School Chaplaincy: Embracing and Inhabiting Liminality

A Case Study of how Chaplains in Designated Community Colleges in the Republic of Ireland, support Principals and the Board of Management in their statutory obligation (Education Act 1998) to uphold the characteristic spirit of their school.

Elizabeth Barry

B.A. Th.; H. Dip Ed.; M.A.; M.Ed.

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Doctor of Education

Supervisors: Dr. Thomas Grenham and Dr. Cora O'Farrell
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Institute of Education
Dublin City University
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Declaration

I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment on the programme of study leading to the award of Doctor of Education is entirely my own work, and 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.

Signed: Elizabeth Barry

ID No.: 53125371

Date: 02/06/2022

Dedication

First, I dedicate this thesis to my family. Tony, Ciara, Carl, Seán, Meghan, Darragh and my beautiful Granddaughter, Lucía, and son-in-law David.

For me, Family is one of the most powerful forces in the entire world and each of you have enriched our family in different ways - these differences make our family unique. This family is where each of you belong – where you are, and will always be, loved unconditionally. Thank you to each of you for being unashamedly yourself every day.

Without your support and understanding over these past few years this paper would have never been accomplished. This paper stands as a testament to your unconditional love and encouragement.

I also want to dedicate this to two wonderful colleagues and friends, who for me exemplify what it means to be a chaplain. Bernadette Egan Brennan, former chaplain in Skerries Community College and Chris Gueret, chaplain in Ratoath College. Through their ministry they have shown, a transformative presence of love and care to everyone in their school communities. They restored my belief that school based chaplaincy has the power to open up the sacred sphere for young people, allowing for spiritual growth and personal transformation.

To God - my source of inspiration, wisdom, knowledge and understanding - most especially. Thank you for the people I have come to share my moments with, for the guidance, and for the protection and help I know I do not deserve.

'Great are the works of the Lord,
studied by all who delight in them.'
(Ps. 111:2)

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ETB	Education and Training Board
BOM	Board of Management
DCCS	Designated Community College
ETBI	Education and Training Board Ireland
VEC	Vocational Education Committee
IEC	Irish Episcopal Conference
SCA	School Chaplains Association
QCS	Qualitative Case Study
DES	Department of Education and Skills
NSCP	National School Chaplaincy Programme
CfE	Curriculum for Excellence
CF	Consent Form
PLS	Plain Language Statement
SCARS	School Activity Rating Study
DDLETB	Dublin and Dún Laoghaire Education Training Board
CDETB	County Dublin Education Training Board
KWETB	Kildare and Wicklow Education Training Board
CAQDAS	Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis
DCU	Dublin City University
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
HCB	Healthcare Chaplaincy Board
NCCA	National Council for Curriculum and Assessment

Abstract

School Chaplaincy: Embracing and Inhabiting Liminality

A Case Study of how Chaplains in Designated Community Colleges in the Republic of Ireland, support Principals and the Board of Management in their statutory obligation (Education Act 1998) to uphold the characteristic spirit of their school.

Elizabeth Barry

In this research study, the researcher set out to gain an insight into the role of chaplains concerning their work in Designated Community Colleges (DCCs) in the Republic of Ireland at a critical juncture in education. In particular, in the current climate, *The Admissions (To Schools) Act 2019* and the Education Training Boards Ireland (ETBs) *'Patrons Framework on Ethos'* have taken prominence in educational debates and are likely to impact the educational landscape into the future significantly. While the central focus of the research question addresses the implications for the practice of chaplaincy in multi-denominational settings and the chaplains' role in supporting the newly articulated characteristic spirit of ETB schools, other sub-questions have risen from the research question. They are considered throughout the study. These include no standardised framework or a professional body for school chaplains and the ambiguity surrounding the rationale for school chaplaincy - resulting in genuine concern about the future of chaplaincy in state schools. As a result, the research explores the following questions: the participants' perceptions and experiences of their role and their concerns for the future of chaplaincy in an increasingly secular landscape. As the knowledge to be generated is subjective, involving the participants' perceptions and experiences, the research was placed in the qualitative field. The research methodology used is a case study with questionnaires and semi-structured interviews generating the raw data.

The literature review considered four key areas pertinent to the subject of this study:
1. The understanding of Ethos in an educational context.
2. Characteristic Spirit in ETB schools.
3. Historical context of chaplaincy in schools in Ireland.
4. School chaplaincy in International contexts – in particular the U.K, Scotland, and Australia.

The study includes the historical background of the chaplaincy role in DCCs and maps the trajectory of how chaplaincy has evolved and what it might look like in the future.

The questionnaires and interviews were coded and interrogated using Excel and the NVivo software application package. The research results provide six key themes. The results revealed the voices and experiences of eleven chaplains and eleven principals. Their testimony revealed the multi-dimensional nature of their roles, their views on the role, and revealed further challenges and concerns for the future of the role. Their concerns form part of a broader concern for the future of Religious Education, the future meaning and trajectory of the role of chaplaincy and add a rich insight into the workings of chaplaincy in DCCs in a changing landscape. This study showed that chaplains work in an increasingly contested space - and while they often inhabit a liminal status, the future and the promise of transformation are always within their reach.

Chapter 1. Historical and Contemporary Context

1.1 Introduction

This case study research explored the chaplain's role in designated community colleges (DCCs) in the Republic of Ireland. The research question specifically addressed how chaplains, in DCCs in the Republic of Ireland, support principals and the Board of Management (BoM) in their statutory obligation (*Education Act 1998*) to uphold the characteristic spirit of their school. Although chaplains work in various school types, this case study is from the perspective of eleven chaplains (and their eleven principals) who work in this particular school context. These designated schools or colleges account for fifty-two of the two hundred and fifty-two schools under the governance of Education and Training Board Ireland (ETBI). These designated schools or colleges are unique as they are the only ones within the ETB sector that are obliged to employ chaplains in an ex-quota capacity and operate under legally binding model agreements or deeds of trust.

The concept, *Embracing and Inhabiting Liminality* – the title of this study - is taken from (S. B. Roberts, 2017), who uses the figure of the *flâneur* (stroller) to give strategic significance to the sometimes marginal and liminal status of chaplains. Roberts (2017, p. 352) describes the flâneur as rooted in a place, someone who is immersed in the crowd but can stand out from the multitudes. He presents the model of chaplain as flâneur in three dimensions. The first concerns the experience or fate of chaplains, how they are treated and perceived, in their school context. The second relates to the physical practice of engaging that space through presence. The third dimension "arises from the other two and is the interpretive practice of seeking meaning and insight in the fragments that have been gathered from [accompaniment]" (Roberts, 2017, p. 359). Chaplaincy is often described as a 'marginal' or 'liminal' space (Pattison, 1997; Threlfall-Holmes and Newitt, 2011; S. B. Roberts, 2017) – a space quite simply on the edge, in a place between the 'what was' and 'what will be next'. Liminal places, by definition, strip us of the roles, goals, and the contexts we depend upon, they also offer opportunities to grow through 'this space on the edge' – offering the potential, not only to inhabit these liminal spaces but to embrace them in a way which allows for fundamental transformation.

1.2 Background

Historically, the situation regarding these schools (DCCs) arose from the 1980s onwards when the Vocational Education Committees (VECs) opened Community Colleges; this gave rise to the model agreement (Education Secretariate, 1981) between the local VEC, Catholic diocesan bishops, and or a religious congregation. These agreements about governance and ethos took place at a time when the VEC did not have clearly defined core values or a coherent position on the place of religion in their schools. (Irwin, 2019, p. 31) contends that "this led to these agreements being more influenced by the other trustee partners [local diocese/Church] in relation to these matters" and argues that as a result, there is a question as to whether these schools can be described as multidenominational. The contentious issues of denominational patronage, religious ethos, and religious education in Irish schools are not new. The Irish Human Rights Commission's Report (IHRC, 2011, pp. 54-55) and the Forum of Patronage and Pluralism in Primary Schools (Coolahan, Hussey and Kilfeather, 2012) have previously explored the issue.

These public square debates continued over the years, and it was within this context that the *ETB 'Core Values Review Process'* (2018-2020), and the subsequent *'Patrons Framework on Ethos'* (2020) transpired. Acting as co-patrons of DCCs, the *Irish Episcopal Conference* (IEC), has played a central role in the negotiations regarding the framework on ethos in DCCs. To date, these discussions are continuing.

The chaplains who took part in the research are currently carrying out their work within this context. This study explores how they are negotiating the sometimes-contested terrain of their ministry in a changing educational landscape. Furthermore, this study is an attempt to give voice to the valuable work of the chaplain in DCCs and explore ways to engage with key stakeholders concerning how to value and safeguard the future of chaplaincy.

1.3 The Context

This study explores of the phenomenon of school chaplaincy in post-primary education in designated community colleges (DCCs) in the Republic of Ireland. The study addresses a lacuna in the field of chaplain's ministry in state-run schools and key stakeholders' perception of the chaplain's role. In particular, this research study addresses the

chaplains' role in supporting the ethos of their schools and how this can in turn aid the school in their statutory obligation, as stated in the '*Education Act (1998)'*, to "uphold and be accountable to the patron for so upholding the characteristic spirit of the school" (Government of Ireland, 1998).

This chapter presents the rationale and scope of the study, the historical context of school-based chaplaincy in Irish state schools, specifically DCCs, and an exploration of the Education and Training Board Ireland (ETBI), who are responsible for the overall governance of these schools. In the context of the ETBs, an exploration of the ethos around the development and delivery of a core values is undertaken. Its purpose is that this is the setting in which chaplains carry out their work.

The aims and significance of the study, the context, the educational philosophy of the researcher which underpins this study, the research framework and design, methodology, data collection, and analysis are introduced, and the limitations and delimitations are presented. Finally, the chapter concludes with an overview of the layout of the thesis and a synopsis of the contents of each of its chapters.

1.4 Rationale and Scope of the Research

The rationale for this research is rooted in the researcher's role as a chaplain in a designated community college for more than twenty years. The personal relationship with school-based chaplaincy over this time, in this particular context, has given rise to many questions and some attempts at opening up discussions around the implications for the practice of chaplaincy in multi-faith settings.

The central focus of this research is the chaplain's role in supporting the characteristic spirit of ETB schools. This is a response to the lack of a standardised framework. The School Chaplains Association of Ireland (SCA), the professional body to oversee best practices, promote professionalism, ensure quality assurance, and support chaplains in their work, have also highlighted the absence of an agreed standards framework.

The failure to articulate a professional competency framework and continuous professional development requirement for chaplains has resulted in ambiguity around the role and rationale for chaplains in school settings. Furthermore, in the absence of a professional body, chaplains have no voice at the policy level resulting in genuine concern about the future of chaplaincy in state schools. The participants in this research

study very clearly articulated these concerns and it is in this narrative that the rationale for this study is rooted.

1.5 Aims of the Research

There has been limited research focussing specifically on the interplay of chaplaincy and ethos in DCCs. Therefore, the emphasis of this research study was to examine what role the chaplain can play concerning to ethos within this particular school type. In particular, how the chaplains' role in supporting the ethos of their schools enables the school in their statutory obligation to "uphold and be accountable to the patron for so upholding the characteristic spirit of the school" (Government of Ireland, 1998).

Currently, there are fifty-two designated community colleges in the Republic of Ireland with their governance structure as determined by a legally binding model agreement. Historically, designated schools came through amalgamating several vocational and church-run schools in an area. The subsequent agreed 'deeds of trust' or 'model agreement' articulate the governance and ethos. This agreement guarantees specific provisions concerning Religious Instruction and worship and determines the employment of a chaplain in an ex-quota capacity. The primary purpose of this study is to give voice to chaplains in these DCCs schools. It allows them to define their role and express their unique contribution to the life of their school through their witness in living out the ethos as defined by the patrons. This research also seeks to allow principals to step back and reflect on the work of chaplaincy within their schools and how they can best support the practice and engage collaboratively with patrons to ensure chaplains are supported in their work. While the research question focuses specifically on the interaction between chaplaincy and ethos, the findings will also address a number of key areas and begin a dialogue that would open up possible ways of building a framework for the future practice of chaplaincy in schools. These keys areas/questions include:

- What are the specific duties of chaplains which support the living out of ethos in their schools?
- How can management and chaplains work collaboratively to ensure that the work of chaplaincy is utilised to the fullest?

- Is it possible to gather data in which participants share a consensus that can be used to construct a framework for future practice?
- Is there a way of bringing the findings and discussion about the practice of chaplaincy in state schools into the public square - so that key stakeholders can actively participate in debates and engage critically in issues that affect the future of chaplaincy?

Gathering evidence that addresses such questions creates a tool for building knowledge and facilitating learning, not just for chaplains but for all those impacted by the work of chaplaincy in schools. It can open up understanding and public awareness of who the chaplain is and what they do.

1.6 Significance of the study

There is a considerable dearth of literature and research on school-based chaplaincy in an Irish context. The lack of research has meant that chaplains' voices are rarely heard in public square debates leading to a misunderstanding of their role and contribution to schools. Arguably, absence from such debates has inferred that chaplains have been unable to inform action or make any significant contributions to developing knowledge in their field. Furthermore, the significance of this research is unique in that it is the first phenomenological research on chaplaincy in DCCs – this school type forms an integral part of the debate for the ETB and the ETBI Strategic Plan, 2021 – 2024 (Education and Training Boards Ireland, 2021, p. 2).

This research study enters Irish educational discourse at a critical and timely juncture: *The (Admissions to School) Act 2018* substantive sections which pertain to the Admission Policy and the Admission Statement of schools was enacted in September 2020. The commencement of which has had a tangible impact on schools. The ETBI responded to this mandatory obligation on their schools by issuing a statement that was key to the sectors ability to comply with the Education (Admissions to Schools) Act 2018, which required all schools to set out their ethos and the general objectives of the school in their Admissions Policies. The Act also prompted ETBI to engage with representatives from other bodies involved in DCCs to agree on a statement on ethos for use in these schools. This ongoing engagement has brought the chaplains role into a newly defined focus and may have profound implications for the chaplain in these schools. This

research attempts to give voice to the chaplain in further discussions that may inform the ETBI strategic plan for the foreseeable future.

1.7 Specific Context of the Study

The Education Act (1998) automatically deemed ETBs as patrons of the schools they managed; thus, this research considers their role as patrons and the implications for chaplains working withing this context.

ETBs are the providers of multidenominational education in Ireland and patrons of sixteen Community National Schools and Community Colleges in the Republic of Ireland. The patron appoints the BoM of the school and determines the ethos or characteristic spirit of the school. The BoM has a mandatory obligation to comply with the requirements as set out in the Education Act (1988), which states that the BoM of a school must:

> uphold and be accountable to the patron for thus upholding the characteristic spirit of the school as determined by the cultural, educational, moral, religious, social, linguistic and spiritual values and traditions which inform and are characteristic of the objectives and conduct of the school… (Government of Ireland, 1998, sec. 15 (2))

To ensure clarity on what the patrons' expectations are concerning characteristic spirit, the ETBI has developed the '*ETBI Patrons' Framework on Ethos*' (ETBI, 2021). This framework results from a comprehensive piece of research across eighteen ETB post-primary schools in six ETBs. "The purpose of this research was to ascertain current understandings and expressions of characteristic spirit (ethos) in publicly managed ETB schools" (ETBI, 2021, p. 2).

1.7.1 Core Values and Characteristic Spirit Review for ETBI Schools

An in-depth analysis of the broad extent of the work undertaken by the ETB sector concerning characteristic spirit is beyond the scope of this study. However, the core values and characteristics spirit process of the ETBs is researched, reviewed, and mapped out to contextualise the school chaplains' work.

The ETB sector, encouraged by the "conversations on patronage happening nationally as a result of the Forum on Patronage and Pluralism, began to seriously consider the characteristic spirit (ethos) appropriate for state schools in 2011 with a series of conferences on the issue" (ETBI, 2021, p. 3). As a direct result of these conferences, a

research team based at the School of Education, University of Limerick, was commissioned to carry out an extensive research project to explore and express the characteristic spirit of ETB schools, as publicly managed post-primary schools within the Irish education system. Subsequently, some ETBs took part in a pilot project in 2013 to explore 'values and moral education in publicly-managed schools', and the pilot project evidenced the need for further work regarding 'characteristic spirit'. A 'Religion and Diversity Task Group', with representatives from more than half of the ETBs, was established and was tasked to explore the complexities which arose from the research concerning characteristic spirit. The emergent issues around multidenominational education and ethos were broad in scope, and questions pertinent to this study regarding the articulation of characteristic spirit in designated schools arose in the process. To understand the issues regarding DCCs, it is important to note their historical context and subsequent governance structure.

Historically, most 'designated' schools /colleges came through the amalgamation of several vocational and church-run schools in an area, and the agreements drawn up about governance and ethos were negotiated when the sector did not have clearly defined core values statement for their schools. "This led to these agreements being more influenced by the other trustee partners in relation to these matters" (ETBI, 2019, p. 5). These agreements make provisions for one particular group (dominantly Catholic) and Catholic practices became largely normalised within these schools, (McCormack *et al.*, 2018, p. 176). Approximately twenty-one percent of ETB schools are 'designated schools' with legally binding model agreements or deeds of trust, thus adding to the complexities and challenges the ETB sector faces concerning the issues of ethos and governance. The ETBs' development in its understanding of itself being a state model of education "challenges this previously unquestioned monopoly of Christianity in addressing questions of meaning and value" (O'Flaherty, Liddy and McCormack, 2017, p. 4).

The *'Draft Core Value and Characteristic Spirit Review Report 2019'*, (ETBI, 2019) stated a significant challenge for the ETB sector regarding differences across the sector depending on whether the school is 'designated', or 'non-designated'. It further questioned if, there was a need for separate articulation of characteristic spirit for designated schools (Irwin, 2019, p. 39). Irwin (2019) suggests a clear choice for the ETB

sector in terms of two main options or interpretations. The ETB views the school as a denominational form of schooling, while the co-trustees/religious bodies view the ETB school as multidenominational and, as such, has a distinct approach to religion and belief. The impact of these discussions continues to be a matter of concern and debate for the relevant stakeholders. Such discussions have been a complex and contested area between ETB, as patrons, and the co-trustees. The co-trustees have a stake in the future of religious education and the overall ethos of these schools. While significant progress has been made between the relevant stakeholders, "negotiations with the IEC regarding the Patrons' Framework on Ethos for use in DCCs are still ongoing" (Conboy, 2022).

Ultimately, the recommendations for change favoured moving towards a multidenominational ethos for all ETB schools. Irwin (2019, p. 34) asserted that there needed to be "a shift in emphasis from a prioritising of Christian approaches to belief to a broader based and pluralist emphasis on 'diversity of values and beliefs'". The following suggestion was made as an attempt to find a normative and philosophical definition of multidenominational education: "In multidenominational education…the truth claims of religion and other belief systems are explored as part of the school's ethos but truth is not associated with a particular view" (Irwin, 2019, p. 36).

As a result of the *Draft Core Value and Characteristic Spirit Review,* an agreed definition was presented which defined ETB schools in the following way: "ETB schools are state, co-educational, multidenominational schools underpinned by the core values of Excellence in Education, Care, Equality, Community and Respect" (ETBI, 2019).

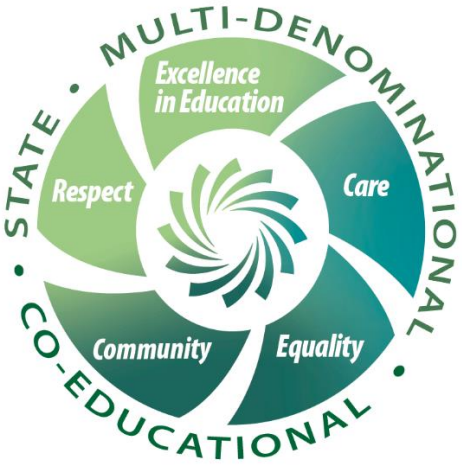

Figure 1*: ETBI Model of Schools (ETBI, 2019)*

However, having a clear statement on ethos was not the end of the journey. The following critical step was developing and implementing the 'Patrons' Framework on Ethos' (2021) to support schools operationalising their ethos.

The question of how the chaplain can play a role in this continuing process is addressed by this research study and will add an essential dimension to the overall discussion, and specifically to ethos in DCCs. In the broader discussion, questions are raised regarding multidenominational status in DCCs, and the implications for the chaplains' practice within this newly defined context. Will the chaplains' role be compromised in these schools that now clearly express an explicit multidenominational ethos and demand a distinct approach to religion and belief? The previous position of *de facto Catholic* and *de jure multidenominational* may well be seriously challenged by this new paradigm shift. The chaplain may need to be prepared to adapt to this changing milieu. Further research in this area is needed to address the changes that occur and explore the challenges this paradigm shift has brought about. By authentically including the voices of chaplains and school principals in this research, I am attempting to make the stories of chaplaincy real – to give witness to something abstract or intangible as material in the public square.

1.8 The Personal Educational Philosophy of the Researcher

Kidd *et al.*, (2021) suggest there are essentially two types of teaching philosophies – teacher-centred, and student-centred. Both "teacher-centred and student-centred views put primacy on the learning of the student, and all other aspects of the learning environment and instruction are planned from that initial standpoint" (Driscoll, 1999, p. 3). This researcher's education philosophy is rooted in the three types of student-centred philosophies of education – progressivism, humanism, and constructivism (Lynch, 2017). Combined, they focus on developing the student's moral compass, fostering each student to reach their fullest potential, and emphasises using education to shape a student's worldview. However, the constructivist philosophical model dovetails more closely with this researcher's ontological and epistemological stance - a contextual constructivist/hermeneutic paradigm - which allows for the unique ways the individual experiences the world. This is discussed in greater detail in chapter three.

Piaget is often singled out as the father of the constructivism philosophical paradigm. "This is largely because he spearheaded the formalization of the theory of

constructivism through his remarkable explanation regarding the mechanisms through which knowledge is internalized by learners to aid them construct knowledge" (Adom, Yeboah and Ankrah, 2016, p. 3). Piaget's theory of constructivism emphasises on the significant role that experiences or connections with the adjoining atmosphere play in student education. From the constructivist point of view, education plays a fundamental role in the development of the individual and is a cultural process instead of a biological one. According to Borisov (2014, p. 400), from a constructivism perspective, there is a transformation of "the person natural" into "the person cultural" [and] the purpose of education "is expansion from the sphere of consciousness to the level of Absolute thought. This thought exists irrespective of environment, but environment stimulates its activity".

It is in this type of environment that this researcher is positioned as a practitioner. This context encourages the creation of educational moments which allow students to develop their moral compass, reach their full potential, and shape their worldview. School-based chaplains are ideally placed to provide an environment which allow students to develop their moral compass - one which allows each student to reach their fullest potential and emphasises using education to help shape a student's worldview. Chaplaincy, embedded in a school, works alongside the ordinariness of school life, and its activity is always concerned with human well-being - opening doorways to a contemplative, reflective stillness, and spirituality while at the same time embracing the existential truth of lived human experience. Chaplains "can play a leading part in developing the religious [or spiritual] literacy of school students" (Caperon, 2015, p. 34).

1.9 Conceptual framework and Research Design

The research is situated within the ontological and epistemological underpinnings of constructivism. The basic assumption guiding the constructivist paradigm is that people socially construct knowledge and that researchers should attempt to understand the complex world of lived experience from the point of view of those who live it (Schwandt, 2000, pp. 197-200). The constructivist paradigm correlates closely with the ontological and epistemological stance of this researcher – however, a purely constructivist approach would not suffice. Therefore, a contextual constructivist/hermeneutic paradigm has been employed. This approach allows for the unique ways in which the individual experiences the world and recognises objective reality and its influence; in so

doing it permits a more nuanced reading of real-life situations (Cullen, 2013, p. 13). Further exploration of this approach is discussed in chapter three.

1.9.1 Methodology

This study is defined by an interest in an individual case focusing on a single occupational group – chaplains - who work in DCCs. The study of the case (chaplains) is itself the primary interest in this exploration. Therefore, the methodology employed in this study is an intrinsic qualitative case study (QCS) - Intrinsic case studies aim at acquiring a better understanding of the particular case of interest. Case studies can be approached in different ways depending on the epistemological standpoint of the researcher. The research design applied to this study is the QCS design, which supports a constructivist approach. This design is best suited to the study's aims and aligns with the researcher's worldview, as it is interpretivist, descriptive, and exploratory. This approach involves understanding meanings/contexts and processes as perceived from the different perspectives of chaplains and principals and trying to understand individual and shared social meanings.

1.9.2 Data collection

Case study research involves using multiple sources of evidence in an investigation of a phenomenon and in-depth, detailed data from a range of data sources consistent with case study design (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003). The study's data collection methods included two data sources - a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews (Appendix A).

Data was gathered from thirteen DCCs in the chosen geographical area – this represented all of these school types in this location. To be eligible for inclusion in the study, a delimitation imposed by this researcher was that each school must have a practicing chaplain.

Phase one of the data collection process included the questionnaire. This was designed to gather information from the respondents regarding their willingness to participate in the study and subsequent interviews. Secondly, it enabled them to articulate their understandings of the practice of chaplaincy in the context of a DCC school. It also allowed the data/responses to direct the design of appropriate interview questions.

Phase two of the process included semi-structured interviews, which allowed for a deep exploration into personal observations and opinions of the participants by

reconstructing perceptions of events and experiences related to chaplaincy services in DCCs. See Appendix B for interview questions intended for chaplains and principals.

1.9.3 Data analysis

In the case of this research project, the chosen theoretical framework - case study, relied on sources of data collection from questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The analysis of the research data and the data gathering was done in an iterative manner which helped gain insight and afforded opportunities for developing meaning within the data. Furthermore, a reflexive process ensured that the researcher was cognisant of interpreting and reporting on all data and disseminating findings with accuracy at all stages of the process. The data analysis tools used for processing the data included Excel and a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) - NVivo 11.

1.9.4 Limitations

"Limitations of any particular study concern potential weaknesses that are usually out of the researcher's control, and are closely associated with the chosen research design, statistical model constraints, funding constraints, or other factors" (Theofanidis and Fountouki, 2019, p. 156). The chosen design of this study is an intrinsic, descriptive, exploratory single case study. This case study aims to discover the meaning and understanding of the chaplain's experiences in their context – schools. This situates the researcher as critical in interpreting knowledge generated from the research process and an active participant in the study. The following limitations are acknowledged:

1. Firstly, the question of bias is created by the researcher's subjectivity. The researcher's own experience of being a chaplain in a DCC could influence the interpretation of the data findings.
2. Secondly, the participants in the research are part of a relatively small number of practising chaplains in DCCs in the chosen demographic. Therefore, it is likely that the researcher will know or have some relationship with the participants.
3. Thirdly, academic constraints of this study concerning word count limited the scope of the research to an Irish context and to a limited sampling population.

In order to overcome some limitations, specific tools for ensuring rigour were applied. These are addressed in detail in chapter three. While these limitations are essentially

out of the researcher's control, delimitations are, in essence, the limitations consciously set by the researchers themselves.

1.9.5 Delimitations

Delimitations are concerned with the definitions that researchers decide to set as the boundaries or limits of their work so that the study's aims and objectives do not become impossible. "Thus, delimitations are mainly concerned with the study's theoretical background, objectives, research questions, variables under study and study sample" (Theofanidis and Fountouki, 2019, p. 157). The limits set for this study included the geographical boundaries and the available number of participants in this sampling pool. This meant that within the data findings there was a possibility that the limited number of participants within the chosen geographical area may not provide an overall scope of responses. Furthermore, only DCCs with a practising chaplain were deemed relevant to the study, reducing the number of possible DCCs from thirteen to eleven. While these delimitations may narrow this study, the choices were deliberate and considered, and they were made to make this research manageable and relevant to the research question.

1.10 Layout of the Study

This chapter has articulated the research question and made explicit the primary focus of this study – to explore the interplay between a chaplain's practise and ethos and how the chaplain's role can make a unique contribution to living out ethos as defined by the patrons. The rationale and scope of this study are outlined, and evidence is provided regarding the specific context and historical narrative in which this research is situated. The researcher's personal philosophy of education is stated in order to provide readers with an understanding for the motivation behind this research. The underlying premise influences the choice of research design in this study. Each individual experiences the world in unique ways, and that language plays a central role in shaping his or her experience in distinctive ways. A brief note regarding the research design, the underpinning ontological and epistemological approach, methodology, data collection, and analysis are presented to contextualise the study – these areas are further explored in chapter three.

Chapter two explores the literature relevant to this study regarding school-based chaplaincy in an Irish context and gives due weight to the two key areas outlined in the research question – chaplaincy and ethos. Chapter three provides a detailed description of the chosen research design of the study - outlining the underlying theoretical perspectives that guided the choice of methodology, the philosophical beliefs and assumptions of the researcher, and the data gathering, analysis, and methods of validation employed. Chapter four presents both the research findings and a discussion of these findings. Finally, chapter five draws some conclusions and makes recommendations for the future of school-based chaplains in DCCs. It addresses the key stakeholders and makes suggestions for future research.

1.11 Conclusion

This chapter outlined the rationale and scope of this study, and the researcher's aims and provided evidence regarding the specific context and historical narrative in which this research is situated. The primary purpose of this study is to give voice to chaplains in DCCs – to allow them to define their role and give expression to the contribution they make to the life of their school. It is anticipated that, by bringing the voices of both chaplains and principals into the public square debates on what the purpose, nature, and scope of school-based chaplaincy in multidenominational schools ought to be, those with a vested interest in chaplaincy in DCCs will consider their contributions insightful and help map the trajectory of role into the future.

The next chapter considers the literature, national and international, pertaining to school-based chaplaincy and ethos in state schools. The relevant literature provides a theoretical mapping of the knowledge and the ideas that have informed the practice of school chaplaincy and contributed to an understanding of ethos in an educational context.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This literature review was undertaken to evaluate available and relevant literature pertinent to this research question explicitly addressing the ministry of school chaplaincy and its impact on ethos. This study explores the phenomenon of school chaplaincy in post-primary Education and Education and Training Board (ETB) Designated Community Colleges (DCCs) in the Republic of Ireland.

This literature review's initial inclusion and exclusion criteria were broad in scope and included theoretical and empirical works on educational chaplaincy and ethos across books, newspaper articles, journal articles, reports, and conference papers from national and international perspectives. Other chaplaincy contexts were also considered in an attempt to explore, in the first instance, the essence of chaplaincy as a ministry. Initial findings suggested that research and practice in school chaplaincy and ethos in a school context are at different development stages in different countries. Hunt (2021) corroborates this finding in a recent research study and suggests that this is the case in countries including Ireland, the UK, Australia, and the United States. He further suggests "obvious cultural, religious and political differences…so findings and conclusions cannot be assumed to be generalised or transferrable" (Hunt, 2021, p. 38). Although an in-depth discussion from an international perspective is not possible in the context of this literature review, material from the UK, Scotland, and Australia on school chaplaincy has been considered, explored, and used to contribute to the analysis of school chaplaincy and ethos. A short discussion on their contribution will be added to this literature review, and a broader exploration will be added to the appendices (Appendix C).

The review of Irish literature on school chaplaincy has identified a lacuna in available material on the chaplains' ministry in state-run schools and on the patrons' perception of the role of the chaplain in supporting the ethos of their school. The literature also identified conflicting ideas regarding the nature and scope of ethos and its impact, implicitly or explicitly, on the culture of a school as held by principals, boards of management (BoM), and chaplains. In an Irish context, these conflicting ideas, and expectations, regarding ethos result from the historical influence and symbiotic relationship between the Catholic Church and the Irish State which had significant implications for the provision of education. Moreover, the inherent nature of Roman

Catholicism's influence on Irish culture and education further complicates the growing diversity and the changing cultural and religious landscape of contemporary Ireland (Anderson, Byrne and Cullen, 2016, pp. 161-172). The Catholic Church (represented by the local Bishop/Diocese) continues to hold dual patronage in 'designated' ETB schools, and as co-trustee, they play an important role in developing and supporting the characteristic spirit of these schools/colleges. Ideas regarding the nature and purpose of chaplaincy as a ministry in DCCs, which serves both Church and state, continue to dominate discussions in the current educational landscape. These debates regarding ecclesial and state involvement in education form part of a broader context and discussion on the historical development of the Irish education system at second level. Although they cannot be explored in great detail here, they are referenced in this discussion to provide some insight into the issues explored in this study.

As this study explores school-based chaplaincy within a particular school context, DCCs, pertinent only in an Irish context, material from an Irish perspective will be prioritised. The structure of this literature review will give due weight to two key areas - ethos and chaplaincy - while at all times being cognisant of the importance of other relevant documents which impact the practice of school-based chaplaincy in an Irish context. This chapter begins with the clarification on essential terminology used throughout this study to illustrate the complexity of how they are understood, and to establish parameters for how they are used in this research. The literature on ethos will then be presented, focusing on school ethos and the current discussions on the characteristic spirit within the ETBI sector. Finally, the literature on chaplaincy will be presented chronologically to help map the order in which school chaplaincy occurred, understand its development, and build a discussion around the chaplain's role concerning school ethos.

2.2 Defining Terminology.

This literature review is a comprehensive study and interpretation of the relevant literature which addresses the research question outlined in this study. The review has identified some essential terms used throughout the literature concerning this study - and as multiple terms and definitions exist to describe some of the key terminologies, these will be defined here for clarity. "Defining terminology in research work helps break

down the complexity of certain words and the primary reason for including these definitions is to avoid misunderstanding with your audience" (Purdue Owl, 2021).

2.2.1 School Chaplaincy

As this research question addresses the chaplain's role in a school-based context, it is crucial to establish some understanding of a chaplain's role within this particular setting. Hunt (2021, p. 27) suggests that the "rapid development of school chaplaincy in so many different contexts has led to a broad range of provision that is difficult to define". Many writers have suggested 'models' of chaplaincy to understand the ministry (Monahan and Renehan, 1998; Threlfall-Holmes and Newitt, 2011; Moran, 2014b; Pohlmann, 2014; Caperon, 2015; Ryan, 2018; Younger, 2018; O'Malley, 2019). However, there is an inherent risk of having so many models as it can complicate our understanding of the role. Arguably, "few if any chaplains will fall within only within one model-they are necessarily interacting with one another" (Ryan, 2018, p. 85). Therefore, any exploration of a model of school chaplaincy needs to be cognisant that "these sets of models, and the models within, are neither mutually exclusive nor incompatible" (Threlfall-Holmes and Newitt, 2011, p. 118).

However, despite the attempts by the writers to offer 'models' of chaplaincy, role definition remains fraught with difficulties, and there appears to be no one definition that can adequately describe the role. In an Irish context, the definition which has characterised chaplaincy is offered by Monahan and Renehan (1998, p. 13) who assert that chaplains are called to be "a faith presence, committed to the values of Christ, and on behalf of the Church and the school communities, accompanies each person on the journey through life". However, while this acts as a framework for further exploration into school-based chaplaincy, we are reminded by Pohlmann (2014) that chaplaincy cannot be seen within a vacuum; instead, it must be contextualised to truly understand the ministry. One of the most significant contextual issues for school chaplains is the school type in which they minister, as each context demands a different response in the way chaplaincy is managed. Therefore, the experience of chaplaincy within the context of this study - publicly-funded state schools/DCCs with dual patronage between Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI) and the local Church/Diocese - will be at all times to the fore of an exploration of the role of the school chaplain.

2.2.2 Secularism

The word secularism and its associated words "secular" and "secularization" remain ambiguous, having many opposite and excluding meanings. The National Secular Society (2017) asserts that the principles of secularism underlie three areas: Separation of the Church from the state, freedom to practise one's faith or belief, and equality. The question, dialogue, and often fractious debates about the separation of the Church and the state in Ireland, particularly about school patronage within the education system, have been part of Irish culture for many years. O'Buachalla (1985, p. 351) suggests that the relationship between the Churches and the state "and the role which both play in the educational system have been central and sensitive issues in Irish political life in this century and the centre of sustained controversy in the last century", and Ruane (1998, p. 239) suggests that while Church and state are constitutionally separate in the Republic of Ireland in practice, there is enormous overlap. While it is beyond the scope of this discussion to encompass such debates, it nevertheless warrants noting as it is particularly relevant to this study and the analysis of the chaplain's role in state schools. Church involvement in education and what constitutes a secular approach to education impacts considerably on the role of the chaplain in an Irish context. To date, in Irish schools, the state continues to contribute to the moral and spiritual education of young people through religious education programmes, and some lobbying groups (Atheist Ireland, 2019) see this involvement as an infringement of the state's duty under the constitution (Article 44.2.2) which consequently denies secularism. However, as all education should endeavour to mediate and anchor respect for human rights and fundamental democratic values, a secular approach to education must be free from any particular religious dominance or indoctrination. In this regard, the chaplain, particularly in a state school, has a definite role in facilitating respectful dialogue and avoiding proselytising accusations. In this research, "secularism" refers to the separation of religion and state as a foundational principle upon which a society is ordered. The term is used to denote a framework for a democratic society. It is not a challenge to any particular religion or beliefs, tenets, or an imposition of atheism on anyone.

2.2.3 Religious Pluralism

"Religious pluralism, broadly construed, is a response to the diversity of religious beliefs, practices, and traditions that exist both in the contemporary world and throughout

history" (Barnes Norton, 2021). The terms pluralism and pluralist can, depending on the context, signify anything from religious diversity to a particular kind of philosophical or theological approach to such diversity. Diversity refers here to the variety of religious beliefs, practices, and traditions, and the terms pluralism and pluralist refer to one kind of response to such diversity. In this study, a pluralist position suggests that more than one set of beliefs or practices can be, at least partially and conceivably wholly true or correct simultaneously. Religious pluralism, in this situation, is understood as a broad category of philosophical and theological response to religious diversity and aims to account for this diversity as a "positive phenomenon and to articulate ways that religious differences can be celebrated and conflicts mitigated, explained, or at least reasonably discussed" (Barnes Norton, 2021).

2.2.4 Governance and Patrons

The research question in this study is contextualised within *The Education Act 1998,* and this *Act* provides a statutory basis for the whole education system, setting out the rights and responsibilities for all involved in education. The Department of Education and Skills (DES) has the statutory responsibility to implement the Education Act, including funding recognised schools and accountability for such funding. "The Act recognises the autonomy of each school, under the patron, and sets out the main responsibilities and rights of the patron, the board of management, and the principal, subject to regulations made by the Minister" (Darmody and Smyth, 2013, p. 41). The *Act* stipulates that in cases where two or more persons exercise the functions of a patron (DCCs), they may be registered as joint patrons (Government of Ireland, 1998, sec. 8(5)). *The Education Act (1988)* left each school to determine its ethos or characteristic spirit, and the *Act* also establishes the functions of boards of management.

2.2.5 Board of Management in a School Context

The Board of Management (BoM) functions includes managing the school on behalf of the patron for the benefit of the students and their parents and providing appropriate education to each student. The primary role of a BoM is one of governance, which accounts for the provision of direction and oversight of the whole school community. The legislative responsibilities embedded in *The Education Act (1988)* state that the BoM manages:

> the school on behalf of the patron and is accountable to the patron and the Minister. The board must uphold the characteristic spirit (ethos) of the school and is accountable to the patron for so doing. The principal is responsible for the day-to-day management of the school, including providing guidance and direction to the teachers and other staff of the school and is accountable for that management (Government of Ireland, 1998, sec. 15 (2)).

A BoM for a school/college within an ETB has a clear remit to manage that school on behalf of the ETB and the Trustee Partner (in the case of a DCC), "in accordance with legislation; Department of Education and Skills (DES) circulars, guidelines and procedures; and any policies or strategies that the ETB may establish regarding the operation of its schools" (Education and Training Boards Ireland, 2019, p. 4).

2.2.6 ETBI and Designated Community Colleges

Education and Training Boards Ireland is defined as; "An association established to collectively represent education and training boards and promote their interests, which is recognised by the Minister [under the Education and Training Boards Act 2013]" (Education and Training Boards Ireland, Annual Report, 2019-2020, p. 5). ETBI is the national representative body for Irelands' sixteen Education and Training Boards statutorily established in 2013 to provide education and training provision in communities throughout Ireland. ETB schools are the largest publicly managed education sector in Ireland (Darmody and Smyth, 2013; McCormack, O'Flaherty and Liddy, 2019) and operate multidenominational schools and a number of designated colleges that provide certain guarantees to the partner trustee. In the context of a DCC, a model agreement governs a range of matters relating to the school, including religious instruction. The DCCs pertinent to this research are situated within the Archdiocese of Dublin, and the Model Agreement for these schools were 'signed, sealed, and delivered' in 1981 by the County Dublin Vocational Educational Committee and His Grace, Most Reverend Dermot Ryan, Archbishop of Dublin (Education Secretariate, 1981). The Model Agreement and the implications for the practice of chaplaincy will be explored later in this literature review.

Having clarified the most pertinent terminology associated with the research topic, this literature review will now address the literature on ethos. As the focus of this study addresses the work of a chaplain in an ETB school (DCC), an exploration of ethos in the context of the ETBs work around the development and delivery of a core values review process across the sector will be given consideration.

2.3 Towards an understanding of Ethos

Williams (2000, p. 74) suggests that our current understanding of ethos still reflects very strongly the Greek genesis of the word as character or disposition used to describe the guiding beliefs or ideals that characterise a community, nation, or ideology. The understanding of the word ethos, taken from its origins deeply ingrained in ancient Greece, meaning "character" also infers that “ethos is the attitude based on an inner impulse to be a person who is fair, honest, consistent, compassionate, human [according to the testimonies of ancient philosophers Plato, Aristotle, Democritus]” (Ethos, 2022). Norman (2003, pp. 2-3) also suggests that ethos implies “the prevalent tone or sentiment of a community…the development of goodness or character”.

While this understanding of ethos offers a starting point and in some way helps to avoid an “unreflective cultural appropriation of ethos” (Jackson, 2019, p. 77), a definition of ethos which aligns with school or educative ethos will be more useful in the context of this research. In this study, ‘ethos’ will be contextualised within *The Education Act (1998)* which gives significant governance to school patrons in the Republic of Ireland in determining their schools’ ethos or characteristic spirit. Furthermore, as this research addresses the chaplain’s role in a state school, any exploration of the term ethos from a denominational or faith perspective will be precluded in an attempt to form a foundational understanding in a secular school context. However, many would argue that to understand ethos properly is to accept the term has religious components (Jackson, 2019, p. 78) or that ethos “depends on some sort of underlying story that has a religious (or religion-like) nature (*mythos*)” (Sulmasy, 2013, p. 447). Several related terms are often used interchangeably with ethos – culture, climate, habitus, and characteristic spirit. For clarity, the word characteristic spirit and ethos will be used interchangeably to explicate the research question in this study, primarily because characteristic spirit is this term referenced in *The Education Act (1988)*. The term characteristic spirit will be explored later in this literature review.

2.3.1 School Ethos

The origin of the term school ethos is generally credited to the work of Rutter, *et al.*, (1979, p. 18), who, in their classic study of school effectiveness, noted in their findings “the importance of the school ethos or atmosphere", stating that some schools which provided a more positive experience were likely to be more effective. Later, Allder

(1993) takes a linguistic approach to the exploration of the term ethos drawing on the work of Van Buren, (1972) - Allder claims that the word is a 'frontier word' in virtue of its closeness to the edges of linguistic expressibility and captures the elusive nature of school ethos in this definition:

> the ethos of a school…is the unique, pervasive atmosphere or mood of the organisation which is brought about by activities or behaviour, primarily in the realm of social interaction… and recognised initially on an experiential rather than a cognitive level. (Allder, 1993, p. 69)

Allder's (1993) definition expresses ethos as something experienced in an atmosphere or mood, subject to change and determined by the behaviour of those in the organisation. McLaughlin (2005, p. 311) concurs and asserts that "ethos is the prevalent or characteristic tone, spirit or sentiment [of a school]", but is notoriously difficult to contextualise within an educational context. Smith (1998, p. 3) suggests that arriving at an acceptable working definition of such a nebulous concept as 'ethos' is very difficult for those working within education. Many others agree about the illusory nature of the term (Donnelly, 2000; Halstead and Taylor, 2000; Murray, 2000; Graham, 2012) asserting that school ethos has turned out to be an obscure idea, highly resistant to a satisfactory definition and practical empirical work. Such misunderstandings resulted in many theorists providing their own definitions, arguing that the term is difficult to define not just because of its broad understandings but also because of how it is lived out in schools (Murray, 2000; McLaughlin, 2005; Faas, Smith and Darmody, 2018).

However, despite its nebulous nature and its resistance to satisfactory definition, it is central to understanding the organisational function of schools. Drawing from the works of Allder (1993) and McLaughlin (2005) on ethos, an adaption of their definitions will act as the foundation for further exploration in this research and discussion and will aid an understanding of a consistent conceptualisation of the term. Ethos, therefore, is understood *inter alia* to human activity and behaviour, to the "human environment in which these activities take place, to the pervasive mood of this environment, to social interactions and consequences, to something which is determined as norms and that are unique" (McLaughlin, 2005, p. 310).

2.3.2 Ethos as a Process

Despite the ambiguity the around the term McLaughlin (2005, p. 310) suggests that it is possible to find some consistency among researchers regarding an understanding of

ethos. Writers such as Eisner (1994); Norman (2003); Glover and Coleman (2005); and Jackson (2019); all suggest that ethos deals with features of atmosphere that emerge from relationships between people and values which underpin policy and practice and constitute a way of life – in this sense ethos can be considered a habitat and a way of life. However, what a school espouses concerning ethos, its formal expression, and what the school is, its informal expression (manifested in social interaction and process) can highlight a significant gap between reality and rhetoric. This is precisely the area of interest that Donnelly (2000) addresses in her research on school ethos. Donnelly's work focuses explicitly on Catholic schools in Northern Ireland. Nevertheless, she offers some interesting perspectives on the concept of the school ethos.

Donnelly (2000, p. 135) explores how the formal ethos is congruent with the informal ethos and situates these two understandings of ethos into two broad camps reflecting either a 'positivist' or 'anti-positivist' viewpoint. Donnelly (2000) asserts that the 'positivist' viewpoint holds that ethos is an 'aspirational' ethos. It is "an objective phenomenon, existing independently of the people and social events in an organisation. In this understanding, ethos exists outside the community and is 'owned' by an organisation and imposed on the people who work within – "it is the *formal* expression of authorities' aims and objectives" (Donnelly, 2000, p. 135).

This perspective finds resonance with Hogan (1984, p. 695) and Norman (2003, p. 24), who speak about 'custodial ethos': whereby the authorities of a school understand themselves as custodians of a set of standards which are to be conserved, protected and communicated through the agency of the school. Similarly, Fischer (2010, p. 6) argues that patrons often interpret ethos as a means for them to transmit their own set of values, and Hogan (1984, p. 697) argues that this has been the most prevalent understanding of ethos in educational circles in Ireland in the past, asserting that ethos seen from this perspective can lead to a custodianship which is 'austere, fastidious, or otherwise rigid in disposition'.

Donnelly (2000, p. 136) asserts that the antithesis of a positivist ethos is an 'anti-positivist' one which is more informal and emerges from "social interaction and process"; it is inherently bound up within the organisation and is produced and reproduced over time. This finds resonance in both Allder (1993, p. 69) and McLaughlin's (2005, p. 311) premise that ethos is the 'pervasive mood' brought on by activities and

behaviours by school community members. Smith (2003, p. 466) sees this more informal set of relationships in terms of Bourdieu's concept of 'habitus' / community of practice: "a characteristic of a school … a complex dynamic interaction of continuous construction and re-construction of individuals' and institutions' habituses—a perpetual 'construction site'".

While Donnelly's (2000) two opposing understandings of ethos appear to be in stark contrast to each other they are equally valid within the school environment. Donnelly proposes a model – *the dimensions of ethos* – where she brings both understandings of ethos together and raises the possibility of a third dimension "which is more deeply entrenched and when combined with the others, offers a further insight into the unique features of schools" (2000, p. 151). The three dimensions of ethos are presented in figure 2 below.

Description of Ethos	Dimension of Ethos	Manifested in . . .	Method of research
Superficial	Aspirational Ethos	Documents/ statements from school authorities such as Churches	Document reviews; semi-structured interviews with school authorities
↓	Ethos of outward attachment	School organisational structures; physical environment of the school; behaviour of individuals	Document reviews and semi-structured interviews with school members
Deep	Ethos of inward attachment	Individuals' deep seated thoughts, feelings and perceptions	In-depth interviews and informal conversations with school members and longterm observation of organisational interaction

Figure 2: *Donnelly's Model – Dimensions of Ethos (Donnelly, 2000)*

Neither of the dimensions of ethos described by Donnelly (2000) is more important or more significant for shaping the school – each is of equal value. Instead, her model and research on ethos provides a lens for viewing the operations of a school, and she warns against any attempts to arrive at a 'single correct' meaning - "ethos is best viewed as a process… which operates on a number of levels and characterised by inherent contradictions and inconsistencies" (2000, p. 150).

From the above discussion, we can begin to understand that school ethos is located within the culture of a school and is both a formal and informal expression of its

members, its cultural norms, assumptions, and beliefs. It is "the prevalent or characteristic tone, spirit or sentiment informing an identifiable entity involving human life and interaction…[and is] seen in the shaping of human perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, dispositions" (McLaughlin, 2005, p. 312). This 'prevalent tone' is the atmosphere that emerges from the interactions of several aspects, including relationships, teaching and learning, management and leadership, and "the use of symbols, rituals and practices, as well as goals and expectations" (Norman, 2003, p. 2). Ultimately, a school can only claim to have an ethos when it is achieved through a negotiated process, and the resultant reality is a lived reality of the values espoused by the whole school community. The school ethos is a process - there cannot be a dichotomy between precept and practice. Ethos must be "what is occurring, what is being experienced, what is expected, what is hoped for; it is concerned with the experiences of relationships, of structures, of polices, of procedures, of roles of founding purposes of the school" (Monahan, 2000, p. xxii).

2.3.3 School Ethos / Characteristic Spirit in Educational Discourse

The Education Act (Government of Ireland, 1998) directs the legislative implications for school management in upholding the ethos of their schools and is the primary focus in this research for an exploration of ethos/characteristic spirit. However, prior to the *Act,* the discourse regarding ethos that dominated educational debates in the past few decades is worth noting. In the report on the *National Education Convention* (1994), references to 'school culture' - characterised as 'ethos'- are found and presented in a whole school sense which involved "the continuing interaction between a shared dialogue on the core value of the school, embracing the patron, trustees, board, principal, staff, parents, and students" (Coolahan, 1994, p. 28). This type of rhetoric around ethos dominated the discourse on education and was reflected in the White Paper on Education *Charting Our Education Future (1995)*:

> Every school has a tangible quality defined by its physical and organisational structures. However, it also has the critical, intangible character called 'ethos', which encompasses collective attitudes, beliefs, values, traditions, aspirations and goals… the ethos of a school is an organic element, arising, first and foremost, from the actual practices which are carried on in that school… (Government of Ireland, 1995, p. 11)

Daly (2008) suggests that by the time of *The Education Act (1998)*, the explicit use of the term ethos was avoided and translated into 'characteristic spirit'. Nevertheless, ethos

was implied in the reference, which highlighted the responsibility of the BoM to the patron for: "upholding the characteristic spirit of the school as determined by the cultural, educational, moral, religious, social, linguistic, and spiritual values and traditions which inform and are characteristic of the objectives and conduct of the school" (Government of Ireland, 1998, sec. 15 (2)). Daly (2008, p. 19) further suggests that while the *Act* was somewhat ambiguous about the meaning of 'characteristic sprit' 'its determination' was clearly weighted towards the patron. Steele (2018) asserts that as the phrase 'characteristic spirit' is one of the senses given for the word 'ethos' in the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary, we may concede "that this particular section of the Act indicates how the Irish courts would be likely to approach any explication of the word ethos".

Hyland (2000, p. 22) suggests that the "definition of 'characteristic spirit' as specified in the Act, while difficult to define, can be identified in the practices of a school" and Faas, Foster and Smith (2018, p. 604) concur and maintain that the characteristic spirit or ethos of the school is "the values, beliefs and practices" underpinning the life of the school. Liddy, O'Flaherty, and McCormack (2018, p. 108) argue that while the term 'characteristic spirit' "shares many aspects with ethos such as moral, religious, and spiritual values …[it] extends to include cultural, educational, linguistic, social values and traditions". Many writers (Hyland, 2000; O'Reilly, 2002; Liddy, O'Flaherty, and McCormack, 2018) suggest that creating the concept of characteristic spirit and expanding the meanings associated with the word ethos was perhaps the Government's attempt to avoid faith-based associations with the word. The *Education Act* indicates an interdependent relationship between 'ethos' and 'characteristic spirit'.

Moreover, ethos is often seen as the product of the culture of a school (Solvason, 2005 p. 87) and is closely akin to related notions such as, 'ambience', atmosphere, climate, ethical environment, and culture (Donnelly, 2000; Glover and Coleman, 2005; Solvason, 2005; Haydon, 2006). It has been noted that the word culture has often been used interchangeably with the word ethos, and the symbiotic relationship between both ethos and culture has been a recurring idea identified in the literature in relation to the creation of a positive school environment (Glover and Coleman, 2005, p. 251; McLaughlin, 2005, p. 309) - the relationship between school culture and ethos will now briefly be discussed.

2.3.4 School Ethos and School Culture

Gavienas and White (2003) suggest that concepts of school 'ethos', 'climate' or 'culture' have been much debated since the 1980s, and Prosser (1999, p. 2) suggests that "by the early 1980's the terms school ethos, climate, culture, atmosphere, and tone were ubiquitous". However, school culture, climate, and ethos are tenuous, complex terms. Donnelly (2000) suggests that ethos is a nebulous term often used to define the culture or atmosphere of an organisation, and Prosser (1999, p. 1) argues that while the term 'school culture' is popular and frequently used, for "over thirty years of research it remains enigmatic and much abused". Nevertheless, a school's ethos or characteristic spirit, is a vital element in defining a school's sense of identity and mission and "plays a vital role in transmitting and maintaining hegemonic and cultural norms" (Lalor, 2013, p. 440). School cultures are historically rooted, determined by social, economic, and political forces and arguably cannot be developed in isolation – many theorists (Schein, 1985; Stoll and Fink, 1992; Hargreaves, 1995; Furlong, 2000) argue that school culture is inextricably linked to ethos and to a large extent, is governed by factors (both external and internal constraints) which affect the formation of ethos in schools. Murray (2000) suggests that "school culture is a synthesis of both the character of a school (micro ethos) and the 'macro ethos' (prestige, status) which result in the true ethos of any school" (2000, p. 15), while Deal and Kennedy (1983, p. 14) argue that 'ethos is just another term for culture' and it is recognised that school culture is a powerful resource, supporting and promoting change, development, and effectiveness in schools. If we accept the argument that school culture and ethos are intrinsically linked, how can schools determine their ethos as a living, vibrant reality and ensure it is the 'product' of the culture of any school? (Solvason, 2005). How can schools find shared meanings, cultural understandings and a set of core values that recognise their school's unique and pervasive atmosphere?

The symbiotic relationship between school culture and ethos has been discussed to clarify their meanings and the practical implications of the terms in a school environment. Solvason (2005, p. 87) asserts that while we can recognise and comprehend school culture, ethos must be experienced moving from aspirational or idealistic to action and become a lived reality. The subsequent discussion will now encompass how a school might aspire to live out its ethos.

2.3.5 Ethos: A lived reality - from Ideal to Action

Jones and Barrie (2015, p. 128) suggest that it is true of any school that the content of the curriculum reflects and shapes its ethos and that the curriculum (hidden or explicit) of a school is embedded in its culture as determined by social, economic, and political forces. Changes to any of these structures will impact school culture, and consequently, school cultures vary: "schools with similar contextual characteristics have different mindsets" (Furlong, 2000, p. 65). Understanding the 'mindset' of a school is the starting point for understanding the values and beliefs which underline school culture that ultimately fosters an approach for defining school ethos or to enable schools to move from the aspirational or ideal to reality (Deal and Kennedy, 1983; Hargreaves, 1995). It is often taken for granted that individual school communities share a common set of core values (Mulcahy, 2000, p. 86) and that these core values are derived from the school's vision and purpose. These values are often espoused in school policies and school climate promoted within the teaching and learning system. So how do schools plan for ethos? How do schools ensure ethos is a lived reality? How do schools map a trajectory from ideal to action? Barr (2000) suggests that such a process needs to begin with schools 'seeing' themselves as learning organisations in which "people at all levels are, collectively, continually enhancing their capacity to think creatively about matters of importance to them" (2000, p. 137). This discussion has noted that many writers stress that ethos is not a static phenomenon. It is more accurately viewed as a process and "the direction which this process assumes depends on the key actors involved, their values and attitudes as well as attendant social and political culture" (Donnelly, 2000, p. 150). Ultimately, a school's ethos is best expressed, developed, and enriched as due to the continuing interaction and shared dialogue on the core values of the school (involving the whole school community) and the daily practices that endeavour to embody these values. Ethos is established and sustained by those repeated practices and traditions. Through beliefs and attitudes promoted and by the goals aspired to by the school community. Bawden (2019) suggests that when considering ethos as a living, breathing thing, it is best to see it at work in the school, helping to create a sense of drive and purpose for all concerned, rather than allowing it to lie hidden in the policies and documents. Bawden's (2019) work suggests a collaborative process where ethos reflects the wider community involvement and correlates closely with Skelly's (2012) and Norman's (2003) thinking on ethos and is the antithesis of custodial ethos, which is

imposed by systems (Hogan, 1984). Furthermore, Bawden (2019) suggests there are three guiding principles which allow ethos to become a lived reality and the driving aspirations of schools: (i) 'ethos is owned by everyone'; (ii) 'ethos lives because we acknowledge it in our lives'; (iii) 'ethos matters because we make it matter'. Applying of these guiding principles should be underpinned by two-character traits: empathy and compassion.

2.3.6 School Type and Ethos: Setting the context

According to McGuinness (2000, p. 45) "an ethos which is living and dynamic has many intangibles which are difficult to encapsulate in a precise definition but its manifestation in the daily life and relationships in an institution can be more easily observed in various school types". Ethos, viewed as a process, is denoted by "inherent contradictions and inconsistencies…and the direction which this process assumes depends on the key actors involved" (Donnelly, 2000, p. 150). In this research, the school type is a publicly managed school, which is defined as "a school where the role of the patron and the accountability regarding characteristic spirit resides with a public body" (Liddy, O'Flaherty and McCormack, 2016, p. 10). Since the passing of the *Education Act (1998),* characteristic spirit applies to all education providers, including the publicly managed sector, and in Ireland, this means the responsibility for characteristic spirit for all schools lies firmly with the patron body (Tuohy, 2008; Daly, 2012). ETB publicly managed schools are of two kinds: 'partnership schools' and schools under the sole aegis of the ETB. Partnership schools, for which the ETB is the patron, are formally referred to as 'Designated Community Colleges' whose co-trustees are historically nominated by a religious denomination (O'Flaherty *et al.*, 2018, p. 328). In designated ETB schools/colleges, the co-trustee plays a role in developing and supporting the characteristic spirit of the school. The direction and tone of these publicly managed ETB schools are articulated by the *Education Act (1998),* which sets out the purpose, direction, and legal governance entity for all schools "where the guardian of the 'characteristic spirit' of a school is a person or entity known as the 'patron', (Coolahan, 1981, p. 141; O'Flaherty *et al.*, 2018, p. 317). The implications for the chaplain in supporting management to uphold the characteristic spirit within DCCs is the focus of this research and will be discussed throughout this study.

2.3.7 Characteristic Spirit in publicly managed schools: some considerations.

The principal legal contexts, the *Irish Constitution (1937)* and the *Education Act (1988)* provide the current national legislative framework for the operation of publicly managed second level/post-primary schools in the Republic of Ireland (McCormack *et al.*, 2018, p. 161). These frameworks, combined with key structural, policy-related developments and the influential role played by the Catholic Church during the formation of the VEC section in the 1930s, have directed the discourse and subsequently established the present "interesting and complex structure" (Coolahan, 1981, p. 141) which represents the education system in the Republic of Ireland today. The focus of the current discussion will not encompass an in-depth analysis of the history of Irish education; instead, it will focus on the implications of recent legislation for schools managed by ETBs – specifically designated colleges, and how they have arrived at a sector-wide articulation of characteristic spirit for their schools. Prior to the *Education Act* (1998), the characteristic spirit did not apply to the ETB sector, resulting in the absence of related policy (Liddy, O'Flaherty and McCormack, 2018, p. 105). Arguably, because the ETB sector has neglected the concept of characteristic spirit, individual schools have been left to identify their own characteristic spirit, values, and traditions. The lacuna of a sector-wide policy on how characteristic spirit is understood, combined with the lack of consideration on an educational philosophy in Irish educational debates, has meant that until recently, the ETB sector has been bereft of any explication of a vision and model of development, (Mulcahy, 1981; Gleeson, 2004). Against this background, it is hardly surprising that the 'characteristic spirit' of publicly managed schools has received scant consideration and O'Flaherty *et al.*, (2018, p. 326) assert that given the history "and general paucity of education debate there are grounds to suggest that the characteristic spirit of the ETB may not have been given, to date, the sort of deep critical discussion it deserves".

Educational philosophy and values in educational discourse have been an ongoing subject for decades, and they are mentioned in the context of this discussion to set the context for the ETBs' attempt to reconstruct and improve understanding of characteristic spirit. Irwin (2019, p. 32) argues that the ETB body, as the only state patron of schools in the Republic of Ireland, is "especially well placed to model an approach to education which is authentically democratic and pluralist". It is precisely this endeavour

undertaken by the ETBs, which will now be examined and discussed as it has direct implications for the chaplain's work in ETB schools.

2.3.8 Core Values and Characteristic Spirit Review for ETBI Schools

Exploring characteristic spirit requires consideration of the "diversification of the cultural and religious make-up of the Irish population in the last twenty years" (Fischer, 2010, p. 1). Arguably, such diversification is represented in publicly managed ETB schools (Liston, 2015). Over the past few years, the sector has responded appropriately to this new social and cultural reality by engaging in an exploration of characteristic spirit, placing it central to such discourse.

The origin of the exploration into the core values and characteristic review process stems from avenues explored by the John Marcus O' Sullivan conferences, which began in 2011. Arising from these conferences a research team based at the School of Education, University of Limerick, was commissioned to carry out an extensive research project to explore and express the characteristic spirit of Education and Training Board (ETB) schools as publicly managed post-primary schools within the Irish education system. Subsequently, several ETBs took part in a pilot project in 2013 to explore 'values and moral education in publicly-managed schools', and the pilot project evidenced the need for further work regarding 'Characteristic Spirit'. A *'Religion and Diversity Task Group'*, with representatives from more than half of the ETBs, was established and was tasked with addressing the complexities which arose from the research around the characteristic spirit and the emergent issues around multidenominational education. These issues are far broader than this discussion will allow. However, a question regarding the articulation of characteristic spirit in designated schools, pertinent to this study, arose in the context of this review process and is worthy of further exploration.

2.3.8.1 Designated Community Colleges and possible Challenges for ETB

Historically, most designated schools came through the amalgamation of several vocational and church-run schools in an area, and the agreements drawn up concerning governance and ethos were negotiated when the sector did not have a clearly defined core values statement for their schools. "This led to these agreements being more influenced by the other trustee partners in relation to these matters" (ETBI, 2019, p. 5), and these agreements make provisions for one particular group (dominantly Catholic), and Catholic practices became largely normalised within the life of these schools,

(McCormack *et al.*, 2018, p. 176). Approximately twenty-one percent of ETB schools are designated schools with legally binding model agreements or deeds of trust that guarantee specific provisions for Catholic children (in most of cases) concerning Religious Instruction and worship (ETBI, 2019, p. 5). This adds to the complexities and challenges the ETB sector faces concerning the issues of ethos and governance. The ETBs' own development in its understanding of itself being a state model of education "challenges this previously unquestioned monopoly of Christianity in addressing questions of meaning and value" (Liddy, O'Flaherty and McCormack, 2018, p. 47). Irwin (2019, p. 39) stated in the '*Draft Core Value and Characteristic Spirit Review Report 2019*', that there was a significant challenge for the ETB sector regarding differences across the sector depending on whether the school is designated or non-designated and asked if indeed there was a need for separate articulation of characteristic spirit for designated schools.

2.3.8.2 A Multidenominational Ethos for all ETB Schools

Irwin (2019) goes on to suggest that considering this question, there emerges a clear choice for the ETB sector in terms of two main options or interpretations: one sees the designated ETB school as a denominational form of schooling, and the second sees the ETB school as multidenominational as such, but as involving distinct approaches to religion and belief:

> This central question of differences of school type and a somewhat differentiated understanding of multidenominational education in each specific school situation will be a central matter for discussion amongst all the stakeholders in the consultation. One of the overarching aims of the consultation should be to bring coherence to this complex situation of ETB school characteristic spirit (or ethos) both at a theoretical level of principles but also, just as importantly, at the level of everyday school culture and practice. (Irwin, 2019, pp. 39–40)

The recommendations for change favoured moving towards multidenominational ethos for all ETB schools, and in doing so, it was asserted that there needed to be "a shift in emphasis from a prioritising of Christian approaches to belief to a broader based and pluralist emphasis on diversity of values and beliefs" (Irwin, 2019, p. 34). Arriving at a normative and philosophical definition of multidenominational; the following was put forward, "in multidenominational education…the truth claims of religion and other belief systems are explored as part of the school's ethos but truth is not associated with a particular view…" (Irwin, 2019, p. 36).

2.3.8.3 A Critical Juncture

An in-depth analysis of the broad extent of the work undertaken by the ETB sector concerning characteristic spirit is beyond the scope of this study; rather, the discussion has attempted to map the trajectory of the ETBs core values and characteristic spirit process, research, and review over the past decade in order to contextualise the work of the chaplain in these school types. To date, the process and review are complete, and arguably it has entered Irish educational discourse at a timely and critical juncture. *The (Admissions to School) Act 2018* substantive sections (act 14, sec. 9), which pertain to the Admission Policy and the Admission Statement of schools, will be enacted in all schools from September 2020. The commencement of these sections will have a tangible impact on schools and will introduce new admission policies, annual admission notices with specific timelines, new responsibilities for principals, and new obligations on parents. In response to this mandatory obligation on schools, the ETBI has written a statement for all their schools' regarding status and type (multidenominational and designated or non-designated) and the implications of defining characteristic spirit for the enrolment of students. Such statements have been a complex and contested area between ETB as patrons, and the co-trustees/religious bodies, who have a vested interest in the future of religious education and its contribution to the overall ethos of schools. The implications of this statement will mean that schools will be required, over time, to redevelop their vision and mission statements and related practices to ensure that while they meet the broad needs of the school community, they are in line with the core values and multidenominational status of the sector.

What does the development of multidenominational status in DCCs, mean for practising chaplains at this critical juncture? Will the chaplain's role be compromised in these schools that now clearly express an explicit multidenominational ethos? The practicalities of celebrating all religions and remaining faithful to the denominational nominating body, the Catholic Church, without privileging their faith may well have serious implications for the chaplain in these schools. The previous position of *de facto Catholic* and *de jure multidenominational* may be seriously challenged by this new paradigm shift. This literature review will now address relevant works on school-

based chaplaincy to define the chaplain's role and the implications of ministry in multidenominational schools.

2.4 School Chaplaincy

This research question explicitly addresses the phenomenon of school chaplaincy in post-primary ETBI Designated Community Colleges in the Republic of Ireland and the chaplains' impact on supporting management in upholding the ethos of their schools. Therefore, this literature review prioritises the seminal work on chaplaincy in an Irish context. Literature on school chaplaincy in an Irish context exposes a noticeable dearth of available works and research in this field, therefore, to broaden the scope of the discussion on the role of the chaplain in schools, consideration has been given to relevant research and international literature from England, Scotland, and Australia. A summary of the literature findings from these countries is presented. However, exploring the chaplain's role in schools in these contexts will only be used to inform the discussion in an Irish context and will not form an extensive part of the literature review as presented here.

Many models of chaplaincy have been suggested and presented in literature and research. Numerous perspectives have been offered on the chaplain's work as a priest, pastor, prophet, teacher, disciple, and servant (Tregale, 2011).Theological, secular, and pastoral models have been explored to understand the complexities of the ministry. However, Hunt (2021, p. 28) suggests that such a wide range of models… "risks complicating rather than aiding understanding of chaplaincy, particularly to those outside the role". Nevertheless, role definition around chaplaincy is fraught with difficulties, and there appears to be no one definition that can adequately describe the role. The subsequent discussion will now address the debates and theological reflections which have endeavoured to offer insight into the ministry of school-based chaplaincy.

While "there is very little consensus on how to define what a chaplain is" (Ryan, 2015, p. 6; Rayner and Swabey, 2016, p. 14), the *National School Chaplaincy Association* (NCSA, 2020) are steadfast in their assertion "that chaplaincy is a vital support to young people in one of the most complex environments in our society — the school". However, support is just one aspect of what the chaplain does in an educational setting, and while it provides some rationale for a model of good practice, it does not encompass the

"multi-faceted and, in many ways, immeasurable service" of the role (Warren and Loza, 2009, p. 33). Caperon (2015, p. xiii) suggests an analysis for addressing chaplaincy might be found in the process of theological reflection on the normative – what churches teach; the formal – what theologians explore; espoused – what adherents claim; and the operant – what drives practice. This analysis has been built upon by Cameron *et al.*, (2010), and it implicitly invites reflection on how theory interacts with practice. Caperon (2015, p. xiii) suggests that critical theological reflection on chaplaincy's espoused and operative dimensions have offered key insights into the ministry.

However, this researcher is cognisant that any attempt to define chaplaincy must be held in tension with the breadth of chaplaincy contexts and argues that fundamentally the full spectrum of a chaplain's work can only really be experienced. "Thus, an attempt to define chaplaincy propels one into experiencing chaplaincy in context" (Hunt, 2021, p. 7), which in this study explores of the chaplain's role concerning upholding ethos in a specific school type - a DCC. The following exploration will now address the available literature which addresses this phenomenon. Furthermore, the findings from the exploration of other models of practice, and subsequent research, will offer definitive ways to recognise, support and encourage chaplains in state schools and facilitate any proposal for change.

2.4.1 Chaplaincy – An Irish Perspective

This literature review will map and explore seminal writings on school chaplaincy in an Irish context. Key researchers who have made significant contributions regarding the rationale for chaplains in Irish post-primary schools include Monahan and Renehan (1998); Norman (2002, 2004); King (2004); O'Higgins-Norman and King (2009); Moran (2014b); O'Higgins-Norman (2014). These writers will be given preference here, and their contributions will be explored chronologically to gain insight into school chaplaincy and how it progressed and developed over time. The review will describe each work in succession, beginning with the first book written as a practical guide for chaplains in Irish schools, *Chaplaincy: A Faith Presence (1998)*. *At the Heart of Education* and *Education Matters (2002, 2014)* are the following significant books that examine the theoretical foundations of pastoral care and situate the chaplain at the core of pastoral care practices. The final work and research addressed is chaplain as "Meaning-Maker" as

expounded by (Moran, 2014b), who explored the chaplain as a facilitator in developing and maintaining school ethos.

2.4.1.1 Chaplaincy: A Faith Presence

Ryan (2015); Freathy *et al.*, (2016); Rayner and Swabey (2016) have asserted that attempting to define chaplaincy is not without difficulty as it is a role which by nature extends into the multi-faceted and complex nature of personal human interactions and faith' and often leads to multiple and conflicting demands and role-identifying conflict for chaplains in their practice. In an Irish context, chaplaincy began to emerge as a lay ministry in the late nineties and the literature written around this time sought to address and identify critical values which could provide a rationale for school chaplaincy. Monahan and Renehan (1998) began the exploration around role-identity for chaplains in their practice and, in one of the first books written as a practical guide for chaplains in schools, they assert that chaplains are called to be a 'faith presence' by accompanying the school community in both educational and formation journeys. Arguably, this is one of the first definitions of the role of the lay chaplain in an Irish school context and "expresses cognisance of an emerging lay chaplaincy …[emphasising] the chaplain's ministry to all members of the school community" (Moran, 2014a, p. 8). This definition encompasses a four-fold distinction of journey, witness, presence, and community and, in some way, reflects what chaplains do in their practice. Monahan and Renehan (1998) situate the practice of school chaplaincy in the 'rootedness of Christ' and assert that "the Chaplain as a faith presence, committed to the values of Christ, and on behalf of the Church and the school communities, accompanies each person on the journey through life" (1998, p. 10). 'Loitering with intent' was a term coined by these authors concerning the practice of chaplaincy, and it became synonymous with the work of the chaplain in schools (Monahan and Renehan, 1998, p. 22). Later work by Roberts (2017) also notes the resilience of 'loitering with intent' as a way of thinking about chaplaincy practice. He uses the figure of the *flâneur* (stroller) to give strategic significance to the chaplains' sometimes marginal and liminal status (Roberts, 2017, p. 351). The flâneur is an eccentric and ambiguous figure who is considered itinerant yet rooted in place, immersed in the crowd while standing out from the multitude. The term encompasses, literally or metaphorically, how chaplains walk the corridors of contested spaces, such

as schools, which Roberts (2017, p. 351) asserts are inscribed with "a wealth of insights into social and political life in the twenty-first century".

The Chaplain: A Faith Presence in the School (1998) is a reflective and definitive guide for new chaplains. However, while it helps provide conceptual clarity around the work the chaplain does in schools, it is simply offered as a guidebook to assist chaplains in what they do rather than why they do it: the four-fold characteristic of presence, as offered by Monahan and Renehan (1998) gives a very realistic picture of a chaplain's ministry in schools. It features a very distinctive characteristic of chaplaincy, namely relationalability - the ability to connect be relevant, relate, and be present to people. Glackin (2011) argues that such 'presence' 'best defines the role of chaplaincy and exemplifies this as being a 'presence in pilgrimage':

> In this sense, the 'presence' of the chaplain has a triple aspect, which chaplains themselves defined as: the physical presence of 'being there for staff [and] students …the charismatic presence of being 'a witness to the centrality of the spiritual in people's lives'; the symbolic presence of being a positive face of the Church. (Glackin, 2011, p. 54)

As suggested by Monahan and Renehan (1998), the concept of being a 'reflective presence' is also explored by other contributors in this book - Dunne (1998), Norman (1998), O'Donoghue (1998). O'Donoghue speaks of the chaplain as a significant adult, challenging students "to make choices and teaching about value…and forgiveness" (1998, p. 117). Dunne (1998, p. 128) suggests that a chaplain's 'presence' must be "wherever students situate themselves", and Norman (1998, p. 124) asserts that the chaplain "is one who leaves you with an abiding impression of presence".

The book further considers the chaplain's role providing meaningful school liturgies as a link between personal development and education and advocates the collaborative nature of the role (Monahan and Renehan, 1998, p. 108). The exploration of the collaborative nature of the role also touches upon – albeit briefly - the potential conflict regarding the expectations of the chaplain from their nominating Church and state body (employer). The writers acknowledge that while "the Church and the school … give the chaplain a mandate to be an identifiable facilitator for the spiritual welfare of students and related school personnel" (Monahan and Renehan, 1998, p. 14), they may have different values and approaches to ensure the welfare of the young people in their care. Indeed the chaplain plays a vital role in the welfare of students and the whole school community, but as a model for chaplaincy Ryan (2018, p. 88) suggests that "caring for

others is a rather limited vision of the role". However, later literature addresses this deficit and attempts to broaden the discussion around the chaplain's role by encompassing their work into a larger pastoral framework within the school. The chaplain as a key facilitator of pastoral care was the subject of a paper by Norman (2002) on chaplaincy in an Irish context, and a discussion on this work will follow.

2.4.1.2 The chaplain and pastoral care

Feheney (1999, p. 15) gives a very succinct definition of pastoral care in schools, declaring it as: "the integration of the academic, social, emotional and religious education of our students so that an atmosphere of care obtains in the school community", and he further asserts that the delivery of pastoral care is built upon ethos, communal life, curriculum, and chaplaincy/counselling services. Caperon (2015) argues that pastoral care, which is a distinctively spiritual activity, is at the heart of an espoused theology of school chaplaincy, and the chaplain's role is defined as "someone whose special concern is not with the subjects of the school curriculum but with the whole spiritual dimension of education" (2015, p. 46).

While Norman (2002) does not define pastoral care in this work, he asserts that the 'perceptions' of pastoral care can be "generally described in terms of three stages... these stages of pastoral care can occur simultaneously or in isolation" (2002, p. 37). According to Norman (2002), the three stages of pastoral care comprise of humanistic, spiritual, and curricular pastoral care. This discussion on 'the contribution of pastoral care and school chaplaincy' formed the basis of the next significant contribution to the literature on chaplaincy in Ireland: *At the Heart of Education (2004)*.

Norman (2004), building upon the three stages as outlined above, divides this book into three parts, referencing them as 'Humanistic', 'Programmatic', and 'Spiritual' pastoral care. Drawing from many contributors, Norman (2004, p. 16) suggests that "taken together, all of the chapters in this book provide a vision for schools to develop their approach to pastoral care so as to fully meet the needs of their pupils: body, mind and soul". He suggests that the school chaplain plays a vital role in providing pastoral care to young people and can make a significant contribution to the humanistic and spiritual needs of the pupil.

2.4.1.2.1 Humanistic pastoral care

Norman (2004) asserts that humanistic pastoral care is how a school provides for students' safety, food, shelter, belonging, love, and acceptance needs. It is a stage of pastoral care that is concerned with the essentials of life, which are a prerequisite for any person to function optimally. The school community provides this in small ways by affirming the student for doing well and making the school environment a welcoming and safe place.

2.4.1.2.2 Spiritual pastoral care

Spiritual pastoral care takes cognisance that human beings are spiritual beings and recognises that if we are to reach our full potential as human beings, we must recognise that there is a spiritual element to our being. Furniss (1995, p. 3) suggests that spiritual pastoral care is best expressed as "a dialogue exploring the possibility and implications of a religious definition of a student's situation". Norman (2004) asserts that a teacher's or chaplain's role in providing spiritual pastoral care must be an intrinsic part of their professionalism as it recognises that we are created and exist in a relationship with the transcendent, that in turn is realised through the quality of relationships we nurture with ourselves, with others, and with the broader environment. Other contributors to this work indicate that chaplains play an important role in animating the spiritual lives of students because chaplaincy, by its nature, is intrinsically linked to the spiritual life of the school community. Byrne (2004, p. 192) suggests that the chaplain, by accompanying the young person in their search for meaning provides opportunities to explain their life situations through authentic relationships and spiritual definitions.

2.4.1.2.3 Programmatic pastoral care

The final stage of pastoral care referred to by Norman (2004) is programmatic pastoral care, and this refers to taught pastoral programmes in schools. De Souza (2004, p. 123) links the educational programmes in schools with nurturing the spirituality of young people. She asserts that the implications of understanding the nature of spirituality "as expressed in terms of the connectedness that the human person has with self, the social other…the physical other…and the Transcendent other" will have direct consequences on the school environment.

2.4.1.2.4 The chaplain as a teacher

This book raises some pertinent points regarding the chaplain as a teacher and their role in faith formation. King (2004, p. 170) suggests that if the role of the chaplain is essentially pastoral, "it raises a crucial issue about the pivotal role of the chaplain concerning the teaching element of a chaplain's job description, as defined by the Department's guidelines". He argues that if one is held accountable by syllabi requirements, there will be less opportunity to explore religious experience and faith with students. King suggests that the immediate challenge for the chaplain will be "to see the syllabus as an extension of the faith formation and spiritual development of the pupil and to afford the opportunity to engage with own personal experiences and the lived experience of the Christian tradition" (2004, p. 169). He asserts that the school can shape the dialogue and practice necessary to honour the affective and cognitive dimensions of religious education and that the chaplain's voice is a crucial contributor to "spiritual capital" (2004, p. 173). Furthermore, through their religious education function (as a teacher), the chaplain can play an essential role in helping to create and sustain school ethos. This debate raises the question of whether the pastoral dimension of the chaplain's role is diminished by teaching, or can the syllabus lend itself to encompassing both knowledge of religion and faith or spiritual development?

2.4.1.2.5 The chaplain as a professional

A further contribution to the discussion in this book is presented by Murray (2004), who explores in theological terms what it means to be a professional chaplain. He suggests that "to be professional is to stand for something…you cannot stand for something if you are confused, or unclear, or diffident about your commitment" (2004, p. 216). Sweeney (2004) adds to this discussion by suggesting that reflective or supervisory practices are an integral part of what it means to be a professional and addresses the concept of supervision for chaplains as an essential element of their ministry. Exploring the value of engaging in reflective or supervisory practices, she asserts that "Ideally, chaplains [should be] members of the School Chaplains' Association, who abide by its code of ethics and receive regular supervision" (2004, p. 85). Arguably, the challenge facing school-based chaplaincy is to articulate a model of professional practice that identifies chaplains as members of the professional educational workforce whose contribution is integral to the provision of excellence in teaching and learning and

"integral to this development is the identification of a model of work supervision which supports professional identity and strengthens good practice" (Sutherland, 2010, p. 2). Parker, Gane and Parker, (2015) remind us of the value of reflective practice as a way of evaluating and improving the work of a chaplain and assert that it "is a process which can be used to enhance our working with individual students, and it is also a practice which should be applied to evaluating and modifying/improving the overall chaplaincy program within the school" (2015, p. 28). The discussion on professionalism and supervision in this work opens up further debate and dialogue rather than offering any definitive conclusion.

2.4.1.2.6 The chaplain and pastoral care: at the heart of education

This series of essays in *At The Heart Of Education* (2004) broadens the discussion and invites conversation around the chaplain's work in a school setting. While this book does not offer any new insights into who is defining the chaplaincy role in Irish education or offer any proposals for role's future, it is a comprehensive book that brings together research into school chaplaincy and pastoral care. It does address issues relating to pastoral care which affect schools in Ireland. It opens a dialogue about how chaplaincy can play an integral part in a vision for schools in developing their approach to pastoral care and suggests "that the rationale for school chaplaincy is contained within the unique contribution chaplains can make to spiritual pastoral care and their enhancement of religious education through ritual and liturgy" (Moran, 2014b, p. 12). The book advocates that pastoral care lies at the very core of chaplaincy, and it must also be, as the title suggests, at the heart of education - reflecting what the educator does in all aspects of school life.

2.4.1.3 Education Matters: Reflections for Chaplains

Education Matters: Readings in Pastoral Care for School Chaplains, Guidance Counsellors, and Teachers (2014) was an updated, renamed, and revised edition of *At the Heart of education: School Chaplaincy and Pastoral Care (2004)*. This book examined, in a balanced way, the theoretical foundations and practice concerning pastoral care in schools for school chaplains, guidance counsellors, and teachers. The book collated a wide range of viewpoints from twenty-four researchers, practitioners and leaders from Ireland, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, and Australia who contributed to the knowledge base and understanding of pastoral care and well-being

in schools. Edited by the same author, Norman (now O'Higgins Norman), the book brought together International research in school chaplaincy, guidance counselling, and pastoral studies. O'Higgins-Norman (2014, pp. 15-17) begins by defining pastoral care and identifies the varying roles of responsibility in offering pastoral care within an Irish school context. Williams (2014, pp. 19-29) then builds a rationale for including care and well-being as educational goals. The subsequent six chapters in this section elaborate on this theme. Section two of the book examines programmatic approaches to pastoral care and offers some practical strategies for pastoral care. The final section of the book explores contemporary spirituality in education. It presents spiritual well-being and pastoral care in different contexts, and the result is "a volume that offers both theoretical frameworks and practical strategies for a range of professionals working across multiple contexts with diverse students" (Christian, 2018, p. 2).

Murray (2014, pp. 282–298), Moran (2014a, pp. 259–271), and O'Higgins-Norman (2014a, pp. 272–281) specifically contribute to the topic of school chaplaincy – and each offer specific insights into chaplaincy from different perspectives. The combined information from these three writers offers practical advice and a comprehensive overview of school chaplains and their role in pastoral care.

Murray (2014) addresses some theological reflections on the chaplain or guidance counsellor as a professional. He looks at how theological reflection supports and shapes the description of a chaplain or counsellor as a 'professional', "in a way that harmonises fully with the notion of chaplaincy and counselling as vocations" (Murray, 2014, p. 282).

Moran's work focuses on an overview of chaplaincy's constitutional, legislative, and policy perspectives. She discusses the rulings of the High Court (1996) and Supreme Court (1998) regarding the constitutionality of State funding for chaplains in community schools (*Supreme Court. 1998. Campaign to Separate Church and State Ltd V The Minister for Education. 2ILRM, 81-101.*, 1998). Moran (2014a, p. 270) concluded from her findings that the two court judgements support the role of the school chaplain and that "the courts suggest that the chaplain has a key role in pastoral care". Her contribution touches upon school ethos and forms part of her thesis that is discussed later in this work.

O'Higgins Norman's contribution reports on the findings of studies with specific relevance to school chaplaincy in Ireland. The first study in 1999 set out to describe the

'current practice of chaplains' regarding conditions of employment, qualifications, training, roles, and functions. The second study in 2002 sought to examine "the nature of the work carried out by school chaplains in pursuance of their educational and ecclesial mandates" (O'Higgins-Norman, 2014, p. 272). The final study carried out in 2009 evaluated the professional qualifications and activities of chaplains in second-level schools in Ireland. As it represents the most current work on school chaplaincy in an Irish educational context, it will be preferenced for discussion in the next section of this work.

2.4.1.4 School Chaplaincy Activity Rating Study

The next significant contribution to the literature on school chaplaincy in an Irish context was a study delegated in 2008 by the School Chaplain's Association of Ireland (SCA). The study, carried out in 2009 by the School of Education Studies at Dublin City University, examined the nature of school chaplaincy and the qualifications and activities of school chaplains. The SCA set up an accreditation committee to "examine the possibility of developing new levels of membership related to the specific professional knowledge and experience of those who work in school chaplaincy" (Moran, 2014a, p. 12). While the focus of the study was mainly to establish an activity list of the work chaplains' do within a school setting, it did offer an important insight into how chaplains define their role. The research was carried out in two strands, administering an adaptation of the School Counsellors Activity Rating School (SCARS) to one hundred and fifty schools (of which there was a 55% response rate) and two focus groups carried out with school chaplains. In 2009, O'Higgins-Norman and King presented their findings in a School *Chaplaincy Activity Rating Study* and highlighted several areas which needed further exploration. The study's findings gave some insight into how chaplains view their role in schools and showed that chaplains were highly qualified, holding teaching qualifications and postgraduate qualifications in chaplaincy.

Furthermore, the (original unpublished) findings showed that over ninety percent of [Catholic] school chaplains are lay and that women outnumber men in the role (O'Higgins-Norman, 2014, p. 275)**.** While these findings established chaplains as a professional occupational group, the overall study highlighted the dearth of empirical research into school chaplaincy in post-primary schools in Ireland. The next significant research into school-based chaplaincy in Ireland was undertaken by Moran (2014b). Her contribution to Irish literature on chaplaincy examines the effectiveness of chaplaincy

through a social, educational, ecclesial, and international context and will now be given some consideration in this discussion.

2.4.1.5 Chaplains as 'Meaning Makers': a way forward?

'The Rationale for School Chaplaincy in Ireland' (Moran, 2014b) is a research doctorate that addresses school chaplaincy and examines a theory of school chaplains as meaning-makers. This research indicates that the school chaplain adds a critical '*Meaning Making'* dimension to education by providing care to students and facilitating young people in exploring their spiritual dimension. The study also suggests that the chaplain adds an important dimension to school life by facilitating reflection on school ethos (Moran, 2014b, p. 249). The theory of school chaplaincy, which is expounded by the research, makes meaning out of elements of school life and personal experience with members of the school community. Drawing on transformative learning theory Moran asserts that "an important Meaning-Making sub-category that school chaplains facilitate is that of developing and maintaining school ethos" (2014b, p. 249). Moran suggests that the ethos-building role of the school chaplain, across both the state and the voluntary school sectors, appears to be unique to the Irish and UK context. Her research findings assert that chaplains in an Irish context "educate colleagues and students in the area of characteristic spirit, ensuring that ethos becomes embedded into the day-to-day life of the school" (2014b, p. 249). As the exploration of ethos is particularly relevant to this research, some consideration will be given to Moran's findings relevant to this area.

2.4.1.5.1 The Chaplain as Meaning Maker and Ethos

The chaplain's role as a Meaning Maker in the context of ethos is validated in this research, yet Moran found that "chaplains themselves do not appear to promote this aspect of their role or indeed fully understand it" (2014b, p. 251). Moran's work explores the chaplain's role in supporting the ethos of their school and offers a theory of 'Meaning- Maker' as a way in which the chaplain can fulfil this aspect of their role. Moran's research addresses several areas relevant to ethos including taking time to reflect and interpreting ethos; modelling core values as a living embodiment of what is the characteristic spirit of the school; the importance of ethos permeating the everyday practices of the school; inclusivity; and ethos being implemented in multidenominational schools. Moran (2014b, p. 265) shows "how the Meaning-Making

chaplain knits together all these aspects of ethos using Transformational Learning pedagogies of ritual and symbols".

A further finding in Moran's findings that helps elucidate the research question in this study is how chaplains give meaning to an ethos that fully acknowledges their school's multidenominational status. She suggests "the crux of the matter lies in whether the chaplain is helping to give meaning to an ethos which happens to have a Christian dimension or is acting as an agent of the Church and is endeavouring to convert students to a particular religious viewpoint" (2014b, p. 263). Moran's research suggested that chaplains are entrusted with a responsibility regarding ethos by school administration - an ethos that has been decided upon by the BoM, that "the chaplain, in interpreting the ethos, does not appear to be acting on behalf of the Church, although some of the values espoused by the school may be Gospel values" (2014b, p. 263). As a Meaning-Maker of ethos, the chaplain needs to be inclusive of all members of the school and has a pivotal role in all school types.

Moran's study is original, and her development of a theory of chaplain as 'Meaning-Maker' moves the reflection on school chaplaincy away from what the chaplain does to why they are needed in educational settings. The theory of the school chaplain as a Meaning-Maker re-imagines the chaplain's role in supporting school ethos and establishes it as an educational practice within an educational theory. The espoused theory gives chaplains and school management a practical model that can be used to improve chaplaincy services in their schools and may well support any proposal for change that emerges through the findings from the research question in this study.

2.4.1.6 Irish Literature: A Conclusion

The literature presented here has mapped the seminal writings on school chaplaincy in an Irish context. These researchers, Monahan and Renehan (1998), Norman (2002, 2004), King (2004), O'Higgins-Norman and King (2009), Moran (2014b), O'Higgins-Norman (2014), have each made significant contributions regarding the rationale for chaplains in Irish post-primary schools. Other contributors, researchers, practitioners, and leaders referenced here have added to the broader discussion on chaplaincy, pastoral care, and well-being in Irish schools. The available literature specific to school chaplaincy in an Irish context is limited and points to a paucity that urgently needs to be

addressed to deal with the rapidly changing context in which chaplaincy operates. This research thesis is an attempt to address this gap.

To address the gap in available literature in an Irish context and to widen the scope of school-based chaplaincy, this literature review examined some influential material from the United Kingdom (UK) and Australia in order to elucidate the proposed research question and to provide insights into models of best practice for chaplains. The literature from these countries offered insights and experiences that enhanced this research and offered a voice to support new ways of thinking about the future ministry of chaplaincy in Irish schools. A brief overview of the findings from these countries will now be addressed.

2.4.2 Literature on Chaplaincy: An International Perspective

To broaden the scope of this research, this literature review privilege some seminal writers from the UK and Australia. These countries have been examined because of their vast experience of religious diversity and, in the case of the UK and Scotland, because of their proximity to Ireland – these perspectives may support chaplains in state schools in Ireland to build a model of chaplaincy which allows them to take ownership of their liminal status. The relevant literature was chosen because they were evidence-based, addressed the tensions between various stakeholders, and explored the lack of clarity around the chaplain's role.

2.4.2.1 Insights from Australia on school-based chaplaincy

The Australian context, into which the practice of school-based chaplaincy sits, finds some correlation with the Irish chronicle on chaplains in post-primary schools and has been given some consideration in this discussion. In an Irish and Australian historical context of school-based chaplaincy, there have been judicial proceedings against the payment of chaplains in State schools – in Ireland, *the High Court Case 1996*, *Campaign to Separate Church and State Ltd V Minister for Education*, and in Australia *the Williams v the Commonwealth (2014)* case. While the findings of the cases in both Australia and Ireland rendered different judgements, the consequences of such proceedings and decisions continue to impact the provision of chaplaincy services in both countries, albeit in quite diverse ways. Despite a favourable ruling for chaplaincy in Ireland, no support system was offered to facilitate the continued provision of chaplaincy services in schools. In Australia, the Government's response to a favourable finding for

chaplaincy was to invest $247 million over four years (2019-2022) to support a National School Chaplaincy Programme (NSCP). In Australia's context of this situation, seminal research was carried out on chaplaincy services in Queensland State schools by leading educationalist and author Dr. David Pohlmann. A summary of his work from his research and the subsequent book will be offered here as it has something to offer to the overall discussion on school chaplaincy in Irish state schools.

2.4.2.1.1 Pohlmann's (2010) study

Pohlmann's (2010) study – *School Chaplaincy in Queensland State Schools: A Case Study* - articulated the nature and effectiveness of chaplaincy services in Queensland State schools. "The study set out to draw together the information [on the features of chaplaincy which were preforming well] … in such a way as to develop a model of effective state school chaplaincy" (Pohlmann, 2010, p. 111). The study highlighted nine key findings, some of which are relevant to the proposed research question in this study: these included that state school chaplaincy can be highly effective; state school chaplaincy is highly contested in nature; state school chaplaincy is multi-faceted and demanding; continuing education is important for chaplains; state school chaplains need support and a robust funding stream and, state school chaplaincy is particularly challenging in practice. Pohlmann (2010, p. 14) addresses the origins of chaplaincy and concludes that it is a "irrefutably Christian ministry", and in contemporary practice, the ministry emanates predominantly, although not solely, from a Christian paradigm. Like much of the literature on school chaplaincy, he found that in an Australian context, many models of chaplaincy exist – and argues that putting these models into practice for chaplains can lead to role ambiguity. Role ambiguity is an area that has been raised by many sources writing about school chaplaincy (Norman, 2004; O'Higgins-Norman and King, 2009; Moran, 2014; Caperon, 2015), and the consensus points to the fact that chaplaincy in all contexts is a complex professional role often leading to a lack of clarity around role identity. Pohlmann's (2010, p. 431) solution to the lack of clarity around the chaplain's role is to present a model of chaplaincy which supports an effective chaplaincy service – namely 'incarnational ministry'. This chaplaincy model finds resonance in other recent writings on school chaplaincy from Ryan (2018) and Younger (2018), who suggest that this model 'gets toward the crux of chaplaincy' and proposes "a pre-dominant self-understanding of the chaplain engaged as an incarnational

presence" (Hunt, 2021, p. 31). However, while this incarnational model can be immensely powerful it can present a problem with those outside of the Church as the incarnation is a fundamental doctrine of the Christian faith.

A final proposal from Pohlmann (2010) and one worth considering in an Irish context – is a model of chaplaincy termed the *'Seven C's model'*, which is built around three elements of 'Chaplain, Community engagement, and Church Nexus', which are facilitated through a 'Chaplaincy Committee'. The chaplaincy committee is the catalyst to produce the dual outcomes of 'Christian spiritual support and Care assistance' (Pohlmann, 2010, p. 433). Together they provide the nature of an effective chaplaincy service.

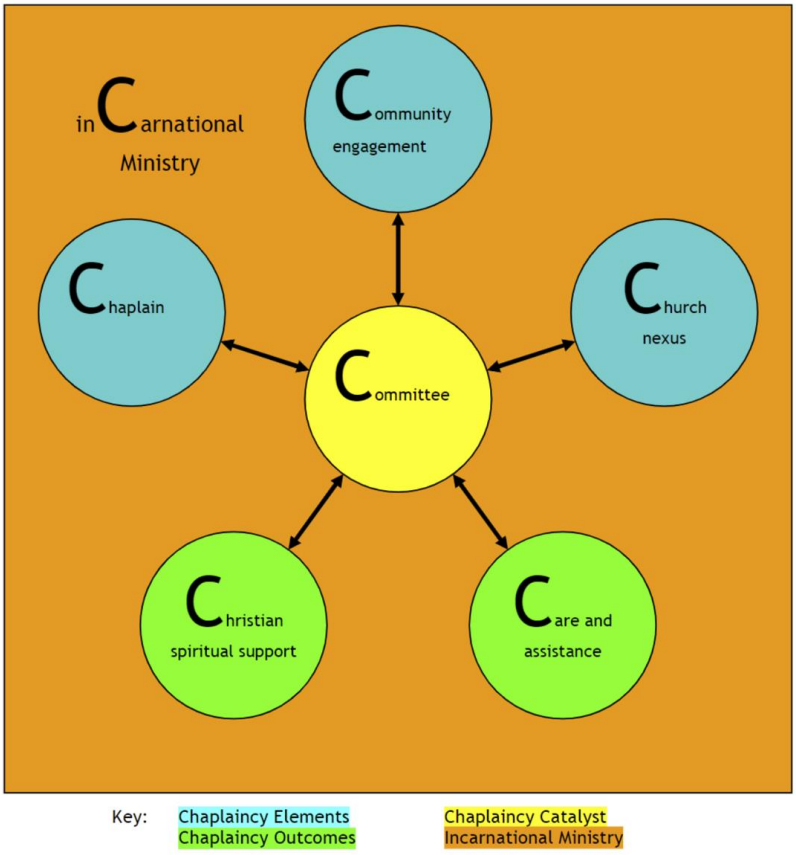

Figure 3: *The Seven Cs Model of State School Chaplaincy as Incarnational Ministry (Pohlmann, 2010)*

While the support offered is primarily Christian and incarnational, it provides a practical Christian presence rather than proselytising or focussing on doctrinal differences. However, if Pohlmann's model were to be proposed as a model of effective school chaplaincy in an Irish context, strategic planning, funding, and professional development structures would need to be Implemented. The catalyst would need to be driven by a

joint endeavour and considered response from both Government and Church agencies. However, a limitation of this model might well be seen in its faith perspective; do denominational faith and spirituality play any part in a secular school system?

2.4.2.1.2 'School Chaplaincy: navigating a culturally diverse society

In his book 'School Chaplaincy: An Introduction' Pohlmann (2014) addresses the roles and responsibilities of chaplains and reminds us that chaplaincy cannot be seen in a vacuum; instead it "must be contextualised to be truly effective" (Pohlmann, 2014, p. 22) and one of the most significant contextual issues for chaplains is the school type in which they minister. Each different context demands a different response in the way chaplaincy is managed. In addressing roles and responsibilities, he looks briefly at the issues of accountability, reporting, and support for chaplains.

Some conclusions that Pohlmann draws from his work, and are worth noting, include "chaplaincy is predominantly a ministry of pastoral care" (2014, p. 36) and that chaplains are frequently called on to minister in increasingly secular and multi-faith contexts. He suggests that ministering in a pluralist society requires the school chaplain to focus on the spiritual needs of all members of the pluralist communities and that the chaplain should always promote religious pluralism. To manage the culturally and religiously diverse society in which we live he suggests the notion of 'committed impartiality'- an idea that aligns with other writers thinking on this issue (Hill, 2012; Younger, 2018). Committed impartiality offers a philosophical approach where students are assisted to look at and evaluate several value stances while chaplains and other educators can, and should, reveal their value stances. Pohlmann (2014, p. 66) challenges chaplains to consider how they can "include, accept, and engage with those of other beliefs and faiths without compromising what many Christians would regard, as exclusive truth". Overall, Pohlmann's work (2010, 2014) is contextualised in one of the most culturally diverse societies in the world (Rajadurai, 2018), and offers valid points for addressing a rationale for chaplaincy in state schools in Ireland. This study will now take a brief look at chaplaincy in the UK to add to the discussion on school chaplaincy in an international context.

2.4.2.2 Chaplaincy and the United Kingdom

There are several significant writers on school chaplaincy in the UK - notably, McKeown (1993), Ballard (2009), Threlfall-Holmes and Newitt (2011), Caperon (2012, 2015), Parry

(2017), O'Malley (2019), Hunt (2021), who have all contributed to the debate on school-based chaplaincy. While it is beyond the scope of this research question to explore each writer in-depth, their work has been explored and informed the overall discussion on the chaplain's role in schools. A common thread that appears to run through all the literature is that chaplaincy is a complex, multi-dimensional ministry, and "the chaplain's role now has to embrace a social culture that is a mixture of multi-faith or no-faith among pupils and the staff" (Parry, 2017). Another common feature in the literature in a UK context is that chaplaincy is a pastoral ministry of care that has the potential to be transformative and the ability to embrace an inter-faith population. Caperon (2015, p. 45) argues that pastoral care is a distinctively spiritual activity and is at the heart of an espoused theology of school chaplaincy, which encompasses the spiritual dimension of education and can make a decisive contribution to education. However, Caperon (2015) argues that the English Government's response to school chaplaincy has failed to see the contribution of chaplaincy in schools, and their response has been to 'side-line' chaplaincy in schools, focussing on "strategic and structural issues in an era of marketization" (2015, p. 45). In an Irish context, Moran's (2014b) research drew similar conclusions regarding a lack of response from the Irish Government regarding role-identity for chaplains and their failure to acknowledge chaplains as being integral to all aspects of school life. Moran (2014b) argued that two court judgements in the 1990s support the chaplain's role, and there is substantial validation of the role in the DES document on School Self-Evaluation. Unfortunately, the evidence shows that this does not translate into the chaplain's role being actively evaluated or considered by relevant stakeholders. This has led to tension and exacerbated a complicated relationship between the nominating authority, the chaplain and school management.

Other literature from a UK context that has some connection with the research question in this study is offered by O'Malley (2019, p. 1) who affirms the chaplain's role in their contribution to the upkeep of school ethos - asserting that the chaplain has the potential to be "a living sign of a school's commitment to ethos". He argues that although the school chaplain may find that they are often caught in the tension between a school's values and its educational outlook and practice, nevertheless, they are called to mediate between these different perceptions and be a living reminder of the school's foundation and ethos. O'Malley's (2019) work specifically addresses chaplaincy in Catholic schools and places Christ and the values of the Gospel at the very centre of the ministry of

chaplaincy; however, he is also cognisant of the complex educational environment of secondary schools in a secular culture and offers practical guidelines for establishing an appropriate and effective chaplaincy practice alongside the current professional demands of education. Moving away from a denominational exploration of chaplaincy in a UK context, some consideration will now be given to non-denominational chaplaincy services within the Scottish education system.

2.4.2.2.1 Chaplaincy in Scottish Non-Denominational Schools

Younger's (2018) contribution to chaplaincy is framed within Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence (CfE), grounded in academic research, and rooted in Scottish education's non-denominational sector. Scotland's CfE maps a trajectory to help children and young people gain the knowledge, skills, and attributes needed for life in the 21st century. The curriculum has been developed to cater to all multi-faith and multi-racial communities and supports Roman Catholic schools by offering opportunities to engage in personal journeys of faith and reflection on issues of religion and morality as well as engagement with a broader range of beliefs, viewpoints, and values they may encounter in life. The complex interface of Church and state involvement in education in an Irish context continues to be reflected in public square debates, and in this regard, the recently defined Scottish curriculum may well speak to a space where the question of religion and newly defined state schools continue to be a matter of contested debate. While the intersection of religion and education is intrinsically linked to this study, it is a broad area beyond the scope of this discussion – nevertheless, it is worth referencing as it raises some interesting questions regarding Irish educational policy and the question of religion in schools. The Scottish model might offer a possible way to advance the further discussion in future policy discourse regarding religion and its place in Irish schools.

Furthermore, Younger (2018) recognises that chaplains in this context are called to lead with integrity without compromising their faith position while at the same time avoiding any attempt to evangelise or proselytise. This finds resonance in Pohlmann's (2010) research, where he found that chaplains were expected to be "inclusive, tolerant, humble and open…[and] never proselytise" (2010, p. 235). Where chaplains are embedded in a non-faith context and, at the same time way 'representative' of a faith belief, there is the potential for tension, and in this situation, Younger (2018) proposes a solution of "committed impartiality" (2018, p. 34) to manage this tension. He asserts

that a stance of 'committed impartiality' requires that the practitioner acknowledge, express, and declare their faith position but consciously undertake not to use their views to persuade or proselytise. Arguably an explicit articulation of this stance may well offer chaplains in all state-run schools (non- or multidenominational) a model which helps navigate a way through the tensions they encounter in their ministry: namely where their faith stance, or the stance of their nominating denominational authority, is at variance with their work which calls on them to minister to those who come from a variety of beliefs, faiths, and philosophies.

Moreover, this stance would allow the chaplain to have their motivations challenged and questioned, but equally and justifiably, they could draw on the rich resources of their faith tradition to avoid offering a 'neutered experience' to the school community. Another interesting argument advanced by Younger (2018), which aligns with much of the literature and research on chaplaincy on school-based chaplaincy, is the concept of 'embedded chaplaincy' where chaplains are simply present and involved, embedded, embodied, incarnated within their school communities. He advances this idea of being 'embedded in community' using the images of 'ambassador' and 'anthropologist'. These are examples of people who move from their community to dwell in a different community, learning their host community's values, customs, language, and culture. They listen and observe, remain impartial, neutral, and non-judgemental as they become embedded in their host community. A final area worth noting, which Younger (2018) addresses, is the motif of pastoral care asserting that the most important function of the chaplain lies in contributing to the link between the school community and the society around it and that "facilitating the pastoral role requires conscious consideration of how a strong relationship and partnership can be built between a school and a chaplain" (2018, p. 11).

2.4.2.3 International Literature

The literature from Australia, England, and Scotland has mapped some seminal writings on school chaplaincy from an international perspective. The writers privileged for discussion in this study were chosen across a spectrum of denominations to grasp a broad view of chaplaincy in different contexts. Chaplaincy, by its nature, must adapt to the situation it finds itself in, and an examination of the ministry in various school types gives some insight into how the chaplain responds to the particular needs of the school

community. The dearth of Irish literature on chaplaincy is not mirrored internationally, and there is a wealth of literature and research available on chaplaincy in various school types. Additionally, the rapid increase in the number of chaplains working in secondary schools within the UK has led to increased research and literature. Most recently, this can be seen in Hunt's (2021) phenomenological case study on six schools across the UK, which has been alluded to throughout this research study.

Furthermore, there appears to be a range of support structures in an international context through diocesan boards and local and regional networks for chaplains in their schools. The literature has revealed many support organisations which advocate for school-based chaplaincy and help schools identify and promote ways in which schools and/or local churches can evolve appropriate models of chaplaincy. International literature would seem to advocate that school chaplaincy is particularly challenging, and chaplains need support and a strong funding stream to protect the future of the ministry in schools. This has been a recurring theme that has aligned with much of the literature across Ireland and Internationally.

2.5 Conclusion

“Standing on the Church/World interface, speaking to the Word of God and to the Church of the world, chaplains in carrying out their work require a deep well of resources on which to draw” (Newitt, 2011, p. 113). Newitt’s (2011) observation on the role of chaplain offers some insight into the challenging and demanding ministry which exists and functions within a complex institutional/world and faith relationship. Chaplains are called to minister in an increasingly secular world, “in which values such as tolerance, equality, accountability and transparency are consistently expected to trump historic Church tradition and belief” (Threlfall-Holmes and Newitt, 2011, p. xviii), and at the same time mediate between the sacred and secular in that “strange hinterland” (Caperon, 2015, p. 64). This is an ongoing challenge for chaplains where they are called to maintain their integrity, “pastoral focus and prophetic voice when operating at the interface of the state, faith communities, and the individual needs of those they serve” (Swift, Cobb and Todd, 2015, p. 7).

Throughout this literature review, the writers, have repeatedly stressed that chaplaincy is a complex, multi-dimensional ministry requiring a high degree of expertise and proficiency: it is a practical discipline that is conscientiously caring and supportive.

However, it is a ministry that is commonly referred to as 'marginal' or 'liminal' (Pattison, 1997; Threlfall-Holmes and Newitt, 2011; N. Roberts, 2017), where a chaplain is quite simply on the edge, in a place between the 'what was' and 'what will be next'. Liminal places, by definition, strip us of the roles, goals, and contexts we depend upon, and chaplains often find they minister without a clear definition of their role or conceptual clarity about what exactly constitutes their ministry. Being in a liminal place is difficult, but it is not simply something terrible that we struggle to get through; instead, it is an opportunity for us to seize to grow through 'this space on the edge' and can provide opportunities where transformation can take place. Chaplaincy is a ministry that has the potential to be 'transformative'; it is a 'ministry of presence' (Caperon, 2015, p. 140) where the chaplain is called to be a visible sign of the school's commitment to an integrated spiritual life, supporting an ethos which guides the school's success in forming and transforming students and in achieving that sense of harmony between faith, culture, and life.

The literature considered in this discussion has identified a lacuna in available texts and research into school-based chaplaincy in an Irish context. Furthermore, no empirical research exists on chaplaincy in state-run schools or considers the challenges for chaplains working in ETBI designated community colleges in light of the newly defined status of ETBI schools. In this regard, this proposed research is timely and warranted and will support the uncharted empirical map of chaplaincy in an Irish context which to date is incomplete. The literature from an international context has offered insights, provided an evidential basis, supporting knowledge, and reflective deliberation to help understand the presence and place of chaplains in contemporary society.

Chaplaincy requires recognition of its key missional significance. It requires acknowledgment and support. It requires a self-understanding of the profession and "ways of interpreting the needs and contexts of those it seeks to serve, the development and refinement of good practice, and the derivation of sound guiding principles, core knowledge and critical theory" (Swift, Cobb and Todd, 2015, p. 1) so that the knowledge of the ministry can develop.

"What we call the beginning is often the end. And to make an end is to make a beginning."

(T.S. Eliot, Four Quartets 4: Little Gidding)

Chapter 3. Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This qualitative study seeks to investigate chaplaincy in ETB Designated Community Colleges and explore how chaplains and principals understand the role as one that supports their school's characteristic spirit. This study is situated within the geographical boundaries of the Dublin Diocese - the ecclesiastic Province of Dublin - in the Republic of Ireland. The Archdiocese embraces the country's largest conurbation, Dublin, and a diversity of schools extending over most of Wicklow and parts of Kildare, Laois, Carlow, and Wexford. Both chaplains and principals will be surveyed and interviewed, and because of their active nature they will are appropriately termed 'participants' (Mertens, 2015, pp. 3-4). This chapter will outline the underlying theoretical perspectives that guided the choice of methodology, the data gathering, analysis, methods of validation employed, and the research design used, which provides the structure for this study. The philosophical beliefs and assumptions of the researcher are also presented.

3.2 Conceptual Framework and Research Design – an overview of the literature

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2011), the conceptualisation of the research process embraces five phases: phase one asks the researcher to begin a reflective and interrogative process through which they consider "what they bring to the inquiry, such as their personal history, views of themselves and others, ethical and political issues" (2011, p. 12). Slife and Williams (1995) assert that although philosophical ideas remain hidden in research, they still influence research practice and need to be identified. Many other writers (Stake, 1995; Merriam, 1998; Denzin and Lincoln, 2011; Pitard, 2017) contend that the researchers espoused philosophical worldview needs to be made explicit from the start of the research process. The term worldview, used here, means "a basic set of beliefs that guide action" (Guba, 1990, p. 17).

The second phase in Denzin and Lincoln's overview of the research process involves the design process, which begins with the researchers' philosophical assumptions in deciding to undertake a qualitative study. Creswell (2007, p. 15) asserts that "the researcher's worldviews, paradigms, or sets of beliefs which are brought to the research project, inform the conduct and writing of the qualitative study". Denzin and Lincoln

(2005, p. 22) concur and state that: “all research is rooted in philosophical beliefs and assumptions and is guided by the researcher’s set of beliefs and feelings about the world and how it should be understood and studied”. “Philosophically, researchers make claims about what is knowledge (ontology), how we know it (epistemology), what values go into it (axiology), how we write about it (rhetoric), and the processes for studying it (methodology)” (Creswell, 2003, p. 6). The net that contains the researcher’s epistemological, ontological, and methodological premises may be termed a paradigm or interpretive framework. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2011, p. 13) at the most general level, four major interpretive paradigms structure qualitative research: in the case of this research, the chosen interpretive paradigm is constructivism. This will be examined at a later stage in this discussion.

Phase three of the research process consists of strategies of inquiry and interpretive paradigms. It begins with research design, which involves a clear focus on the research question, the purposes of the study, and asks what information most appropriately will answer specific research questions, and which strategies are most effective for obtaining it.

> A research design describes a flexible set of guidelines that connect theoretical paradigms, first, to strategies of inquiry and, second, to methods for collecting empirical material. A research design situates researchers in the empirical world and connects them to specific sites, people, groups, institutions, and bodies of relevant interpretive material, including documents and archives. A research design also specifies how the investigator will address the two critical issues of representation and legitimation (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011, p. 13).

Strategies of inquiry refer to qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods designs or models that provide specific direction for procedures in a research design. At the same time, inquiry strategies also connect the researcher to particular methods of collecting and analysing empirical materials. While many research strategies can be chosen to address the research question, the one that closely aligns with this study is the case study, as it offers a framework for conducting an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (chaplaincy) in-depth and within its real-life context (school). Furthermore, as the primary purpose of this research strategy is to “portray, analyse and interpret the uniqueness of real individuals and situations through accessible accounts” (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007, p. 85), the case study offers the most appropriate way of achieving this objective. The case study is often considered

the most flexible of all research designs, and allows the researcher to retain the holistic characteristics of real-life events while investigating empirical events (Schell, 1992, p. 2).

Methods of collecting and analysing empirical materials is phase four of Denzin and Lincoln (2011) research process model and include a broad range of methods including, the interview to direct observation, visual materials, or personal experience. “The researcher may also use a variety of different methods of reading and analysing interviews or cultural texts, including content, narrative, and semiotic strategies” (2011, p. 14) and needs to seek appropriate ways of managing and interpreting the data. The chosen methods for collecting data in this study are questionnaires and, semi-structured interviews, as these, are data collection techniques closely aligned with the case study methodology, and they allow space for the participants' more spontaneous descriptions and narratives.

As suggested by Denzin and Lincoln (2011), the final phase refers to ‘interpretation and evaluation’. Qualitative research is endlessly creative and interpretive, and the researcher constructs interpretations.

While it is important to note that the field of qualitative research is defined by a series of tensions, contradictions, and hesitations, these five phases-as outlined by Denzin and Lincoln (2011) provided an excellent conceptual framework for supporting the entire research process.

3.3 Constructivism / Contextual Constructivism

The chosen paradigm for this research is constructivism: constructivism is an epistemology (theory of knowledge), a learning or meaning-making theory that explains the nature of knowledge and how human beings learn. It claims that humans generate knowledge and meaning from an interaction between their experiences and ideas. The basic assumptions guiding the constructivist paradigm are that people socially construct knowledge and that researchers should attempt to understand the complex world of lived experience from the point of view of those who live it (Schwandt, 2000, p. 197). For constructivists, learning is not knowledge written on or transplanted to a person's mind as if the mind were a blank slate waiting to be written on or an empty gallery waiting to be filled. Instead, it is the view that individuals build knowledge: construction implies a foundation upon which or a context in which the individual builds knowledge.

In other words, construction takes place in a context – in the case of this research, it is a cultural context created by the ministry of chaplaincy in schools – the knowledge that chaplains hold is assumed "to have a complex set of referents and meanings" (Magoon, 1977, p. 652) and these will be considered when conducting the research and analysing the data.

Contextual constructivism is a natural outgrowth of personal constructivism, and Cobern (1991, p. 21) argues that these categories are not mutually exclusive but complementary. According to Cullen (2013, p. 12), “a person is Internally and continually constructed when new information comes into contact with existing knowledge emerged from experience and meaning assigned to experience. Meaning is accessed through symbols language and groups”. This research will give this interpretive paradigm due consideration and will examine its application to this research study and include it in the further discussion.

3.4 Locating this Study on the Research Continuum

It was observed in the discussion above that researchers are bound within a net of ontological, epistemological, and methodological premises. According to Creswell (2012, p. 19) “the positivist/post-positivist and constructivist-interpretive paradigms broadly shape the continuum of research along which quantitative and qualitative research methods are located as different points as opposed to of representing ‘two ends in a dichotomy’”. Positivism and constructivism are two very different philosophical stances. On a fundamental level, positivism can be understood as a philosophical stance that emphasises that knowledge should be gained through observable and measurable facts. Positivism is ‘objectivist through and through’ (Crotty, 1998, p. 27) based on the notion that social phenomena can be viewed and treated as things. Denzin and Lincoln (2005, p. 11) contend that in the positivist paradigm, “there is a stable and unchanging reality out there to be studied, captured and understood”. In this sense, positivism is considered a rigid scientific inquiry that uses “empirical methods of objective social science” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005, p. 8), and does not rely on subjective experience. Post-positivism is an extension of positivism; “that it still adheres to the main concepts and principles of positivism but modifies them at the ontological and epistemological levels but mirrors positivism at the methodological level” (Darracott, 2016). Onwuegbuzie and Collins (2009) confirm this methodological

mirroring. Creswell (2009, p. 6) asserts that the assumptions of the positivist/post-positivist worldview "hold true more for quantitative research than qualitative research".

On the other hand, constructivism states that reality is socially constructed. "Social constructionism originated as an attempt to come to terms with the nature of reality. It emerged some thirty years ago and has its origins in sociology and has been associated with the post-modern era in qualitative research" (Andrews, 2012). Although the terms constructivism and social constructionism tend to be used interchangeably and subsumed under the generic term constructivism, some writers (Young and Collin, 2004; Andrews, 2012) suggest that while constructivism proposes that each individual mentally constructs the world of experience through cognitive processes, social constructionism has a social rather than an individual focus. The world can only be known in relation to peoples' experience of it and not independently of that experience, and according to Steedman (1991, p. 53) "most of what is known and most of the knowing that is done is concerned with trying to make sense of what it is to be human, as opposed to scientific knowledge". Individuals, or groups, define this reality. The ontological stance, as espoused by this researcher, that reality is socially constructed, naturally lends itself to a constructivist paradigm.

3.5 The Researcher's Ontological and Epistemological Stance

According to Crotty (1998), logically, ontological beliefs confine epistemological beliefs. Both are mutually dependent and difficult to distinguish conceptually in research issues: "To talk about the construction of meaning [ontology] is to talk about the construction of a meaningful reality…ontological issues and epistemological issues tend to emerge together" (Crotty, 1998, p. 10). Crotty (1998) further notes that an ontological stance implies a particular epistemological stance, and Mertens (2015, p. 19) concurs, stating that "the inquirer and the inquired-into are interlocked in an interactive process; each influences the other". Guba and Lincoln (1994, p. 111) suggest that "the conventional distinction between ontology and epistemology disappears, [as]… the investigator and the object of investigation are assumed to be interactively linked".

Ontology is the study of being: The nature of existence and what constitutes reality. It is a worldview that offers a model of reality that our mind creates and nurtures to

facilitate a comfortable and meaningful life. Mangattu (2018, p. 1) suggests that "worldview essentially refers to a framework of beliefs and principles through which man (sic) tries to make sense of his life and his world": a worldview is but an ontology and a descriptive model of the world. Ontologically, this researcher's stance is dominated by a belief that "multiple and intangible realities exist, which are not governed by natural laws or by structures that exist independently of us" (Bhaskar, 1975, p. 9). This is consistent with a constructivist paradigm that assumes that:

> truth and meaning do not exist in some external world but are created by the subject's interactions with the world. Meaning is constructed not discovered, so subjects construct their own meaning in different ways, even in relation to the same phenomenon. Hence, multiple, contradictory but equally valid accounts of the world can exist. (Gray, 2014, p. 7)

Guba and Lincoln (1994, p. 111) assert that constructivist research is 'relativist, transactional and subjectivist'. Relativists believe that reality is constructed - subjective meaning is important to relativism, and within this ontology there is no conception of absolute truth; it denies that reality exists beyond our knowledge of it (Killam, 2013, p. 17). In this regard, an entirely constructionist position would not adequately address the requirements of this research, as recognition of the possible influence of objective reality is fundamental to this study. For this researcher, God exists independent of any conscious entity and is, therefore, objective reality.

However, while pure constructivism recognises that individuals develop subjective meanings of their contextualised experience, Cullen (2013, p. 13) argues that 'contextual constructivism' allows for the recognition of objective reality and its influence. It allows for a more nuanced reading of real-life situations. Arguably, human inquiry is inevitably interpretive and inherently subjective, and Greene (2007, p. 40) argues that "human inquiry is inevitably interpretive and inherently subjective" and that such subjectivity does not necessarily lend itself to bias instead it allows the researcher to interpret a context to understand it and maybe learn from it, change it or confirm it.

3.5.1 A Contextual Constructivist Hermeneutic Paradigm.

The constructivist paradigm grew out of the philosophical school of thought of interpretive understanding or meaning called hermeneutics (Eichelberger, 1989), and according to Mertens (2015, p. 11) the methodological approach associated with constructivism is primarily qualitative where "hermeneutical; dialectical; contextual

factors are described". Guba and Lincoln (1994, p. 111) concur, asserting that the constructivist methodology is "hermeneutic and dialectical". They suggest that the intramental nature of social constructions means that individual constructions can be elicited and refined only through interaction between and among investigators and respondents. Eichelberger (1989) describes the methodological work of the constructivist (hermeneutical) researcher as one who wants to know what meaning people ascribe to activities and how that relates to their behaviours. Eichelberger (1989) argues that constructivist hermeneutical researchers are much clearer about the fact that they are constructing the "reality" based on the interpretations of data with the help of the participants who provided the data in the study. Guba and Lincoln (1994, p. 111) imply that in constructivist research, the investigator and the object of investigation "are assumed to be interactively linked so that the 'findings' are literally created as the investigation proceeds".

The underlining premises that influence the choice of research design in this study is that each individual experiences the world in unique ways and that language plays a central role in shaping their experience in distinctive ways. These experiences can then be shared with another person without losing meaning while simultaneously acknowledging the possibility of nuanced and infinite experiences through that very same language (Peck and Mummery, 2017, p. 5).

3.5.2 Contextual Constructivism and the Question of Religion.

Despite constructivism's influence in the past fifteen years, the leading proponents of the approach have failed to define a strategy or response to the question of religion: "there is no single constructivist approach to religion. Clifford Geertz, Pierre Bourdieu, Max Weber, Michel Foucault, and Ludwig Wittgenstein are all typically categorized as constructivist yet differ in their definitions and analysis of culture and ethnicity" (Menchik, 2017, p. 570). This lack of an approach to the question of religion does not necessarily undermine the strength of the process. Menchik (2017) argues that one of the advantages of the constructivist approach is that it recognises "the internally and geographically heterogeneous nature of religion, placing any analysis of religion's influence in time and context, questioning secularism, and recognizing that religion exists within a matrix of power relations, which is shaped by the modern state" (2017, p. 577).

As the role of religion and spirituality are fundamental to the chaplain's role (the case study) in this study, the inclusion of discussion around this area is fundamental to the overall research project. The research paradigm in this study recognises an objective religious reality and allows for multiple interpretations and paths towards an expression of that reality for participants. Therefore, as the approach to this study identifies the possible influence of objective reality, it will not adopt a purely constructivist approach. Instead, it will apply a subjectivist 'contextual constructivist/hermeneutic' paradigm - allowing for the unique ways in which the individual experiences the world and for, at least, some participants worldviews encompassing a religious dimension. Individuals can express this religious dimension in nuanced hermeneutic ways.

3.6 Case Study Approach

The Case Study approach allows for an in-depth, multi-faceted exploration of issues relating to a phenomenon of interest (the practice of chaplaincy) in its real-life setting, the school. "The all-encompassing feature of a case study is its intense focus on a single phenomenon within its real-life context" (Yin, 1994, p. 13). In contrast to experimental designs, which seek to test a specific hypothesis through deliberately manipulating the environment, the case study approach "lends itself well to capturing information on more explanatory '*how*', *'what'* and '*why*' questions…and can offer additional insights into *what* gaps exist in its delivery or *why* one implementation strategy might be chosen over another" (Crowe *et al.*, 2011, p. 4). Creswell (2013) describes the qualitative case study (QCS) approach as an exploration of a bounded system or case over time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information, each with its own sampling, data collection, and analysis strategies. The outcome is a case description comprised of case-based themes.

Some key theoreticians and methodologists in this field of enquiry have been considered in applying this approach to the research question, and while it is beyond the scope of this discussion to offer an in-depth analysis of the seminal writers, it nevertheless is worthy of some attention. The evolution of the case study as a research approach and the contributions made by three prominent methodologists, namely Yin, Merriam, and Stake, will be briefly considered.

3.6.1 A Brief history of the Case Study Approach

According to Harrison *et al.*, (2017), case study research has undergone substantial methodological development over the last forty years, with change and progress stemming from equivalent influences of historical transformations in research approaches and individual researcher's preferences, perspectives, and interpretations of this design. This has resulted in a "pragmatic, flexible research approach, capable of providing comprehensive, in-depth understanding of a diverse range of issues across a number of disciplines" (Harrison *et al.*, 2017, p. 1). Researchers who have contributed to the development of case study research come from diverse disciplines with different philosophical perspectives, resulting in various definitions and approaches. Many authors (Yazan, 2015; Harrison *et al.*, 2017) suggest that Yin, Merriam, and Stake are considered three seminal authors who have provided procedures to follow when conducting case study research and the most common definitions come from the works of these authors. Furthermore, Harrison *et al.*, (2017, p. 5) imply that Yin, Merriam, and Stake are considered the most significant contributors to the development of case study research in education. Each author has varying emphasis on the case study approach and:

> As researchers and research methodologists, Yin, Merriam and Stake have their own epistemic commitments which impact their perspectives on case study methodology and the principles and the steps they recommend the emerging researchers to adhere to while exploiting case study method in their research endeavours. (Yazan, 2015, p. 136)

This epistemological stance is important when choosing a framework to support the researcher's epistemic stance. Generally speaking, the epistemic stance proposed by Stake (1995) and Merriam (2009) is situated in a social constructivist paradigm, whereas Yin (2011) approaches case studies from a post-positivist viewpoint (Hyett, Kenny and Dickson-Swift, 2014).

According to Harrison *et al.*, (2017, p. 7) Yin's definition focuses on the "scope, process, and methodological characteristics of case study research, stressing the importance of context to the case and the nature of inquiry as being empirical". On the other hand, Stake (1995) takes a more flexible stance, and while concerned with consistency in the processes, he places emphasis on what is studied (the case) rather than how it is studied (the method). Merriam (2009), like Stake (1995), emphasises the defining feature of case study research as being the object of the study (the case) adding that case study

research focuses on a particular thing and that the product of an investigation should be descriptive and heuristic in nature. Merriam (2009) describes case study research by its characteristics: particularistic, descriptive, and heuristic, highlighting the purpose and qualitative nature of case study research, the focus on a specific entity and, the motivation to understand and describe the findings. These varied definitions stem from the researchers' differing approaches to developing case study methodology and reflect the elements they emphasise as central to their design. Despite the differing philosophical orientations and the simultaneous application to their work, all three writers, Yin, Stake and Merriam, agree that an overarching methodology shapes a case study design and that multiple sources of data and methods can be used. This further emphasises the need for researchers to explain the particular underpinning methodology adopted and clarify the alignment of chosen methods used with their philosophical assumptions and chosen approach. Brown (2008, pp. 1-13) suggests the three approaches used by the seminal researchers, Yin, Merriam, and Stake, rest along a quantitative-qualitative continuum where the post-positivist methodology of Yin (2014) sits at one end, Stake's interpretivist design (1995, 2006) sits at the other end and Merriam (1998, 2009), who as a pragmatic constructivist draws on the elements of both, rests toward the centre.

Case studies may be approached in different ways depending on the researcher's epistemological standpoint; the QCS design that best addresses the aim of this study, and aligns with this researcher's worldview is interpretivist, descriptive and exploratory which supports a constructivist approach. This involves understanding meanings /contexts and processes as perceived from different perspectives and trying to understand individual and shared social meanings. In this context, Stake's approach to case study research will be used to understand the case in this inquiry which, requires "experiencing the activity of the case as it occurs in its context and in its particular situation" (Stake, 2006, p. 2).

3.6.2 Stake: Relativist—constructivist/interpretivist

Stake (1995) proposed three types of cases and study design frameworks: the intrinsic case, the instrumental case, and the collective instrumental case. As the intrinsic case is used to understand the particulars of a single case, and this study is defined by an "interest in an individual case" (Stake, 1995, p. 3); with the focus on a single occupational

group, it will be considered an intrinsic case study. The individual case in this study refers to the occupational group of chaplains ministering in DCCs. The study of the case (chaplains) is itself the primary interest in this exploration. Stake's (1995, 2006) approach to QCS closely aligns with a constructivist and interpretivist orientation and supports this research and research study's underlying ontological and epistemological stance.

Stake (2006) suggests that a case is selected because it is interesting in itself or can facilitate understanding something else; it is instrumental in providing insight on an issue. The researcher studies the case in context. This allows an examination of the unified system in which the case unfolds and allows the researcher to capture an interpreted reality of the case. This viewpoint finds a correlation with many different proponents of the case study. Case study research is consistently described as 'a versatile form of qualitative inquiry most suitable for a comprehensive, holistic, and in-depth investigation of a complex issue (phenomena, event, situation, organization, program individual or group) in context, where the boundary between the context and issue is unclear and contains many variables' (Stake, 2006; Merriam, 2009; Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2014). Stake (1995, p. 2) advocates for discovering meaning and understanding of experiences in context: "understanding requires experiencing the activity of the case as it occurs in its context and in its particular situation" and stresses that the researcher is an active participant who is critical in interpreting knowledge generated from the research process. "An interpretative position views reality as multiple and subjective, based on meanings and understanding (Harrison *et al.*, 2017, p. 11).

Stake (1995, p. 2) suggests that in QCS, data collection and analysis can be obtained through multiple sources and methods. However, he stresses that interviews and observations are the preferred and dominant collection methods. "In seeking understanding and meaning, the researcher is positioned with participants as a partner in the discovery and generation of knowledge, where both direct interpretations, and categorical or thematic grouping of findings are used" (Stake, 1995, cited in Harrison *et al.,* 2017, p. 11). Harrison *et al.*, (2017, p. 11) state that Stake (1995) "recommends vignettes—episodes of storytelling—to illustrate aspects of the case and thick descriptions to convey findings, a further illustration of his constructivist and

interpretivist approach to case study research". Below is a table describing the elements and provides descriptors of meaning as outlined in this discussion.

Element	Description
The case	Object of the case study identified as the entity of interest or unit of analysis Program, individual, group, social situation, organization, event, phenomena, or process
A bounded system	Bounded by time, space and activity Encompasses a system of connections Bounding applied frames to manage contextual variables Boundaries between the case and context can be blurred
Studied in conext	Studied in its real life setting or natural environment Contect is significant to understanding the case Contextual variables include political, economic, social, cultural, historical, and/or organizational factors
In-depth study	Chosen for intensive analysis of an issue Fieldwork is intrinsic to the process of the inquiry Subjectivity a consistent thread - varies in depth and engagement depending on the philosophical orientation of the research, purpose, and methods
Selecting the case	Based on the purpose and conditions of the study Involves decisions about people, settings, events, phenomena, social processes Scope: single, within case and multiple case sampling Broad: capture ordinary, unique, varied and/or accessible aspects Methods: specified criteria, methodical and purposive; replication Logic: theoretical or literal replication (YIN, 2014)
Multiple sources of evidence	Multiple sources of evidence for comprehensive depth and breadth of inquiry Methods of data collection: interviews, observations, focus groups, artifact and ocument review, questionnaires and/or surveys Methods of analysis: vary and depend on data collection methods and cases; need to be systematic and rigorous Triangulation highly calued and commonly employed
Case study design	Descriptive, exploratory, explanatory, illustrative, evaluative Single or multiple cases Embedded or holistic (YIN, 2014) Particularistic, heuristic, descriptive (MERRIAM, 1998, 2009) Intrinsic, instrumental, and collective (STAKE, 1995, 2006)

Figure 4: *Case Study Elements and Descriptors - (Harrison* et al.*, 2017, p. 14)*

3.6.3 Possible limitations of the Case Study Approach

Case study methodology has long been contested in social sciences research, characterised by varying, sometimes opposing, approaches espoused by many research methodologists. As with all research, the case study approach is not without its limitations. Yazan (2015, p. 134) argues that "despite being one of the most frequently used qualitative research methodologies in educational research, the methodologists

do not have a full consensus on the design and implementation of case study, which hampers its full evolution". Flyvbjerg (2011, pp. 301-302) suggests that although case studies "generate socially-embedded concrete knowledge, they are criticised for their perceived inability to generate theoretical knowledge and generalisations". Furthermore, according to Luck, Jackson and Usher (2006, p. 107) there are three positivistic criticisms of case studies: they lack rigour, two, they are prone to bias, and three, they lack generalisability. Yin (2014) agrees that there are shortcomings in the methodology of case study research but contends that these shortcomings are not innate and represent opportunities for development within the research strategy or, even more importantly, recognition of methodological constructs already known.

The first criticism, that case studies lack rigour is often seen as one of the key weaknesses of case studies. However, according to Gibbert and Ruigrok (2010, p. 712), such criticism "often seems to lie in the eye of the beholder and may even involve 'persuading' readers and reviewers… of the 'credibility' of methodological procedures". Furthermore, Gibbert and Ruigrok (2010) contend that the most influential model used to ensure the rigour of case study research adheres to what is commonly called the "natural science model, where several research actions are grouped under four criteria: construct validity, internal validity, external validity, and reliability" (2010, p. 712). If the case study reports a transparent chain of evidence on the explication of the data collection procedures - such as organisational access, time frame, interviewee selection, a reflection on the actual process, a discussion of data analysis procedures - it may be deemed sufficient to ensure construct validity and improve rigour of the research procedures and credibility of the results.

Developing criteria for evaluating case study methodology requires logical tests of the validity and reliability of the research tactics used or planned. Tests of reliability and validity include construct internal and external validity. Construct validity qualifies the operational measures and is a critical aspect of the research procedure, particularly during the data collection. "Multiple sources of evidence, with convergent lines of enquiry, and clearly established chains of evidence support construct validity during the data collection phase of the research" (Schell, 1992, p. 13). Throughout this research process, the researcher will apply a clear chain of evidence regarding the explication of the data collection procedure, ensuring the validity and reliability of the study.

The criticism aimed at the lack of rigour is often linked to the problem of bias which is introduced by the subjectivity of the researcher and others involved in the case, and this is the second criticism directed toward the case study method – "[the case study] maintains a bias toward verification, understood as a tendency to confirm the researcher's preconceived notions, so that the study therefore becomes of doubtful scientific value" (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 17). However, the proximity to reality, which the case study entails and the learning process that it generates for the researcher will often constitute a prerequisite for advanced understanding. Furthermore, Shields (2007) argues that:

> The strength of qualitative approaches is that they account for and include difference-ideologically, epistemologically, methodologically, - and most importantly, humanly. They do not attempt to eliminate what cannot be discounted. They do not attempt to simplify what cannot be simplified. Thus, it is precisely because case study includes paradoxes and acknowledges that there are no simple answers, that it can and should qualify as the gold standard. (Shields, 2007, p. 12)

Flyvbjerg (2006) suggests that the argument of bias against case study research misses the point and that the question of subjectivism and bias toward verification applies to all methods, not just to the case study and other qualitative methods. This research study will use key informants to review the draft case study report to overcome bias and subjectivity.

The third criticism of the case study approach relates to generalisability. Yin (2013, p. 321) suggests that "validity and generalization continue to be challenging aspects in designing and conducting case study evaluations, especially when the number of cases being studied is highly limited (even limited to a single case)". However, Yin (2014) refutes this criticism by presenting a well-constructed explanation of the difference between analytic generalisation and statistical generalisation: the latter is mainly used in quantitative research. Yin (2013, p. 327) argues that "the preferred manner of generalizing from case studies and case study evaluations is likely to take the form of making an analytic or conceptual generalization, rather than of reaching for a numeric one". Furthermore, Stake (2012) argues that case studies facilitate learning on the part of those who use them; and that this involves 'naturalistic generalization', a quite different kind of generalisation from that which is characteristic of science. In case studies, generalising results from either single or multiple designs are usually made to the theory and not necessarily to populations. While statistical findings are mainly

generalised to populations, "cases have a tendency to generalise to other circumstances and situations, with the help of in-depth analytic investigation… case studies are not intended to generalise from samples to universe" (Yin, 2014, p. 18). Therefore, the claims made when generalising from cases cannot be considered 'proof' in a statistical sense; rather, they build theoretical premises that function as a tool to make assertions about situations akin to the one studied (Wikfeldt, 1993, p. 4). Stake (1995) suggests that through its through its vivid and colourful thick description and socially embedded nature, "the intrinsic case study can be a small step toward generalization" (1995, p. 141). This research will apply thick description through vignettes - episodes of storytelling - to illustrate aspects of the case and convey findings so that readers can understand the significant and complex cultural meanings underpinning the findings.

As with many studies, the current study's design is subject to limitations. Nonetheless, the researcher will interpret the results with caution, and if any of the QCS limitations, as discussed here, arise during the research process, they will be duly addressed and acknowledged in the final discussion section of this thesis.

3.7 Sampling Process

This study sought to explore chaplains' and principals' perceptions of the role of chaplaincy in upholding the characteristic spirit of their schools. The school type selected for this study was ETBI designated community colleges, as they are the only state school type that employs chaplains in the Republic of Ireland. As stated, this study is situated within the geographical boundaries of the Dublin Diocese, and there are seventeen designated community colleges located within these borders. Twelve schools are positioned within the Dublin and Dún Laoghaire Education and Training Board (DDLETB), two schools are located within the City of Dublin Training Board (CDETB), and three schools are located within the Kildare and Wicklow Education and Training Board (KWETB). All seventeen schools were considered for sampling. However, initial inquiries established that four of these schools had vacant chaplaincy posts and could not be considered in this study. The remaining thirteen schools were included in the initial probing phase to ascertain their willingness to participate in the study. Thus, the target population within this grouping was twenty-six, and deemed a sufficient number representative of Ireland, urban and rural, and significant in its own right. Out of the twenty-six target participants, twenty-two responded favourably.

In this study, the researcher used the intentional selection of individuals and sites to develop a detailed understanding of the case in question. This aligns with the principles of purposive sampling, which refers to "identifying and selecting individuals or groups of individuals that are especially knowledgeable about or experienced with a phenomenon of interest" (Creswell, Plano and Clarke, 2011, cited in Palinkas *et al.,* 2015). According to Patton (2002) the samples for qualitative inquiry are generally assumed to be selected purposefully to yield cases that are information-rich – purposive sampling is widely used in qualitative research to identify and select information-rich cases related to the phenomenon of interest. Purposive sampling is sometimes called a judgment sample, as participants are selected for inclusion in a study based on the researcher's professional judgement. However, there is no intentional bias in the choice of purposive sampling for this study. This is a homogenous purposive sample, the opposite of a maximum variation purposive sample, and is selected because members of the sample have a shared characteristic or a shared set of characteristics. The study participants who were chosen are directly linked with the aims of the investigation.

3.7.1 Access to Participants

One of the most fundamental tasks relating to undertaking a qualitative research study lies in gaining access which "involves both securing entry into a particular organisation and ensuring that individuals associated with it, such as employees or users, will serve as informants" (Shenton and Hayter, 2004, p. 223). Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2018) suggest an overview of seven considerations that should be considered from the outset of the research process - one of which involves considerations for 'access to participants or data'. They put forward the following two questions for deliberation before gaining access: "Are you likely to be able to gain access to the participants or data you need to actually conduct the research? and "Are the sensitivities of ethical considerations involved likely to be too challenging to be easily overcome?" (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018, pp. 158-160). This researcher considered both questions in this research. The question regarding ethics was addressed in the submission for ethical approval, which the *Research Ethics Committee* of DCU granted.

In this study, access to participants was addressed through an iterative process beginning with accessing data through the ETBIs on DCCs in their sector. E-mails were sent to the relevant ETBIs (those within the geographical boundaries of the conurbation

of the Dublin diocese) - these were Dun Laoghaire Education and Training Board, Kildare and Wicklow Education and Training Board, and City of Dublin Education and Training Board. Subsequently, four of these schools disclosed vacant chaplaincy posts and were deemed ineligible to participate. Questionnaires were sent out to the chaplains and principals in each of the eligible thirteen schools. Favourable responses, from both chaplains and principals in eleven schools were received, and these were considered active participants in the research process.

Gaining access to the participants in this study employed a tactic referred to as "phased entry" Shenton and Hayter (2004, p. 225). This initially involved targeting the required sample population and asking them to complete a questionnaire relating to their understanding of characteristic spirit, the role of the chaplain, years of experience and their willingness to participate in the project. This was a purposive sample as it was necessary to ensure that those who were asked to participate met specific criteria. Furthermore, the data collected via the questionnaire was to aid the gathering of material to compile the questions for the interviews.

> In terms of gaining access, this preliminary contact can serve as an "ice-breaker" and afford the investigator a foothold in the organisations since, when further, more demanding involvement is needed from them through providing access to informants and, perhaps, appropriate documents, the researcher will be able to identify himself or herself as someone whom the organisations already know and have already assisted. (Shenton and Hayter, 2004, p. 225)

Access influences the research process, and results are shaped by power dynamics and are best seen as an iterative, ongoing, and dynamic process that "lasts as long as the research project process" (Riese, 2019, p. 669). Awareness of the complexity of access will help qualitative researchers to make more conscious and deliberate decisions from the outset, and time spent attending to the practical aspects early on will help minimise complications. In this study, consideration of potential challenges from the beginning of the process will be considered throughout the research project.

3.7.2 Profile of the Research Sample

This is a homogenous purposive sample as the selected participants have a shared set of characteristics - both chaplains and principals work in DCCs in the Republic of Ireland. The focus of this research sample is the characteristics of a population that are of specific interest to this project and will best enable the researcher to answer the research question. The sample being studied is not representative of the population, instead is

the sample of the population of interest. This homogeneous sample has been chosen because the research question is specific to the characteristics of this group of interest.

The researcher has provided a clear rationale for choosing a methodological approach to this study and the choices made about selecting participants, including sampling and access. Some reflection on being an insider researcher is warranted as part of the overall iterative process.

3.7.3 The positionality of the researcher

The principal investigator (P.I) in this research project has practised as a chaplain in a DCC since 1999 and has a vested interest in this research as it directly impacts my work and career as a chaplain. As a chaplain researching the ministry of chaplaincy, the researcher acknowledges that she is embedded and strongly connected with both the setting, and participants, and as such is considered an 'insider researcher'.

According to Asselin (2003, p. 99), "insider research means that the researcher shares an identity, language, and experiential base with the study participants". Other writers (Mercer, 2007; Trowler, 2011) suggest that Insider research is said to exist on a continuum that is dependent on the closeness of the researcher to the aspect being researched. On one end of the continuum, a researcher may be investigating parts of the organisation previously unknown to them and collecting data from strangers, even though they are members of the same organisation. On the other end of the continuum, the researcher collects data from close colleagues or examines their practice. The boundaries along the continuum are often blurred, and the positioning of the researcher depends on "the aspects of an insider researcher's self or identity which is aligned or shared with participants" (Chavez, 2008, p. 475). In this regard, there is the potential for bias. However, there are steps that the researcher can take to identify and overcome potential bias – these include an awareness of the possibility of implicit coercion during recruitment, privacy, and confidentiality; ensuring trustworthiness; maintaining institutional anonymity when citing information; and ensuring the data is rigorously interpreted to ensure credibility (Trowler, 2011).

To overcome any potential bias the researcher will, take steps to maintain objectivity and avoid any potential challenges at all stages in this research process. Throughout the research process the researcher will remain alert to researcher bias - insofar that

personal values and experiences may influence the research questions, design, and data collection procedures. The researcher will address any challenges, and possible ways of overcoming such bias will be explored and put into place with the support of the research Supervisors, Dr. Thomas Grenham and Dr. Cora O'Farrell. Details about how these challenges were met and addressed will be noted and made available if questions regarding bias arrive at a later stage. Establishing this critical navigation and reflexivity, will ensure that credible and trustworthy research can be achieved and will contribute to advancing the future practice of school-based chaplaincy. This research attempts to improve practice through understanding, influencing, and changing the direction and position of other stakeholders.

3.8 Data Collection

Stake (1995) states that essential parts of a data-gathering plan for case studies are definitions of the case, a list of research questions, identification of helpers, data sources, allocation of time, expenses, and intended reporting. The case study research involves using multiple sources of evidence to investigate a phenomenon and in-depth, detailed data from a range of data sources (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003): data collection methods in this study included a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews.

3.8.1 Questionnaires

The first data set collated in this research project was through a questionnaire. A questionnaire is essentially a structured technique for collecting primary data. It is generally a series of written questions for which the respondents has to provide the answers (Beiske, 2002). Questionnaires provide case study researchers with a data-gathering technique that collects, through written self-reports, either quantitative or qualitative information from an individual unit regarding the unit's knowledge, beliefs, opinions, or attitudes about or toward a phenomenon under investigation (Mills, Durepos and Wiebe, 2010, p. 1). In case study research, questionnaires can be used in two ways - they can be the primary strategy for data collection, or they can be used in combination with other case study techniques, such as interviewing. In this case study research, the use of questionnaires drew from the fact that the respondents possessed both a personal awareness of the phenomenon under investigation (school-based chaplaincy), and the ability to articulate their understandings of it. The questionnaire comprised of nine questions; these included a combination of open-ended,

dichotomous, and multichotomous (closed-ended) questions. The combination of question types offered the advantage of providing a wide range of responses to help capture the flavour of people's answers while not influencing the outcome of the question by pre-determining possible responses. The two main objectives of the questionnaire were to allow participants to indicate their willingness to participate in the study and subsequent interviews (or request further clarification); and allow the collected data/responses to direct the design of appropriate interview questions.

The researcher contacted each participant by phone or email before distributing the questionnaire. With stamped addressed envelopes, the questionnaires were sent by post to the selected participants to complete at their convenience. Only one of the participants asked for further clarification regarding the second data collection stage, and a phone call followed this. Twenty-three questionnaires were returned, and twenty-two respondents were deemed appropriate to include in the second stage of the data process - semi-structured interviews. The excluded school was deemed ineligible because only the chaplain responded to the questionnaire.

3.8.2 Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews balance the pre-planned questions of a structured approach with the spontaneity and flexibility of the unstructured interview. The researcher prepares questions and/or discussion topics in advance and generates follow-up questions during the interview. Unstructured interviews are used to collect data through a conversation between the researcher and participant. Kallio *et al.* (2016, p. 6) suggest that "the use of semi-structured interviews requires a certain level of previous study in the research topic area because the interview questions are based on previous knowledge". DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006, p. 315) concur and assert that "semi-structured interviews are generally organised around a set of pre-determined open-ended questions, with other questions emerging from the dialogue between interviewer and interviewees". In this research study, the data collected from phase one - the questionnaire - was used to direct and prepare the questions for the interviews. The knowledge from the questionnaires created a conceptual basis for the interviews.

The individual in-depth interviews employed in this study allowed the researcher to delve deeply into personal observations and opinions of the participants by reconstructing perceptions of events and experiences related to chaplaincy services in

DCCs. Stake (1995, p. 65) advocates that “the interview is the main road to multiple realities”, and the interviews in this study were carried out in the hope of gathering ‘perceptions or knowledge over multiple respondents’ and providing ‘rich, thick descriptions’ of the case.

From January 2021 until March 2021, twenty-two semi-structured interviews were undertaken using Zoom - a videoconferencing platform. The participants chose their desired date for the interview using a pre-made calendar/schedule on Google forms which were sent via email. Once the participants chose their preferred dates, the Zoom links were sent as a Google-Calendar invitation. These interviews comprised eleven chaplains and eleven principals; they were recorded using Zoom audio and cloud recording and on a separate recording device (Dictaphone) with participants’ permission. Each interview took approximately 45-60 minutes. Once the researcher received the cloud recordings, both audio and visual, representing the entire interview content, they were subsequently transcribed with a clear emphasis on “what was said” rather than “how it was said” (Poland, 2012, p. 634), coded and uploaded to NVivo prior to data analysis. These semi-structured interviews proved an effective method of learning about and understanding the participants’ experiences, feelings, and views.

3.8.2.1 The use of Zoom

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, the video conferencing tool Zoom has become ubiquitous. Recent research into the use of Zoom by (Gray *et al.*, 2020, pp. 1292-1301) reported that Zoom video conferencing was a positive experience in conducting qualitative research interviews. Gray *et al.*, (2020) identified the strengths of this approach and asserted that video conferencing software (ZOOM) economically supports research. Furthermore, their findings indicate the viability of Zoom as a tool for collection of qualitative data because of its relative ease of use and accessibility (i.e., phone, tablet, and computer); cost-effectiveness; data management features; security options; and enhanced personal interface to discuss personal topics.

The use of Zoom in this research was carried out under the ethical approval of the DCU *Research Ethics Committee*. When using Zoom, DCU is regarded as a ‘Data Controller’. Accordingly, this researcher is considered an employee of the Data Controller and abided by data protection rules and obligations under GDPR when using Zoom.

3.9 Data Analysis Overview

The way research data is processed depends on the nature of the data. In the case of this research project, the chosen theoretical framework is the case study which relies on multiple sources of data collection – in this instance, questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Typically, a case study is carried out interactively and consists of several different types of data, analysis of the research data, and data gathering. The role of iteration in qualitative data analysis is not a repetitive mechanical task but a reflective process and is key to sparking insight and developing meaning (Srivastava and Hopwood, 2009, p. 77). Furthermore, Mills, Durepos and Wiebe (2010, p. 100) assert that "while the data are being gathered, they are also being evaluated, and therefore a partially theoretical construction is done during the gathering stage". In this context, patterns may be known in advance, drawn from the research questions, but "sometimes, the patterns will emerge unexpectedly from the analysis" (Stake, 1995, p. 78). At all stages of the process, the researcher must be responsible for interpreting and reporting on all data and disseminating findings with accuracy.

In this study, the data gathered through the questionnaire was processed by Excel - a data analysis tool. The physical process of managing the data analysis was initially guided by a traditional paper-based approach where comments from each participant's responses were cut out and thematically arranged by sticking them to a whiteboard and grouped based on similarities. At this stage emerging key words, phrases, and themes were identified. All handwritten notes were transcribed into electronic format via Microsoft Word to analyse the data. Following this, all the data was migrated to a Microsoft Excel worksheet, where graphs showed the relationships between answers and trends within the data. The common themes across the answers are represented on the x-axis and the number of responses on the y-axis.

The semi-structured interview data was processed using a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) - NVivo 11. NVivo provides an organised and structured, systematic approach to analysis ensuring that qualitative data analysis is undertaken rigorously. It allows the researcher to keep track of (and review) transcripts as they are imported into the project, follow the progress of coding, and make notes of emerging ideas (via memos) as code occurs.

3.9.1 Thematic Analysis: Overview

"Generally, thematic analysis is the most widely used qualitative approach to analysing interviews" (Jugder, 2016, p. 2). Once data are gathered, reading and interpretation are the starting points for meaningful analysis. In thematic analysis themes or patterns within data can be identified inductively or deductively (Ramirez, 2017).

Inductive Thematic Analysis	Deductive Thematic Analysis
Data-driven	Analyst-driven
Themes are strongly linked to data	Themes around permissiveness
A process of coding the data WITHOUT trying to fit it into a pre-existing coding frame or the researcher's analyic preconceptions	Provides LESS a rich description of the data, MORE a detailed analysis of some aspect of the data
Specific research questions can evolve	Code for a specific research question
Researchers read and re-read the data for any themes related to the topic	Interested in the way permissiveness plays out across the data

Figure 5: *Summary on "Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology" (Ramirez, 2017).*

The method employed in this research is 'inductive' as the emergent themes are strongly linked to the data.

Braun and Clarke (2006) argue that thematic analysis can be conducted within realist/essentialist and constructionist paradigms. The constructionist paradigm allows the researcher "to theorize motivations, experience, and meaning in a straight-forward way, because a simple, largely unidirectional relationship is assumed between meaning and experience and language" (Ramirez, 2017, p. 30). As the ontological stance espoused by this researcher naturally lends itself to a constructivist paradigm, the conceptual framework of the thematic analysis for the questionnaire and semi-structured interviews in this research were modelled on the theoretical positions of Braun and Clarke (2006). Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 79), assert that "thematic analysis is a method used for 'identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within the data". The six-phase analytical strategy as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006) was applied using Excel and NVivo 11. However, some slight adjustments were made to correlate with the data collection methods employed in this study. The original Braun and Clarke framework (2006), which was used to conceptualise the one used in this study, can be found in the appendices (Appendix D). Figure 6 below shows the amended framework employed in this study. A brief description of this process will now be discussed.

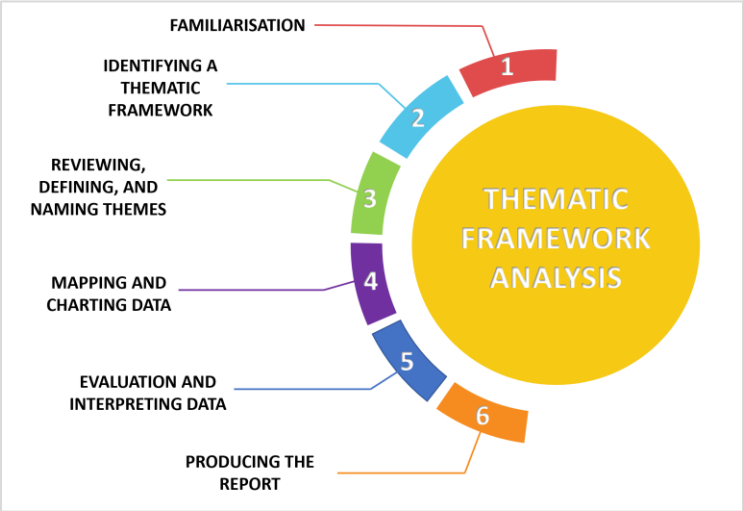

Figure 6: *Conceptual Framework for Data Analysis*

3.9.1.1 Phase one: Familiarisation

The familiarisation process began with collecting the data generated from the questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. This involved reading and re-reading the questionnaire and interview responses and becoming familiar with the responses. While some possible themes began to emerge and were noted, the focus was on becoming familiar with, understanding what was being said, and allowing the preliminary interpretive process to begin.

3.9.1.2 Phase two: Identifying a Thematic Framework

A hand-analysis method for gathering the data rather than a computer-generated programme was employed for the questionnaires. This method ensured that a 'hands-on feel' was retained (Creswell, 2012, p. 240) and, the researcher remained close to the data. The response to every question was closely examined, and possible themes were identified and noted – in some cases, more than one possible theme was identified.

The interview transcripts were analysed using the computer software NVivo 11. Each of the transcripts was uploaded to NVivo and separated into two folders – chaplain and principal. All transcripts at this stage were anonymous – no participant or school names were used. From this point, all participants were known as C.1. or P.1. etc. Each transcript was read through, and some key responses were highlighted to indicate possible themes. See figure 7 below as an example of a response from C.10; this response was analysed and highlighted as a possible theme. A code was then created for this theme and called 'worry for the future'.

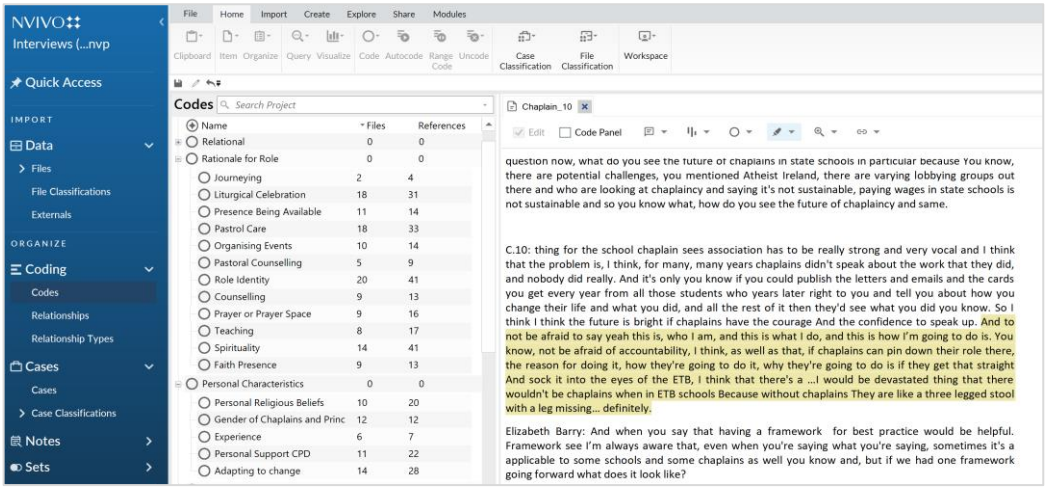

Figure 7: *Coding in NVIVO Example*

There was no attempt made at this stage to develop patterns or hierarchies. However, interesting features were coded methodically across the body of data relevant to each code.

3.9.1.3 Phase three: Reviewing Defining and Naming Themes

Phase three involved reviewing the initial themes generated in phase two and deciding whether a theme could be more specific, if some themes could be grouped together under one parent theme, or if some themes needed to be changed completely. All the themes identified in the responses were uploaded and inputted into a table in Excel for the questionnaires. An example of what this looked like for question 4 can be seen below in table 1.

Q.4 - PURPOSE							
School	**Faith Presence**	**Pastoral Care / Support**	**Promotes Inclusivity / Equality / Positve Environment**	**Spiritual Guidance**	**Liturgical Celebration**	**Collaboration W.S/ Relationships**	**R.E**
1	C	C / P		P	C / P	P	
2	C	C / P			C / P		
3	C	C / P	P	C	P		
4	C	C / P	C		C / P		
5		C / P	C			P	P
6		C	C	C / P	C / P	C	
7		C		P	C / P	P	P
8	C	C / P	C / P	P	P		
9	C	P	C		C	C	P
10	P		C / P	C	C	P	
11	C / P		C / P	C			

Table 1: *Excel Graph showing emergent themes for Q.4 - purpose*

As question four was titled purpose, the heading of the table for question four was named 'purpose' and any themes identified in the responses to this question were then inputted as headings. If either a chaplain or principal mentioned these themes, a C or P was placed in the row underneath.

For the interviews, phase three involved analysing the themes and codes on NVivo and attempting to group them or find some correlations between themes. Some of the original themes which were identified as having close correlations with the original theme were consequently re-coded as a 'child code'. This allowed for a thorough reviewing and refining of the that had emerged through data analysis. Once the 'child codes' had been aggregated, the process of the final review and selection of the major themes began. For example, '*worry for the future'* was one code generated in phase two, as this is very similar to the code entitled '*challenges*', which had also been generated and both were subsequently grouped under one parent theme or Code renamed '*Anticipatory Concerns*' as shown in Figure 8 below.

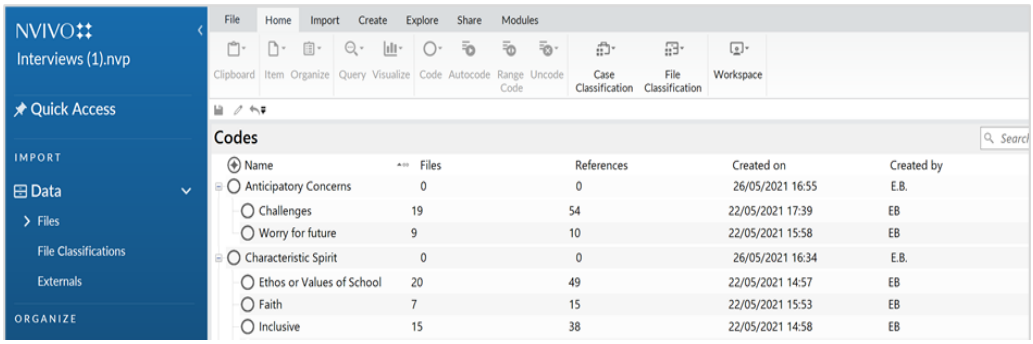

Figure 8: *Coding NVivo*

Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 82) remind us that "there is no hard-and-fast answer to the question of what proportion of your data set needs to display evidence of the theme for it to be considered a theme", instead it is a question of 'researcher judgment' which determines what a theme is. In this instance a 'semantic' approach was employed as the themes were identified "within the explicit or surface meanings of the data" (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 84), and no attempt was made to look beyond what the participants said or what had been written.

3.9.1.4 Phase Four: Mapping and Charting Data

Phase four involved generating the graphs and charts to show the data findings more logically and coherently. Mapping and interpreting represent the themes graphically and investigate how each of the themes relates to each other.

The tables generated in Excel in phase three were used to generate charts and graphs to present the questionnaire data, and NVivo was used to generate the charts and graphs from the interviews.

3.9.1.5 Phase five: Evaluating and Interpreting Data

Phase five involved assessing the charts and graphs generated and examining and interpreting them in an attempt to find relationships / connections / interesting features or themes that may have emerged. The charts and graphs generated from the data analysis through NVivo dictated the final themes and findings - they constitute the subsequent discussion in chapter four and form the information for the final report.

3.9.1.6 Phase six: Producing the Report

Phase six established the writing of the case study, and this reporting is often as important as empirical material collection and interpretation. “The case study report is a summary of what has been done to try to get answers, what assertions can be made with some confidence, and what more needs to be studied” (Stake, 2006, p. 14). Ultimately, case studies depend for their meaning on the concrete particulars of the case in context: the knowledge they generate is context-dependent – they are not directly transferrable to other situations. However, they can resonate with the readers’ experiences in similar contexts (Slater, 2016, p. 73).

3.10 Methods of Verification

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), verification in qualitative research is established through trustworthiness, credibility, transferability, and confirmability. The methods to ensure verification used in this study were triangulation, thick description, peer debriefing and the presentation of the findings of this case study to the research participants. A short explanation of these methods will be discussed below.

3.10.1 Triangulation

Triangulation refers to using multiple methods or data sources in qualitative research to develop a comprehensive understanding of phenomena (Patton, 1999). Triangulation also has been viewed as a qualitative research strategy to test validity through the convergence of information from different sources.

> The logic of triangulation is based on the premise that no single method ever adequately solves the problem of rival explanations. Because each method reveals different aspects of empirical reality, multiple methods of data collection and analysis provide more grist for the research mill. (Patton, 1999, p. 1192)

Triangulation is a strategy for reducing systematic bias in the data findings. The strategy involves checking findings against other sources and perspectives in each case. This

process allows the researcher to guard against the accusation that a study's findings are simply an artefact of a single method, a single source, or a single investigator's biases. The multiple sources of evidence in this research led to “converging lines of inquiry” (Yin, 2014, p. 120) and strengthened the overall construct validity of the case study in this research project.

3.10.2 Thick description

Thick description is a qualitative research technique that gives detailed descriptions and interpretations of situations observed by a researcher. According to Denzin (1989), a thick description does more than record what a person is doing: “It goes beyond mere fact and surface appearances. It presents detail, context, emotion, and the webs of social relationships that join persons to one another” (1989, p. 83). The use of ‘thick description’ in this research allowed a clear picture of the participants (principals and chaplains) in their culture and the school setting in which they work to emerge.

3.10.3 Peer Briefing

Peer debriefing is a strategy used to enhance credibility in qualitative research. It is “a process of exposing oneself to a disinterested peer in a manner paralleling an analytic session…for the purpose of exploring aspects of the inquiry that might otherwise remain only implicit within the inquirer’s mind” (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 308). A disinterested peer is not an immediate stakeholder in the outcome of the research project but is a knowledgeable source on the topic. The use of peer debriefing was employed in this research through consultation with a ‘disinterested peer’ who is a qualified school chaplain but not employed in this area at present. This critical peer also holds substantial experience in school management in a DCC and offered valuable insight into both the chaplain and management position concerning school-based chaplaincy within the ETB sector. As a peer, he advocated sometimes opposing claims for the sake of the argument. These debriefing sessions allowed the data findings to come into a more explicit focus, highlighted areas that need improvements and pointed out the strengths of the findings. At no time did his feedback exert undue influence over the research. Denzin and Lincoln (2011) maintain that peer debriefing increases the credibility of a project, and Hendricks (2006) asserts that peer debriefing helps focus on the correctness and accuracy of research interpretations and conclusions, guards

against researcher bias, provide evidence of collaboration of stakeholders, and enables the distribution of findings.

3.10.4 Presentation of findings to participants

Another method of verification is the presentation of the findings of this case study to the research participants. All participants were offered an opportunity to read over the transcripts of their interviews and were informed when the findings were completed and allowed to read the final case study. This practice allowed the participants to review their responses to ensure they were happy with their contribution or to make amendments where desired. This practice also helps avoid previously held assumptions and any potential bias of the researcher to inform the research.

Overall, verification was built incrementally into the entire research process with checks on "the credibility, plausibility, and trustworthiness of the findings" (Merriam 2009, p. 211) to ensure the study's reliability, validity, and the rigour.

3.11 Ethical Considerations and Research Integrity

Ethical responsibility in qualitative research is an ongoing process. Ethical approval to undertake this study was sought from Dublin City University and the research proposal qualified under DCU's 'Notification Procedure as a low-risk social research project'; subsequently DCU Research Ethics Committee approved the project (see Appendix E).

Considering the nature of qualitative studies, the interaction between researchers and participants can be ethically challenging. Researchers face ethical challenges in all stages of the study, including anonymity, confidentiality, informed consent, researchers' potential impact on the participants and vice versa. Qualitative studies are frequently conducted in settings involving the participation of people in their everyday environments, and the formulation of specific ethical guidelines in this respect seems to be essential. "Therefore, any research that includes people requires an awareness of the ethical issues that may be derived from such interactions" (Orb, Eisenhauer and Wynaden, 2000, p. 93).

Initial access to information regarding the schools was gained via email from the relevant ETBs. Once the school type had been established, the participants deemed appropriate for the study were contacted directly via e-mail and/or by phone. The information was obtained via the relevant school's website. A copy of the questionnaire

was then sent to both chaplain and principal in each school. Once completed, the findings, in graph form were sent to the participants. They also received the interview questions for the second stage of the process.

As an interview is usually equated with confidentiality, informed consent, and privacy the questionnaires and interviews in this project were maintained within these parameters. All the participants were deemed 'adults', and issues around confidentiality and privacy were explained in the '*Plain Language Statement'* (PLS) and *'Consent Form'* (CF) (Appendix F and Appendix G) and these were distributed at least a week in advance of their scheduled interview time. Informed consent was obtained in written form prior to the interviews via the CF and again verbally before recording took place to allow participants an opportunity to ask any further questions arising from the PLS and CS. Subsequently, all interviewees and the schools they worked in were assigned numbers but as this case study concerns a homogenous population, purposively selected - chaplains and principals within ETB DCCs situated within the geographical boundaries of the Dublin Diocese - the small number of these school types meant schools and personnel could easily be identified. Therefore, complete anonymity could not be guaranteed to the schools, principals, or chaplains in this study. This was clearly outlined in both the PLS and CF.

All data was stored on the researcher's PC and was password protected. A hard copy of all interview transcripts and questionnaire results was kept in a locked cabinet in the researcher's home. Upon completion of this study, all data will be destroyed. The computer hard drive will be wiped, and the hard copy of the interview transcripts and questionnaire results will be shredded.

3.11.1 Research Integrity

Research Integrity is about knowing and meeting the responsibilities of a researcher, and it means performing research to the highest standards of professionalism, at all points of the research process, from design to dissemination.

> DCU is committed to ensuring the highest standards of integrity in all aspects of our research, in line with the National Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland, HEA Principles of Good Practice in Research within Irish Higher Education Institutions and the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity. (https://www.dcu.ie/research/research-integrity-dcu)

The eight principles of research integrity as per the *European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity* include honesty in communication; reliability in performing research; objectivity; impartiality and independence; openness and accessibility; duty of care; fairness in providing references and giving credit; and responsibility for the scientists and researchers of the future. Throughout this research study the process of critical reflection was employed, and a reflexive approach helped to counter any potential neglect of the principles that govern the conduct of research.

3.12 Conclusion

This chapter has described the epistemological and ontological position of this researcher. It has described the research paradigm, and the methodological rigour applied to the research design, data collection, analysis procedures, and verification methods employed to ensure the reliability and validity of the findings. A discussion was also given on ethical considerations and research integrity principles applicable to all research. Chapter four follows with a presentation of the research results and the subsequent discussion prompted by the findings.

Chapter 4. Research Findings and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

All case study research starts from the same compelling feature: the desire to derive an up-close or otherwise in-depth understanding of a single or small number of cases set in their real-world contexts. Within a case study, one should be able to "hear the sound of voices" (Thomas, 2011, p. 7), and a way to ensure the voices are heard is through vignettes—episodes of storytelling—to illustrate aspects of the case (Stake, 1995). This chapter will utilise vignettes to allow the voices of the participants to be heard in a balanced and reflective way. The findings which are presented here have emerged from the analysis of both chaplains' and principals' voices in each phase of the research.

Stake (2005) contends that the methods employed for the case study are to "learn enough about the case to encapsulate complex meanings into a finite report [and] to describe the case in sufficient descriptive narrative so that readers can experience these happenings vicariously and draw their own conclusions" (2005, p. 450). The challenge for the researcher is to ensure that they do not present their findings in descriptive form alone but rather with depth and reflection (Bazely, 2009). The findings presented here represent a significant understanding of the data, a recognition of what was worthy within the data, and a conscious and unconscious testing out interpretations' authority. Stake (1995, p. 49) asserts that "all researchers have great privilege and obligation: the privilege to pay attention to what they consider worthy of attention and the obligation to make conclusions drawn from those choices that are meaningful to their audience".

This chapter will now outline the findings from both the questionnaire and interviews. Discussion on the findings/results will also be presented and, where applicable, correlations will be drawn with the literature on school-based chaplaincy as delineated in chapter two.

4.2 Questionnaire findings and discussion

The raw handwritten data was analysed using thematic analysis. Evaluations of the questionnaires and analysis of the graphs show the relationships and the similarities between answers/responses. The analysis of this data informed and directed the formulation of the questions for the interviews.

The researcher implemented an inductive approach. The level at which themes were identified, semantic (where surface meanings of the data are used) or latent (where underlying ideas and concepts are identified in data) was also considered. The themes were analysed initially in a descriptive form (with data organised to show patterns in a semantic content) before progressing to an interpretative form which attempted to look beyond the surface of the data (where the broader meaning and ultimate implications of the themes/patterns are deduced, often via engagement with literature) (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

4.2.1 Methodology for Analysis: Thematic Analysis

As previously discussed in the methodology chapter, thematic analysis was employed for all data investigations in this research study. Once the data was gathered, reading and interpretation began as the process for meaningful analysis. Themes or patterns within data were identified inductively – this allowed for a coding process without trying to fit it into a pre-existing coding frame. This ensured that analysis was driven by the data collected during the evaluation process rather than any analytic preconceptions. The conceptual framework for the questionnaire and semi-structured interviews in this research was modelled on an *adjusted* theoretical framework espoused by Braun and Clarke (2006). The six-phase adjusted analytical strategy was outlined in chapter three.

4.2.2 Microsoft Excel

The responses were read carefully, notes were taken, and relevant words, phrases, and sentences were labelled from the questionnaire. Relevance was decided by repetition, links to references in the literature, or if the participant had stated it was important. At all times, researcher bias was avoided, and the credibility of the data findings was maintained. This was achieved through a reflexive approach that was applied throughout the entire procedure. Personal interpretation and subjectivity were repeatedly questioned and addressed through corroboration, peer review, respondent validation, persistent observation, and prolonged involvement with the data.

The first two questions relating to gender and years of experience did not require coding, and responses were directly migrated into Excel and graphs were used to indicate these responses.

The following four questions required participants to give their opinion on certain issues. Each question was constructed around a specific topic. For example, question three related to the purpose and this specific word was subsequently used as a title. Question five, six, and seven corresponded to ethos, effectiveness, and support of management, and these were also used as titles. The responses to each question were analysed, and keywords /phrases were noted. From these keywords, headings – representing the main themes - were generated under which the words/phases were grouped. There was no limit to the number of keywords needed to generate a heading, however, some subjectively were applied in grouping similar themes.

4.2.3 Profile of Participants

Questions one, two, and three elicited information on gender, role, and years of experience. The responses were noted and migrated directly into an Excel worksheet. The results were collated, and subsequently, Bar and Pie-charts were generated to illustrate the statistical data findings visually.

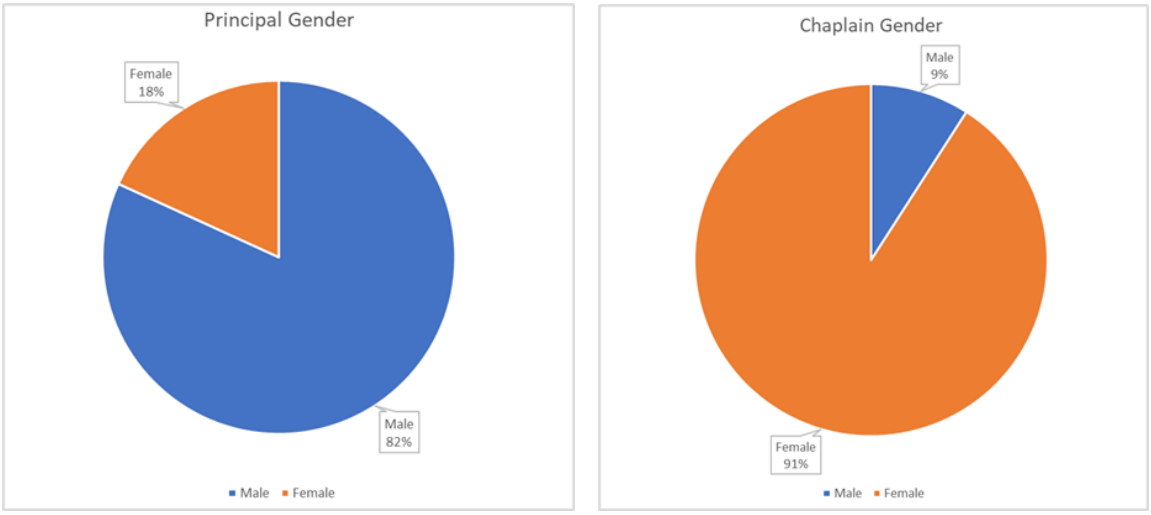

***Figure 9**: Principal and Chaplain Gender*

The sampling population for the questionnaire comprised of eleven chaplains and eleven principals. The results showed that male principals represented eighty-two per cent of the respondents, and female principals represented eighteen per cent of all respondents. Nine per cent of chaplains who responded were male, while ninety-one per cent were female, and this represented just one male chaplain and ten female chaplains.

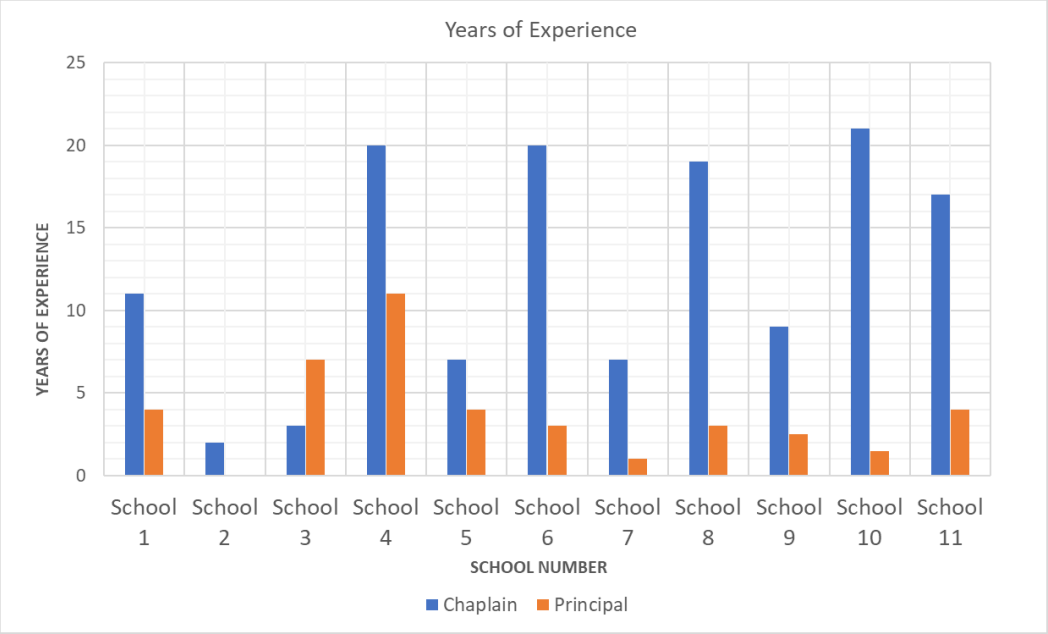

Figure 10: *Years of Experience*

Each school was assigned a number from 1 to 11, and both principal and chaplain from the same school were grouped together – these numbers were used to anonymise the school and participant. The graph indicates the years of experience of each chaplain and principal in their school. The years of experience are represented on the y-axis, ranging from 0 to 25 years, and each school (1 – 11) is shown on the x-axis.

4.2.3.1 Discussion of Results

The number of female chaplains far outnumbered their male counterparts in this role. This finding corresponds with the evidence discussed in the literature review in this study, from O'Higgins-Norman and King '*School Activity Rating Study*'**,** (O'Higgins-Norman, 2014, p. 275)**,** which explicitly stated that women did outnumber the men in this role.

Furthermore, in phase two of this research study – the interviews - this finding was presented as question one to both chaplains and principals and generated much discussion and interesting vignettes around the absence of male chaplains.

The question relating to experience showed that chaplains tended to have far more experience than the principals in their schools. This reflected the chaplains' inclination to stay in the school to which they were appointed and to stay in the same role. On the other hand, principals were more likely to have moved into a management role and were more likely to change schools for a variety of reasons – including new school builds, different school types, or larger school communities. This also generated much

discussion in the interview phase of this research project. Some chaplains and principals expressed hope that this wealth of experience brought to the school by the chaplain was utilised fully by the school community and, in particular, by senior management.

4.2.4 The Purpose of Chaplaincy Services

Question four asked: *What do you believe is the purpose of Chaplaincy Services in Designated Community Colleges?* This question was looking for information on the function or purpose of the chaplaincy role. Therefore, the word 'purpose' was chosen as the title. This question elicited a very broad range of responses, and as it was challenging to find correlating links, the decision was made to include as many words/phrases or suggestions which were offered. In total, thirteen themes were selected and inserted into Excel, where the corresponding responses were noted, counted, and graphs formed to illustrate the findings.

4.2.4.1 Results and discussion

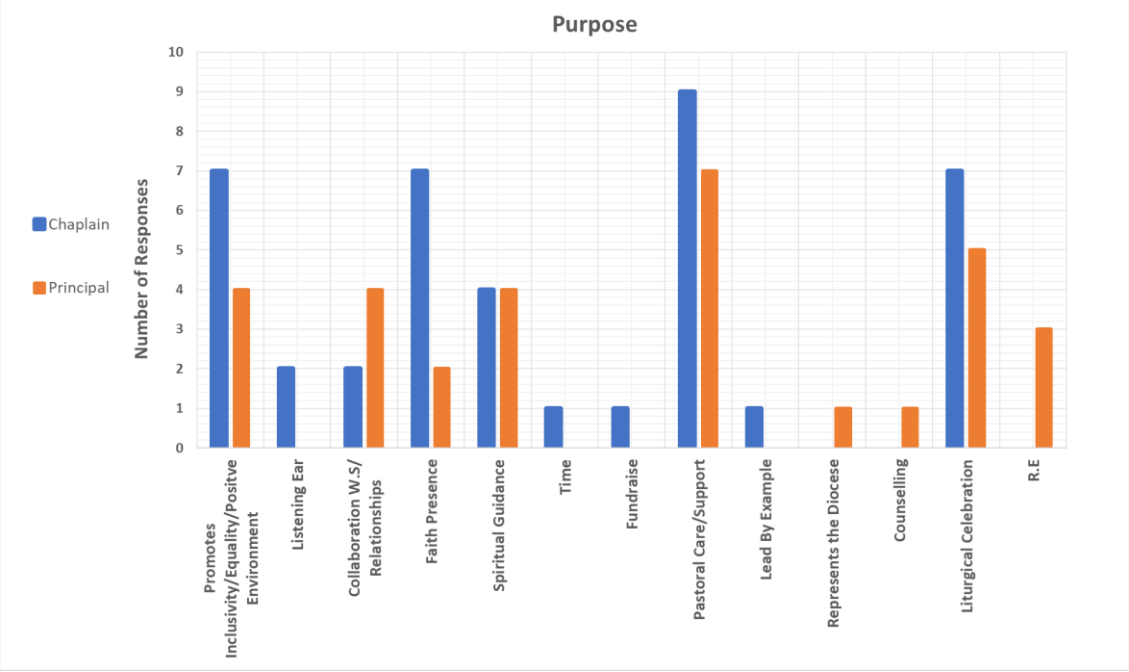

Figure 11: *Question 4 Results*

The overall response from both chaplains and principals was that the chaplaincy role was mainly a pastoral care role. Eighty-two per cent of all principals asserted that chaplaincy and pastoral care were synonymous, while sixty-four per cent of chaplains explicitly expressed the pastoral care element of the role. This finding correlates closely with findings in chapter two, the literature review in this study– from an Irish and an

international perspective. The literature advocates that pastoral care lies at the very core of chaplaincy, reflecting what the chaplain does in all aspects of school life (Norman, 2002; Pattison, 2008; Moran, 2014a; Murray, 2014; O'Higgins-Norman, 2014; Caperon, 2015; Younger, 2018; O'Malley, 2019).

Promotion of an inclusive environment was seen by sixty-four per cent of chaplains as a key aspect of their role, while only thirty-six per cent of principals stated this as the sole remit of the chaplain.

Monahan and Renehan (1998, p. 22) suggest that chaplains in schools are routinely "called to be a faith presence, committed to the values of Christ". However, in the context of this study that examines the role of a chaplain in a state school – with multidenominational status – it is perhaps understandable why just eighteen per cent of principal's saw being a faith presence as a defining purpose of chaplaincy. However, in terms of spiritual guidance, both chaplains and principals equally asserted the importance of this in defining the purpose of chaplaincy.

An interesting finding from this question emerged from some of the principals who referenced three areas that they believed were linked to the chaplaincy role – these included representing the diocese, counselling, and teaching religious education. None of the chaplains specifically referenced any of these areas in relation to their understanding of their role. However, the theme of teaching was raised in question seven, and some consideration will be given to this discussion later. Furthermore, although chaplains did not specifically reference counselling, both chaplains and principals did reference the idea of a 'listening ear' which lends itself to pastoral counselling and validates the finding that chaplains play a key role in the pastoral practices in schools.

The final finding worth noting here relates to liturgical celebration. Sixty-four per cent of chaplains saw liturgy and creating liturgical moments throughout the school year as important, and forty-five per cent of principals concurred. Further discussion on this indicated that these liturgical moments were always inclusive to all faiths and beliefs.

4.2.5 Understanding Ethos / Characteristic Spirit

Question five asked *How would you describe the ethos/characteristic spirit in your school?* This question was directly related to the research question and attempted to ascertain what the participants understood by the terms ethos and or characteristic spirit, as by nature, these are terms that can mean "many things to many people and to a large extent [have] been misunderstood, partly due to the elusive nature of the concept" Jackson (2019, p. 77). The word ethos was selected as the appropriate title for this question, and eight themes were selected to represent the findings best.

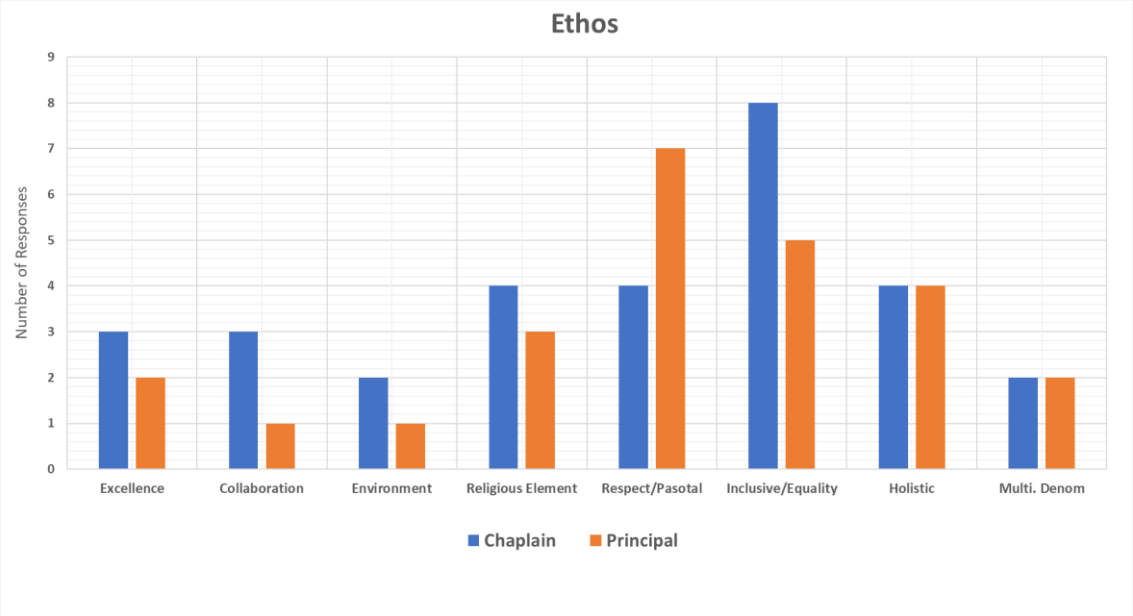

Figure 12: *Question 5 Results*

4.2.5.1 Discussion of results

Participant responses to this question generally referred to the ethos or core values derived from their school's vision and purpose. These values are often espoused in school policies and school climate promoted within the whole teaching and learning system.

Notably, seventy-three per cent of chaplains and forty-five per cent of principals referred to inclusivity and equality as core elements of their school environment, and this correlates closely with the core values of DCCs as espoused by the ETBI. One further point worth noting was that just two chaplains and principals referenced multidenominational as something which underpinned the ethos of their school – even though the ETBI 'Core Value Review' arrived at a normative and philosophical definition

of the multidenominational status of all their schools, effectively meaning they were de *jure* multidenominational.

4.2.6 The Effectiveness of Chaplaincy Services

Question six addressed effectiveness: *How effective do you believe chaplaincy services are in Designated Community Colleges and why?* This was a rating scale survey question: the respondents are asked to assess the effectiveness of the chaplaincy service in their school type based on an already pre-determined dimension. The question displayed a range of answer options on a scale from one to ten – with one representing least effective and ten being very effective. Overall, both principals and chaplains rated the chaplaincy service in their school as very effective. No response scored less than an eight on the rating scale. However, respondents were asked to explain their choice, and seven major themes were selected from these responses and used as headings.

4.2.6.1 Results and discussion

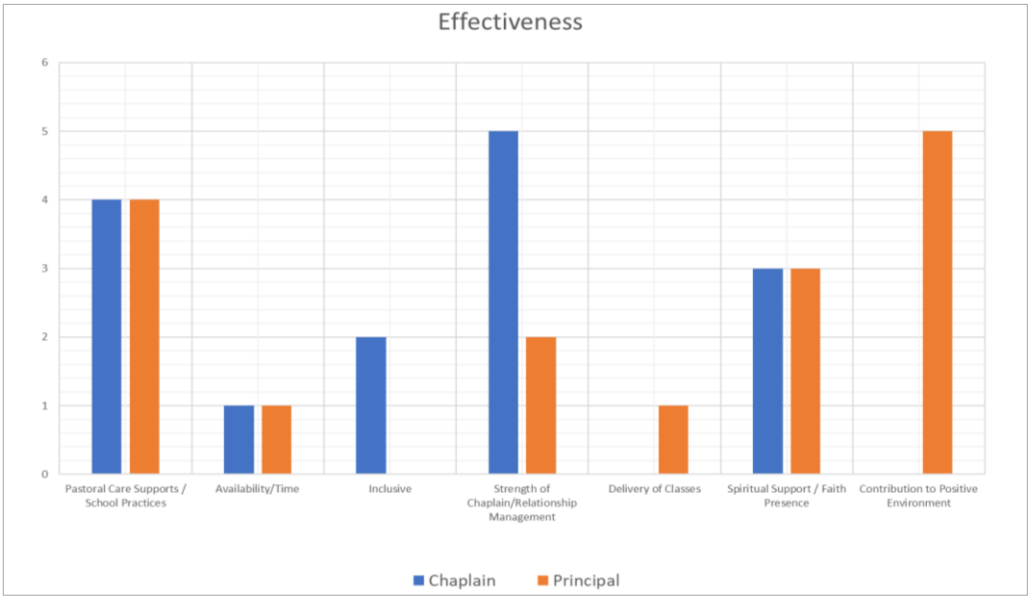

***Figure 13**: Question 6 Results*

Over fifty per cent of principals said that their chaplaincy service was very effective because it was evident that the service contributed to a positive school environment. On the other hand, chaplains tended to see their effectiveness manifest itself in their roles in the pastoral care system of the school.

An interesting finding in this question related to the 'strength of the chaplain / principal relationship', this showed that over fifty per cent of chaplains asserted the relationship was crucial in the provision of an effective service. Chaplains believed that if there was

no mutual trust between them and management, then the chaplaincy service in the school could not flourish in any meaningful way. Nevertheless, the strength of this relationship did not appear to prove as important to principals, with just eighteen per cent noting it as essential for an effective service. However, this data provided the basis of a question in phase two of the research study, which elicited a different response from principals who saw that mutual trust and effective communication were essential for the overall effectiveness of the chaplaincy programme in their schools.

4.2.7 Chaplaincy - Supporting Ethos / Characteristic Spirit

Question seven asked, *"How do you understand the role of the chaplain in helping management uphold the characteristic spirit of their school?"* This question directly correlated with the research question in this study. The title was chosen to represent this was 'Support of Management' – this allowed both chaplain and principal to consider what the chaplain achieves that has a direct bearing on living out the characteristic spirit as espoused by the school community.

4.2.7.1 Results and discussion

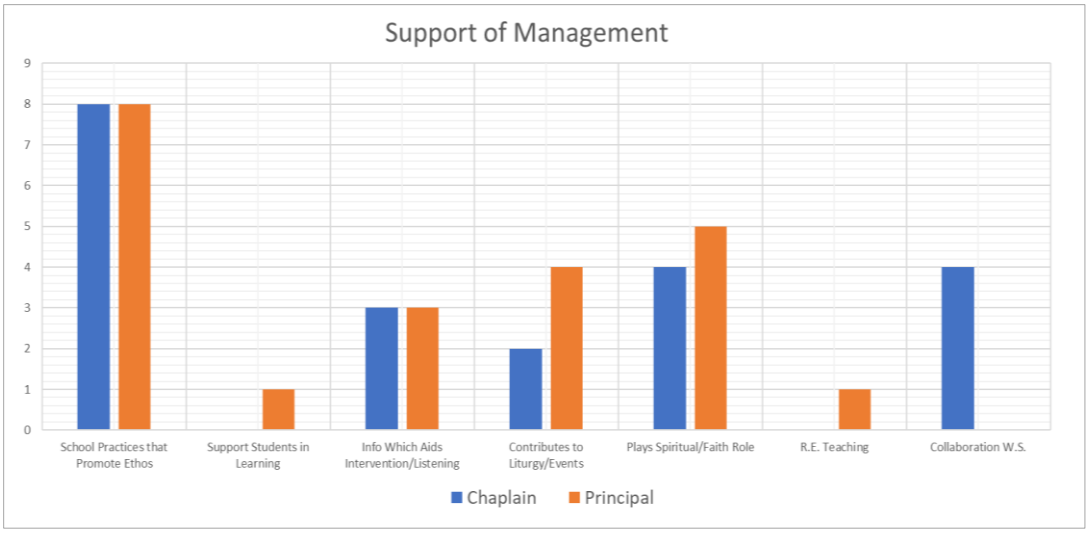

***Figure 14**: Question 7 Results*

Over seventy-two per cent of both chaplains and principals asserted that the chaplain's role was to be involved in school practices which in effect supported the living out of a school ethos. These services ranged from being directly involved in pastoral care committees to the individual support of students and staff, which ultimately was reflected in an inclusive and caring environment.

Four out of eleven chaplains and five out of eleven principals saw spiritual support as necessary for upholding ethos, while liturgical moments were seen as making only a small contribution in support of management in advocating ethos.

An interesting finding from this question was in relation to teaching and learning, which had also been referred to in question three in relation to the purpose of chaplaincy – in question three, only principals saw teaching as an aspect of chaplaincy, and likewise, in this question, no chaplain explicitly stated any reference to teaching religious education or supporting students in learning. Again, as evident in question three, some principals in this question did reference the teaching role as part of the chaplain's ministry and linked the teaching aspect to the support of management in creating a positive school ethos. Many in the literature have alluded to this debate regarding the chaplain as a teacher (Norman, 2003; King, 2004; O'Higgins-Norman, 2014; Pohlmann, 2014). They have asserted that teaching and learning are intrinsically linked to the prevalent tone, atmosphere, and ethos. Therefore, the chaplain can through their religious education function (as teacher) play an important role in helping to create and sustain school ethos. This finding was mirrored in the interview phase of data collection, where it was raised as a sub-theme under the major theme - 'rationale for the role'.

4.2.8 Chaplains – Influencing Spiritual Development of Students

Question eight was a dichotomous question, allowing the respondent to answer yes or no only. The question asked: *Does the Chaplain have a role in the spiritual development of students in this school?* The advantage of this type of question is that it does not allow for ambivalent answers, and this was an important consideration given the "fact that Spirituality' is an elusive word with a variety of definitions" (Palmer, 2003, p. 377). The weakness of this type of question is that it does not allow for any degree of sensitivity or emotional preference; however, this inherent weakness was addressed further in phase two of the research study, where participants were given an opportunity to explore their understanding of spirituality.

4.2.8.1 Results and discussion of results

Nine principals all answered in the affirmative – stating that chaplains play a role in the spiritual development of students. One principal commented that they were not sure because of the ambiguous nature of the term (spirituality), and the second principal left

this question blank. Chaplains unanimously agreed that they played a role in the spiritual development of the students.

4.2.9 Further Participation in the Research Study

The final question was about participants' willingness to participate in the second phase of this research project: if answered in the affirmative respondents were asked to supply their school's name. Respondents were given a choice to ask for further information about the research study - only one principal chose this option and was followed up with a call to answer any outstanding questions. Subsequently, he was happy to be involved.

4.3 Interview findings and discussion

According to Stake (1995, pp. 64-65), "the interview is the main road to multiple realities… [and] seeks to aggregate perceptions or knowledge over multiple respondents". In this research study, interviews were conducted with twenty-two participants, and each transcription was thoroughly analysed to ensure accuracy and dependability in the findings. Codes were created, explored, and thematic patterns were identified – as themes are generally broader than codes, several codes were combined into single themes. The final step in defining the themes involved formulating what was meant by each theme, finding a succinct and easily understandable name for each theme, and considering how each theme helped to understand the data. Dey (1993, p. 117) reminds us that "there are no single set of categories [themes] waiting to be discovered…[as] there are as many ways of 'seeing' the data as one can invent".

The following six major themes emerged from the data:

1. Responsibility
2. The Rationale for the Role
3. Personal Characteristics
4. Anticipatory Concerns
5. Characteristic Spirit
6. Relational

All six themes are represented in figure 15 below. This graph also shows the number of codes and references that each theme comprises.

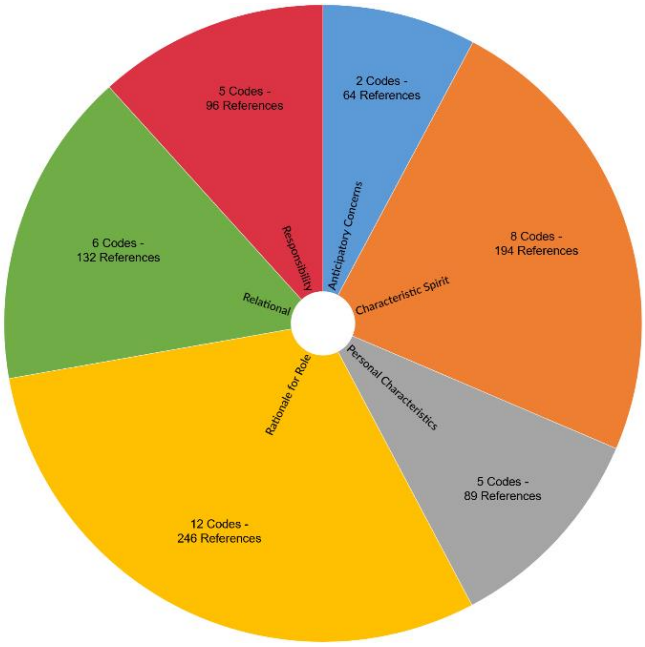

Figure 15: *Themes*

It is beyond the scope of this study to discuss each theme in detail. However, an explanation of the theme and its possible link to the literature is discussed. Furthermore, two of the six themes – *Anticipatory Concerns* and *Relational* - have brought a new perspective to the findings that have not been addressed by literature or research on school-based chaplaincy in an Irish context and, as such, warrant some deeper exploration.

4.3.1 Theme 1 – Responsibility

Responsibility emerged as a theme to encompass the overarching concept of work responsibility and professionalism. This theme included five codes: provision of support, policy and plans, a framework for practice, chaplaincy plan, and accountability.

Responsibility			
Code:	**References:**	**Chaplain:**	**Principal:**
Provision of Support	20	0.00%	100.00%
Policy and Plans	10	65.39%	25.92%
Framework for Practice	26	47.89%	42.78%
Chaplaincy Plan	6	100.00%	0.00%
Accountability	34	47.06%	48.36%

Table 2*: Responsibility Code Coverage Breakdown*

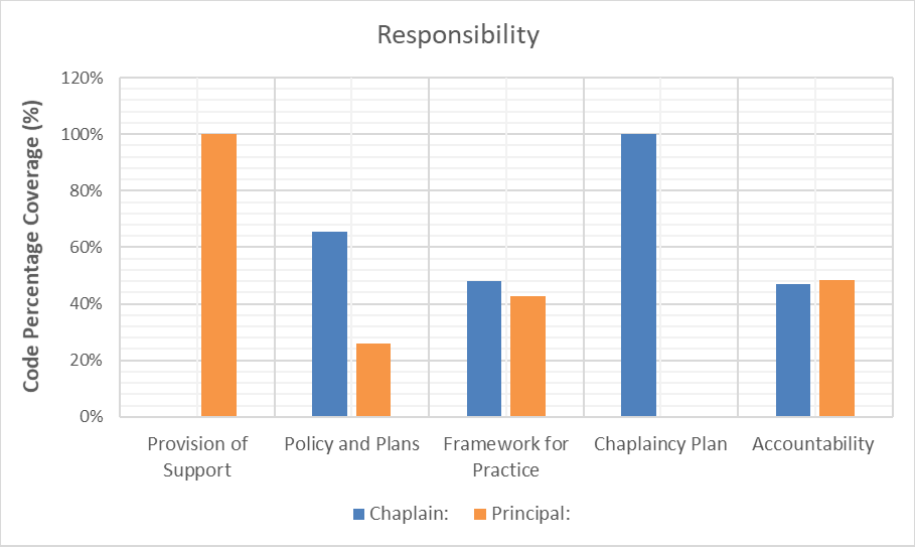

Figure 16: *Theme One - Responsibility Code Percentage Coverage*

4.3.1.1 Provision of support

Concerning the provision of support for chaplains, principals discussed whose responsibility it was to provide support to chaplains - the code - provision of support - related to questions about an effective chaplaincy service. Where principals recognised the chaplaincy service as effective, they made direct correlations with this effectiveness and continuous professional development (CPD). There appeared to be a consensus amongst principals that chaplains needed to avail of some CPD and upskilling; however, there was an expectation that chaplains would take personal responsibility to seek out opportunities for such upskilling or CPD.

> *P.11 "I think CPD is vital for the chaplain, and I think they need, you know, strengths and encouragement themselves, and they need to continually, no more than the rest of us, continually need to upskill".*

> *P.8 "CPD would definitely be good for the chaplains it gives them as well a sense of their own worth … and CPD is important … It also gives them a certain air of more legitimacy, probably around their peers".*

When it came to who would or should provide CPD there seemed to be a lack of clarity and consensus on behalf of principals. Some principals were aware of local cluster support groups for chaplains and actively encouraged their chaplains to participate, while only one school encouraged formal 'supervision' and offered financial assistance to their chaplain for this service. Others felt it was the patrons' responsibility – ETB or Diocese - to provide this support.

> *P.3 "So you[patrons] must provide services to us that respect who we are as schools… you must provide courses to our chaplains that support them".*

4.3.1.2 Policy and plans

Generally, both principals and chaplains saw the value of having a personal chaplaincy plan and chaplaincy policy. However, there was a strong sense that any policy must be adaptable and could be *lived out* within the school to serve the whole school community.

> *C.11 "It might be an idea to have a plan to help us focus, I suppose…but I hate the idea of going down that road, that you'd have to have a policy for chaplaincy or your policy for this unless it was a lived policy…That actually it was a reflection of what we were doing the day-to-day basis as well".*

> *P.11 "We have a policy about pastoral care with a policy around chaplain we have a whole number of policies where the chaplain is within those…but we do have a policy around chaplaincy and that's really important".*

4.3.1.3 Framework for practice

The literature presented in this study, particularly from an English and international context, all pointed to the need for professional and practical guidelines to establish an effective framework for chaplaincy practice within schools. Establishing a framework, alongside current professional demands of education, sets out parameters of good practice for chaplains which should ultimately establish an appropriate and effective chaplaincy service (O'Malley, 2019). In general, the discussions regarding a framework for practice were viewed in a positive light. However, while chaplains asserted that a framework would be welcome, they were certain that any such framework would need to be flexible to allow chaplains to respond effectively to those they minister to and reflect each school's characteristic spirit.

> *C.1 "having a framework that is quantifiable probably would help secure chaplaincy."*

> *C.10 "I think, a framework would be good, a framework though, that isn't so constraining that you can't adapt..."*

> *C.2 "A framework…again that's not too structured because the schools are all different, but I think that's imperative to have one".*

> *C.9 "If there was a general framework…that'd be brilliant, because then you could tweak it into Your own school or your own role in school…"*

Principals also saw the value of a framework and held the idea highly.

> *P.11 "I do think that definite framework, a definite structure, a governing body would be would really, really help going forward".*

> *P.2 "but I do think the framework and, and the guidance would strengthen the position, because then you would actually see a uniformity and a real value…".*

> *P.5 "You can absolutely see that the framework could be invaluable to a school, to a principal, to a board of management".*

The findings regarding the need for a 'framework for practice', are strongly corroborated by the literature as presented in chapter two. Sweeney (2004) suggested that reflective or supervisory practices are an integral part of what it means to be a professional [chaplain] and addressed the concept of supervision for chaplains as an essential element of their ministry. Sutherland (2010) also advocated a model of professional practice, and Parker, Gane and Parker (2015) asserted that the value of reflective practice was an effective way of evaluating and improving the work of a chaplain and could be applied to building a framework for evaluating and modifying/improving the overall chaplaincy program within the school.

4.3.1.4 Chaplaincy plan and accountability

The chaplaincy plan was given a different code and not incorporated into '*policy and plans*' to allow chaplains to discuss their plans that might be less formalised than a plan or policy ratified by senior management or the BoM. Overall, chaplains did see the value of having a plan, and while some linked these to accountability, far more chaplains and principals saw accountability as broader than the provision of a plan.

> *C.9 "I suppose for accountability, what I do is I make like a weekly schedule for each term"*
>
> *C.8 "I document everything…I have folders for every initiative that I feed into those folders. And so that's how I have proof as well, I have written proof"*
>
> *C.2 "I do have a plan and every month I send in everything I do in every class to the principal".*
>
> *C.10 "I'd have a total record every day of what I did because I was always aware that the rest of those out there who think God easy like you've got nothing to do you know, looking at you don't teach on a Friday, what do you do. But I always… accountability was really important to me".*
>
> *C.6 "Like everybody needs somebody to be accountable to. Often chaplains are just left to their own devices…so it is all down to your own professionalism".*
>
> *P.1 "I need them [chaplains] to reflect on what they have achieved, but also to set their targets for the next year… [our chaplain] would have to account for the work that she's done and set targets".*
>
> *P.7 "I see the accountability in the care team meetings when discussion comes up around a particular child… you know that level of accountability possibly needs to be more visible You know"*

4.3.2 Theme two – Rationale for the Role

This theme which produced twelve sub-codes with two hundred and forty-six references from both chaplains and principals, expresses clearly that there "remains a lack of accessible public research on what chaplains are, what they do and why (if at all) their roles matter" (Ryan, 2015, p. 9).

Rationale for Role			
Code:	**References:**	**Chaplain:**	**Principal:**
Teaching	17	45.82%	52.22%
Spirituality	42	61.28%	38.27%
Role Identity	42	57.12%	42.88%
Presence Being Available	24	57.21%	42.79%
Prayer or Prayer Space	26	82.82%	8.60%
Pastoral Care	33	41.67%	58.33%
Pastoral Counselling	9	75.10%	24.44%
Organising Events	14	54.38%	45.62%
Liturgical Celebration	31	48.83%	49.93%
Journeying	4	8.55%	91.45%
Faith Presence	13	78.95%	21.05%
Counselling	13	50.27%	49.73%

Table 3: *Rationale for the Role Code Coverage Breakdown*

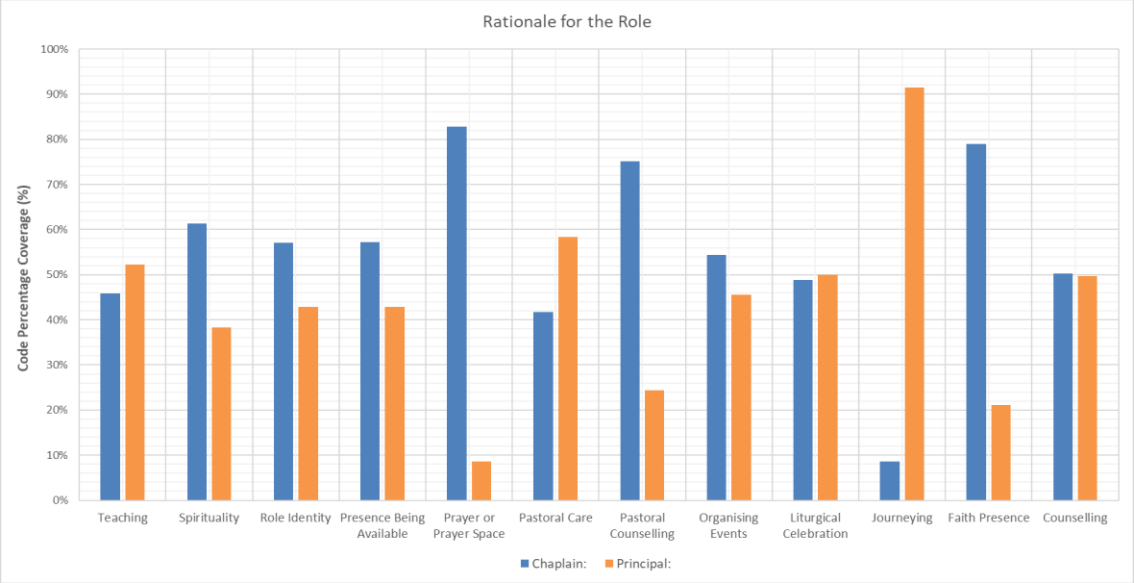

Figure 17: *Theme Two - Rationale for the Role Code Percentage Coverage*

The sheer breadth of the chaplaincy role is encompassed in these numbers and reflects what is consistently mirrored in the literature - that chaplaincy as a ministry is 'multi-faceted and demanding' and one which lacks clarity around role identity. Both chaplains and principals repeatedly expressed this.

> *C.7 "There's confusion, you have to expect that from people because the chaplain role is so multi-faceted. Like, you can't just expect people to understand this…"*

P.1 "And I think too it's around language and roles and perhaps it is the lack of clarity around the roles and expectations of chaplains".

As discussed in this study, the issue of role ambiguity for the practice of chaplaincy and the lack of clarity around role identity was identified by many writers on school chaplaincy in an Irish, UK, and Australian context (Norman, 2004; O'Higgins-Norman and King, 2009; Pohlmann, 2010; Moran, 2014b; Caperon, 2015). In an Irish context, the most up to date research on school-based chaplaincy by Moran (2014b) has specifically addressed this area and offered the theory of 'Meaning-Maker' to address this issue.

These observations and discussions which emerged from the data offer insight into a challenging and demanding ministry exiting and functioning within a complex institutional/world and faith relationship - chaplains are called to minister in an increasingly secular world while at the same time mediate between the sacred and secular in that "strange hinterland" (Caperon, 2015, p. 64). This is expressed particularly by the following chaplain:

C.11 We can be utilised in lots of different ways… the last two or three years I was struggling to find space for my specific chaplaincy… For the stuff… the spiritual development in that space, because I was being utilized and I was happy to do it because I saw it as part and parcel of my role… I was like a social worker… I mean that is all part of a chaplaincy role, I think, as well, but it's trying to make sure that we hold boundaries around that, so I do have time for my specific chaplaincy role. I'm trying to, I suppose, put a line between what is that, where that is, and I think that's the challenge that I have had over the years…

Role definition around chaplaincy will continue to be fraught with difficulties. There appears to be no one definition that can adequately describe the multi-faceted and complex nature of the role, which inevitably leads to multiple and conflicting demands and role-identifying conflict for chaplains in their practice. The ministry's nature means this will always be an ongoing challenge for chaplains where they are called to maintain their integrity and pastoral focus to address the individual needs of the communities they serve.

4.3.2.1 Pastoral Care

A final point on the sub-theme of pastoral care is worth noting, as, throughout the literature, this is an area that is consistently seen as the chaplain's responsibility. It has been identified in the literature as key to the role: "The school chaplain plays a key role in the provision of pastoral care to young people in that s/he can contribute to the humanistic and spiritual needs of the pupil" (Norman, 2002, p. 39), and Caperon (2015)

suggests that pastoral care is at the heart of an espoused theology of school chaplaincy. O'Malley (2019) also gave considerable time to discussions around pastoral care and saw it as a key skill for the pastoral dimension of chaplaincy. In general, the literature on school-based chaplaincy advocates that pastoral care lies at the very core of chaplaincy and the findings from this research strongly supports this claim, with eighteen of the twenty-two participants engaging in discussion around the value of pastoral care within the ministry of chaplaincy.

4.3.3 Theme Three – Personal Characteristics

There was a direct correlation between the findings around the gender of chaplains and principals, which arose from the findings in phase one (the questionnaires), and the subsequent discussion regarding the possible personal attributes or characteristics required of chaplains to enhance the role. Previously, Ryan's (2015) research highlighted the importance of chaplains' identities asserting that one of the most important aspects of chaplaincy's appeal is who the chaplains are. "In a role that is often very personal and based on relationships, a non-judgemental attitude and being there for people in need, the personality of a chaplain is a critical element in their impact" (2015, p. 55). This finding is congruent with the findings in this study which listed several personal attributes needed by chaplains to support them in carrying out the role. Table 4 and Figure 18 below show the six sub-codes which were attributed to personal characteristics and the code percentage coverage of each.

Personal Characteristics			
Code:	**References:**	**Chaplain:**	**Principal:**
Personal Support CPD	22	98.58%	1.42%
Personal Religious Beliefs	20	89.24%	9.63%
Gender of Chaplains and Principals	12	56.29%	43.71%
Experience	7	0.00%	100.00%
Adapting to Change	28	64.11%	35.89%

Table 4: *Personal Characteristics Code Coverage Breakdown*

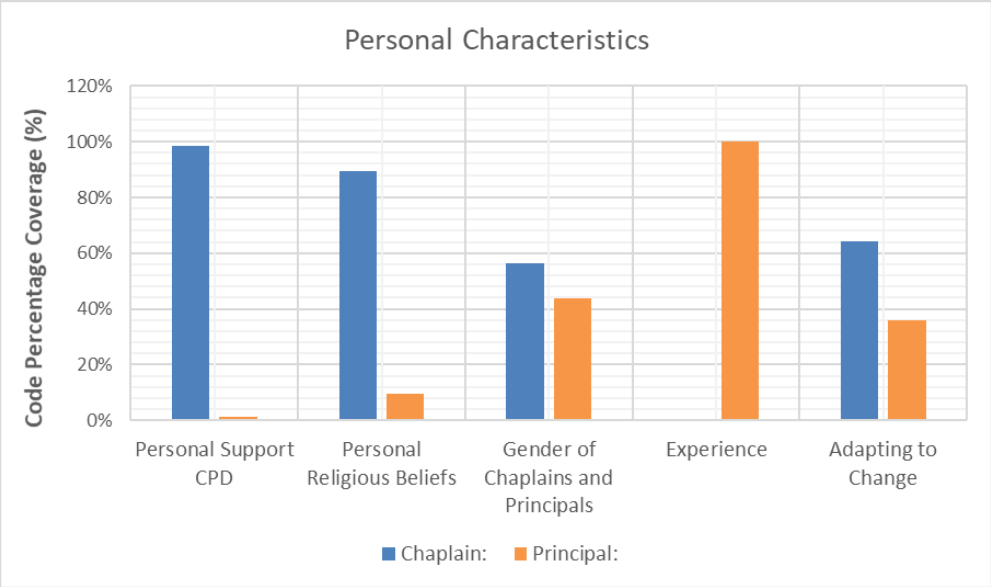

Figure 18: *Theme Three - Personal Characteristics Code Percentage Coverage*

An ability to adapt to change, personal responsibility in accessing CPD, experience in the role, and personal religious beliefs all emerged as necessary concerning the personal characteristics of chaplains and their ability to provide an effective chaplaincy service. Furthermore, the findings, which indicated that just one of the eleven chaplains was male, sparked some interesting discussions around gender imbalance in the role.

> *C.11 "Like the gender balance really caught my eye. I suppose I knew indirectly that it's predominantly a female space like, but it was interesting you know your principal data was predominantly male".*
>
> *P.5 "I was quite surprised at the small number of male chaplains. And the reverse of that in terms of Principals… there's quite a high percentage, 82%, as opposed to female… but more surprised that there's quite a small number of male chaplains".*
>
> *P.7 "The gender balance and chaplaincy…I would have thought that would it be more males. You know. So those stats did actually surprise me more so, more so than anything else you know".*

The conversation around gender also generated some discussion around the need for more male chaplains in our schools – particularly about having good male role models as witnesses to their faith.

> *C.3 "So I found very interesting the contrast in gender between principals and chaplains…yeah and very interesting that the majority of principals are male, and the majority of chaplains are female, so why do we not have more male chaplains in our schools today? Like what's putting them off because, and you know our students need good male role models…"*

Overall, it appeared that if chaplains had an awareness of the demands and multiplicity of the role and were personally aware of their strengths and possible weak areas, they could respond to the demands that emerged.

4.3.4 Theme Four – Anticipatory Concerns

This finding is highly significant in the context of this study as it represents something new and current, and has not been addressed by either literature or research on school-based chaplaincy in Ireland. The theme emerged in the context of the final question directed to both chaplains and principals about how they saw the future of chaplaincy in state schools.

Anticipatory Concerns			
Code:	**References:**	**Chaplain:**	**Principal:**
Worry for Future	10	66.81%	33.19%
Challenges	54	36.38%	54.99%

Table 5: *Anticipatory Concerns Code Coverage Breakdown*

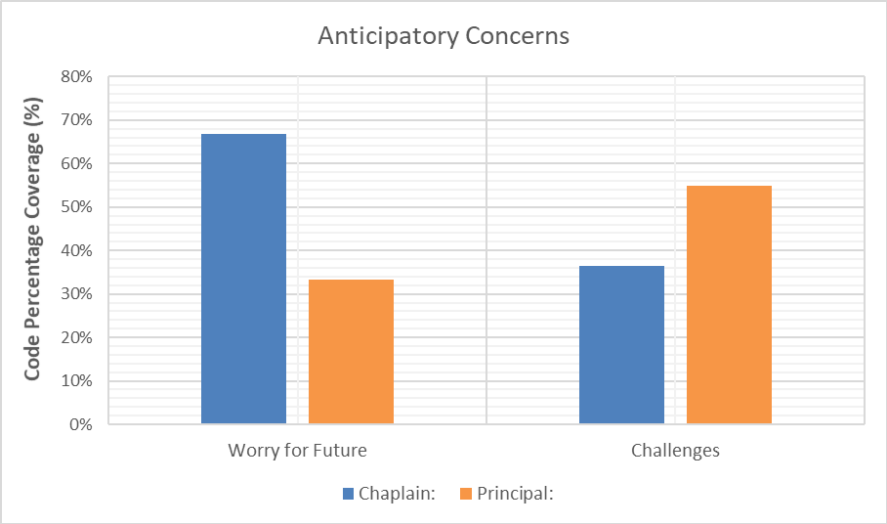

Figure 19: *Theme Four – Anticipatory Concern Code Percentage Coverage*

Nine of the respondents, representing both chaplains and principals, directly addressed their worries about the future of the role.

> *C.3 "I would have a lot of concerns, about the future of chaplaincy now…but I think in schools when chaplains retire, I would be concerned they're not going to be replaced in certain schools. I worry about that and yeah, I would be very, very concerned."*

> *C.6 "And just that I'd be nervous, I'd still be nervous for the role of the chaplain… like will it get dropped at some stage and decided not to go with us anymore, because it is so associated with the Catholic Church?"*

C.10 "I would be devastated that there wouldn't be chaplains in ETB schools… because without chaplains they are like a three-legged stool with a leg missing… definitely".

P.4 "Would I be worried about the status of the chaplain. I would be… I would be fearful that, in the broad sense, we would find it difficult to justify the continuing of a chaplain in state schools in certain ways at the moment…"

P.6 "Is it [chaplaincy] sustainable? Probably not unless it was something that was broadened and accessible for other students as well…"

Dealing with the tension of serving dual patrons, religious and secular, also raised concerns and formed part of the discussion in these findings.

P.11 "Well, I suppose when you have two different groups or two different experiences, or views, you have potential conflict, definitely. So again, I suppose the chaplain needs to be, first of all aware that that potential conflict is there. And then they need to, I suppose, have the skill set to be able to work their way through that".

Other respondents encompassed their concerns in challenges that they encountered regarding dual patronage in their daily work.

P.3 "The most challenging thing of the role is actually that aspect… the spiritual part of the chaplaincy and if the chaplain can facilitate that in a multi-d setting".

The practicalities of remaining faithful to the denominational nominating body, the Catholic Church, without privileging this one faith will undoubtedly continue to be a point of discussion for both patrons as they navigate their way through the implications of the newly defined status of state schools. This new paradigm shift brought about by the ETBI raises many questions for the chaplain and the BoM in DCCs and may have severe effects on the future of chaplaincy.

4.3.4.1 Challenges

Nineteen of the respondents all spoke about challenges within the actual practice of chaplaincy. These were broad in their remit – ranging from dealing with different religions and student cohorts to challenges posed by parents and colleagues.

C.11 "We had students coming from every religion and none and probably in our school at the minute you know, the challenge is in the chaplaincy space. And the problem is I suppose the religious slant… I think that's a huge challenge well like".

C.7 "And it is challenging because I think no matter what, there is an element of trying to keep everyone …you're meant to be always chaplain from this whole school approach…It's that you're trying to offer something to everybody. So, in a roundabout way, you're nearly trying to keep everyone happy, which is virtually impossible. And that is the challenge in itself".

C.9 "What I think one of the biggest challenges is people not understanding what a chaplain is and the role of chaplain and I think that is a huge thing."

P.8 "The biggest challenge it's to make people outside the school gate fully aware of the valuable… invaluable work that a chaplain does in school and, again, I think that it sounds terrible to say but it's almost a publicity battle".

Some chaplains spoke of the challenges in a positive light –encountering situations and finding solutions allowed them to draw upon their own skillset and resources and turn the challenges into positive experiences.

C.5 "Then even for kind of, for providing whatever small amount of liturgical stuff …we can do that equally, you know, we can find a balance in relation to the message of being multidenominational, as well as Christian."

4.3.5 Theme five – Characteristic Spirit

A substantial part of the literature review in this study was given to discussion around ethos/characteristic spirit and finding a suitable definition for state schools, relevant in the context of this research. Aware that ethos is a term "that means many things to many people and to a large extent has been misunderstood, partly due to the elusive nature of the concept" (Norman, 2003, p. 1), it was essential to engage participants in discussion around ethos/characteristic spirit – both in their understanding of the terms and in how they saw their role in supporting it within their school. Table 6 and figure 20 below shows the eight sub-codes which emerged from this theme – these included safe and positive environment; multidenominational; lived experience; inclusive; personal faith and interfaith practice; ethos/values of the school.

Characteristic Spirit			
Code:	**References:**	**Chaplain:**	**Principal:**
Safe Environment	2	100%	0%
Positive Environment	8	0%	100%
Multidenominational	29	42.66%	50.30%
Lived Experience	13	75.84%	24.16%
Interfaith	40	40.90%	59.10%
Inclusive	38	24.92%	75.08%
Faith	15	18.20%	81.80%
Ethos or Values of School	49	29.10%	69.55%

Table 6: *Characteristic Spirit Code Coverage Breakdown*

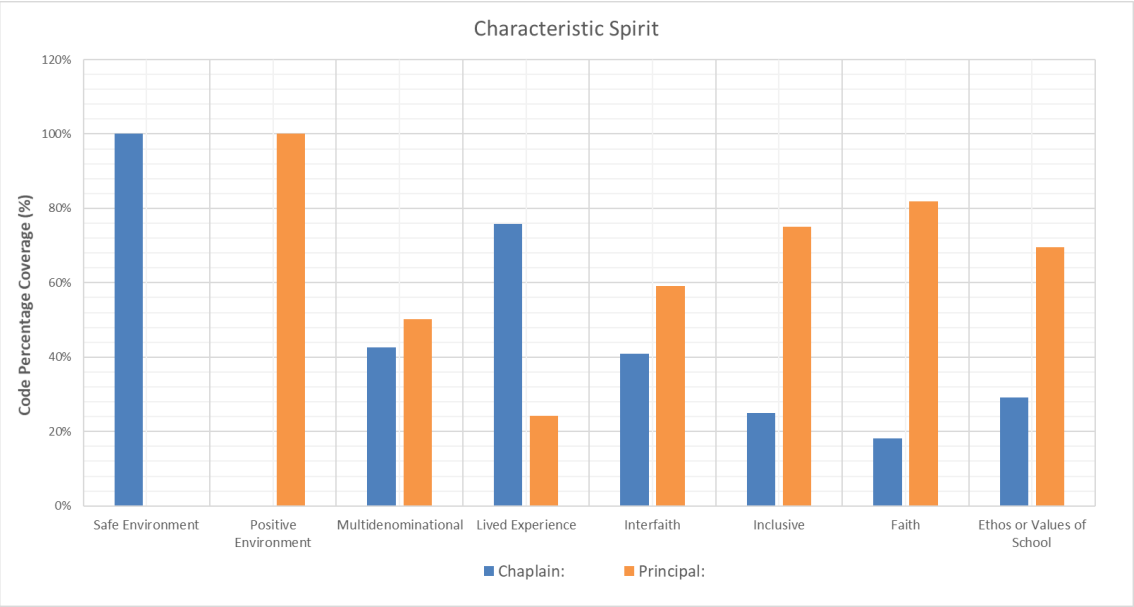

Figure 20: *Theme Five - Characteristic Spirit Code Percentage Coverage*

As this theme has direct bearing on the research question in this study, some exploration of the findings will be privileged for discussion here.

4.3.5.1 Ethos or Values of School

In relation to the participants' understanding of ethos, most of the respondents used the word interchangeably with characteristic spirit, mission statement and values. Both chaplains and principals stated that chaplains played an integral role in supporting the characteristic spirit of the school. As expressed in the literature review in this work, ethos is seen as located within the culture of a school and is both formal and informal expressions of its members, its cultural norms, assumptions, and beliefs. It is the predominant characteristic tone, spirit or sentiment informing an "identifiable entity involving human life and interaction" (McLaughlin, 2005, p. 311) and, as such, is seen as the shaping of human perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, and dispositions. Therefore, it is not difficult to see why a chaplain whose ministry is relational plays a pivotal role in helping schools live out their ethos. Ethos is a lived reality and manifests itself in daily life and relationships within the school. Moran's (2014b) research on school-based chaplaincy in Ireland suggested that the chaplain adds a vital dimension to school life by facilitating reflection on school ethos, and this finding corroborates the findings in this study. Furthermore, O'Malley (2019, p. 1), in his discussion on chaplaincy, also asserts that the chaplain has the potential to be "a living sign of a school's commitment to ethos".

C.10 "In some ways the chaplain holds the key to the ethos… when I first started my principal was delighted that I would work ethos out with him…And that we, together, could shape ethos and lead ethos in a designated Community college".

C.8 "As chaplain in the school that I'm in is that in everything I do I always reflect the mission statement and the ethos of the College".

P.2 [The chaplain] Being available to check that everything is as close to the characteristic spirit and to what chaplaincy is in a community college, making sure that's always to the fore.

The research question in this study set out to explore how chaplains can support the ethos of their schools and how this can, in turn, aid the school to "uphold and be accountable to the patron for so upholding the characteristic spirit of the school" (Government of Ireland, 1998). The findings in this data set clearly show that chaplains support their schools in sustaining the ethos in many ways.

P.6 "[Chaplains] support of management and practices that promote the ethos… almost across the board there's unanimous agreement to the fact that the role is supporting management [to promote ethos] within the school".

The findings also assert that management sees the chaplain's role in living out the school's ethos as indispensable.

P.11 "I do think that the chaplain has a very definite role in supporting the characteristic spirit, you know, bringing it alive in the school".

4.3.5.2 Personal Faith, Interfaith and Multidenominational

The Chaplain supports the characteristic spirit of the school through a variety of practices – including giving witness to their faith and ensuring that the multidenominational status of DCCs is upheld through inter-faith practices. In this research, personal faith tended to be referenced in terms of 'presence' or witnesses to faith, awareness of one's faith stance, and how that directed one's worldview.

C.8 "I put it like this, the importance of animating all faiths, but not losing sight of my own when I'm there as a person providing spiritual support and safeguarding sacred spaces".

P.1 "It's the [Chaplain's] ability to manage their own faith while embracing and respecting and including all other faiths".

C.6 "It is okay to talk about faith and to talk about our [own] spirituality".

C.2 "You know you have to try and bring that faith element in… you have to be cleverer about it… but it needs to come in, in a different sense".

The changing landscape of our society and the context and cultural milieu of schools demand chaplains to embrace all faiths and beliefs and avoid any attempt to evangelise

or proselytise. Younger (2018, p. 32) highlighted the tension of the chaplain embedded in a non-faith context while engaged in representational ministry and suggested a stance of '*committed impartiality'* as a solution to manage this tension. This stance allows chaplains to be open about their faith position while creating events and worship experiences that use religious language and practices to avoid attempts to persuade or proselytise consciously. The findings from this study clearly show that chaplains cognisant of this tension attempt to navigate it by being aware that are called to lead with integrity while holding firm to their faith position.

The chaplain's witness to the multidenominational status of their school was often seen through offering a variety of liturgical celebrations, and management in this study expressed that these liturgical times were pivotal in assisting them to uphold the characteristic spirit of their school. Interfaith practices are often seen as central to the chaplain's role and offer opportunities to reflect the chaplain's ability to cater for the school community in a multidenominational setting.

> *P.8 "[The chaplain] celebrates different times of the year and acknowledges all faiths… there's a balancing act there you know that is tricky…it takes a lot of common sense or kind of just an awareness of the audience and making sure that people don't feel left out and thinking the chaplain is only just concerned about one cohort of people".*
>
> *P.9 "We [chaplain and management] would, care for every student and the multidenominational education that we try to provide times for all faiths…I suppose while there is a strong Catholic ethos in our school, we will also be mindful of every of everybody's beliefs".*
>
> *C.1 "I love interfaith services and I love seeing the pride in the face of the Muslim child who is delivering their prayer and their parents are there and it's amazing… and the inclusivity of it…that it gives to those families".*

4.3.5.3 Positive and Safe Environment, Lived Experience, Inclusive.

The final findings under the theme of 'characteristic spirit' encompassed the respondents' beliefs about what was essential for upholding the ethos of their schools. The idea of a positive environment being linked to ethos finds expression in the literature on ethos, as discussed in this study. It was noted that the origin of the term school ethos was credited to the work of (Rutter *et al.*, 1979), who observed the importance of the school ethos or atmosphere, stating that some schools that provided a more positive experience were likely to be more effective. Furthermore, Allder (1993, p. 69) asserted that the ethos of a school "is the unique, pervasive atmosphere or mood of the organisation". This research showed that principals were confident that the

chaplain played a key role in creating a positive/safe environment or presence in the school.

> *P.1 "The actions of the chaplain, to decide how an atmosphere or atmospheres are created around the various events that the chaplain gets to organize… [is a] contribution to positive environment".*
>
> *P.11 "This is a great school it is very welcoming, it's very warm, there's a really nice feeling…sometimes it's very hard to put your finger on it. But behind all of that very often is the chaplain".*
>
> *P.8 "[The chaplain] promotes kind of wellness and wellbeing and positivity in the school".*
>
> *C.4 "We help to create a climate that prevents or promotes respect".*
>
> *C.2 "Guiding them, engaging them, and sometimes carrying them… and that's both students and staff… To say I feel safe in our school… we carry each other a lot and you know the chaplain is very much available to create that [environment]".*

In general, both chaplains and principals believed that ethos was not static; instead, it was a lived experience within the school and found expression in the positive environment, relationships, and inclusive practices.

> *C.11 "They'll see that in day to day [things]…they will see it as lived values as opposed to this ornate value".*
>
> *C.1 "A lived experience of the characteristic spirit of our college is…everywhere…is visible everywhere in the school, lived out and mentioned at every assembly…it's very inclusive, it's very welcoming, very safe".*
>
> *C.2 "It's not what's written on a piece of paper…people are what influences it. We can write it down on a piece of paper… but it's the reality of how you do it and how you talk and how you engage with people…that's what builds characteristic spirit…".*
>
> *P.3 "Characteristic spirit is lived…which means if you walk into the building, you should see excellence, you should feel respected… every interaction you have with somebody, it should be lived out".*
>
> C.4 "[*Our ethos] should embrace inclusivity and we should embrace diversity and we need to make it known that everybody's voice matters…".*

It has been argued in this study that a school can only claim to have an ethos when it is achieved through a negotiated process - there cannot be a dichotomy between precept and practice, and it is only in this context that the ensuing reality is a lived reality of the values espoused by the whole school community. The data findings in this research validate this argument and shows that the chaplain plays a central role in ensuring that ethos is lived out in schools.

4.3.6 Theme six – Relational

In the context of this research and this emergent theme, six sub-codes were generated with one hundred and thirty-two corresponding references concerning relationships. This theme is significant because it represents new and exciting findings – specifically, the relationship between the chaplain and principal.

Relational			
Code:	**References:**	**Chaplain:**	**Principal:**
Support from Colleagues other than Chaplains	6	0%	100%
Relationship with Students	15	35.52%	64.48%
Relationship with Staff	9	86.21%	13.79%
Relationship with Management	35	70.62%	25.68%
Relationship with local Church or Community	28	87.25%	12.75%
Collaboration with wider community	49	57.27%	42%

Table 7: *Relational Code Coverage Breakdown*

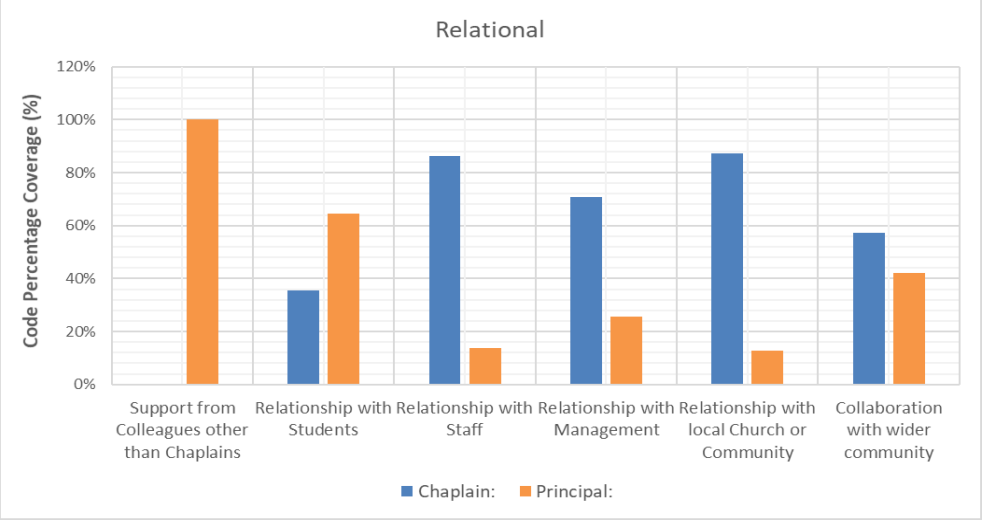

Figure 21: *Theme Six - Relational Code Percentage Coverage*

The literature on school chaplaincy generally expresses that chaplaincy is relational, but it tends to contextualise the relational aspect of the role within the broader remit of pastoral care and not specific relationships. It has been well documented that pastoral care is central to the practice of chaplaincy (Moran, 2014a; O'Higgins-Norman, 2014; Caperon, 2015; Paterson, 2016; O'Malley, 2019), and that one of the essential functions for a chaplain lies in facilitating the pastoral role and building strong relationships and partnerships with the whole school community.

> Chaplaincy care is grounded in initiating, developing, deepening, and closing a spiritual and empathic relationship with those receiving care. The development of a genuine relationship is at the core of chaplaincy care. Relationships underpin, even enable, all the other dimensions of chaplaincy care to occur. (LaRocca-Pitts, 2015, p. 1).

The importance of other relationships – relationships with students, staff, management, the local Church – and collaboration with the broader school community are also validated in these findings. These relationships and support from colleagues, both within the school and from outside agencies, were seen as supporting chaplains in their ministry.

The specific relationship between chaplains with management, which initially emerged in phase one of this research, has not been previously validated or explored in research or literature on school-based chaplaincy in an Irish context. It warrants further discussion and consideration.

4.3.6.1 Relationship with Management

The first sub-code, the relationship with management, directly corresponded to phase one of the research in this study – the questionnaires – which had raised an interesting finding from question six regarding effectiveness. The strength of the chaplain / principal relationship showed that over fifty per cent of chaplains believed that a relationship with the principal, based on mutual trust and good communication, was fundamental to an effective chaplaincy service in the school. While principals did not necessarily state this relationship was crucial in this stage of the research, later in the second phase, six principals concurred with the chaplain's assertion that the relationship between them was essential for an effective chaplaincy service within schools.

> *C.1 "The strength of the chaplain's relationship with management… I would say that that relationship is actually very central to my role. If you didn't have same strength of relationship with management you are not as effective, you are not as strong, in your role…"*
>
> *C.11 "I would like to think I have always had a very good relationship with the managers of the school, and they would see the value in the work that I do within the school 100% …I do think the influence of management [on the chaplain] in their school is really, really important".*
>
> *C.6 "We're effective in what we are doing with, but it depends on your relationship with the principal or the deputy Principal…".*
>
> *C.7 "If you are supported by your management…. then it [chaplaincy] runs and it works".*
>
> *P.10 "A strong relationship with management… regular collaboration provides a strong chaplaincy and involvement".*

P.2 "I think, if the relationship is good, and if it's not it's an issue for management, but it's also equally an issue for the chaplain… The management support is very important for the chaplain and vice versa".

P.3 "There has to be a high trust relationship. [chaplaincy] is effective because the chaplain you're working with have responsibilities, they are educated they are going to do their job".

P.7 "I mean my experience of [working] with them [chaplains] is kind of close collaborative work or relationships on a daily basis".

While positive daily interpersonal interactions between a principal and all school staff are necessary to garner trust and support to operate an effective school, the relationship between a principal and chaplain is unique. Arguably, it requires something that transcends mere interactions and demands a more collaborative relationship. This collaborative relationship is necessary based on the multi-faceted nature of a chaplain's work. The role of the chaplain can encompass many aspects which impact their relationship with the principal - the following list gives a glimpse into the nature of a chaplain's relationship with management, which tends to operate outside of the normal parameters and interactions with other teachers/staff – this list is by no means exhaustive rather it serves to emphasise the point that the chaplain/principal relationship is unique. This research study gained these insights through discussion with chaplains and principals.

- Work that operates outside of the structured timetable of the school where mutual trust and accountability are essential.
- Dealings with staff and students personally - at moments of crisis and vulnerability, where this needs to be communicated to the principal appropriately.
- Response and adaptation to the school's needs require a negotiated process between the principal and chaplain.
- The chaplain's role in leading the school community in celebrations and moments of loss and/or critical incidents through sacred liturgical moments.
- The chaplain's call to be the 'eyes and ears' around the school for the principal – a '*barometer*' to measure what is happening behind the obvious daily interactions of teaching and learning.

These aspects of the chaplain's role, which are unique to the chaplain, demand a positive and trusting relationship with the principal and senior management. Furthermore, they

require a conscious consideration on behalf of both principal and chaplain of how this positive relationship can directly impact the overall effectiveness of a chaplaincy service within a school. This is an area that may warrant further research as it has the potential to shape effective chaplaincy provision within schools.

4.3.6.2 Collaboration with Diocese and ETB

The discussion and findings regarding collaboration with the diocese and ETB relate to the ecclesial and educational aspects of the chaplaincy role. The question attempted to elicit a response regarding their relationship (if any) with their local diocese, their employer, and the ETB; and whether those relationships were supportive or necessary in their role. This was an important consideration as it focused on the nature of chaplaincy in state schools that hold a dual mandate for the chaplain –ecclesial and state – which can lead to possible conflicting expectations for the chaplain in their ministry. In general, chaplains believed that their relationship with their local Bishop or diocese was poor and that contact or support for them in their role was poor. The primary connection with the diocese came through the support of the diocesan Adviser.

> *C.10 "I think that the relationship with the diocese over 20 odd years has been very poor".*
>
> *C.6 "And the only contact that I have with Archbishop house is through the diocesan advisor it's also the advisors' visits".*
>
> *C.8 "I have never had an outreach from the Bishop. I was always out reaching to the Bishop and I'm always reaching out to the parish…But I'm always trying to say please include me to the Bishop…"*

Some principals echoed what the chaplains expressed; a lack of contact with the local diocese following the appointment of a chaplain.

> *P.4 "But today no…If I was to say which influences [the school] I would say the ETB, we are more guided by the ETB. The Archbishop - no".*

When it came to direct support for their chaplaincy service, there was little influence exerted on principals by the diocese once they complied with the requirements for their BoM – which states they are obliged to have two Archbishop's representatives on the board.

Concerning support from the ETB - principals showed an awareness of the responsibilities of dual patronage and the implications of being a multidenominational school and generally had more contact with the ETB as their employer and patron body.

P.7 "I supposed the fact that the ETB is our employer and has the kind of the shared patronage and they've obviously done a lot of work on the characteristic spirit…but you know because we are designated It is that bit different…the multidenominational… that aspect of the school is quite complex…"

P.3 "So I suppose we as an ETB School…they are our patrons in the school with the Archbishop of Dublin…The characteristic spirit was handed as a developed piece of work between the ETB And the Archbishop's…"

P.3 "What is the responsibility for the ETB and the Archbishop's to actually support the 57 [DCC] schools?"

P.5 "I suppose as a principal the level of contact with the ETBI around so many different things is high... and your level of contact with the Archdiocese is actually quite limited. I would never have gone to the Archbishop's office looking for advice".

Some principals recognised that the ETB had a more secular approach to their schools; made explicit in recent times with the newly defined status of all ETBI schools as *de facto* multidenominational.

P.7 "I suppose I get the sense from the ETBIs that the vision tends to be more secular. Without a doubt we have a patronage there that is kind of directly connected with the Archdiocese of Dublin as well and there's a tension there. Yes."

The tension described between the secular and religious expectations involved in a DCC did not seem to be viewed negatively; instead once the tensions were acknowledged both chaplains and principals attempted to navigate their way through them to benefit the whole school community.

P.8 "There is [a tension] but I don't know… [is it negative?] I just notice what we do and how the chaplain's role here kind of helps the students… it's very Christian… it's very supportive and it's not at odds with any ETB core values".

C.5 "Like if it could be a joint thing between them… ETB and [Diocese]… you have different patronage, but you really need to work together".

Ultimately, the school chaplain is called to work through these tensions in a way that mediates between these different perceptions and be a living reminder of the school's foundation and ethos without compromising their ministry.

4.3.6.3 Relationships with students, staff, and local Church

The concept of the chaplain being a 'presence' or accompanying those they meet on their journeys is repeatedly stressed throughout the literature on school-based chaplaincy. Glackin (2011) suggests that this 'presence' 'best defines the role of chaplaincy and exemplifies it as being a 'presence in pilgrimage': the physical presence of "being there for staff [and] students" (2011, p. 54). O'Donoghue (1998, p. 117) speaks

of the chaplain as a 'reflective presence' or 'prophetic presence', challenging injustices and becoming a significant voice for students in need. Monahan and Renehan (1999) acknowledge that while the school and the Church may have different values and approaches to ensure the welfare of the young people in their care, ultimately, both "give the chaplain a mandate to be an identifiable facilitator for the spiritual welfare of students and related school personnel" (1999, p. 14). This study's research findings closely correlate with the literature and validate that the chaplain plays a crucial role in the welfare of students and the whole school community. The findings suggested that chaplains believed that relationships with students, staff and the local parish/Church were key to an effective chaplaincy service.

> *C.8 "[Chaplaincy is] based on the relationship with the students and the parents and colleagues".*
>
> *C.4 "Relationships are key to chaplaincy [being effective]".*

Principals concurred that a chaplain's relationships with the whole school community were essential for a functioning chaplaincy service.

> *P.2 "It's all of your [chaplain's] interactions… it's how you interact with, with students, irrespective of what that interaction really is about, and how you interact with parents. And it's all about the interaction, the relationship and what you hold as important and what others can see that you hold as being important".*

It is clear from the literature and research on school chaplaincy that an effective chaplaincy service provides support to all members of the school community – fundamentally, effective chaplaincy has an ability to connect and engage with the community and it garners the support and involvement of local Church communities (Pohlmann, 2010, p. 233).

4.3.6.4 Support from Colleagues

The final sub-code to emerge within this theme was the support chaplains received from their school colleagues and other chaplains. This was an important point to note as chaplaincy, by its nature, is often seen as 'liminal' or 'marginal' (S. B. Roberts, 2017). While Whipp (2018, p. 108) describes this isolation as a 'necessary liminality' and suggests that chaplains need to be "willing to linger somewhat on the edge of things, while striving to be genuinely embedded in context" it nevertheless is a paradoxical path for the chaplain to patrol.

C.10 "Talking to all the chaplains and just and talking to colleagues as well, so it doesn't become stale … So that their religion department as well…know that you are a leader in the team, not just a person who's the nice old chaplain".

C.7 "If you are supported by your management or your RE department, then it [chaplaincy] runs and it works. Because it's a team effort".

C.1 "And for the very most part, my staff are very supportive…and that matters but you do meet challenges and you would have your difficult staff members and they're in the minimum…"

For chaplains, the support of colleagues was seen as essential and allowed them to be part of a team, which meant their contribution to the whole school community was seen as significant.

4.4 Summary of Findings

This chapter has presented and reflected on the research findings and attempted to bring the participant's voices into dialogue with the relevant literature. Throughout the research, the findings of this study indicate the nature and role of chaplaincy as a multi-faceted and complex ministry which often leads to multiple and conflicting demands and sometimes role-identifying conflict for chaplains in their practice. While previous literature on school-based chaplaincy has addressed several key areas for chaplains in their practice - including the question of role identity, the rationale for school-based chaplaincy, and approaches for best practice - this study set out to specifically explore how chaplains in DCCs (state schools) support management in upholding the ethos of our newly defined multidenominational schools. Overall, it is very evident that chaplains are vital in offering school management support in upholding their statutory obligation to uphold the ethos of their school as laid down by the *Education Act 1988.* In the final analysis, the findings clearly show that chaplains (according to principals and chaplains) are necessary and integral to a school in living out its ethos and that chaplains are professional practitioners who can navigate the duality of the role (ecclesial and state mandates) and manage any possible tensions which this may bring.

Furthermore, this study highlighted the relational aspect of the role involving the principal or senior management and the chaplain and is a crucial finding that, to date, has been a lacuna in research into school-based chaplaincy. In providing an effective chaplaincy service, consideration of the relationship between the chaplain and principal,

has been well documented in this study, and this relationship is pivotal for providing an effective service.

4.5 Conclusion

The findings in this study clearly indicate that chaplains urgently need a framework that supports them in their practice. Recognising the important and distinctive work professional chaplains do requires appropriate support structures from the relevant stakeholders. While maintaining competent chaplaincy care is the responsibility of individual chaplains, employers need to encourage and support their chaplains in seeking out opportunities to enhance the quality of this care practice through continued professional development. Further research and discussion will require how this framework should be built and who should deliver it. The need for a framework was a genuine concern for both chaplains and principals. Moreover, this concern, which emerged as a theme in this research, is genuine for chaplains and principals – the future of chaplaincy in state schools is not safeguarded, and the questions regarding the future provision, equity, and sustainability are a genuine concern. While both chaplains and principals in DCCs are aware that the landscape in which they work is very different to other school types, they nevertheless require a clear and definitive vision of the values they are obliged to represent from their patrons and an understanding of the centrality of chaplain's role in upholding this vision into the future.

Considering the chaplain's significant contribution to school ethos, it may benefit schools to redefine the chaplain's role within the whole-school context. Suppose we begin with establishing a collaborative relationship with management and the chaplain - in that case, each school can shape their chaplaincy provision within a broader framework that shows professional competence, accountability, and the necessity and value of chaplaincy within a school. It would be a first step to addressing the concerns expressed in this research about the future of chaplaincy in state schools.

The concluding chapter of this thesis outlines the implications and recommendations that emerge from this research study.

Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

This study emerged from the research question investigating the interplay between chaplains and ethos in DCCs in the Republic of Ireland. The study employed a case study to address the research question and set the parameters exploring chaplains' experience in upholding the ethos of their school and of the principals' understanding of the chaplains' role in that process. The research findings have clearly shown that chaplains play a vital role in supporting management in their statutory obligation to "uphold and be accountable to the patron for so upholding the characteristic spirit of the school" (Government of Ireland, 1998, sec. 15 (2)). Furthermore, through the voices of principals, chaplains have been honoured and acknowledged as essential in creating authentic inclusion for the whole school community.

This chapter begins by considering the relevance of this study for current educational research, specifically in an Irish context. As outlined in chapter four, the findings highlighted and discussed six major themes – responsibility; rationale for the role; personal characteristics; anticipatory concerns; characteristic spirit; and relational. From an analysis of these themes, four key areas arose from the findings - these are:

1. First, the importance of identifying and defining the ethos of a school emerged - chaplains were able to recall, understand and explain in their own words what ethos meant to them in their school context. They were able to articulate how they supported management in upholding ethos. Management too expressed that; chaplains played a vital role in supporting ethos in their school.

2. Second, both chaplains and principals recognised that the relationship between the nominating patrons and chaplain while, complex, was manageable - both chaplains and management agreed that chaplains are capable of employing strategies that allow them to manage any emergent tension. The challenges presented by this tension were often seen in positive regard – allowing for fostering a positive school environment /ethos.

3. Third, data analysis uncovered that relationships were an important indicator of the school's ethos and formed a space in which the school's ethos could be nourished and embedded. Most notably, this was expressed as the necessity for positive relationships

between management and chaplains. It was seen as key to demonstrating values, nurturing equality, respect, and a positive environment, which ultimately contributed positively to embedding ethos within the school's culture.

4. Fourth, data findings indicated that chaplains need an agreed and standardised framework from both patrons, which supports them and management in their school. Participants saw this framework as essential for providing an effective chaplaincy service.

Considering these findings, this chapter will make recommendations for future research, and the implications for policy and practice in light of these will be considered. The limitations and delimitations are acknowledged, and the chapter will conclude with the researcher's reflections.

5.2 Relevance of this study

The overall purpose of this research was twofold: to give voice to the chaplains working in DCCs, allowing them to articulate the valuable contribution they make in their school and to utilise this research to engage with key stakeholders about how to safeguard the future of chaplaincy. Fundamentally, the relevance of this research lies in bringing the voices of both chaplains and principals into the public square debates on the purpose, nature, and scope of school-based chaplaincy in multidenominational schools ought to be.

In its investigation of the approaches and experiences of chaplains, the research reveals that conflicting perceptions and expectations exist between the state, school patrons and the wider school community about the chaplain's role. These conflicting perceptions have led to role identity ambiguity and a lack of institutional support for the chaplain – creating real concerns for the future provision of service. Furthermore, there is a dearth of research on school-based chaplaincy in an Irish context, and to date, no phenomenological research on chaplaincy in DCCs; therefore, this current research speaks to this space.

This research is also timely, owing to the two pivotal developments in the educational landscape: *The (Admissions to School) Act 2018*, enacted in all schools in September 2020 and the launch of the ETBI strategic plan for 2021-2024. Both endeavours, by key

stakeholders in education, have attempted to build strategic and collaborative partnerships to deliver and cater to schools and the broader communities. Arguably, both of these have had and will continue to impact schools and the provision of services significantly. Furthermore, the findings in this research validate the role of the chaplain as an integral part of the delivery of services in schools and the chaplains' desire to be part of any future collaborative process or strategic partnership with patrons.

Finally, this research has highlighted an important finding that has not been addressed in the literature on school-based chaplaincy: the importance of the relationship between management and chaplains to provide an effective chaplaincy service. The findings in this research overwhelmingly substantiated the importance of relationships between the principal and chaplain. Allowing principals to have a voice in this research strengthened this finding and was particularly useful in allowing chaplains to hear that their role's distinctiveness was acknowledged by principals and validated as something which made a significant contribution and impact on school life and ethos. While research and literature has shown that the chaplain has a distinctive role in forming relationships with others in the school community (Murphy, 2004, p. 208; Caperon, 2015, p. 71; Ryan, 2015, p. 37; Hunt, 2021, p. 208) the distinctiveness of the chaplain and principal role has not been explored in an Irish context. The relationship between the principal and chaplain models and encourages good relationships within the school and provides a role model for staff and pupils in relating to and serving the needs of others. It has the capacity to create a relational bridge between the school and the community.

5.3 Recommendations for Future Research

In consideration of the contributions and the limitations of this study, there are four recommendations for further research that would extend insight and knowledge into the practice of school-based chaplaincy in DCCs. These recommendations are made to arrive at a *shared* understanding of how the chaplaincy's purpose, nature and scope may be shaped in the newly defined ETB multidenominational model of schools. These include recommendations to broaden the research to include more voices from chaplains and other key people who are impacted by the chaplain's role; recommendations for further exploration and research into the significant finding regarding the importance of the chaplain and principal relationship which, could have a

substantial impact in shaping the future provision of chaplaincy services in schools. Finally, recommendations will be made for a reconfiguration of the chaplaincy role and for research into building a framework for best practices for chaplains in schools.

5.3.1 The inclusion of more voices

Further research to capture other voices is needed. The chaplains in this study were selected from schools situated within the geographical boundaries of the Dublin Diocese, which embraces Dublin and a diversity of schools extending over most of Wicklow and parts of Kildare, Laois, Carlow, and Wexford. However, only two participants came from outside of the Dublin region (Kildare), while all other participants worked in schools within Dublin city and county. Further research to include the voices of chaplains in all fifty-two DCCs in the Irish Republic could give greater scope to build a database of the work chaplains carries out, which supports management in upholding ethos. Furthermore, including chaplains from across the country (Republic of Ireland) would ensure that both urban and rural schools across all four provinces were represented and shed light on the relationship with patrons in the different regions. The voices of other chaplains in DDCs throughout the country may provide a more strategic perspective on chaplaincy and its contribution to ethos. Although this research emphasised the voices of principals and chaplains being heard, limitations on time and resources prevented the voices of all chaplains working in DCCs from being heard. While the results of the research may apply to the Republic of Ireland, this is not claimed to be an outcome of the study.

Further research could also provide the opportunity to hear the student voices and recognising their distinctive relationship with the chaplain in their school. Research could also be undertaken with parents, who often are the ones who validate the chaplains' work – specifically those involved in the discussions around future provision of care for their children arising from interventions between the chaplain and their child. Other voices from the local community could also add a further dimension to the discussion on the value and role of the chaplain. Finally, research involving participants from a patron's perspective might offer insight into how DCCs, through the chaplain's work, could demonstrate and embody ethos in a way that would be seen as equitable, transparent, inclusive, and congruent with the status of multidenominational schools.

5.3.2 Relationship between chaplain and principal

Further research into the relationship between the principal and chaplain is needed. A significant finding in this research related to the relationship between chaplain and principal. All eleven chaplains who were interviewed referenced the need for a positive relationship with the principal to allow the chaplaincy service to be effective. All the chaplains indicated that they felt valued in their schools and that the principal, in the first instance, was key to this awareness, which contributed to a positive school environment. Furthermore, all eleven schools showed very clear indicators of effective chaplaincy practice, and the principals of those schools reinforced this. Six out of the eleven principals also endorsed the chaplain's perception that a mutually positive relationship was vital to the success of an effective service. Integral to providing an effective service was the chaplain, who became the embodiment of the school's ethos. Principals expressed that although ethos was often seen as abstract it became visible in the manifestation of relationships, interactions, and tangible expressions of care shown by the chaplain - these visible signs were facilitated through a positive relationship between them and the chaplain. This was the foundation – the space which modelled and encouraged good relationships for the whole school community. These positive relationships are "imbued with positive feelings about the self and others [and] positive feelings lead to behaviours that grow social capital" (Roffey, 2016, p. 9).

The data findings in this study indicate that the relationship between chaplain and principal is an essential indicator of how the school's ethos can be embedded into daily school practices. This relationship is distinctive compared to other members of staff, and everyday encounters may also be fundamentally different - both research and literature have shown that the chaplain has a distinctive role within the institution of the school and is significantly different from that of the ordinary teacher (Caperon, 2015, p. 71; Ryan, 2015, p. 56). The very essence of the connection between chaplain and principal needs to be nurtured from its inception to develop and maintain this important relationship. The relationship between chaplains and principals is of crucial importance, and while management is ultimately responsible for embedding the school's ethos, the chaplain holds the crucial role in making it a reality. However, while the data findings in this study indicated mutual, positive, and high-trust relationships between the chaplain and management, this may not always be the case in other school settings. So how can

school management be sure that the relationship will work? What are the indicators which may help foster these relationships? What is the relationship dependent on? Ryan (2015), in an empirical study of chaplaincy in the UK, suggests that one of the most important aspects in the appeal of chaplaincy is who the chaplains are. “In a role that is often very personal and based on relationships, a non-judgemental attitude and being there for people in need, the personality of a chaplain is a critical element in their impact” (2015, p. 55). Considering the findings in this study, it is recommended that further deliberation needs to be given to how the relationship between chaplain and principal is fostered so that trust, compassion, and fairness are modelled in a way that is translated into relational practices within the school environment. Further research in this area, directed by an awareness that successful chaplaincies are those built upon effective relationships with management, could help create proactive dialogical approaches to the procurement and negotiations for chaplaincy services in schools.

5.3.3 Reconfiguration of the chaplaincy role

Further research into the chaplains’ contribution to ethos is needed. Considering the chaplain’s significant contribution to school ethos, it may benefit some schools to redefine the chaplain’s role within the whole-school context, which would recognise the chaplain’s significant contribution to living out ethos in all aspects of school life. Further research around how chaplaincy is defined and understood by leaders in education could build upon the foundation of the existing language of the ministry but include the chaplain’s sense of duality between the school community and the patrons they serve. In recent research in an English context, Hunt (2021) concludes that the school chaplain role would benefit from a role – reconfiguration. He argues that further research would “potentially help to avoid the chaplain being confined to limited definitions which fail to recognise the breadth of the role and give some shape to general statements about the chaplain’s involvement in embedding school ethos” (2021, p. 238). Moran’s (2014b, p. 205) research on school chaplaincy in an Irish context also addressed the issue around role identification and the need for a person (chaplain) with a pastoral role not to be defined in terms of a specific faith. If chaplains are to serve in a secular setting, then perhaps the word chaplain – with obvious religious connotations – is not the correct term to describe who they are and what they do. Arguably the title should reflect that the role is not limited by a particular faith connection or specific belief. Perhaps we need

a broader understanding of the definition of chaplaincy - one that is not (necessarily) characterised by religious connotations. The issue of language is important and needs to be considered so as not to create barriers for those who have no faith connections. Chaplaincy needs to be understood as inclusive - offering accompaniment to all searching for meaning. Chaplaincy must always be understood as a ministry rooted in shared human experiences.

5.3.4 A best practice competency framework

Further research into developing an appropriate competency framework is needed. The findings in this research which emerged from one of the six major themes – responsibility - and the subsequent five sub-themes (accountability, chaplaincy plans, framework for practice, policy and plans and provision of support), all indicate the need for a competency framework to safeguard the future of chaplaincy provision in schools. Underpinning all these themes emerged the need for clarity on the professional characteristic of the role, the need for accountability and the necessity of continuous professional development. Moran's research on school-based chaplaincy indicated that "accountability would bring a greater professionalism to the service and could contribute to increased clarity of role for both school chaplains and school management" (Moran, 2014b, p. 339). Moran (2014b) suggested that the lack of accountability within school chaplaincy in an Irish context was largely connected to the nomination process. Although chaplains in DCCs are employed by the school's BoM and paid by the state through the ETBs, none of these bodies has responsibility for assessing or evaluating the work of the school chaplain. Furthermore, the local Bishops or diocese's role in school chaplaincy is minimal – they often understand their role only in terms of the nomination process, and their involvement at any level with school chaplaincy is not consistent across all dioceses. Often dioceses will delegate responsibility for the support of chaplains to the Diocesan Advisor.

The absence of a competency framework for chaplains in schools from the local ordinary is not mirrored across other chaplaincy disciplines. Standards for healthcare chaplaincy are set by the Healthcare Chaplaincy Board (HCB) and reviewed four years: they "aim at ensuring that [chaplains]… have an appropriate understanding and appreciation of the role… and that they demonstrate the ability to minister with the required levels of formation and competence" (The Healthcare Chaplaincy Board, 2018, p. 4). The HCB list

professional competencies and standards that chaplains must demonstrate along with evidence of professional qualifications and forty hours of CPD annually. This shows the Bishop's commitment to chaplaincy as a ministry in health care settings which is not mirrored in an educational context. The HCB is a subcommittee of the Council for Healthcare of the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference.

Furthermore, the lack of support or any competency framework for chaplains in schools from key stakeholders is also not mirrored across the board when identifying specific regulated professional standards in teaching – chaplains are obliged to be registered teachers with the teaching council and have the same responsibilities to continue their professional development as other teaching staff. The Teaching Council's Policy on CPD is underpinned by a right and responsibility for all registered teachers to be allocated time for CPD - emphasising that CPD should be based on teachers' identified needs within the school as a learning community. It is the responsibility of all "registered teachers should be to take reasonable steps to maintain, develop and broaden the professional knowledge, skill and capabilities appropriate to his or her teaching [role within the school]" (The Teaching Council, 2011, p. 19). However, there is no coherent national framework for CPD offered to chaplains by the Teaching Council.

The lack of a framework for best practice for chaplains from their patrons is alluded to here to validate the findings in this study – which clearly showed that chaplains felt unsupported in CPD and were offered little or no opportunities for upskilling from their employers. Similarly, principals expressed concern about the lack of support for their chaplains, and the absence of a standardised framework for chaplains' nomination and work requirements created uncertainty and ambiguity for school management.

In the context of this discussion and finding, it would be very beneficial to undertake specific research in the area of competency frameworks that could be applied to school-based chaplaincy. Such a framework could encompass the dynamic combination of school chaplains' knowledge, understanding, skills and abilities. Continuing professional development would foster these competencies in a way that affords valuable opportunities for chaplains to articulate discipline-specific needs and engage in appropriate professional development.

As outlined by both the Bishops and the Teaching Council, the current framework for competency practice could effectively be utilised as a starting point to identify specific training needs for chaplains and could also serve to focus dialogue when evaluating needs or demands. Chaplaincy in schools demands the same level of knowledge and skills required of chaplains (and arguably teachers) in other disciplines – knowledge and skills which engages with values, beliefs, and attitudes to make competent and effective decisions.

The overwhelming evidence from the findings in this study asserts that the primary driving force for an effective chaplaincy service is the context and identified needs within the school. Cognisance of context – or school type - ensures that a good understanding of the ethos and an appreciation of the school community's needs will define chaplaincy in the school's staffing structure. In this way, a school chaplain becomes part of the fabric of the school community, pastorally caring for those in need, modelling positive relationships and capable of adapting to the needs of the school community by implementing necessary proactive programs and encouraging the wider community to be involved in the life of the school. Creating a competency framework would at least represent a move towards standardisation and formally recognise chaplains as an integral part of the schools' pastoral care system.

5.4 Conclusion

This research question set out to explore how chaplains in DCCs could support management in upholding the ethos of their school. Through questionnaires and interviews with chaplains and principals, this question was explored and revealed a range of ways in which chaplains contributed to the ethos and the creation of a positive school culture. This research study specifically addressed the role of the chaplain in DCCs. The historical development of DCCs and the role of the chaplain in this school type was a significant landmark in the advancement of second-level education provision in Ireland. The deeds of trust/model agreement situated the chaplain as an integral part of the vision for these schools. However, "it is well documented that during the past two decades, Ireland has become an increasingly diverse country" (ESRI *et al.*, 2018, p. 4) - in the current cultural milieu, Ireland has been radically different since the establishment of these schools, and the role of the chaplain needs to reflect this paradigm shift. In response to the significant cultural, religious, political, and

demographic changes in Irish society over the past decades, the ETBI, who are the co-patrons of DCCs, have developed a *'Patrons Framework on Ethos'* (2021) in an attempt to offer transparency, consistency, and accountability across the sector. This has brought the chaplain's role into a sharp focus, and questions regarding the chaplain representing a particular faith group in the newly defined multidenominational schools have taken prominence in the educational landscape. In this regard, this research is timely and warranted and has the potential to make a significant contribution to educational policy dialogue in Ireland at this time.

Furthermore, the consequence of the study regarding the role of the chaplain in DCCs is noteworthy as it can give chaplains a voice that allows them to be competent in articulating their needs incredibly. Such a voice is critical to ensure that outcomes regarding chaplaincy in DCCs secure the place of chaplains in these schools in the future.

Chaplains must at all times be ministers of hope, but in order to bring hope, they must "negotiate with hope and with the confidence that what they bring to any situation is an adherence to outcomes that create a more positive environment for human beings to flourish" (Hilliard, 2021, p. 115). Today's call for school chaplaincy is to respond to the increasing religious diversity in society – to adapt to school communities more secular and humanistic demands while holding firm to the values of meaning, faith, and hope. "Irrespective of context, chaplains are liminal figures: there for all, accessed by some, understood by few. Chaplains [will] handle that sense of liminality in different ways" (Paterson, 2016, p. 1). There is little doubt that there are many contemporary challenges facing chaplaincy today, and changes have occurred that have shifted the settings and requirements for the role of the chaplain. However, this is also a time to embrace these challenges and to see chaplaincy "in the context of the culture of encounter…not to be right but to be open, to see distant horizons and to be hopeful that with the Gospel at the heart of their mission people can journey towards their realisation…guided by encounter" (Hilliard, 2021, p. 115).

Chaplains are called to minister in an increasingly secular world and mediate between the sacred and secular in that "strange hinterland" (Caperon, 2015, p. 64). This is an ongoing challenge for chaplains who must maintain their integrity and pastoral focus when operating at the interface of the state faith communities and the individual needs

of those they serve. Chaplaincy holds the power to be a transformative ministry but requires a clear mandate, recognition, and support from both Church and state as to what is required of the ministry. Such a mandate would help chaplains “to inhabit and embrace their liminality as a vocational locus of grace” (Paterson, 2016, p. 149).

Appendices

Appendix A: Questionnaire

Understanding School Chaplaincy in Designated Community Colleges

Questionnaire

How can Chaplains, in Designated Community Colleges in Ireland, support Principals and the Board of Management in their statutory obligation (Education Act 1988) to uphold the characteristic spirit of their school?

- The principal investigator/researcher for this project is Elizabeth Barry. This project is in partial fulfilment of the Doctorate in Education in Dublin City University, under the supervision of Dr. Thomas Grenham (School of Human Development).
- The research is being conducted under the ethical guidelines and protocols as set down by DCU Research Ethics Committee.
- Contact details for the research investigators are:
  - Elizabeth Barry: elizabeth.barry3@mail.dcu.ie
  - Dr. Thomas Grenham: thomas.grenham@dcu.ie

1. What is your gender?

☐ Female

☐ Male

2. Are you a Principal or a Chaplain?

_____

3. How long have you been in your current position?

_____

4. What do you believe is the purpose of Chaplaincy Services in Designated Community Colleges?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

5. How would you describe the ethos/characteristic spirit in your school?

6. How effective do you believe chaplaincy services are in Designated Community Colleges and why?

Mark 1 box

Very Ineffective	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	**Very Effective**
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	

Please explain why

7. How do you understand the role of the Chaplain in helping management uphold the characteristic spirit of their school?

8. Does the Chaplain have a role in the spiritual development of students in this school? ***Mark only one box***

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Unsure

9. Are you willing to participate in this research project? ***Mark only one box***

If Yes, please state your school's name

- ☐ Yes _____
- ☐ No
- ☐ I would like more information

Appendix B: Interview Questions

(1) Interview Questions for Chaplains

How can Chaplains, in Designated Community Colleges in Ireland, support Principals and the Board of Management in their statutory obligation (Education Act 1998) to uphold the characteristic spirit of their school?

- The principal investigator/researcher for this project is Elizabeth Barry. This project is in partial fulfilment of the Doctorate in Education in Dublin City University, under the supervision of Dr. Thomas Grenham and Dr. Cora O'Farrell (School of Human Development).
- The research is being conducted under the ethical guidelines and protocols as set down by DCU Research Ethics Committee.
- Contact details for the research investigators are:
  Elizabeth Barry: elizabeth.barry3@mail.dcu.ie
  Dr. Thomas Grenham: thomas.grenham@dcu.ie
  Dr. Cora O'Farrell: cora.ofarrell@dcu.ie

Let me first start by thanking you for agreeing to partake in this interview. Your contribution is very valuable to this doctoral research. Our session should last no longer than 1 hour and during that time we will be discussing your experiences and views on chaplaincy in designated community colleges. I am particularly interested in how you see your role and chaplaincy supports the BOM in upholding the characteristic spirit of your school.

1. What is your understanding of the role of the school chaplain in a Designated Community College?
2. How would you describe the Characteristic Spirit of your school? What has influenced this understanding?
3. How do you think being a chaplain in a Designated Community College compares and contrasts to being a chaplain in other school types?
4. How does the characteristic spirit of this school support and challenge your role? Are there particular challenges in fulfilling your role/duties?
5. How do you measure effectiveness? What factors have a bearing on your effectiveness? How do you know if you are being effective?
6. What impact do you believe you have on the religious development and spiritual guidance of students in this school?
7. What is your relationship with your local Bishop and with the ETB?
8. How do you engage in professional development for your role as chaplain?
9. How do you see the future of chaplaincy in State schools? Are there potential challenges ahead? Would a ;framework for best practice be helpful and why or why not?

Original questions for chaplains:

1. Can you outline how you were appointed to this school? How long have you been chaplain here?
2. What is your understanding of the role of the school chaplain in a designated community college today?
3. What do you see as the main role of the school chaplain in your school?
4. Do you see your role in this type of school different to chaplains in other types of schools? For example, community schools or voluntary secondary schools.
5. What factors have a bearing on the effectiveness of your chaplaincy?
6. How do measure your effectiveness? How do you know you are being /not being effective?
7. How well does your school community make use of the chaplaincy service?
8. In a multidenominational school how do you minister to all faiths and none?
9. What kind of impact do you feel you have on the religious development and spiritual understanding of your students?
10. As a chaplain you are employed in this school type under the 'model agreement' which affirms that the local diocese/church has a role in the provision of religious education for Catholic students. Do you understand the school chaplain as working for the school or for the Church? How do you manage possible tension between the Church and ETB expectations for the provision of religious education to all students?
11. In WSE and MLL reports the chaplain is frequently mentioned as contributing to the characteristic spirit of the school. What role, if any, do you see school chaplains having in the building up a particular ethos or characteristic spirit for their school?
12. What is your relationship with the local Bishop? What is your relationship with your management body?
13. How is your professional development supported? What facilitates school chaplains in this regard?
14. What supports do you feel are necessary to support the role of the chaplain in ETB schools?
15. Describe the main challenges facing school chaplains in Ireland today. What obstacles do they face?

In Semi-structured the main questions are fixed, but interviewers are able to improvise follow-up questions and to explore meanings and areas of interest that emerge. The purpose of the research is to explore, probe, and substantiate issues identified by the researcher on a particular topic or topics. The following list outline the probing questions which will be used to illicit further information on each specific question.

Q.1. [Probes: Pastoral Care. Liturgical. Presence Teaching. Counselling.]

Q.2. [Probes: Model Agreement for D.C.C. ETB Core Values Statement. Bishops Guidelines.]

Q.3. [Probes: Voluntary Secondary. Community Schools.]

Q.4. [Probes: Religious viz-a-viz pluralistic worldview.]

Q.5. [Probes: Policy and or plan. Accountability. Vision. How do you measure?]

Q.6. [Probes: Duty to be Christ-like. Christian Vision.]

Q.7. [Probes: Support structures from nominating authorities. CPD.]

Q.8. [Probes: Supervision practices. Self-Care. Personal supports.]

Q.9. [Probes: Challenges by lobbying groups. Accreditation like Guidance Counsellors. Framework for best practice.]

(2) Interview Questions for Principals

How can Principals, in Designated Community Colleges in Ireland, support Principals and the Board of Management in their statutory obligation (Education Act 1998) to uphold the characteristic spirit of their school?

- The principal investigator/researcher for this project is Elizabeth Barry. This project is in partial fulfilment of the Doctorate in Education in Dublin City University, under the supervision of Dr. Thomas Grenham and Dr. Cora O'Farrell (School of Human Development).
- The research is being conducted under the ethical guidelines and protocols as set down by DCU Research Ethics Committee.
- Contact details for the research investigators are:
  Elizabeth Barry: elizabeth.barry3@mail.dcu.ie
  Dr. Thomas Grenham: thomas.grenham@dcu.ie
  Dr. Cora O'Farrell: cora.ofarrell@dcu.ie

Let me first start by thanking you for agreeing to partake in this interview. Your contribution is very valuable to this doctoral research. Our interview should last no longer than 1 hour and during that time we will be talking about your experiences and views on chaplaincy in your school and how your school is utilising the work of the chaplain to support you and the BOM in upholding the characteristic spirit of your school.

1. How would you describe the characteristic spirit of your school? What influenced this understanding?
2. How does your school provide for pupils of various religions and belief systems?
3. How would you describe the role of the chaplain in your school? How does this role support and challenge this school in living out its characteristic spirit?
4. Do you think chaplains are adequately trained for responding effectively to the needs of the religiously diverse population of the school?
5. As you are aware, Designated Community Colleges hold dual patronage between ETB's and Church/Diocese. Do you see any potential conflict between the two nominating authorities? Can you explain further?
6. How do you know if your school chaplaincy service is effective or not?
7. Would you identify any areas where you think policy and decision-making for the future of chaplaincy in State schools needs to be developed by patrons? Would a framework for best practice be helpful and why or why not?
8. There have been High Court cases and various challenges against the payment of chaplaincy salaries in State schools. Do you think the payment of chaplains salaries are sustainable in the context of our diverse and multicultural population?
9. How do you see the future of chaplaincy in State schools? Are there potential challenges ahead?

Original Questions for Principals:

1. How does your school provide for pupils of various religions and belief systems?
2. How does your school engage the chaplain in providing support of the various religions and belief systems?
3. How does your school engage in rituals and mark religious festivals? How does the chaplain help in these areas?
4. Do you think chaplains are adequately trained for responding effectively to the needs of the religiously diverse population of the school?
5. What is your opinion of the role of the chaplain in a designated community college? What are the assets and challenges of having a chaplain in this type of school?
6. What role does the chaplain play in the provision of pastoral care in your school?
7. Are there any curricular needs in which you see the chaplain playing a role? Do you see the chaplain as an educator?
8. In Whole School Evaluations (WSE-MLL) the chaplain is frequently mentioned as contributing to the characteristic spirit of the school. What role do you see your chaplain having in building and sustaining your ethos?
9. As you are aware, designated community colleges hold dual patronage between ETB's and Church/Diocese: Do you see any potential conflict between the two nominating authorities?
10. Often there are conflicting debates about what constitutes the role of the chaplain. Do you think that a standardised model of chaplaincy, including a framework for best practice would help your school articulate a job description and offer clarity for BOM, staff and parents?
11. How do you know your chaplaincy is effective?
12. If a model of chaplaincy was to be written for your school type, who do you think should be involved in writing an agreed statement for the role of the chaplain in state schools?
13. Have any challenges been raised in relation to the presence or role of the chaplain in your school to date?
14. Would you identify any area that you think policy and decision-making for the future of chaplaincy in state schools needs to be developed by the patron(s)?
15. There have been High Court Cases and various challenges made against the payment of chaplaincy salaries by the state. Do you think the payment of chaplain's salaries by the state is sustainable?
16. How do you see the future role of chaplaincy in state run schools?

In Semi-structured the main questions are fixed, but interviewers are able to improvise follow-up questions and to explore meanings and areas of interest that emerge. The purpose of the research is to explore, probe, and substantiate issues identified by the researcher on a particular topic or topics. The following list outline the probing questions which will be used to illicit further information on each specific question.

Q.1 [Probes: Model Agreement for D.C.C. ETB Core Values Statement. Bishops Guidelines.]

Q.2 [Probes: A specific Catholic / Christian dimension. Liturgical Celebrations.]

Q.3 [Probes: Provision of Pastoral Care. Counselling. Curricular needs/teaching.]

Q.4 [Probes: Professional qualification. CPD]

Q.5 [Probes: Religious viz-a-viz pluralistic worldview.]

Q.6 [Probes: Policy and or plan. Accountability.]

Q.7 [Probes: Standardised role definition. Recruitment Process.]

Q.8 [Probes: One religion favoured. Dominance of Catholic Church and historical influence.]

Q.9 [Probes: Challenges by lobbying groups. Accreditation like Guidance Counsellors.]

Appendix C: Supplementary Literature on Chaplaincy
An International Perspective

To broaden the scope of this research international literature on school chaplaincy was considered. Searches of available work encompassed academic research around the role of the school chaplain, evaluation of the effectiveness of the role of school chaplains, and chaplaincy roles in denominational school systems. Literature from England, Scotland, and Australia were privileged because of their vast experience of religious diversity and therefore had particular relevance to this research question. The research revealed interesting findings and some of these were used to enhance discussion in the literature review. However, due to the limitations imposed by word count for this study all of the findings could not be applied in a thorough way and so the findings of the research are presented here as supplementary material.

Chaplaincy and the United Kingdom

School chaplaincy is a long-established form of ministry in the United Kingdom, which has undergone significant changes especially in recent years and specifically in church schools and academies. Gordon Parry, Director of the School Chaplains and Leaders Association in England recently stated that "The chaplain's role now has to embrace a social culture that is a mixture of multi-faith or no-faith among pupils and their parents – and, indeed, many members of staff. This has produced a shift in emphasis" (Parry, 2017). Arguably, regardless of the cultural context in which a chaplain works it is a role that changes as the world changes. Whenever there is a new emphasis or a new anxiety around a school a chaplain has new things to address. The growth of secularization has meant that many young people have become disconnected from the Church across the globe and Caperon (2015, p. 32) argues that this disconnection "means that the post-millennium generation are not able to draw on the religious heritage of the Church and its spiritual resources". This has led to 'spiritual deficit' among the young and "a dearth of spiritual capital" (Caperon, 2015, p. 15). Education systems are ideally placed to provide an element of spiritual resource for young people and chaplains "can play a leading part in developing the religious literacy of school students," (Caperon, 2015, p. 34). The strategic significance of school chaplaincy is an argument advanced by Caperon (2012) who has become a seminal writer in the United Kingdom, and his work contributes significantly to empirical research into school chaplaincy.

Chaplaincy in the U.K: A Vital Ministry in the Post-Christian Era

Caperon's work *'The Nature of the Ministry of School Chaplaincy in Church of England Secondary Schools'* (Caperon, 2012), begun as empirical research into how school chaplaincy related to the mission and ministry of the wider Church. While the research focussed on Church of England

schools, its underlying motivation was to ensure that the Church maintained a connection with young people in the secular context in which they live. He argues that School chaplaincy has a huge strategic significance for the Church and Christian culture and reveals, through his research, a multi-functioning ministry which has the potential to embrace an inter-faith population. Caperon's research was constructed around four areas, addressing employment, the role of the chaplain, theological resources for school chaplaincy, and school chaplaincy and the wider Church. While his work is not related to the proposed research question in this study it nevertheless embraces chaplaincy and school ethos, the focus of this research, (albeit it in a non-denominational context) adds to the rationale for school chaplaincy and advances the discussion around the question of how school ethos and the effective practice of school chaplaincy are closely interconnected. It addresses school chaplaincy from a professional context, theological context, the wider context of secularity, and chaplaincy as a ministry of presence: "embodying and signifying the spiritual dimension" (Caperon, 2012, p. 118). Furthermore, it explores the chaplain's role, accountability, professional development, and the need for support, all of which are essential components required to build an effective model of school-based chaplaincy.

Drawing on his research Caperon furthers this discussion in his book, '*A Vital Ministry: Chaplaincy In Schools In The Post-Christian Era'* (Caperon, 2015). The book describes the situation of the 'post-millennium' generation, and their 'disconnection from the Church.' Caperon (2015) argues that the school chaplain "embedded within the life of the school community…[is] a key potential resource…in providing spiritual support for young people" (2015, p. x). The notion of being 'embedded' into school life as opposed to being peripheral to it, is an idea advanced by other sources, Ballard (2009); Threlfall-Holmes and Newitt, (2011); who argue that chaplains are placed where people are and embedded within an organisation or institution. Ballard (2009) presents the key characteristic of chaplaincy as having its primary context in the world rather than the church and the defining characteristic of chaplains as being 'embedded' in social structures: the chaplain, whilst having links with the church: "is situated in the structures of the wider society…which provides the matrix that shapes the job" (Ballard, 2009, p. 20). O'Malley (2019, p. 10) concurs, and asserts that chaplaincy must be "integrated alongside the ordinary life of the school" if it is to be truly effective. Arguably, it is this commitment to authentic engagement and dialogue with the grounded reality of life that characterises chaplaincy. Caperon's book addresses a range of topics including looking at a model of chaplaincy for our present time, the cultural and religious context for school chaplaincy, the response of the state and Church, and furthermore addresses chaplaincy in its 'complex professional capacity.'

Similar to O'Higgins-Norman's claim, (O'Higgins-Norman, 2014), Caperon (2015) asserts that at the heart of Christian chaplaincy is a pastoral ministry of care. He advances this idea by insisting that chaplaincy as a pastoral ministry has the potential to be transformative and that it seeks "the liberation of all people from what oppresses them, by bringing to bear on their lives the love of God expressed in and through Jesus Christ" (2015, p. 9). This pastoral motif is further developed in this book throughout the various discussions, and Caperon uses the work of liberation-based theology as advocated by Pattison (1997, 2008) to enhance his argument. For both, Pattison and Caperon, pastoral care is an activity concerned with human well-being and our relationship with God, and this has "profound missional seriousness," (Caperon, 2015, p. 84). Pastoral care, which is a distinctively spiritual activity, is at the heart of an espoused theology of school chaplaincy, and the chaplain's role is defined as "someone whose special concern is not with the subjects of the school curriculum but with the whole spiritual dimension of education" (Caperon, 2015, p. 46). Spiritual accompaniment is also a focus of chaplaincy which both, McKeown (1993) and O'Malley (2019) reference as a key aspect of the chaplain's role in schools. Spirituality and school ethos are a further area which Caperon (2015) addresses, the significance of which augments the proposed research question of this study.

While Caperon links the identity of chaplaincy intrinsically with Church mission and builds his rationale for chaplaincy around this, he does address the multi-faceted and multi-faith dimension of the role. He also addresses, in an English context, the response of the state and the Church towards the ministry of chaplains. He makes some interesting observations here which bear directly on the research question in this work. He states that the English Government's response has been to 'side-line' chaplaincy in schools, focussing on "strategic and structural issues in an era of marketization" (Caperon, 2015. p. 45) and they have failed to recognise how chaplaincy can make a decisive contribution to education. Arguably, this is not unlike the situation in Ireland which Moran (2014b) found evidence of in her research. She argued that:

> Although the role of the chaplain is supported by the two court judgements of the 1990s, and there is substantial validation of the role in the DES document on School Self- Evaluation, the evidence is that this does not translate into the role of the chaplain being actively evaluated or considered as part of a Whole School Evaluation/Management, Leadership and Learning (Moran, 2014b, p. 190).

In an Irish context the failure to address the confusion around role-identity, and the failure to acknowledge chaplains as being integral to all aspects of school life has led to a tension and exacerbated an already existing complicated relationship between the nominating authority, the chaplain and school management. Moran (2014b) further asserts that If the chaplain were to be considered as contributing to school life and evaluated by DES inspectors, the rationale for

school chaplains would come into well-defined focus. Furthermore, chaplains would have a means of measuring their progress, their contribution to school life and could play a key role in setting goals for the spiritual development of students. Caperon like many other writers (McKeown, 1993; Threlfall-Holmes and Newitt, 2011; Moran, 2014b; O'Malley, 2019) all concur that chaplaincy is a complex, multi-dimensional ministry and one that "overtly brings into play spiritual values that may be in tension with those of the institution in which a chaplain works" (Caperon, 2015, p. 57).

Caperon's (2015) contribution to research on school-based chaplaincy offers significant insights into the role of chaplaincy. While his work contextualises the ministry of chaplaincy within the mission of the Church, he recognises the contemporary culture of education and the 'spiritual deficit' among our young people. In doing so his research and subsequent writing is rooted in a rationale for chaplaincy which is suited to the cultural cultures of the twenty-first century, and chaplaincy in all schools. Drawing on a range of correlating theological sources he presents a very real picture and "understanding of school chaplaincy compiled from chaplains' own espoused theology, from formal theological thinking and from the process of theological reflection" (Caperon, 2015, p. 132). While Caperon acknowledges the intrinsic value of a theological vision of chaplaincy, which marks it as a distinctly Christian, he argues that the Church of England schools have failed to see the value of a "key ministerial provision for supporting the spiritual dimension of education" (Caperon, 2015, p. 45). In contrast, he argues that the Roman Catholic Church is clear about the priority of the spiritual dimension in education and about the centrality of chaplaincy in the mission of Church schools.

School Ethos and Chaplaincy: Implications for Catholic Schools in the United Kingdom

The cornerstone of all Catholic education has always been to draw out the potential in every human person to the full "in a community which recognises the centrality of Christ as our guide and inspiration" (Hume, 1997, p. 33), in this setting the school becomes a place of learning within the context of spiritual life. The chaplain is concerned, not just with the academics of the school, but rather with the whole spiritual dimension of education and represents the centrality of Christ. "A chaplain is primarily a minister of the Gospel within the school and works as a visible sign of the school's commitment to an integrated spiritual life for all the school community" (O'Malley, 2019, p. 39). This is the compelling vision of chaplaincy in Catholic schools. The worthwhile survival of Catholic Schools depends on this vision and the continually renewed promotion of their Gospel-inspired ethos, and O'Malley, (2019) affirms the chaplain's role in their contribution to the upkeep of school ethos in his book, *'School Ethos and Chaplaincy: A*

Handbook'. As the research proposal in this study addresses the question of school ethos or characteristic spirt, O'Malley's work offers some helpful guidance in this area. While he does not give any weight to the discussion on ethos per se he weaves the idea through-out his reflections and guidance. O'Malley, (2019) asserts that chaplaincy is a flexible and ecumenical ministry and can "support and energise the distinctive nature of Christian education", and that the chaplain has the potential to be "a living sign of a school's commitment to ethos" (2019, p.1).

Like many other contributors to research into chaplaincy, (Moran, 2014b; O'Higgins-Norman, 2014a; Caperon, 2015; Paterson, 2016), O'Malley (2019, p. 21) gives considerable time to discussions around pastoral care and sees it as "a key skill for the pastoral dimension of chaplaincy". However, while he asserts that pastoral support must be given a high profile and status in schools, he suggests that a chaplain's role has much more to offer and the chaplain must be "primarily a minister of the Gospel within the school and [work] as a visible sign of the school's commitment to an integrated spiritual life for all the school community", (O'Malley, 2019, p. 39). Pastoral care is the response to the potential of every person, with their own unique story and a sacred dignity and is always rooted in the centrality of the Gospel message. For O'Malley (2019, p. 39), the link between pastoral care and the Gospel should always be strong and clear, and the chaplain will be challenged to balance the rights and responsibilities of the whole school community into a Gospel-based ethos.

While O'Malley's work specifically addresses chaplaincy in Catholic schools, and places Christ and the values of the Gospel at the very centre of the ministry of chaplaincy, he is also cognisant of the complex educational environment of secondary schools in a secular culture. Arguably, Catholic Social Teaching can be applied to all interreligious and multicultural settings as the practice of 'the common good', at the heart of this teaching, is based upon the dignity of every human person. Bunge (2014, p. 205) argues that "Christian interaction with agnostics, atheists, and people of other faiths is grounded … in an understanding that all people are made in the image and likeness of God ", and that dictates how all Christians should treat others. One of the great qualities of a Catholic school is that it is 'all embracing' and has the ability to welcome people of all cultures into community with them: "the starting point for religious dialogue is living in positive relationships with others" (O'Malley, 2019, p. 120). For the chaplain, Catholic tradition and Catholic social teaching has the ability to evoke the deep spirit of humanity in people of all religions and none.

Overall, the main task of the book is to provide background to the tradition of chaplaincy "and to suggest the professional and pastoral guidelines within which this tradition needs to operate today" (O'Malley, 2019, p. viii). O'Malley (2019, p. viii) offers practical guidelines for establishing

a chaplaincy practice within schools "alongside the current professional demands of education" and attempts to set out parameters of good practice for chaplains, which should ultimately lead to the establishment of 'an appropriate and effective chaplaincy'. He asserts that his reflections on the ministry of chaplaincy are offered "as an antidote to the present culture that takes a superficial view of education as concerned only with the visible, measurable and repeatable outcomes of instruction and examinations" (O'Malley, 2019, p. 131). The school chaplain may find that they are often caught in the tension between a school's Christian values and its educational outlook and practice, nevertheless they are called to mediate between these different perceptions and be a living reminder of the school's Christian foundation and ethos.

Time for Reflection: Chaplaincy in non-denominational Scottish schools

Younger (2018), in a 'Time for Reflection: A Guide to School Chaplaincy and Spiritual Development', recognises that chaplains are called to lead with integrity without compromising their own faith position, while at the same time avoiding any attempt to evangelise or proselytise. Younger (2018), acknowledges that the literature on chaplaincy suggests a predominant self-understanding of the chaplain engaged in "representational ministry", or a "incarnational presence" embedded in non-faith context as an individual who is some way 'representative' of a faith belief" (Younger, 2018, p. 32). This is an area of potential tension, and he says there is a balance to be sought. Arguably this is the same creative tension which chaplains in State schools in Ireland find themselves grappling with, and Younger (2018) puts forward a possible solution. He propounds the idea of 'committed impartiality' (2018, p. 34) which allows faith practitioners to be open about their faith position and create events that need not shy away from being worship experiences or from using religious language and practices. He asserts that a stance of 'committed impartiality' requires that the practitioner acknowledge, express, and declare their own faith position but consciously undertake not to use their views to persuade or proselytise (2018, p. 34). For Younger (2018), being a school chaplain and being a part of a school community is simply an extension of what you already are, a person of faith living within the community you live and work in: "A chaplain cannot abandon in school what they are in themselves and in every other part of their lives, and neither should they" (Younger, 2018, p. 33). This offers a very sound starting point for all chaplains and finds resonance in an essay entitled "Is Theology Poetry?" found in The Weight of Glory by C.S Lewis: "I believe in Christ like I believe in the sun. Not because I can see it, but by it, I can see everything else," (Lewis, 1980, p. 140). Younger's (2018), concept of 'committed impartiality' offers chaplains in State run schools (non or multidenominational) a model which helps navigate a way through the tensions they encounter in their ministry: namely where their own faith stance, or the stance of

their nominating denominational authority, is at variance with their work which calls on them to minister to those who come from a variety of beliefs, faiths, and philosophies.

Younger's (2019) observations finds correlation with the findings of O'Higgins-Norman and King, (2009) report on chaplaincy in Irish schools. The authors of this study noted that while many school chaplains had adapted their practice to cater for the interfaith contexts of their schools, they had shied away from using religious language and symbolism and "tended to provide liturgies that were more 'basic' and spiritual rather than religious in nature" (O'Higgins-Norman, 2014b, pp. 280–81). While many sources argue that 'spiritual' and 'religious' are 'compatible' and interdependent concepts (Marler and Hadaway, 2002; Tracey, 2003; Egan, 2007), and there are distinct advantages in using 'spiritual' rather than 'religious' language to describe the chaplaincy role, others say there is also an inherent danger in doing so. Egan (2007, p. 115) asserts that one advantage of using the language of spirituality is that as spirituality transcends denominational boundaries, using the generic language of spirituality allows one to address what is acknowledged as a universal human need of the human person, and furthermore "does not leave one open to the accusation of proselytising". However, the inherent danger in moving away from religious language and symbolism is that it can leave one open to losing what is distinct about "one's religious identity and tradition…and lose denominational support which is crucial to the provision of services" (Egan, 2007, p.115). However, Younger (2019, p. 33) argues that while a chaplain "should be prepared to have their motivations challenged and questioned and should be sensitive to context and careful to avoid assertiveness or indoctrination", equally they should draw on the rich resources of their own faith tradition and avoid adopting a neutral stance and offering the school community a 'neutered experience' (2018, p. 33).

The idea of 'embedded chaplaincy' as advocated by other writers on school chaplaincy, (Ballard, 2009; Slater, 2010; Threlfall-Holmes and Newitt, 2011; O'Malley, 2019), is also a concept advanced by Younger (2018). His suggestions correlate closely with these writers, and he asserts that "there is no substitute for chaplains simply being there and being involved… embedded… embodied… incarnated… a representative Christian person" (Younger, 2018, p. 16). He advances this idea of being 'embedded in community' using the images of 'ambassador' and 'anthropologist.' These are as examples of people who move from their own community to dwell in a different community, learning the values, customs, language, and culture of their host community, they listen and observe, remain impartial, neutral, and non-judgemental as they become embedded in their host community. Both the Anthropologist and Ambassador "do all they can to blend in and have to work out for themselves what aspects of their own culture they can bend and flex and accommodate to their new setting and what aspects they will find non-

negotiable" (Younger, 2018, p. 35). While neither image is a perfect fit to describe chaplaincy, they nevertheless offer an interesting model for chaplains in schools to reflect upon.

Furthermore, the motif of pastoral care as central to the practice of chaplaincy as addressed by many (Moran, 2014a; O'Higgins-Norman, 2014; Caperon, 2015; Paterson, 2016; O'Malley, 2019), is also a theme discussed by Younger (2019). He asserts that the chaplain's most important function lies in contributing to the link between the school community and the society around it and that "facilitating the pastoral role requires conscious consideration of how a strong relationship and partnership can be built between a school and a chaplain" (Younger, 2019, p. 11).

This book is framed within Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence, grounded in academic research, and is rooted in the non-denominational sector of Scottish education. Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) maps a trajectory to help children and young people gain the knowledge, skills and attributes needed for life in the 21st century, (Education Scotland, 2019). The totality of the curriculum is planned for and experienced by learners across four contexts, one of which is 'Ethos and the Life of then School,' and one of the eight curriculum areas specifically addresses 'Religious and Moral Education.' These areas are grounded in specific curriculum content, which are integral to human living, and all educational establishments and local authorities are expected to have policies that describe their approach to Religious Observances (RO); in nondenominational schools this is referred to as 'Time for Reflection' (TfR). While this is not related to the specific research question as outlined in this study it nevertheless is worth mentioning as it seems to be the polar opposite of what is currently happening in Irish schools. We have noted that recent Circulars (0013/18 and 0062/18) which address the teaching of the new NCCA R.E syllabus, have explicitly stated that:

> Religious Education, where it is offered by a school, must be delivered in the timetabled class periods without any religious instruction or worship of any religion forming any part of class activity. This means that any practice or material that would introduce religious instruction or worship cannot be used in the future (Department of Education and Skills, 2018).

While in some way these Circulars reflect the ongoing dialogue about religion and society, reflect public square debates between various lobbying groups and interested parties about the place of religion in schools, and the complex interface of Church and State relationship in education in the Republic of Ireland, they nevertheless clearly show the pathway which Irish educational policy is moving towards. The issue of religion and education in Ireland is deeply rooted in a complex historical narrative and will no doubt continue to be the subject of contested debates, because of the inviolable separation of the Church and State. The debate raises some interesting

questions. Has Government, in an attempt not to exclude or offend and in efforts to find a safe option through policy discourse, done a disservice young people in our schools? Is it safer to avoid religious and worship elements entirely? Younger (2018, p. 137) would argue that failure to offer the experience of participation in religion and worship impoverishes the education of our young. Many would agree: Estrada *et al.*, (2019) in a recent research study asserted that "Religious education…can provide a student with deeper understanding of diverse cultures around the world, enrich a student's understanding of human experiences, and allow the student to acquire values that they can integrate into their own lives". Furthermore, religion and its effect on health and well-being has been the subject of many previous studies (Wong, Rew and Slaikeu, 2006; Meehan, 2019; Pew Research Centre, 2019) and there appears to be accumulating evidence that religiosity/spirituality are important correlates of mental health for our young people. Perhaps from an Irish context it is timely to explore all these potential sources and how "Religious Education, with sound content and pedagogy that accurately and respectfully represents religions, can contribute to the wellbeing of young people and of society" (Meehan, 2019, p. 518).

The Scottish curriculum is relevant for all multi-faith and multi-racial communities and also supports Roman Catholic schools, by offering opportunities to engage in personal journeys of faith and reflection on issues of religion and morality as well as enabling them to engage with a wider range of beliefs, viewpoints, and values they may encounter in life. While a large part of Younger's (2018) work in this book addresses the area specific to the Scottish curriculum, it nevertheless is relevant for practitioners and chaplains in educational settings. Some of the exemplar material for use in assemblies and liturgies could provide excellent resources for chaplains in multi-faith settings. These resources offer ideas for using the Bible as an educational tool for understanding Western culture, history, and literature, for challenging perceptions about faith, encouraging young people to consider the spiritual dimension of their development and reflect on individual spiritual and moral values, and offers suggestions for ways to express shared values of school, family, and community. The Scottish Curriculum for Excellence is ultimately about "modelling something very important-the art of sensing for ourselves and of spiritual development" (Younger, 2018, p. 45) and appears to embrace the existential truth of lived human experience allowing practitioners and chaplains to find a common pathway for all faiths and none, and to open doorways "to a contemplative, reflective stillness and spirituality" (2018, p. 45).

United Kingdom literature: A Conclusion

The literature as presented here has mapped some seminal writings on school chaplaincy in the United Kingdom. The writers privileged for discussion in this study were chosen across a spectrum of denominations to grasp a broad view of chaplaincy in different contexts. Chaplaincy, by its nature, must adapt to the situation it finds itself in and an examination of the ministry in various school types gives some insight into how the chaplain responds to the particular needs of the school community. These researchers, Caperon, O'Malley, and Younger represent three different Religious denominations in the United Kingdom and have contributed in a significant way to the research on school-based chaplaincy. Others, who have contributed to the dialogue on the ministry of chaplaincy in an English context, have been referenced in order to support the discussion in this study and to aid the overall research question. The dearth of Irish literature on chaplaincy is not mirrored in the United Kingdom and there is a wealth of literature available on chaplaincy in schools and in varying contexts. Furthermore, the United Kingdom through Diocesan boards and local and regional networks offer support structures for chaplains in their schools. Many support organisations exist which advocate for school-based chaplaincy and help schools identify and promote ways in which schools and/or local churches can evolve appropriate models of chaplaincy. Local Diocesan and Education boards have published guidelines for chaplains in their schools and colleges, (Education Commission, 2007; Archbishops' Council Education Division, 2014; Centre for Chaplaincy in Education, 2020; Chaplaincy Central, 2020) in an attempt to recognise the key missional significance of school chaplaincy and to aid positive policy and active strategies for further development of the role. From a Roman Catholic perspective "across a range of normative theological sources-canon law, episcopal statements, official documents from Catholic Education Services and dioceses-the Church sets out a powerful vision of chaplaincy in schools" (Caperon, 2015, p. 46). The Department of Education and the Catholic Church in Ireland could look to the United Kingdom for help in creating a vision for chaplaincy in schools: a vision which coalesces with an understanding of the school as a place of spiritual growth and personal formation. Chaplains in Irish schools require a shared and collaborative relationship with their local dioceses, and need intentional policy guided by the Church to support the practice of chaplaincy into the future. Moving further afield to Australia, a different picture of school-based chaplaincy appears, and support of the service in state schools is firmly rooted in government policy.

Chaplaincy in Australia: It's nature and effectiveness in State Schools.

The Australian context, into which the practice of school-based chaplaincy sits, finds some correlation with the Irish chronicle on chaplains in post-primary schools and warrants some consideration in this discussion. In Australian state schools, chaplaincy emerged as a response

to a perceived need for the provision of a religious education programme and pastoral care supports for students and families. Pohlmann (2010) asserts that in Australia, state school chaplaincy currently occurs to some degree in all states and territories, and that there has always been a "clear separation between religion and national governance" (2010, p. 47). Chaplaincy provision is organised by state-level and local organisations. State organisations act as employment bodies while local chaplaincy committees work in partnership with Christian chaplaincies in state schools. This organisational arrangement is vastly different to the Irish context, however the historical narrative prior to these arrangements is important to note as it finds some correlation with discussion on chaplaincy services in an Irish context.

In Australia, prior to the establishment of the 'National School Chaplaincy Programme' in 2015, the Government funded the National School Chaplaincy and Student Welfare Program (NSCSWP). However, in December 2010, Ronald Williams brought a proceeding in the High Court challenging the payment of money by the Commonwealth and Scripture Union Queensland (SQU), to provide chaplaincy services at the state school Mr Williams' children attended. The Court held that the funding agreement between SUQ and the Commonwealth, and the payments made under it, were not supported by the executive power of the Commonwealth under #61 of the Constitution, and consequently payments made under the NSCSWP were beyond the constitutional authority of the Commonwealth. However, Mr Williams then brought a fresh proceeding in the High Court against the Commonwealth, the relevant Minister, and Scripture Union Queensland (SUQ), and once again challenged the validity of payment payments under the "National School Chaplaincy and Student Welfare Program" (High Court of Australia, 2014). As a consequence of the High Court decision in the Williams v the Commonwealth (2014) case, the High Court found that the making of the payments to schools for provision of the services of a chaplain was beyond the constitutional authority of the Commonwealth, and new arrangements to fund a National School Chaplaincy Programme, through a project agreement with the states and territories was put into place. Subsequently, the federal government continued to fund the chaplaincy programmes by providing grants to state governments rather than directly to schools.

While it is beyond the scope of this discussion to address the complexities of the entire case and subsequent judgement, it is nevertheless an interesting point which bears somewhat on the research question as presented in this study. It correlates closely with the Irish historical context of chaplaincy in relation to judicial proceedings against the payment of chaplains in State schools (High Court, 1996). The Campaign claimed payment of chaplains' salaries constituted an endowment of religion and was in breach of the Constitution. The High Court rejected that claim, and the Campaign appealed the ruling to the Supreme Court (Supreme Court, 1998). The

Supreme Court found that funding Chaplains was not unconstitutional and chaplains, to date, continue to be paid through state funds. While the findings of the cases in both Australia and Ireland rendered different judgements, the consequences of such proceedings and decisions continue to impact on the provision of chaplaincy services in both countries, albeit in hugely different ways.

Despite the favourable rulings of the Irish Courts, no formal structure or programme was put in place to support the work of chaplains in schools, and there continues to a lack of clarity around the role the chaplain plays in state schools. Furthermore, there remains a sustained campaign to separate Church and state in relation to educational policy, and the payment of chaplain's salaries (Atheist Ireland, 2019). The Australian Government appears to have taken a more considered response and since the court rulings in 2014 they have adapted and made new arrangements to fund a National School Chaplaincy Programme, which consists of the provision of chaplaincy services operating over four years from 2015 to 2018. As part of the agreement, an evaluation to research the effectiveness of the NSCP in terms of how it is delivered, utilised, and viewed within government, Catholic and independent schools was carried out in 2017. In particular, the research explored how the chaplaincy programme supports the emotional wellbeing of students and the broader school community (Kantar Public, 2017, p. 4). The research, carried out in over 3000 schools covered a broad spectrum of questions in relation to chaplaincy provision, and asked some of the following pertinent questions: What activities/strategies are implemented by schools to support the wellbeing of students and the broader school community? How many students utilise the chaplain service? What drives or impedes delivery and use of the chaplaincy activities/services? How are the chaplaincy services provided viewed by principals, students, and parents? How important is the NSCP in supporting the school community? What impact does the programme have on students and the broader school community? Overall, the findings found there was a positive sentiment towards the NSCP. The programme was described with positive regard and awareness of chaplaincy services was high, however, there was limited knowledge of the role of chaplains (Kantar Public, 2017, p. 62). Arguably, this is not unlike the situation in Ireland, where chaplain's role identity is fraught with difficulty and there appears to be dissonance among the relevant stakeholders in articulating a clear rationale for the role.

Following on from this programme and evaluation, the Australian Government invested a further $247 million over four years (2019-2022) to renew the National School Chaplaincy Program (NSCP). This funding was to support approximately 3000 schools per year to access the services of a qualified chaplain (Department of Education Skills and Employment, 2020). Fundamentally, the NSCP supports the wellbeing of students and school communities through

the provision of pastoral care services and strategies delivered by chaplains. Schools who wish to avail of a chaplain receive a monetary grant to support and access the services of a qualified chaplain. The NSCP states that chaplains may be from any faith and must not proselytise. Furthermore, they are required to respect, accept and be sensitive to other people's views, values, and beliefs, to meet minimum qualification requirements and comply with state and territory laws and policies in relation to child protection matters. In is in the context of this situation in Australia, that seminal research was carried out on chaplaincy services in Queensland State schools by leading educationalist and author, Dr. David Pohlmann. Some consideration will now be given to his research, and subsequent book, dealing with chaplaincy in state schools.

School Chaplaincy Services in Queensland State Schools

At the time of Pohlmann's (2010) study, Queensland State schools had over four hundred chaplains whose services are "commonly auspiced by interdenominational bodies that oversee training, funding and employment issues and that provide chaplaincy programmes for state schools" (Pohlmann, 2010, p. i). These services are resourced in Australia through the NSCP. The purpose of Pohlmann's study was to articulate the nature and effectiveness of chaplaincy services in these schools, to ascertain which areas chaplaincy was preforming well, and to identify features of the chaplaincy service which were effective. "The study set out to draw together the information sought in responding to these questions in such a way as to develop a model of effective state school chaplaincy" (Pohlmann, 2010, p. 111). The study highlighted nine key findings, some of which are relevant to the proposed research question in this study: these included that state school chaplaincy can be highly effective; state school chaplaincy is highly contested in nature; state school chaplaincy is multi-faceted and demanding; continuing education is important for chaplains; state school chaplains need support and a strong funding stream; and state school chaplaincy is particularly challenging in practice. Some of the findings, which address the actual practice of chaplaincy, are hardly surprising and arguably are transferable across the ministry in a global context. Pohlmann's (2010) overall research is broad in scope as it addresses models of state school chaplaincy across the different states in Australia. However, some relevant points and findings are privileged in this discussion as they bear direct relevance on the research questions as posed in this study.

Pohlmann (2010, p. 14) addresses the origins of chaplaincy and concludes that is a "irrefutably Christian ministry" and in contemporary practice the ministry emanates predominantly, although not solely, from a Christian paradigm. He found that in an Australian context many models of chaplaincy exist, including pastoral or liturgical, faith development, educational or evangelical, and community development models: some, namely educational and pastoral, are

evident in an Irish context. Pohlmann (2010) argues that putting these models into practice for chaplains can lead to role ambiguity. Role ambiguity is an area which has been raised by many sources writing about school chaplaincy, (Norman, 2004; O'Higgins-Norman and King, 2009; Moran, 2014b; Caperon, 2015) and the general consensus points to the fact that chaplaincy in all contexts is a complex professional role often leading to a lack of clarity around role identity. In his preliminary discussion around the origin and models of chaplaincy he concludes that ultimately chaplaincy in state schools in Australia tend to focus on pastoral care, providing a caring presence in the schools, and his research findings overwhelming indicated that state school chaplaincy services are primarily meant to provide pastoral care and support to school communities. The motif of pastoral care is alluded to throughout Pohlmann's (2010) work, and he asserts that "the fact that pastoral care was seen as important to survey respondents is supported by the literature… Burnham (1997) has argued that pastoral care reflects Christ's ministry and so is a core role of school chaplains" (2010, p. 390). It has been noted, in this literature review, that discussion around chaplaincy and the notion of pastoral care as intrinsic to the role is almost ubiquitous and that at the heart of Christian chaplaincy is a pastoral ministry of care (Caperon, 2015, p. 8). However, while Pohlmann (2010) discusses pastoral care models, practical pastoral care, multi-layered pastoral care strategies to assist schools, theological considerations for pastoral care, and defines pastoral care as espoused by Treston (1992) a robust definition of what is meant by the term is not propounded. Arguably, there is an inherent danger in using the term pastoral care in a generic way, or as an umbrella term, as this can lead to limited notions and understandings of what pastoral care is about: quite simply It can belie the complexity of what the term actually encompasses. Calvert (2009, p. 268) argues that defining pastoral care "has proved difficult over the years and has been recognised as being problematic both by dint of the terminology that suggests ecclesiastical or agricultural roots and the fact that it is very much a UK-based phenomenon". While Pattison, (1997, p. 14) has consistently argued for such a 'robust' definition of pastoral care, one that is beyond a secular understanding and encompasses a distinctively spiritual activity, concerned with nurturing the whole person. Linking school chaplaincy with the provision of pastoral care seems reasonable, however the term needs further consideration so that a broader understanding of pastoral care and chaplaincy are understood. In a broader understanding pastoral care would not be limited to an 'individualistic therapeutic paradigm' and chaplaincy would be understood as a potentially transformative ministry. In later work, Pohlmann advances his research findings and offers a broader definition and vision of the pastoral care model which encompasses the religious, ethical, and spiritual needs of the students.

A further area of Pohlmann's (2010) research which emerged from his findings, are the five themes which described an 'effective chaplaincy service' in state schools. The findings suggested that an effective chaplaincy service is one which provides pastoral care and offers this support to all members of the school community; it has an ability to connect and engage with the community; it is dependent upon the personal attributes of the chaplain and how they conduct themselves in their chaplaincy role; it garners the support and involvement of local Church communities; it connects Christian spirituality as an integral part of the service (Pohlmann, 2010, p. 223). In terms of pastoral care provision, effective chaplaincy was one which displayed "a caring philosophy that permeates all aspects of school life" (Pohlmann, 2010, p. 234) and one which provided spiritual and emotional support irrespective of faith background. Connection and engagement with the whole school community was viewed as a way of achieving an effective chaplaincy service. The findings here pointed to chaplaincy being integrated into school programmes and communities, so that students and families knew of someone in the school whom they could approach in confidence. Key to connecting and engagement with the whole school community was an ability to being open and accessible. The third finding related directly to the personal attributes and conduct of the chaplain. A chaplain had to be a positive role model. Unfortunately, Pohlmann's (2010) findings did not elaborate on what was meant by 'role model' and "descriptions of modelling could equally be shallow and external, or deep and authentic" (2010, p. 235). A chaplain as a role model may be deemed to be so from a myriad of understandings of the term 'role model': would that term encompass the idea of a spiritual leader who transcends religious and cultural differences? Or one who takes principled positions on contentious issues, however challenging and unpopular those stances may be? Regarding the conduct of a chaplain Pohlmann, (2010) found that chaplains were expected to be "inclusive, tolerant, humble and open…[and] never proselytise" (2010, p. 235). This finding correlates closely with (Younger, 2018) who recognises that chaplains are called to lead with integrity, without compromising their own faith position, while at the same time avoiding any attempt to evangelise or proselytise. The Church-chaplaincy nexus was a further indicator of an effective chaplaincy service. Being an authentic witness to one's Church and able to adequately represent the 'breadth of theological understanding' was seen as indicative of an effective chaplaincy ministry. The final finding was specific to Church respondents who seen the issue of spiritual development as integral to the ministry of chaplaincy. From a Christian perspective it was expected that the chaplain would give students opportunities to "explore the fundamental questions concerning the meaning and purpose of life in the context of a Christian world view" (Pohlmann, 2010, P. 236).

A last point from Pohlmann's study which will be given privilege in this discussion is the proposal of a key model for understanding state chaplaincy. This model could bear relevance and elucidate the research question as posed by this study regarding chaplaincy in state schools in an Irish context. Pohlmann (2010, p. 431) suggests that the nature of effective chaplaincy may well be termed "incarnational ministry". The concept of an incarnational ministry or presence was raised by Younger (2018, p. 32) who suggested that the literature on chaplaincy proposes a pre-dominant self-understanding of the chaplain engaged as an "incarnational presence". Pohlmann advances this understanding, by suggesting that as the incarnation is a fundamental doctrine of Christine faith and chaplaincy is seen predominantly as one that is practically and authentically Christian "thus begins the suggestion that effective chaplaincy is incarnational" (Pohlmann, 2010, p. 431). Incarnational ministry espouses an incarnation theology which requires action in the world and accepts "the host culture as a valid, albeit imperfect, way of life" (Lingenfelter and Mayers, 2003, p. 120) which inevitably leads to thinking 'in the style of our neighbour'. Pohlmann's (2010) theoretical model of chaplaincy effectiveness is rooted in a theological vision of incarnational theology which calls for "the immersion of oneself into a local culture and 'becoming Jesus' to that culture." Incarnational ministry seeks to dispense with ministry "from a distance" and embrace ministry "up close and personal"—the love of God and the gospel of Christ are "incarnated" or embodied by the person ministering (Houdmann, 2020). Pohlmann's (2010, pp. 433–434) model of effective chaplaincy, the 'Seven C's model' built around the three elements of "Chaplain, Community engagement and Church nexus are facilitated through the 'Chaplaincy Committee' - the catalyst - to produce the dual outcomes of "Christian spiritual support and Care assistance" (2010, p. 433). Together they provide the nature of an effective chaplaincy service.

The Seven Cs Model of State School Chaplaincy as Incarnational

While the support offered is primarily Christian and incarnational, it nevertheless provides a practical Christian presence rather than being proselytising or focussing on doctrinal differences. Strategic planning, funding and professional development structures would need to be put in place if Pohlmann's model was to be proposed as a model of effective school chaplaincy in an Irish context. The catalyst would need to be driven by a joint endeavour and considered response from both Government and Church agencies. A limitation of this model might well be seen in its faith perspective; does denominational faith and spiritualty play any part in a secular school system? While it has been noted by many sources, (McKeown, 1993; Threlfall-Holmes and Newitt, 2011; Moran, 2014a; Younger, 2018; O'Malley, 2019) that this is an area of potential tension and there is a balance to be sought, a strong argument has been made for a stance of 'committed impartiality' (Hill, 2003; Younger, 2018) or "ethical proselytization", which, subject

to the criteria, is perceived to be highly compatible with Christian values and morally acceptable in the state school.

Pohlmann's (2010) research thesis is significant in that it contributes to knowledge and understanding about chaplaincy, informs policymakers, validates the worth of chaplaincy in state schools, informs stakeholders and practitioners and, in a wider context, contributes to the discussion on chaplaincy and offers a very valid theoretical model for effective chaplaincy in state schools. This discussion will now examine Pohlmann's book 'School Chaplaincy: An Introduction' which offers an excellent resource to assist those engaging in the vital ministry of chaplaincy.

School Chaplaincy: An Introduction to the art of chaplaincy

We have noted throughout this discussion that school chaplaincy is a complex and varied form of ministry and chaplains are often called to minister in pluralistic educational settings. In 'School Chaplaincy: An Introduction' Pohlmann, (2014) draws together an immensely comprehensive and valuable resource for what school chaplaincy is and can be, outlines the various models of chaplaincy, practical strategies for carrying out the role and background into the context in which school chaplaincy occurs. Each of the twelve chapters offer thought provoking discussion questions and case studies with accompanying questions to help chaplains and take a more deliberate and intentional approach to chaplaincy.

The book offers a brief discussion on the origins and nature of chaplaincy, explores the contexts within which school chaplains find themselves, and examines the various chaplaincy models and roles that are situated within those contexts. Building on the previous research Pohlmann addresses the various models of chaplaincy and offers examples of those models in practice. Addressing the roles and responsibilities of chaplains he reminds us that chaplaincy cannot be seen within a vacuum rather it "must be contextualised to be truly effective" (Pohlmann, 2014, p. 22), and one of the largest contextual issue for chaplains is the school type in which they minister. Each different context demands a different response in the way chaplaincy is managed. In addressing role and responsibilities he looks briefly at the issues of accountability, reporting and support for chaplains. Pohlmann (2014) deliberates a number of practical topics such as, developing programmes and planning events, building ministry teams, liaising with whole school staff and support workers, and ministry to the wider school. He includes a chapter on the importance on pastoral care where he reminds us that "chaplaincy is predominantly a ministry of pastoral care" (2014, p. 36). This thinking is mirrored by many writers on school chaplaincy (Moran, 2014a; O'Higgins-Norman, 2014a; Caperon, 2015; Paterson, 2016; Younger, 2018;

O'Malley, 2019), who fundamentally see pastoral care in a school context as 'an expression of the school's continuing concern for the individual's integrity and welfare'.

The book also touches on the topic of chaplaincy and teaching, which in an Irish context was previously alluded to by King (2004) who suggested that if the role of the chaplain was essentially pastoral then 'it raises a crucial issue about the pivotal role of the chaplain with respect to the teaching element of a chaplain's job description, as defined by the [Irish] Department's guidelines' (King, p. 170). For Pohlmann (2014, p. 58) "To Teach or Not to Teach" is a discussion framed within the broader dialogue on what constitutes religious education and religious instruction. Is the chaplain to be involved in religious education in its broadest sense or rather in a narrow process of doctrinal instruction? Is the pastoral dimension of the chaplains' role diminished by teaching or does it allow the role to encompass both knowledge of religion and faith or spiritual development? While Pohlmann offers no definitive answers on this subject he raises important points which calls on the chaplain to question their own stance and reflect accordingly.

The final topic in this book to be privileged in this discussion is Pohlmann's examination on "Ministry in a pluralist society" (Pohlmann, 2014, p. 63), as this bears direct relevance for this research question. Pohlmann's (2014) reflections acknowledges that chaplains live and work in increasingly secular and multi-faith contexts: "We no live in an era where truth, especially religious truth, can be expected to be proved or believed. There is a marketplace of ideas, concepts and 'truths'…Everyone can have his or her own beliefs and practices" (Pohlmann, 2014, p. 63). The school, as a microcosm of society, reflects the cultural milieu in which it functions; so how does Christian chaplaincy fit in to such a diverse place as a school? Quoting a number of authors who speak about the diversity in Australian culture, he speaks about "the spiritual smorgasbord" which is indicative of the post-modern mind and of a "mosaic generation" (2014, P. 65). He asks chaplains to reflect on these elements and challenges them to consider how they can "include, accept, and engage with those of other beliefs and faiths without compromising what many Christians would regard, as exclusive truth" (2014 p. 66). Pohlmann (2014) ends his reflections with a discussion around Garth Read's article 'The Christian Chaplain in a Pluralist Community' (Read, 1997), who asserted that the role and function of the school chaplain was to focus on the spiritual needs of all members of the pluralist communities and argued that chaplaincies should promote religious pluralism. This he argued was possible by looking at Christian mission in a way that places God as a 'missionary God' directed at creation and all life. Read believes this is something God does, and we are participants in that. God's "mission is a message of shalom: a harmonious and peaceful community...and a multi-faith pastoral care programme available to all fits this view" (2014 p. 67). Again, the discussion turns to the notion

of ‘committed impartiality’ (Hill, 2012; Younger, 2018) as a way of managing the culturally and religiously diverse society in which we live. Committed impartiality offers a philosophical approach where students are assisted to look and evaluate a number of value stances while chaplains and other educators can, and should, reveal their own value stance.

Australia literature: a conclusion

The literature presented here has mapped seminal research and writing on school chaplaincy in Queensland, Australia. The writer, Pohlmann (2010; 2014) was privileged for discussion in this study because his research addressed chaplaincy in state schools, which is the focus of this research question. Some of Pohlmann’s (2010) findings have been previously discussed by other writers in the field and they have been used to augment some of the points made by Pohlmann on the ministry of chaplaincy: Burnham, 1997; Norman, 2004; Caperon, 2012; Moran, 2014a all speak about role ambiguity, Hill, 2003; Younger, 2018 speak of ‘committed impartiality’ and Younger, 2018; Houdmann, 2020 discuss ‘incarnational ministry’. Pohlmann’s research (2010) and subsequent work has been significant in advancing the understanding of school-based chaplaincy in state schools. Furthermore, his work which is contextualised in one of the most culturally diverse society’s in the world Rajadurai (2018) offers a valid framework for addressing a rationale for chaplaincy in state schools in Ireland.

Appendix D: Braun and Clarke Thematic Analysis Framework (2006)

Phase	Description of the process
1. Familiarising yourself with your data:	Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.
2. Generating initial codes:	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.
3. Searching for themes:	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.
4. Reviewing themes:	Checking in the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic 'map' of the analysis.
5. Defining and naming themes:	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells; generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
6. Producing the report:	The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

***Figure 22**: Phases of Thematic Analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006)*

Appendix E: DCU Research Ethics Committee Apprvoval

Ollscoil Chathair Bhaile Átha Cliath
Dublin City University

DCU

Ms. Elizabeth Barry
School of Human Development

Dr. Thomas Grenham
School of Human Development

1st December 2020

REC Reference: **DCUREC/2020/229**

Proposal Title: **How can Chaplains, in Designated Community Colleges in Ireland, support Principals and the Board of Management in their statutory obligation (Education Act 1998) to uphold the characteristic spirit of their school?**

Applicant(s): **Ms. Elizabeth Barry & Dr. Thomas Grenham**

Dear Colleagues,

This research proposal qualifies under our Notification Procedure, as a low risk social research project. Therefore, the DCU Research Ethics Committee approves this project.

Materials used to recruit participants should state that ethical approval for this project has been obtained from the Dublin City University Research Ethics Committee.

Should substantial modifications to the research protocol be required at a later stage, a further amendment submission should be made to the REC.

Yours sincerely,

Geraldine Scanlon

Dr Geraldine Scanlon
Chairperson
DCU Research Ethics Committee

DCU
Research & Innovation

Taighde & Nuálaíocht Tacaíocht
Ollscoil Chathair Bhaile Átha Cliath,
Baile Átha Cliath, Éire

Research & Innovation Support
Dublin City University,
Dublin 9, Ireland

T +353 1 700 8000
F +353 1 700 8002
E research@dcu.ie
www.dcu.ie

Appendix F: Plain Language Statement

Plain Language Statement

How can Chaplains, in Designated Community Colleges in Ireland, support Principals and the Board of Management in their statutory obligation (Education Act 1998) to uphold the characteristic spirit of their school?

• The principal investigator/researcher for this project is Elizabeth Barry. This project is in partial fulfilment of the Doctorate in Education in Dublin City University, under the supervision of Dr. Thomas Grenham and Dr. Cora O'Farrell (School of Human Development).

• The research is being conducted under the ethical guidelines and protocols as set down by DCU Research Ethics Committee.

• Contact details for the research investigators are Elizabeth Barry elizabeth.barry3@mail.dcu.ie 0862386145 Dr. Thomas Grenham thomas.grenham@dcu.ie and Dr. Cora O'Farrell cora.ofarrell@dcu.ie

The research being conducted forms part of my EdD thesis. **Ethical approval for this research project has been obtained from the Research Ethics Committee of Dublin City University.**

Dear Helen,

My name is Elizabeth Barry, and I am currently a doctoral student (EdD) in the Institute of Education, Dublin City University (DCU). As part of my doctoral studies, I am conducting research to ascertain how Chaplains, in Designated Community Colleges in Ireland, support Principals and the Board of Management in their statutory obligation (Education Act 1998) to uphold the characteristic spirit of their school.

My supervisors for this research project are Dr. Thomas Grenham and Dr. Cora O'Farrell (School of Human Development).

The aim of this research is to gain insight and further perspective into the importance of school-based chaplaincy - particularly in state run schools.

This research project is being conducted in three phases – **pilot phase involving a questionnaire**, which you have already participated in, **documentary analysis** and **semi-structured interviews**. I am now writing to request your participation in the next phase, the semi-structured interview stage of this research. Your time and participation in this research is greatly appreciated.

Participants in the semi-structured interview phase of this research are asked to agree to participate in an interview using the Zoom.us virtual platform. It is anticipated that the interview will be approx. 40-60 minutes in duration. It is important to emphasise that participants are not required to answer any questions they may wish not to answer. **A list of the interview questions will be provided to participants prior to the interview**. The interview will be arranged for a day and time suitable to the participant.

About the interview

This interview will be recorded. The transcript of this interview will be provided to you prior to any data analysis occurring to ensure accuracy, together with, allowing the participant to correct or amend any part of their contribution. If participants wish not to be recorded, it can be arranged where the notes of the interview will be handwritten by myself the interviewer.

Confidentiality

The identity of participants and the school they are referring to will be fully pseudonymised and the identity of participants and school will only be known to myself and my two supervisors. Participants' names and schools will not appear in the thesis or any other documents emanating from this research.

It is however important to outline that confidentiality of information can only be protected within the limitations of the law - i.e., it is possible for data to be subject to subpoena, freedom of information claim or mandated reporting by some professions.

The analysis and transcribing of the interview will be done by the researcher.

Data Protection

The Data Controller will be Dublin City University. The Data Processor is Elizabeth Barry. The Data Protection Officer of Dublin City University is Mr Martin Ward. Mr Ward may be contacted as follows:

- data.protection@dcu.ie
- Telephone: (01) 7005118 / (01) 7008257)

The data collected during this interview process is necessary to collect the views and opinions of the participants to analyse the data and responses to answer the research question.

All participant's details will be pseudonymised by the assignment of a code, the details associated with such codes will be stored in a password protected document on a password protected computer in the home of the researcher, known only to the researcher and supervisors. It is also important to highlight that given the number of potential participants, this may have implications for your anonymity.

The opinions and comments expressed by the participants and used in the dissertation or any associated academic papers or articles will by anonymised.

Data will be securely stored in a password protected file in a password protected computer for the lifespan on the research. It is anticipated that the lifetime of this research is January 2021 to July 2022. In the unlikely event that this research project continues after July 2022 all participants will be requested for their permission for the data to be stored for an additional period of three months. At the end of the research project all data will be destroyed by the researcher, Mr Brendan Feehan. No electronic or hard copies of the data will be maintained, all data will be fully erased.

Participants in the research have the right to lodge a complaint with the Irish Data Protection Commissioner (www.dataprotection.ie)

Should participants wish to access their own personal data, this access can be requested by contacting the Data Protection Unit of Dublin City University (https://www.dcu.ie/ocoo/data-protection)

Your participation in the research

You have been chosen to participate in this research about the role of the chaplain in designated community colleges, and how chaplaincy can support Principals and BOM's in their statutory obligation to uphold the characteristic spirit/ethos of their school.

No research has been conducted on chaplaincy in designated community schools to date, and in light of the recent change of status of state schools (From 2020 all ETBI schools are *de facto* multidenominational) this has implications for chaplains and management of these school types. The study will hopefully provide insights into the types of practices and policies, regarding chaplaincy, which are necessary to offer support to multidenominational schools in their endeavours to uphold their ethos. Your participation in this research will assist in developing a future framework for best practice for chaplains in state schools. Upon completion of the research, all participants will be sent a copy of the research findings and recommendations.

Participation in this research project is voluntary. ***All participants have the right to withdraw consent from the research at any stage***. Participants should contact the researcher, Elizabeth Barry at the above contact details to do this. If a participant withdraws from the research, all data previously collected from the participant will be destroyed within 3 days of notice of withdrawal being received. Participants will receive written confirmation of their withdrawal from the project and confirmation that all data collected from the participant has been destroyed. The participation of the participant will cease immediately upon receipt of confirmation of request to withdraw from the research.

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 Research and Innovation Support, Dublin City University, Dublin 9. Tel 01-7008000, e-mail rec@dcu.ie

Yours sincerely,

Elizabeth Barry

Appendix G: Consent Form

How can Chaplains, in Designated Community Colleges in Ireland, support Principals and the Board of Management in their statutory obligation (Education Act 1998) to uphold the characteristic spirit of their school?

• The principal investigator/researcher for this project is Elizabeth Barry. This project is in partial fulfilment of the Doctorate in Education in Dublin City University, under the supervision of Dr. Thomas Grenham and Dr. Cora O'Farrell (School of Human Development).

• The research is being conducted under the ethical guidelines and protocols as set down by DCU Research Ethics Committee.

• Contact details for the research investigators are Elizabeth Barry elizabeth.barry3@mail.dcu.ie 0862386145 Dr. Thomas Grenham thomas.grenham@dcu.ie and Dr. Cora O'Farrell cora.ofarrell@dcu.ie

The research being conducted forms part of my EdD thesis. Ethical approval for this research project has been obtained from the Research Ethics Committee of Dublin City University.

Participant – please complete the following (*Indicate **Yes** or **No** for each question*)

i. I have read the Plain Language Statement (or had it read to me)
Yes/No

ii. I understand the information provided
Yes/No

iii. I understand the information provided in relation to data protection
Yes/No

iv. I have had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study
Yes/No

v. I have received satisfactory answers to all my questions
Yes/No

vi. I am aware that my interview will be recorded
Yes/No

vii. I understand that involvement in the research study is voluntary
Yes/No

viii. I understand I may withdraw from the research at any time
Yes/No

ix. I have read the Plain Language Statement (or had it read to me) and I understand that legal limitations may exist around the confidentiality of data
Yes/No

x. I understand that my data will be destroyed should I withdraw consent from the research or at the end of the lifespan of the research
Yes/No

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:

Witness:

Date:

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