boards of management and stuff like that. That has an impact on the whole idea of democracy, I think (Parent 3, page 8, lines 3-7).

Another parent was asked about the possible disconnection between the principles that the Educate Together schools are based on and the actual practice in his school and whether it was possible to always 'live the values':

> (I) don't think it is fully possible. I think those principles are pretty aspirational and also quite broad. I mean, democracy is a very loose word in itself anyway. Student-centred…schools, not particularly just Educate Together would say they are learner-centred, student-centred which is almost in opposition to say, curriculum-centred…I'd say in practice there is more participation from the community and family members than other school experiences I know of…but I think it is really up to the leaders in the schools. Whether they be the teachers in the classes, head teachers or principals, I think they need to show the example and show by positive leadership of not taking control where they normally would in normal situations and letting the parents take control or make decisions but getting the balance between what they need to do from an admin point of view and from the Department of Ed requirement point of view and what the values and principles say within the curriculum (Parent 5, page 10, lines 28-39).

It would appear from the interviews that the ethos of Educate Together schools is an important factor in helping parents make decisions about their children's schooling. As such, it would be important that at the very least an attempt is made to ensure that the key elements of this ethos, including a respect for and encouragement of democratic values and principles, would be observed and practiced throughout the schools activities including the relationship between parents and principals. That this was not always the case would give rise to concerns about the level of commitment to such principles in some of the schools involved in this research. Additionally, it is worth considering whether it is always possible to manage and run large, complex organisations such as Primary schools in ways that abide by meaningful democratic and participative principles. The evidence from this research is inconclusive in that regard.

Another recurring theme in the interviews concerned that ways by which such a clearly defined ethos should be implemented and how these activities are measured.

The following sections will look at how the Educate Together Ethos is taught, enacted and evaluated.

6.2.6 The Ethical Core Curriculum and how it is taught

The ethos or spirit and character that defines and informs the policies and practices in any school environment is what differentiates one school from another and one set of educational experiences from the next. As has also been referred to by parents and Principals, the ethos that defines Educate Together schools appears to permeate all of the schools activities and practices and is regarded as central to its practices and operation.

The different elements that comprise the Educate Together ethos i.e. the four strands of the Learn Together curriculum and the other principles upon which the schools operate, have already been described in this thesis but how the schools actually mediate this ethos into practice has only been broadly referred to. This section will outline how this ethos is enacted in the schools that participated in this research.

Principals were asked to describe how their schools taught the different elements that comprised the Learn Together curriculum. Each school interviewed has a teacher who is designated as a post-holder who has responsibility for the Learn Together curriculum.

Principal 2 describes the role and responsibilities of the post-holder in her school:

> ...she is a co-ordinator for the school so she would look after all the resources. We have a resource section...a very large one for ethical education...(for) all the different strands...she would co-ordinate all of those...and make sure they're available, so whatever the theme is, she'd make sure that they're all available for that week. Each child then...(has) their 'learn together' scrap book...so all their different work throughout the year goes into this scrapbook and they bring that home at the end of the year. We have...our ethos wall. So, because ethos is so important...the minute you come in the door, that whole wall facing you...is our ethos wall. We have the four strands right in front of you there...so that whole wall is dedicated to our ethos. And each month a different class takes responsibility for the 'learn together' board, so they do its display, so every month it changes (Principal 2, page 14, lines 17-36).

Principal 6, while speaking about the value to the school of the Learn Together curriculum and how it allows a variety of topics to be addressed and learned about also suggests that there is more work to be done in this area

> I think what the Ethical Core Curriculum document that Educate Together has put together is a wonderful addition to the new curriculum and takes it on a step further. We have many many more steps to go in relation to this but I

mean the four pillars of our ethical core curriculum equality and justice, ethics…the whole question of ethics, ethics and the environment is a whole other section, it does not just give us license but it does make it encumbent upon us to get into areas like this (Principal 6, page 3, lines 7-11).

With regard to how the Learn Together curriculum is implemented, all of the schools used an assembly system, which provided an opportunity for different elements of the Learn Together to be implemented. Principal 5 outlines what a typical assembly would deal with:

The senior assembly today was based on the strand of equality and justice and it would have been all about (the) most inspirational women in history, so the children would have presented that. So each assembly would (be) geared around an aspect of an implementation of part of the ethos and a part of the curriculum. Equality and Justice would be very much like that. The ethics and the environment would be like that. But the belief systems would not necessarily have that kind of focus, it would kinda be about tolerance and respect and giving information about different religions but informative only (Principal 5, page 2, lines 28-37).

Another Principal gave an example of what would take place in a typical assembly in his school:

Every Friday, I meet every member of the school community in groups. I hold an assembly with them…and the teachers, say for example when we were going to debate about Barrack Obama last week, I would go in on a Monday morning and say 'we are going to have a debate on this one next week, your 5th class is going to debate with 5th class next door, this is the motion before the house, you are going to argue in favor, you are going to argue against and then the teacher will work with them and do some preparatory work and there will be some research, they will talk to parents at home (Principal 6, page 6, lines 37-45).

Other examples of this type of activity occurred in the schools that participated in this research. Principal 2 speaks about how this is done in her school and she ties it in to how the ethos is given form in her school:

It…kind of permeates the whole school day, no more than any ethos does really. So, we would have displays around the school, we would have assemblies and themes every week so…for example, our theme last week was responsibility. Children would work on that theme for the week…they would get certificates and prizes. There would be displays up. The children might do their songs. There might be drama's going on. It kind of just runs through the school day, the school week. The parents would know what the theme is…you see there is four strands in the curriculum so it would vary then, depending on the time of year as well, it could be a festival or a religious feast that's on, so that, one particular week it could be that. Or it could be a moral or ethical or

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an environmental one. It just depends (Principal 2, page 13, lines 51-55; page 14, lines 1-7).

The details of these approaches are interesting because they speak about how abstract concepts, which define an educational philosophy, can be mediated in meaningful ways to young learners. It speaks also about the level of commitment of teachers and Principals to the ideals that inform Educate Together schools and also about the levels of pedagogical flexibility and creativity that are required to articulate such concepts and these ideas are worthy of note and record. However it is also worth noting that there are difficulties with the structure and form of the Learn Together Curriculum. One of the interviewees, a Deputy Principal, spoke about the lack of a clear structure and definition with regard to how the Learn Together curriculum is delivered:

> Well in a lot of schools it's still growing, it's always under discussion, it's not as easy, not as set out, like the English curriculum or anything, it's still evolving, a lot of people are not really sure how to deal with it, can we do a Xmas song at some stage…some parents are not sure do they want the word of God or Christmas or any of those kind of things, do they want a Nativity play and teachers are very unsure if they can do it or not. I just say look if you want to do that it's…I look at it from a cultural point of view rather than a religious point of view. You know they are in Ireland now and they might as well know about the cultural background, why do we have these holidays? That would be my approach but a lot of teachers, you know, are careful…(DP 1, page 7, lines 40-48).

McNamara, Mulcahy and O'Hara (2012) refer to difficulties with the apparent lack of structure regarding the Learn Together curriculum. In interviews they conducted with the authors of the original Learn Together Curriculum, it emerged that the intention for the curriculum was that individual schools would adapt it and the ways in which it was implemented would take account of the different contexts within which it operated and this local interpretation did operate in the schools in this research. Principal 5 offers an example of how this worked in her school

> (The post holder) would break up the strands in the curriculum and they would give the teachers an idea, because teachers love getting a ready-made programme there and then, but the Learn Together curriculum is not a ready-made programme. It is very much a prototype that allows you to devise your own lessons (Principal 5, page 5, lines 25-31).

McNamara, Mulcahy and O'Hara's research (2012) found that other stakeholders in Educate Together, including some Principals and teachers, were keen for a more formalised centrally driven curriculum to be offered to the schools and these

sentiments are borne out in this research as well.

Some Principals spoke about the problems of mediating the content of the Learn Together curriculum in classroom contexts and this refers back to what Principal 6 speaks about with regard to structure and guidance for teachers:

> The Ethical Core Curriculum is a wonderful, challenging document but it takes a lot of time and a lot of effort to translate that into something that teachers could use in a structured coherent way, which reflects the four strands of the curriculum within their classrooms and the difficulty with that (Principal 6, page 4, lines 5-8).

He also spoke about the difficulties with dealing with some of the more abstract concepts that are included in the Learn Together curriculum:

> The difficulty with that is you've got the four cores: beliefs systems which is easy to do; ethics and Environment, the environment which is easy to do; Equality and Justice, depending really on where you're at yourself, it gets more or less done and then morality and spirituality which is by the far the most difficult area to get into (Principal 6, page 4, lines 10-13).

It emerged in a number of the interviews that some Principals felt that some elements of the curriculum were easier to teach than others. Principals referred to those elements of the curriculum that required a more critical approach and that these were sometimes not given the same weight or attention because of their controversial or problematic elements. This raises an important issue with regards to the lack of a critical element in some of the core aspects of the Curriculum, which could serve to dilute the effectiveness of the material and lead to only a surface treating of these important subject areas. This would not appear to be a good development as it undermines the value of some of the core principles of the schools and is something that would need to more closely monitored within the schools themselves and at a broader organisational level.

Another Principal spoke about the difficulties inherent in teaching any curriculum and spoke about the role played by individual teachers being responsible for mediating any programme:

> Things change so quickly on the ground of teaching and learning that...there is no...static body of knowledge which is comprised in the 22 books on the curriculum...that actually delivers it at a human level...in terms of breathing contemporary life into that, that is in the hands of the man or woman who is teaching in the classroom (Principal 3, page 1, lines 41-47).

The values and skills required by teachers in mediating and enabling the curriculum in

classrooms will be returned to in section 6.3.2 of this chapter. Before considering this, the next section will look at another important element in ensuring that curriculum is implemented and developed: Curriculum Evaluation in Educate Together schools.

6.2.7 Evaluating the Educate Together Ethos

One of the more interesting themes that was not part of the Includ-ED findings but which emerged from the interviews with Principals in particular concerned the role and practice of evaluation in Educate Together schools. Evaluation in any educational context is of great importance and this obviously applies to Educate Together schools, as they are such values driven entities. The questions of evaluation as a mechanism for ensuring that the ethos in the schools was being enacted and the use of evaluation as a tool for developing practice in the schools were raised by a number of Principals. Before going on to look at this in more detail it would be important to briefly consider why evaluation in national and international contexts is particularly current.

Formal evaluation in Irish primary school contexts is the responsibility of the Department of Education and Skills Inspectorate. According to Harold Hislop, currently the Chief Inspector in the Department, there are a number of forces at play, which are driving the interest in evaluation and accountability in education contexts not only in Ireland but also throughout the world. These forces include the professionalization of teachers, a renewed focus on quality in human services provision and a more pronounced value for money agenda (Hislop, 2012, pp.4,5). The Inspectorate is responsible for ensuring that a range of evaluation processes is used in the Primary and Post-Primary sectors and these include whole school evaluations and the facilitation of self-evaluations to be carried out by the schools themselves. The role of evaluation in schools in general is important to allow for the professional development of the teachers and organization (with the intention of enhancing the quality of the educational experience) and for the purposes of providing a public accountability for the work done by the schools. It is important to note that the Inspectorate does not carry out evaluations of the religious instruction elements of the primary school curriculum and that Educate Together's Learn Together Curriculum falls into this category.

The requirement for evaluation in Educate Together schools is particularly important given the value driven nature of its provision. This was a subject that featured in most of the interviews conducted with Principals during this research. In addition to the

issues regarding evaluation practices in the schools, Educate Together as an organisation has also been involved in facilitating a self-evaluation process in its schools and this will also be discussed here.

The Includ-ED research points out the role of family involvement in evaluations in their children's schools: 'evaluation is another decisive area in which family participation makes it possible to exchange viewpoints and overcome difficulties' and offers examples from such initiatives in EU countries involved in the research (Includ-ED, 2007(a), p.36). The practice of family involvement in elements of the school evaluation process is encouraged and facilitated at national and local level by Educate Together as an organization and by the schools themselves and the ways in which this happens will be outlined below.

The evaluation work undertaken by the schools themselves were all designed and driven by Principals in the first instance. They were the individuals in the schools who appeared to take the responsibility and initiative to ensure that not only were the elements of the core curriculum implemented but that they were also monitored and evaluated. Principal 5 spoke about how staff from a number of schools came together to conduct an evaluation exercise:

> We had presentations on the four strands of the curriculum...from four...schools and one school presented all about belief systems and how they run their belief systems throughout the year and they talked about the planning end of things and how much time and effort goes into it (Principal 5, page 6, lines 8-12).

Another Principal, when speaking about how the curriculum was taught across all of the Educate Together schools, was concerned about how the delivery of certain elements of the core curriculum was easier than others because of the content of these elements and about how this depended on the staff in individual schools:

> Other places might be doing it even better than we're doing it but other places might not be doing it and you have a system where the belief systems, which is the easiest one to teach, gets done very well but a lot of the other stuff doesn't get done so well depending on the staffing in individual schools and that's not good enough (Principal 6, page 4, lines 20-24).

Principal 4 spoke about the rigorous process his school engaged in with regard to evaluating the curriculum and how this is guided and supported by material from the Department of Education and Skills. He also referred to how this process is concerned with evaluation not just as an exercise in accountability but also with how the

evaluation fed in to the development of the school and the planning for the following
year:

> We do our own internal…school evaluation every year based on the document
> 'Looking at our School' and we write up an annual report for ourselves and
> that...takes each curricular area amongst a lot of other things as well,
> and...describes the activities that have gone on in that curricular area in the
> space of the year, attempts at giving some indications...of the children's
> learning in those areas. It also describes the state of policy and the state of
> resourcing of that area and then concludes with a set of recommendations that
> become the blueprint for the following year. And actually I think I've got one
> of those recommendation that is in an area for instance that isn't being taught
> well, would be perhaps further career development for us all in that area which
> then becomes our map for the following year and it gets done (Principal 4,
> page 4, lines 52-55; page 5, lines 1-7).

This Principal was concerned that the evaluation process would:

> critically look at our curriculum and particularly maybe some curricular areas,
> we would look to see does it give ample opportunity for the experiences and
> cultures of the diverse population in the school to get vent in the school and to
> be seen as legitimate and valuable experiences. And, you know, therefore, if
> we felt it lacking, to make up that lack (Principal 4, page 2, lines 50-54).

He was also mindful of the importance of ensuring that those elements of the
curriculum which touched on areas of student well-being as well as having a broader
educational dimension were continuously evaluated:

> There is a cycle of themes which they revisit on an ongoing basis and our
> multiculturalism and our understanding of multiculturalism would be revisited
> over a lot of guises even say something like…developing an anti-bullying
> policy, it is expanded in order to see does anybody…include racism and
> therefore we will come back to 'what is racism' and does the school have to
> play an active part and does the school want to play an active part in
> promoting anti-racism (Principal 4, page 3, lines 12-18).

This Principal referred to the collaborative approach in his school, which is reflective
of an organisational learning approach to evaluation and which also involved an
element of continuous professional development. This approach was prompted by this
Principal's own experiences and history of professional development and is an
example of the role played by individual Principals in the schools various processes:

> We have started that process by having an in-depth staff discussion prompted
> by some academic readings on inclusion. And what exactly is understood by
> inclusion...from a perspective of special educational needs but also every other
> aspect of diversity as listed, the nine areas that are listed and again our staffing
> point are now considering how we are going to expand as special education
> services, comes about from a very broad…collaborative understanding of

inclusion (Principal 4, page 3, lines 20-26).

Principal 5 spoke about how the evaluation in her school involved a sub-committee, which consisted of representatives from each of the years in the school. The sub-committee would look at the different elements of the Learn Together curriculum and again this is an example of an evaluation process, which was concerned with feeding forward into planning for future years:

> A particular teacher might have an interest in human rights, another teacher might have an interest in belief systems and so on and so forth. I would be in attendance and the deputy principal and we would meet on a regular basis and the Learn Together planning would be done around that (Principal 5, page 5, lines 18-20).

One Principal spoke about the difficulties involved in ensuring that the Learn Together curriculum was being delivered, how the actual content matter of the curriculum contributed to this and how he felt professionally responsible to ensure that it was delivered:

> The greatest challenge I would have as a school principal would be standing over that every teacher in every room is actually delivering the Educate Together Programme in a meaningful way...we would programme it for every month so that there is a set programme at all levels across the school...and I do not check what different teachers teach in each subject area but I do check every week in Assembly that the Educate Together Programme is taught because its not a literacy or a numeracy subject, there is no standardised testing, there's no consequence for not doing it, and it's to get that into the margins of the curriculum when you focus in the priorities and I have to stand over it...(Principal 3, page 8, lines 31-39).

The Principals involved in this research all had devised some form of local and usually formative evaluation processes in their school. While this can be viewed in a positive light because it can feed into on-going improvement and is context specific it does raise some concerns. To begin with, these were all locally devised evaluations, which did not seem to follow any recognised evaluation framework. The level and extent of the knowledge and experiences of evaluation as a process varied quite considerably from Principal to Principal and there was no sector-wide, mandatory evaluation process, which could capture practice across all schools. There are only 60 Educate Together primary schools so devising and managing such an approach would not be an enormous task. Such a sector-wide evaluation process would serve a number of purposes: it would provide very useful information for the development of the

schools; it would show evidence of achievement and would serve to validate practice; it would identify areas for development which could enhance practice and help to establish the credibility of the claims that Educate Together makes about its work; evaluation of this kind would also help to create a stronger identity and sense of accountability.

Another concern would be that because these local initiatives originated with Principals, the deeply political nature of evaluation would have to be taken into consideration and because of this the ultimate usefulness and accuracy of the results might legitimately be brought into question.

In addition to the local evaluation arrangements made in the individual schools Educate Together has also developed a voluntary Ethos self-evaluation process for schools. This involves inviting schools to participate in a process, which invites all members of the school community to engage in an evaluation of the ethos of their respective schools. The purpose of the self-evaluation is:

> to cover the taught ethos, or Ethical Education Programme (Learn Together in most cases) and also the lived ethos, in other words, how the principles of Educate Together are implemented and experienced by all members of the school community. The process is promoted and facilitated by Educate Together in the spirit of supporting schools to carry out ongoing-self evaluation (Educate Together, 2011, p.2).

The self-evaluation process is facilitated and supported by Educate Together's National Office and is managed by an education professional with an academic and professional background in the area of evaluation in educational settings. The evaluation process is operated by a school Self-Evaluation Committee drawn from all members of the school community and follows a cyclical form which involves gathering evidence through a facilitated workshop process and questionnaire, the creation of a subsequent report and plan of action and an action implementation phase. The evaluation is concerned only with how the ethos is implemented and its development and not with the broader curriculum or management processes operating in the school. The supporting documentation provided by Educate Together points out that the self-evaluation should:

- evaluate the extent to which the ethos is lived out in a school
- consider the perspective of all members of the school community
- not add unduly to schools' existing workload
- be clear and transparent
- help schools identify areas of achievement and for improvement

- be an ongoing and regular point of reference for schools
  (Educate Together, 2011, p.2)

The documentation suggests a number of thematic areas that the process might usefully look at. These include Teaching, Learning and Curriculum; Governance, Leadership and Accountability and Relationships, Culture and Environment. The self-evaluation pack is quite comprehensive and detailed but one or two of the areas are worth a brief mention in order to give a flavour of what is involved in the process.

In the area of Relationships, Culture and Environment for example the evaluation focuses on the built environment and school culture and takes into consideration ideas such as how well the school makes use of the built environment and how innovative it has been in extracting the best outcomes from available resources (ibid, p.8) and if the multi-denominational nature of the school is acknowledged through the appreciation of the individual and shared beliefs of the children; (if) practices reflect the values inherent in the Ethical Curriculum and how well the staff are supported and affirmed in their role and have a sense of ownership and collective responsibility for the school (ibid, p.8). The area of Teaching, Learning and Curriculum takes into consideration the levels of planning and coordination of the Learn Together programme and of the Educate Together ethos in all school planning; the level of support given to teachers in the delivery of the Learn Together programme and the school ethos in general and how well the lessons are planned and resourced and the degree, type and relevance of the teaching methods used (ibid, p.9).

6.2.8 Conclusion to Ethos

The notion of Ethos and how it is practiced and measured in Educate Together schools would appear to be central to the identity of these schools and to have an influence on decisions that parents make about where to send their children to school. Some of the themes that emerged from the research and which were reflective of this ethos in practice included the nature and extent of those forces influencing Parental choices and parental/community involvement; the role and responsibilities of the Principal in Educate Together schools (including the potential conflict between a Principal's need to control and manage and the principles on which Educate Together schools are based) and the possible conflict between Educate Together's principles and practices and the Ethical core curriculum and how it is taught and evaluate. Some, such as the value to the school, pupil and community of high levels of parental

involvement in the school also featured prominently in the Includ-ED research. Others, such as the key role played by Principals in managing, upholding and evaluating how the ethos was put into practice, emerged from the interviews with parents and principals and raised important issues which are central to the schools distinctive character. These issues will be discussed in more detail in chapter 7. The next section will look at diversity in curriculum settings in the Educate Together schools involved in the research.

6.3 Diversity in the Curriculum

One of the characteristics of Educate Together schools and an example of one of its core principles in action is the range of diversity found within the schools and the encouragement and celebration of difference that the schools attempt to promote. The Includ-ED research speaks about the benefits to the whole school community of a diverse and inclusive school environment and how this is important in plural societies (Includ-ED, 2007(b), p.65) and these ideas are particularly resonant in today's Ireland.

This section will look at some themes, which emerged concerning diversity in the curriculum in Irish contexts with a particular emphasis on the Educate Together sector featured in this research. These included how and whether the official curriculum reflects the diversity in Irish society; the values and skills required to teach in diverse settings; whether the teaching staff should reflect the diverse school population; the idea of the intercultural classroom and finally the possible benefits and challenges presented to the whole school population of having a diverse school/ethos.

6.3.1 How the Official Curriculum Reflects the Diversity in Irish Society

Some of the respondents spoke about how they felt that the official curriculum didn't fully represent the diversity in the today's classrooms and they attributed this to a number of factors. Firstly, the Primary School Curriculum was last amended in 1999 and obviously did not and could not have foreseen the changes that have taken place in the country in the last 10 years or so. Secondly, the curriculum, in the opinions of some of the respondents and which have already been referred to in earlier sections of this chapter, would have been drafted with a view to preserving the cultural and educational status quo in society, which prevailed in the late 90s. Most responses to the question of how the official curriculum reflected the diversity in Irish society referred to the difference between the official curriculum and the delivered curriculum. It was felt that the official curriculum is subject to adaptation to suit the prevailing conditions where it is implemented and to take account of the various forces and agencies that act upon it. These factors apply to Educate Together no less than any other education context and this again is an instance of Stenhouse's (1975) observations in that regard. Principal 7 speaks of an awareness of the many types of Curriculum that feature in her school and how these are subject to different influences:

there is the national curriculum, then there is the taught curriculum and that doesn't mean they are one and the same, they are all mediated by the gatekeepers, who are, unions, management bodies, church bodies in a lot of cases, market demands, parental demands, so it is all mediated (Principal 7, page 6, lines 24-28).

She goes on to speak about how the taught curriculum becomes the experienced curriculum and how for her it is this curriculum that lies at the heart of the educational project:

so if we come back again to what is the moral purpose of the school, what do I want every child in our school to take home with them every day, every week, at the end of every year. What do I want them to take home with them? So it is the experienced curriculum and also, the implicit or hidden curriculum. And the hidden curriculum is where we are getting into attitudes and authenticity, genuineness, engagement (Principal 7, page 6, lines 31-36).

Parent 5, who had a unique perspective as a parent, an active member of his child's school community and as an education professional with expertise in the area of Curriculum, also speaks about how the Curriculum must be adapted at local level to suit that context and how flexibility is needed to achieve this:

the educational system itself, never mind it just being Educate Together or other primary schools, find it difficult to accommodate change within the curriculum anyway. Certain schools, based on their own values, ethos and leaders…can drive some of those curriculum changes through as they want to as the Board of Management and prioritise them…It is so much like a cherry picking process for certain schools (Parent 5, page 7, lines 9-15).

This practice of locally adapting curricula was particularly common in the schools involved in this research. For reasons outlined earlier regarding the apparently ad-hoc nature of how the curriculum was implemented in Educate Together schools this is perhaps not a surprise. The sector is a relatively recent arrival on the Irish educational scene and has faced a number of challenging circumstances in its attempt to establish itself. One of the consequences of this is perhaps a less than uniform curriculum approach. This is obviously a factor, which will need to be given more consideration as the sector grows in size and impact.

Just as Principals in the schools play an important role in many aspects of the schools life and in the preservation and promotion of the ethos, teachers also have crucial roles to play particularly with regard to the hidden curriculum and the messages that this conveys. The next sections will look at the values and skills that teachers need in order to be effective in these diverse contexts, the (possible) need for a teaching staff

that reflects such diversity and what those elements are that constitute the intercultural classroom and the role teachers may have in defining and creating this. The chapter will conclude by referring again to the Includ-ED research and its findings on the benefits and challenges presented by a diverse school population and how these are experienced in the schools that participated in this research.

6.3.2 The Values and Skills Required to Teach in Diverse Settings

Part of the focus of this research has been on how the principles that inform an ethos are carried in to the practice of the curriculum in a particular educational context. The key agent in the process of mediating an educational idea in to an educational experience is the class teacher and so the research considered the values and skills that inform these teaching professionals.

When considering the values and skills that teachers required to work in diverse contexts Banks claims that 'teachers need to develop reflective cultural and national identifications if they are to function effectively in diverse classrooms and help students from different cultures and groups to construct clarified identifications' (2001, p.10). Rone and Ozola (2003), ask for 'a high-quality teacher, pedagogically, psychologically and professionally' and talk of knowledge and skills on the one hand, but personal qualities, attitudes and value systems on the other (p.202).

Banks also claims that:

> teachers, like students, also bring to the classroom personal and cultural knowledge that is situated within a set of deeply held values that result from their personal and professional experiences…teachers need to critically examine the value assumptions that underlie their personal knowledge, the knowledge taught in the curriculum, and the values that support the institutionalized structures and practices in the schools (Banks, 1998, p.12).

Parent 3 suggests that teachers need an ability to engage in dialogue and a degree of competence in the key areas of the Learn Together curriculum (page 6, lines 31-35). She spoke about the values that teachers need to work in these environments and the ability to leave these values to one side:

> high level of respect…they need to have a sense of caution about whether they are inculcating someone into their own culture and their own beliefs or whether they are allowing someone to maintain their own beliefs (Parent 3, page 5, line 54; page 6, line 6-7).

Another parent spoke about the need for teachers to respect other cultures and to be

able to teach about the value of respect (Parent 4, page 8, lines 27-28). She also spoke about the need for teachers to have *'an openness to the different cultures that are there and I guess they need to be as knowledgeable as possible in the specific religions and cultures that are in that classroom'* (Parent 4, page 8, lines 37-39). Parent 1 referred to teachers developing an *'understanding of the child as an individual. A sense of being fair and of being self-analytical and self-critical. I think the most important thing is being able to self-analyse'* (Parent 1, page 9, lines 37-38). Another parent took a view on teacher values that differed from the stance of many of the Principals regarding teacher values. Most Principals felt that it was important that teachers' values should be consistent with the organisational values but parent 5 disagreed:

> you have the values of an organisation and individual values aren't necessarily shared values but I think when somebody is contracted by an organisation with a set of values, they have to buy into those values or there is no point in them being there – but I think you can retain your own values but they don't necessarily need to be fully lived within the school if they are the opposite to the organisations value (Parent 5, page 10, lines 48-53).

Principal 7 felt that values in these contexts are extremely important but that she finds reluctance on behalf of some teachers to discuss and consider them:

> I think there is not enough emphasis put on values…and it is so important…for people to reflect on 'what are my values'? 'Why am I here'? 'What am I trying to do here'? I think the values need to be talked about an awful lot more…male participants, in particular, get embarrassed about it at the beginning but…most of them would come back and say, I have never thought about this before and it is going to change my teaching (Parent 7, page 8, lines 32-47).

One of the professional educators working in the area of Teacher Education spoke about how a teaching approach informed by the idea of a critical multiculturalism is necessary in diverse settings:

> I think it has to be embedded in the way you teach your teachers, you know in their choice of materials, in their choice of language when they are teaching, in their grouping systems, in the content of what they teach, it has to be really embedded in everything that they do and that I see is critical Multiculturalism in the classroom where its founded on a real engagement with difference (EP 1, page 4, lines 25-29).

The question of the skills and values that teachers require to work in diverse educational settings is one that also needs to be considered in the light of teacher training and professional development and this will be discussed in section 6.4.

6.3.3 Whether and How the Teaching Staff should Reflect the Diverse School Population

Another dimension of how the schooling system reflects and promotes diversity concerns the make-up of its teaching staff. Ross (2003) suggests that 'in an age when the notion of culture is becoming increasingly plural and diverse, we need to ensure that the teaching force – in both schools and in higher education institutions – should reflect 'the composition of our society'. He speaks about how the teaching staff is an element of the hidden curriculum and that this conveys important messages about the culture that we wish to transmit (Ross, 2003, p.217).

The OECD in its 2007 report 'Improving School Leadership' suggests that 'the absence of a culturally diverse teaching profession can militate against the development of inclusion. The challenges in recognising non-Irish and non-European citizens as teachers need to be addressed, especially at primary level (2007, p.31).

Banks (2001) refers to the situation in America where he claims that 'most of the nation's teacher education students are middle-class, White females who have little experience with other racial, ethnic, or social-class groups…teacher education students tend to distance themselves from their class origins and to view themselves as middle class in values, perspectives, and behaviours' (Banks, 2001, p.10).

The issue of the teaching cohort reflecting the diversity found in the student cohort is important in Educate Together schools, which tend to have diverse student populations. All of the Principals who spoke about this issue claimed that they would like to have a teaching staff that reflected the diversity found in the classroom but that there were considerable difficulties about realizing this not least of which was the requirement for teachers to have a qualification in the Irish language. None of the schools involved in this research had members of staff from cultural or ethnic backgrounds other than White (and predominantly) Irish and Principals and parents alike were united in calling for the Department of Education and Skills to address this matter in a creative way. However, it was felt across the board that it would take a considerable degree of time and effort in order for this situation to change.

Another point needs to be made with regard to the relatively recent nature of the changes in Irish society. The education system in Ireland is rooted in a tradition and a set of practices, which have made the sector conservative by nature and slow to embrace change. This research recognises the need for a more rapid response to the

changes that have taken place in Ireland over the last 20 years while also being cognisant of those forces which are resistant to such change.

6.3.4 The Intercultural Classroom

The OECD in its report on Improving School Leadership Practices in Ireland (2007) suggest that:

> schools have a pivotal role to play in integrating the newcomer students into schools and into society by developing a more inclusive, intercultural classroom environment and by providing children with the knowledge and skills they need to participate in the multicultural Ireland of today (OECD, 2007, p.30).

The intercultural classroom, what it looks like and what should happen within it, features strongly in the work of Professor James Banks. Leeman (2003, p.33) drawing on the work of Banks amongst others, suggests a set of educational objectives for intercultural education contexts which should be concerned with:

> The development of knowledge about ethnic-cultural diversity and learning that knowledge is socially constructed.
> The development of knowledge about inequality in the multi-ethnic society and of values and skills to tackle inequality.
> The development of values and skills aimed at safeguarding ethnic-cultural diversity, personal autonomy and communality in the school and society and the development of values and skills necessary for living democratically in a multi-ethnic context.

Leeman (2003 p.32) argues that "an information package on other cultures" is totally inadequate for learning how to…live in a *good* way; in an ethnically and culturally diverse society…Intercultural education has normative aspects. The moral dimension involves stimulating *satisfactory* multicultural living, based on principles such as recognition of cultural diversity, communality, equality and democratic values'.

Parent 3 suggested that the intercultural classroom was one where *'everybody in that classroom is respected, that everybody in the classroom has an opportunity to reach their potential, that they have an opportunity to express themselves in accordance…(with) their own culture'* (Parent 3, page 5, lines 26-29). She went on to say that this type of classroom would:

> recognise the range of cultures…that it would be obvious that these cultures were represented in the classroom and that there would be credibility given to the views of every person, in other words that if somebody is expressing a particular view based on their cultural identity then that view would be

listened to as much as the view of another person (Parent 3, page 5, lines 30-34).

Principal 7 suggests that in such classrooms *'each child, first of all is a child. They are not part of this, part of that, they are not representatives of anything. The teacher is a huge part of an intercultural classroom'* (Principal 7, page 8, lines 3-5). Principal 1 spoke about the intercultural classroom as a place which would foster *'awareness of the diversity of human beings, equality and justice, you know, all the basic human values, well the human being, well, freedom, I mean, freedom of the individual, the freedom to be whatever it is they want to be'* (Principal 1, page 6, lines 17-19).

The successful development of an intercultural classroom is dependent on a number of factors not least of which would be the personality, values, skills and abilities of teachers. As has been pointed out already in this thesis there are a number of concerns about teacher readiness to work in or to help create such classrooms. The research has pointed out that not only are teachers generally ill-prepared by their teacher training courses to work in such intercultural classrooms, the teacher training colleges themselves are also reflective of more traditional views of Irish society, ones that might not necessarily see the need for or the benefit of having such diverse classrooms. Educate Together needs to become more strident in its advocacy for relevant training courses and in its promotion of alternative approaches to teacher training in general.

6.3.5 The Benefits and Challenges Presented to the Whole School Population of having a Diverse School/Ethos

One of the findings from the Includ-ED research concerned the advantages to the whole school community of having a diverse school going population (Includ-ED, 2007(a), p.4). The research also highlighted how maintaining the visibility of cultural and other diversity in the classroom leads to an increase in student self-esteem and subsequent benefits to student learning (ibid, p.45) and it also refers to how 'various studies indicate that the existence of an ethnocentric perspective within the school context has grave consequences for pupils from cultural or religious minorities' (ibid, p.46).

These ideas, and those mentioned by Banks (2011) in his five dimensions of Multicultural Education, all featured prominently in the research carried out in the

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Educate Together schools. The following responses from parents and Principals reflect this. Principal 5 refers to how having a diverse school:

> opens the mind and I think the huge focus here would be on tolerance and it would be on respecting difference and we are all different but we are all the same...they just get to see tolerance rather than just hear about it and I think that has added benefits then in the curricular side of things (Principal 5, page 11, line 35-41).

A professional working in the field of teacher education spoke about how such diversity:

> broadens everybody's perspective on life because you have to engage with difference and, you know, there is a requirement on everybody to suspend your expectations and really to learn about each other and I think everybody grows as a result of that (EP 1, page 4, lines 40-43).

Principal 3 spoke about how this diversity brought benefits to the school and the importance of a values based education, which started at the earliest stages in the school:

> but you have an equality of respect and regard and esteem...where no indivdual or group of individuals has any sense of being inferior to anyone else or superior... and that comes from the cradle and the cradle in any school is junior infants' (Principal 3, page 6, lines 9-15).

Parents also spoke about the benefits to the wider community of having a diverse school population and an ethos that respected such diversity. This parent, who is also a professional working in the field of education, felt that:

> there are definitely real tangible benefits...it also challenges your own perceptions of other people's worldviews, religions, all these kind of things. It is not just about ethnic diversity, it is about cultural diversity so we could all share a similar religion but it could be a French parent I deal with and I haven't had experience of that, so that is good. It also means if people outside of the normal standard cultural area...they can help other parents integrate into that community by making sure that there is information to be shared (Parent 5, page 15, lines 39-46).

Principal 4 gave a well thought out description of a critical multiculturalism philosophy which underpinned his understanding of working in diverse settings and which informed the practice in the school. The extract from the interview is lengthy but is worthy of inclusion here because of the ideas and critical approach it outlines and as an example of the depth of critical thinking that was engaged in by this particular Principal:

Well, first of all the basic premise would be the recognition of the diversity that is in this school. We don't try to seek to make the diversity invisible or to homogenise it, so, to recognise the diversity within it. Secondly, to understand that we can take and feel free to take and expect other people to take, in response to us, something of the critical status towards each and everybody's cultures, ethnicities, religious background etc. So, while we have hopefully, liberal understandings of everybody having freedoms within the school to be who they are, to dress who they are, to celebrate their celebrations to recognise the difference and not to seek to eradicate difference to promote anti-racism. We also reserve the right and expect the exercise of the right on parents behalf or whatever, to also be critical of both the dominant cultures of the school and the dominant ethnicity of the school staff which is Irish but equally too, for us also, on the premise of child centred education, on the premise of child protection on the premise of, the understanding of the importance of equipping a person to be an active citizen in Irish society to also reserve that right in our practice to cause some critical frisson as well (Principal 4, page 2, lines 37-50).

6.3.6 Conclusion: Diversity in Curriculum

One of the key findings of the Includ-ED research concerned diversity in the classroom and how practices that reflected and facilitated such diversity benefitted the pupils, the schools and the wider communities they were located in. This theme would also appear to be central to Educate Together's ethos and practice.

All of the respondents were in broad agreement as to the benefits to the pupil of learning about diversity, in diverse environments, and in ways that were sensitive to and reflective of difference. Parents spoke about the need for their children to be prepared to live in a society where such diversity is commonplace. Principals were also concerned that the educational experiences they managed and led in the schools should provide for this. They were also aware of their responsibilities to parents and pupils in this regard and spoke about the practices they engaged in to ensure that respect for and understanding of diversity were reflective of Educate Together's commitments in this area.

This section also dealt with the issue of the values and skills required by teachers to work in Intercultural classrooms and what constituted such spaces. The next section will discuss the findings from the research regarding teacher training and preparation for working in Educate Together schools.

6.4 Category: Teacher Training

The category of Teacher Training for those who work in diverse settings was one that emerged quite clearly from the data. This section is principally concerned with the nature and extent of teacher training provision in the area of Intercultural education and how this impacts on Educate Together schools. Teacher training for those interested in working in diverse settings and for those already employed in the area links across some of the other themes in this research. The quality and extent of Teacher training in this area relates to a range of curricular concerns: understanding and mastery of content knowledge in the area of education in diverse settings; cultural awareness and sensitivity; teacher values and the consistency with organizational values in an area which is strongly based on such values; the need for teachers in such settings to embody such values and for these values to be acted out through pedagogical practice. The themes and sub-themes under the category of Teacher Training are represented in table 6.3

Table 6.3: Category of Teacher Training provision & attendant themes and sub-themes

Category	Theme	Sub-theme
Teacher training	*Negative aspects of Teacher training provision*	Lack of training in the colleges to prepare teachers to work in ET schools
		The denominational orientation of the Teacher Training colleges as an impediment to bedding in an Educate Together strand in their courses/Training colleges
Teacher training	*Positive aspects of Teacher training provision*	General ethos of support in the Schools for NQTs/ Local initiatives instigated by Principals/ Mentoring systems put in place
		The electives in the various colleges of Education
		Examples of models of best practice from other countries

6.4.1 Negative elements of Teacher Training Provision

The topic that was most frequently raised throughout this research process concerned the general lack of training provision for teachers working or intending to work in diverse settings in Ireland. All of the Principals interviewed commented on the lack of preparation of newly qualified teachers to work in Educate Together schools.

Principal 5 claimed that *'everybody new who has come in I'm aware that they haven't got the training from the teacher training colleges'* (Principal 5, page 4, lines 49-50). She also pointed out that *'multiculturalism is in all of those schools on the basis of the demographics of the school. And the teachers aren't receiving training in it'* (Principal 5, page 8, lines 38-40). Parent 3, who also serves on the Board of Management of an Educate Together school, spoke about the lack of training that teachers in her school received in the past *'teacher education didn't necessarily cater as well as it could for Educate Together Schools'* (Parent 3, page 7, lines 28-29). During the course of this research a number for trainee teachers were interviewed in order to examine their experience and understanding of teacher training in diverse educational contexts. One of the trainee teachers felt that the lack of training to work in these contexts was impacting on student teachers career choices *'there are certain friends who would be avoiding applying for jobs in Educate Together schools just because they feel unprepared for the situation from college but I think it is more of a fear because we haven't had much exposure to Educate Together schools'* (TT 1, page 1, lines 51-54). In response to a question on whether her training had prepared her to work in diverse settings TT 1 replied:

> Honestly, I don't think so. I still feel I have a lot to learn from that and I think you learn a lot when you are in the actual classroom setting. But I don't think we learned a lot about it throughout the course of our three years, about handling different situations that may arise and stuff like that – we didn't do much on practical, everyday dealings with a multicultural classroom. That wasn't something that was covered on our course, I don't think. It would have been referred to a good bit throughout different modules but there was never any specific course that the aim of the course was to tackle it (TT 1, page 4, lines 44-49; page 5, lines 1-2).

She went on to say that the teacher-training course that she attended did not prepare her to work in diverse settings *'but I still don't think it's handled like it needs to be for the society that we live in today. It's something that is handled but it isn't core to our course, I don't think'* (TT 1, page 6, lines 36-37). Another trainee teacher concurred and said she didn't think she was being *'adequately educated. I don't know will they go more in depth into the Educate Together in second or third year, but I know for definite that we haven't done anything in first year'* (TT 2, page 3, lines 29-30). A professional working in the area of teacher education questioned whether training for teachers working in these settings might be better aimed at postgraduate level:

> with the intercultural education I think that undergraduates again have

difficulty in engaging in, accepting what a superficial way they will do the optics and the flags and the intercultural days but in terms of building it in to the curriculum, and the way that they teach, that is much harder and I think that that is probably at post graduate level that you can do that (EP 1, page 2, lines 16-20).

She also referred to the lack of engagement with and need for Continuous Professional Development (CPD):

Well you see CPD I think that there is a lot on offer but the take-up isn't huge, so, what is happening there, you know, and all the studies say that there is a need for CPD around Intercultural Ed. Yea, but the take-up of courses is not major (EP 1, page 2, lines 33-35).

A number of interviewees spoke about the prevailing ethos in the teacher training colleges and how this informed the types of programmes that were offered to trainee teachers. Principal 4 stated that *'I would see what is missing in the Irish training colleges as being legacy and hangover and ethos of being denominational'* (Principal 4, page 14, lines 37-38); he added that *'the notion that teacher training colleges should be propagandising and making teachers ready for teaching in a school that is going to culturally transform the Irish population…and there is a hangover of that in all the Irish teacher training colleges'* (Principal 4, page 12, lines 47-52). Another respondent, working in the area of teacher training, spoke about how *'the Colleges of Education are of course denominationally run, you've got Pats, Mary I etc., (which are) denominationally run and so they basically promote and teach their own religious programme'* (EP 2, page 1, lines 12-16) and she added that she regarded this situation as being unfair (EP 2, page 2, line 17).

A recent positive development which has taken place with regard to teacher-training provision for those working in Intercultural education contexts concerns the establishment of a certificate in Ethical and Multi-denominational Education. The principal teacher-training college in Ireland, St Patrick's College and Educate Together have developed this one-year, part-time, post-graduate Certificate, which looks at the concepts underlying Ethical and Multi-denominational Education. The course is mainly designed for teachers and principals and aims to explore concepts such as the Ethical Education in modern Ireland, the values underpinning education in diverse contexts and ethical leadership in multi-denominational schools. This course was offered for the first time in 2012. However, as this qualification is offered at postgraduate level it does not address the broader deficit with regard to training for

intercultural education contexts in Initial Teacher Training degrees on offer in the Colleges.

6.4.2 Positive Elements of Teacher Training Provision

At a local level, Principals spoke about the range of programmes and measures they had introduced in their schools for up-skilling, mentoring support and on-going professional development and the positive environment that existed within their schools for these initiatives.

Principal 5 spoke about how she had brought in outside expertise to facilitate a CPD programme for the teachers in her school and how the idea of teacher up-skilling was important to her practice *'I would have come from the professional training end for teachers and upskilling would be very important to me. So I brought in xxxx on the basis of upskilling and continuous professional development for the teachers to tease out what we are doing'* (Principal 5, page 5 lines 8-10). She referred to the mentoring system, which operated in her school and how this approach was typical of Educate Together schools and was necessary because of the lack of training for teachers who worked in this area:

> the way it works in schools, on the ground, you join an educate together school...as a newly qualified teacher, the teachers in the school will generally support you, if there is that culture there and that culture is prevalent in educate together schools because there is no other place you can go to get the training. So effectively what happens in a school, if somebody new comes in and they are new to the…curriculum, they will be assigned a teacher, either their peer teacher might be well versed in it or somebody else on the staff might be in a mentoring role (Principal 5, page 8, lines 8-14).

Principal 4 gave details of how mentoring worked in his school with a particular emphasis on the curricular elements that were covered in this approach:

> The mentor here takes everybody on Monday afternoon, the NQT's or anybody we identify as being in it, they go and they take a theme each week and they look at the theme. It might be like, say, talking with parents, it might be planning Geography, it might be the school's 123 traffic lights discipline system, they take those theme by theme and xxxx will do…an introduction into the philosophy behind it, implementation issues. She will also visit teachers as they teach and give them a particularly structured contingence and the feedback on it (Principal 4, page 15, lines 8-14).

A noticeable feature of these initiatives is that they were devised locally and were driven by and tailored to specific needs that had been identified in the schools. While

at an organisational level Educate Together offers online continuous professional development courses, which deal with aspects of the Learn Together Curriculum and provides in-service, whole-school training courses on the Learn Together programme, these courses are voluntary. It would perhaps be advisable that Educate Together would work to develop a comprehensive sector-wide training resource with some compulsory elements.

These ideas are tied in with other ideas relating to the organisation's role in providing a more structured, sector-wide form of the Learn Together Curriculum and this has been referred to earlier in this chapter.

Principal 4 also spoke about an induction programme, which had been developed in his school and which served both existing experienced teachers who were coming to work in Educate Together schools for the first time and newly qualified teachers. He also spoke about how his school participated in the National Pilot Project for Teacher Induction (NPPTI) and that the school had:

> Two trained mentors from that programme in the school and those trained mentors, over the period of the person's first, second and third year of teaching in the school, work closely with the teachers to ensure that it is the 1999 curriculum in its pedagogies and its practice and its resourcing that goes on in the school (Principal 4, page 4, lines 39-42).

Although this Principal spoke about the lack of teacher training provision for newly qualified teachers in the area of Intercultural education he did speak in support of the work the colleges did in preparing teachers:

> Well, you know, alongside the elective there are also what we call the foundation courses and the foundation courses – sociology, philosophy and history of education. Now, those…very substantial courses are obligatory to everybody and they are also taken in 1st, 2nd and 3rd year. Now, and I do know what's taught… in philosophy and…in sociology in the colleges. And they are good. So the notion that a person only knows about a multicultural school or a multicultural society because it did or didn't take the elective in interculturalism, that's not fair on the college (Principal 4, page 14, lines 21-28).

He also spoke about how the schools should be able to offer a supportive environment within which new teachers could develop their experience and skills:

> I think perhaps sometimes there is too much made out of the deficit. And what we try and do here is find a safe and secure teaching…we have a strong mentoring system, and we try to provide a safe and secure workplace whereupon a person can relax and, in every regard, reflect on their own strengths and deficiencies (Principal 4, page 14, lines 11-14).

One of the positive points raised during the interviews with Principals concerned the quality of newly qualified teachers coming from other jurisdictions to work in Educate Together schools and how the training they received to work in diverse settings seemed to prepare them well to work in the schools:

> But I have found that many of the people who have taken the xxxx course in a UK college or whatever, I have found them by (virtue) of where they have done their teacher practices and also have some experience of being in a minority or some experience of living and working in another country or whatever, to be considerably more disposed to a lot of the day to day issues that they come across' (Principal 4, page 13, lines 55; page 14, lines 1-4).

Principal 5 referred to the prevailing and historical conditions in the UK for example which allowed for courses to be more grounded in practical experiences and understandings:

> (teacher training to work in diverse settings) is certainly prevalent in the UK in that there is a lot more training available to teachers simply because London ended up being the way it was, Birmingham ended up the way it was and they actually proactively did it (Principal 5, page 12, lines 39-41).

6.4.3 Conclusion to Teacher Training Section

Teacher Training provision, the shortcomings in the area and the orientation of the teacher training colleges have been discussed in some detail in this chapter and in the section devoted to teacher training. Principals highlighted this issue as being one that was a cause for concern across the interviews. A number of initiatives had been implemented at a local level in the schools to ensure that recruitment procedures were developed in order to identify those who might best be suited to work in the sector. The issue of teacher training and continuous professional development impacted on all elements of the teachers' practice in the schools from commitment to and understanding of the ethos to how it might best be implemented and evaluated and many schools had arrived at a number of ways to assist teachers in their initial and on-going professional development. However, it would appear that a system-wide and comprehensive approach needs to be considered in order to ensure the quality of provision.

This section was concerned with the type and extent of training that trainee and current teachers working in Educate Together schools received to work in such settings. It also considered the initiatives that had been implemented at a local level to support newly qualified and experienced teachers in their training requirements and

highlighted a commitment to a CPD philosophy in some of the schools. The findings from this section will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 7.

6.5 Concluding Remarks: Findings Chapter

This chapter presented the findings from the Case Study. It discussed the findings, which fell under the categories of curriculum and teacher training both of which were topics of concern to parents, Principals and education professionals involved in this research. The chapter raised a number of interesting issues concerning the type and extent of parental involvement in Educate Together schools, how parents experienced this and how the schools facilitated it. Other points raised concerned the ways that Educate Together schools provided an inclusive environment which allowed diversity to flourish and the advantages and challenges presented by diverse school going populations. Participants spoke about the role of the Principal in maintaining the ethos and in cultivating the range of relationships within and beyond the school. The role of evaluation and its importance in terms of maintaining the Ethos were discussed as was the self-evaluation process managed by Educate Together. The findings also explored the current status of Teacher Training provision in the area and initiatives at a local level to facilitate Continuous Professional Development for experienced and novice teachers. The chapter also highlighted the difficulties involved in a number of different areas and the shortcomings in the area of support offered at an organisational level to principals, teachers and schools.

The next chapter will focus on some of the main features from the findings from the Case Study and will look at what these mean for Educate Together. It will also offer some suggestions as to future research avenues. The chapter begins with a brief discussion of the findings from the other elements of the research**.**

Chapter 7: Conclusions and Recommendations

The research sought to investigate how inclusive Educate Together is when measured against identified best practice across the EU and was conducted through a number of different research lenses, which have been outlined in earlier chapters. The research moved from global perspectives through to national settings and then focused in on local and specific settings.

The following sections will discuss the findings from the research and will concentrate in particular on the findings from the Case Study element of the research.

7.1 The Includ-ED Project

Changes in the European demographic, social and cultural landscape referred to earlier in this thesis have impacted on many aspects of life and education is one of those areas most affected. Societies and their education systems throughout Europe are dealing with the challenges and benefits presented by diverse populations. The Includ-ED project examined those policies, practices and processes from across European education systems with regard to the inclusive and excluding practices that exist in those systems. It looked at these practices in relation to how they affected marginalised groups and how these impacted on other areas of peoples' lives.

Irish educational contexts have also been subject to the same forces that apply in broader European terms and have changed over the last 20 years and education policy, practice and processes has been slow to react. Lessons can be learned from how these phenomena are experienced in Europe. The Includ-ED research highlights many elements of good practice from across the education systems in Europe in countries that have long histories and experiences of diversity and difference. For example, the research speaks about providing opportunities for increased family and community participation in students' learning activities, both during regular school hours and after school and for the fostering of heterogeneous ability classrooms with reallocation of human resources in the regular classroom and extending learning time through a longer school day and year. The benefits to learners of these kinds of interventions have been highlighted by the research and may be worthy of consideration in the broader educational landscape in Ireland. There are of course obvious resource implications to the successful implementation of such approaches, and these are all the more pertinent in times of economic difficulty. Other less tangible problems are also posed by such interventions, which in some cases could

mean a considerable alteration to current working arrangements and the reconsideration of attitudes to radical change on behalf of those charged with representing teachers' interests. Teacher unions in Ireland have historically been amongst the most active in defence of teachers' working rights and changes to working conditions such as those outlined above may not be so easily accomplished. Nevertheless, these and other examples of good practice from the research are worthy of consideration.

The Includ-ED research also highlights some of the practices in these systems that should be avoided when teaching in diverse education settings (e.g. practices that serve to exclude and stigmatise learners) and lessons from these experiences could also be usefully be applied in Irish contexts. The same economic and systemic constraints would apply but again this should not mean that ideas to ameliorate the negative aspects of these practices are not given at least some consideration.

The Includ-ED findings were considered in terms of how they applied in broader national education settings and this was done in Ireland mainly through a series of workshops. A number of key themes emerged from these workshops and these are outlined in the next section.

7.1.1 The Includ-ED Irish Workshops

The Includ-ED workshops were held to allow a wide range of interested stakeholder to speak about their experiences of the research findings from an Irish perspective and for these stakeholders to offer suggestions as to how some of the initiatives identified in other European education systems could be adapted to work in the Irish context. The workshops considered a number of the themes, which emerged from the European research with a focus on those that were considered to be more relevant in the broader Irish context. These included family and community involvement in the school, language acquisition and diversity in the classroom and inclusion of vulnerable groups. The findings of the Irish workshops in the area of family involvement are particularly interesting and contained a number of initiatives to increase such involvement. The idea of increased involvement by parents in the school and class was broadly welcomed. These ideas highlighted the need to change the culture of the school to facilitate more parental involvement and challenged the traditional notions of teachers as experts and suggested that schools embrace parental involvement in classroom activities. The idea of parents acting and being seen to act

as role models within school settings was particularly interesting and echoed the Includ-ED findings in this regard which found that parents acting in this capacity served to increase the self-esteem of learners and increase the visibility of marginalized groups. Other suggestions included training for teachers in the area of communication with parents and ideas around changing the form of parent/teacher meetings.

The findings regarding diversity also referred to the need for change in the way schools were run and in the philosophies that informed their practices. Increased parental involvement, the focus on the positive aspects of diversity and increasing visibility of minority cultures were also mentioned as ways that diversity recognition could be enhanced in the broader Irish educational context.

A number of barriers to applying the research findings in broader Irish contexts were identified by the workshops. These included philosophical, historical and practical forces. Many participants spoke about the (negative) weight of history and the dominance of particular denominational orientations as impediments to change. Others referred to the lack of willingness to engage in structural reform within the schools as factors, which inhibited progress in these areas while others mentioned the lack of financial and other supports as barriers to change. Changes to long-established sectoral cultural practices would be required if some of the initiatives outlined above were to be successfully implemented and, has been referred to earlier, change of such systemic nature can be difficult to achieve. Nonetheless, it would be important to acknowledge that such changes would need to be considered if the education system is to reflect the diversity in the wider society and if it is to contribute to the creation of a citizenry that embraces such difference.

7.1.2 Educate Together Teachers Online Survey

The online survey of teachers in Educate Together schools sought to gauge how the Includ-ED findings applied in Educate Together schools and from the perspective of the teachers working in the schools with particular regard to the values that they felt were central to their practice. The findings from this phase of the research were important as they allowed the views of teachers to be heard and give an indication of the things that teachers found important. This survey asked question about concepts such as values, which can be difficult to articulate and are ideas that perhaps professionals working in these contexts would regard as innate and which may not

necessarily be questioned or discussed on a regular basis. What emerges from the survey is the amount of activities and examples that are given of inclusive, democratic and participative activities that were promoted by the schools and how these ideas seemed to inform a wide range of the schools processes and which notably were not just confined to the classroom. Teachers were also quite aware and interested in the ways that the values of the school extended beyond the school setting. The findings highlighted what teachers found to be important in their work with regard to the inclusive practices in their schools. The findings in the areas of parental involvement, diversity recognition and the practice of inclusive values echoed the findings concerning good practices in these areas that were highlighted during the Includ-ED project in the broader international and national contexts.

7.2 Conclusions from the Case Study

This research was prompted and informed by a large EU wide research project called Includ-ED. Part of the work of the project was to see how the Includ-ED findings applied in the broader Irish educational setting. The outcomes from this part of the Includ-ED project suggested that further research could be usefully conducted in a specific setting and this resulted in this research being undertaken in a selection of Educate Together schools. As was referred to earlier, Educate Together was chosen because of the principles it espouses regarding inclusive education practices and ethos.

It is important to note at this point that the Includ-ED research was concerned with how inclusionary and exclusionary policies and practices were experienced by specific constituencies and marginalized groupings in European societies. The Case Study did not focus on marginalized groups in Ireland specifically but rather sought to explore how inclusionary and exclusionary practices apply in a particular educational context. This element of the research was also bounded in that only a selection of schools were chosen and then in those schools only certain respondents were chosen for interview and the reasons for these choices and how they were made are outlined in chapter 4, the Methodology chapter, in the section dealing with Sampling.

The Case Study involved a series of semi-structured interviews with a range of stakeholders drawn from a number of Educate Together schools in Dublin city, county and surrounding counties. These stakeholders included Principals, parents of

children attending the schools and professionals working in the area of education in diverse settings.

Principals were chosen for interview because of their position in schools as the interface between Educate Together's declared ethos and the mediation of that ethos in the schools and because of the range of relationships they managed within the school and between the schools and its various communities and stakeholders. One such stakeholder group was the parents of children attending the schools. A small number of those were chosen in order to investigate their experiences and understandings of Educate Together. One of the key features of Educate Together schools is the encouragement and facilitation of a strong parental involvement in all aspects of the schools life. This research attempted to explore what parents' perceptions of this were and again this was an attempt to find out the ways in which Educate Together enacted one of the core principles of its ethos. The material on Educate Together's ethos, how it is taught and evaluated, and the role and influence of the Principal in these activities constituted some of the main findings of this research. In Ireland, 98% of schools are informed by a denominational ethos, which impacts on the educational experiences of pupils in these schools. Educate Together schools offer an alternative to this dominant paradigm with its ethos informed by a multidenominational approach grounded in principles of participation, democracy and inclusiveness and taught through its Learn Together programme. This research sought to determine how successful Educate Together was in achieving this in the schools that participated in the research.

As mentioned above, semi-structured interviews were used in this phase of the research and they allowed the research to determine how the Includ-ED findings applied in the specific Educate Together settings and also allowed for a number of other interesting themes to emerge. The Includ-ED related findings and the emerging themes were outlined in the previous chapter. The following themes emerged from the research and will be discussed in the next sections:

- The extent to which the Includ-ED findings on inclusion and diversity were echoed in the practices and ethos of the Educate Together schools involved in this research.
- The degree to which parental involvement in the schools reflects and is consistent with the Educate Together ethos.

- Evaluation of the ethos and practices would seem to be areas for further and more detailed attention. The fact that Educate Together operates on a values-based ethos places a responsibility on the schools to engage in continuous evaluation of the schools practices and processes. This section will discuss in what ways and to what extent this happened in the schools involved in this research.

- The role of the Principal in Educate Together schools is a complex and varied one. This section will look at how these various roles and responsibilities were discharged in the schools that participated in the research.

- Regarding Teacher Training, the lack of teacher preparation to work in Educate Together schools was a key finding of this stage of the research. This section will consider the initiatives put in place to deal with this deficit at a local level.

These and other issues will now be discussed in more detail. In addition, an overall summary will be given of the main findings and recommendations will be made for possible future research directions.

7.2.1 Diversity and Inclusion

One of the key themes of the Includ-ED project concerned the benefits that a diverse and inclusive school environment brought to both the school community and the broader society within which it was situated. Educate Together would regard itself as being an example of such a diverse and inclusive school setting in Ireland. Parents, principals and educational professionals alike spoke about how the schools contributed to pupils' understanding of a diverse society and also how such an education prepared the child to live an active life in such a society. Respondents spoke about how diversity requires an engagement with difference and how this engagement leads to growth (see interview with EP 2, page 3).

Parents also referred to the challenges to their perceptions and preconceptions presented by engaging with diversity and how this could bring benefits to individuals and communities (see interview with Parent 5, page 11). Across the interviews there was a sense that the schools involved in the research were places where the inclusive practices engaged in by the school both within and beyond the gates held value for the

pupils and the communities they lived in and that this was recognized by the Principals and the parents of children attending the schools.

The parents who participated in this research were, in the main, quite clear on their understanding of what Educate Together schools offered their children and how the experience of these types of educational approaches prepared their child to understand and to live in, a diverse society. Some had made the choice to send their children to the schools based on their regard for the distinctive ethos of the schools and on the pedagogical approaches that the schools professed to use. Parents were also reasonably clear about the contribution that such approaches can make to the broader society in terms of fighting racism and xenophobia and creating a society based on an understanding of and respect for difference. However, they were also aware that because the schools operated within such a defined value framework it sometimes could be difficult to satisfy the range of interpretation and understandings of what Educate Together schools should be offering. Parents and Principals also referred to the difficulties in dealing with the expectations of a wide constituency of interests represented by a diverse population. They referred to situations where the ethos and the practice diverged and this was a common occurrence across the schools involved in the research. Many of the issues concerning this divergence related to cultural and religious differences and problems with communication of a direct kind. There were instances where parents and schools failed to communicate effectively around matters to do with pupil behaviour, attendance and participation at meetings, and participation in other school activities and structures. Other difficulties concerned the variety of understandings of fundamental principles of the Educate Together ethos. This was particularly difficult where interpretation of the ethos ran counter to the broader accepted definition and understanding in this area and led in some cases to misunderstandings and unrealistic expectations on behalf of parents.

Another difficulty arising from an absence of a shared understanding of the ethos underpinning the schools would be the expectations of various cultural groups of what such an education provider should offer. Educate Together might usefully reconsider how it articulates its principles in the public forum and how it communicates the essence of its ethos and how this operates within the schools themselves. Some Principals remarked on the misinterpretation by parents of what the schools believed in and what practices it should engage in. One of these issues concerned the role and responsibility of the school in administering discipline. Another area of

misunderstanding concerned the visibility of religion and the freedom of religious expression in the schools. Principals spoke about instances where parents felt that religion should not be taught about at all in their schools while others felt that certain subjects should not be taught as these were in conflict with their religious views. Dealing with more fundamental expressions of religious beliefs and managing the inevitable conflicts that arose because of this consumed the time and energy of Principals. It is also an area that they did not feel comfortable dealing with because of its highly personal nature, they lacked confidence in their own expertise and knowledge about a variety of faiths and they also felt unsupported at an organisational level to deal with these situations. Matters of this kind were in some cases central to peoples' reasons for choosing Educate Together schools and as such people felt quite strongly about the subject. This also presented difficulties for Principals, as they had to uphold the schools position on its core beliefs in the face of some parents' views of the elements they felt constituted a multidenominational school, and these views were sometimes at odds with the schools' ideas in this regard.

Issues also arose with regard to the areas of management and organisation within the schools and some parents commented on how some of the decisions made and the ways these were arrived at and communicated were at odds with a democratic, participative, inclusive ethos and that such approaches to management should be less reflective of more traditional, top-down models of school management. A number of Principals spoke about the tensions they felt were contained between the role of maintaining an open, democratic and participative model and the need to manage effectively in organizations, which contained a wide range of beliefs, cultures and understandings. Principals spoke about the difficulty of accommodating such a variety of interests that existed in their schools without having to resort to approaches, which would be associated with more centrally controlled management structures. The lack of an organizational support structure for Principals across a range of practical and philosophical areas was referred to on a number of occasions. It is a topic that Educate Together would be wise to examine and make efforts to address sooner rather than later. Principals in the schools perhaps have too wide a range of responsibilities as managers with the result that the equally important responsibility of leading is overlooked and the lack of structured support is possibly damaging in the longer term. It would be important that issues of this kind are closely monitored. An education system so clearly predicated on a particular, defined set of principles should ensure

that adherence to such principles is given sufficient regard across the range of activities that the school engages in and not just in its core teaching and learning processes. If this does not happen, the schools are in danger of losing sight of the values that inform their ethos and of ultimately undermining such values. Educate Together would need to guard against such a possibility and should devise mechanisms to address perceived discrepancies between what it espouses and what it practices.

7.2.2 Parental and Community Involvement

Another prominent theme that emerged from the interviews and which featured in the Includ-ED research concerned the extent and quality of parental and community involvement in the schools. While the experiences of parents and principals in this regard was generally very positive and mutually appreciated there were a number of interviewees who were concerned about aspects of this. The Includ-ED research mentions five types of parental involvement and it would be useful to briefly re–visit these here and to use them as a framework within which to view how the Educate Together schools in this research operated in this regard. The types identified by the research were:

Informative participation where parents are informed about the school activities, school functioning, and the decisions, which have already been made; they do not take part in those school decisions and meeting with the parents consist of informing families about these decisions. From the interviews with parents and Principals this type of parental participation did not feature in the schools involved in this research as the sole means of parental involvement. It did however take place as part of the communication processes operating within the schools. As has been referred to in this thesis parental involvement in Educate Together schools is subject to a range of forces. The diverse nature of the school population and the cultural and historical experiences of some of the parents and pupils meant the conventional communication triangle of school, parent and pupil was not always easy to establish and maintain. Some parents were reluctant because of language and cultural issues to have any dealings at all with the school. In those cases, and there was a number of instances of these, Principals had to resort to communicating with parents through their children about decisions that the parents had no input into. These communications usually took the form of written and online newsletters. In some schools communication of this

kind was a more common occurrence because of the demographic profile of the school. Principals were not happy that this was the only communication with the parents and they also felt that on a longer-term basis that problems would arise because of it but they did feel that it was better than no communication at all.

The second type of parental involvement, characterized by Includ-ED as Consultative participation, sees parents having a limited impact on decision-making, participation is based on consultation with families and the parents participate through the school's statutory bodies. This type of participation was a feature in all of the schools in this research and respondents spoke about how this type of engagement was encouraged by the school.

A further level of involvement as characterized by Includ-ED is Decisive participation. This involves community members participating in decision-making processes by becoming representatives in decision-making bodies. This again was a feature of some of the schools in this research and parents were involved in decision-making committees in the schools and were encouraged to do so. All of the parents interviewed during this research were currently or had in the past been members of a range of committees and groups within their schools. This engagement was reflective of the activism that typified some of the parent cohort in Educate Together schools. Those parents who were involved in this research were vocal, involved and very active in their children's schools. They also reported that their children were aware of and happy about such involvement and the parents also commented on how they felt this involvement gave their children greater interest in the school and its processes. There was a downside to some parents' experiences in this regard. Because of the high level of involvement a lot of demands were put on parents and they felt participation in committees and Boards of Management in particular were quite taxing and carried heavy responsibilities. Another negative element cited by some of the parents concerned the political nature of such engagement. One parent in particular became quite disillusioned with the level of infighting and discord and felt that the atmosphere in her schools management was driven by a select group of quite dominant individuals and that this experience ran counter to what she expected from an Educate Together school. Because parental involvement is in principle highly regarded by Educate Together, one which it regards as a cornerstone of its philosophy, it would be important to ensure that processes and systems are established to ensure that such engagement is supported, monitored and valued and that parents

who work in this capacity in the school feel protected and their contribution not taken for granted.

With regards to Evaluative participation, where family and community members participate in the overall school evaluation, this was not referred to by any of the participants in this research. However, an interview was conducted with an Educate Together staff member involved with the Ethos self-evaluation process and she spoke about how such parental involvement in the process was a key feature of that process and was encouraged and supported. She spoke about how some parents were quite active in engaging with such activities and were very keen to be so involved. She felt that it was an important expression of the organization's ethos that an evaluation process carried out in to parental understanding and experience of ethos in their particular schools would involve parents in a meaningful way. None of the parents involved in this research had been involved in a school self-evaluation process. The self-evaluation process is another example of an activity that Educate Together should manage and carefully maintain if it wishes to give action to some of its core principles.

The final type of participation, Educative participation, has family and community members participating in students' learning activities, both during regular school hours and after school. This aspect of involvement, while considered by the Includ-ED research to be of most benefit to schools and pupils, was the one that probably presented the most challenges in a practical sense to the schools involved in this research. Principals spoke about the difficulties involved in securing meaningful parental involvement for reasons of language and cultural barriers and restrictions on engagement on religious grounds. All of these reasons militated against parental involvement at this level in the schools. This is an issue for the Educate Together sector given their espoused and clearly articulated commitment to parental involvement. However, there were numerous examples of parental involvement in the schools in class and extra-curricular activities. One of the parents involved in the research, gave examples of how he had been asked to give a talk on a particular cultural practice that he was familiar with and one which members of the school staff were not sufficiently knowledgeable about or experienced in. Principals gave a number of examples of how parents were asked to engage in similar activities in their schools and the benefits this brought to the pupils and staff and also to the members of particular ethnic and cultural groups in the school whose identities were affirmed

and given value. This is another aspect of the work that Educate Together needs to ensure is fostered and managed and is arguably the most important type of parental involvement because of the role it plays in combatting prejudice and misconceptions about other cultural groups.

7.2.3 Evaluation

Another of the themes that emerged during the interviews concerned the role and relevance of evaluation in Educate Together contexts. This was not a topic that was prominent in the Includ-ED research but was a theme that was considered by Principals in particular, to be of some importance. Evaluation in the Educate Together schools involved in this research took a number of forms. These included:

- A self-evaluation process, facilitated by Educate Together, to allow the school to evaluate its core principles and which involved a broad range of the school's stakeholders.
- Locally devised and implemented initiatives.

The questions regarding how education systems and processes influence society and are influenced by society are central to this research. How Educate Together schools engage in these processes has been the focus of the research as is the matter of how the schools see their principles in relation to their practice on the ground. This prompts a further question of whether Educate Together needs to re-articulate its vision in all that it does on an ongoing basis or whether the schools are like many other schools in that there is a local interpretation of the curriculum.

These questions would seem to be particularly important in the context of an education provision that is based on such a clearly articulated set of values and principles. If the value based system is so important then surely there is greater responsibility on Educate Together schools to ensure, through continuing evaluation, that the values are being enacted? Engaging in progressive evaluation practice would also be an expression of and consistent with a commitment to such principles (additionally, a desire to engage in continuous improvement and the development of skills to do this are hallmarks of a kind of an 'enactive Citizenship education' the principles of which are mirrored in many elements of Educate Together's philosophy).

While the self-evaluation process is comprehensive, potentially beneficial and serves as a good illustration of the very thing it is trying to measure (an enacted ethos), the process itself is not without its drawbacks and limitations.

Not every school buys in to the ethos self-evaluation process and there is a danger that those schools that do are perhaps already deeply committed to improvement and may not be the schools that are most likely to need to engage in such a process. Also, because of the understandable reluctance on behalf of Educate Together to become involved in a follow up process to a self-evaluation, the responsibility for ensuring that any difficulties that are identified are highlighted, or for ensuring that changes that need to be made actually do take place, lies with people who may not be politically positioned to enact such changes or sufficiently skilled to do so. One of the consequences of conducting evaluations which are transparent and which offer the prospect of positive change to organisations is that provision for such changes needs to be made: it is inadvisable to ask people to engage in a change process which holds out the prospect for change and then fail to at least attempt to deliver such change. Such failures undermine the credibility of the organisation, those who initiate such change programmes and any future change processes. A related problem is the apparent lack of any sanctions at a broader organisational level if schools identify problem areas and no action is taken. Another difficulty lies with the elective element of the self-evaluation process: schools are not compelled to engage in this process.

The question of how Educate Together sees itself in relation to how its practices and principles are lived out and how these are then communicated to parents and to the wider society are complex. One of the ways in which these questions can be answered is through a robust, transparent and accessible participative evaluation process. Educate Together schools have employed a model for the self-evaluation of their ethos through a process which attempts to be consistent with its principles. The schools themselves have also devised a number of strategies at local level, which enable them to evaluate their teaching and learning practices and have taken measures to ensure that these are rigorous and inclusive.

Principals mentioned some of the local initiatives which they had devised and which they used to ensure that the core elements of the ethos were enacted and maintained. These included the establishment of sub-committees (see interview with Principal 5, page 4) and some interesting initiatives by Principal 4 in his school where he speaks about having in-depth discussions about how elements of the ethos are observed. He

gives an example of discussing inclusion and how these discussions are prompted and informed by academic readings, which the staff engages with (see interview with Principal 4, page 2).

Evaluation in education contexts is carried out for many reasons. Easterby-Smith (1994) claims that evaluation in these contexts has four principal purposes: to prove, to improve, to control and to learn. He suggests that some of these purposes, for example to prove and to control are more traditional, more common and easier to implement but are perhaps a little limited in helping organisations to grow and develop. Evaluation which seeks to improve and evaluation which is designed for organisations to incorporate evaluation processes and an evaluation mentality into their practice are more demanding on the individuals in these organisations, more difficult to implement but ultimately more beneficial in the long run to organisations and practitioners alike. The forms of evaluation carried out by Educate Together are an attempt to adhere to its guiding philosophy and are conducted in the spirit of evaluation as an emancipatory and empowering process, which permeates the curriculum practice in the schools.

7.2.4 The Role of the Principal in Educate Together Schools

The role of the Principal in Irish Primary schools is, as the literature suggests, a multifaceted one. The research found that this was also the case in the participating Educate Together schools. Principals were responsible for, amongst other things, teacher recruitment, relationship building within and outside the school, facilitating and encouraging parental involvement, management at board of management level and ensuring that teacher training and CPD were provided for new and existing staff. The most difficult and perhaps the most important role involved responsibility for ensuring that the core ethos of the school was preserved and that it informed all of the schools activities. The Principals involved in this research were marked by their commitment to the Educate Together ethos and not just in practical terms. They all articulated an understanding of the importance of the ethos to the identity of the schools and a clear appreciation and understanding of some of the broader philosophical ideas and societal contexts within which the schools operated. Some spoke of fostering relationships with outside agencies in order to keep informed of developments in the area of Intercultural education while others talked about their own continuous professional development, the importance of engaging in such

activity and how that fed back in to their practice. Principals referred to the use of readings and discussions with staff members in order to develop understanding and policy within the school about areas of education in diverse settings. Some Principals spoke about the ways in which they engaged in evaluation activities to ensure that the ethos of the school was being implemented and reference was made in a number of interviews to the quality of teacher training in the area and the measures they had introduced in order to address what some perceived as a deficit in this regard. There were a number of difficulties raised by parents regarding ensuring that democratic principles were observed in the schools particularly around access to decision making. Other parents remarked on how the principles could be only aspirational in reality and were prepared to accept this as they felt the overall benefits of the school, outweighed issues of this kind.

That Principals play a pivotal role in Educate Together schools is without question, acting as they do as the medium through which the ethos is communicated and overseen. What is less clear is the level of support that they receive in this role and how easy it is for Principals to access such support. Further and more focused research in to the role of the Principal in these settings is a recommendation of this research and could serve to explore the responsibilities of the Principal and how best they could be supported in discharging these.

7.2.5 Teacher Training

There was universal agreement across the interviews regarding the lack of dedicated, compulsory programmes for trainee teachers to prepare them for working in diverse settings. Trainee teachers spoke about how their courses did not prepare them to work in such settings and how they would be less inclined to opt to work in such settings because of this. One teacher trainer spoke about how this type of training was perhaps more suited to post-graduate courses. Some Principals referred to how graduates arriving from countries, which had more and longer experience of a diverse society, were better prepared and attuned to work in the schools. All of the Principals had introduced measures in their schools, which provided opportunities for CPD for new and existing teachers. Others referred to mentoring and induction schemes that they had introduced and how these were attempts to address the problem.

A number of measures need to be considered in this area. The first is the need for Teacher training courses to fully integrate Diversity education models and precepts in

to their programmes. Work has already been done by Educate Together in trying to achieve this in the Colleges of Education and while it has been successful in devising a Post Graduate Certificate in the general area, work still needs to continue to ensure that such programmes are introduced in to general, initial teacher training programmes at undergraduate level. It would also be important that Educate Together takes a more robust approach to this at an organizational level and to perhaps consider introducing CPD courses and resources that had some compulsory elements.

Another finding from the research concerned the amount of direction and structure provided by Educate Together at an organizational, sector-wide level and concerning different aspect of the schools work and this ties in with the observations regarding Teacher Training. An example of this would be in the area of a clearly defined and articulated curriculum *implementation* framework. Principals spoke about a lack of direction at this level with regard to applying such a framework. They felt that such an approach would help to more clearly identify what Educate Together schools offered to parents and to the broader society. Such an initiative would be a support to new and existing teachers by offering guidance, direction and a bank of resources, experience and expertise that the school community could draw upon. This would also be important in the light of the dearth of specific teacher training provided by the teacher training colleges and by Educate Together in the areas of initial teacher training and continuous professional development. Principals referred to local mentoring and training initiatives in their schools and Educate Together has devised and offered a range of online supports and resources but there was a feeling that these could be enhanced, developed and given a more visible and prominent place at a national level by Educate Together.

Ross (2003) and Devine (2005) referred to the importance of having the schools teaching staff reflect the diversity faced in the classroom. At the moment there are difficulties in recruiting teachers from other jurisdictions because of the Irish language requirement in Irish teacher education contexts and this matter needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

7.3 Dimensions of Multicultural Education

As referred to at the beginning of chapter 7 the data generated in this research was also considered in terms of Banks' five dimensions of Multicultural education (2011) and these dimensions are considered below in terms of the research findings.

1) **Content Integration, which involves the use of examples, data, and information from a variety of cultures and groups to illustrate key concepts, principals, generalizations, and theories in their subject area or discipline**. It is difficult to establish the extent to which content integration as described by Banks took place in the classroom activities in the schools in this research, as observation of classroom practice was not undertaken during the research. However, a number of points can be made about the use of such material in the schools in general and how this attempted to reflect the range of cultures found in the schools. Every school involved in the research had a dedicated space, usually prominently positioned in the entrance hall or foyer of the school, where material relating to the breath of cultural and ethnic representation in the school was displayed. Principals also spoke about a range of events where the different religious and cultural identities found in the school were given expression (for example the religious festivals of the religions in each of the schools were celebrated and the school environment reflected this in a series of displays and other artwork. Principals spoke about how these celebrations would provide a theme for the general teaching and learning activities that took place during these celebrations). Principals and parents commented on how representatives from the different ethnic and cultural groups within their schools presented on elements of their culture to the school staff and pupils.

Overall the research found that many examples and instances of and from a variety of cultures were used in the schools to illustrate ideas and to support teaching and learning activities at a whole school level. However, there is a final note of caution to be sounded in regard to this. The schools need to consider how to incorporate a range of cultures and identities in to their curriculums in ways that have real depth and meaning and go beyond tokenism. There is a sense that some schools feel that celebrating a range of religious festivals or hosting World Food days in the school is a sufficient commitment to recognising and teaching about diversity but schools need to guard against this tendency. As referred to earlier, King (2004, p.72) speaks of the need for transformative teachers to develop pedagogies that really celebrate diversity and this would be important in Educate Together schools if we are to avoid what some in Irish educational contexts have called the 'samba, saris and samosas' approach to education.

2) **The Knowledge Construction Process: this describes the ways that knowledge is created and how that process is determined by the context within which it occurs.** Here it could be said that in the Educate Together schools that participated in the research the Principals spoke about the efforts made to employ a range of methodologies that were encouraging and respectful of diversity and how the schools also tried to enact some of the key principles i.e. a participative, democratic approach throughout the teaching and learning process and in how the schools developed and maintained the key relationships within the school between teacher and pupil and between the school and parents.

3) **Prejudice Reduction is concerned with those lessons and activities used by teachers to help students to develop positive attitudes toward different racial, ethnic, and cultural groups.** All of the parents and Principals involved in the research spoke about the important role played by the teaching and ethos of the schools in creating an understanding of the ethnic and cultural difference that exists in modern societies. Inviting and including representatives from such communities was shown by the include-ED research to have benefits for learners from migrant and minority groups as this served to dispel myths about the 'other' and allowed for such groups to share in and celebrate achievement of members of their fellow group members. This type of parental involvement was a feature in all of the schools that participated in this research and a number of examples of such involvement have been outlined in earlier chapters. This type of involvement allowed for prejudice and preconceived ideas about those from minority backgrounds to be tackled and addressed.

4) **An Equity Pedagogy: An equity pedagogy exists when teachers modify their teaching in ways that facilitate the academic achievement of students from diverse racial, cultural, and social-class groups.** Educate Together schools claim to enact a philosophy, which places respect and understanding of diversity and inclusion at the core of its activities. However, as has also been outlined, it was difficult in this piece of research to determine in what ways and to what extent teachers had modified their teaching to facilitate the academic development of the types of students outlined above because the research did not involve interviews with or observation of teachers in classroom settings. What can be stated is that Principals were aware of the need for such pedagogical approaches and claimed that they facilitated and supported such approaches.

5) **An Empowering School Culture and Social Structure which describes the process of restructuring the culture and organization of the school so that students from diverse racial, ethnic, and social-class group will experience educational equality and empowerment.** Educate Together schools claim to operate within an empowering philosophy which celebrates and nurtures the diversity found within the schools and seeks to create citizens to live in these diverse contexts. The ways in which it does this varied from school to school in this research and the research has attempted to capture a flavour of this. The schools did however attempt to create a whole-school culture, which informed all of the schools activities. Principals remarked on the importance of embedding such values throughout the curriculum and that such values should not be confined to one subject area.

7.4 Summary of Key Findings

In attempting to determine how inclusive Educate Together was, when measured against best practice across the European Union, the following main points could be made:

ET works really well in the schools in:

- How it incorporates its principles into its teaching approaches
- How it encourages active participation by a range of stakeholders and particularly with parents and pupils
- The ways in which it sensitively deals with the range of diverse religious and cultural difference it experiences in its schools
- The ways in which it promotes and develops an active citizenship through its teaching and general practices

ET needs to look at how it can:

- Improve the kind and degree of integration into local communities
- Develop the mechanisms it has for managing and evaluating how the core principles are being enacted and incorporated in to practice
- Bridge the apparent gap between the management role and the leadership role of the Principal in Educate Together schools and assist Principals in discharging their many and complex duties

- Ensure that the high level and standard of parental involvement is monitored and maintained

7.5 Recommendations for Further Research

The following list of recommendations outlines some possible future research avenues, which are suggested by this research.

- Seek the perspectives of Boards of Management (including those of parents who sit on the Boards) in a range of schools to further explore some of the issues raised in this research process.

- Conduct research into the role and responsibilities of the Principal in Educate Together schools with a particular emphasis on the difference between the roles of management and leadership and the challenges and opportunities presented by such responsibilities.

- Develop a Whole School Evaluation type of approach to the Learn Together Curriculum in a school or a range of schools in order to build on Educate Together's self-evaluation process.

- With regard to Educate Together pupils' transition from primary to secondary school how do some of Educate Together's core principles of democracy, parental involvement, student engagement and so on carry over into secondary school settings that do not follow Educate Together's principles and what is the impact of this on the pupils?

- As has been pointed out in this thesis the voice of the child and the teacher did not feature to any real extent in the research. This was due to a number of reasons, which have already been outlined. However, it would be essential that such research would take place at both a local level and at the more ambitious and challenging national level. This research could look at a range of different elements all of which would be necessary to provide a complete picture of the teaching and learning experience that takes place in Educate Together schools. Suggested areas for further research would include:
  - Approaches to teaching and learning in the schools and how these are or can be adapted to work in diverse settings. This would involve a range of research methods including observations within and beyond classrooms to try to capture the breadth of curriculum approaches.

- An exploration of the key triangle of relationships in the schools, that is the relationships that exist between teacher, pupil and parents.
- Pupils' understanding and experience of education in the schools.
- Teachers' understanding of the role of values and beliefs in teacher training and practice with a particular emphasis on how these ideas operate in diverse settings.
- Teacher's understandings and experience of the knowledge types and frameworks from the literature, which inform good practice in the area and which have been identified in other education systems. Banks identified four categories of knowledge that teachers needed in order to work in culturally diverse schools

  1. Knowledge of the major paradigms in multi-cultural education.

  2. Knowledge of the major concepts in multi-cultural education.

  3. A historical and cultural knowledge of major ethnic groups.

  4. Pedagogical knowledge about how to adapt curriculum and instruction to the unique needs of students from diverse cultural, ethnic, and/or social class groups (Banks, 1994)

  These ideas are interesting in two respects: one concerns the apparent

  distance between Banks ideas and the current reality in Irish schools and Teacher Training colleges; the second point is that Banks' four types of knowledge reflect what Educate Together claims it is trying to do through its teaching and general curriculum approaches.

  Again it is worth mentioning that while knowledge of the kind outlined by Banks above would appear to be necessary to work in such contexts as Educate Together schools the extent to which it is practiced in the schools and the level of such knowledge, which individual teachers possessed, was not determined during this research and it would be worthwhile to consider research, which would look at these dynamics.

7.6 Recommendations and Concluding Remarks

Educate Together endeavours to enact the ethos and principles that guide its practice. In general, this research found that it does this and it does it reasonably well. Because its ethos and principles are so important to the parents, Principals, teachers, and pupils

and because of the commitment Educate Together makes in this regard to the broader society, it is essential that these be maintained. Some of the ways that this can happen are outlined below:

1. Through constant evaluation within the schools at a locally and nationally managed level. The current self-evaluation model developed and facilitated by Educate Together is an excellent resource and one that is gradually being rolled out to all of the schools. The self-evaluation model could perhaps be built upon and used to devise and develop a model for an evaluation process, which had negotiated, compulsory elements. It would be important that any compulsory national Educate Together evaluation model would be consistent with the principles that it espouses and that the approach would involve well-defined inclusive, participative processes and practices.
Educate Together is a robust, working model of an approach to inclusive education and a response to modern diverse societies but it is important that the standards it has set are upheld.

2. The ethos and principles can also be maintained by focusing on newly qualified and existing teacher training, preparation to work in these settings and Continuous Professional Development. Educate Together is currently working with the Colleges of Education in this regard and the locally devised arrangements that have been developed and implemented in the schools and outlined in this research are examples of creative approaches to teacher training and development. Educate Together needs to continue its work of lobbying to secure a more prominent place for modules and programmes specific to the area of Intercultural Education in the teacher training colleges.

3. The resources that Educate Together has, such as the goodwill and commitment of parents, the leadership provided by the Principals and the commitment and resourcefulness of the teachers are all rich and need to be nurtured and built on and mechanisms put in place to ensure this happens. Programmes could be developed and managed to also ensure that the relationships, which Educate Together fosters within and beyond the school environment and which are central to the success of the Educate Together model, are maintained.

4. The fourth element in ensuring that the principles and ethos of Educate Together are maintained concerns the role of research. This piece of research has made a modest contribution to research in this area but more focused research needs to take place and more research is needed in the area generally. More local projects should be developed and more longitudinal research approaches need to be taken. There should also be an element of locally devised and implemented research projects involving Teachers, Principals, parents and other stakeholders. Participatory Action Research models would appear to be particularly suitable for this purpose and context and researchers from the Third level institutions, which Educate Together has developed relationships with, could provide training and support for these and other types of research.

The models of good practice that Educate Together engages in to apply its ethos and principles in authentic educational environments are worthy of dissemination in wider national and international education contexts. Also worthy of recording and perhaps disseminating in national contexts particularly would be the ways Educate Together has operated as an organization and as a lobbying and advocacy group as it tried to bring about change in the traditional education sector. This might be a useful resource for groups and organisations working to similar agendas.

A strategic approach to research in all of these areas would greatly assist in this. This would also support Educate Together in its ongoing development and lobbying work, recent examples of which are the development of an Educate Together second-level model and contributions to the Forum on Patronage and Pluralism in the Primary Sector. Future work of this kind would be supported by continuous, robust research projects.

5. One of the findings that emerged from the research concerned the level of support and guidance that Educate Together offered to the schools in a range of areas. These areas included a curriculum framework that might apply in all of the schools; a sector wide teacher training and continuous professional development model and support for the role of the Principal with its dual responsibilities of managing and leading in such complex environments.

It is fairly clear from the research that Principals occupy a pivotal role in the schools and are responsible for interpreting and providing for the enactment of the ethos in the schools. It would be very important that Educate Together as an organisation does not lose sight of this and provides the necessary mechanisms to ensure that this crucial role continues to be peopled by staff of the calibre of those who currently occupy those positions in the schools that took part in this research.

This thesis has looked at how the Irish education system has responded to the changes that have taken place socially and demographically over the last 20 years in Ireland. Ireland has been transformed from a closed, inward looking society, dominated by a particular denominational perspective, a force that exerted great control over the mores and values of the society. It did this through a number of media but had a particular influence on the education system at all levels: management, curriculum development and implementation and teacher training. Various government and laws underpinned this influence over the last 100 years. This dominance began to be challenged in the early 70s when people who wished to educate their children outside of these denominational parameters sought to challenge the Catholic Church's hegemony in the area of education and it was from this challenge that the Educate Together movement begun.

As this thesis has outlined, the last 20 years has witnessed profound changes taking place in Ireland. These changes are reflective of changes at a wider level in Europe and beyond and are due to a number of reasons such as changes in law and technology, which have resulted in increased globalisation, and greater and freer movement of people, capital and ideas within Europe and beyond. Ireland was not immune to these forces, which led to a rapid and major growth in economic productivity and wealth, a phenomenon known as the Celtic Tiger. One of the key features of the Celtic Tiger was the massive increase in migration to Ireland from a number of countries in Europe and many other countries and this in turn led to a change in the demographic constitution of the society itself and to the population within its schools. The phenomenon of mass movements of people because of economic reasons was not exclusive to Ireland. In order to gauge the effect of such movements the EU developed a number of different research projects to look at how these changes were experienced in educational settings. One such project was the Includ-Ed project and the details of this have been laid out in this thesis. Part of that

project's remit was to determine how its findings about particular practices in education systems in the EU applied in local contexts and this led directly to this particular piece of research on how the inclusive practices in particular that were identified by Includ-ED played out in a range of Educate Together schools.

Educate Together makes a number of claims with regard to the educational experience it offers to children. This research found that in the participating schools the principles that underpin such claims were considered to be the foundations that the schools philosophies, practices and relationships were built on. The research also found that it was not always possible for the schools to abide by its governing principles and this was due to a variety of reasons: lack of training for teachers to work in the area and the absence of a uniform system of continuous professional development; misunderstandings on the part of parents and principals with regard to how the schools philosophy should operate in practice; an over-reliance on local autonomy and a lack of direction and support from Educate Together at an organisational level with regard to curricular frameworks, evaluation of practice, management and leadership roles of Principals and the fostering and maintenance of some of the relationships between the school and some of its key stakeholders. Notwithstanding these considerable issues it can be said that the schools involved in this research were also places, which seemed to strive to enact their philosophies and which attempted to place the child at the centre of their activities. The parents involved in the research were committed to and supportive of the ideals that Educate Together espoused. The Principals involved were also committed to and understanding of the ideas that drive provision in the schools while also being aware of the practical and philosophical difficulties the schools have in operating in the current social and economic climate. They all had considerable experience of working in the traditional education sector and were aware of the difficulties involved in that sector being able to embrace and respond to cultural transformation and to move away from working practices that have been dominated by a particular denominational perspective; it is perhaps unrealistic to expect the education system and the broader society in which it is located to be able to engage in such transformation and absorb and react rapidly to the changes that have taken place in Ireland in the last two decades.

At the moment Educate Together as a movement represents only a tiny fraction of the schools in the Primary sector and its influence is confined to the margins. However, the ways in which it tries to articulate and enact an inclusive, democratic ideology

could provide a framework for the rest of the education system as it tries to respond to the changing face of Irish society.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Includ-ED Irish Conference Workshop Findings

The First Includ-ED Finding concerned language acquisition

The research found that:

- *Incorporation* of the language and culture of minority pupils contributes towards their cultures being valued and this encourages the empowerment of the pupils;
- Multilingual approaches seen to be beneficial;
- Countries with relatively small performance differences between immigrant and native students tend to have *well-established language support programmes* (OECD, 2006c: 3);
- One factor that increases the risk of failure at school for the immigrant population is the scarcity of support programmes for language learning.

A cursory examination of these findings alone would immediately point up a number of difficulties in the Irish context. In 2007 Ireland was already heading in to the early stages of the current economic downturn and there was a focus on resources and support provision in language acquisition teaching.

The following outlines the main findings from the workshops conducted during the Conference.

The workshops began by considering the question of the participants understanding of 'language of instruction' and how this was understood in Irish contexts.

Some referred to the concept as being about 'pitching' instruction at the correct level but were unsure as to how best to measure this. Others referred to the language of instruction as more than just words and suggested that it should also take into account images, symbols and graphics. Another workshop felt it was 'the combination of verbal, non-verbal communication enhanced by ICT, music and multi-lingual resources'. It was also suggested that the concept was not just about the instruction that takes place in the classroom but the language demonstrated throughout the formal, informal and hidden curriculum.

When considering the question of the policies that enable acquisition of 'language of instruction' participants offered that the introduction of special needs assistants into classrooms was seen as a policy that enables acquisition of language, however, the fact that the majority of them were not trained as language tutors actually inhibits the acquisition. Policies and legislation at EU level could help and recognised guidelines across member

states was another suggestion as well as the benefits of collaboration through partnerships with other organisations. There was a range of policies that inhibited acquisition of 'language of instruction' e.g. it was suggested that mono-cultural schooling systems and faith based schooling inhibit the acquisition of language of instruction. Lack of funding was also mentioned as necessary to assist migrants in learning the language and getting accreditation for it so that they can integrate into society and their children into schools. Lack of teacher training was a strong feature and the need for teacher education to prepare teachers for diverse classrooms as well as the need for special needs assistance and language tutors to be correctly trained in teaching language of instruction to varying age groups using relevant resource materials. It was also suggested that a multi-lingual approach over a monolingual one is necessary which reiterates the findings of the Includ-Ed project.

Finally, it was suggested that teachers need incentive to sign up to in-service training which is often outside working hours, unpaid and thus unattended.

Recommendations for policies that encourage 'language of instruction' were:
- A multi-lingual approach;
- Promotion of community based projects and collaboration;
- Improve access to language schools for migrants;
- Improve Initial Teacher Education approaches – values and skills;
- Learn from research and other EU and US models;
- Quality of training for support teachers and language tutors;
- EU guidelines and legislation for member states.

The Includ-ED Findings on diversity recognition were also discussed by the workshops

These included:
- Participation of members of cultural minorities in the classroom promotes their recognition and benefits all pupils;
- Invisibility of cultural minorities in the *curriculum* does not reflect current societal realities;
- Educational centres should not identify themselves with any specific religious tradition but should allow diversity to exist amongst pupils;
- The secularisation of the space allows expression of diverse religious traditions and identities to occur;
- Adverse consequences of an ethnocentric perspective.

The participants reflected on their understanding of the term diversity and what that meant in Irish educational contexts. People thought that the concept of diversity was very broad and that it went beyond the nine grounds of equality set out in the Equality Acts as it incorporated differences such as learning styles, intelligences and personal experiences. The (then) current cultural and economic situation in Ireland was also a common theme with participants highlighting that discussion on the concept of diversity and the need to address diversity is so new in the Irish context as a result of the 'Celtic Tiger' economy and the recent influx of new-nationals. However, others referred to the importance of remembering that diversity has 'always been there' and that Ireland has had a history of dealing with 'swallowing up the invaders', referring to the notion of becoming 'more Irish than the Irish themselves'. A further comment suggested that diversity was fine 'once 'they' are trying to be like 'us' alluding to the perception that newcomers should adapt to the Irish culture in order to be integrated.

There was also a consensus that 'diversity' in the Irish context could be something positive, suggesting such benefits as 'respect for difference', empathy from 'those of us who had experience of emigration in the 50's and 60's' and suggesting that diversity 'is about embracing difference' and 'individuality'. However, some comments also sounded notes of warning suggesting that diversity could also mean 'putting people into 'boxes'' and that 'it can be a distraction detracting from the real issues'. Suggestions about what Practices enable recognition of diversit centred around the recognition of diversity, values and self as well as an emphasis on a pragmatic approach at both a macro and micro level. The need for recognising commonalities was highlighted but so too was the importance of positively recognising differences.

The need for recognition of values identity was discussed as well as the need for self awareness and 'facing up to the role of 'Me' and understanding ourselves first'. This idea was echoed in another workshop that stressed the importance of understanding our own (Irish) culture too and is in line with Professor Banks' ideal of having your own culture as central to you (figure 1).

The benefits of celebrating cultures and feast days in the school community was seen as an enabler along with using resources and books that reflect the diverse society that we live in; 'books that deviate from: white faces, Irish names, one religion, family constitution, sexual orientation'.

When considering those practices that inhibited the recognition of diversity, participants asked whether the curriculum reflected and answered the needs of diversity.

One group suggested that diversity was 'beneficial at a macro scale but at micro there are problems' referring to religion, culture and special needs. Further suggestions at the micro level were the lack of confidence of teachers, school structure, lack of support and lack of resources with one comment suggesting there is 'no point trying to climb Everest in ballet pumps'.

Representation of diverse groups at board level and policy level was suggested as an inhibitor by one group which was echoed by another as a 'lack of voices' in schools and even at the DCU conference.

What can I do to enhance diversity recognition in schools?

Recommendations across groups can be summarised as follows:
- Look to what is working in other countries
- Focus on positive attributes of diversity and commonalities
- Examine school philosophy, mission statement and ethos
- Reflective practice and policy
- Remove the word 'normal'
- Involve parents and community
- Celebrate all religions and cultures
- Use other cultures, religions etc when giving examples in class
- Embracing other languages not just Irish/English

Includ-ED Finding 3

Family and community involvement

The participation of families and community members becomes a significant potential resource to enhance educational and social inclusion. 5 types of participation were identified: informative, consultative, evaluative, participation in decision making and educative.

Informative participation
- Parents are informed about the school activities, school functioning, and the decisions, which have already been made.
- Parents do not take part in those school decisions.

- Parents' meetings consist of informing families about these decisions.

Consultative participation

- Parents have a limited impact on decision-making.
- Participation is based on consultation with families.
- They participate through the school's statutory bodies.

Decisive participation

- Community members participate in decision-making processes by becoming representatives in decision-making bodies.
- Family and community members monitor the school's accountability in relation to its educational results.

Evaluative participation

- Family and community members participate in students' learning processes through helping evaluate children's school progress.
- Family and community members participate in the overall school evaluation.

Educative participation

- Family and community members participate in students' learning activities, both during regular school hours and after school.
- Family and community members participate in educational programmes which respond to their needs and help to create interactions that have been shown to favour student's success

Among the five types of family and community participation, research shows that Decisive, Evaluative, and Educative are the ones that most positively influence student success. In these types of participation, families are involved in the school at a higher degree and have a greater influence on school decisions**.**

Promoting cultural and educational interactions between students and social agents, and more particularly with family members, enhance students' achievement.

Creating educational and cultural spaces where family and community members can actively learn, reinforces particular interactions that have been shown to favour student's success.

Policies should be developed to create and/or increase the participation of families and communities in learning activities (with students or for themselves), curriculum development and evaluation, and school decision making and the research suggests that those types of participation have greater influence in students' learning than when they just participate in festivals or are just informed.

Participation of families from vulnerable groups (migrants, cultural minorities, students with disabilities) should be particularly encouraged as it relates to their children's academic success. Policies should be developed to promote family education programmes in schools.

Family and community participation in education contributes positively to quality learning.

What is the current status of family and community participation in Irish Schools?

Apart from obligatory parent representation on the Boards of Management of schools and the involvement of parents in fundraising events, the general consensus across groups was that there was not enough involvement of parents and community. Acknowledgement of the success of Home School Liaison Officers in low socio-economic areas concurs with the example of successes given in the Minister's speech. However, there was reference to a recent report from the Primary School Inspectorate that placed Ireland as 13th out of 27 countries in terms of involvement of parents in the school and another reference to the school as an 'island' and not welcoming to outsiders.

Other comments made in this section were more fitting as practices that either enable or inhibit involvement of parents/community in education as follows.

What practices enable such type of participation?

The fact that parents can choose where their child goes to school (Article 42 of the Constitution of Ireland referred to earlier) means that parents can make a conscious decision about their child's education and are more likely to be involved.

It was acknowledged that some schools do have facilities such as parent rooms and are welcomed into schools and that rural schools are more likely to encourage involvement that urban schools.

Reference was also made to a research project conducted by Area 7 of City of Dublin Vocational Education Committee (CDVEC) showing that when mothers are involved in education there is a higher retention of students.

There was praise for support from large retailers through corporate community programmes such as Tesco Computers for Schools programme and other organisational initiatives.

One group informed of the National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) who have published guidelines on family literacy and are developing a model of best practice.

What practices inhibit such type of participation?

Contrary to the obligation of schools to have parental representation on Boards of Management it was suggested that parents do not really have a voice. One comment suggests that the 'priest' is the facilitator of the board meetings and has more control. It was also suggested that lack of skills in dealing at board level inhibits parent representatives from really having a voice. Also it was questioned how other parents can really have access to that parent representative.

Socio economic background was also suggested as an inhibitor with one commentator suggesting that 'lower class parents are only called if there is a problem with the child' which links into another suggestion that the parents' own negative experiences of school in the past may contribute to a lack of confidence in approaching the school. Contrary to this, it was suggested that some middle class families only see school as a place to mind children.

A strong inhibiting factor was that the onus to involve parents and community is on the school itself and that they don't always have a welcoming approach often due to pressures of time and lack of resources to get involved in activities outside the remit of already stretched timeframes.

Although Home School Liaison programmes are working well, they are only available to a small number of schools which leaves the rest wanting. It was suggested also that there is a need for schools to engage with parents in the transition of students from primary to secondary school.

Finally, a strong inhibitor is that teachers are 'terrified' of parents and that there are often conflicts of power involved with the 'teacher as professional vs parent as interested amateur'.

What can I do to support family and community participation in schools?

Recommendations to involve parents and community are summarised as follows:
- Change the approach of school to become more open to outside involvement.
- Change in culture of parent teacher meetings and other involvement.
- Examine school leadership and basic human relations.
- Demonstrate the value of parental/community involvement – role models.
- Training and courses for parents and involve parents in the curriculum
- Up-skill teachers to facilitate dialogue in schools.
- Invite parent groups into Initial Teacher Education (as exampled by the TED and ASET programmes in Mary Immaculate College and University of Limerick).
- Continue to investigate stories of different (non traditional) family groups such as LGBT particularly at Initial Teacher Education.
- Understanding the functions of education – move away from teachers as subject experts with no need for involvement of 'non experts'.
- Practical ideas such as including parents in student unions as exampled by one school in Dublin, introducing mother/toddler groups (previously suggested by Victoria Baldwin), initiatives in literacy, involvement in newsletters.

Includ-Ed Finding 4: Differentiation/educational experiences of vulnerable groups

The project has identified a number of practices and strategies in European classrooms with regard to grouping of students (*Mixture, Streaming)* and inclusion

Mixture, Streaming and Inclusion
- *Mixture*: educating students with different abilities together (does not guarantee an efficient response to the diversity of the students)
- *Streaming:* extra resources (e.g. support teachers) to help those students with more difficulties, but this accompanied by ability grouping or by different placements or separation
- *Inclusion*: consists of using the same resources that are used for segregated practices to educate all of the students together

Types of inclusion identified throughout Europe

- Heterogeneous ability classrooms with reallocation of human resources in the regular classroom and extending learning time through a longer school day, or a school year or activities that promote family support and education in the school or at home.

- When these actions are implemented in schools with predominantly immigrant and minority student populations located in disadvantaged areas, their educational results improve.

- Inclusion actions should be promoted, especially for students from vulnerable groups in order to increase the school achievement of all students and improve inter-group relations in classrooms and schools.

- Research indicates that separation into special programmes and schools, of students from ethnic minorities (e.g. Roma), second language learners (e.g. immigrants) and students with disabilities, increases dropout levels and racism.

Educational experiences of vulnerable groups

What factors inhibit access to and participation in compulsory education for those vulnerable groups involved in the research in Irish contexts?

What factors are in place that improve access to and participation in compulsory education for those groups?

What *should* be done to improve access to and participation in compulsory education for those groupings?

1. *What factors inhibit access to and participation in Irish schools?*

    Educational experiences of vulnerable groups

    Who are the vulnerable? Each minority? Every community includes minority and majority populations. In one area it may be Nigerians some of who are vulnerable and some who aren't. Single mother parents.

    Closer family is to chaotic life: all access is problematic regardless of ethnicity.

    Extremely local/individual: re class, marital breakdown, addictions, special needs.

    In one area : one quarter of newcomer families have one parent in part due to other parent still being outside the country, questions arise: where is home? Mixed race students can find that neither community accepts them. What do teachers call them?

    Schools don't have resources for the challenges of wider societal issues.

    There can be an inability to get families involved: people can feel put upon or can be suspicious.

Person in proximal zone of chaos can present resistance.

Newcomer parents tend to be more pro-education than Irish parents.

Newcomer parents 'couldn't access school', do not understand assessment. They may be working from their own personal experience of education: early school leaving, segregated, structures.

Enrolment policies, can show patterns of exploitation.

Integration is needed in school/outside of school. Priorities for income – doe they include education?

2. *What factors are in place that improve access to and participation in compulsory education?*

In compulsory education, supports such as Home School Liaison and School Completion make a big difference.

Often schools rely on the goodwill of teachers/community workers.

Depends on area status: community schools and co-educational schools tend to get little support.

Often can depend on poor school governance/leadership – miss out on funding or self exclude school from DEIS funding due to vanity/stigmatisation of school as disadvantaged.

3. *What should be done to improve access to and participation in compulsory education?*

There is a need for diversity recognition: monitoring of kids, academic support and English as a second language.

There is a need for school leaders.

Whole School Evaluation does not seem to address any aspect of diversity or inclusion. Focus is solely on numeracy and literacy. Anecdotally, inspectors come in, look at checklist for school evaluation and often 'need to be dragged' to look at school innovation in terms of programmes or extra supports.

Point made about learner/student empowerment: learners should be encouraged to take ownership of their own education in a learner-centred environment. Could potentially include mentoring programmes between years utilising ICTs.

Research has shown that newcomers like the Irish system of education at secondary level as there are no compulsory repeats of years. Even though a learner may fail or achieve a very low standard in their tests they are allowed to progress through the system.

Point made that teachers are not easy to access, discussion around teachers being defensive with parents complaining. Issue of timing and structure of parent/teacher meetings raised. No need to timetable all the parent/teacher meetings in one evening putting pressure on everyone. May be need for a longer school year to accommodate greater communication between teachers, parents, learners and the community.

Overall the Includ-ED research found that greater academic success was found where
- Increased *family and community involvement* in decision-making and classroom activities and promotion of role models from the community.
- Higher degrees of *interaction within classrooms.*
- Higher *recognition of diversity* benefits entire community and integration of strategies into the *curriculum* and *within classroom settings.*

Appendix B3

Interview with Parent 3

(First Tape)
J: Hi xxxxx (intro) etc. █████████████████████████████

X: ███
███████████████████████.

J: Okay, very briefly would you talk about that transition between primary and secondary school, just in a few sentences.

X: Well, ██
██
████████████████████████████ it.

(Second Tape)

X: He has made a very good transition but we do notice very distinct differences between the climate in the primary school and the climate at secondary level. Mainly linked, not so much to the content of what the children are learning but to the communications and the athmosphere and environment in the second level school.

J: how is it different, in what way?

X: He has noted a number of times, he doesn't think there is respect for everybody involved in the whole venture, as it were. They don't respect one another and there is a feeling that it is more about policing a large group that actually focussing on the development of the children who are in the school and the development of the children in according to each of their needs.

J: Do you think that is a problem in Edtog schools, they are preparing kids who may not go to an Edtog secondary school where they have certain expectations built up around how they might be treated and how the curriculum might be and then they go into a conventional secondary school and there is a bit of a culture shock.

01.22

X: I don't know that it is a problem for them. I think they, because they, I mean, xxxxx is very articulate and very self confident and very grounded. He doesn't experience it as that much of a problem but for the parents who have been involved in the creating of an Edtog school, I think we see it as a problem. And I'd certainly see it as a problem because I can see how it could be different.

J: Right and what ways do you think it could be different then?.

X: Well I do think the structures of the second level school could be different. I think in the case of his school, there is a large group of first years, that group should probably be established as a school within a school with a higher level of interaction with all of the teachers involved.

J: Why in first year only?

X: I'm just talking about first year initially because it would give a greater chance for the teachers to work as a team with all of the students there, equally. There is also, in the school that he is in, children who have already been identified as very much on the margins and he

sees that and we see that. And they have been separated out even though the main group is quite homogonous, I would feel that there isn't enough of an emphasis on finding out what each child's potential is and then working really hard towards helping them to achieve that.

J: Do you think that is possible in the current climate or in any climate where resources are generally quite stretched, to have that more intensive approach?

03.04

X: I think that approach is more to do with the way people think and the way people value one another than actually to do with the resources

J: Why did you send you children to an Edtog school?

X: (laughing), there was no choice. In xxxxx a start-up group was established and I got involved in that and we set up the school. Now, the reason I did it was because I had grown up in what would now be classified as a very disadvantaged area. I had gone to school in a disadvantaged area, I had worked with predominantly disadvantaged young people and so-called disadvantaged adults, I had seen a large number of people who were my students who had loads and loads of potential and who were side-lined by the main-stream education system. And I came with a degree, that kind of bias, a question about why people were being sidelined by the system. I didn't think an educational system that side-lines people is fair and is in the best interests of the whole population. So that is one of the reasons. The other reason in retrospect is that when I was growing up I remember the ███████████████ ██ cause it was discussed at home. There was quite a lot of discussion of education in my home. We were very exposed to knowledge about lots of different faiths deliberately by my parents who weren't sent down one track even though we were Catholic, I mean, I was practicing for all of my teenage years. We were still exposed to a wide range of information about other faiths and other nationalities.

05.13

J: So it was sort of in the family that you were pre-disposed to that type of way of thinking about faith or whatever.

X: when the opportunity arose.

J: Okay, so is faith the big thing then, for you and maybe it is the fact that there isn't an emphasis on any one faith, is that a big thing for you?

X: The big thing for me is the fact that the Edtog schools work hard to go according to the motto which is 'learn together to live together' so they do a lot help children to know that the child that is sitting beside them is maybe different to them in may respects but they can coexist in a peaceful way or in a way that respects both of their differences and allows them to get on together.

J: And do you think ordinary primary schools don't do that?

X: I don't really know about other primary schools apart from my own experience but I would say that, while they, you can say yes, a school tries to help children to get along together, the likelihood and this has changed recently, but the likelihood of having a wide range of children in the area I live in, of a whole lot of different faiths in a regular primary school is less likely. What the denominational schools would say now is that they are inclusive Catholic schools or they are inclusive Church of Ireland schools but to me that does

not mean they are actually working, they are working from the stance of one particular faith, so, if, in a Catholic school or in a Christian school, you would expect people to act in a Christian fashion but I am not entirely sure that that is what happens all the time. And it is very much a Christian point of view.

J: Okay, so then, if Edtog schools are about the promotion of the inculcation or lets say, instilling of particular values in children, and within the whole school, how well do you think they do that? You know, you expect Edtog schools to do certain things, how well do they do those certain things?

X: I can't speak for all the schools (J: No, no, but your Edtog school), but what I would say is that in our Edtog School and I can only speak, I only realised the true benefit of it when ██ that the whole effort over their years of primary schooling was like a whole sum of the parts. So, I could see that every one of them had developed in a very particular way, that was open to difference, that was open to, I suppose, to caring for other people and this wasn't hidden. This was, sort of, coming out of them, it was being expressed very clearly by them. I think that was because of the efforts of all the strands and parts of the school made to apply the four principals of Edtog to their schooling. Now, on the other side I would say, and as a member of the Board of that school, I would say there is still things that we have to deal with.

08.54

J: Like what?

X: Like, for example, parents bringing, what I would consider gendered expectations to the school, of their children. (J: what does that mean) So, expectations, an example would be, you would have a school fair and a parent, without any em, because people don't realise, offer to do a 'lucky dip' and you arrive at the school fair and children go to the 'lucky dip' and there is a pink box and a blue box, so a girls box and a boys box and in the boys box there were loads and loads of plastic guns and in the girls boxes there were loads and loads of dolls so like the challenge in the schools for me is actually making, if we say we are co-educational, actually saying we are co-educational from the point of view that we will seek to challenge some of the norms in society.

J: Okay, that's fair enough. As a parent, now not as a board member, right, as a parent, how much of an input do you have in the school? How much contact do you have, are you asked to get involved in any way and in what ways are you asked to get involved? What is your communication contact like with the school?

X: A huge amount. Basically I can walk into the teacher any time I want.

J: ████████████████████████████

        ████████████████████████████████████
        ████████████

J: Would you say it is more characteristic of Edtog schools that there is greater contact between the parent and the school?

X: I have, from talking to friends who have children in other types of schools, that's my information, that's my understanding. Now, it differs from school to school I think, depending on the sort of, climate established by the principal and their team. I think in our school the principal has created a very open climate where people are allowed to integrate and

Do you know what I mean.

J:	Do you find that your involvement in the school, what effect do you think that has on your child's performance or experience of the school? Did he like it? Does he like it?

X:	█████████████████████████

J:	█████████████████████████████████████

X:	No, no because I ███ very proud of the school and they are very proud of …. But I don't think that came from me or from home. They are used to talking about it because it is discussed at home but I think their pride in their own school comes from the climate that was created in the ████████████████████ In other words, I don't see ████████ gaining any particular ███████████████████████ bring a lot of school politics back into the house.

12.44

J:	Sure, okay. Em, What do you think … I'll come back to those issues with regard to the involvement with the school but it is .. what do you understand by these four terms, very briefly and there is no right and wrong answer to these :- multiculturalism?

X:	How long have you got (laugh). Recognising a full range of the, or expecting that there would be a full range of cultures. Are you talking about in the school? Just that the whole world is made up of lots of different cultures, our culture is informed by a whole lot of different things as well and understanding this, that there are a lot of different cultures and that you can't expect there to be one. And we could go on about sub-cultures …

J:	No, that's fine. What is interculturalism then?

13.44

X:	My understanding or the way I think of interculturalism is maybe people from two or three different cultures working together or mixing or coming together.

J:	Okay, assimilationisms?

X:	Taking somebody in from another culture and expecting them to change, to become part of the new culture that they come into, in other words not recognised and not respected for their own culture.

J:	Okay, integration?

X:	A bit like assimilation but might be a little more, sort of easy-going in that it would allow people to integrate with aspects of their own culture into a more dominant culture.

J:	Pluralism?

X:	We take all comers, everybody.

J: Diversity?

X: recognise that there will be diversity and that we value that there is difference. But diversity is different to culture because if you are talking about diversity, diversity can mean a whole lot of different things, it can mean that say, in a place e.g. a school, we will take, we accept that we are going to welcome a diverse population. That can include, as well as including people from different races, different cultures, it can include people with disabilities.

J: Which one of those words do you think most characterises Edtog Schools? If you were to pick one of those words, which one?

X: My experience, pluralism, I think, yea, I'd pick pluralism. That's in my interpretation of the word.

J: Pluralism, okay. And what do you think constitutes an inter-cultural classroom. If somebody said to you, make an intercultural classroom at primary level, in the morning, what do you think that intercultural classroom would look like or have in it or what the kids would do in it?

X: But is that based on my previous interpretation of what intercultural means?

J: Just if somebody said to you, what do you think an intercultural classroom is or should be?

X: well, the first thing I would say is it is one where everybody in that classroom is respected, that everybody in the classroom has an opportunity to reach their potential, that they have an opportunity to express themselves in accordance and recognising that they may express themselves differently depending on their own culture. Then I think that the classroom would also recognise the range of cultures, do you know, that it would be obvious that these cultures were represented in the classroom and that then the climate or the atmosphere in the classroom, that there would be credibility given to the views of every person, in other words that if somebody is expressing a particular view based on their cultural identity then that view would be listened to as much as the view of another person.

J: Okay, what about contestable or contested conflicting views and values and the expression of those between say, two faiths, for example, say for argument sake, one particular faith group within the school would have a particular practice that perhaps, would not be accepted in the broader population or would not be understood in the broader population. How do you deal with that?

18.00

X: Well then, for one, the teacher has to be capable and able of actually mediating the discussion that brings up these differences or conflicts in some way that recognises where both views comes from but manages to accommodate both in some way, a very difficult job, without actually having a large war or battle on their hands.

J: And that brings me on to my next question. What values then do you think a teacher needs to work in an intercultural classroom that might be different than working in a (if there is such a things as) non-intercultural classroom? But, you have this (18.50) …………what values does the teacher need to have?

X: A high level of respect, a great sense of, I don't, its not really a value, it is an understanding of the fact that they as a person have their own beliefs and views and

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understandings and come from their own culture but that they can't actually, they have to be able to listen to the other cultures or the other people represented in the room and they have to be able to set aside their own bias in order to do what's right for the, in a sense, do you know like, they have to, in a way, take a, sort of, neutral or be capable of taking a, sort of, neutral stance. So, you mentioned inculcating before and this is a difficult one, I think they need to have a sense of caution about whether they are inculcating someone into their own culture and their own beliefs or whether they are allowing someone to maintain their own beliefs based on the fact that in an Edtog, or my understanding of an Edtog school is that you allow, you know, the children in that school may have their own faiths, their own belief systems which are secured and developed in the home but they bring some of that to the school, but the school isn't the place where that's continued. (J: Okay) Do you understand what I am saying, so the teacher has a different role and that would be a bit like the difference in my, the way I understand it between an Edtog school and a denominational school. A denominational school still has a role to maintain the ethos, which is Catholic in the …… or Church of Ireland or Muslim or whichever school. So it still has a role in the faith development of the child. An Edtog school doesn't have a role in the faith development of the child.

J:	What competence does a teacher need then? Now value are a particular thing , things that are perhaps less articulated very often but less easy to articulate but they are also very important because you don't want to over influence kids in one value or another if you are going to be teaching in a particular environment like that, but what competencies i.e. skills, if you define competency as things that a teacher should be able to do, what do you need in Edtog school that might be different?

X:	Well I think personally, I think one of the strengths that a teacher can have is being able to promote dialogue, dialogue in the sense that you allow people to talk together and come to understand where each other is coming from but not to become aggressive or do you know, so I think that is really important and that, a teacher who is as a compense is able to actually promote that dialogue in an age-appropriate fashion as well. So it might be very easy to do it with your 12 year olds but how do you do it with your 6 year olds, do you know. What other compenses? I suppose another compense would be actually the whole area of, you know in the, in the core curriculum, the learn together curriculum there are four strands, belief systems, values, environmental and ethics, I think, and the other one, I can't remember what it is now but I think that teachers need some competence in those areas. You know, if you are talking about (J: as in subject knowledge or content knowledge or ..?) yea, that, you know, if you are talking about ethics and the environment, for example, I think that it is important that teachers understand why that strand is there, they understand what ethics is about.

22.58

J:	Okay, that brings me to my next question then, do you have any role in the hiring of teachers as a board member.

X:	████████████████████████████

J:	But not everybody would?

X:	Not everybody does, unless it is somebody who has to stand in for me if I am not there.

J:	████████████████████████████

23.23

X: Very little. Now what we do is, the board meets with the staff once of twice a year, usually in the summertime and around Christmas time and it is more like a social meeting so we know who is who. And the only other, the whole board has a role in signing off on the appointment of the teacher, ███████████████████ ████████████████

J: Okay, one of the reasons I am asking that is that I think, because of the values and competencies that I think you might need particular ones to work in an Edtog school, in other words you'll perhaps need to live your values a little bit more obviously and visibly and be aware of them and let other people know what they are, that it requires a particular type of training to work in these places.

X: Well it requires a particular kind of training but a particular kind of person.

J: Sure, but the training you can, you can't really do much about the person, you can do something about the training, so having been there as a parent, been there as a board member, being there as a board member hiring, you know, possibly hiring teachers, can you comment on the quality of the training that they get, to work in these places, is there any, do they get …?

X: Well, the first thing, before we go that far, what I'd say is that on the interview panel generally we have the Chair of the board, the Principal of the school and an independent assessor and our independent assessor was the Principal of another Edtog school. So I think the three working together is very good and also always going back and remember what the charter says and what the four principles are, is really good. And then when you have people coming to interview, and I know things are changing, in the last two years there is a module for, in St Pats, I think and Mary I in the Edtog, learn tog. It is an elective so I have to say, generally, before that, teacher education didn't necessarily cater as well as it could for Edtog Schools.

There are some of these points that I am might come back to you with written questions on and I might get you to respond by email or whatever.

X: Or sorry, I was going to say, however, when we were recruiting people, what happened was that there were people, we were actually able to recruit people who trained in England, some of them, who would have worked in very multicultural schools and a lot of our staff would have trained in England. And have had experience of working abroad.

J: Do you think it is important that the school staff reflects the diversity in the classroom?

X: Yea, but our system doesn't allow for that because our system actually has (J: with regard to the Irish language?), with regard to the Irish language, our system actually prevents having diversity in the teaching population which is an issue that we have.

J: And finally, what are the particular problems with the Edtog approach that you would go, I'm really not happy with that, but on balance, I'm happy with the school but there is a few things in there that I think they should change or I don't like or whatever?

X: The biggest difficulty I have is around the whole idea of democracy and the partnership. Now, I mean, I am not, my school happens to be quite good, I think, but it is the hardest work and I am speaking as a board member and as somebody who started a school, the hardest thing for me is actually generating what I think is a true feeling of democracy around decision-making in the school.

J: It usually ends up with the Principal?

X: It is usually the Principal or the Board and that creates, that working with all the elements of a school community is the most difficult thing in terms of meeting our Principal around democracy and also the strictures created by the fact that we are established as a primary school under the national guidelines for primary schools in terms of say, boards of management and stuff like that. That has an impact on the whole idea of democracy, I think.

J: Okay, that's interesting, that's all really great, thanks, but I will come back to you with more, if you are okay with that.

Appendix B11

Interview with Principal 2

XX: Okay, well my name is xxxx, and I'm the Principal of xxxxx Edtog National School, which is here in ████████████

JL   Thanks very much xxx for agreeing to see me. We'll being with some context questions. What is the population of the school, how many pupils?

XX: We have 385 pupils at the moment.

JL   385, of which, what is the percentage of international students?

XX   Of those families (JL – if that's the language that you use?) Yea, well I'm going to try to put that in context because most of those children would have been born in Ireland, so they are Irish citizens and most of them would consider themselves Irish. But, of those families, 84% of the parents were not born in Ireland. So in 84% of the families the parents are not of Irish origin. That's the way I would describe it. Now, unfortunately the key to the filing cabinet where all the list of the countries etc. are kept, is at home. But we did do an audit last year for Yellow Flag programme which I will describe to you in a little while and we discovered through that audit that we have 54 countries of origin among the parents in the school and 45 different languages spoken in the homes of our families, so there would be 54 different countries of origin and among the homes then, in various degrees, 45 different languages spoken among the childrens families – whether its full-time, part-time, it is impossible to say but the children would have those languages on their ear to a varying degree during the day.

JL   Ok, so obviously there are some big questions around that as to your relationship between the parents and the children but we will get onto that in a little while.

XX   So that was the information we kind of gleaned because it is not always possible from forms and from birth certs etc. to tell - what is a nationality, where are you from – the whole thing of identity, nationality .. it is a tricky thing and I've heard six year olds, I have heard debates and conversation doing on among children I've taught about their identify, their nationality "I'm Irish, no you're not, you're from Nigeria, no no, my mammy is from Nigeria but I am Irish, I was born in Dublin" you know, among children as young as six. And that whole this of geography, identity, culture, nationality, it is very complex.

JL   And of that population 0f 84% whose parents or families are from other countries, what % of those children were born in Ireland and are Irish citizens, roughly?

XX   I don't have a definite, most of them,

JL   Most of the children who attend here were born in Ireland?

XX   I don't have a definite and I should have probably worked out that statistic before today. But it is something that I could possibly get for you.

JL   Okay, yea, because it is tied in with this idea of identity.

XX   Yea, it is something I should possibly work out now because it is something we will have to do for next year, for different statistics. Probably ¾ of that 84%, if not slightly more of those children were actually born in Ireland. Yea, the vast majority, yea.

JL   ████████████████████████
████████████████

XX   It is a very new idea so most people don't know a lot about it. Everybody is familiar with the green flag programme, I think, well a lot of people. You see Green flags flying outside schools and the whole green thing is obviously eco-friendly. So school is awarded a green flag, they are awarded that for their efforts towards recycling, reducing their waste, that type of thing and that has been on the go now for a number of years, their awarded by An Taisce, and schools can apply for a Green Flag. I think they are, you can get up to, I'm not sure, 5 or 7 of these flags. And you are awarded them for different projects say it could be water waste reduction, waste recycling. We got our first one last year for our efforts in recycling. Now, last year, it would have been the year before last, we were awarded the Yellow Flat last October but the previous school year the Irish Traveller Movement launched a pilot programme, a Yellow Flag programme. And it was a pilot scheme and they were looking to set up an award scheme for schools around the area of inclusion, commitment and diversity. That type of thing. So there are just four schools involved, two primary's and two secondary's and we are one of those schools. There's a secondary school in Tralee, a primary school in Limerick and two in Dublin, a primary and a secondary school.

JL   Right and how many traveller children are there here?

XX   At the moment we have seven. The numbers fluctuate each year. So that programme was very interesting. There were 9 steps, same as the green flag, not it was a pilot programme so there is a lot of learning for both the co-ordinators of the programme and for ourselves in that it was the first time this programme had been rolled out in the schools.

JL   Initiated by the Irish Travellers Movement?

XX   Yea, ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ in the school. We set up a Diversity Committee and work with a lot of the children, so the children and parents and staff would be well used to being interviewed. That's why I'm saying it would be parents and children who would be well used to being asked about diversity and about inclusion and above the challenges of diversity. And about anti-racism initiatives and all that sort of thing. And how schools deal best with these issues. So, it wouldn't be something totally alien to be asked by people. And we did get our flag. We haven't had our flag raising ceremony, we hope to do that when the weather improves. So it looks like it will be June at this rate… but yea, later in the year.

JL   So, into more substantive questions with regard to what my study is about. By the way, were you a national teacher before, well you're obviously still a national school teacher, but were you in the traditional sector before?

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▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ village school, catholic girls school, in the village, since ▮▮▮▮▮

JL   And you are here for the rest?

XX   Since this school opened up ▮▮▮▮▮▮.

JL   Straight into Principal.

JL   Well that great because you will be in a position, I hope, to answer the next question. What way does the official curriculum reflect the changing nature of Irish society? A big question but – as you enact it in the classroom. The next part of the question is – what way does the taught curriculum effect – now, the official curriculum was introduced in 1999 about 10 years ago and the gestation for a number of years up to that point in Ireland and it is completely different than it is now and especially people in education didn't foresee things ……………. So, what are your thoughts on it?

XX   My thoughts on it, well, the curriculum was revised obviously and this is what they call the revised curriculum and before that, it is interesting, because that was the new curriculum. And certainly because we are a pretty new school, we have a lot of newly qualified teachers coming into the school every year. We are recruiting every year, large numbers, certainly in the initial years and we are still recruiting because we are growing. We grew really the first few years. We grew so quickly, we were taking on, you know, 5, 8 teachers at a go, huge recruitment so among that, a lot of newly qualified teachers. And we have a mentoring scheme, we are part of the pilot Mentoring and Induction Scheme which is a fantastic scheme. It is still a pilot scheme, unfortunately, but we are lucky to be part of that ..

JL   and who's …………………, this is the Dept. – and was it for edtog schools or through the …………..

XX   No, no, through the colleges, it's a Dept. funded thing whereby the school has a mentor on the staff and they are trained, a trained mentor, to induct newly qualified teachers into the profession. We have a mentor here.

JL   do you have to apply for it - not every school has a mentor?

XX   No, no, we applied about three years back and we are lucky enough to get on it – we apply every year and we are lucky to still be on it. ████████████████████████
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████████████████████████████, I would still be in touch with the mentoring. Our ████
████████████ the mentor so she is mentoring the newly qualified teachers and from all the in-service we did on the revised curriculum as it was coming in, my impression would be that the curriculum is very much a menu curriculum, would be my understanding. That the curriculum documents of which there are twenty three big books, like, it is a lengthy big sizeable thing, twenty three books for all the subjects. My understanding of it would be, from working with the teachers that it is not prescriptive. My overall sense from people is that it is a very good curriculum but it is not prescriptive. Okay, the objectives are set objectives but the resources and the methodologies within it are menu based so you are very much free to source your resources, your teaching aids, and your materials for your class. Now that obviously puts extra work on a teacher so what we would be trying to do is, like the objectives are good and one of our core principles in edtog would be that we are child-centred so therefore if you keep your objectives in mind and you are child-centred, then you try and base your lessons and your school plans with your ethos in mind, with your objectives in mind and then you obviously select your resources very carefully. I should work

XX   Now, finding the resources can be a challenge so, you know the taught curriculum then, it can be, we would try and be very conscious to get resources that reflect the school population.

JL   and they don't). It can be hard to get them. They wouldn't tend to be in Ireland, you would have to source stuff from America and the UK

JL   why do you think that is?

XX   well we are just not used to dealing with diversity here. It just happened so quickly. Like, you can get it when you look around on the internet, especially in America.

JL   But the idea of the taught curriculum which is …………through teachers.

XX   this is what you are actually doing then. It is obvious we have to be ..

JL   ………………influence on that?

XX   Yea, the curriculum, I think, but then again you would probably get a better idea talking to the teachers but the sense I get from people is, but I may be deluded now, but that the revised curriculum is a good one. Now, I could be saying something completely different to what other people are saying, but that it is

JL   No, actually you are right ….

XX   but that it is very flexible, that it is what you do with it and that it is what you do with the class of children that you have in front of you and how you meet the objectives and I think that is a good thing that it is not too prescriptive. Like, we have to be very flexible, like we use parents as a resource all the time.

JL   And other schools do as well.

XX   Like, you have a choice there of going to get a book out of the library about Dewalli or whatever and putting your powerpoint up and telling them, or bringing a parent in and telling the children first hand, how they celebrated with their family. That type of thing or if you were putting up a display, like, we have a display in the corridor there at the moment and a lot of our stuff is obviously ethos based and human rights based, so the display of dolls there in the corridor, you just make sure that they are ethnic based, all the skin colours, all the are culture based – that we don't have a generic set of little culture ………… you know that kind of thing. The posters on the wall are mixed race, that type of thing. We just have to be careful around that. And you just have to do a little bit more searching around for your posters and your dolls and your jigsaws and your library books. You know, language books in the library, that type of thing, software, its just so ………….., a bit more searching around. It is not that easy to find sometimes.

JL   And that sort of leads me on to the next question in that, seen as the new curriculum is mediated principally
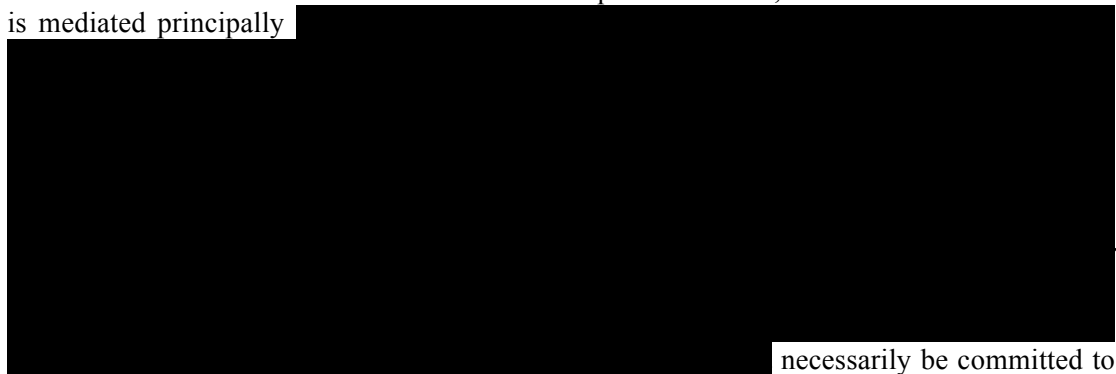
necessarily be committed to the idea of Edtog …………………..an interview is a very crude process to ……………
But look, we can leave that question, its fine.

XX ███

JL other people have said that as well and the reason that I do ask, is that it is tied into the training, is that, if the modules that students teachers take in the colleges, most of them are electives so they don't necessarily have to have done anything as regards to …. So they can arrive at your door never having thought about an Edtog school, but it does require a particular type of person or …

XX It does and it doesn't, ██

JL It also seems to be something that requires more extra-curricular work, as you were saying there a few minutes ago about even accessing resources, than conventional primary schools?

XX Yea, but not necessarily ███

JL But are you not, by definition, more better equipped to deal with a more diverse student population than the conventional national school?

XX In what way? Because of our ethos?

JL Yea.

XX One could argue that we might do it better, I don't know. Maybe when it comes to the religion end of things, it might be easier in that we don't face the same challenges or the same uncomfortable situations around religious instruction and maybe having to separate children when it comes to religion instruction time.

JL I'm not █████████████████

XX No, ███████████████████████████████████ on at the moment around all of this stuff, who is to say what is the best way. I, myself found, like, every school in Dublin xx, well probably apart from the Gaelscoil, for obvious reasons, I think, is facing huge challenges around this diversity, this change that has happened over such a short period of time. It just happened so quickly and we weren't ready for it, we weren't equipped for it, we weren't trained for it, you know, it just took everybody by surprise and it isn't being acknowledged and resourced properly. And less and less not obviously because of the current economic climate. You know, resources have been withdrawn now.

JL Well that is essentially why I am doing the ….(speaking together) ……what are the difficulties and what are the ..

XX I suppose for me, what began to happen for me was, in a Catholic school you had increasing numbers of children who weren't Catholic in the class. So, it came to religion

time, or whatever, the formal religion time, like, there was always, and obviously every school is entitled to promote its ethos, you know, and that's the way it should be, a Catholic school has a right to promote the Catholic ethos, of course it has and that is the way it should be, you know, and you are entitled to have your prayers and your statues and your crucifix and that's fine but it became more and more uncomfortable to keep, to having to ask more and more children to say, you know, 'you are not to say these prayers'. Now, 'you are not to listen to this story

– but that's a whole other thing. So there are so many aspects to it.

JL   How many religions are represented in the school?

XX   A lot of people don't put down anything which is interesting, so I probably couldn't give you a definite answer on that. A lot of people, we don't necessarily ask people, if they want to, they can say. We don't make an issue of it.

JL   No, they don't have a religious instruction, they get informed about it…?

XX   We have a religious education programme called Learn Together. So, the formal instruction, for parents who want it, is organised outside school.

JL   So what about something like Communion.

XX   Yea, the Communion and Confirmation are going ahead, yea, they have joined in with the local Catholic school.

JL   And do you broker that arrangement or is it left up to the parents themselves to do it?

XX   Parents yea, well it is a kind of a mixture that everything is organised, that the room is available, and like, I went down to the Confirmation, I was invited.

JL   I remember when I was getting Confirmed and it took up a huge amount of class time ……………..the church, that obviously doesn't go on here?

XX   No, it is done outside of school

JL   And so it doesn't really impinge?

XX   It is not hatching on their learning, teaching and learning time here, no. (talk together) And actually, ██
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JL   Would the majority of students be, or pupils ..

XX   No, no, we call them students as well. The older ones like that when we call them students, they think they are very mature.

JL   would the majority of students be Roman Catholic?

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JL   And that is representative across the ..

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JL   Because?

XX   I don't know. Well the juxtapositioning now of the Catholic school and the edtog school is something that will be very interesting to see the development of.

JL   So where are all those kids who are not coming to here ……………… houses ..

XX   Well, we're ██
██

██?

XX   We are hoping won't happen, but it could possibly happen.

JL   So that is the reason why people aren't sending their kids here?

XX   ██
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████████████████████████████ families who we already have. So very few.

JL   It's strange really because in some respects (M. we need the balance, you know) because Edtog was begun by Irish people what we would call traditional Caucasian Irish people, to meet a different demand than it is satisfying now.

XX   It ██
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████████████████████████████?

JL   I do, yes, intend to do that.

XX   ██
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████████████████████████████ primary as well (JL VEC schools?) Yea, VEC. And I don't

know if there are any Irish children, maybe one or two. It is just a shame because you really don't want to see it going down, you really don't want to see kind of those ghetto schools.

JL   For lots of different reasons!

XX   So many different reasons.

JL   Another question, with regard to what we were just talking about there now, is that the general perception that I get anyway when talking to people and even people who I lecture, I lecture on inter-cultural education and inter-cultural approaches in the classroom and the amount of people who say to me, well it is only a short term thing, it is an economic thing and people are going to go back to the places where they originally came from. And I am arguing that, looking at immigration historically, it is never a temporary thing.

XX   Well, we are not seeing that, we are not seeing the families leaving yet and then I don't know if you ███ born last year, in about 4 years time there is going to be a massive big emergency again in school places.

JL   I saw the report by xxxxx, did you see it?

XX   No, which one was that now, oh that was the one himself and xxxxx did.

JL   (talking together)

JL   It's a really good document.

XX   Oh yea, we were all part of that research.

JL   Just the change in the demographic, profile, not the profile but just the size, it was just incredible.

XX   But, its going ███
███████████████████████

JL   Okay, moving in a slightly different direction,

XX   all over the place but I knew we would

JL   No, but that's great.. I think I'm ..

XX   But yea, I didn't mean to sound so negative, I don't mean to be putting a negative slant. We go through all the positives now. (talking together)

JL   I know I haven't really. And we were dealing with broader social things so………

XX   I can tell you how I'd like it to be if I was in power, in a minute.

JL   Please do, it is something that I want to hear.

XX   I'm sure xxxx told you all about it as well.

JL   Well, my next question is, it is in part to allow you to address some of the other concerns we were talking about as to why parents aren't sending their kids here and there is something I know from research I have been doing in other placed, the particular benefits that are presented to school children from being in a diverse population academically. And it is a difficult question to answer because how do you quantify …………………Why should you send your kids to an Educate Together school as opposed to sending them to a traditional national school?

XX   Generally or academically?

JL   Well generally is to me ……………………………….

XX   Well I couldn't say why academically now.

JL   Do you think kids benefit academically from being in the classroom with a diverse population?

XX   Well we ██n I am obviously very biased from the ethos point of view and what they get from being in an edtog school, you know. From being in a diverse classroom I would see, certainly from different ethnic groups, we see the families, their ambition for their children, we see the fantastic work ethic they bring, the ambition of the children and in certain cases, how they are bringing the standards up. They are absolutely fantastic, the children are. Okay, they might come with broken English or no English, but when they do get the language, they are fantastic workers in the classroom. Absolutely brilliant and particularly in Maths, they are bringing the standards way up, we feel.

JL   Yea, I have heard that from a couple of places.

XX   But, all the other benefits as well. Well we feel, anyway certainly in this school that while there are undoubtedly huge challenges but the richness it brings and it can only be good for the children because the children are growing up into a society where they are going to be living and working with people from all over the world and hopefully travelling the world and it is just preparing them for life in the 21st century.

JL   And then, what particular challenges are presented at a local level by a diverse population within the school? For the students and the teaching staff ……………..

XX   well, obviously, communication, if English isn't the first language, initially it is very difficult. For the children it is difficult because it is frightening for them when they come first, they can't communicate with their teachers or the other children and this can be very scary, it can lead them to 'acting up'. Frustration – it can lead to all kinds of behavioural problems. Communication with parents, they don't understand the signs, the text messages, the newsletters. It is very difficult to have meetings, you'd have to pay for interpreters to get things translated – that is very expensive, we don't get a budget grant for that – I mean they are the main challenges really. Now there are ways around it. We find ways around it but it

is just an added, it just makes things complicated, it is extra effort all the time. Then the cultural differences obviously. It makes things very complicated at times, because just peoples perceptions of school, you know, of teachers, of corporal punishment, what is appropriate ways to communicate, mens' attitude to women can differ

JL   Personal space, body language …

XX   All of that kind of thing. Punctuality, how important that is, is it important. Just, what is appropriate for some people, and what's not ..

JL   But interest in all that learning things – but for everybody, not just …
Okay, there are a couple of more areas that I want to go into but I am also conscious that I told you I wouldn't keep you more than 40 mins. (M - No, I'm here as long as you need). Two things I want to talk about, one is the …….. curriculum, how it is implemented and how it is evaluated then. That's one thing and then the other thing is, your understanding of a particular language and the reason I am asking you this is that there seems to be an absence at official level, policy level, in government in the Dept., of what they mean by multi-cultural and integrated and different words like that. So I just want to know what your understanding is of those terms and does it matter to you. Have you a multi-cultural school or an inter-cultural school or an integrated school?

XX   the terms don't matter to me in the slightest, no, to be honest really.

I'm not coming at this now just from a   view because these things signify an approach by government to, because England and say, Holland are traditionally multi-cultural countries and other countries, France is an assimilationist country, northern European countries are more inter-cultural and integrationist. So, if that is the case, that informs government policy like the education policy, so how does that work, what is your understanding of what we have in this country?

XX

JL   It is an intercultural model which you use here, in a good sense …

XX   For us as a school, to be honest, right, or certainly the way I would approach it and I think the way the staff would, is that, we treat every single person as an individual. We don't give hoot where they are from or what language they speak, what colour their skin is. Every single person, every single child is an individual and we don't ever, to be honest I don't thing, well certainly I don't anyway, and the home school teacher, we would deal a lot with the families. It doesn't come into our mind, like, where they are from or what language they are speaking, we just focus on this mother, this father, this child, you know, how can we make sure that they feel they belong in here, that they are welcome and safe and happy here

almost
like, that we have our own school culture.

████████████████████████████████████. And help them the best we can. And that is our policy. And we work really hard on that.

JL   Because there does seem to be multicultural elements here as well as in …………where there is this idea of …

XX   But we are learning from each other all the time. I don't know how you would describe it, how would you describe it, what I have described so far? You see, I may put labels on things but ..

JL   At the same time, the school is preparing children for the world, to be part of the world and so what sort of world is this school part of as in, Ireland, what sort of a world is it, is it a multi-cultural …………where you have, ultimately all these ………..if a form of ghettoisation where there is never any cross-pollination of contact between cultures regarding you know, this idea of a little Chinatown, little Africa town, little Polish town – the cultures are celebrated in the country on that basis and at official policy level whereas somewhere like this has an element of that because you do celebrate (M yea, we do a little bit of that) …. culture but its like (M what have we all got in common as well, yea) but it is also to celebrate that idea of communication between cultures which is really important for people to ultimately (together) ……………….so that's what I am wondering, I don't know how much it is being thought out, even at edtog level, with regard to 'where do we stand' because the impression I get when I talk to people is, 'it doesn't really matter' or 'we don't think about that' or …………just get on with the work.

XX   Because we would do a lot about belonging. You see, a lot of it comes from - our SPHE curriculum would be very big – that would be a core part of what we do and while obviously all the academic subjects are very important, I would see SPHE as being at the core. That and our ethical education programme has been at the core of everything. And all the others slot in. I would see those as being really at the centre. And the children and the parents are just as much the educators. Like the children teach other things as well and the parents do and the teachers obviously are educators as well. And we talk about our belonging to our school and we also do a lot of work on the community. Now that would be another big thing, you see, this is for, I think, you see, now ████████

JL   Okay, so we are talking about community planning which seems to be not something that has happened or hasn't happened in xxxx, but if you look anywhere in Ireland over the last 30 or 40 years, it hasn't been a thing you could say we have done very well, so where were we going with that?

XX   I just feel, yea, when they were planning an area this big or this new, that, you know, they are very good at planning the houses and the shops, you know, that there is the residential and the commercial but there is so much more to a community than that. It is very interesting, if you, and we often do it in the classrooms, if you went in to even a junior infant classroom and asked them to plan a town, they would plan it very well and they would tell you that you would have to have, you know, well they would put in a hospital and they would put in, you'd have to have your library and your whatever. And they would have all the different things you need for a real community. (JL that the grown-ups can't do). Now in the school next door, xxxx, they ███ for mothers & toddlers, all of that stuff, citizens information, particularly with the diversity in the area.

JL   Instead of bringing these things in after when things start to go a bit pearshaped.

XX   Yea and a park, somewhere for kids to go, something for kids to do. I mean, take the schools as well, we are looking for, oh yes, that came from the thing in America. We saw some places in the inner-cities whereby the schools, they were all in one building. Like, there was a school and a health centre and a dentist and a community centre and the secondary and the primary. It was all together on this whole campus. Yea, so all the facilities were there together. They were amazing. Obviously very expensive to run, of course. It was amazing the way it was done. And there was a pre-school and after-school, just the support systems were amazing. It was really impressive. We find that we, as a school, are unofficially doing a lot of that stuff because we were the only building in xxxx.

JL   And the community focal point.

XX   Yea, with a hall and a room, so we are doing a lot of that and even, we have a home school, that's another ███ in the village there when there was a young lad up on a roof, trying to get him down off the roof. All this kind of thing. We are doing all kinds of mad stuff - because we care about them and because there is nobody else there to do it. We are kind of covering all kinds of roles and angles in the community, just because we have to, you know. And that is what you do. It is kind of a mad job in a way (talking together) ….multitasking and you do, do things before school and after school and you facilitate things and you try and get community groups in to try and foster some sense of community because that is what's very difficult with the diversity. You have so many ethnic groups speaking different languages in the area, it is very difficult to get a sense of community going.

JL   Yea, someone else mentioned that in one of the other schools.

XX ██

JL   They weren't part, the school wasn't part of the community it is a school of choice, this particular Edtog school. I can't remember which one it is, anyway. And so therefore it was difficult for it to develop links in the immediate community because people were coming not just from ████████████████ but from everywhere around. That is not the case here then obviously?

XX   No, we are right in the middle of our community all right. But each of the distinct groups though, because they speak different languages, the chances of them socialising and getting involved with each other outside of the school are minimal, I think.

JL   So the school, therefore, serves that purpose though ……….

XX   it has been so far, so hopefully it will continue and then when the community centre opens but again, the community centre, yea, but it will be expensive. It will be expensive to rent rooms and all that kind of thing. But however …

JL   It seems to be a very positive feature of edtog schools, is the involvement of parents, not just the thing of coming in but actually coming into classrooms and coming in to assemblies particularly ……….

XX   Yea, they do and again we have also a lot of classes and things going on for parents as well. They come in, we are lucky enough to have a room for the parents so they come in and do, like this year we have done a big, big focus on Irishness. I think it is, well it was to get a little bit of a balance on last year with the Yellow Flag, we did so much intercultural stuff that we wanted to balance it up a little bit, so we've had parents coming in learning Irish dancing, doing Irish classes. And none of those were Irish parents which is interesting. And they do computer classes, healthy eating classes, they are doing English language classes, self development classes, parenting classes, all kinds of stuff going on.

JL   And these happen obviously ….

XX   No, they are during school hours, while the kids are in school because this would lead to babysitting issues, so when the kids are in school, the parents come to their classes. So it is fantastic.

JL   That sounds great.

XX   And it is. I'm not trying to paint a, you know like, the picture is very very positive. While it is challenging, it would be negative towards maybe the powers that be but towards our own school and our own staff and our own families it is A1.

JL   The ethical curriculum then which differentiates edtog schools, another way of differentiating them from other schools (M it is probably the main difference really, I'd say) .. how does that happen? I know there is half an hour ..

XX   There is an agreed half an hour every day which is dictated by the patron so whatever schools would do their 'Alive O' or their religion programme, we would do Learn Together. So that ████████████████ time but to be honest it is kind of permeates the whole school day, no more than any ethos does really. So, we would have displays around the school, we would have assemblies and themes every week so, like, for example, our theme last week was responsibility so there would be a theme going for the week. We would have assemblies. Children would work on that theme for the week. We would have prizes. We call them

shining stars, on a Friday. They would get certificates and prizes. There would be displays up. The children might do their songs. There might be drama's going on. It kind of just runs through the school day, the school week. The parents would know what the theme is. Then it could be, you see there is four strands in the curriculum so it would vary then, depending on the time of year as well, it could be a festival or a religious feast that's on, so that, one particular week it could be that. Or it could be a moral or ethical or an environmental one. It just depends. Various ……..

JL   I've seen how it operates in other schools and I'm very aware of it. But, the question I'm interested in is how is it evaluated or how do you ensure that it is being done properly?

XX   Well we have a post holder in the school, so one of the post holders responsibility, one of the teachers in the school has a post of responsibility for 'learn together' – like other curriculum subjects. So it is treated with the same, that's why we still have posts of responsibility. They are disappearing as well with all the cutbacks. But, just like any other academic subject, Irish or Maths, we have a post of responsibility for 'learn together', so she is a co-ordinator for the school so she would look after all the resources. We have a section in our staff room, I can show it to you if you like, before you go, if we have time for a cup of tea or whatever, I can show you that anyway. But in our staff room we have resource sections, we have a very large one for ethical education and we have lots and lots of resources, boxes of resources, displays and artefacts and visual aids and that and all the different strands. So she would co-ordinate all of those and look after all of those and make sure they're available, so whatever the theme is, she'd make sure that they're all available for that week – if there are puppets or storybooks or whatever and she would encourage everybody to use them, remind everybody where they are. Each child then, in the school, has, they have their 'learn tog' scrap book, so they use those every year so where they don't have a text book, obviously, for 'learn tog', they each have their scrapbooks, so all their different work throughout the year goes into this scrapbook and they bring that home at the end of the year. We have a 'learn tog', when you come into the school, again, you probably walked quickly passed it, we have what we call our ethos wall. So, because ethos is kind of, so important, the minute you come in the door, that whole wall facing you when you come in, is our ethos wall. We have the four strands right in front of you there, we've, because the Yellow Flag is so important to us, we have a Yellow Flag board. We are going to keep that as our Yellow Flag board. And then we have our 'learn tog' board. So that whole wall is dedicated to our ethos. And each month a different class takes responsibility for the 'learn tog' board, so they do its display, so every month it changes.

JL   (talking together)

XX   so, its there and nobody can say they didn't know what was going on or they can't say 'oh, I didn't know you were an edtog school', it's in your face the minute you walk in the door (JL the colour) – its kind of in your face, so that's how 'learn tog' works.

JL   ████████████████████████████████████
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XX   ………………education

JL   Because it would seem to me to be a very, it could be a very strong strand of equality and justice ………

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XX   Maybe it varies from school to school, I don't know. Well, we would do a good bit of it now.

JL   but…………….. of edtog schools that I spoke to, and I've spoken to other schools as well, there is much greater focus on the inter-cultural because the inter-cultural element is local and immediate. The developmental element is more global and less tangible. Less immediate, you know, it is not something that you confront every day, but you might, through the media or whatever… so anyway that's just a general …

XX   Yea, we would do, well, now Im trying to think ███████████████████████
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██ have. We are lucky, we have a lot of resources in our school and we try to get a balance between the four strands. Now I ██
██████████████████████████████ done out our own school plan and we have tried to get a good balance to make sure we are not over emphasising one strand over the other – because it is very easy to do a lot on the belief systems because that's kind of one of the easier ones. But we have tried to do it so we are spreading the load over the four and that each class, we've done it per class level.

JL   How often do you that, where you sit down and talk about how it is going and whether you are emphasising …

XX   Well we have done out the school plan and we had a lot of meetings last year so we are going to give that a couple of years and then review it in a couple of years. We feel we have got a good balance now that we are not over-compensating with one over the other. So, hopefully and again as I said, they're working a lot on the office and they are planning to put a lot of stuff up on the website. That is ongoing. So we'd be liaising a lot on keeping an eye on that as well because obviously we are looking for new ideas, you know.

JL   Okay, I think my final question would be with regard to training in the colleges. What is your impression of it, its adequacy when it comes to the new teachers that you employ for them to work in intercultural diverse context. Do you think the training is good enough when they come here to work in these contexts or what?

XX   If I am to be absolutely honest I'm not aware of what training they are getting. That's the honest answer to that. They seem to get short modules

JL   Do you mean that statement now as something that you'd, evidenced by …………………….you wouldn't know

XX   No, no, no I couldn't say exactly what they are getting ie, from interviewing them, they seem to ██
██
███

JL   ……………………………Intercultural guidelines

XX   yes, but now yes, okay, we got a book posted out to the school. (JL and that was it?) ..we got no training, none whatsoever

JL   Is that just you, not just your school, not just edtog schools

XX   No, no schools got training.

JL   Anywhere in the country?

XX   No, no.

JL   that's a great website actually

XX   You know the guidelines are very good.

JL   ………………………..resources.

XX   There is a tool kit for diversity as well that came out. They are very good, no, they are good but teachers are very busy. I do feel that, now having said that like, schools, not all teachers have got …………………child protection training either.   That's even more urgent. So maybe, the intercultural guidelines training isn't top of the agenda. The guidelines did come out but there wasn't countrywide training. It would have been no harm to have maybe done a half day or something, or cluster schools together and do some kind of training. But having said that …

JL   I'm surprised that they don't come out and ..

XX   Yea, but having said that, if I was to toss a coin or whatever and say, do the child protection training with all the teachers in the country, if principals got that training and a few teachers from each school did that, I think all teachers in the country need to get that but intercultural training, I'm sure it is improving in the colleges, you know, there wasn't for a long time and now there is a small amount but like, the schools vary so much, I mean, to get a job in this school, or to get a job in, maybe in, xxxx or down in xxxx down the road, like there is no comparison but you learn on your feet. You have no choice really and I don't know what the answer would be to it. Are they aware of it, I don't really know. I don't really know, you see, if they are possibly not quite aware of what its like, no more than anything else, if somebody asked me to draw up a plan for and A&E Dept or whatever, I wouldn't have a clue obviously. You have to go and be there to know what it is like, it is very hard to describe what exactly it is like.

JL   Absolutely, but then as the same time they have to ………..

XX   But they don't really listen to, I find the Dept Ed, the people that work in the planning units and the, I don't know, its obviously dealt, money is the bottom line. It has to be. The cynical side

JL   The country was awash with money years ago…

XX   Exactly, because if they did, you see, if they did start giving out lots and lots of language support teachers, at one stage, like, say when after xxxx and xxxx's, you know, they were given out, like, you got one language teacher for every 14 children that needed it and schools were getting 5 and 6. You know it was great there for a little while. Now you need to have 90 to get two. You get two for 90 children now. It has tightened even more this year. Schools that maybe would have got six language support teachers are now getting two.

Really tightened back on it again. But that's just number crunching and money, it has to be. It has to be to save money.

JL   As opposed to ….

XX   ███
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██████████████████████ didn't believe us, so now we are doing the test and you're still not giving us the teachers.

JL   Okay, I think we'll end it there because it's an hour and 10 minutes which is 30 minutes more than I said I would talk to you. Thanks a million for your time, its been great, and when I transcribe ….

Appendix C

Coding framework

Coding framework

'Irish' is included under a number of codes and categories:
Irish included as part of the code 'Identity' and in the category Diversity & Access/inclusion and coloured pink.
Irish included as part of the code 'ethos' and in the category Curriculum and coloured red.
Irish counted under 'Irish classrooms' included as part of the code 'diversity in the curriculum' and in the category Curriculum and coloured red.
Irish counted as 'language' included as part of the code 'Language in Curriculum Terms' and in the category Curriculum and coloured red.

Language as a term is counted separately under different codes:
Language as an indicator of the code 'cultural diversity' and in the category of Diversity, Access/Inclusion and is coloured pink.
Language included under the code 'language' in the category Policy/Public Discourse and is coloured green.
Language included as part of the code 'Language in Curriculum Terms' and in the category Curriculum and is coloured red.

Enrolment policy (general denoted as EP1), Enrolment policy (as response to access crisis/ issue/difficulty denoted as EP2), patron etc fall under the code of Access/Inclusion (in line with Includ Ed findings) and are all coloured pink.These in turn fall into the category of Diversity & Access/inclusion and are coloured pink.

Culture is counted separately under these different codes:
1. ethos 2. diverse cultural representation in the curriculum and fall under the catgorey of Curriculum and are coloured red.
Culture is also included in the code 'culture in broader societal terms' and falls into the catgory of Diversity & Access/inclusion and are coloured pink.

The terms or phrases Ethical Core Curriculum, 4 strands, 4 principles, core curriculum, learn together curriculum are all counted as the term 'core curriculum' which falls under the code of 'Ethical Core Curriculum'. This code in turn is included in the broad category of 'Curriculum' and are all coloured red.
The individual elements of the core curriculum i.e. Belief systems, equality and justice, Ethics and the environment and morals and spirituality are counted separately and fall under the code of 'Ethical Core Curriculum'. This code in turn is included in the broad category of 'Curriculum' and are all coloured red.
The terms of teachers, teachers training, training, etc are regarded as 'positive' 'neutral' and 'negative' codes and fall under the category of teacher training and are all coloured light green

Appendix C3

Matrix of Interview with Parent 3

Initial coding into axial coding

'Irish' is included under a number of codes and categories:
Irish included as part of the code 'Identity' and in the category Diversity & Access/inclusion and coloured pink.
Irish included as part of the code 'ethos' and in the category Curriculum and coloured red.
Irish counted under 'Irish classrooms' included as part of the code 'diversity in the curriculum' and in the category Curriculum and coloured red.
Irish counted as 'language' included as part of the code 'Language in Curriculum Terms' and in the category Curriculum and coloured red.

Language as a term is counted separately under different codes:
Language as an indicator of the code 'cultural diversity' and in the category of Diversity, Access/Inclusion and is coloured pink.
Language included under the code 'language' in the category Policy/Public Discourse and is coloured green.
Language included as part of the code 'Language in Curriculum Terms' and in the category Curriculum and is coloured red.

Enrolment policy (general denoted as EP1), Enrolment policy (as response to access crisis/ issue/difficulty denoted as EP2), patron etc fall under the code of Access/Inclusion (in line with Includ Ed findings) and are all coloured pink.These in turn fall into the category of Diversity & Access/inclusion and are coloured pink.

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1. ethos 2. diverse cultural representation in the curriculum and fall under the category of Curriculum and are coloured red.
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The individual elements of the core curriculum i.e. Belief systems, equality and justice, Ethics and the environment and morals and spirituality are counted separately and fall under the code of 'Ethical Core Curriculum'. This code in turn is included in the broad category of 'Curriculum' and are all coloured red.
The terms of teachers, teachers training, training, etc are regarded as 'positive' 'neutral' and 'negative' codes and fall under the category of teacher training and are all coloured light green.

Phrase/word/term	Inst	Date	Subject	Line/pge	Code	Cat
He has made a very good transition but we do notice very distinct differences between the climate in the primary school and the climate at secondary level. Mainly linked, not so much to the content of what the children are learning but to the communications and the atmosphere and environment in the second level school.	1	xx xx xx	Parent 3	1/18-20	Ethos	Curriculum
he doesn't think there is respect for everybody involved in the whole venture, as it were. They don't respect one another and there is a feeling that it is more about policing a large group that actually focusing on the development of the children who are in the school and the development of the children in according to each of their needs.	2	;;	;;	1/24-27	Ethos	Curriculum
but for the parents who have been involved in the creating of an Edtog school, I think we see it as a problem. And I'd certainly see it as a problem because I can see how it could be different.	3	;;	;;	1/36-38	Ethos	Curriculum
Well I do think the structures of the second level school could be different. I think in the case of his school, there is a large group of first years, that group should probably be established as a school within a school with a higher level of interaction with all of the teachers involved.	4	;;	;;	1/42-44	Ethos	Curriculum
I'm just talking about first year initially because it would give a greater chance for the teachers to work as	5	;;	;;	1/48-53	Ethos	Curriculum

a team with all of the students there, equally. There are also, in his school, children who have already been identified as very much on the margins and he sees that and we see that. And they have been separated out even though the main group is quite homogenous; I would feel that there isn't enough of an emphasis on finding out what each child's potential is and then working really hard towards helping them to achieve that.						
I didn't think an educational system that sidelines people is fair and is in the best interests of the whole population. So that is one of the reasons. The other reason in retrospect is that when I was growing up I remember the establishment of the school projects, ▮▮▮▮▮ There was quite a lot of discussion of education in my home. We were very exposed to knowledge about lots of different faiths deliberately by my parents who weren't sent down one track even though we were Catholic, I mean, I was practicing for all of my teenage years. We were still exposed to a wide range of information about other faiths and other nationalities.	6	;;	;;	2/3-10	<mark>Ethos</mark>	<mark>Curriculum</mark>
The big thing for me is the fact that the Edtog schools work hard to go according to the motto which is 'learn together to live together' so they do a lot help children to know that the child that is sitting beside them is maybe different to them in	7	;;	;;	2/22-25	<mark>Ethos</mark>	<mark>Curriculum</mark>

may respects but they can coexist in a peaceful way or in a way that respects both of their differences and allows them to get on together.						
it was being expressed very clearly by them. I think that was because of the efforts of all the strands and parts of the school made to apply the four principals of Edtog to their schooling. Now, on the other side I would say, and as a member of the Board of that school, I would say there is still things that we have to deal with	8	;;	;;	2/47-50	Ethos	Curriculum
if we say we are co-educational, actually saying we are co-educational from the point of view that we will seek to challenge some of the norms in society	9	;;	;;	2/61,62	Ethos	Curriculum
I think in our school the principal has created a very open climate where people are allowed to integrate and participate as much as they want. And that means you can give what you can to the school and to an extent, you can take if you want to take as well.	10	;;	;;	3/13-15	Ethos	Curriculum
What is multiculturalism? X: How long have you got (laugh). Recognising a full range of the, or expecting that there would be a full range of cultures. Are you talking about in the school? Just that the whole world is made up of lots of different cultures, our culture is informed by a whole lot of different things as well and understanding this, that there are a lot of different cultures and that you can't expect there to be one	1	;;	;;	3/37-42	language	Policy/public discourse
or the way I think of inter-culturalism is maybe people from two or three different	2	;;	;;	3/48,49	language	Policy/public discourse

cultures working together or mixing or coming together						
assimilationism? X: Taking somebody in from another culture and expecting them to change, to become part of the new culture that they come into, in other words not recognised and not respected for their own culture	3	;;	;;	3/51-54	language	Policy/public discourse
integration? X: A bit like assimilation but might be a little more, sort of easy-going in that it would allow people to integrate with aspects of their own culture into a more dominant culture.	4	;;	;;	3/56-59	language	Policy/public discourse
Pluralism? X: We take all comers, everybody	5	;;	;;	3/61-63	language	Policy/public discourse
recognise that there will be diversity and that we value that there is difference. But diversity is different to culture because if you are talking about diversity, diversity can mean a whole lot of different things, it can mean that say, in a place e.g. a school, we will take, we accept that we are going to welcome a diverse population. That can include, as well as including people from different races, different cultures, it can include people with disabilities.	6	;;	;;	4/1-5	language	Policy/public discourse
My experience, pluralism, I think, yea, I'd pick pluralism. That's in my interpretation of the word	7	;;	;;	4/10	language	Policy/public discourse
well, the first thing I would say is it is one where everybody in that classroom is respected, that everybody in the classroom has an opportunity to reach their potential, that they	1	;;	;;	4/20-27	Diversity in the curric	Curriculum

have an opportunity to express themselves in accordance and recognising that they may express themselves differently depending on their own culture. Then I think that the classroom would also recognise the range of cultures, do you know, that it would be obvious that these cultures were represented in the classroom and that then the climate or the atmosphere in the classroom, that there would be credibility given to the views of every person, in other words that if somebody is expressing a particular view based on their cultural identity then that view would be listened to as much as the view of another person			49			
A high level of respect, a great sense of, I don't, its not really a value, it is an understanding of the fact that they as a person have their own beliefs and views and understandings and come from their own culture but that they can't actually, they have to be able to listen to the other cultures or the other people represented in the room and they have to be able to set aside their own bias in order to do what's right for the, in a sense, do you know like, they have to, in a way, take a, sort of, neutral or be capable of taking a, sort of, neutral stance. So, you mentioned inculcating before and this is a difficult one, I think they need to have a sense of caution about whether they are inculcating someone into their own culture and their own beliefs or whether they are allowing	2	;;	;;	4/44-58	Diversity in the curric	Curriculum

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someone to maintain their own beliefs based on the fact that in an Edtog, or my understanding of an Edtog school is that you allow, you know, the children in that school may have their own faiths, their own belief systems which are secured and developed in the home but they bring some of that to the school, but the school isn't the place where that's continued. (J: Okay) Do you understand what I am saying, so the teacher has a different role and that would be a bit like the difference in my, the way I understand it between an Edtog school and a denominational school. A denominational school still has a role to maintain the ethos, which is Catholic in the …… or Church of Ireland or Muslim or whichever school. So it still has a role in the faith development of the child. An Edtog school doesn't have a role in the faith development of the child						
Same quote as above again but this time (counted as an instance of the term 'state role/responsibility for education')	1	;;	;;	4/44-58	Curric as reprod agent in society	Curriculum
one of the strengths that a teacher can have is being able to promote dialogue, dialogue in the sense that you allow people to talk together and come to understand where each other is coming from but not to become aggressive or do you know, so I think that is really important and that, a teacher who as a compense is able to actually promote that dialogue in an age-appropriate fashion as well So it might be very easy to	3	;;	;;	4/66,67 5/1-9	Diversity in the curric	Curriculum

do it with your 12 year olds but how do you do it with your 6 year olds, do you know. What other competences? I suppose another competence would be in the core curriculum, the learn together curriculum there are four strands, belief systems, values, environmental and ethics, I think, and the other one, I can't remember what it is now but I think that teachers need some competence in those areas. You know, if you are talking about (J: as in subject knowledge or content knowledge or ..?) yea, that, you know, if you are talking about ethics and the environment, for example, I think that it is important that teachers understand why that strand is there, they understand what ethics is about.						
Same quote as above again but this time (counted as an instance of the term 'core curriculum')	1	;;	;;	5/1-9	Ethical Core Curric	Curriculum
Well, the first thing, before we go that far, what I'd say is that on the interview panel generally we have the Chair of the board, the Principal of the school and an independent assessor and our independent assessor was the Principal of another Edtog school. So I think the three working together is very good and also always going back and remember what the charter says and what the four principles are, is really good. And then when you have people coming to interview, and I know things are changing, in the last two years there is a module for, in xxxxxx, I think and Mary I in the	1	;;	;;	5/43-49	teacher training: negative	Teacher training

Edtog, learn tog. It is an elective so I have to say, generally, before that, teacher education didn't necessarily cater as well as it could for Edtog Schools.						
Do you think it is important that the school staff reflects the diversity in the classroom? X: Yea, but our system doesn't allow for that because our system actually has (J: with regard to the Irish language?), with regard to the Irish language, our system actually prevents having diversity in the teaching population which is an issue that we have.	4	;;	;;	5/59-63	Diversity in the curric	Curriculum
The biggest difficulty I have is around the whole idea of democracy and the partnership. Now, I mean, I am not, my school happens to be quite good, I think, but it is the hardest work and I am speaking as a board member and as somebody who started a school, the hardest thing for me is actually generating what I think is a true feeling of democracy around decision-making in the school (counted as an instance of the term 'core curriculum')	2	;;	;;	6/2-5	Ethical Core Curric	Curriculum
It is usually the Principal or the Board and that creates, that working with all the elements of a school community is the most difficult thing in terms of meeting our Principal around democracy and also the strictures created by the fact that we are established as a primary school under the national guidelines for primary schools in terms of say, boards of management and stuff like that. That has	3	;;	;;	6/9-13	Ethical Core Curric	Curriculum

an impact on the whole idea of democracy, I think.					

Appendix C11

Matrix of Interview with

Principal 2

Initial coding into axial coding

'Irish' is included under a number of codes and categories:
Irish included as part of the code 'Identity' and in the category Diversity & Access/inclusion and coloured pink.
Irish included as part of the code 'ethos' and in the category Curriculum and coloured red.
Irish counted under 'Irish classrooms' included as part of the code 'diversity in the curriculum' and in the category Curriculum and coloured red.
Irish counted as 'language' included as part of the code 'Language in Curriculum Terms' and in the category Curriculum and coloured red.

Language as a term is counted separately under different codes:
Language as an indicator of the code 'cultural diversity' and in the category of Diversity, Access/Inclusion and is coloured pink.
Language included under the code 'language' in the category Policy/Public Discourse and is coloured green.
Language included as part of the code 'Language in Curriculum Terms' and in the category Curriculum and is coloured red.

Enrolment policy (general denoted as EP1), Enrolment policy (as response to access crisis/ issue/difficulty denoted as EP2), patron etc fall under the code of Access/Inclusion (in line with Includ Ed findings) and are all coloured pink.These in turn fall into the category of Diversity & Access/inclusion and are coloured pink.

Culture is counted separately under these different codes:
1. ethos 2. diverse cultural representation in the curriculum and fall under the category of Curriculum and are coloured red.
Culture is also included in the code 'culture in broader societal terms' and falls into the category of Diversity & Access/inclusion and are coloured pink.

The terms or phrases Ethical Core Curriculum, 4 strands, 4 principles, core curriculum, learn together curriculum are all counted as the term 'core curriculum' which falls under the code of 'Ethical Core Curriculum'. This code in turn is included in the broad category of 'Curriculum' and are all coloured red.
The individual elements of the core curriculum i.e. Belief systems, equality and justice, Ethics and the environment and morals and spirituality are counted separately and fall under the code of 'Ethical Core Curriculum'. This code in turn is included in the broad category of 'Curriculum' and are all coloured red.
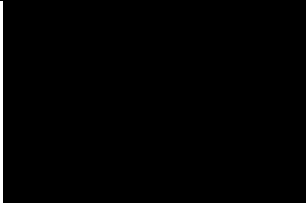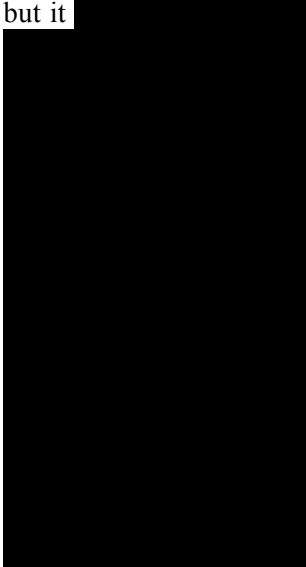The terms of teachers, teachers training, training, etc are regarded as 'positive' 'neutral' and 'negative' codes and fall under the category of teacher training and are all coloured light green.

Phrase/word/term	Inst	Date	Subject	Line/Pge	Code	Cat
most of those children would have been born in Ireland, so they are Irish citizens and most of them would consider themselves Irish. But, of those families, 84% of the parents were not born in Ireland. So in 84% of the families the parents are not of Irish origin. That's the way I would describe it. Now, unfortunately the key to the filing cabinet where all the list of the countries etc. are kept, is at home….we have 54 countries of origin among the parents in the school and 45 different languages spoken in the homes of our families, so there would be 54 different countries of origin and among the homes then, in various degrees, 45 different languages spoken among the children's families – whether its full-time, part-time, it is impossible to say but the children would have those languages on their ear to a varying degree during the day (counted as an instance of 'identity')	1	xx xx	Princip 2	1/14-22	Identity	Diversity Access/ inclusion
Same quote above but this time (counted as an instance of the changing nature of Irish society)	1	;;	;;	1/14-22	Culture in broader societal terms	Diversity Access/ inclusion
I have heard debates and conversation doing on among children I've taught about their identify, their nationality "I'm Irish, no you're not, you're from Nigeria, no no, my mammy is from Nigeria but I am Irish, I	2	;;	;;	1/29-32	identity	Diversity Access/ inclusion

was born in Dublin" you know, among children as young as six. And that whole this of geography, identity, culture, nationality, it is very complex (counted as an instance of 'identity')						
Same quote above but this time (counted as an instance of the changing nature of Irish society)	2	;;	;;	1/29-32	Culture in broader societal terms	Diversity Access/ inclusion
Probably ¾ of that 84%, if not slightly more of those children were actually born in Ireland. Yea, the vast majority, yea (counted as an instance of 'identity')	3	;;	;;	1/47,48		
Same quote above but this time (counted as an instance of the changing nature of Irish society)	3	;;	;;	1/47,48	Culture in broader societal terms	Diversity Access/ inclusion
We set up a Diversity Committee and work with a lot of the children, so the children and parents and staff would be well used to being interviewed. That's why I'm saying it would be parents and children who would be well used to being asked about diversity and about inclusion and above the challenges of diversity. And about anti-racism initiatives and all that sort of thing. And how schools deal best with these issues. So, it wouldn't be something totally alien to be asked by people. And we did get our flag. We haven't had our flag raising ceremony, we hope to do that when the weather improves	1	;;	;;	2/11-16	diversity in the curric	Curric
No, class teacher, xxxx xxxx for the first two	1	;;	;;	2/36,37	Preparation/ experience	Curric

years. xxx xxxxxx ▓▓▓▓▓▓▓ al fo▓▓▓						
And we have a mentoring scheme, we are part of the pilot Mentoring and Induction Scheme which is a fantastic scheme. It is still a pilot scheme, unfortunately, but we are lucky to be part of that ..	1	;;	;;	2/51-53	Teacher training: positive	Teacher training
the school has a mentor on the staff and they are trained, a trained mentor, to induct newly qualified teachers into the profession. We have a mentor here.	2	;;	;;	2/57,58	Teacher training: positive	Teacher training
So, while I'm not in the classroom, for the last four years, I would still be in touch with the mentoring. Our deputy principal xxxxxx) is the mentor so she is mentoring the newly qualified teachers and from all the in-service we did on the revised curriculum as it was coming in, my impression would be that the curriculum is very much a menu curriculum, would be my understanding	3	;;	;;	2/64-67	Teacher training: positive	Teacher training
My overall sense from people is that it is a very good curriculum but it is not prescriptive. Okay, the objectives are set objectives but the resources and the methodologies within it are menu based so you are very much free to source your resources, your teaching aids, your materials for your class. Now that obviously puts extra work on a teacher so what we would be	1	;;	;;	3/2-9		Curric

trying to do is, like the objectives are good and one of our core principles in Edtog would be that we are child-centred so therefore if you keep your objectives in mind and you are child-centred, then you try and base your lessons and your school plans with your ethos in mind, with your objectives in mind and then you obviously select your resources very carefully						
well we are just not used to dealing with diversity here. It just happened so quickly. Like, you can get it when you look around on the internet, especially in America.	2	;;	;;	3/19-20	diversity in the curriculum	Curric
but that it is very flexible, that it is what you do with it and that it is what you do with the class of children that you have in front of you and how you meet the objectives and I think that is a good thing that it is not too prescriptive. Like, we have to be very flexible, like we use parents as a resource all the time	2	;;	;;	3/34-36		Curric
you have a choice there of going to get a book out of the library about Diwali or whatever and putting your Powerpoint up and telling them, or bringing a parent in and telling the children first hand, how they celebrated with their family. That type of thing or if you were putting up a display, like, we have a display in the corridor there at the moment and a lot of our stuff is obviously ethos	3	;;	;;	3/40-46	Diversity in the curriculum	Curric

based and human rights based, so the display of dolls there in the corridor, you just make sure that they are ethnic based, all the skin colours', all the are culture based – that we don't have a generic set of little culture ………… you know that kind of thing. The posters on the wall are mixed race, that type of thing						
██████████ (instance of how understanding of edtog ethos is imprtant in the recruitnment process)	1	;;	;;	3/64,65	ethos	Curric
but it ██████████ (instance of how understanding of edtog ethos is imprtant in the recruitnment process)	2	;;	;;	4/6-9	ethos	Curric
Maybe when it comes to the religion end of things, it might be easier in that we don't face the same challenges or the same uncomfortable situations around religious instruction and maybe having to separate	1	;;	;;	4/26-28	religion	curric

children when it comes to religion instruction time (counted as an instance of the term 'the teaching of religion')						
every school in Dublin xx, well probably apart from the gaelscoil, for obvious reasons, I think, is facing huge challenges around this diversity, this change that has happened over such a short period of time. It just happened so quickly and we weren't ready for it, we weren't equipped for it, we weren't trained for it, you know, it just took everybody by surprise and it isn't being acknowledged and resourced properly. And less and less not obviously because of the current economic climate. You know, resources have been withdrawn now (counted as an instance of the changing nature of Irish society)	4	;;	;;	4/34-39	Culture in broader societal terms	Diversity Access/ inclusion
But I have always felt that when I've had a Communion or Confirmation class that the whole thing was just a farce. You know, you had so many people going along with that charade because it was the done thing and it was just a fashion show – but that's a whole other thing. So there are so many aspects to it. I suppose for me, what began to happen for me was, in a Catholic school you had increasing numbers of children who weren't Catholic in the class. So, it came to religion time, or whatever, the formal	1	;;	;;	4/44-65	Ethos	Curric

religion time, like, there was always, and obviously every school is entitled to promote its ethos, you know, and that's the way DOWN TO... it should be, a Catholic school has a right to promote the Catholic ethos, of course it has and that is the way it should be, you know, and you are entitled to have your prayers and your statues and your crucifix and that's fine but it became more and more uncomfortable to keep						
Same quote above but this time (counted as an instance of the term 'the teaching of religion')	2	;;	;;	4/44-65	religion	curric
JL would the majority of students be Roman Catholic? X ▮▮▮▮▮ JL And that is representative across the .. X ▮▮▮▮▮ (counted as an instance of the changing nature of Irish society)	5	;;	;;	5/37-45	Culture in broader societal terms	Diversity Access/ inclusion
From being in a diverse classroom I would see, certainly from different ethnic groups, we see the families, their ambition	1	;;	;;	7/24-28	Diversity in the curriculum	curric

for their children, we see the fantastic work ethic they bring, the ambition of the children and in certain cases, how they are bringing the standards up. They are absolutely fantastic, the children are. Okay, they might come with broken English or no English, but when they do get the language, they are fantastic workers in the classroom. Absolutely brilliant and particularly in Maths, they are bringing the standards way up, we feel (counted as an instance of the benefits of Edtog education to society and individuals)						
but the richness it brings and it can only be good for the children because the children are growing up into a society where they are going to be living and working with people from all over the world and hopefully travelling the world and it is just preparing them for life in the 21st century (counted as an instance of the benefits of Edtog education to society and individuals)	2	;;	;;	7/33-35	Diversity in the curric	curric
communication, if English isn't the first language, initially it is very difficult. For the children it is difficult because it is frightening for them when they come first, they can't communicate with their teachers or the other children and this can be very scary, it can lead them to 'acting up'. Frustration − it can lead to all kinds of behavioural problems.	1	;;	;;	7/40-49	Diversity in the curric	curric

Communication with parents, they don't understand the signs, the text messages, the newsletters. It is very difficult to have meetings, you'd have to pay for interpreters to get things translated – that is very expensive, we don't get a budget grant for that – I mean they are the main challenges really. Now there are ways around it. We find ways around it but it is just an added, it just makes things complicated, it is extra effort all the time. Then the cultural differences obviously. It makes things very complicated at times, because just peoples perceptions of school, you know, of teachers, of corporal punishment, what is appropriate ways to communicate, mens' attitude to women can differ (counted as an instance of 'difficulties presented by diversity')						
Have you a multi-cultural school or an inter-cultural school or an integrated school? X the terms don't matter to me in the slightest, no, to be honest really.	1	;;	;;	7/63-65	language	Policy/ public discourse
I'm probably a bit cynical about the whole thing because. It depends, you see, what way you are looking at it. Sometimes I wonder do they care at all but then, now that's probably being a little blasé about it, like, do you know, or are the people that are up there making the policies, do they really know what is happening on the ground at all. But	2	;;	;;	8/7-10	language	Policy/ public discourse

then, that's not an answer to your question. For us as a school …						
Same quote above but this time (counted as an instance of the term 'state role/responsibility for education')	1				Curriculum as reproductive agent in society	Curric
For us as a school, to be honest, right, or certainly the way I would approach it and I think the way the staff would, is that, we treat every single person as an individual. We don't give hoot where they are from or what language they speak, what colour their skin is. Every single person, every single child is an individual and we don't ever, to be honest I don't thing, well certainly I don't anyway, and the home school teacher, we would deal a lot with the families. It doesn't come into our mind, like, where they are from or what language they are speaking, we just focus on this mother, this father, this child, you know, how can we make sure that they feel they belong in here, that they are welcome and safe and happy here.	3			8/14-20	language	Policy/ public discourse
I would see SPHE as being at the core. That and our ethical education programme has been at the core of everything (counted as an instance of the term 'core curriculum')	1	;;	;;	8/50,51	Ethical Core Curriculum	Curric
I would see SPHE as being at the core. That and our ethical education programme has been at the core of everything	2	;;	;;	8/50,51	Curriculum As Reproductive agent in	Curric

(counted as an instance of the term 'state role/responsibility for education')					society	
You have so many ethnic groups speaking different languages in the area, it is very difficult to get a sense of community going (counted as an instance of 'difficulties presented by diversity')	2	;;	;;	9/50,51	Diversity in the curric	curric
we are right in the middle of our community all right. But each of the distinct groups though, because they speak different languages, the chances of them socialising and getting involved with each other outside of the school are minimal, I think (counted as an instance of 'difficulties presented by diversity')	3	;;	;;	9/62-64	Diversity in the curric	curric
No, they are during school hours, while the kids are in school because this would lead to babysitting issues, so when the kids are in school, the parents come to their classes. So it is fantastic (counted as an instance of the term 'parental involvement')	1	;;	;;	10/18,19	ethos	Curric
Same quote as above but this time (counted as an instacnce of 'diversity in the curriculum')	4	;;	;;	10/18,19	Diversity in the curriculum	curric
we would do Learn Together. So that time but to be honest it is kind of permeates the whole school day, no more than any ethos does really. So, we would have displays around the school, we would have assemblies and themes every week so, like, for example, our theme last week was responsibility	2	;;	;;	10/32-41	Ethica Core Curriculum	Curric

so there would be a theme going for the week. We would have assemblies. Children would work on that theme for the week. We would have prizes. We call them shining stars, on a Friday. They would get certificates and prizes. There would be displays up. The children might do their songs. There might be drama's going on. It kind of just runs through the school day, the school week. The parents would know what the theme is. Then it could be, you see there is four strands in the curriculum so it would vary then, depending on the time of year as well, it could be a festival or a religious feast that's on, so that, one particular week it could be that. Or it could be a moral or ethical or an environmental one. It just depends. Various (counted as an instance of the term 'core curriculum')						
Well we have a post holder in the school, so one of the post holders responsibility, one of the teachers in the school has a post of responsibility for 'learn together' – like other curriculum subjects. So it is treated with the same, that's why we still have posts of responsibility. They are disappearing as well with all the cutbacks (DOWN TO)… And then we have our 'learn tog' board. So that whole wall is dedicated to our ethos. And each month	1	;;	;;	10/46-65	Curriculum evaluation	Curric

a different class takes responsibility for the 'learn tog' board, so they do its display, so every month it changes (counted as an instance of the term 'evaluating the curriculum')						
Well we have done out the school plan and we had a lot of meetings last year so we are going to give that a couple of years and then review it in a couple of years. We feel we have got a good balance now that we are not over-compensating with one over the other. So, hopefully and again as I said, they're working a lot on the office and they are planning to put a lot of stuff up on the website. That is ongoing. So we'd be liaising a lot on keeping an eye on that as well because obviously we are looking for new ideas, you know.	2	4th May	;;	11/40-44	Curriculum evaluation	Curric
If I am to be absolutely honest I'm not aware of what training they are getting. That's the honest answer to that. They seem to get short modules	1	;;	;;	11/50,51	Teacher training: neutral	Teacher training
we got no training, none whatsoever	1	;;	;;	11/63,64	Teacher training: negative	Teacher training
There is a tool kit for diversity as well that came out. They are very good, no, they are good but teachers are very busy.	4	;;	;;	12/13,14	Teacher training: positive	Teacher training
So maybe, the intercultural guidelines training isn't top of the agenda. The guidelines did come out but there wasn't countrywide training. It would have	2	;;	;;	12/15-17	Teacher training: negative	Teacher training

been no harm to have maybe done a half day or something, or cluster schools together and do some kind of training.					
but you learn on your feet. You have no choice really and I don't know what the answer would be to it. Are they aware of it, I don't really know. I don't really know, you see, if they are possibly not quite aware of what its like, no more than anything else, if somebody asked me to draw up a plan for and A&E Dept. or whatever, I wouldn't have a clue obviously. You have to go and be there to know what it is like, it is very hard to describe what exactly it is like.	3	;;	;;	12/27-31	Teacher training: negative	Teacher training

Appendix D

Report of Survey of Educate Together Teachers

<u>Introduction</u>

The main objective of the Includ-ED project was to analyse educational strategies that contribute to social cohesion and those that lead conversely to social exclusion, in the European context.

In order to demarcate the extent to which educational strategies; that contribute to social cohesion, as per the Successful Educational Actions in the IncludED project, are being implemented in the context of the Irish Primary Education system, a survey, the results of which follow, was completed by teachers and support staff working within the service.

The survey was focused on those teachers and staff working within the particular educational body of "Educate Together" nationally.

"Educate Together" is the patron body to Ireland's multi-denominational schools. Established in 1978, it has grown to preside over 60 national schools. "Educate Together" schools are committed to practices that are child-centred and encouraging of parental involvement. Their educational philosophy promotes the values of justice, equality and human rights for all children, while their practices embrace the democratic, by empowering teachers, parents and children to work as partners. "Educate Together" schools respect and celebrate the different and unique identities of all those in their school community.

Their ethos is encapsulated in their mottos

"Learn Together to Live Together" & "No child an outsider"[1]

The limitation of the survey lies in the fact that only schools from one educational patron body in the Republic of Ireland are covered. Therefore the results of the survey relate only to how schools under the "Educate Together" management structures incorporate the objectives of the IncludEd project.

<u>Methodology</u>

The research method was that of a mixed survey which contained questions, some of which pertained to a quantitative approach while others were designed with qualitative analysis in mind.

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[1] Information accessed from www.educatetogether.ie

[2] Final Included Report: Strategies for Inclusion and social cohesion in Europe from education

[3] With Decisive participation, community members participate in decision making processes by becoming representatives on decision making bodies and family and

1.

100% of those who took part in the study, work, as teacher's and support staff, within the "Educate Together" school system in the Republic of Ireland.

2.
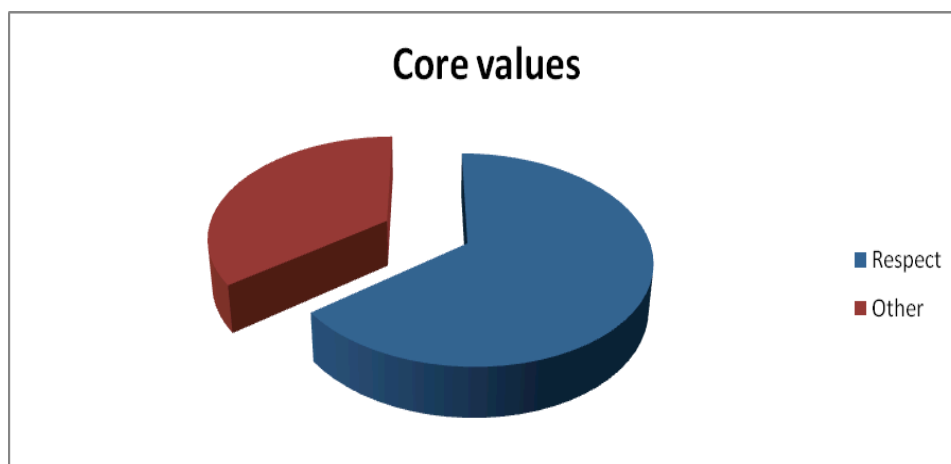
The respondents were asked initially to share the core values promoted within their school. **Respect** was cited by 64.7% of the respondents making it the dominant core value expressed. Others values cited were

Inclusiveness

Equality

Celebrating differences

Compassion

Empathy

Fairness

Tolerance

Democracy

Non denominational/multi-racial

Child centred

Honesty

Friendship

Cooperation

Responsibility

Peace

Teamwork

Fairplay

Sense of community

Justice

Best effort

Parent/Teacher partnerships

3.

The respondents were then asked to elaborate on how these theoretical values were incorporated in their educational practice. The responses included examples of both explicit and implicit practical application of the core values.

<u>Explicit practices</u>

1. Inclusive enrolment: Acceptance of all faiths and none and inclusion of children with Special Educational Needs
2. Use of "Learn Together" curriculum which includes specific lessons on celebrating difference integrated within the learning objectives of SPHE and Drama
3. Core values promoted in the schools Code of Behaviour & Positive Language Policy
4. In class discussion of Core Values
5. Democratic partnerships: Parents and students involved in school policies and decision making through parent/teacher committees and student councils

<u>Implicit practices</u>

1. Teachers modelling the aforementioned core values in their interactions with students and parents
2. Students engaged in co-operative group work, the aim of which is to draw out these values
3. One respondent spoke of these values being the "very fabric of school life" underpinning all decisions and informing planning, curriculum delivery, parental and community involvement and extra curricular activities
4. The respondents were then asked if they consciously promote values, outside of these core values, in their education practice. 85.7% answered Yes, the remaining 14.3% answered No

Other values

- Yes 85.7%
- No 14.3%
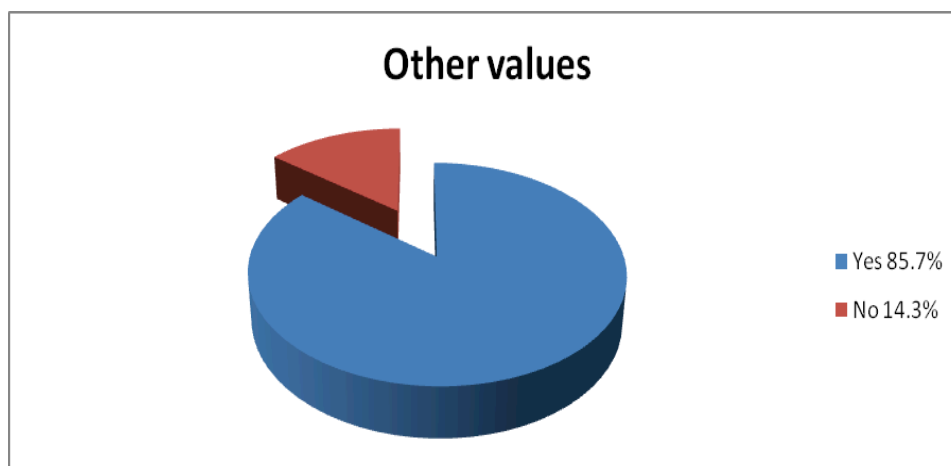
5. The other values consciously promoted were partly focused on the child's personal development and partly focused on the social development of the child.

In terms of the developing the child's personhood the respondents cited promoting self esteem, good work ethic, patience, perseverance and the ability to reflect while also developing the skills necessary for good organisation and critical thinking.

In terms of developing the child socially the respondents cited the promotion of safe play, anti bullying and the encouragement of helping and caring attitudes. Showing good manners and respect for elders was also mentioned.

6. The respondents were then asked how often a programme of early intervention was used in their school to promote equality of opportunity academically. The results below show that early intervention was employed frequently in the majority of schools to promote equality of opportunity among the students.

Early intervention

- Frequently 81.3%
- Sometimes 6.30%
- Rarely 6.3%
- Never 6.3%
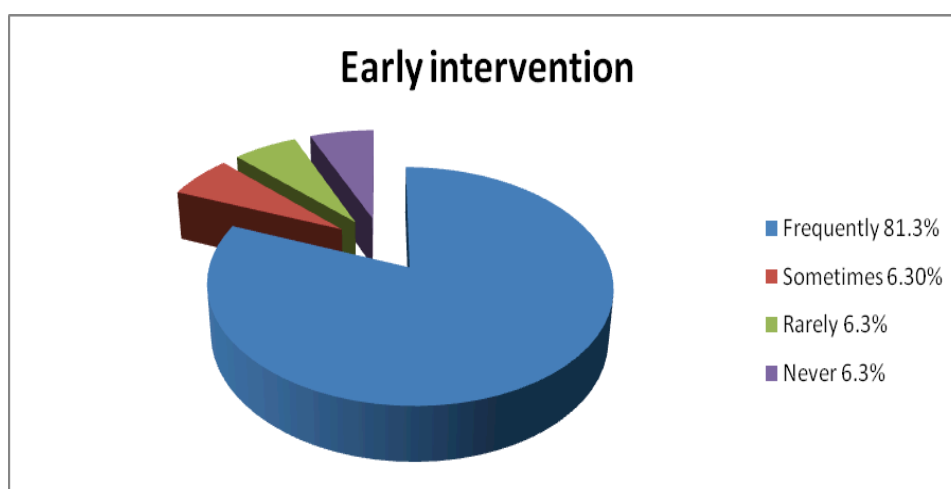
7. The respondents were then asked to elaborate on the early intervention programmes at play in their respective schools.

Special Educational Needs

Children with autistic spectrum disorders are provided with support, in a pre-school unit, before entering the mainstream classes thereby proactively minimising difficulties which may arise.

Teachers tailor their planning to allow children with special needs to be included in the curriculum.

Also schools engage in Team Teaching wherein the Learning Support teacher assists, in class, with literacy and numeracy, thereby minimising the exclusion of children with special educational needs from the class programme of learning.

Targeted Learning Support

Schools are engaging with the "First Steps" program which is a targeted literacy initiative taught in small groups that can pre-empt and pro actively minimise difficulties in literacy achievement at a later stage.

With the same aim of pre-empting difficulties in literacy Learning Support teachers in some schools focus on Junior Classes.

English as an Additional Language

Children for whom English is an Additional Language are given support so that their full potential in the mainstream classroom can be maximised.

Financial support

In instances where disadvantage is occurring through a lack of family financial resources, schools provide free books and resources to overcome that difficulty and ensure equality of opportunity.

8. The respondents were then asked to rate the extent to which educational achievement is valued by the school, parents and/or the community
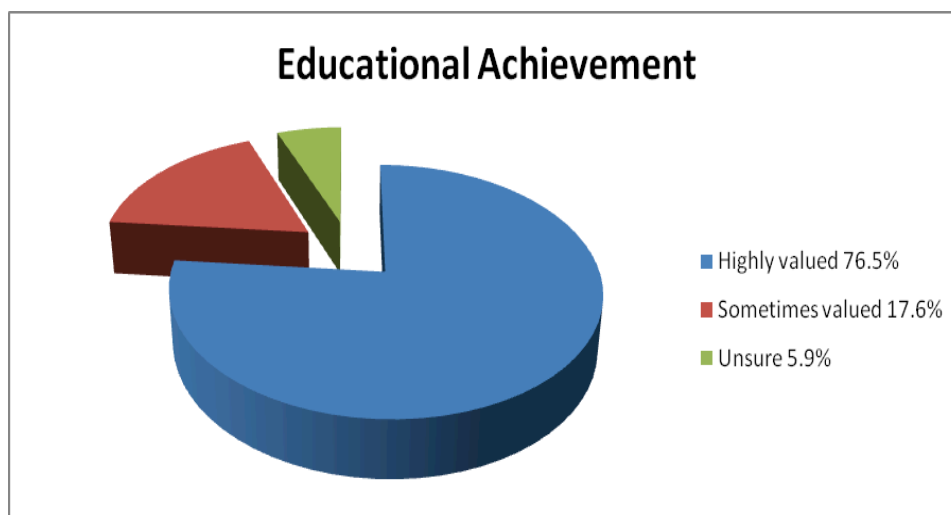
The results show, that in the majority of schools in question, educational achievement is highly valued.

9. The respondents were then asked to elaborate on the strategies or practices, in place, in the schools, that show the value attributed to educational achievement.

SCHOOLS

- **Reward systems**

Respondents cited the use of stickers and charts that focused on educational achievement. Individual children were also acknowledged by a "pupil of the week" award. Rewards for effort were included in these systems.

- **Verbal praise**

Respondents spoke of the use of quiet on-going in class praise of the children's endeavours and of relaying this praise to the child's parents regularly. Respondents also said they communicated to the children their high expectations for them and encourage all children to achieve their best.

- **Display**

Many of the respondents mentioned valuing the achievements of students through displaying their work in the class, on whole school notice boards and on the schools website and blogs.

- **Assessment**

Others cited formal and informal assessment as a practice used to value educational achievement and ensure that early intervention was in place for children who needed to target certain areas of difficulty. Respondents also mentioned the use of differentiated tests so that all children experience success and can feel that their educational achievements are valued. Also children who attain highly are then facilitated to engage with the curriculum at a higher or more in depth level

- **Professional Development**

Another practice cited was that of teachers engaging with continuous professional development in order to upgrade their skill sets and stay abreast of educational initiatives.

- **Outside Agents**

Respondents also cited how their schools engaged with outside agencies in order to attain support services for certain children and to attain funding for specialised resources.

PARENTS

Respondents cited parental involvement in literacy and numeracy courses as well as their input in child specific planning and implementation of programmes as examples of how achievement is valued.

They also mentioned the parent's role in helping their child with homework and volunteering in the classroom activities. The valuing of educational achievement among parents was also witnessed in their willingness to support afterschool activities by volunteering themselves or providing transport to events and also engaging outside of school hours in fundraising events.

COMMUNITY

According to the respondents the community show the value they place on educational attainment by donating resources to the school, sharing community resources and highlighting the work of the school in the local paper. The school also acknowledge the communities involvement in the educational attainments of the children by displaying photos of outings in the community, publishing and distributing school newsletters in the local community and encouraging student participation in community programmes and competitions.

10. Respondents were asked to rate the extent to which positive attitudes and values that promote inclusive practices in everyday activities exist in their school environments.

A strong majority, 82.3% said that attitudes and values promoting inclusive practice were strongly present in their school, while 5.9% replied that these practices were only sometimes present, and 11.8% responded that they were unsure as to the extent to which these practices existed in their schools.
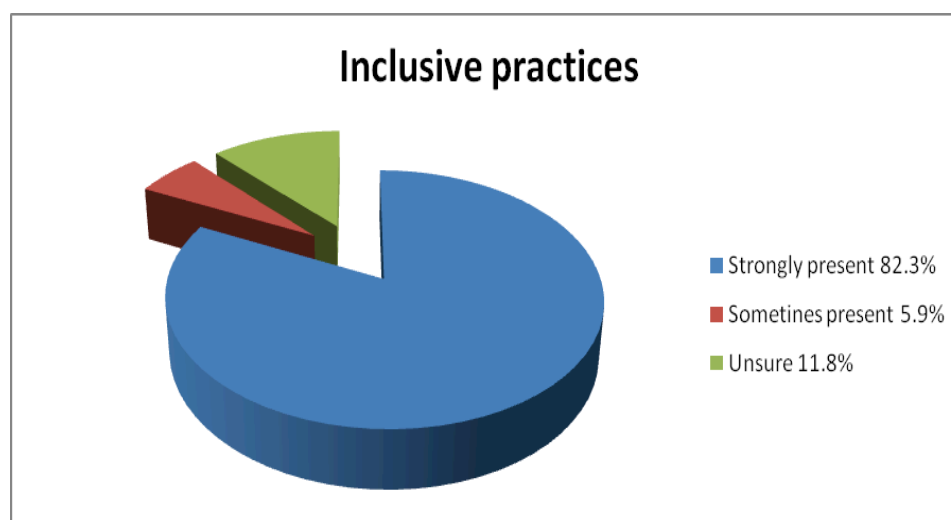
11. Elaborating on these findings, the respondents were then asked to identify the specific activities within the school that promote inclusive practices.

These practices span whole school activities, in class actions and recreation times meaning that inclusion is practiced in many ways within the school environment.

WHOLE SCHOOL

At the whole school level respondents mentioned the child's initial interaction with the school, that is, enrolment and maintained that enrolment is carried out on a first come first served bias. The children then throughout their school experience are exposed to and involved in many whole school activities that promote inclusion, for example, the children take part in the Green schools committee, the Yellow Flag programme for inclusion and various "Weeks" such as Human Rights week, anti bullying week, friendship week. A respondent spoke of how children who practice the core value of inclusion in their interactions are acknowledged with a "Shining Star" award within a Whole School Assembly setting.

IN CLASS

Inclusive practices are integral to the in class experience also according to the respondents. Classes are mixed in terms of ability and all children including those with special educational needs are taught within the one classroom, supported by a structure of team teaching. Where children with special educational needs are taught in specific units, these units are part of the school campus and integration is very strongly supported. Within the classes children are encouraged to have a voice and to support one another academically and socially. Inclusion is also prioritised among staff with teachers, principals, special needs assistants, caretakers and secretaries eating and socialising together.

RECREATION TIMES

During recreation times, inclusive practices are promoted. Respondents mentioned the use of a lunch buddy system for children with Special Educational Needs so that exclusion is counteracted while other s mentioned the promotion of "Playground buddies", children who ensure that no one is excluded during break and lunch times.

PARENTS

Inclusive practices are extended to the parental community. Parents are encouraged to volunteer in classes. Groups for parents and toddlers are in place and some of the schools run English classes for parents for whom English is an additional language while others include the community in the school through the providing of yoga and jewellery making classes on the premises after school times.

12. When asked if democratic values were promoted in their school, both with the curriculum and extra-curricular activities 100% responded with a "Yes".

13. When asked then to rate the extent to which democratic values were promoted a strong majority stated that they were "Highly promoted" at their school, which split minority saying that they were "Sometimes promoted" or they were "Unsure" as to their promotion.

Democratic values

- Highly promoted 87.5%
- Sometimes promoted 6.3%
- Unsure 6.3%
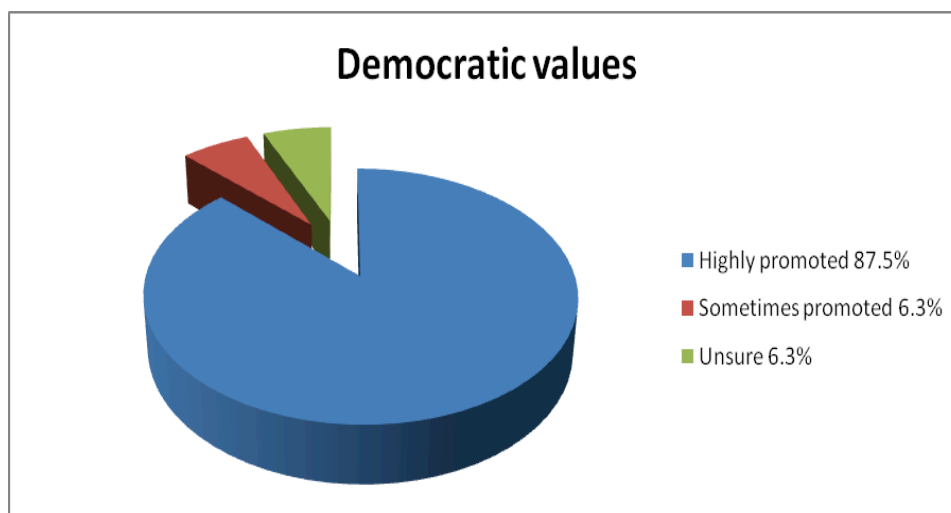
14. The respondents then elaborated on the types of activities, taking place within the curricular and extra-curricular areas that promote democratic values at their school.

WHOLE SCHOOL

At the whole school level, respondents mentioned again how children's voice and input was welcomed through their Student Councils, Comenius council and Green School s committee. Also mentioned where assemblies where the school principal listens to the views of the children in relation to the school.

IN CLASS

Respondents stated that class voting was a common occurrence. Children are often involved in making group decisions and coming to a consensus. If an election or referendum is coming up, it is used as a learning opportunity. Students were involved in evaluations and collaborate in the direction their learning takes. Children are also involved in determining procedures for classroom management and models of positive behaviour.

PARENTS

Democratic principles are espoused through parental involvement in the schools also. Respondents mentioned how parents discussed the Equal Status Act with the student council. Teachers and parents meet regularly to discuss the children's progress and parent feedback is requested during policy formation. Respondents mentioned how children and parents are consulted on Code of Behaviour and Healthy Eating policy and how, policy groups are formed that include staff and parents working together on draft policies that are then sent to the Board of Management. Parents also are involved

in the choosing of class outings and the drawing up of the school sports, arts, music and drama programmes.

15. When asked to what extent diversity and differences are accepted in the school, a strong majority of respondents, 82.4%, answered that they are fully accepted. A number of respondents 11.8% said that in their school there is some acceptance while a further 5.9% were unsure.
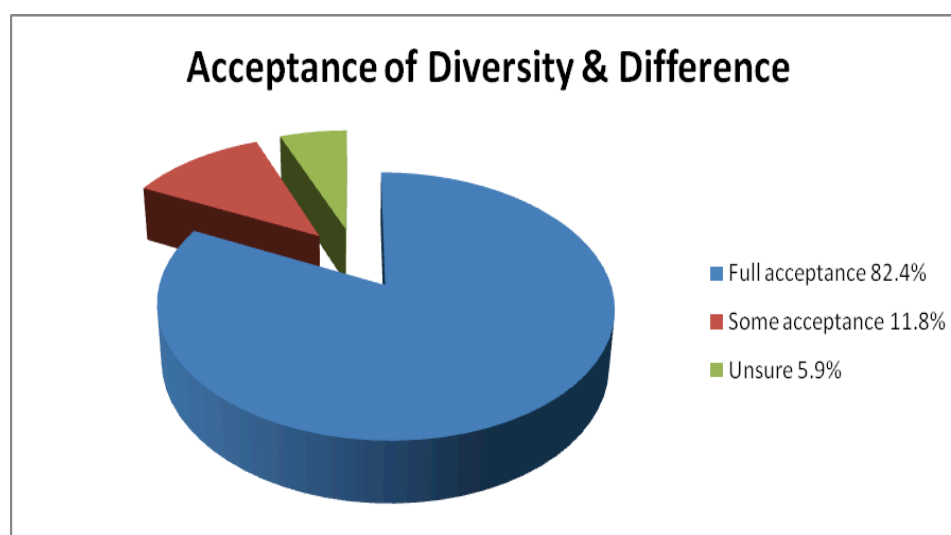
16. The respondents were then asked to outline the activities or practices that show that diversity and differences are accepted and valued in their school.

WHOLE SCHOOL

At the whole school level the respondents listed much that showed that diversity and differences are accepted in their school. The respondents spoke about explicit projects, such as "Show Racism the Red Card" the "Yellow Flag for Diversity" and "International Day" that are incorporated into school life. Certain schools also have weekly school assemblies where acceptance of difference is promoted.

Respondents also mentioned that acceptance of diversity and difference is acknowledged by the overall school ethos where attitudes of "Zero tolerance" towards disrespecting others are fostered and new pupils are warmly received and welcomed. They spoke of an "ethos of friendliness and respect" wherein all staff, teachers, caretakers, secretary etc. are open and friendly from the front door in. In terms of the school environment respondents mentioned how positive displays and posters, photos of families are displayed that reflect and support diversity and of how Halal and

vegetarian options are offered at Food Nights. Furthermore diversity and difference is shown to be accepted in school by the provision of interpreters for parents during parent/teacher nights.

IN CLASS

The respondents stated that diversity and difference is promoted in class through the teaching of the Learn Together programme which encourages learning on various belief systems and customs of other faiths. Parents are involved in this programme and take part in dress up events, food days and language days. The religious education programme also can include festivals from various religious.

As well as the "teaching" of acceptance of diversity and difference the children live this acceptance through the inclusion and integration of children with a range of special educational needs in the mainstream class. A respondent spoke also of how their school is working with the Special Education Support Service to secure funding to support a deaf child through the whole of that child's class learning sign language.

17. The respondents were then asked how often the values of tolerance and solidarity were promoted in their everyday practice. A majority 81.3% stated "Frequently" while the minority 18.8% stated "Often"

Tolerance and Solidarity promoted

- Frequently 81.3%
- Often 18.8%
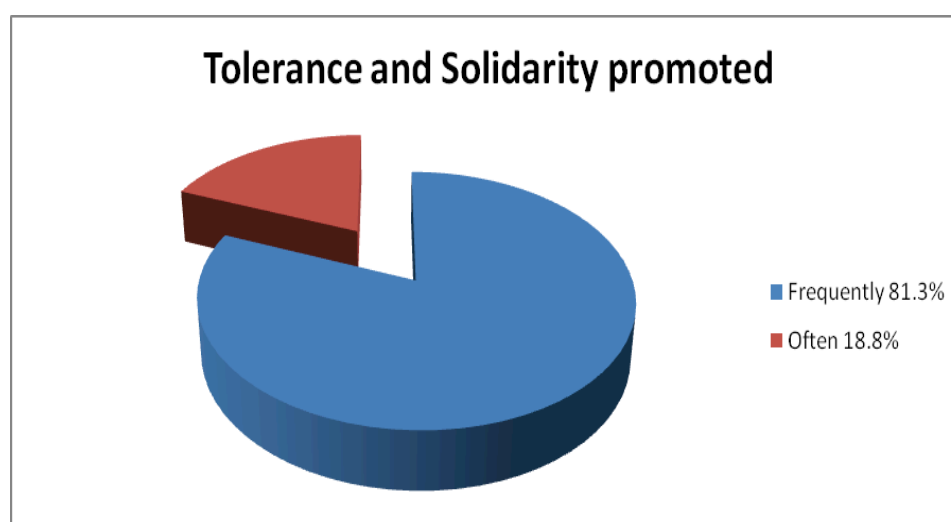
18. The respondents were then asked to elaborate on the everyday practices, within their school, that promote tolerance, solidarity and a sense of school community.

A number of the practices cited pertain to the school ethos and atmosphere. The staff shares similar values and work together to model collaboration, co-operation and conflict resolution. Respondents spoke of the importance of a friendly open atmosphere where all students are listened to from the smallest up. Children are encouraged to promote and advance this atmosphere by being friendly and helpful to one another and ensuring that no child is left without a playmate in class or at break times.

In class, tolerance, solidarity and a sense of school community is further promoted through the "Learn Together" programme wherein children are taught an appreciation for the enriching potential of difference in our society. Classes also comply with Positive Language Policies and Codes of Behaviour that promote tolerance and a sense of solidarity and community is achieved through the displaying of images from other countries, world maps and welcome signs in different languages. A sense of solidarity and pride is fostered through having a school song and the celebration of school activities in the schools websites and newsletters. Children also develop a sense of solidarity through their involvement with outside groups, such as Amnesty International, where the children sell Friendship Bracelets to raise money for the work of this organisation.

Teamwork is encouraged and the children take on responsibilities and help in the overall running of the school through their involvement in the student council and playground buddy programmes. A sense of identify and community pride was achieved in one school through their participation in the Comenius project through which 17 European visitors arrived and introduced to the school and the school community.

Solidarity and a sense of community are also fostered through active Parent Teacher associations which organise social events for the wider community.

19. The respondents were then asked if spaces for community learning were available in the school. In a majority of schools, 82.4%, there are spaces for community learning while in 17.6% of schools there are no such spaces.

Community Learning

Yes 82.4%
No 17.6%
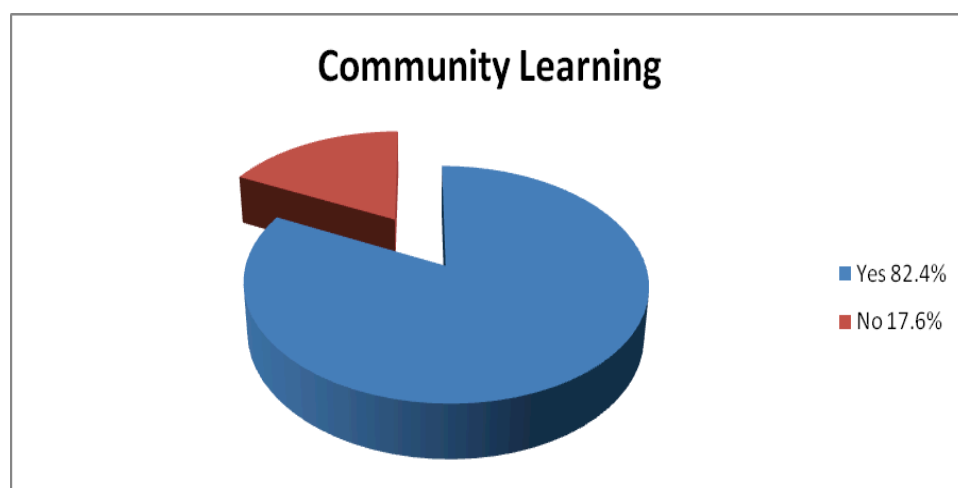
20. Of those who answered yes, a brief description was given as to the various community groups who make use of the space.

SPORTS & EXERCISE

Classes of martial arts: yoga: athletics: Irish dancing and aerobics.

COMMUNITY

Parenting courses: Parent and Toddler groups: Childcare groups and Resident Association Meetings: Community Group: Reading Groups: Knitting Groups: Local choir practices

EDUCATION

VEC night classes for parents and staff: Gardening classes: Maths classes for Parents: Jewellry making: Computer classes: Healthy Lunch Courses: Personal Development Courses: French and Spanish classes: Art classes: Drama classes: Specific drama classes for children with ASD and their families: Music classes: Samba drumming: Capoeira classes: Foroige

CHURCH

Presbyterian masses and Catholic instruction

21. Respondents were then asked to state how often their school collaborates with other organisations and institutions within the locality.

26.7% of the respondents stated "Frequently", with the majority 46.7% stating "Often" and another 26.7% stating "Seldom"
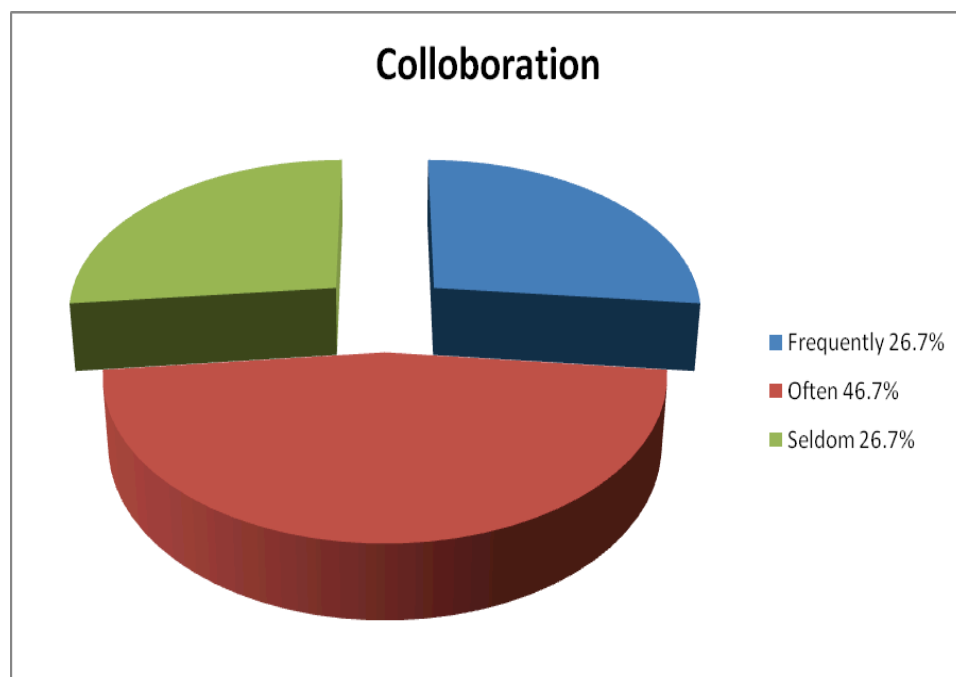
22. The respondents were then asked to elaborate of the sorts of collaborative practices that exist between their school and other institutions and/or organisations within the locality.

COUNTY COUNCILS

Respondents stated that County Councils funded cycling skills and provided funding for an artist in residence. Schools also collaborate with Local Libraries which supply books for their book clubs. In another school the County Council

funded an Immigrant Council "Toolkit for Parental Involvement" which involved a 9 week training programme.

PARISH

Some schools have a relationship with their Parish centres with students visiting elderly people in the parish centre and organising annual fundraising for their parish.

OTHER SCHOOLS

Respondents stated their schools were linked with other schools for football matches and for a secondary school provision campaign. Schools also are involved in "Tus Maith", a primary to secondary school transition programme. They also provide work experience for secondary school students and students from Teacher Training colleges and FETAC courses. The respondents mentioned their involvement in research studies and surveys also. The local teacher centres also send experts to assist in "Science week".

STAFF

It was stated that Principals meet monthly with their Local Principals Network and that

Learning Support Teachers share good practice and give and receive information from the National Educational Psychological Services (NEPS).
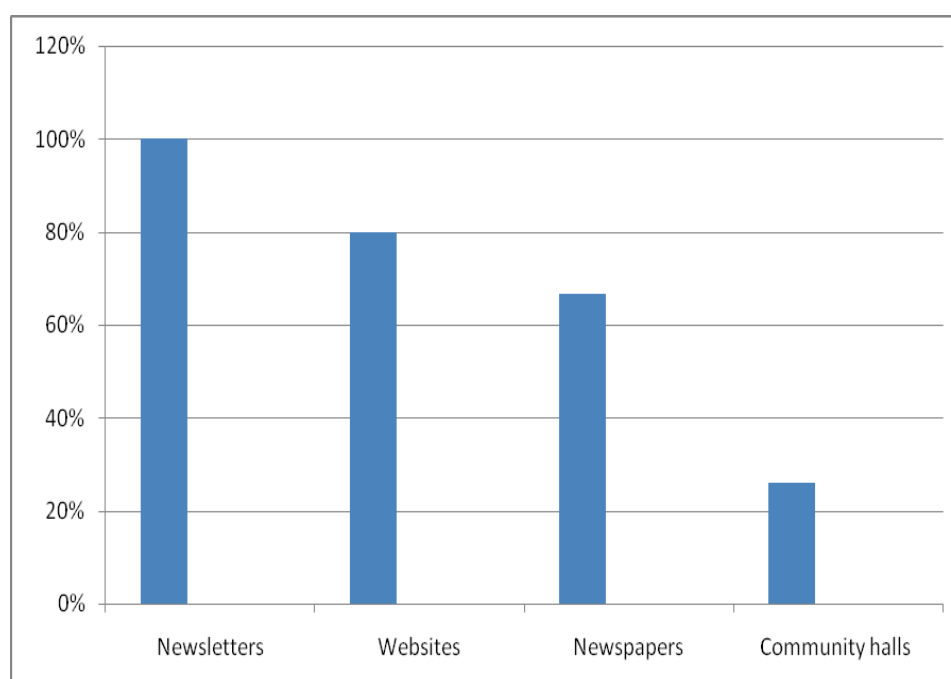
COMMUNITY

Schools were linked to the following community groups and events
- St. Patricks Day Parade
- Community Development Organisation-annual Spring Clean
- Credit Union Quiz
- GAA provide pitch for Sport s Day and link in with afterschool clubs
- Local Third Level Campuses for Art s initiatives
- Doras Luimni, Limerick Civic Trust, Barnados and the Red Cross
- An owner of a local castle allows the school to visit annually

- Senior Citizen Group, they visit the school and go on outings with the children while also assisting in the teaching of history and knitting

23. The respondents were then asked what modes of dissemination are used to reach out to the community.

100% of them stated that Newsletters are used: 80% make use of Websites to disseminate information: 66.7% of schools provide information in local newspapers and 26% display information in community halls.


The four modes of dissemination were the most widely used but schools also made use of informal contacts with neighbouring schools and parents involved in the local community. Children and teachers also keep class blogs and some schools have community notice boards within their environs.

Parents are also kept informed through the "Text a parent" service and open day meetings for new parents.

24. Respondents were asked to rate the extent to which parents and other adults in the community are involved in the school.

52.9% answered that parents were very involved, while 41.2% stated that parents were involved and 5.9% were unsure.
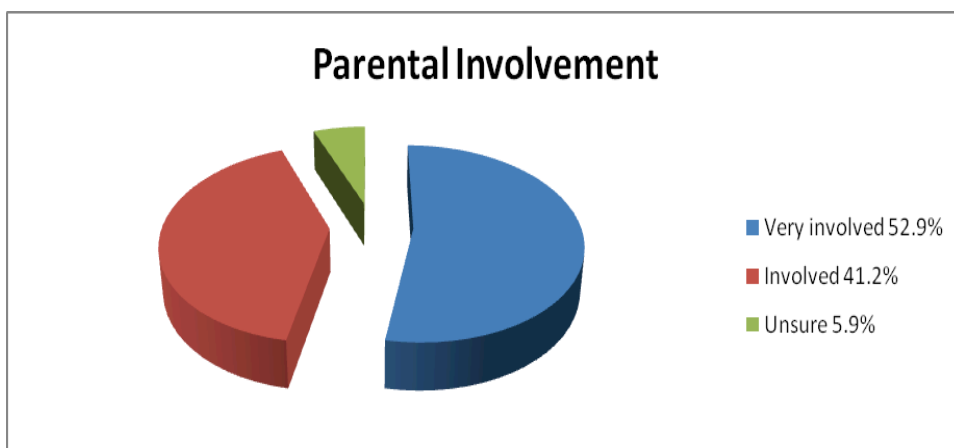

25. The respondents were asked how often parents are involved in decisions regarding the academic content offered to students.

The majority, 41.2% answered that parents were involved "Sometimes", while 23.5% answered "Rarely", with only 17.6% answering "Frequently" or "Never".
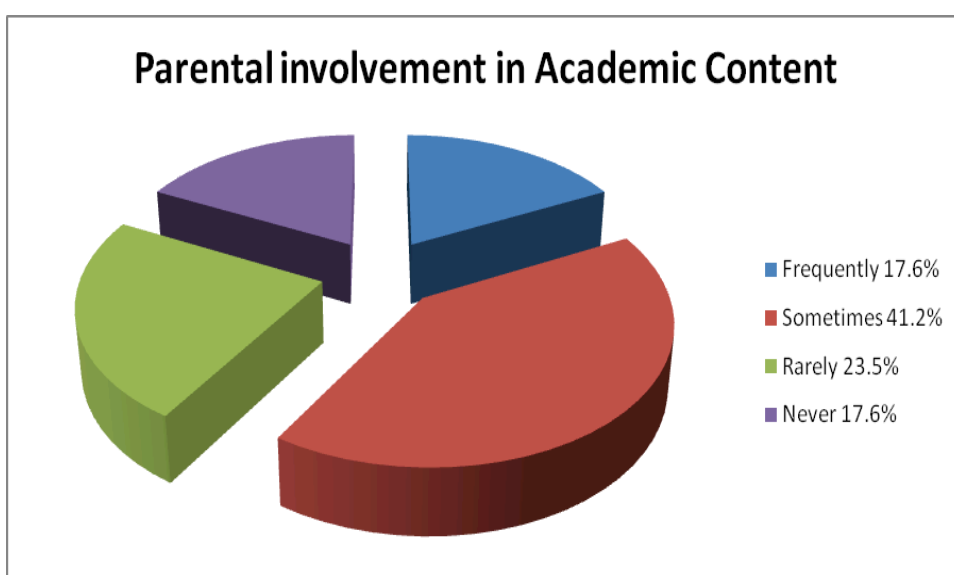
26. When asked subsequently how often discussions take place between staff, parents and other community members with regard to curriculum design, the majority of respondents, 35.3% stated that these discussions take place "Rarely", while 29.4% said they happen "Sometimes", 23.5% stated that they "Never" happen, with the minority 11.8% stating that they happen "Frequently"

Discussion on curriculum design

■ Frequently 11.8%
■ Sometimes 29.4%
■ Rarely 35.3%
■ Never 23.5%
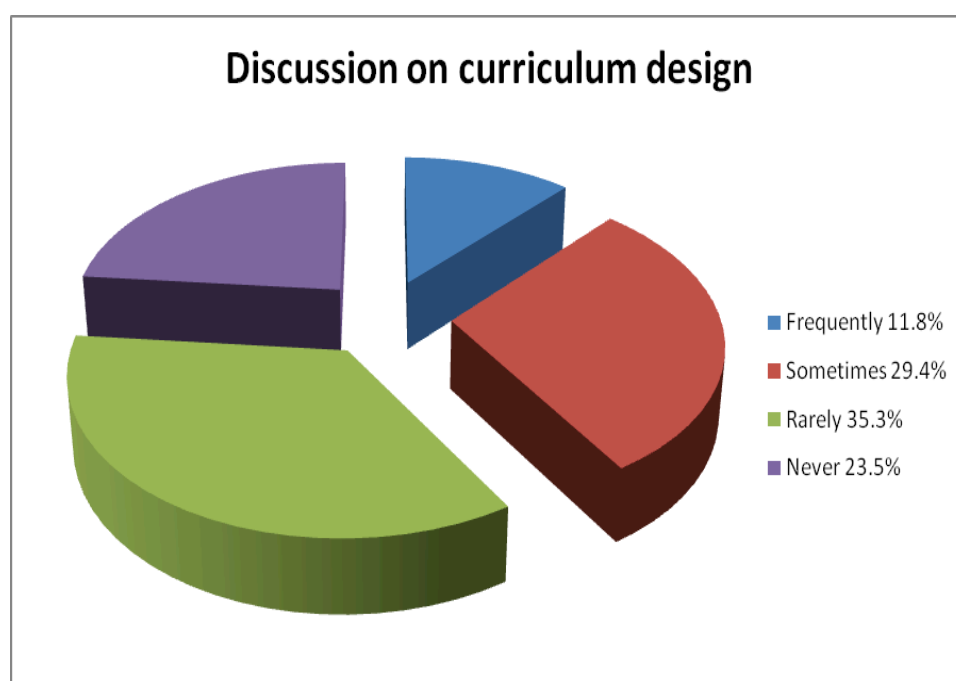
27. Respondents were then asked to elaborate on the opportunities that exist within their school for parental involvement.

WHOLE SCHOOL

Respondents stated that parents were involved in whole school events such as Intercultural Day, The Book Fair, School Fairs, Green School events, Concerts and Shows.

Parents are also part of the Board of Management structure and so are involved in the overall running of the school. Some respondents also mentioned how parents at their school assisted with administrative duties and offered IT support and training to teachers and other staff members.

CLASS

In some of the respondent schools, there is a Parent Rep for each class. Parents also volunteer within classes, offering help to the teacher and sharing specific skills and knowledge in the areas of music, religious education, science, art and Drama.

EXTRA-CURRICULAR

It was stated also that the Parent/Teacher associations jointly organise extra-curricular after school clubs.

FUNDRAISING

Parents are involved with Fundraising and Communication committees

28. The respondents were then asked to identify the practices which exist within their school that encourage the involvement of parents/adults from
a) migrant communities
b) minority communities
c) those with special needs

a) **MIGRANT COMMUNITIES**

To encourage the involvement of migrant communities respondents stated that English Language lessons were provided, these parents were encouraged to talk to staff and interpreters were provided for Parent/Teacher meetings if necessary. Those belonging to a migrant community were also encouraged to join the Parent/Teacher association and are invited to share their culture with children in the classroom. Cultural evenings take place and the school assists in translating documents and interpreting documents for people when necessary. Some schools provide Free Irish classes also and home visits are facilitated.

b) **MINORITY COMMUNITIES**

Similarly to above, parents/adults from Minority communities are encouraged to join the Parent/Teacher Association and form part of other Parent groups. The

schools organise cultural nights where communities such as the Traveller community take part. People from Minority communities are also encouraged to share aspects of their culture with the children in the classroom. Many respondents mentioned their acquisition of a Yellow Flag. The Yellow Flag programme is co-ordinated by the Irish Traveller Movement and it promotes and rewards tolerance and acceptance of diversity.

c) **SPECIAL NEEDS**

The respondents stated here that a talk is given to the children by an adult with special needs. Certain schools are linked with organisations that care for adults with special needs and the children collaborated with these adults in creating artwork. Parents of children with special needs are encouraged to join the Parent/Teacher Association and teachers and Special Needs Assistants met regularly to discuss and update the IEP, that is, Individual Educational Plan, of children with special needs. Staff members also are aware of appropriate terms around Special Needs. It was stated also that advice is given to parents on how to support the school's academic programme at home. Many schools are also wheelchair accessible.

29. The respondents were asked then to describe any forums or processes that exist to facilitate discussion about curriculum design and evaluation between school staff and parents/other adults in the community.
- Policy committees involving parents and teachers
- PTA invite visiting experts to give talks which are attended by parents and teachers
- Working groups established to work on issues eg working group on how to teach non religion in the school
- Policies online and comments welcome, policies presented to BOM
- Curriculum policies given to PA before completion for advise and comment rather them receiving a finished policy and asked for comment
- Self Assessment of Literacy and Numeracy
- Surveys, Questionnaires, Info meetings and Training days

- Presentation of Infant Curriculum to Parents
- If parent is an expert or well informed in certain fields they will be consulted and/or asked to lead or support a lesson for the children
- 2 respondants said this area solely for teachers, parents not involved beyond aspects of curriculum such a school garden and storytime and ethical education presentations. Not involved in PLANNING curriculum just aspects of its execution

30. The respondents were asked if their school has access to sufficient human resources to facilitate long term extra-curricular activities. The vast majority 73.3% responded that yes they did, with the remaining 26.7% stated that they did not have enough human resources to sustain such a service.

Extra curricular activities: Long term

- Yes 73.3%
- No 26.7%
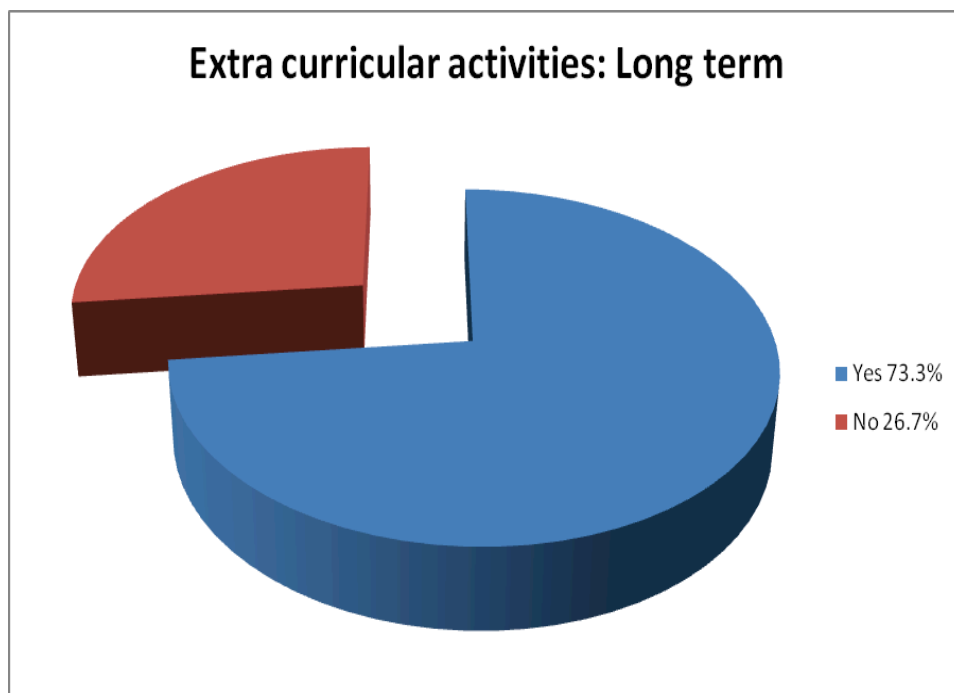
31. The respondents then elaborated on the types of long term extra-curricular activities available at their school.
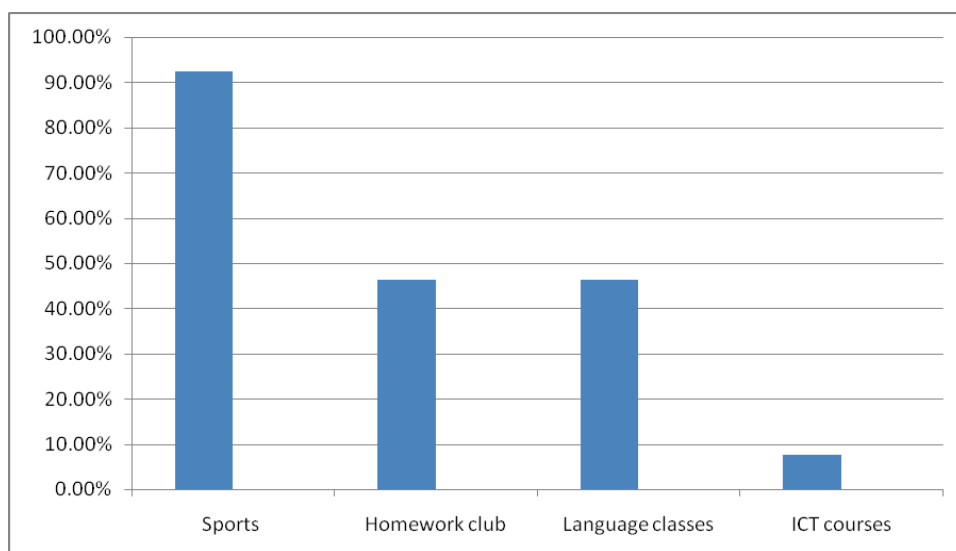
92.3% provide Sports after school: 46.2% have Homework clubs and Language classes and 7.7% provide ICT courses

Along with this some schools provide chess, art, drama, book clubs, board games club, music, astronomy and Catholic class.

32. The respondents were then asked finally if they wished to add any further comment.
Below are their comments.

"Am happy to be working in an Educate Together environment, as like the atmosphere of openness to innovation, to diversity"

"I teach at a denominational school" *(?? I thought the survey was only completed by teachers and staff of Educate Together schools)*

"The questions in the survey are not particularly well phrased. This is a topic that is very detailed and is unrealistic to assess in a survey. I feel that inclusion of any kind is often not measurable or quantifiable by the initiatives a school or organisation undertakes. Initiatives such as an International Day can be very

tokenistic if they are not backed by everyday interactions and inclusion is not part of the very fibre of the school"

"Values should be promoted as part of a whole school approach. We have a word of the week and children are rewarded for acting in a certain way which reflects the values above. A positive language policy and inclusion policy for children with SEN is paramount for a true and honest reflection of the values. Children s voice is very important and they should be given the opportunity to give their opinion"

<u>CONCLUSIONS</u>

Rather than just explaining the social exclusion of vulnerable groups in education, the IncludED project identified SEA's, Successful Educational Actions that overcome the existing barriers to inclusion.

The IncludEd project found Streaming, an educational practice common in Europe, exclusionary and incongruent to inclusion and social cohesion. It propounded rather heterogeneous classroom groupings that do not separate pupils according to their ability and favoured the reorganisation of human resources to attend to all pupils within the same classroom.

The survey findings above elucidate how practices in "Educate Together" schools adhere to this inclusive classroom model. In part 6 of the findings it is detailed how teachers and support staff are utilised and organised to ensure that those with English as an Additional Language and those with Special Educational Needs are facilitated within the one mainstream class.

Another Successful Educational Action identified in the IncludED project was how the extension of learning time through homework clubs and tutored libraries further increased inclusion of vulnerable societal groups.

Part 31 of the report above demonstrates how many of the Educate Together schools involved in the study were committed to utilising their resources in such a way as to provide Homework clubs and after school sports, educational and recreational facilities for pupils and members of the wider community.

The IncludED project also found that another Successful Educational Action was the involvement of family and community in the school. This involvement, it was found, enhances student achievement, especially for students from minority cultures.[2] In Part 24 above it is shown that a majority of respondents stated that parents at their school are "very involved". Throughout the survey and on the "Educate Together" website parental involvement is promoted as central to the running of the school.

In the final IncludEd report it is concluded also that "Decisive"[3], "Evaluative"[4] and "Educative"[5] types of participation are the ones that contribute most significantly to academic success. In Part 19 of the report above it shows that in 82.4% of the respondents schools, spaces for community involvement and learning are made available. In Part 22, a majority of the respondents state that their schools collaborate with organisations and institutions in the community often. In Part 27 respondents elaborate on the various opportunities present for parents to be involved in the school. These opportunities exist at whole school level by means of parent/teacher associations, school fairs and fundraisers: at classroom level by means of volunteer assistance in particular curricular areas and at after school level in the organisation of homework clubs and other extra-curricular activities. Furthermore, in the Educate Together schools surveyed many respondents stated that those in the community from minority and migrant communities and those with special needs are particularly encouraged to be involved.

In conclusion therefore, the results of the survey expound, that practices, within the Educate Together schools under study, adhere closely to the Successful Educational Actions promoted by the Final IncludEd, actions or strategies which are conducive to inclusion and social cohesion in Europe from education.

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[2] Final Included Report: Strategies for Inclusion and social cohesion in Europe from education

[3] With Decisive participation, community members participate in decision making processes by becoming representatives on decision making bodies and family and community members monitor the school's accountability in relation to its educational results. P31 Final IncludEDReport

[4] With Evaluative participation the family and community members participate in pupils' learning processes by helping evaluate children's school progress and family and community members participate in the assessment of school programmes and curriculum. P.31 Final IncludEd Report

[5] With Educative participation the family and community members participate in pupils' learning activities, both during regular school hours and after school and family and community members participate in educational programmes which respond to their needs. P31 Final IncludEd Report

Appendix E1

Educate Together Teachers Survey Questions

PLEASE NOTE: SURVEY TO BE COMPLETED BY TEACHERS IN EDUCATE TOGETHER SCHOOLS ONLY. THANK YOU.

Includ-Ed is a European Union research project that is examining policies and practices that enable or inhibit social inclusion in compulsory schooling across the EU.

This survey is examining the values that are imbued or fostered in educational policy and practice in primary level schools in Ireland. There are 31 questions in total across this survey, examining values in educational practice. It takes about 30 to 40 minutes to complete. Click on 'Done' when you have answered all questions.

1. Are you a teacher in an Educate Together school?

2. What core values are promoted within your school?

3. How are these core values fostered by you in your practice?

4. Do you consciously promote other values, outside of these core values, in your educational practice?

5. If you have answered yes to Question 3, briefly describe the other values that you consciously promote.

6. How often is a programme of early intervention used in the school to promote equality of opportunity academically?
○ Frequently
○ Sometimes
○ Rarely
○ Never

7. If early intervention programmes are used in your school, in what ways do they promote equality of opportunity academically?

8. Rate below the extent to which educational achievement is valued by the school, parents and/ or the community?

9. What strategies or practices implemented in your school show that educational achievements are valued: by the school, parents and/ or the community?

10. Rate below the extent to which positive attitudes and values that promote inclusive practices in everyday activities exist in the school?

◯ Not present

◯ Unsure

◯ Sometimes present

◯ Strongly present

11. What activities within the school promote inclusive practices?

12. Are democratic values promoted in the school both within the curriculum and extra- curricular activities?

13. If answer is 'yes' to Question 11, rate below the extent to which democratic values are promoted.

◯ Not at all promoted

◯ Unsure

◯ Sometimes promoted

◯ Highly promoted

14. What activities/practices both within the curriculum and extra curricular activities promote democratic values in the school?

15. Rate below the extent to which diversity and differences are accepted in the school?

◯ Non-acceptance

◯ Unsure

◯ Some acceptance

◯ Full acceptance

16. What activities or practices show that diversity and difference are accepted and valued in your school?

17. How often are the values of tolerance and solidarity promoted in the school in everyday practices?

◯ Frequently

◯ Often

◯ Rarely

◯ Never

18. What everyday practices within your school promote tolerance, solidarity and a sense of school community?

19. Are there spaces for community learning available in the school?

20. If answer is 'yes' to Question 18, describe briefly the various community groups that occupy the space.

21. How often does the school collaborate with other organisations and institutions within the locality?

◯ Frequently

◯ Often

◯ Seldom

◯ Never

22. Describe any collaborative practices that exist between your school and other institutions or organisations within the locality?

23. What modes of dissemination are used to reach out to the community?

☐ Newsletters

☐ Websites

☐ Information in community halls

☐ Information in local newspapers

Other (please specify)

24. Rate the extent to which parents and/or other adults in the community are involved in the school?

◯ Uninvolved

◯ Somewhat Uninvolved

◯ Unsure

○ Involved

○ Very Involved

25. How often are parents involved in decisions regarding the academic content offered to students?

○ Frequently

○ Sometimes

○ Rarely

○ Never

26. How often do discussions take place between staff, parents and other community members with regard to curriculum design?

○ Frequently

○ Sometimes

○ Rarely

○ Never

27. What opportunities exist for parental involvement in the school?

28. What practices exist within your school to encourage the involvement of parents/adults from a) migrant communities, b) minority communities, c) those with special needs?

29. Describe any forums or processes that exist to facilitate discussion about curriculum design and evaluation between school staff and parents/other adults in the community?

30. Does the school have access to sufficient human resources to facilitate long term extra-curricular activities?

31. If answer is 'yes' to Question 29, what long term extra-curricular activities does the school facilitate?

☐ Homework club

☐ Sports

☐ ICT courses

☐ Language classes

Other

32. Would you like to add any other comment?

Appendix F1

Interview schedule and informed consent documents

Interview questions and context.

Context

The principal research question is concerned with how the Irish Education System accommodates a diverse school going population particularly in the light of recent changes in the demographic and social profile of the country and in the context of what has traditionally been perceived as a mono-cultural, mono-theistic education system. The main theme concerns how elements of the Irish Education system accommodates the new realities and challenges presented by a culturally diverse population.

The research will look at the ways in which the system serves to *increase participation* and in what ways does it serve to *inhibit participation* particularly for members of ethnic and migrant communities. During the course of the research I hope to conduct interviews with School Principals, teachers, parents and pupils. I also intend to interview those people involved in other areas of the Education system, either centrally or peripherally in order to hear their experiences and understandings of the Education system and how it relates to my research question.

The interview will be semi-structured in form. I have a set of questions which I will ask but I will ask some others during the course of the interview which are suggested by your responses. I will also be taking notes during the interview and recording the interview on a digital recorder. When I have transcribed the interview I will e-mail you a copy for your final approval.

If you do agree to be interviewed I will also ask you to sign an informed consent form. This form describes the scope and nature of the research and also gives assurances with regard to the ethical conduct of the researcher and the confidentiality of the material gathered.

I intend to ask the following questions:

- How many nationalities are represented in your school?
- How many languages are represented in your school?
- In what ways does the *official* curriculum reflect the changing nature of Irish society?

- In what ways does the *taught* curriculum reflect the changing nature of Irish society?

- What you understand by the terms multiculturalism, interculturalism, assimilationism, integration, pluralism, diversity, cosmopolitanism as used in education contexts

- What particular benefits are presented at a local level, to the whole school community, by a diverse school population?

- What particular challenges are presented at a local level, to the whole school community, by a diverse school population?

- How are these overcome?

- What efforts are being made at a local level in order to include people from ethnic minority and migrant communities?

- What efforts are being made at a national/official level in order to include people from ethnic minority and migrant communities?

- What do you think constitutes an intercultural classroom/school?

- In your opinion, what values does a teacher need to work in an intercultural classroom?

- In your opinion, what competences or skills does a teacher need to work in an intercultural classroom?

- What are the training requirements for teachers both at pre and within service levels?

Informed Consent Form

I am carrying out a piece of research which will look at the experiences that parents and children from a range of different cultural and ethnic backgrounds have of elements of the Irish Education system at primary level. The research will also look at these experiences from the viewpoints of teachers and principals.
The reason I am carrying out this research is that Ireland is going through a time of change in a lot of important areas and education is where many of these changes are taking place. The research is hoping to find out what these changes are and how they affect the people involved.

The principal research question is concerned with how the Irish Education System accommodates a diverse school-going population particularly in the light of recent changes in the demographic and social profile of the country and in the context of what has traditionally been perceived as a mono-cultural, mono-theistic education system.

Myself and my research supervisor both work in the School of Education Studies in Dublin City University and this research continues our professional interest in this area.

The main part of the research will involve interviews with parents/guardians, childrens' teachers and the school principals. These interviews will be recorded on audio tape with each interview taking no more than an hour.
Written consent will be sought to interview all of the participants. Some of the participants may be asked to complete a questionnaire.

All of the information provided **will be treated as confidential** and your identity will not be made public or given to any individual other than the researcher and research supervisor.
The data will be held in secure storage in the School of Education studies for the minimum period required by law after which it will be destroyed.
Participation in the research is voluntary. If you do decide to participate you may withdraw from the research at any time and without penalty of any kind.
You will not be exposed to any risk by engaging in the research.
You will also be given an opportunity to review and amend material given in interviews before the material is published.

Please take time to answer the following before signing this consent form

Have you read or had read to you the Plain Language Statement?   Yes   No
Do you understand the information provided?   Yes   No
Have you had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study?   Yes   No
Have you received satisfactory answers to all your questions?   Yes   No
Are you aware that your interview will be audio taped?   Yes   No

<u>**Signature:**</u>

I have read and understood the information in this form. My questions and concerns have been answered by the researchers, and I have a copy of this consent form. Therefore, I consent to take part in this research project

Participants Signature: _____

Name in Block Capitals: _____

Position: _____

School/Organisation: _____

Witness: _____

Date: _____

If participants have concerns about this study and wish to contact an independent person, please contact:

The Secretary, Dublin City University Research Ethics Committee, c/o Office of the Vice-President for Research, Dublin City University, Dublin 9. Tel 01-7008000

Plain Language Statement

I am carrying out a piece of research which will look at the experiences that parents and children from a range of different cultural and ethnic backgrounds have of elements of the Irish Education system at primary level. The research will also look at these experiences from the viewpoints of teachers and principals.

The reason I am carrying out this research is that Ireland is going through a time of change in a lot of important areas and education is where many of these changes are taking place. The research is hoping to find out what these changes are and how they affect the people involved.

My research supervisor and I work in the School of Education Studies in Dublin City University and this research continues our professional interest in this area.

The research will take place in a number of schools in different areas of Dublin and it is hoped that the research will benefit the entire school community, children, parents and school staff by helping to raise awareness of the issues that face people from different communities when they engage with the education system.

The main part of the research will involve interviews with school principals, teachers and parents. These interviews will be recorded on audio tape with each interview taking no more than forty minutes.
Written consent will be sought to interview all of the participants. Some of the adult participants may be asked to complete a questionnaire.

All of the information provided will be treated as confidential and people's identities will not be made public or given to any individual other than the researcher, the research supervisor and an external examiner from another University.

The data will be held in secure storage in the School of Education studies for the minimum period required by law after which it will be destroyed.
Participation in the research is voluntary. Participants may withdraw from the research at any time and without penalty of any kind.
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