PEDAGOGICS OF CARE:

Attitudes of Roman Catholic Primary School

Boards of Management to the Religious

Education of Pupils with Special Education

Needs

by

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DECLARATION

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABA   Applied Behavioural Analysis

AD(H)D   Attention Deficit (Hyperactive) Disorder

ASD   Autistic Spectrum Disorder(s)

ASPIRE   The Asperger Syndrome Association of Ireland

BMGLD   Borderline Mild General Learning Disability

BoM   Board of Management

CABAS   Comprehensive Applied Behavioural Analysis System

CCC   *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1992, 1997)

CCCC   *Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church* (2005)

CCE   Congregation for Catholic Education (for Educational Institutions)

CCMA   Catholic Clerical Managers Association

CDD   Childhood Degenerative Disorder(s)

CEDE   Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education

CGC   Child Guidance Clinic(s)

CICE   Church of Ireland College of Education

CM   CoMorbidity

CPI   Community Playgroup Initiative

CP-ID   Cerebral Palsy-Intellectual Disability

CPMSA   Catholic Primary School Managers Association

CPPRECI   Catholic Preschool and Primary Religious Education Curriculum for Ireland

CPS   Child Psychiatric Service(s)

CRE   Critical religious education

CROC   Convention on the Rights of the Child

CRPD   Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

CT   Class Teacher(s)

DCA	Domiciliary Care Allowance
DEC	Development Education Centre
DEIS	Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools
DES	Department of Education and Skills, in Ireland; also known as Department of Education, Department of Education and Science
DES-UK	Department of Education and Science, in the UK
DH	Dignitatis Humanae (*Declaration on Human Dignity* (1965), of Vatican II)
DHC	Department of Health and Children
DHH	Deaf and hard of hearing
DME	Dual or Multiple Exceptionality
DoE	Department of Education (name changed in October 1997); also DES
DoH	Department of Health (name changed October 1997); also DHC
DS(I)	Down Syndrome (Ireland)
DSM-IV	*Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* of the American Psychiatric Association, 4th edition
EAL	English as an Additional Language
EASNIE	European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education
EBD	Emotional and Behavioural Disturbance/Disorder/Disability
EFA	Explanatory Factor Analysis
EL	Expressive Language Disorder
EPSEN	Education for Persons with Special Education Needs, Act of Oireachtas, 2004
ERB(E)	Education about Religions and Beliefs (and Ethics)
ESAI	Educational Studies Association of Ireland
EU	European Union
GAM	General Allocation Model
GCD	*General Catechetical Directory* (1971), of the Vatican
GDC	*General Directory for Catechesis* (1997), of the Vatican

GE	Gravissimum Educationis (*Declaration on Christian Education* (1965), of Vatican II)
GLD	General Learning Disability – changed to Intellectual Disability in the 1990s
GUI	Growing Up in Ireland Study
HSCL	Home School Community Liaison (Scheme)
HSE	Health Services Executive
IAA	Irish Autism Action
IASSID	International Association for Scientific Study of Intellectual Disability
IATSE	Irish Association of Teachers in Special Education
ICD-10	International Classification of Diseases, 10th revision, WHO, Geneva, 1989
ICIDH	International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities and Handicaps 1980
ICF	International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health
ICF-CY	International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health – Children and Youth Version
ID	Intellectual Disability
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (1975), USA
IEC	Irish Episcopal Conference
IEP	Individual Educational Plan
IHME	Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, University of Washington
IHREC	Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission
II	Inclusion Ireland
ILSA	Irish Learning Support Association (teacher organisation)
INTO	Irish National Teachers Organisation
IRT	Item Response Theory
IQ	Intelligence Quotient
ISL	Irish Sign Language
JASP	Just another statistical programme; free, open-source

LD	Learning Disability
LEA	Local Education Authority (United Kingdom)
LST	Learning Support Teacher(s) (changed from 'remedial')
MGLD	Mild General Learning Disability
MH	Mental Handicap
MO	Medical Officer
ModGLD	Moderate General Learning Disability
NABMSE	National Association Boards of Management in Special Education
NAGC	National Association for Gifted Children
NAM	New allocation model, replacing the GAM, 2017
NAMHI	National Association for the Mentally Handicapped in Ireland (changed to: Inclusion Ireland, January 2007)
NASBE	National Association of State Boards of Education
NCCA	National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
NCPD	National Catholic Partnership on Disability
NCSE	National Council for Special Education
NDA	National Disability Authority
NEB	National Education Board
NESC	National Economic and Social Council
NEWB	National Educational Welfare Board
NIDD	National Intellectual Disability Database
NIID	Nation Institute for Intellectual Disability
NPC	National Parents Council (NPCp indicates primary; NPCpp is post-primary section)
NPSA	National Parents and Sibling Alliance
NS	National School
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PCA	Principal Component Analysis

PDD	Pervasive Developmental Disorder(s)/Disability
PDD-NOS	Pervasive Developmental Disorder – Not Otherwise Specified
P$_{SEN}$/p$_{sen}$	Pupil with special educational needs(s) (SEN)
PT	Peripatetic Teacher(s)
R/r	statistical programme; free, open-source
Rattle	statistical programme built on R; free, open-source
RT	Resource Teacher(s)
S&L	Speech and Language Therapy
SCoTENS	Standing Conference on Teacher Education North and South
SDRB	Social Desirability Response Bias
SEG	Special Education Group (National Parent Council)
SEN	Special Education Need(s)
SENCO	Special Educational Needs Co-Ordinator
SENO	Special Educational Needs Organizer
SERC	Special Educational Review Committee (1993)
SESS	Special Education Support Services
SET	Special Education Team; Special Education Teaching
SETA	Special Education Teaching Allocation (2017-)
SGN	*Share the Good News* (Irish directory for Catholic catechesis; see Irish Episcopal Conference 2010)
SNA	Special Needs Assistant
SNS	Special National School (System)
SPED	Special Education (also written: Sp.Ed.)
SPHE	Social, Personal and Health Education (Irish curriculum subject)
SPLD	Severe and Profound Learning Disability
SPMH	Severe and Profound Mental Handicap
SPRED	Special Religious Education (or Development)

SRV	Social Role Valorization
ST	*Summa Theologica*, of Thomas Aquinas, in 3 parts (I, Ia-IIae, II)
TALIS	Teaching And Learning International Survey
TEACCH	Treatment and Education of Autistic and related Communication-handicapped CHildren
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

ABSTRACT

Author: John O'Grady

Title: Pedagogics of Care: Attitudes of Roman Catholic Primary School Boards of Management to the Religious Education of Pupils with Special Education Needs

Though responsibility for the vision, ethos and effective teaching and learning in primary schools lies with the local Board of Management it has been observed that there is a lack in the religious education (RE) of pupils with special educational needs (SEN). Thus, it was opportune to research the *status quaestionis* of this lack.

This research project employed a mixed methods approach and developed a theologico-philosophical framework to address the research questions. The literature review on RE, SEN, inclusion, and the rights of children with disabilities provides a conceptually renewed understanding of personhood embracing pupils with SEN. Quantitatively, Boards of Management (BoM) of primary schools under Catholic patronage were surveyed in the Dublin Archdiocese, using Likert-item statements, to build a profile of Members' attitudes to SEN, RE, and the RE of pupils with SEN. This element had three stages: a questionnaire, sent to Members, online; a feedback of this data; and a follow-up questionnaire to gauge how members were assisted in engaging with RE for pupils with SEN. Qualitatively, interviews were conducted to provide quality-control, thicker descriptions and critique from within questionnaires and of the process.

The combination of methods offers a pedagogics mutually supportive for BoM Members and pupils with SEN in their care.

The methodology and findings have serious implications for a number of areas, especially, future research on this topic, guidance for Members in their duties, support and strategies for BoMs, and enhancement of the overall progress of pupils with SEN (and pupils generally) as a consequence of their RE.

PREFACE

Because education aims at the holistic person in the context of a life well-lived there is a real sense in which education has to be itself a spiritual way of being in the world. The explicit positing of spirituality has the potential to ennoble educational enterprises by virtue of the transcendent dimension that spirituality itself brings to education. In educating a person the spiritual aspect adheres authentically and not merely autonomously for one is an animated whole and not just a rational mind or a functioning body (see Webster 2004, p. 15). However, 'the spiritual' is a category that brings possibilities of confusion and clarity, and our world is marked by many voices and opinions, shared and dissenting worldviews. Indeed, modernity is liquid, says Zygmunt Bauman (2012): it is marked by the tide and flow of events, social movements and technology; these move and are active at such a pitch that individual persons can be threatened, overwhelmed and rendered immobile as fear before the unknown wells up. That with which people identify moves on to new configurations before the ink of their writ, as it were, is dry on the page; the result is often a sense of personal ill-at-ease-ness, dislocation in the social realm, a lack of space in which to be. The emphasis on the personal and individual, which characterizes much of western thinking, threatens what makes them possible in the first instance: the social or public sphere. Daily, we encounter people wounded by life; sometimes they are strangers, sometimes loved ones, sometimes ourselves. What wounds and why may be ineluctable, diffuse and unknowable, yet unconscionable suffering is often a person's lot, made worse by others' casual cruelties and unempathetic responses. Yet, there is also in life a well of generosity, sympathy and care for others less fortunate than oneself.

People in pain, especially when that pain or its cause is visible, evoke responses of kindness, fellow-feeling and help, even self-sacrifice. Sometimes, international laws or agreed conventions seek to protect the rights of people, especially those unable to assert themselves, whether due to personal infirmity, poor local protections, prejudice on the part of societies or powerful, oppressive individuals and forces. Sometimes, the weak not only evoke caring responses from others, they bring forth from others a strength that the latter did not know they had. In the microcosm that is the classroom and school play-yard these negative and positive energies are seen by teachers almost hourly.

In this dissertation, one teacher looks at the spiritual care, by one group of educational actors, of a distinct group of pupils within the school setting. The context is the Irish primary school under the patronage of the Roman Catholic church, more specifically, those pupils who are deemed to have some degree of difficulty in accessing the curriculum due to physical and/or intellectual difficulties of one kind or another. Fortunately, today, such pupils can look forward to increasing amounts of assistance in dealing with their difficulties; once, and not so long ago, they were scarcely admitted inside the classroom door; once, they were outcasts and laboured under a plethora of ignoble soubriquets. Today's terminology is better; however, it is still not perfect though we are learning. Unfortunately and in spite of demonstrable improvements in the lives of pupils with educational needs, there are still systemic lacks whose persistence works to those pupils' disadvantage: texts fail to recognize their difference and what is not recognized remains invisible; pupils do not communicate; teachers fail to bridge the communication divide and/or may lack that awareness that is essential to addressing, if not redressing, the perhaps invisible scars of somatic illness, psychic disturbance, or social dislocation.

The fact of this situation has given rise to the present research. To address it I have narrowed my focus to a specific group of stakeholders in education who may be expected to ameliorate the educational experience of pupils with special needs. Boards of Management (BoM) have a duty 'to manage the school on behalf of the patron and for the benefit of the students and their parents and to provide or cause to be provided an appropriate education for each student at the school for which that board has responsibility' (DES 2015c, p. 12; CPSMA 2012, p. 73, both citing the Education Act 1998, #15(1)). The patron, in the case of Roman Catholic schools, is the bishop of the diocese in which the school is established. The bishop 'delegates to the [BoM] members certain responsibilities' (CPSMA 2012, p. 8). My research, in short, seeks to direct the attention of BoMs to the spiritual care of pupils with special needs and it is carried out in the Irish Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Dublin.

Chapter 1 **INTRODUCTION**

Even as the barriers are removed, children remain inevitably handicapped by their very dependence and inability to choose the circumstances of their birth or nature. (Richard Smith 2010, p. 87)

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This research into the religious education of pupils with special educational needs was conducted in the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Dublin. Engaging members of Boards of Management in the Irish primary school sector of this archdiocese, in which I am a teacher, became the focus for an investigation of some current thinking and reflection on how best to address the needs of those pupils who experience difficulty in achieving to their potential. According to the Central Statistics Office figures (2018), there are 3,246 national schools in the State, of which 3,111 are ordinary/mainstream, 482 are ordinary with special classes, and 135 are special schools. The research is outlined in the next sections in terms of background (1.2) and rationale (1.3). This contextualizing of the research continues with a look at some of the key terms at the heart of this project, e.g. education and pedagogics, special educational needs, religion and spirituality, and the use of rights-language. The following sections engage with the aim and objectives (1.4), and the research questions (1.5) that I deal with. In order to establish a view or epistemology of personhood two distinct approaches are taken. First (1.6), I look at how the human person is understood in the Judeo-Christian tradition, which has largely formed many people's ontology and anthropology. This may be expected from a project that issues from and is directed within the Christian tradition. Another approach (1.7), drawn from the phenomenology of Martin Heidegger, is engaged to offer a contrastive ontology and anthropology. Because this research is framed in an intra-Christian or Catholic context does not mean that it is reducible to that context. For, today's schools and pupils have an increasingly secular *umwelt* or environment, and cognizance of this must be taken. As his philosophy is so radical and influential on others like Arendt, Derrida, Foucault, Gadamer, Levinas, Merleau-Ponty, Rorty and Sartre, Heidegger is instructive and helpful. Heidegger, then, may be taken to represent a 'secularist', non-Christian understanding of being and the human.

1.2 Personal Background of the Research

More than one billion people in the world live with some form of disability, of whom nearly 200 million experience considerable difficulties in functioning. In the years ahead, disability will be an even greater concern because its prevalence is on the rise. (WHO 2011, p. 5)

Disability, as an indicator of people's struggles to live life as fulsomely as possible, is a challenge to those responsible for education who must endeavour to make living both less of a struggle and more fulsome. All children attend school and if their school fails to address adequately the issues of those with disabilities then, it is argued, the latter and those presumed not to have such disabilities are likely to suffer. Some 15% of the world's population live with disabilities; of them about 110 million 'have very significant difficulties in functioning' and 190 million have severe disability. The *Global Burden of Disease*, for 1990-2016, estimates that 8.4% of children globally, 52.9 million, younger than 5 years had development difficulties in 2016 (IHME 2018). In 2011, the estimate for children younger than 14 years was 95 million, of which 13 million have severe disability (WHO 2011, p. 8). These realities confront a teacher's daily practice. Likewise, BoM members are tasked to develop thinking, policy and responsiveness, too, especially as our ethos is distinctively Roman Catholic: 'the whole school is rooted in and moved by the Gospel values of respect for life, love, solidarity, truth and justice' (Irish Episcopal Conference 2010 [henceforth SGN], p. 142). Personally, as someone who has taken career-breaks to study theology, and who, in 2015, became a member of my school's BoM, my concern with and for pupils with special needs has been the spur to the present research.

1.3 Rationale and Context

Aside from one's biography, the wider world demands reasons for the constructions that Christians put on the world, here the religious education of pupils with special needs. What is religious education and why is it presented as central to the education of pupils? Why has it a particular resonance for those with special needs? Religious education (RE) is commonly thought of as formation in faith, usually in Ireland as bringing up one's children in the faith-tradition of one's parents. Building on the model presented in the letters of Paul, faith is transmitted – *paradosis* – from one faith-generation to another. However, even in this loose and generic description a hermeneutical caution is required as people seek to make sense of their faith tradition 'in its own terms and context (Towner 1982, p. 102). Increasingly likely today, both parents will come from disparate religious traditions.

One or both may abjure the tradition into which they were born, may have sworn allegiance to a different faith-tradition or forsworn any religious practice in favour of secularity.

RE is also a distinct study of faith, with or without a preconditioning faith-formation. On the one hand, those new to the faith are educated in its teachings and doctrines as a body of knowledge that is conceptualized, developed and expanded in ways similar to any given arena of conceptual knowledge. This may be called deepening of one's faith. On the other, anyone may seek such conceptual knowledge without a concomitant commitment to sharing the belief-system of that body of knowledge. Though one may be 'outside' the faith-community, one seeks, insofar as possible, an insider's (native or emic) perspective of the community's faith.

Another referent of RE today is education about the religious or spiritual patrimony of humanity. At one remove it may be part of how one is informed about a significantly important dimension of life and, therefore, is similar to philosophical pursuit in that one loves to learn (this spiritual element) of human wisdom. In another, RE helps to inform us of a key aspect in human historical development. Here we learn about religion and religions even as we learn from them. We may be seeking an etics of objective or sociologically important elements of a religion.

There is also an understanding of RE as an explication of some of the formative influences in our human life, which is to say, as something formative of peoples' specific identities, which builds a hermeneutical identity-marker for, say, Europeans whether or not they continue to formally classify themselves as Christian, or Arabs whether or not they continue to formally identify themselves as Muslim, etc. Thus, we speak of the 'culturally Christian'; in Europe, this is a growing phenomenon, sometimes acknowledged, sometimes not by Europeans themselves. It is the wider context in which this research project is set; for, Ireland is no longer a monocultural, isolated and singular nation. The Ireland of today is religiously, socially and culturally diverse in ways unforeseen one generation ago. The form and role of religion in contemporary Ireland is changing in tandem with the form and role of education, itself changing in response to larger societal ebbs and flows.

1.3.1 Finding the Gap

Because RE is bound up with education generally and may refer to formation in or about (or both) religion it is an issue that evokes a variety of responses. In Ireland's evolving but

still largely denominational educational context, the religious tradition in which schooling takes place is predominantly Roman Catholic. BoMs come under Roman Catholic episcopal oversight. Yet, there has been no research that I have found that looks at the attitudes of BoM members to the RE of pupils. Given that BoMs have been formally instituted since 1975 this is surprising. Awareness of this research gap, coupled with my more recent teaching role with pupils who experience special difficulties in their literacy and numeracy, made it timely, important and judicious to engage with BoMs on the issue of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) especially their formation in RE.

1.3.2 Definitions

We have used a number of terms already that require some examination if they are to remain useful. Definitions are about how we, at certain times and in differing contexts, understand concepts and they in turn affect our practice, i.e. how we put those definitions into practice. They are slippery in that subtle changes over time lead to lack of clarity, confusion and misinterpretation. All the terms that we examine here are contested at some level or other, by many. Still, an attempt must be made because the stakes are high: children and their education into self-awareness and maturity, especially if there are co-occurring physical, mental or social conditions that limit and constrain them, depend, in varying degrees, on their schools for the quality of that education.

Education and pedagogics

The Oxford English Dictionary defines education, deriving from the Latin 'to train' (*educare*) or 'to lead out of' (*e-ducare*), as '[t]he process of bringing up a child, with reference to forming character, shaping manners and behaviour, etc.; the manner in which a person has been brought up; an instance of this.' This accords with *paideia*, which Martha Nussbaum, appealing to Aristotle, calls 'the education by practice and precept that initiates a young Greek into the ways of his community' (Nussbaum 2001, p. 252). It can also be the 'culture or development of personal knowledge or understanding, growth of character, moral and social qualities, etc., as contrasted with the imparting of knowledge or skill' (OED); it is the 'systematic instruction, teaching, or training in various academic and non-academic subjects given to or received by a child, typically at a school; the course of scholastic instruction a person receives in his or her lifetime' and the 'instruction or training given to or received by an adult' (OED). From this wide semantic field I usually use it here to refer both to the broad set of pedagogical processes that schools typically engage in and to a positively charged understanding of mental and physical, human and humane, religious and spiritual, moral and cultural development of the individual person,

who, in turn in this dissertation is normally referred to by the more pedagogically indicative 'pupil'. Pedagogy, from the Greek for 'leading of the child', is used synonymously with education, and as one may have different models of education so there may be different pedagogies.

Nevertheless, I distinguish these latter usages from the word *pedagogics*, which, of course, may be a plural of pedagogy, as once was the case. Instead, I use pedagogics, in the singular, for the larger, more abstract study or science of education. Thus, this term presupposes a more philosophical approach to a field, rather than a method or mode of teaching to be adopted for a specific subject, in a particular class. My usage, then, harks back to that of Johann Friedrich Herbart (1776-1841), founder of the academic study of pedagogy. For him, education developed the individual's character and so helped society, as democracy, to develop. Importantly, Herbart distinguished between *educatio*, shaping the development of character for human betterment, and *instructio*, the process of effective teaching (Hilgenheger 1993). Though both had to be attended to, the former was crucial.

Therefore and because this dissertation concerns education at a fundamental level, yet does not directly address the devising of curricula or of specific programmes to address pupils' individual needs, a distinctive term – pedagogics – was required that references the conceptual, moral and educative dimensions as a unity in such a way that it becomes a 'skilful means' with which BoMs can engage for the sake of pupils with special needs.

Expanding on education itself, then, we say that it is the values, attitudes, skill-sets, etc. that pupils acquire, in an age-appropriate way, when taught by recognized teachers, in order that they may participate in society as citizens and unique individuals, like the world-citizen or *kosmopolitēs* that Diogenes the Cynic claimed to be (Nussbaum 1997, pp. 50-58). While every element of this statement requires explanation, and even then may prove to be merely less inadequate, we have to begin somewhere. Were we to begin with the notion of the individual pupil that would be to beg the question of who or what an individual is and from what a pupil is individuated. Thus, we begin with notions like society and citizenship, participation and recognized teachers, in other words, the social reality into which any given child is born. Any individual is a one-among-many whatever other distinguishing characteristics may be adduced within the many.

Special (educational) needs

Again, it is within a social context that one begins to discuss an individual's special needs. All needs are understood in the light of their time and place; the task becomes how to understand what is special about some of those needs such that we mark them in special

ways. Often, we begin with the notion of a handicap or lack of some ability or other; this may beg the question of what the norm is, of how no-handicap or no-lack is conceived. Historically, while there are references to people who had impediments of various kinds, especially, blindness, deafness and various forms of mental impairment, it is only in recent centuries that, with increasing study of the human body and its mind, and the search for cures for ailments, more accurate diagnoses began to be made; today, 'disability' comes under scrutiny because it is so often used without serious reflection on how society constructs certain people as being dis-abled. This is addressed, for instance, by Cheryl Mattingly who recounts how Malcolm, a boy with autism, was misunderstood by his own mother until she was helped to see beyond his incapacities; now, with the assistance of a trained therapist Malcolm emerges, though still as a puzzle, with 'contours that demand attention' (Mattingly 2017, p. 267). A BoM has to be alert to the distortions that labelling, e.g. with a diagnosis of ASD, may have for one pupil in one circumstance but not for another in a different circumstance.

Because those with disabilities were left out of sight or marginalized in societies it is hard to find records. Laes, for one, bemoans the historical lack of category or term for 'disability' (2018) and is bemused to realize that his current work is 'the first synthesis' for the Roman world (2018, pp. viii, 21). Osteologists continue to trace survival patterns of people with handicaps into adulthood; some had club-feet, others spina bifida; other illnesses, such as forms of non-congenital blindness were due to proximity to marshes and rivers, others to lack of vitamins; all are evidence against 'the old stereotype of ancient societies systematically practising selective elimination at birth' (Laes 2018, p. 19). Across the ancient world 'one is struck by the sheer variety of terms to denote impairing bodily or metal afflictions…However…one will search in vain for words which unambiguously connote congenital conditions as distinguished from disabilities acquired in later life' (Laes 2017, p. 13). As Laes states, amidst the variety, *infirmitas* is the more generally used term (2017; also Krötzl, Mustakallio & Kuuliala 2016; Kuuliala 2017; Pudsey 2017); interestingly, the *infirmitas consilii* (weakness of judgement) of women was the argument of Cicero for having women under the control of *tutores*, males who monitored their economic activities (see Dixon 1984, p. 343; also Saradi-Mendelovici 1990 on the *infirmitas sexus* in Byzantium).

It was only when attention began to be paid to the factors that impinge on pupils' learning and distinctions were made between different conditions that greater clarity ensued. Today, the WHO has an International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) to

distinguish issues related to bodily functions, activities and participation, environmental factors, and body structures; the former include physiological and psychological, while the body structures relate to the human anatomy (WHO 2010, 2017). As a category 'special needs' is one of the more rapid developments in modern education. The Irish National Teachers Organisation (INTO) was early to recognize it as an issue. Puirséil reports: 'The question of special needs education had been part of the INTO agenda since the 1950s, when Seán Brosnahan [INTO President, 1947; General Secretary, 1967-1978] has been one of its earliest champions, and during the 1990s it held a dedicated conference on special education and issued reports on special needs teaching' (2017, p. 198). Every year now conferences are organized on basic educational needs and how to improve pupils' communication. Helpfully, Brahm Norwich directs attention to different kinds of needs that pupils have: some are individual as they are characteristic of one individual but not of others, some are exceptional as they share elements in common with others, e.g. impaired vision, and some are common as all share the same characteristics (Norwich 1996, p. 103). It should be remarked that the OECD prefers 'special needs education' to special education(al) needs, believing that it recognizes a move away from a context of special schools and narrows the idea to those 'who may be included in handicapped categories' (OECD 2007, p. 18, citing the 1997 International Standard Classification of Education's own definition of 'special needs education'). The use of 'special education(al) needs' remains more apposite to the present research. Winzer (1998) credits Alexander Graham Bell as the first to use the term 'special education', at a meeting of the National Education Association, in Madison, Wisconsin, in 1884 (1998, p. 212).

Iitaka (2016) links what it is to be human with basic communication:

> *Communication is at the heart of being human. Being human is diminished when one is unable to communicate with others. Being human is permitted when people can overcome obstacles to communication: we help people to overcome limitations and be at peace with themselves. The work of communicating is the work of reconciling what might otherwise be divisive, debilitating and demoralizing. Being human is enhanced when we dedicate our life and work to enabling others to communicate; our lives are enriched when we learn from those for whom we work.* (Kyoko Iitaka 2016)

Thus, we understand Iitaka to be issuing a challenge to all teachers to communicate well and to learn from their practice. The role of BoM members is also to communicate, especially a vision and ethos, to the whole school 'in a spirit of partnership with the patron

and trustees, parents and children, school staff and the parish community' (SGN 2010, p. 143).

Religion and spirituality

Communication raises the possibility of communicating beyond the physical constraints and networks that humans engender. Notions like religion and spirituality betoken a realm beyond the terrestrial or mundane. Both are contested terms, sometimes seen to be synonymous, sometimes poles apart. For Macmurray, religion is 'something people do…a human activity' (1961, p. 151). Earlier, he had described it as 'the original, the one universal expression of our human capacity to reflect; as primitive and as general as speech' (1957, p. 20). Religion is, at least, one of the areas in life where people cooperate and care for one another (or not, as Wigger 2016, p. 337, warns). Attempting to define religion is an oeuvre *sui generis*. Much depends on who defines, to what end and with what strategies in view (see McGuire 2008, pp. 1-24). Today, 'religion' is often and simplistically contrasted with 'spirituality'. While the former smacks of organized religion and following in a tradition, the latter seems more attuned to the modern autonomous person, who chooses the meaning(s) she or he wants and is less inclined to follow 'traditional' religious paths.

In terms of education in religion, there is also diversity between those who argue pro-religion and those who argue pro-spirituality. However, it is possible that there are 'distinctive features of the Catholic school' that may receive general acceptance. Among these Harmon & Mahon have outlined five characteristics which they consider distinctive: an expression of the desire of parents and of the community, rooted in the person of Jesus Christ, evangelical, sacramental, and catechetical. These characteristics are interrelated and inseparable and are used 'to present a picture of how Catholic schools are different to other school types' (2012, p. 35). In such a presentation, 'religious' and 'spiritual' might equally apply. We will return to this important topic, too.

Rights

The rhetoric of rights dominates many discourses today, and the area of special educational needs is among them. At a basic level, it derives from the struggles of those who, lacking power to act, defy the status quo (of the powerful and elites) and demand justice, the right to be heard on an equal footing with those who have long held power. The powers-that-be become limited, or permit themselves to be limited, by laws; thereby, the 'meek and lowly' become empowered to move from dependence to independence. Those who demand that their rights be fulfilled appeal to laws, publicly endorsed statements vindicable in the

courts. Statements, for instance, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations, become enacted and the powerless can appeal to them over and above the powers-that-be.

In respect of children, laws are enacted to ensure that parents and those *in loco parentis*, normally teachers, fulfil certain duties towards those children. Sometimes these duties are derived from certain overarching principles; in this sense we speak of the human rights of children, which when identified, ground the duties. The language of rights is both fast-growing and complex and it is no less so in relation to children. On the one hand, we speak of positive rights; these are the rights secured by legal or state-sponsored means. On the other, are fundamental rights; these are human or moral rights, or rights grounded in the nature of what it is to be a human. When it comes to pupils' SEN, arguments are often made from the latter as a means to enact positive rights.

Not forgetting pupils' agency, Mhairi Cowden (2016) argues that the rights that children have are to 'certain core capacities that allow them to achieve normal human functioning' (p. 86). Basically, Cowden's argument is that children have an interest in developing their still latent capacities. It is the duty of others either not to interfere or destroy a child's latent capacities (2016, p. 86). In individual cases the duty to protect children and their best interests may run counter to their competence, e.g. a genetically male teenager who identifies as a girl and becomes traumatized at the onset of pubescence. Here, too, it is parents who will usually exercise the role of surrogate decision-maker and help the child function well and so develop her or his competence level. Likewise, BoMs can assist pupils to develop because of the way they exercise oversight within the school in favour of capacity-building by pupils.

As such, of course, the law in Ireland has determined, through legislation such as the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs (EPSEN) Act 2004 as well as through adoption of internationally binding instruments, e.g. the European Convention on Human Rights (1950), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), that children have rights (see Edge 2006). Nevertheless, there is much debate as to whether children can have rights in a philosophical sense (Cowden 2016, p. 153). Joel Feinberg's 'manifesto' rights (1970) still have to be made determinate. Until the theory of children's rights is strengthened their translation into practice remains tentative. For Cowden (2016) children's rights arise out of interests sufficiently important that they have to be protected. These interests provide the ground for 'claims that produce duties in others to act or refrain from acting' (2016, p. 154). As Cowden argues, children have rights; however, they have

to be justified rather than simply be based on belief. Rights are 'human creations…powerful social and political tools for change' (Cowden 2016, p. 153).

Onora O'Neill has also examined the issue of rights and duties in relation to children. Human concern for the quality of their lives demands attention to 'ways in which children's lives are particularly vulnerable to unkindness, to lack of involvement, cheerfulness or good feeling' (O'Neill, 1988, p. 450). However, to enshrine in law that 'each child has a fundamental right to specific forms of care and education' is daunting (O'Neill 1988, p. 459). Parents and teachers may not violate any rights (of children) but yet fail to help children flourish because they do not recognize certain 'imperfect' duties that apply to them. It is part of the constructivist argument of O'Neill that even the fundamental rights of children are 'best grounded by embedding them in a wider account of fundamental obligations, which can also be used to justify positive rights and obligations' (O'Neill 1988, p. 446). O'Neill's constructivism is allied to obligations rather than to rights on the basis that the former have theoretical advantages otherwise lacking in the latter. Because children depend so hugely on others O'Neill counsels a shift from the idiom of rights to that of obligations (1988, p. 459). Avowedly Kantian in her reliance on obligations or duty, O'Neill distinguishes three sets of obligations: obligations that encompass all people, that encompass some specified others, and that encompass unspecified but not all people. If rights duly pertain to the first two – the all and the specified – only the unspecified others 'cannot plausibly be thought of as having corresponding rights' (O'Neill 1988, p. 447). In other words, in situations where rights can be neither claimed nor waived, because the recipients are neither all nor some specified others, fundamental obligations are incomplete or imperfect and, therefore, lack corresponding fundamental rights. Parents and teachers who fulfil only their perfect obligations or duties towards their children 'will do less than they ought' if they do not also fulfil their imperfect obligations.

> *Unless children receive both physical care and adequate socialization, they will not survive; if they merely survive they may not become competent agents: without education and instruction appropriate to their society they will lack capacities to act that are needed to function in the specific contexts available to them. A plurality of distinct rational beings who are also needy cannot therefore universally act on principles of mutual indifference. If they did, agency would fail or diminish for some, who then could adopt no principles of action, so undermining the very possibility of action on principles that can be universally shared. Rational and needy beings cannot universally act on principles of refusing all help to one another or of doing nothing to strengthen and develop abilities to*

act. However, it is impossible to help all others in all ways or to develop all talents or even some talents in all others. Hence obligations to help and to develop others' capacities must be imperfect obligations; they do not mandate specific acts of helpfulness to specified others or any specific contribution to developing talents in specified others. The construction of imperfect obligations commits rational and needy beings only to avoiding principled refusal to help and principled neglect to develop human potentialities. The specific acts required by these commitments will vary in different lives. Those who live or work with children are likely to find that they must take an active part both in their care and in their education if inaction is not to amount to principled refusal of those commitments. (O'Neill 1988, pp. 457-458*)*

The challenge to avoid inaction here overrides the risk of 'getting it wrong'. The dichotomies that assail us are reflected in Hohfeld's jural correlatives for entitlements (right, privilege, power and immunity) and disablements (duty, no-right, liability and disability): right v. duty, privilege v. no right, power v. liability, and immunity v. disability (Hohfeld 1917, p. 710). It is precisely in the relations between these notions that Hohfeld established their meaning (so that existing confusions in terms, their use and abuse, could be exposed and remedied), for instance, instead of 'right' denoting 'any sort of legal advantage, whether claim, privilege, power, or immunity' it should more narrowly be 'the correlative of duty' (1917, p. 717). Thus, for each conception there is a unique correlative, a unique opposite and each is never any of the others. Unfortunately, his clarity is honoured more in the breach than the observance. Hohfeld established what Schlag calls an analytic method, and not a substantive theory of law (Schlag 2015, pp. 189-190). However, though his work sets a high standard, it is a warning about the complexities that beset legal and practical thinking.

The perspectives we take are measured according to internal calculi, which themselves are aligned with our inner dispositions. Rights do not always reveal themselves in the cool light of rationality, but in the give-and-take of debate and duties may be a safer standard. Thus, concerning human rights, we observe:

> *One of the ironies of the theory and practice of human rights is that although, rhetorically, universal human rights are said to be 'non-negotiable', in fact negotiation is the primary political mode of the realisation of human rights.* (Bickenbach 2009, p. 1122)

Care

Finally, the notion of care must be addressed as it determines the very heart of this research-project. The word derives from Old High German *kara*, sorrow, and not from the

Latin *cura*, the pains or trouble bestowed on something; as a verb, its meaning shifts from 'to feel trouble, anxiety, interest or concern' to 'to give care'. Care is used in many contexts: prenatal, child, adolescent, teenage pregnancy, intensive care nursing, end-of-life, critical, primary, secondary and global health, person centred, advanced, etc. What is it, though? At its simplest, it is a human response for another in her or his need; Schleicher (2017) adds that it also care for the world, a view which is receiving prominence in the teachings of Pope Francis (2015, 2020). In pupils there are needs that are common to all, needs that are more specific to their SEN, and needs that are specific to the individual child. Assessing needs within this complex is neither easy nor agreed across states (Florian *et al*. 2006). Comorbidity, presentation-changes over time and differentials between categorization of needs and the needs themselves complicate issues. Variability between diagnosing professionals, in terms of qualifications and expertise, and between diagnostic procedures, in terms of standards, judgements and appropriateness of norms, are themselves comorbid complications, at the professional level. Within this scenario the risk of misdiagnosis, over-diagnosis or failure to diagnose increase, and pupils may not be adequately cared for in terms of their needs. An 'assessment battery' – including 'multi-axial approaches' to examine cognitive processes, abilities and attainments, technical aspects of interpreting 'single scores' that affect reliability, and responses to interventions – is needed for better diagnosis (Desforges & Lindsay 2010, p. 11). The local school team – teachers, ancillary staff and BoM – may acutely feel any needs-response mismatch. When we look to this and similar situations to discern the concern that arises in teachers and others, and then name it, the answer of many pupils is 'my teacher cares for me'. So, the exigency for collaboration between professionals, external to the school and within it, grows from a wellspring of caring for pupils. BoMs, with their crucial role of advocacy, are also part of the pedagogics of care, and though I have yet to hear pupils say that the BoM cares for them I can personally attest to the reality that its members do.

In spite of the difficulty in defining what care may mean in the context of pupils with disabilities of varying magnitude and complexity, especially in relation to their educational setting and in the context of who has the primary responsibility for that care, the limits within which my understanding of care is framed require to be established in order to make of it a serviceable conceptual tool. When developing an education plan for a pupil with special needs (called a Student Support File) a teacher first determines the status of that pupil's basic physiological, safety, belonging and esteem needs. This progression – from matters of adequate food, warmth, clothing, etc., to whether she/he requires physical or psychological protection, to how close she/he is to family, friends, peers, etc., to whether

the pupil experiences reciprocity in the receiving and giving of respect and positive feedback from others – invokes a comprehensive assessment of how well the pupil is cared for and alerts teachers to those elements that must be addressed or redressed if she/he is to benefit from the educational setting. Education itself is ever more constructed as caring for the whole person of the pupil. The structures of schools, including international and national stakeholders, policies and staff, both classroom and ancillary, and BoMs, are imbricated with the language of care (e.g. Child Care Act 1991, DES 2004, Webster 2004, Department of Children and Youth Affairs 2014, Tusla 2018).

Pupils are attracted by those who care for them. Part of that attraction is expressed by pupils wanting to emulate them or follow their example. As Vos helpfully distinguishes, there is a type of moral exemplarity that belongs to people because of their role – he identifies people like parents, teachers, professionals, etc. – and there is a type that is existential, that is to say, while having an exemplary role they 'exceed these roles' – e.g. Mahatma Gandhi, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela and Pope Francis – and in so doing 'they acquire meaning on a deeper, existential level, that is, with regard to what it means to be a human being and to be a human being with and for others' (2018, p. 23). This statement recognizes something essential in the educator-pupil relationship (also Teal 2014); it may bring out the noblest qualities in pupils but it may also deteriorate into indoctrination, which is a process that erects 'an illegitimate barrier between the beliefs an individual holds and the evidence or reasons she has for holding them' (Wareham 2019, p. 44). It is only seemingly trite to say that care must be taken of care itself.

Later, we will see how central care becomes in both a Heideggerian understanding of the human being and in theological descriptions of how God operates in the world. Theology, in its elemental simplicity, is talk about the divine or God; this mode of discourse may be philosophically engaged with the possibility of extra-human reality and/or with treating of how God relates to God's creation; while theologizing includes dialogue with as well as on the divine, it does not necessarily entail Newmanian assent to doctrines or dogmas. In theology, there are various dogmatic fields; here I use 'dogma' (*dokein*, to seem good) in its earlier, Greek, non-religious sense of that which seems to be true. For instance, in Christianity, Jesus Christ is the pre-eminent symbol of truth, 'the way, the truth and the lifet' (John 14:6); around this dogma of Christ various other dependent doctrines, such as Mary as *theotokos* or God-bearer, the church as 'the body of Christ' and the Trinity as the expression of the inner nature of God, revolve.Some, even in specifically Roman Catholic

educational contexts, no longer operate within a Christian *Weltanschauung*. For instance, following the European Enlightenment and the rise of Freemasonry, the idea of nature meant many things and was hypostasized in the figure of Isis: 'She [Isis] represents Nature, the object of science, but also Nature conceived as the mother of all beings, and finally Nature as infinite, divinized, ineffable, and anonymous, or universal Being…also identified with Truth, which is conceived as the ultimate, and perhaps inaccessible, object of the efforts of human knowledge' (Hadot 2006, p. 269). New dogmatic concerns cannot be equated to a denial of the validity or worth of a non-Christian educator's care for pupils. Rather, Roman Catholics have to find new ways of engaging with others that are not necessarily predicated on a shared belief system. Indeed, denominational schools and their BoMs will increasingly have to deal with a diminishing Roman Catholic presence and what they do and say must be attuned to this reality. This research is undertaken in light of this new context.

1.4 AIM AND RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The aim of the present dissertation is to examine the question of the RE of pupils with SEN as it pertains to the oversight role of BoMs. In other words, there is a conscious attempt to eschew the specialized argot of 'special' education, especially regarding the aetiology, pathology and remediation of conditions that impact on pupils' ability to learn, interact with others and live independently. Instead, I offer to Members of BoMs and other educationalists reflections and a process that assist them in fulfilling their role. As Ernest Hilgard discusses, educational research can be translated into action (1972); in particular, he looked at how the psychology of learning related to educational practises. He identifies two sets of distinctions, viz. logical and social. First, there are logical distinctions, those between 'primarily analytical and explanatory' science and an 'essentially synthetic' science; the former leads to 'general theories that are parsimonious, elegant, and of wide scope' while the latter leads to 'the design of instruments or programs that serve practical ends'. Second, the social set also concerns the investigator in basic science; however, the scientist may follow her or his own path, at her or his own pace and publish without financial reward, or may apply knowledge, follow a laboratory's path, at its more urgent pace and produce patents that may yield royalties (1972, p. 18). We must, nonetheless, beware of the process of translation itself. As Mazenod makes clear: 'The act of translation can thus result in a type of category error where differences can be unintentionally concealed and similarities assumed through the use of language that evokes a different or broader conceptual framework than intended in the original language' (2017, p. 199). The

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present research-project on BoMs has its distinctions between explication and constructive modelling, too, as will become evident in chapter five; socially, however, it follows the author's path and pace. The richness of the concept of translation, meanwhile, is appealed to later when theological tropes are used to deepen some possible understandings of BoM members' service to pupils both with and without SEN.

Teachers, such as myself, often fall prey to professional jargon and, in particular, an overuse of abbreviations; though we would prefer to achieve Quine's 'cognitive synonymy' (1951) between terms in an academically specialized field and those in general, educated discourse, temptation may trump wisdom. Nevertheless, here, in a dissertation that engages the opinions of members of BoM, it is imperative to avoid too specialized a vocabulary and set of conditions, for essential to the composition of such boards is a diversity of members. At the same time, there is also an imperative to offer a discussion of issues central to their responsibilities and a pedagogics that engages both intellectually and practically. The evolvement of the present research targeted all types of members of BoMs and not simply those formally engaged in education. The purpose of the research is to assist all members in carrying out their responsibility more effectively by reflection on an issue that I maintain is central to the whole educational process: what is education for those who until quite recently were 'left out of the reckoning' perhaps because the system was overburdened, or because it would be too expensive to take them into account or because 'they' were deemed ineducable. The thesis argued here is that BoMs can and therefore should play a central role in education, that RE is a curricular area of particular importance and centrality through which to exercise this role, and that pupils with SEN contribute essentially to how this role is to be conceived as applicable to all pupils.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In order to effect the aim of assisting BoMs, this research-project is led by the following questions:

- What do those tasked with care of pupils with SEN think about the issue?

- How might they be helped to fulfil their duties better in this regard?

- What are the salient issues that arise for the thesis when we reflect on special education, especially in the primary sector in an Irish context?

- Are there lessons to be learnt at the end of this exploratory process?

Behind these questions are certain hypotheses that lie at the heart of a study of the oversight role of management in the religious educational provision for pupils with SEN and they include:

- there is a dearth of research on RE for pupils with SEN

- there is research on pupils with SEN

- BoMs are not adequately prepared for their responsibilities in regard to RE for pupils with SEN

- there is a theological deficit at the heart of thinking on SEN.

Educators are familiar, both from the literature and the presence of children in their classes, with the idea of nurturing the imagination of those same children. Maxine Greene (1995) argues that imagination must also be nurtured in educators themselves as it is the means by which empathy is produced. Joyce Ann Mercer further argues that this empathy is 'a requisite part of education in contexts ever more diverse, and a world ever more complex' (2016: p. 345). Although Mercer's context is the lifeworlds of others more generally, her emphasis on empathy, the ground, according to Churchland (2019), for conscience (see also MacFarquhar 2007), accords with Greene's nurturing of imagination and is pertinent to our consideration of children with special needs as we struggle to gain an insight and thus a possible entry-point into their reality in order to help to educate them (having begun to educate ourselves first and to develop our own attitudes, explicit and implicit (see Wilson & Scior 2015) towards education, religious education and the pupils with SEN).

1.6 Subject of the Question – Judeo-Christian

'Children should be seen and not heard' ran the old saying in my youth. I suspect that a generation before mine probably intended that the prohibition be applied to sight, too. Until recently, a scholar searched in vain for discussions of children and their place in the theological and philosophical discourses and treatises in colleges, universities and seminaries. The child was scarcely an object to be noticed, still less a person to be encountered. Instead, the anthropological aspect of serious discussion and research was firmly rooted in the adult, the healthy 'normal' one. Today, we strive to communicate with children and relate to them as fellow-humans, not simply as potential adults. In short, children are centre-stage: curricula are child-centred, especially since the 1971 curriculum (Walsh 2016, p. 8), and all texts are child-friendly, the focus 'children first'.

We become human and, at the same time, we are always part of humanity. A long gestation and a longer childhood result in the development of skills, competencies and sociality that form the individual person. In the social the person is born. For Habermas, the social is the public space out of which 'the deep-rooted reciprocal dependence of the one person on the other' is intuited; inverted, this person reflects the outside social world. 'The public character of the jointly inhabited interior of our lifeworld is both inside and outside at once' (Habermas 2004, p. 3); we become aware of ourselves first under the gaze of others (2004, p. 4). Not for Habermas the 'misleading Cartesian image of the monadic consciousness'. Of human essence is communication. 'Only those who talk can be silent. Only because we are by our nature linked to one another can we feel lonely or isolated' (Habermas 2004, p. 4); too often western philosophers analyze language as a medium of representation not of communication (2004, p. 4). Rational discourse proceeds reflexively, drawing in all contributions and exchanging reasons – it has borrowed this from the written word (2004, p. 5). Here Habermas reflects Iitaka. Habermas (2004) considered his own birth with a cleft palate, which resulted in 'the traumatic experience of surgery' throughout his childhood and 'failures in communicating' in school (2004, p. 2), as having a major effect on both his social and professional life. Thus, with Habermas, we see the importance of communication in leading to his theory of communicative action; it was born from personal experience.

At this juncture, we turn to one the more formative aspects of our self-understanding: the Biblical narratives that shape western understanding. What are the messages about our humanity that, like cargo, come with reading the Jewish and Christian scriptures? We are searching for the biblical understandings of nature, the body and sin.

1.6.1 Anthropological roots

First, the Genesis accounts of the creation of the first humans were of fully formed adults. This image combined with, if not engendered, an almost total disregard for children. Correspondingly, those with bodily or mental 'defects' were so ignored that they are virtually invisible in literature, not least inspired scriptures, until recent decades. The present thesis would have been inconceivable throughout most of Christianity's history. Yet, without much of that history the thesis could not have been formulated as it is.

What do we understand the human person to be? Even as people engage this question and global policies continue to be developed to vindicate the rights of humans great energies, in addition to the everyday outcomes from war, disease, drought and famine, are expended in diminishing certain others, especially at the early and final stages of life. So, outside

discussion of what the span of life might typically mean and how it might be secured, ameliorated and fostered, there is another agenda of damaging, deconstructing and destructing life. Often, the agency for the good and the bad in life is not 'the nature of things' but the will of humans, more often men. This is the context into which a child is born. That child will continue to be shaped by her or his environment until the moment of death. Accidents may happen to the child along the way; some children will thrive and others will fail; some will be helped and some will be hindered. However, the child does not only enter a context or lifeworld; she or he also brings an enormous phylogenetic heritage-history as well.

1.6.2 Judeo-Christian heritage

The Bible is more accurately a *biblia*, which is Greek for a collection of books or texts, produced in a wide variety of contexts, for various purposes, over a vast amount of time. It is not just the religious text of Jews and Christians, it is also revered by Muslims (e.g. *Qur'ān* 3:113-115, referring to Jews as 'people of the Book', at least some of whom are 'in the ranks of the righteous'). And it is the normative text of western culture, in spite of increasing secularization. Over the long history of biblical composition we find portrayals of people who are different, who stand apart from others either because they are marginalized or excluded as sojourners, orphans or widows (e.g. Deuteronomy 24:17-22) or because they suffer some infirmity like lameness, blindness, leprous skin, etc. Just as certain animals were treated differently from others because they had, say, a cloven hoof, and could not be eaten without making humans who touched them 'unclean', that is to say, ritually unclean, so individual humans might be ostracized if their presence might be thought to contaminate the community of those deemed 'clean'. The 'unclean' were stigmatized. Indeed, this process is alive and well today as those with HIV or mental illness can attest; so, too, pupils with AD(H)D or who are on the autistic spectrum are open to being stigmatized. On the other hand, others were separated because they were 'holy', the mark of God was upon them (see Otto 1931). An infirm human body 'could actually serve as a means of communication between God and humans' (Krötzl, Mustakallio & Kuuliala 2016, p. 1). In Christian history there have been some, like Francis of Assisi and, nearer our own day, Padre Pio, who bore the marks of Christ's crucifixion on their bodies, marks we call the stigmata (see Galatians 6:17). Typically, a person with a stigma is one who is marked off from the majority, in a usually negative sense, such as those with AIDS in the 1980s and 1990s. Generally, though not always, then, having a *stigma*, or sign, is a mark of shame, dishonour and defilement and marks one off as separated from the norm.

The most profound category of stigmatization in the Judeo-Christian tradition is, however, not some physical blemish such as leprosy – though it was quite extreme – but sinfulness, the transgressing of divine law by human wilfulness. Thus, the paradigmatic story of biblical sinfulness tells of God's anointed, David, who caused Bathsheba's husband to be killed lest her pregnancy by David be discovered and she be stigmatized – perhaps, put to death, as the Law prescribed (Leviticus 20:10) – before all. Later, Mephibosheth, Jonathan's five-year old son, became lame in both feet when a hurrying nurse dropped him (2 Samuel 4:4); David brings the boy up at his own table (2 Samuel 9:1-13). Though it has been attempted (Stiker 1999), it seems forced to derive a full-blown theology of stigmatization or disability from the Bible, by using stories such as that of Mephibosheth. What is important for the present thesis is the biblical recording of human failure and accident and that an affliction did not necessarily entail divine displeasure or condemnation.

Biblical nature

The Jewish scriptures, the Tana<u>k</u>, do not present a worked-out, elucidated ontology of nature or of human nature. In the first two chapters of Genesis two differing accounts of creation are presented. Each shows God as lord and creator of all being and life-forms. These narratives are neither history nor science but theology. The special divine-human relationship, in spite of human failures, is central.

The paradigmatic, second description in Genesis 2 is of the earthy *'ādām* brought to life by the *nismat hayyim* (breath of life) which the Lord God breathed (*wayyippaḥ*) into his nostrils and so the man became 'a living being (*nepēš ḥayyāh*)' (Genesis 2:7). The body is, as it were, animated or en-souled by God. The *anima* or soul is not synonymous with *nepēš*, however, as the terms in 2:7 make clear: God's breath is not the *nepēš*. Significant, too, is the use of *nepēš* for animals (Genesis 2:19). When the widow's son is raised by Elijah (1 Kings 17:22) his *nepēš* returns. McKenzie warns that conceiving *nepēš* as 'living' is as risky as equating it with soul (1965, pp. 836-839). He picks out other senses, including principle of life (Numbers 23:10), self (Job 9:21, combined with life), bodily appetites like hunger and thirst (Psalms 31:9, 42:2), and knowing and thinking (Proverbs 19:4, 23:7).

The tie between the divine spirit, *rūaḥ*, and God is clarified further in the account of how the elders were given the gift of prophesy and how Moses accepted that Eldad and Medad, who seem not to have been with 'the seventy' (Numbers 11:26), were entitled to do so. The Lord took 'the spirit (*hārūaḥ*) that was on him [Moses] and placed it upon the seventy

elders, and it happened that when the spirit (*hārūaḥ*) rested on them they prophesized' (Numbers 11:25).

Also evocative of a way of being beyond the merely physical is life (*ḥayyê*). In Proverbs 14:30 – 'life to the body [is] a sound heart' – we see various terms are conjoined with it. Life is opposed to death and only the living (*ḥay ḥay*) praise God (Isaiah 38:19). King David asked for life (*ḥayyîm*) and was given length of days forever and ever (Psalm 21:4). To represent one's consciousness and the emotional dimension of life, the Hebrews usually but not exclusively used *leb*, heart. They understood the heart to be the seat of emotions, will and consciousness generally (for instance, Genesis 6:5; Deuteronomy 15:9; Isaiah 10:7), and 'to steal one's heart' is really to deceive, not 'win over'. When Jeremiah foresees the new covenant written, not on tablets of stone, but in human hearts (31:32-33) and Ezekiel sees inner renovation in the heart (36:26, with 'a new heart' replacing 'the stony heart'), they are referring to the consciousness of humans. Paul also uses this understanding: he echoes Jeremiah in 2 Corinthians 3:3 and Romans 2:15. Likewise, it is the mind or will that is involved when God sends 'his Son' to redeem 'us' and enable us to be adopted children of God. God also sends the Spirit into 'our hearts' so that we cry 'Abba!, Father!' (Galatians 4:4-6); the heart is where Christ lives (Ephesians 3:17). Indeed, those who are slow to believe in Jesus are 'hard of heart' (Mark 3:5; 6:52; 8:17), i.e. they are poor in understanding or intellectually culpable.

Referring to the whole person Job uses flesh (*beśārō*) and soul (*wenapšō*, 14:22). More generally, the usual Hebrew term for human weakness, whether physical or moral, is flesh (Hebrew: *bāśār*; Greek: *sarx)*. We turn now to the notion of flesh before noting the particular association with sinfulness.

Flesh

In Psalm 102:6, *bāśār* is used for flesh (Psalm 102:6), and means the complete human body (Leviticus 13:13 *et passim*). It also represents the sexual organs (Exodus 28:42). One's life-span is limited because one is *bāśār* ((Genesis 6:3). We note that this account is part of the prelude to the story of Noah, the just (*ṣaddiq*) and blameless man (*ish*): we read further that God saw how great was the wickedness of man (*hā'ādām*) and 'every intent of the thoughts' of his heart (*libbōw*) was filled with evil and, so, God planned to wipe out humankind (Genesis 6:6-7); here, *ādām* represents fallen humanity.

In the New Testament, *bāśār* is translated as *sarx*. It represents human limitation before God (Matthew 16:17) and physical existence (1 Corinthians 15:39; Galatians 4:14). Often in Paul, however, *sarx* refers to the human in opposition to the divine: Paul contrasts those

who 'boast according to the flesh (*kata sarka*)' with himself, who speaks 'above measure (*huper*)' (2 Corinthians 11:18-23). Paul proceeds to list the ways in which he has worked more, suffered more from the lash, rods, stones, being shipwrecked, ever in peril, hungry and thirsty, etc. and every day has 'the care (*merimna*) for all the churches' (vv.23-28). I should add here that *merimna* is otherwise used only in Matthew, in the story of the sowing of the seed: the one who receives the seed among thorns is the one who becomes unfruitful because the world's *merimna* and riches' deceitfulness chokes the word (Matthew 13:22).

If one 'sows in one's own flesh', then 'from the flesh one will reap decay'; this is contrasted with one who, sowing in the spirit, 'from the Spirit will reap eternal life' (Galatians 6:8). Ultimately, in Romans, Paul urges us to seek victory over *sarx* (7:5). However, the key and usual word that Paul uses for the body is *sōma*. This term is for the whole person, the human who lives the sensual life, and, as Paul develops his ecclesiology, the body of Christ and the cosmic Christ (Colossians 1:17-25), too. Christ is 'the head of the body (*tou sōmatos*) of the church' (1:18), who, 'in the s*ōma* of his *sarx* through death' (1:22), has reconciled 'the alienated and sinners' to God. 'In my *sarx*, on behalf of Christ's *sōma*, which is the church', Paul adds, 'I fill up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions' (1:24). It is the *sōma* that will be resurrected (1 Corinthians 15:35-44).

Sin

Sin, as already hinted, is a complex notion. The origin of our western notion of sin lies in the story of Adam and Eve's disobedience to divine prohibition: do not eat the fruit of the tree (Genesis 2:16-17). The following chapters (Genesis 4-11) show the contagion of sin that follows upon this primordial disobedience. Tied to what we call sinfulness and crime is God's punishment: the ground is cursed because of Adam, who must toil, in sweat, until the day he returns to become dust again (Genesis 3:17-19) and Cain is accursed because he has slain his brother, Abel (Genesis 4:1-18). We note how sin is personified in God's warning to Cain that 'sin (*ḥāṭṭā'ṯ*) is crouching at the door; its desire is for you, but you must master it' (Genesis 4:7). Henceforth and throughout the scriptures, sin, death and disobedience are juxtaposed with divine wrath, punishment, forgiveness and new covenant. When people repent they are forgiven, often with warnings from 'friends of God' and prophets like Abraham, Noah, Moses, Isaiah, Elijah, Jeremiah, Hosea and Amos. This was true at such special times as the Exodus, the fall of Judah and Israel, the destruction of the first Temple, the exile into Babylon, and the Roman occupation.

Thus, the Tanaḵ's presentation of sin is more in human terms than in a specifically theological notion of direct challenge to the divine; indeed, a lot of what people in the West

take to be the biblical doctrine of sin, the Fall, etc., actually derives from John Milton's poetry, especially his *Paradise Lost*. Words common to ordinary 'secular' use encompass religious usage: sin is a falling short of what should be; indeed, *ḥēṭ'* and *ḥāṭṭā't* have the meaning of 'missing the mark'. For instance, it (*ḥāṭā'ṯî*) is used of breaking an inter-nation agreement (Judges 11:27); it names the breaking down of a lord-vassal relationship (1 Samuel 19:4; 24:12), which is viewed in highly personal rather than political ways, and hints at failure to reach a goal. The guilt of failure is expressed by *'āwôn*, iniquity, something too heavy to bear (Genesis 4:13, Isaiah 1:4); its root-verb *'āwâ* to sin also connotes to be bent, make crooked, bend; there is a too easy association here with physical burdens that de-form the body. It is a 'straying' (*šᵉgāgāh*) from the right path. We note that *ra'*, evil (2 Kings 8:18, 27), also means ugly (Job 2:7); hence, what lacks proper shape is ugly, crippled, defective. Also, to have defects is to be unclean and so precluded from sacred ministry. The book of Leviticus offers a list of blemishes profaning the divine sanctuary that includes blindness, lameness, a mutilated face, too long a limb, broken foot or hand, being a hunchback or dwarf, having an eye blemish, itching disease, scabs, or crushed testicles (21:16-23).

In the Christian scriptures, on the other hand, sin takes on a more theological nuance: sometimes sin is personified, though usually it is an act committed by a person, and sometimes it is a state from which Jesus is portrayed as releasing people. Jesus's own stories and parables, for instance, the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32), confirm his attitude towards the sinful person: win them back by forgiveness. Further, any and each act of repentance must occasion forgiveness (Luke 17:4).

Jesus and children

Finally, we look at Jesus's relationship to children. Helpfully, Gundry-Volf (2000) discusses five portraits of how Jesus regarded children:

- children as recipients of the kingdom/reign of God (Mark 10:13-16; // Matthew 19:13-15; Luke 18:15-17)
- children as models of entering the kingdom of God (Mark 10:15)
- humble like a child (Matthew 18:1-5)
- serving children and being great (Mark 9:33-37; // Matthew 18:1-2; Luke 9:46-48)
- to welcome children is to welcome Jesus (again, Mark 9:33-37; // Matthew 18:1-2; Luke 9:46-48)

Caring for children was low-status in the time of Jesus, yet he makes those who would be great become as children (Mark 9:33-37). In Matthew, children in the Temple proclaim

Jesus as 'the son of David', a messianic designation. For Gundry-Volf, the Gospels 'teach the reign of God *as a children's world*, where children are the measure, rather than don't measure up to adults, where the small are great and the great must become small' (2000, p. 480, emphasis original).

1.6.3 Theological insights

Having looked at some of the terminology for natural being and sinfulness, and lest we think there is only fragmentary and disparate mention of the human *qua* human and, perhaps, even less of the divine-human relationship we need to recall other biblical tropes. In both the Tanak and the Christian scriptures, the imagery of the shepherd minding sheep is used to show God's concern for the welfare of the people, his flock. Psalm 23 is paradigmatic of the good shepherd (*rā'āh*): the Lord is my shepherd, who 'makes…leads…guides', yet the imagery is of sheep following, rather than being led by, the shepherd. God has been shepherd of Jacob's life (Genesis 48:24); like the sceptres of earthly kings, God's crook is used to draw back the wandering sheep from danger (see Jeremiah 49:19), for people, like sheep, can be lost even when the shepherd is in sight (Isaiah 53:6). King David exemplifies the good shepherd: taken from the sheepfolds (1 Samuel 16:11-13), God made him shepherd the people after Saul was rejected; though his sins were many, David well represents the person who turns back to God, once his evil has been called out (e.g. 2 Samuel 11-12). With regard to Saul, we observe that the language of divine rejection forms the narrative of rejection *simpliciter*: 'an evil spirit from the Lord tormented him' (1 Samuel 16:14). Today, Saul's mood-swings, spells of anger, persecution complex, jealousies at David's successes in battle, (1 Samuel 18:7-9), his setting of traps for David, including the use of his son, Jonathan, and daughter, Michal – both of whom loved David as well as their father (1 Samuel 18) – all indicate mental ill-health; in today's world, Saul would receive psychiatric and medical intervention.

Other prophets employ the shepherd motif, too. Ezekiel excoriates leaders for failing to act like true shepherds (Ezekiel 34:1-6). God, however, will seek God's lost, scattered sheep (v.11); the broken will be bound up and the weak strengthened (v.16). God will judge between 'sheep and sheep' (v.22) and prophesizes that 'my servant David' will be 'set over' the sheep as one shepherd; God will make 'a new covenant of peace' (v.25). Jeremiah, though, is more caustic: when shepherds become stupid, the flock scatters (Jeremiah, 10:21). Yet, he, too talks of a new covenant 'with the house of Israel and the house of Judah' (31:31). Israel and Judah are personified. Indeed, blessings and curses assail them, they are rejected and forgiven, they repent and are brought into new covenants

with God. We need little more than the long history of God's dealings with Israel and Judah to see how wilful and disobedient children behave towards those who love them. God will write God's law within the heart/mind of each person, declaring 'I will be their God, and they shall be my people' (v.33), and 'from the greatest of them to the least' they will all know God such that there will no longer be a need for one person to teach another (v.34).

In the 'new testament', Jesus is the shepherd who, in his parable of the lost sheep, leaving the ninety-nine, goes in search of the one lost sheep (Luke 15:3-7; //Matthew 18:10-14). Jesus is also the final shepherd: at the last gathering in of all the nations Jesus will separate sheep from goats, the former on his right, the position of honour, and the latter on his left (Matthew 25:32-34). The Johannine Jesus is not only a leader-shepherd, he is life-giving because he lays down his life for the sheep (John 10:11, 15, 17, 18). Also and following on his post-betrayal affirmations of love for Jesus, Peter is told by Jesus to 'tend my lambs, shepherd my sheep and tend my sheep (John 21:15-17). Peter takes up this affirmation – 'shepherd the sheep-flock of God among you' – in his first epistle and advises the presbyters: to do this willingly, eagerly; to clothe yourselves with humility towards one another and humble yourselves under God's mighty hand; be sober and watchful; and resist the devil (I Peter 5:2-10).

We have in these accounts an embryonic theology of care. God is prepared to act as any good shepherd would towards 'the sheep': God will care for them. In Jesus, that dimension of care is taken to the extreme of preparedness to die for 'the sheep'. The commission that Jesus leaves to his followers is: care for my sheep. The language, if not always the reality, of being a pastor to the people has echoed in churches for millennia. The word 'bishop' derives from the oversight (*epi-skopos*) that shepherds have over their flock. The underlying notion draws on human self-understanding and conscience. Being self-aware, that is, being cognitively aware of what is going on within my own interiority of mind, and being confronted by personal conscience – the French *conscience* preserves both senses in the one word – it is reasonable, both epistemically and morally, to affirm that others also act with care and self-sacrifice. Though writing about a specific context, Geraldine Smyth OP observes that in every age 'where rituals without depth tumble out according to the dictates and mind-change of the celebrity industry, the care of the soul calls attention to the importance of deep symbols and meditative practice in the search for wholeness' (Smyth 2007, p. 162). BoMs are one of society's ways of overseeing the holistic development of pupils. Their members search for modes of recognition, patterns of acting and openness in

order to fulfil this role. In posing the question of what 'my' role is each of us also poses the more fundamental question of who each of us is. In this, we are reminded of Augustine of Hippo (354-430), who, having followed a secular way of life, came, under the influence of Monica, his mother, to see that the very scriptures he had railed against as foolishness proclaimed a God who now made claim on him. He exclaimed in his autobiographical *Confessions*, and in language that reminds us of Laes (2017), that 'In your [God's] eyes I have become a problem to myself, and that is my sickness [*in cuius oculis mihi questio factus sum, et ipse est languor meus*]' (Augustine, *Confessions* X.33.50, p. 208). Augustine claims that in the love of God's mercy and in the sweetness of God's grace 'every weak person [*infirmus*] is given power, while dependence on grace produces awareness of one's own weakness [*conscius infirmitatis suae*]' (*Confessions* X.3.4, p. 180). His own attitudes now radically altered, Augustine views the world with Pauline eyes: what have we that we have not received (*Confessions* IX.13.34, XIII.14.15; echoing 1 Corinthians 4:7). God is the strength of the weak (*virtus infirmorum*) (*Confessions* XI.2.3, p. 222); it is 'because of our own *infirmitas* [*quoniam ex nostra infirmitate*]' that we are moved to help others in their debility even as we would wish ourselves to be assisted were we to be similarly distressed (*Confessions* XIII.17.21, p. 285). Augustine has discovered what is later called a relational understanding of personhood (see Ware 2009; Macmurray 1957, 1961).

Another insight is offered in a seminal essay of Karl Rahner (1971). Childhood, characterized by openness, trust in others and readiness to journey into the new, is seen by Rahner as mystery and essentially religious. Rahner is concerned with 'what the divinely revealed word has to say about childhood' (Rahner 1971, p. 33). Simply, he concludes that childhood is a mystery (p. 42) in which one retains 'the true spirit of childhood' (p. 50), earlier called 'an infinite openness of existence' (p. 49), throughout one's life then one finds God (p. 50). For Rahner, it is God who bestows 'the grace of divine sonship in the *Son*' (p. 49, emphasis original) and so it is God who creates the 'childhood of God' as the quintessence of human childhood and as 'the ultimate consummation of its own nature' (p. 49). The adult, in learning how to remain in the childhood given her or him at birth, viz. the childhood of God, comes to maturity as ever more the child of God: the openness of childhood becomes the 'infinite openness' of human childhood (p. 48) in which there is trustfulness of another who loves and cares for one (p. 45). That this maturity may begin is the task of adults – and here we think of parents, teachers and BoM members – who help the child to be more truly a child as one who shares in the interior life of God. Children's experience can teach us about the mystery of God present in the world's everydayness. It is not that the child – or we – experience God as one object among others; experience of God

is an horizon within which and towards which we journey; in reflection, it becomes the source of our knowing and graced freedom. For Rahner, when we experience limits and the void opens before us then the possibility of divine mystery may also open for us (see McEvoy 2019, p. 130).

1.7 Phenomenon of Being – Heideggerian

> *For most people in Ireland, the totality of the human condition cannot be understood or explained merely in terms of physical and social experience. This conviction comes from a shared perception that intimates a more profound explanation of being, from an awareness of the finiteness of life and from the sublime fulfilment that human existence sometimes affords.* (Introduction, DES 1999, p. 27)

Whether in Christian or secular terms, our linguistic and cultural heritages shape how we interpret the world as well as how we respond to and assist others. Having looked at the rather unthematic interpretation that lies at the heart of western culture I propose to briefly examine another but thematic interpretation, that of Martin Heidegger, and see what it may yield in terms of human self-understanding and wholeness and so contribute to a broader conception of human being in the world. Please note that the pilcrow sign, in the referencing in *Being and Time*, customarily designates the paragraphs in the German original, i.e. Max Niemeyer Verlag's eighth edition.

With *Being and Time* (1926), Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) was working out the existential structures of being, such as *In-Sein* (Being-in), *Befindlichkeit* (state of mind), *Verfallen* (deterioration) and *Sorge* (care). We note that, for Heidegger, the task of 'working out the problem of fundamental ontology' depends on how well *Dasein*, which is his term for the phenomenon of the human person, has been explicated, for it is Dasein which understands Being; in this way Heidegger plans to arrive at an understanding of Being (¶43, p. 244) and so lay bare the fundamental orientation of *Being and Time*, namely, to understand Being. However, this is a long and detailed text; therefore, before entering into it, we examine Heidegger's more compact *An Introduction to Metaphysics* (1999 [1929]) as an introduction.

In his four-stage archaeology of being, through examining both the distinctions between it and becoming, appearance, thinking and the ought, and the changes that began in the time of Plato and Aristotle, Heidegger seeks to 'unfold the true essence of being' (p. 200). Being is permanence (not becoming), the always identical (not appearance), the already-there

(not thought), the datum (the not-yet ought). He notes that being (*physis*) is initially 'the power that emerges and discloses' (p. 197); as such what it discloses is *eidos* and *idea*, 'that which is seen in the visible, the aspect it offers' (p. 180). This is not problematic for Heidegger; it happened with Plato: *being* emerges and in consequence appears or shines forth and, in this sense, is something to be looked at, an idea (p. 180). However, in time the *idea* became 'the sole and decisive interpretation of being' (p. 182), and much of Heidegger's work is an undoing of that philosophical turn. With *eidos* comes thought, which Heidegger calls *logos*. As logos became something 'handy', truth became correctness, a sort of tool to be handled in the right way, and that way became known as logic (see p. 188); indeed, we know the determinations of being as *katēgoriai* or categories because of this notion of logos. Because logos has become statement and statements are passed from one person to another it is easy to see that the truth as experienced can become lost. And yet, it is thought, not being, that came to dominate western philosophy. In the latter, self-sufficient reason becomes the master narrative and Heidegger, aware both of what is being lost and of the danger lurking in modern reason's subservience to technocratic thinking, argues for the primacy of what is, what reveals itself and shines forth in itself and for itself, *Sein*, which is prior to any beings even the being that recognizes Being, namely, *da-sein*, the being-that-stands-out, the human being.

1.7.1 Being and Nature

In nature (*physis*) Being is made present in a way that Heidegger later says 'makes beings *differentiable* among themselves' (Heidegger 2016, p. 319, emphasis original); hence is part of the projecting of Being into the future. Whatever Being is its structure is in time, and time is what presents possibilities to Being or *Sein*, and to the being or *Dasein* who stands out, and is identified with the human, the being who is there (*da*): '…it has nevertheless been revealed that I am myself the entity which we call Dasein, and that I am so as a potentiality-for-Being for which to be this entity is an issue' (¶63, p. 361). It is Dasein who can ask the 'question of being'. At every point, then, Heidegger is trying to see how things, beings (*seiendes*), connect with one another in the world of Being (see ¶12, p. 84). In this fundamental phenomenological approach Heidegger shares an understanding of being-in-the-world that is common and which he labels *ontic*, that is, concerning entities and the facts about them (p. 31, footnote 3), as distinguished from ontological, which concerns Being. However, what he wants to achieve is an ontological understanding of being and reveal that to us; he would not describe it like this; for him, Being discloses itself and we have to learn to see what it is that Being discloses to us.

To orient ourselves we look first at the distinction Heidegger makes between beings-present-at-hand (*Vorhanden*) and beings-ready-to-hand (*Zuhanden*). Some-thing – Heidegger's own example is of a hammer – is present-at-hand; it lies before us, a thing of wood and metal, perhaps unknown in a society that has never smelted metal; I can observe it, and describe it in an ontic way, as a scientist might examine its constituents. However, if I know how to use it, if I pick it up and wield it to put a nail into a piece of wood in order to make a chair, say, then the hammer is a piece of equipment for me and its specific type of being is *Zuhandenheit*, readiness-to-hand (¶15, p. 98). In this readiness-to-hand there is revealed a hammer-nail relationship; for Heidegger, the relationship reveals itself in the use to which hammer and nail are put. The latter usage can change, of course; for instance, in ancient Nordic legends and modern cinema, a hammer may be the power of Thor present-to-hand. So, too, there is a relationship between hammer and Dasein; the latter knows the use of a hammer and in some sense is her- or himself the being that she or he is because of this relationship; equipment and tools are what they are by having functions that humans know. Knowing the hammer's function is a condition of the possibility of becoming a carpenter. The particular form of sight that Zuhandenheit calls forth is circumspection or *Umsicht*. Umsicht, as a seeing-around, is the recognition of the everydayness of being-in-the-world. Anything we do that concerns us, domestically or 'in the public world', our *Umwelt*, is ready-to-hand (¶15, p. 100). Indeed, the environment-nature, *die Umweltnatur*, too, has this readiness-to-hand.

The relation of the person to the phenomenon of Being-in-the-world is not established by the presence together of 'the physical and the psychical', neither ontically nor ontologically (¶43, p. 248), and attempts like that of Kant to prove this relation fail. They fail because Dasein 'already *is* what subsequent proofs deem necessary to demonstrate for it' (¶43, p. 249, emphasis original). In other words, the person is, and does not require proof of its being-in-the-world; Dasein is already present-at-hand, though this is something that other non-Dasein entities have in common with it (¶25, p. 150); it is first looked at, ascertained and then becomes accessible as something factual. To be distinguished from this present-at-hand-ness of Dasein is a certain 'existential attribute of the entity which has Being-in-the-world as its way of Being' (¶29, p. 174); it is not something we can come across by looking at it. It is a mood, a state-of-mind, that discloses Dasein in its thrownness. We are 'never free of moods' (¶29, p. 175): the mood brings about the 'there/*da*' Dasein; it brings 'experiences' into reflection; it 'makes it possible first of all to direct oneself towards something' (¶29, p. 176). We note that in Dasein's existential

structure of projection Heidegger is naming the human as always having possibilities (*Möglichkeiten*, see ¶31, p. 185).

Care

Dasein differs from entities that can be said to be either Vorhanden or Zuhanden, for it 'is "in" the world in the sense that it deals with entities encountered within-the-world, and does so concernfully and with familiarity' (¶23, p. 138). For Heidegger, the being of Dasein is care, *Sorge* (¶42, p. 241; ¶80, p. 465). Once he has laid bare the features of Dasein existentially, already enumerated as the three-fold 'existentiality, facticity, and Being-fallen', Heidegger moves to this interpretation of Dasein as care. Care, from the Latin *cura*, has a double meaning: 'anxious exertion' and 'carefulness' or 'devotedness' (¶42, p. 243). In relation to Dasein as 'projected' into the world, in terms of possibilities and being free, one's *perfectio* or perfection 'is "accomplished" by "care"; but if it is, care also determines the Dasein's 'thrownness' into the world (¶42, p. 243). Dasein is 'brought before itself and becomes disclosed to itself in its thrownness' (¶39, p. 225). At the heart of this disclosure is the basic state-of-mind of anxiety (¶40, pp. 228-235); for, anxiety, which is also central to death and authenticity, 'belongs to Dasein's essential state of Being-in-the-world' (p. 234). Indeed, care is the 'basic state of Dasein' (¶50, p. 293). Dasein is non-transient because it can never be present-at-hand; 'if it is, it *exists*' (¶73, p. 432), and if it no longer exists it is not ontologically past; rather, it is *da-gewesen*, having-been-there. However, as care, Dasein *is* the 'between' (¶72, p. 427), i.e. between birth and death.

What concerns Dasein most fundamentally is something it can never outstrip: death (¶50, p. 294). By its very existence, Dasein is 'thrown' towards death (¶50, 295) and this is anxiety. However, death is more than something that cannot be outstripped; it is also both non-relational and a possibility in spite of its being portrayed as actual (¶51, p. 297). Indeed, its distinctiveness tends to be 'lost' and the authentic anxiety towards death that, in the face of death, demands a certain courage is not permitted by the 'they', *das Man*. What Heidegger stresses is that death is not now Vorhanden for me, but is a possibility and therefore should be faced authentically. He is not talking of brooding on death but of 'the measureless impossibility of existence...the possibility of *authentic existence...an impassioned freedom towards death*' (¶53, pp. 304-311, emphasis original).

We also note that Dasein takes space in, literally. Heidegger calls space 'spiritual'. Therefore, Dasein in able to 'be spatial in a way which remains essentially impossible for any extended corporeal Thing' (¶70, p. 419).

1.7.2 Knowing

Knowing, for Heidegger, is understood phenomenologically: it is 'a kind of Being which belongs to Being-in-the-world' (¶13, p. 88). Even though it is because we first fail in our being-concerned-with the world that our observing of the nature of something present-at-hand becomes possible as knowing. Indeed, once this knowing becomes concern with the world, it 'is *fascinated by* the world with which it is concerned' (¶13, p. 88, emphasis original). Assertions, propositions, interpretations, making things determinate, and perceptions are ways of being-in-the-world, rather than interpretive 'procedures' (¶13, p. 89); this way of thinking goes against the grain but, in it, Heidegger is breaking down a Cartesian, possibly Kantian, dichotomizing of world of the mind and 'external' reality. Dasein's mind, as it were, is 'always "outside" alongside entities which it encounters and which belong to a world already discovered' (¶13, p. 89). In another phrasing of this, outsideness is only a way of speaking: Dasein is, of course, alongside entities, but it is so because it is a being-in-the-world which knows. Given the importance of knowing in Dasein, then, is reality 'real' only so long as thinking beings think so? Do entities exist in the absence of Dasein? Heidegger is quite clear on this point: though the entities can neither be discovered nor remain hidden in the absence of Dasein, his, Heidegger's, understanding of Being, concomitant with Vorhandenheit, means that entities continue to be (¶43c, p. 255).

Conscience

'In conscience Dasein calls itself' (¶57, p. 320). 'Conscience manifests itself as the call of care' (¶57, p.322). Dasein, in its essence as Being, is care (¶57, pp. 322-323; ¶58, 329). In itself, Dasein comprises 'facticity (thrownness), existence (projection) and falling (¶58, p. 329; ¶64, p. 364). As a potentiality-for-Being, of course, Dasein has possibilities before it, some for good, some for bad, what Heidegger calls authentic and inauthentic possibilities and, because of the possibility for inauthenticity, care itself 'is permeated with nullity through and through' (¶58, p. 331). Indeed, conscience attests to Dasein's 'ownmost potentiality-for-being' (¶57, p. 324). Conscience *discloses*; it is 'revealed as a *call*', *Ruf*, which is a mode of *discourse*, even if that discourse never comes to utterance (¶60, p. 342)*:* the call of conscience has the character of 'an *appeal* to Dasein', to its ownmost potentiality-for-Being-its-Self. This appeal is a summons to 'its ownmost Being-guilty', which has the effect of calling the self back from 'the loud idle talk' characteristic of the 'they'. Corresponding to the appeal 'is a possible hearing' (¶54, p. 314, emphasis original).

When the call of conscience is understood, lostness in the 'they' is revealed. Resoluteness brings Dasein back to its ownmost potentiality-for-Being-its-Self. When one has an understanding Being-towards-death – towards death as one's ownmost possibility – one's potentiality-for-Being becomes authentic and wholly transparent. (Heidegger, *Being and Time*, ¶62, p. 354, emphasis original)

Truth

In laying out the original meaning of *logos* – as used in the sense of 'science of' (¶7A, pp. 55-58) – Heidegger roots 'truth' (Greek: *alētheia*) in 'unhidden'. For, *alētheia* derives from *a*-privative (not) and *-lath-* (to escape notice, to be concealed). Indeed, Heidegger relates the proper use of logos to a different word for truth, viz. *aisthēdis*, 'the sheer sensory perception of something' (¶7A, p. 57). This latter type of knowing (*noein*) what is 'true' is an act of discovery, and that in such a way that it never covers up: it lets entities be perceived and, in this sense, '*logos* can signify the *reason* [*Vernunft*]' (¶7A, p. 58, emphasis original). Heidegger is drawing a new interpretation of truth from ancient Greek sources like the Pre-Socratics, Plato and Aristotle. Belonging to this is the Greek understanding of causality; to gain insight into this we first look at another Heideggerian text, 'The Question Concerning Technology' (1954).

Heidegger's example is the Greek understanding of the *causa* of a silver chalice (Krell 1977). The Greek for cause or fault is *aition* (that which is responsible for something else or to which something else is indebted). For a chalice there are four elements, or separate causes, *aitia*: silver is the material (*hyle*), which is shaped into a form (*eidos*) of chaliceness; the use of it *qua* chalice defines its boundaries (*telos*), which Heidegger resolutely denies means 'end or purpose'. These three elements are co-responsible for the chalice's existence as a chalice, for the latter's *that* and *how* of the chalice. Instead of later philosophy's *causa efficiens* (effecting cause or agent) for the silversmith's role, Heidegger appeals to Aristotle's understanding: what the silversmith does is to 'consider carefully', *überlegen*, the chalice's sacred use; linguistically, Heidegger links the German *überlegen* to the Greek *legein* and *logos*, which ultimately connects with the idea of 'bringing forth into appearance' which ties to his phenomenological method. In considering carefully, the silversmith brings together silver, chaliceness, and context and so allows the chalice as 'sacrificial vessel' to come into being, the chalice is revealed as such in a process of *poiesis* or making, as *logos*, as *giving* to the existence of the chalice. This process, Heidegger notes, is what occurs in *physis*, which is *poiesis* in the highest sense (Krell 1977, p. 290). Heidegger writes of the four causes as being 'at play' together in a bringing-forth into being; in this play what was concealed now comes into unconcealment, which

for us is truth, for the Romans *veritas* and for the Greeks themselves *alētheia*. For Heidegger, though, technology entails a destructive sort of making; paradoxically, technology's origins are benign: *technē* recalls the ancient Greek notion of 'making appear' and in this sense producing something. Unfortunately, modern technology conceals this and instead domineers and manipulates (Campolo 1985, pp. 436-437).

Returning to *Being and Time*, truth is parsed as *alētheia*, and it has historically been connected with Being, hence it is part of fundamental ontology's problematic (¶44, p. 256). Heidegger shows 'truth' as really un-concealing by examining the Greek word: truth really means Being-uncovering (¶44(b), p. 262). Heidegger says, '[u]ncovering is a way of Being for Being-in-the-world' (¶44(b), p. 263).

Un-concealing or disclosedness is itself constituted by 'state-of-mind, understanding, and discourse, and pertains equiprimordially to the world, to Being-in, and to the Self' (¶44(b), p. 263). Care is *ahead of itself* as being alongside entities within-the-world 'and in this structure the disclosedness of Dasein lies hidden', for 'only with Dasein's *disclosedness* is the *most primordial* phenomenon of truth attained'. Dasein's character is of such a 'kind of Being that is essential to truth' and so 'all truth is relative to Dasein's Being' (¶44(c), p. 270). It's not that we presuppose X is true, but that truth is 'what first *makes possible* anything like presupposing' (¶44(c), 270, emphasis original). Thus, there is an essential equiprimordiality of being and truth. Heidegger says,

> *Being (not entities) is something which 'there is' only in so far as truth is.*
> *And truth is only in so far as and as long as Dasein is. Being and truth*
> *'are' equiprimordially.* (¶44(c), p. 272, (emphasis original))

In his Mindfulness text, Heidegger becomes quite scathing of theologians who 'level off' the revealedness or disclosedness of *ens* (being): their accounts of the 'revelation of being' are 'expressions and propagandistic constructs that are not at all adequate to that which these theologians [unnamed] have to think in keeping with their dogma as *ens creatum*' (2016, p. 273, emphasis original).

Finally, we also note Heidegger's understanding of measuring, which almost always in *Being and Time* relates to time. He cites Aristotle, '[f]or this is time: that which is counted in the movement which we encounter within the horizon of the earlier and later' (*Physica* Δ 11, 219b 1ff., in *Being and Time* ¶81, p. 473). For Heidegger, then, measuring is normally taken as the measuring of time: '[m]easuring is constituted temporally when a standard which has presence is made present in a stretch which has presence' (¶80, p. 470). In measuring time, for instance, the day is the 'most natural' measure (¶80, p. 465). From

this developed a particular instrument, the clock: the clock is a consequence of temporality; but, we recall, it is in temporality that Dasein has its basis, and time both is a making-public and has spatial stretches and changes in location (¶80, p. 470). So, although we do not need to follow Heidegger's particular argument here, we do note that the notion of measuring has different dimensions: if time is measured by ever-better instruments there is also the idea of time as inherent in the human, as helping to constitute her or him; on the other and, in the everyday measuring a forgetfulness of what is really measured can also occur.

1.7.3 Critique from Arendt

Hannah Arendt (1906-1975) imbibed the philosophy of Heidegger; she understood his depiction of the human being as present-at-hand, already in the world and not needing to be proved by a cognitive or Cartesian philosophy. When Arendt reflected on the past she saw something there that is common to all humans: sin. Yet, Christian love, *caritas*, is also determined by the past. Hannah Arendt sums up Augustine, on whom she wrote her doctoral dissertation (Arendt 1996), on *caritas*: 'in general, one's obligation toward another arises from this common past of sin, the concrete impulse of neighborly love arises from the thought of one's own peril' (1996, p. 109). The consequence of sin as eternal loss is what gives the impulse to charitability. It is, for Paul of Tarsus and Augustine, only in loving Christ that humans come to love the neighbour.

Arendt's presentation of Augustine helps her to grasp the way in which the neighbour, who stands before us as other (than myself) and with an individual relationship to the creator, is like an ethical call: 'Although we can meet the other only because both of us belong to the human race, it is only in the individual's isolation in God's presence that he becomes our neighbour' (1996, p. 112), because in the isolation the person is lifted out of common dependency of common life and so our connection with her or him becomes kinship. The isolation permits us to free ourselves from history and its 'irrevocable enchainment by generation' (1996, p. 112). Arendt's debt to and distinction from Heidegger becomes clear also in her different understanding of time: 'The presentation of past and future in which both coincide annihilates time and man's subjection to it' (1996, p. 57).

1.7.4 Theological insights

Already our discussion of being *qua* phenomenon has begun to take a theological turn. Our past and future stand before us, one as our history the other as project. Arendt is taken with Augustine's 'I have become a question to myself', which reveals to him that he was not his

own maker but, instead, needed and sought the Creator. Thus, as one's desiring 'for a return to the past origin turns into the anticipating desire of a future that will make the origin available again', so the beginning and end of Augustine's or one's life become exchangeable (Arendt 1996, p.57). Siding with Augustine, Arendt distinguishes her position from that of Heidegger: it is memory, not death, that gives unity and wholeness to human existence (1996, p. 56). For, it is in the present that the past (as memory) and the future (as expectation deriving from the past) coincide; this 'determines human existence' (Arendt 1996, p. 56). Happy in the present, humans can participate in eternity (Arendt 1996, p. 57).

More recently, the neuroscientist Alva Noë offers another, not dissimilar perspective to that of Heidegger as critiqued by Arendt:

> *Meaning is relational. And the relation itself thanks to which our thoughts and ideas and images are directed to events, people, and problems in the world is the fact of our being embedded in and our dynamic interaction with the things around us. The world is our ground; the world provides meaning.* (Noë 2009, p. 164)

Thinking of Heidegger's analysis of how being came to be forgotten in the eidetic turn and the subsequent privileging of the mind that is associated with Descartes, it is reasonable to say that the mind-body problem has beset and continues to beset philosophical thinking and bedevil arguments about what constitutes 'the human', which has enabled some to dispose of those who are not considered human (or human enough). Therefore, this problem is germane to those concerned with pupils who have needs above and beyond 'the norm'. That Heidegger analysed the problem as he did and consequently restored the notion of being, in which all participate, to the centre of philosophical concerns is vital to any attempt to construct the relationship of individuals to their world and themselves as meaningful, fruitful and moral. If one notes the place of shock, dread and being-towards-death in Heidegger one must also contrast it with his (quasi-)mystical apprehension of Being and its *ereignis*, event, which is a coming-into-view or 'enowning'. i.e. as appearing into their own-ness (Vallega-Neu 2010, p. 141). For the theologian it is a most useful theologoumenon in that Heidegger normally proceeds without reference to (a need for) God. Certainly, he is aware of theology and its concerns, but, in his phenomenological method, he is really focused on getting, as it were, under the skin of being and letting being show itself – shine even – in its own manifestness. Heidegger traced the origin of *phainein*, to make appear, and *phantazein*, to make visible, to *phos*, light. We may add that

the hypothetical root of *bhā-* is the Sanskrit *bhati*, it shines or glistens, from which derives the Old Irish *ban*, white, (ray of) light, that became the modern *bán*, white.

Within being, Heidegger looks at the human, which he helpfully 'distances' for us by his use of 'Dasein'. The risk in his procedure is that Heidegger fails to grasp the sense of human individuality that we are so accustomed to, though I believe he chose this method deliberatively and deliberately and Arendt offers a helpful critique of it. The gain is that we look afresh at humans within a larger ontological whole which is, long after Heidegger has passed, today receiving increasingly focused attention even as nature or the world is threatened with disaster – economic, political, societal, ecological – by the actions and forgetfulness of humans, a threat which he alerted us to. Heidegger does not treat of other elements of our humanity that many consider essential. Heidegger treats of hope only in passing (¶68(b), pp. 395-396), as one among other 'moods and affects'. For him, hope's character or decisiveness lies in 'hoping as *hoping for something for oneself* [*Für-sich-erhoffen*]' (p. 396, emphasis original), which relates to Dasein as itself thrown into the world. Almost as a throwaway, he offers a contrast with indifference ('the pallid lack of mood [*Stimmung*]'), which 'is based on forgetting and abandoning oneself to one's thrownness' (¶68(b), p. 396). For '[t]he Being-present-at-hand-together of the physical and the psychical is completely different ontically and ontologically from the phenomenon of Being-in-the-world.' He does not treat of love, except as part of a list in a note (iv to ¶40, p.492).

If Heidegger continues to address us then the sheer wonder and shining brilliance of what lies before us in the world stands ready to uncover itself anew and lead humans to appreciate, *etsi deus non daretur*, their ownmost shining forth in truth and authenticity.

1.8 EDUCATION FOR PUPILS, INCLUDING THOSE WITH SEN

> *No one would assert that humanity has left behind cruelty, apathy, ignorance, and fear, and that is surely true of attitudes toward persons with disabilities.* (Safford & Safford 1996, p. 3)

This section presents an overview of some of the main features of the development of education in Ireland in so far as they are known to us. Attention is drawn to matters that, not so categorized in their day, would now be regarded as part of the pre-history of SEN in Ireland. We begin with education in Ireland (1.8.1); it is followed by shorter treatments of the European scene (1.8.2) and the multinational one (1.8.3).

1.8.1 Education in Ireland

In this section, however, we move from this background to an overview of education for the young in Ireland in order to grasp better some of the distinctive features of that education and how it developed awareness of pupils with SEN. In particular, one of the earliest assessments of special education in Ireland was provided by the 1993 review, the Report of the Special Education Review Committee (SERC). It established a pattern that has been followed in more recent research.

Ancient and medieval Ireland

The education of the medieval child was largely in the hands not of parents but of a fostering family. Fosterage was an institution embodying 'child-rearing, nurturing and education': the foster-father was called *oide* and the foster-mother *muime*, terms of affection; *oide* is the basis for *oideachas* or education while *dalta* or pupil has its basis in foster-child (Ní Chonaill 2008, p. 11). Fines could be imposed where an education was deficient (Ní Chonaill 2008, p. 13). Ní Chonaill argues for a high value being placed on childhood in medieval Ireland in light of the legal protections afforded them (2008, p. 31).

Unsurprisingly, information on SEN aspects of education in medieval Ireland is lacking; a few clues, at best, can be discerned, as Robins warns (1986, p. 16). Brendan Kelly (2016) has drawn attention to accounts of inducing or curing madness in ancient Ireland myths, legends and the Brehon law. The Irish term *duine le Dia*, a person of/with God, came to denote persons with intellectual disability and may have arisen due to Christianity's arrival (Kelly 2016, p. 16). Whether the term connoted a divine punishment or diabolical possession it was assumed into the ancient system of law, the Brehon law, in Ireland. Three terms – *mer*, *dásachtach* and *drúth* – named different states of madness; a person with epilepsy (*tailmaidech*), if protected, might still be otherwise mentally competent. The law sought to protect from abuse; it did not deal with cases of neglect, however. Crawford (2011), looking at disease and illness in medieval Ireland, distinguishes between Christian (religious) explanatory and naturalistic models on health and healing in the fifth to twelfth centuries. Nevertheless and discussing issues centred solely on children, 'illness which attacked a population collectively was viewed as punishment from God; it was not just singular occurrences' (2011, p. 220). Naturalistic causation as well as religious causation for illnesses were accepted by people (2011, p. 302).

One of the first European orders in Ireland were the Augustinian friars who came with the Norman invaders, establishing their first foundation c.1280. Within two hundred years they had become Gaelicized.

In medieval Ireland texts do not treat of children in the way that we do today. Nevertheless, as one of the pillars of society, the system of fosterage, i.e. giving one's child into the care of another('s family) for its upbringing until the end of childhood as a means of creating social bonds between the families, is mentioned in medieval legal texts that bear testament to 'the position and upbringing of the child' as partly 'a reflection of the overall health of society' (Ní Chonaill , p. 31). In addition to fostering there was the practice of oblation, where a (male) child was left in the care of a monastery, but there is little information on the practice.

In sum, laws protected the mentally infirm and ensured that 'any children were looked after properly' (Kelly 2016, pp. 16-17); yet, in the middle ages and early modern period 'the mentally ill and intellectually disabled…tended to live harsh, difficult, brief lives characterised by vagrancy, illness, imprisonment and neglect, especially in times of hardship and famine' not only because of laws but because help from monastic institutions, which 'was patchy at best', dried up with the sixteenth century dissolution of the monasteries (Kelly 2016, p. 18).

16th and 17th centuries

Henry VIII's dissolution of the monasteries, affecting Britain and Ireland, brought both misery and reform. The closure of the monasteries and convents entailed the disappearance of their hospitals and care systems for the sick of mind and body, though there is evidence that the 'natural fool' (now recognized as one with learning difficulties), known from Shakespearean drama as well as the Tudor court, continued to be treated kindly in court circles if not in less privileged society (Lipscomb 2011). Henry VIII did seek to establish parish-based education in Ireland (1537) and Elizabeth I sought to establish diocesan schools (1570) there too. However, Catholic Ireland did not take them up and some 'often became tainted with corruption' (Lyons 2012, p. 73). Eventually, towards the end of the sixteenth century, 'almshouses and hospitals sprang up' (Jarrett 2012, p. 13) and society rather than the church began to concern itself with the plight of its more destitute members. Individuals such as David Woulfe SJ who set up a school in Limerick in the 1560s, had to beware of state law no matter how popular their teaching among the Irish (see Moynes 2017). The dearth of information in these centuries is testimony to the suppression of Catholic education under English rule. Following the introduction of the Penal Laws (*na Péindlíthe*) under the Education Act 1695 (repealed in 1782), RE in Roman Catholicism and Dissenting Churches was officially outlawed. With the education of Roman Catholic children severely curtailed, resort was often made to the so-called

'hedge schools'; these were held in the open largely because a tax on windows meant that many buildings did not have sufficient light for educational purposes (Kieran & Hession 2005, p. 68; Parkes 2010).

18th and 19th centuries

Ireland in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was imbued with a reforming attitude, along with Britain and continental Europe. Scientific discovery and the quest for human advancement arising from the Enlightenment, along with economic, political and religious debates, led to a questioning of existing practices and an appeal to legal instruments to enact reform. The treatment of the poor, prisoners, sick and indigent people was legislated for (see Butterly 2014). Texts such as Cesare, Marchese de Beccaria's *An essay on crimes and punishmen*t (1767) had alerted people to the cruelty of prisons and reform became part of public discourse. Thus, the period prior to Famine Ireland (1845-1850) saw legislation for the care of those with mental health issues ('lunatics'), even though it took from 1805 to 1810 before a parliamentary grant was given to erect the first national lunatic asylum in Dublin, the Richmond (opened in 1815). The passing of the Lunatic Asylums for the Poor Act (1821) enabled the erection of many asylums, e.g. Armagh (1824), Limerick (1827), Belfast (1829), Londonderry (1829), Richmond (1830), Carlow (1832), Connaught (1833), Maryborough (1833), Clonmel (1834), etc. In 1838 the Poor Law (Ireland) Act and the Criminal Lunatics Act were passed; in 1842 the Private Lunatic Asylums Act regulated private institutions. The building of asylums continued in the post-Famine years. In 1925, such asylums were renamed 'mental hospitals' (Local Government Act 1925). As Butterly makes clear, 'an epidemic of institutionalisation in the last three centuries [is] not an epidemic of insanity' (2014, p. 6).

Attempts at more strictly educational reform were also made in Ireland. These largely grew from the work of individuals who went on to found religious congregations to continue their work. Roman Catholic religious orders, some of which were founded expressly to educate children of the poor, set up their own schools as the Penal Laws were more and more relaxed and ultimately repealed. Honora 'Nano' Nagle (1718-1784), foundress of the Presentation order of nuns and promoter of public action on behalf the Catholic poor, was one such religious pioneer. Her first education may have been in a hedge school though, having been smuggled out of Ireland, she was later educated in France. Nagle wanted to provide education outside the Charter School system. Charter schools had been established in 1733 – the first school, for girls, opened in 1734 (Raftery 2007, p. 11) – and, though this system died out a century later (Milne 1996), it aimed to raise Catholics as Protestant

(Raftery, Delaney & Nowlan-Roebuck 2019). Around 1755, Nagle founded her first school in Cove Lane, Cork; in 1775 the first convent opened. It was Nagle's successors in collaboration with others from Teresa Mulally's Dublin-based school (1728-1803) who established the Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary (formally approved in 1800). Others, such as the Presentation Brothers, the Sisters of Loreto (an Irish foundation of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary, under Frances Ball (1794-1861), and the Sisters of Mercy established themselves between 1775 and 1827 (Kieran & Hession 2005, p. 69). Of the four Irish founders of religious congregations dedicated to education Sandra Cullen (2005, pp. 200-204) first singles out Nagle. The others were: Catherine McAuley (1778-1841) who founded the Sisters of Mercy in 1831, and Mary Aikenhead (1787-1858) who founded the Irish Sisters of Charity in 1815, and Margaret Louisa Aylward (1810-1889) who eventually founded the Sisters of the Holy Faith in 1857 though her wish was for a community of women less ecclesiastically structured than the congregations, which themselves were designed to be less constricted that the religious orders such as the Franciscans, Dominicans and Jesuits. Religious orders and congregations provided 'a social bulwark for the poor, sick and mentally infirm' in the nineteenth century (Sweeney 2010, p. 105). In 1855, The Daughters of Charity, founded by Vincent de Paul and Louise de Marillac, in 1633, in France, first came to Drogheda and opened a night school for young girls, but later known for their work with those having a mental handicap (Robins 1992)The Irish Christian Brothers and the Presentation Brothers were founded by Edmund Ignatius Rice (1762-1844), the fourth of Cullen's founders. Rice had been educated by an Augustinian friar, Patrick Grace, and later married. Rice's daughter was born with a disability on the deathbed of her mother, in 1789; Rice opened the first 'Mount Sion' school in 1802 and in the 1820s the Christian Brothers formed out of the Presentation Brothers (see Keogh 2008).

Another early nineteenth century initiative that is historically important was the Kildare Place Society (KPS), founded in 1811 (Hislop 1990; Parkes 2011). Nondenominational in aspiration, the KPS was not acceptable to Roman Catholic authorities because the Bible was read 'without note or comment', a practice that was taken to be proselytizing by the established church. Out of its ashes came the 'Stanley Letter' (1831), a nondenominational system of 'national school' (primary) education for Ireland that Lord Edward G. Stanley (1799-1869), as Chief Secretary of Ireland, initiated in his famous letter to the Duke of Leinster. The national school system that emerged was funded by parliament (London) though not legislated for; it became acceptable to Roman Catholic authorities, spearheaded by Cardinal Paul Cullen (1803-1878), only when religious instruction was

denominationally organized, which effectively happened with state recognition, in 1883, of denominational training colleges (Keogh & McDonnell 2011; Kieran & Hession 2005, pp. 71-79).

Desmond Swan argues that the first attempt to 'systematically apply psychology to schooling in Ireland, and perhaps Britain, was that of Richard Lovell Edgeworth (father of Maria, the novelist, in the school at Edgeworthstown in 1798, influenced by the psychological thinking of Jean Jacques Rousseau' (Swan 2014, p. 26). In Belfast, David Manson pioneered special education in Ireland in the mid-eighteenth century: he encouraged play, learning by choice rather than compulsion, and adapting learning to 'individual differences in ability' (Griffin & Shevlin 2011, p. 34). In 1816, Charles Orpen, having been inspired by Johan Heinrich Pestalozzi, established Ireland's first school for the deaf, the National Institution for the Education of the Deaf and Dumb, in Glasnevin. In 1851, Oscar Wilde's father, Sir William Wilde, penned the 'first official demand for special provision for people with general learning disabilities in Ireland' (Griffin & Shevlin 2011, pp. 35-36). The demand was only met around 1867 when fundraising led to the establishment of what became Stewarts School and Residential Centre, the state's oldest functioning centre for people with SEN (Griffin & Shevlin 2011, p. 36).

Jonathan Swift's bequest, on his death (1745), led to the establishment of Swift's/St Patrick's Hospital for 'idiots and lunaticks', the first of its kind in Ireland (Kelly 2016, pp. 20-22). The 1800s saw a rapid growth in asylums for the 'lunatic poor'; this system would rapidly expand to the incarceration of many people including the physically disabled, unwed mothers and their offspring, in a variety of orphanages, industrial schools, reformatories and borstals, workhouses, and (Magdalene) laundries. In 1853, for instance, some 77,000 children under the age of fifteen were in workhouses; between 1859 and 1936 some 80,000 children passed through industrial schools (O' Neachtain 2013, p. 22). A picture of incarceration emerges. Social rather than medical interests often maintained these institutions (Kelly 2016, p. 304). There is evidence, too, of more directed attention to those with special needs. In 1865 Cheyne Brady, a governor of the Meath Hospital, published *The Training of Idiotic and Feeble-Minded Children*. Two years later, an asylum in Lucan is readied for children with intellectual disability. In 1882, the Brothers of St John of God establish a private psychiatric hospital in Stillorgan.

20th century

Various schools for deaf mutes that were established by religious orders in the mid-nineteenth century were finally recognized by the state, e.g. the Irish Christian Brothers in

1926, and the Dominican Sisters in 1952. In the 1870s schools for the blind were opened by the Irish Sisters of Charity and Carmelite community of brothers; they became part of the national school system in 1918 and received tacit state recognition as special schools in 1952 (SERC 1993, p. 48). Pupils with mental and physical disabilities had longer to wait: by 1950 one special school for mental disability had been state-recognized. Meanwhile, there were stories beginning to emerge about life in 'special' schools. An account, written in the 1940s, by Rev. Clarence Duffy, detailed his treatment and suffering for some six months in Monaghan Mental Hospital a decade before (Duffy 1944).

A special school was set up by the Carmelite Brothers for boys who were blind, in 1870; it became a national school in 1918, though without additional funding or special resources from the state (Griffin & Shevlin 2011, p. 38). The first state-recognized school for pupils with SEN opened in 1947: St Vincent's Home for Mentally Defective Children (Flood 2013, p. 5). Five years later, 'the first state intervention in special education became a reality' when extra funding was provided. In 1956, the first class for emotionally disturbed children was opened by Nancy Jordan along the principles of Maria Montessori; in 1962 her Benincasa Special School was recognized as a national school. Generally in this period, affected by its past as a colony and its present as 'postcolonial' (Sweeney & Mitchell 2009), both secular and religious bodies concurred, for instance, with the Council of Education (1954) statement that 'the first purpose of the primary school was to train children in the fear and love of God' (cited in Wickham 1980, p. 326). Indeed, parents had to struggle until 1960 before the first lay national school – later, St Michael's House – was established through the efforts of Declan Costello, son of the then Taoiseach and brother of an intellectually disabled child (Griffin & Shevlin 2011, pp. 38-41). The role of parents in advocating for the rights of their disabled children is perhaps best illustrated in legal challenges made in the last decade of the twentieth century, the so-called O'Donoghue (1993) and Sinnott (2000) cases. In the former, the DES's claim that Paul O'Donoghue was ineducable was rejected: he had a right to free primary education. In the Sinnott case, Jamie Sinnott was originally judged in the High Court to have a right to life-long education; this, however, was challenged and won by the state in the Supreme Court (2001) with the consequence that educational provision for the young ends at age eighteen.

More widespread, with firm anchorage among country-people during most of my life, was public awareness of 'the workhouse'. The Irish psyche is riven with memories of the workhouse, which was a system of buildings originating in the Poor Relief Act 1838 that housed people who were dependent on the state for 'charity'. Once in a workhouse, a

person did manual labour in exchange for housing and food. Presence in a workhouse carried a social stigma of formidable proportion. Less in the public imagination were the industrial schools, at least until more recent times when cases of historical abuse began to be investigated, though many passed through them (above). In 1936 the Commission of Inquiry into the Reformatory and Industrial School System (Cussen Report) informed the Oireachtas (government). One recommendation (#33) of the Cussen Report was that those with special needs in an industrial school 'should…be sent to the institution especially certified for such cases' (cited in volume IV of the Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse, #1.79, childabusecommission.ie), i.e. not be educated with their peers.

However, when it began to percolate through Irish society from the mid-century on, change quickly gathered pace, helped by an altered economic policy that led to Ireland's accession to the European Common Market, later the European Union (EU), in 1973, and a changing social policy of openness to the wider world marked most obviously perhaps by the 1963 visit of President John F. Kennedy (19-1963) to Ireland and his speech to the Irish people in the Oireachtas which recognized Ireland's (small) nation among the (united) nations of the world (Oireachtas 1963). A short period before this, Kennedy had been told the full story of the failed lobotomy performed on his sister, Rosemary (1918-2005), that left her incapacitated (Clifford Larson 2016). Their sibling, Eunice (Kennedy Shriver, 1921-2009), undertook many initiatives on behalf of people with intellectual disabilities, e.g. Camp Shriver for children with special needs (1962), and the Special Olympics (1968). The first games of the latter outside the USA took place in Dublin in 2003 and has vastly improved public perceptions of disability. Support for the bills that became the National Disability Act 2004 and the EPSEN Act 2004 was probably helped by the publicity generated and involvement of Irish civil society in the Special Olympics. Increased state funding for services supporting people with disabilities followed; no longer would the latter have to depend solely on 'charity'.

It is not surprising, in terms of pupils with SEN, that Desmond Swan (2000), despite its ongoing and incomplete nature, characterizes the educational change of the previous thirty to forty years as a revolution: he contrasts the 1936 Commission of Inquiry into Reformatory and Industrial Schools that 'mentally deficient children…are a burden to their teachers, a handicap to other children, and, being unable to keep up with their class, their condition tends to become worse' with Micheál Martin's statement as Minister for Education, January 2000, that '[s]pecial education services should promote the inclusion of all with special education needs, regardless of disability'.

In the late 1950s a coalescing of interested parties provided the impetus for state change towards special education: 'increased parental movement and work by religious communities seemed to provide the push needed' (SCoTENS [n.d.]) so that, in 1959, the first Department of Education inspector for special education was appointed (Swan 2000). Two years later, St Patrick's teacher training college began a professional in-service course for teachers of pupils with SEN (McManus 2014, p. 107). Patrick Hillary, as minster for education (1959-1965), oversaw these developments. He made special education 'a distinctive sector' and approved of Ireland's participation in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and is credited as being the one 'who opened up the Irish education system, will all its defects, not only to international scrutiny but also to international influences' (McManus 2014, pp. 107, 111). More broadly, educational equality was coming to public consciousness. George Colley, as minister for education (1965-1966) reiterated the 1959 call from Noel Brown to provide equality of educational opportunity for all children as it derived from the 1916 Proclamation of the Republic to 'cherish all the children of the nation equally' (McManus 2014, p. 133).

Swan (2000) offers an overview of developments towards special education provision. He discerns successive phases of special education support: a) *neglect* (by 1950 St Vincent's Home for Mentally Defective Children, established in 1926, was officially and alone recognized by the state as a special school only in 1947); b) *Special Schools* (they increased from 28 in 1966 to 65 in 1989, and special classes in mainstream schools were also encouraged, even as 'remedial pupils' were assisted by 'the remedial teacher', see Shiel & Morgan 1998); c) *integration/inclusion* (in the 1980s-1990s, 'a momentum for integration' occurred that had, in the absence of a legal framework, the unintended consequence of confusing people about present and future educational policy). In 1993, SERC was published. No ordinary report, its advocacy of a continuum of support for pupils with SEN laid the foundations for what became the Education Act 1998, via the National Education Convention (1994) and the *Government White Paper on Education* (1995) (Griffin & Shevlin 2011, p. 56). Much of this change took place when Niamh Bhreathnach was minister for education (1993-1997); she had been a Froebal-trained teacher. Swan (2000) notes that both the conceptual clarity and the call for the state to support a policy of integration found in the Report were major contributions to the Act itself. At the time Swan wrote policy was leading practice, whereas, until recently, practice had led policy. For instance, in the 1950s, a special national schools system evolved that was normally led by voluntary organizations which negotiated placements 'between parent, disability service provider and school principal' (Flatman Watson 2009, p. 7).

For basic law on the education of children we must look at the provisions of the Irish Constitution, *Bunracht na hÉireann* (1937, with amendments to the present day). The Constitution upholds the family as 'the primary and natural educator' of children (Art. 42.1). Indeed, it already describes the family 'as the natural primary and fundamental unit group of society, and as a moral institution possessing inalienable and imprescriptible rights, antecedent and superior to all positive law' (Art. 41.1.1). The state sees its role as supporting the family in the task of educating the young, not supplanting it, though it may provide other forms of educational facility if the public good so requires it (Art. 42.4).

Kilkelly (2010) discusses the education of children in this context, including their right to choose their own religion (see Art. 42.4). Other commitments by the Irish state also impinge on how the rights of children are to be seen. Notably, the referendum on children's rights, enshrined in the 31st amendment to the Constitution of Ireland (2012), became law in 2015. The 'natural and imprescriptible rights of all children' were formally recognized and affirmed and the state committed itself to 'by its laws protect and vindicate those rights' (Article 42A.1). Additionally, Article 42A.4.20 stated that 'in respect of any child who is capable of forming his or her own views, the views of the child shall be ascertained and given due weight having regard to the age and maturity of the child.'

Unfortunately, the efforts of the state to exit the Bailout following the economic crisis that began in 2008 meant that resources for schools, especially those that catered for Travellers, suffered cutbacks; also, regulations governing the assessment and allocation of resources to children with special needs confounded teachers and parents' efforts to access those assessments and allocations (for instance, medical teams that were required to be multidisciplinary could not replace absent key members). There is currently an improvement in Irish education generally as funds are being released 'into the system'; this has occurred mainly in the third level sector (DES 2018). However, in schools that are unable to generate local, 'voluntary' funds, the problem of paying for educational assessments operates as both a constraint on the identification and addressing of pupils' needs and a generator of wasteful effort by individual schools' special education teams (SET), especially in arguing for special needs assistants (SNAs) for pupils. Schools try to work through bureaucratic systems which, while not recognizing teacher-led assessments, require their own log-jammed state systems to be the only gatekeepers of the professional reports necessary for identification and support of SENs of pupils. The revised special education allocation system (SETA, see 2.2.3) of 2017, with its wider model for allocating

resources so that schools 'will deploy resources based on each pupil's individual learning needs' (DES 2017), has brought improvements for schools by allowing them greater autonomy. Also, it is not (lack of) resources alone that constitutes a barrier to success for pupils with SEN (Travers, Balfe, Butler, Day, Dupont, McDaid, O'Donnell & Prunty 2010, p. 160). Were teachers' interventions to be less effective would be a far more serious barrier.

A diagnosis of disability is no longer the primary basis for educational support to pupils. Now, 'a single unified allocation for special educational support teaching needs' is 'based on that school's educational profile' (DES 2017). Diagnoses existing at the time of the introduction of SETA were allowed to stand, no reduction in teacher allocations were made at that time and three-year reviews of the school profiles were envisaged. The latter was quickly revised to two-year reviews and the second round of re-profiling has been effected (Spring 2019).

The school educational profile has two components:

a) baseline – 'to support inclusion, assistance with learning difficulties and early intervention'

b) a school educational profile – that takes into account:

- the number of pupils with complex needs enrolled to the school

- the learning support needs of pupils as evidenced by standardised test results

- the social context of the school including disadvantage and gender.

The baseline (a) is calculated as 20% of the total allocations to schools in the 2016-17 year 'redistributed on an equal basis, proportionally, between all schools' based on each school's enrolment numbers for the 2015-16 school year. The school educational profile (b) has become the definitive set of criteria for determining new allocations of resources. The criterion of pupils with complex needs is reduced by the number of such pupils who leave the school and is increased by the number of 'new complex needs category pupils' (DES 2017). 50% of the profiled total allocation is given to complex needs. Weightings are also applied to test results: the highest is for pupils with STen scores of 1 (including exemptions from the tests), with graduated weightings for STen scores 2-4. 23% of the profiled allocation is given for standardised tests. The social context of a school is based on survey-

results returned to the DES from each school. Thus, 3.5% is allocated for socio-economic status. 'Gender differentials' are given weightings and account of the final 3.5% of the profiled allocation of resources. Each school will, on the basis of its individual educational profile, receive different combinations of allocated resources. Additional allocations can apply where high concentrations of pupils requiring language support (EAL) are identified.

Nevertheless, there is still an onus to identify learning needs and, often, and always in the case of complex needs, relevant diagnoses are required. The 'proofs' of medical needs necessary to employ an SNA are retained, as are those for retention of special classes. The burden on BoMs and schools remains high as they seek resources, supports and advice from professionals in caring for pupils with SEN. Also, Ireland has begun to maintain a database of Irish adults and children with intellectual disabilities who are in receipt of or need 'support services, including medical, psychological, therapeutic and family supports' (McConkey, Kelly, Craig & Shevlin 2016, p. 97). In their recent study, Travers, Savage, Butler & O'Donnell (2018) reflect on the setting up of the Irish research database on SEN, disability and inclusion. Between 2000 and 2013, their audit of 3188 entries noted research items in relation to: attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), autistic spectrum disorder (ASD), Down syndrome, dyscalculia, dyslexia, dyspraxia, emotional behavioural disorder, exceptionally able, general learning disability (GLD, including 3 sub-categories: mild, moderate, severe and profound), hearing impairment, multiple disabilities, other, physical disability, specific speech and language, and visual impairment. Most were in ASD (339), GLD (317, plus 51, 32, 53 in the sub-categories, respectively), and EBD (69); the least were in relation to dyscalculia (2) and multiple disabilities (4). The entries for the last three years totalled that of the previous nine. Recommendations are made to increase further research through collaboration with the NCSE and the wider dissemination of research through international databases like EBSCO.

1.8.2 Beyond Ireland

Before Swan (2000) another classification of special education is that of Margaret Winzer (1993). Overall, she traces a movement from 'a dark past' to 'the light of a more modern world' to 'the new century'; the period before the eighteenth century is called 'dread and despair' (p. 6). In classical Greece (c. 400 BCE) infanticide was widespread; Aristotle is supposed to have stated: 'let there be a law that no deformed child shall live' (Smith 2010, p. 79). Exceptionally, in Augustan Rome, Quintus Pedius who was deaf was taught to paint. In the fourth century CE, under the influence of Christianity, the new social reality of Christendom saw the establishment of the first hospices for those who were blind; these

were normally attached to monasteries. The *Codex Iuris Civilis* (or body of civil law), usually called the Code of Justinian (533-565 CE), comprised of summarizing laws hitherto passed in the Roman empire (the *Codex*), of legal opinions (the *Digesta*), of a legal textbook (the *Institutiones*) and of the new laws (the *Novellae*), and became the standard for almost nine centuries; it made many distinctions between people with disabilities, e.g. people with mental disability could not marry, deafness had five categories (Albrecht, Seelman & Bury 2001, p. 17). Such categorization was for the ordering of society, not for understanding the disabilities themselves. In the chaos following the fall of the Roman empire, then, monasteries provided one of the very few repositories of civilization; if life was most difficult for 'healthy' adults, it must have been so much worse for those with disabilities. Winzer summarizes that, while 'the gods' inflicted curses on humans in ancient times, now Christianity, mixed with superstitions, saw illnesses as divine punishments of sinfulness (1993, p. 16). Henry Bracton, in the thirteenth century, held that a child born with more or less than 'the proper number of members' should be 'accounted not as children but as beasts or monsters' (*De legibus et consuetudinibus Anglina*, 1220, cited in Smith 2010, p. 80).

Yet, the investigations that would lead to the specific field of special education are first discerned in the early modern period with the advent of Renaissance ideals of scientific progress and the betterment of humanity. One of the clearest signs of a changing attitude towards disability in Europe was the work of Pedro Ponce de Léon OSB (1520-1584) in Spain for those with handicaps (c.1578); he may have developed a sign language for the deaf. By 1620 Fr Jean Pablo Bonet (c.1573-1633), who had a brother who was deaf and mute, had written what is considered to be the first textbook on special education (Katims 2000, p. 4). In Britain, the Royal Society of London begins investigation of language acquisition and the teaching of people who are deaf and blind (1662) (Winzer 1993, pp. 6-7). Abbé Charles-Michel de l'Épée (1712-1789) established a school for people who are deaf and is credited with developing French sign-language. After his death, people who were deaf were recognized (1791) as having rights under the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen*. Samuel Heinicke (1727-1790) developed 'oralism' for the deaf in Germany; his wife continued his work after his death.

In post-revolutionary France, Jean-Marc Gespard Itard (1774-1838) began the medical work and research on deafness that led to his being called 'the father of special education' (Linneman 2001) and founder of that branch of medicine dealing with diseases of the ear, otiatria (Montessori 2008, p. 45). Itard is famous for his encounter with the so-called

'enfant sauvage de l'Aveyron', a boy who had been living a feral life and had been captured and who, it was hoped, would respond successfully to Itard's educational methods. Though it is not part of my research it is to be noted that, in terms of the history of special education, this story is a watermark; this wild boy was experimented on yet treated as a human, and controlled by the state yet someone for whom the state now had 'binding obligations that must be fulfilled' (Itard, cited in Linneman 2001, p. 103). However, if haphazard and hazardous describe the ordinary life of people until recent times, then to these terms must be added 'often lethal' when children were born with defects that might be deemed ugly and offensive, burdensome to society, evil and/or diabolical. The body was clearly problematic. The impaired body (Metzler 2006) is conceptualized in both thisworldly and otherworldly terms: thus, the body is associated with sin, on the one hand, and with resurrection and eternal blessedness, on the other. How people came to their notions of the body is rarely evident, though pivotal experiences may be presumed to indicate at least part of the story. For instance, it is not unreasonable to suppose that the particular concern of the Order of Preachers (Dominicans) for the sick was strengthened if not initiated by the contacts that the founder, St Dominic de Guzmán (1170-1221), had with Cathars and their repudiation of the body (Metzler 2006, p. 62). With Maria Montessori (1870-1952) came a search for methods that followed acute observation and experimentation; she had learnt about Itard from the work of his pupil, Édouard Séguin (1812-1880), who often educated those with intellectual disabilities and the blind and was noted for breaking down skills into smaller and smaller steps (Montessori 2008, pp. 45-51).

However, in mid-twentieth century Ireland, the 1944 Education Act (UK), with its language of 'ineducable' and 'educationally subnormal' pupils, fed into an exclusionary 'policy of separate special schooling'. This contrasts with Maria Montessori's 1912 assessment that mental retardation was an educational rather than a medical problem (Swan 2000). Though the 1965 Report on the Commission of Inquiry on Mental Handicap favoured special schools for certain disabilities, Ireland's increasing contact with the work of the United Nations, especially UNESCO, encouraged continued work 'towards guaranteeing equal access to all levels of education' (UNESCO 2019, p. 109). Also, contact with other European jurisdictions led, in 1987, to a joint declaration of integrating pupils with SEN into mainstream schooling (McManus 2014, p. 262).

Undoubtedly, it is developments in the European Union that continue to exert a strong influence on the way education is practised and theorized in Ireland. The EU, in its 2020

Strategic Framework document, Education & Training 2020 (ET 2020), sets out a number of strategic objectives or priorities for education. They are:

- making lifelong learning and mobility a reality

- improving the quality and efficiency of education and training

- promoting equity, social cohesion, and active citizenship

- enhancing creativity and innovation, including entrepreneurship, at all levels of education and training.

The third of these states:

> *Education should promote intercultural competences, democratic values and respect for fundamental rights and the environment, as well as combat all forms of discrimination, equipping all young people to interact positively with their peers from diverse backgrounds.* (EU 2009, p. 4)

This represents a broadening of what inclusion has been taken to mean: issues concerning interculturality, democracy, human rights and the environment are named areas within inclusive education. Furthermore, there is a stated proactive agenda of combatting any form of discrimination that impacts negatively on young people's interactions. Interestingly, in a recent submission to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Education and Skills, the National Association of Boards of Management in Special Education (NABMSE), in referring to the need for 'a very definite strategy' for inclusion added that the latter should be one 'which seeks to include various government departments working together for the betterment of all' (NABMSE 2018, p. 5). Clearly, those who work for inclusion need themselves to have inclusive practices.

In 2015 a 'stocktaking' or revision of EU 2009 was undertaken (EU 2015). The earlier objectives were reaffirmed. However, new priorities were outlined: the original thirteen were reduced and 'declined into concrete issues' (see Annex to EU 2015) and greater clarity achieved for direct action. The priorities are:

1. relevant and high-quality knowledge, skills and competences developed throughout lifelong learning, focusing on learning outcomes for employability, innovation, active citizenship and well-being

2. inclusive education, equality, equity, non-discrimination and the promotion of civic competences

3. open and innovative education and training, including by fully embracing the digital era

4. strong support for teachers, trainers, school leaders and other educational staff

5. transparency and recognition of skills and qualifications to facilitate learning and labour mobility

6. sustainable investment, quality and efficiency of education and training systems.

From this agenda for change we can see a focus on active citizenship and well-being and on inclusive education; both of these priorities are germane to education for pupils with SEN. The OECD, for instance, operates with four uses of 'equity': having the same chance of progressing in education; having the same quality and quantity of learning conditions; having equivalent outcomes for the same educational goals; and having the same chances, in work and life, of using the education they have acquired (OECD 2003, pp. 11-12). More recently, the OECD has listed indicators on early childhood education and care and grouped them under contextual information, such as what influences policy, policy inputs on the resources employed, policy outputs that record the results achieved, and policy outcomes that link how resources and results have related to one another (OECD 2017, p. 18).

Nevertheless, complexity and competing values are ever present; for instance, the European Court of Human Rights has to balance the principle of pluralism with states and their neutrality on religious matters (Ringelheim 2012, p. 306). The theory of human values is itself a major area of research and debate; Schwartz (2006) offers an extensive overview of different societies' values and identifies ten motivationally distinct 'basic values' (each having a 'central motivational goal', such as self-direction, stimulation, hedonism, achievement, power, security, conformity, tradition, benevolence, universalism) among which he further identifies dynamic relations which structure those values, viz. openness to change, self-transcendence, conservation and self-enhancement. The structure is designed to help people set their own priorities or 'hierarchies'; in Schwartz, values and beliefs are convertible. Therefore, it would be wise to incorporate these in any structure that guides this latter aspect of education. Importantly, BoMs, assuming oversight, would also need to be aware, at least, of these priorities.

1.8.3 Multinational Scene

As this study aims towards a praxis that frees children for greater personal progress and social participation it has an emancipatory aspect (Robson 2011, p. 63). This becomes more important as the amount of (diagnosis of) children with SEN increases. Nel Noddings defines education as 'a constellation of encounters, both planned and unplanned, that promote growth through the acquisition of knowledge, skills, understandings and appreciation' (2002a, p. 283); the home is the first educator and the school the second (2002a, p. 289). Education is imbued with care and the more natural it is the better (Noddings 2002a, pp. 30-31).

However, the effects of the past often lie round about us and may determine educational paths that a different past would have avoided. The infant so cherished today was once the *infans*, one incapable of speech and so of little worth (Schalick 2001, p. 91). Indeed, education itself was not always centred on the young; for instance, Safford & Safford (1996) seek to redress this. If adolescence was long considered the formative period of human learning this book is intended to seek 'understanding of the historical context in which exceptional children have lived and services for them have been provided' (p. viii), i.e. at a much younger age. Citing Barbara Greenleaf that a child may be nurtured on condition 'that it had no mark of the devil on it' (Greenleaf 1978, p. xiii), Safford & Safford list some of these marks that worked to deny education to certain people: a blemish, a cleft palate, a clubfoot, more or less than the usual number of fingers or toes (1996, pp. 1-2). Though their context is the United States of America, Safford & Safford distil a pattern from the history of western education that still manages to shock. They refer to the usually identified 'successive eras of extermination, ridicule, asylum, and education' in the history of responses to children with disabilities (1996, p. 3). Even though education has more than begun we still meet similar responses today (Safford & Safford 1996, p. 3). They cite Plato on putting away in an unknown place 'the offspring of the inferior…when they chance to be deformed'. Aristotle's *Politics* is cited for not letting any deformed child live (p. 4). Infanticide increased in practice with the growth of the Roman empire but the practice of abandonment of babies might not always entail death (p. 5). Madness, deafness, cretinism, tuberculosis, falling sickness (epilepsy), etc. elicited prejudice, which has not ended despite subsequent medical advances (p. 8). Religious traditions influence the perception of children with disability, sometimes to their benefit, and sometimes placing them in 'greater jeopardy' (p. 9). The advent of Christianity saw a shift from extermination to ridicule as, say, dwarfs were kept by emperors as jesters and the 'fool' was kept by the wealthy for

amusement (p. 3). More positively, Constantine I 'issued edicts forbidding infanticide, selling children into slavery, and maiming them as beggars, while initiating measures to assist parents too poor to support their children and mechanism for formal adoption' (p. 12). The authors also cite the doctrine of original sin as propounded by St Augustine (356-430): this theology saw deformities as punishments for the sins of parents or the work of Satan. Sometimes children were left as an *oblatio* or offering to a convent; 85% of monks in one monastery (c. 1030-1070) were oblates (p. 13). The authors suggestively wonder 'how future historians will interpret statistics concerning poverty, homelessness, and lack of immunization among American children in the 1990s' (p. 16). Disability in the United States is estimated to affect 11% of children aged six to fourteen and 72% of people aged eighty or above. Creamer counsels that we 'reconsider our understandings of human embodiment' (2009, p. 3). Models of disability, such as the medical one or one that disregards disability because of its 'minority' status, may 'disallow a wide variety of lived experiences of disability' (Creamer 2009, p. 27). If being disabled equates to being discriminated against then how 'the disabled' are treated in socio-political life becomes an issue of justice (Creamer 2009, p. 25). Yet, Creamer's own limits model (2009, pp. 28-33), which allows for application beyond physical and/or social restrictions to our understanding of sinfulness, is also to be included in any discussion of disability.

Looking at the context of children's rights internationally, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UN 1948, 1989) is the bedrock of the right to education and its ratification by states confers a legal obligation on them to act in accordance with it; this has been strengthened by later UN documents (1971, 1975, 2007), which clarify the rights of those with disabilities or SEN. The World Conference on Special Needs Education, in Salamanca, (UNESCO 1994) set the agenda for states. The right of all children to education is affirmed in section 2 of its so-called 'Salamanca Statement':

> *We believe and proclaim that:*
>
> ○ *every child has a fundamental right to education, and must be given the opportunity to achieve and maintain an acceptable level of learning,*
>
> ○ *every child has unique characteristics, interests, abilities and learning needs,*
>
> ○ *education systems should be designed and educational programmes implemented to take into account the wide diversity of these characteristics and needs,*

- *those with special educational needs must have access to regular schools which should accommodate them within a childcentred pedagogy capable of meeting these needs,*

- *regular schools with this inclusive orientation are the most effective means for combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all; moreover, they provide an effective education to the majority of children and improve the efficiency and ultimately the cost-effectiveness of the entire education system.*

Incorporated into these legal instruments is also the right to religion. For instance, in 2017 the UN's Human Rights Council published 'Right to Education' (UN 2017), which affirmed existing educational goals like those of the Millennium Development Goals and the Incheon Declaration, Education 2030, which the World Education Forum adopted in 2015. UNESCO's Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960) is the basic principle of these instruments; its definition of discrimination 'includes any distinction, exclusion, limitation or preference which, being based on race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, economic condition or birth, has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing equality of treatment in education' (Article 1). Article 5 of the same Convention affirms the right to 'religious and moral education of the children in conformity with their own convictions; and no person or group of persons should be compelled to receive religious instruction inconsistent with his or their own convictions'. Such instruments, in their regular renewal and restatement, seem designed both to 'keep the pressure on' states to fulfil obligations already committed to and to keep the UN itself always focused on fulfilling children's right to education. Evident here may be a parallel to the findings of Cooc & Kiru, who were examining disproportionality in special education provision in the US context, that it is on the macro-level of 'social institutions and the school systems', rather than within 'certain student groups', that the problem resides (2018, p. 10).

1.9 BOARDS OF MANAGEMENT

We will return to issues respecting the role of BoMs; for now, we seek to present their current legal status as determined by the Education Act 1998 (1.9.1) and how they are composed (1.9.2). We also advert to the role BoMs play between state and community (1.9.3).

1.9.1 Legal status

The groundwork for this legislation was largely laid during the 1990s, particularly under the education ministry of Niamh Bhreathnach (McManus 2014, pp. 280-293). From her 1993 initiative, the National Education Convention, to her education bill in 1997, discussion of school governance was central. The individual sectoral interests of patrons, parents, teachers and the state came to the fore at various stages; for instance, the consternation following the April 1996 leaking of the draft heads of the educational bill were assuaged that November with agreement 'on the composition of boards of management for primary schools and there were no surprises' (McManus 2014, p. 289), until the 1997 Education Bill itself was published, when 'representatives of almost every faith came together on the 10 March 1997 to protest' against it (p. 290). Eventually, it fell to Micheál Martin (minster for education, 1997-2000) to have the Education Act signed into law.

Under the Education Act 1998 a BoM is established by the patron so that the school is 'managed in a spirit of cooperation' (#14.1). The functions of a BoM are defined by the same act (#15.1-3):

15. – (1) It shall be the duty of a board to manage the school on behalf of the patron and for the benefit of the students and their parents and to provide or cause to be provided an appropriate education for each student at the school for which that board has responsibility.

(2) A board shall perform the functions conferred on it and on a school by this Act and in carrying out its functions the board shall—

(a) do so in accordance with the policies determined by the Minister from time to time,

(b) uphold, and be accountable to the patron for so 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, and at all times act in accordance with any Act of the Oireachtas or instrument made thereunder, deed, charter, articles of management or other such instrument relating to the establishment or operation of the school,

(c) consult with and keep the patron informed of decisions and proposals of the board,

(d) publish, in such manner as the board with the agreement of the patron considers appropriate, the policy of the school concerning admission to and participation in the school, including the policy of the school relating to the expulsion and suspension of students and admission to and participation by students with disabilities or who have other educational needs, and ensure that as regards that policy principles of equality and the right of parents to send their children to a school of the parents' choice are respected and such directions as may be made from time to time by the Minister, having regard to the characteristic spirit of the school and the constitutional rights of all persons concerned, are complied with,

(e) have regard to the principles and requirements of a democratic society and have respect and promote respect for the diversity of values, beliefs, traditions, languages and ways of life in society,

(f) have regard to the efficient use of resources (and, in particular, the efficient use of grants provided under section 12), the public interest in the affairs of the school and accountability to students, their parents, the patron, staff and the community served by the school, and

(g) use the resources provided to the school from monies provided by the Oireachtas to make reasonable provision and accommodation for students with a disability or other educational needs, including, where necessary, alteration of buildings and provision of appropriate equipment.

(3) For the avoidance of doubt, nothing in this Act shall confer or be deemed to confer on the board any right over or interest in the land and buildings of the school for which that board is responsible.

Thus, the Education Act clearly lays an onus on BoMs to ensure that all pupils in the school have an 'appropriate education'. Pupils with SEN now have 'their rights and entitlements enshrined in law' (McManus 2014, p. 313). Participation of pupils with SEN have to be governed by school policy; school buildings might have to be altered; and SEN specialists would have to be appointed to the inspectorate. Also, the Act explicitly makes the BoM accountable to the patron for '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' (1998, #15.2.b). When the 1999 curriculum was inaugurated that part relating to RE was explicitly devolved to the patronal authorities (Introduction, DES 1999, p. 58). Thus, under state law, the RE of all pupils falls within the remit of BoMs. With this bedrock we may

assume that debate, even contestation, will surround definitions of education and appropriateness. The present dissertation is also to be seen as a contribution to this debate. By raising issues here, the complexity of the task of addressing pupils' needs may indeed become more obvious and pressing and, therefore, more difficult to resolve; on the other hand, solutions may be less inappropriate and less exclusionary and more inclined to be consensual and locally focused. Specifically, our focus is on the RE of pupils with SEN; doubtless, this focus will have implications for the more general provision of RE to all pupils.

The 1937 Irish Constitution did not mention school patronage; nevertheless, the Irish state inherited a system of patronage that had been in place since the Stanley Letter 1831. The Education Act 1998, however, did recalibrate 'the concept and role of patron' and, perhaps uniquely, 'links it to the newly introduced concept of characteristic spirit of all primary and secondary schools including ETB schools' (O'Flaherty et al. 2018, p. 324). The latter is suggested as an attempt to avoid 'the faith-based connotations of "ethos"' (O'Flaherty *et al*. 2018, p. 324). Schools should become reflexive organizations in a process that re-evaluates their practice in light of their values and re-evaluates the values in turn (citing J. Elliott 1994, Clarifying values in school, p. 418).

1.9.2 Composition

A Board is comprised of:

- 2 direct nominees of the patron
- 2 parent nominees
- Principal (or Acting Principal)
- 1 serving teacher
- 2 members of the community.

Interestingly, the members of the community are chosen by the other six Members in light of needed skill-sets, gender-balance, interest in education and its promotion, and, here, who have 'a commitment to the ethos of the school and the community/parish served by the school and shall have an understanding of and commitment to Catholic education as outlined in the Deed of Trust for Catholic Schools' (DES 2015, Appendix C, 4.a-d(i), pp. 46-47).

1.9.3 Community based

As is evident from the foregoing sections, legally and compositionally, a BoM is based in a local community. Normally, most if not all of its members are drawn from the local community or are persons deemed to be representative of society. As will become evident, BoMs hold a key interstitial place between the state and the education of pupils in a specific location. In 2002, when Katherine Zappone reported on the conceptually coherent call 'for the establishment of power-sharing mechanism' between the DES and school/local communities (Zappone 2002, p. 61), she was referencing an issue that has come prominently to the fore in society in general, namely, the relationships of power that exist in society and which have a huge influence, whether we are aware of them or not. In Zappone's case, the structures of power would 'make possible local decision-making mechanism' and 'a flexible approach to the curriculum'; for today, BoMs could also be a structure of local decision-making, especially in curriculum delivery, and more especially in provisioning for the education of pupils with SEN.

1.10 CONCLUSION

Since the middle of the last century there has developed a 'paradigm shift' away from thinking of people with disabilities as the problem or that they are the ones who have to change and towards 'understanding disability as a condition of a society in which people with impairments are discriminated against, segregated and denied full participative citizenship' (Swain, French & Cameron 2003, p. 1). Yet, the identification of a lacuna in the pedagogical and philosophico-theological education of certain pupils in our primary system is significant. Its importance derives from the context of caring for those less able to do so for themselves and from the task that stakeholders, especially teachers and members of BoMs, have *ex officio*. Why individuals are seen as important and how this came about led to a brief examination of a) the Judeo-Christian worldview that informs western thinking still today, irrespective of religious affiliations; and b) the non-theological worldview of Heidegger that is presumptively more acceptable to those who eschew the Judeo-Christian patrimony. Hopefully, we have somewhat less inadequate understandings of our world (ontology) and persons in it. Different ways of knowing (epistemologies) have shown that we are not as strong in body, mind or spirit as we might think and working towards truth is a task of constant uncovering of what is really before us.

The understanding adopted here as most broadly and conceptually useful for the condition of the human in the world is *infirmitas*. Infirmity in bodily and mental senses is loose

enough to fit those pupils who are identified as having special needs; this dissertation, if it addresses BoMs in the first instance, addresses them at a second remove. Thereby, it fits adults, too. And, it may also be taken as an apt term for the moral infirmities that accompany human living and acting; for, we are not always strong enough to unbind ourselves from vincible and invincible sinfulness. Indeed, if nothing else, Christianity witnesses to the indelible fragility of humans and declares that 'human weakness' is part of the human condition. Of course, the message of Christianity is that God takes the part of humans and that in a double sense: God is on the side of the weak and God so acts that in Christ God decided to 'put on' human frailty and enter fully into the human predicament. Heidegger is enchanted by Being but he does not work out how one lives forward in consequence. His thinking fails to show how Dasein creates community and in this his philosophy lacks an ethics. Always attuned to Heidegger's original insights Hannah Arendt nevertheless built such an ethics. Arendt began by countering her mentor's awareness of a person who stands out – *da-sein* – and who uses death as the spring of praxis with her own awareness of being born into society and using the facticity of life as the spring of living well. Heidegger listens as Being speaks to him; this is what is seen or what appears in front of one, the *phainomenon* as it reveals itself, which is to say as it lights up before us (as *phos*, light). For us, the person of *in-firmitas* reveals her- or himself before us and we are called to respond with care.

The theologically usual term for God's action is *caritas*, *agapē* or love in accordance with John's definition of God (1 John 4:7-21). However, I have chosen the somewhat less freighted 'care' to designate both human (and divine) action for the good because it is a structure of human personhood as well as a modality of *caritas*. Part of the history of education, and the pre-history of special education, has shown how awful that predicament has been. Scholars demonstrate from the meagre records available hesitant, piecemeal and largely unreflective development in the recognition and appropriate treatment of people with disability. Winzer writes of a 'dark past, followed by 'the light of a more modern world', and by 'the new century', i.e. the twentieth, and 'from segregation to integration' (1993); later, she updates her work to speak of 'inclusion' (Winzer 2009). Safford & Safford accounts from history It has also shown how individuals have tried to respond, often from charitable motives. For SERC, the beginnings of special education in Ireland 'can be traced to the middle of the 19th century' with religious orders among 'the first service providers', particularly to those with deafness and blindness (DES 1993, p. 48). Yet, official remediation by the state came slowly: by 1950, only one 'special school for pupils with mental handicap had been given official recognition' (DES 1993, pp. 49-50). A

milestone was achieved with the 1961 setting up of the Special Education Department in St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra (DES 1993, p. 53).

We should also note, with SERC, the role of 'voluntary bodies', set up by parent groups or, sometimes, religious organizations, to provide special educational services; they were 'almost totally segregated from mainstream schooling' (DES 1993, pp. 54-55). Today, a simplistic notion of 'charitable giving' is deemed inadequate where the basic issue is newly constructed as structural, i.e. inbuilt in social structures, and, therefore, in need of a response altogether different from localized and individual handouts. A new structure that makes SEN integral to education is also taking shape in modern society; mainstream schooling is the normative site for the education of pupils with SEN. The role of the teacher, as implementer and leader of this broader understanding of teaching, becomes more crucial to successful outcomes for all pupils. Indeed, the teacher is called to exemplify what is best in pupils' educational experience. What do they and other key stakeholders make of this situation, one that arose from religious and secular wellsprings but is taking on quite other configurations?

The State recognizes that BoMs have 'a responsibility for supporting and monitoring the characteristic spirit of the school, which is determined by cultural, educational, moral, religious or social values and traditions' (Government of Ireland 1999, p. 23). Further the State recognizes the BoM's support to curriculum implementation and staff morale. Thus, in looking at BoMs from either the State or church perspective a certain synergy can be observed, though not a worked-out vision. In this research I seek to locate the members of BoMs in relation to the RE of pupils with SEN, that is, what they think about the key issues of RE, SEN and RE for pupils with SEN and what attitudes help them in their role so that such pupils are assisted in gaining the best education possible for them. To gain a better understanding of what special education entails we turn to the literature review.

Chapter 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

> *Down between the lines*
> *Little antic fish are all go. Nothing else.*
> *And yet in that utter visibility*
> *The stone's alive with what's invisible.*
> (Seamus Heaney. 2018. Seeing Things II. In *100*
> *Poems*. London: Faber & Faber, p. 105)

2.1 INTRODUCTION

While the previous chapter set RE for pupils with SEN in a larger contextual and historical frameworks involving the notion of humanness, the common bedrock of personal and social being into which divine grace inserts itself, I engage, in this chapter, with some of the literature surrounding the core conceptualities that this dissertation adumbrates. Providing assistance to BoMs in their duty of care towards pupils with SEN, especially in relation to their RE, necessitates reflection on education, which was largely dealt with in the historical account in chapter one (1.8). In this chapter I outline the methods I undertook in order to review the relevant literature (2.1). Then I look to the issues of special education and inclusion (2.2), spiritual and religious education (2.3), and religious education for pupils with SEN as my investigatory core (2.4). This review permits a theological and social perspectival overview (2.5). In order to render a more coherent and accessible account of the development of special education in Ireland in the necessarily curtailed compass of this dissertation I presented the historical outlines of that development within the history of education generally (1.8).

2.1.1 Researching special education

Some six years ago, in gaining a qualification to teach children with special educational needs I noticed that there was little or no mention of the RE of the pupils I was being educated to serve. This led to more formal investigations. The library of Dublin City University was the main source of information. Electronic facilities and academic repositories, for instance, JSTOR, ATLA Religion database and Academic Search Complete (EBSCO host), were the main gateways to the literature I researched. To search for appropriate materials, keywords like 'religion', 'religious', 'spiritual', 'spirituality', 'theology' and 'theological', in combination with 'education', 'educational', 'special

education needs', 'special educational needs' were employed. Qualifiers such as 'elementary education', 'early education', 'primary', as well as 'state', 'legislative', 'human rights', helped to specify pertinent subject material. During the time of this research there is a developing interest in the issue of RE of children with SEN and the identifiers used above, in new searches, yield increasingly substantial results. Yet, it must also be noted that, in a number of textbooks that do reference religious education and SEN, they are almost never discussed together (for example, Frederickson & Cline 2009; Lewis & Norwich 2005; Wearmouth 2012). As Ault a decade ago averred, finding references to religion in literature on SEN is more a matter of comments amidst articles with other foci (Ault 2010, p. 186).

The first basic right of the child as described by the Geneva Declaration on the Rights of the Child (League of Nations 1924) is: the child must be given the means requisite for its normal development, both materially and spiritually (see Jeffers, 2013, p. 11). Apart from such essentials as food, clothing, housing, etc., this right is normally the principle that underpins state educational systems; without education the mental, moral and spiritual growth of the child is so lacking that it is virtually bereft of development. In light of this we examine a couple of key areas concerning the religious education of children with SEN that inform this dissertation: definitions of terms, theory and practice, and social and theological perspectives. Thus, there is a caution concerning education from a results-driven agenda. In teaching it is too easy to make test results the goal, in which case any value they might have as indicators of general educational achievement under normal conditions may be lost; also, such a goal will most likely lead to unfortunate and deleterious practices (Campbell 1979). The danger of treating results as an, or worse, the end of education is shown when a critique of evidence-based policy, as happened in the Blair premiership in Britain, ends by becoming policy-based evidence (Boden & Epstein 2006, p. 226). The state, in quantifying pupils' education on the basis of test results in English and maths, as happens in the republic of Ireland, always runs the risk of missing the wood for a couple of trees.

2.1.2 Pupils with SEN

One example of changing obligations is examined by Elizabeth Mathews who studied the situation of deaf and hard of hearing people in Ireland. Their fortunes changed as policy changed from the teaching sign-language to oralism. Interestingly, Mathews shows the link between the former's use in Roman Catholic schools in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries while oralism was used in Britain. In the mid-twentieth century this policy

changed as the fear of losing pupils to the British system encouraged a change in Irish schools to oralism. Because pupils who are deaf and hard of hearing – she refers to them as DHH – can be exempted from learning Irish they thereby fail to meet the common requirement of proficiency in Irish in order to become a primary school teacher; in sum, they could not become teachers to their own (Mathews 2017, p. 38). Mathews is also critical of the mainstreaming of such pupils; for her, it is a form of 'normalization' and not true inclusion. It is somewhat ironic that Mathews's study of a decade earlier was published in the very year that the Irish Sign Language (ISL) received legal recognition as one of the official languages of Ireland in the Irish Sign Language Act 2017; this will guarantee ISL interpretation services, regulation of interpreters and educational supports for pupils.

Though this topic is important as a subset of religious formation as such, there is an information deficit on the RE of pupils with SEN. We may hope that the cross-national, European wide, research project, Religious Education in a Multicultural Society: School and Home in a Comparative Context (REMC), which is designed to examine the home-school interaction that shapes the religious and other beliefs formation of children, will yield substantive, rich data. The area of special education is a growing and developing one in the Irish context; the Irish Department of Education and Skills (DES) has been given increased responsibility in this area as a result of legislation. The government of Ireland (Government of Ireland 1998 and 2004) has sought to address the educational needs of all children and it has brought forth legislation, especially the EPSEN Act 2004, to vindicate the educational rights of children with SEN. Some provisions of this act have been given legislative effect; still, other provisions including commitments made in the present Programme for Government (DES 2011b), which would require substantial financial investment by the state in supporting the education of pupils with SEN, have yet to be enacted. Unfortunately, those with SEN become collateral damage; as Banks & McCoy (2012) report,

> *This research (Growing Up In Ireland] shows that children from working class backgrounds are far more likely to be identified with SEN…particularly…boys who display high levels of SEN (of a non-normative type such as emotional/behavioural difficulties – EBD). Moreover, children attending schools designated as socio-economically disadvantaged are significantly more likely than their peers to be identified as having EBD.* (2012, p. 4)

Consequently, there are low levels of 'school engagement and overall enjoyment of school' (Banks & McCoy 2012, p. 4; Banks, Shevlin & McCoy 2012). Of course, the EPSEN Act 2004 specifically addresses pupils with SEN by way of being 'further

provision' to the Education Act 1998. It states from the beginning that those with and those without special needs 'shall have the same right to avail of, and benefit from, appropriate education'. From this alone we may infer that the 1998 act is not only prior to but also legally more expansive than EPSEN. Still, we may note that the revised allocation model of support for pupils with SEN (2017) has begun to improve the situation: some 900 extra teachers have been promised.

It is part of the purpose of this dissertation to examine the role of the state in fulfilling its obligation to children with SEN in the context of the latter's right to RE. This is a fraught question. It raises fundamental issues around human rights, especially those of children and more especially of children with special needs; parental rights and duties; the state's duty to act on behalf of children; and the role, right and duties of religious authorities, the state and parents in concert to decide what is appropriate, necessary and sufficient in the lives of children with special needs and their religious formation.

2.1.3 RE of pupils with SEN

The specific role of Boards of Managements in these issues is a lacuna, especially in light of their oversight and responsibility for the education of pupils in their schools. For, what role, if any, do Boards of Management play in the provision of RE to pupils with SEN? In keeping this question to the fore, issues of responsibility and care run like a red thread through the research and operate as an operational principle of cohesion and conceptualization, before being integrated into a whole in chapter five. However, as this review evidences, there is almost no direct addressing of their role elsewhere. We endeavour to set a standard for BoMs that will stand them, in all their diversity, in good stead. For, the measure we try to attain is also the indicator of a BoM's long-term success.

When a state system of special schools was established following recommendations from the Department of Health Commission's *Report of the Commission of Inquiry on Mental Handicap* (1965, see Griffin & Shevlin 2011, p. 29), only 1% of pupils were deemed to have a 'problem of mental handicap'; the same Report also recommended some special classes in mainstream schools for 'slow learners' and that there should be a sharing of resources between the departments of health and education (see Griffin & Shevlin 2011, p. 29); the term 'special class', perhaps from the German 'Sonderklassen' of the nineteenth century, dates to the American educationalist, J.E. Wallace Wallin (1876-1969), in 1914 (Winzer 2009, p. 275), and the reality it named too indicated a 'dumping ground' for unruly, unmanageable, disobedient or unable pupils (Winzer 2009, pp. 23-24), which

notion anecdotally pertained also in Ireland. By 2008 some 17% of primary pupils were in receipt of supplemental resources (Banks & McCoy 2011, p. 68). More recently, the Economic and Social Research Institute accepts that a quarter of pupils have 'some form of SEN' (Banks & McCoy 2012, p. 3). Demand for resources increases here (and abroad) for the state to more adequately fund the extra costs associated with the education of those with SENs (Desforges & Lindsay 2010; NABMSE 2018). BoMs are required to be aware of the additional role that the Department of Health plays in the allocation of resources to pupils with SEN. The Department of Children and Youth Affairs, too, in its advocacy on behalf of pupils with needs, demands attention from BoMs. Employment law, social welfare changes, involvements with social services and the criminal justice system directly impinge on school management. The Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018 exemplifies new procedures incumbent on the DES, patrons, BoMs and staffs in relation to how a school draws up its admission policy; the detail, cost and commitment of time required is outweighed, of course, if a pupil with a disability gains access to local schooling; nevertheless, BoMs are faced with greater demands. The increase in and complexification of bureaucratic state structures also require ever newer skills and knowledge of BoMs as the latter seek to assist the principal and staff in addressing the increasingly complex needs of at least some of the pupils of the school. Understanding the nature of SENs and making adequate provision for pupils so affected is daunting both socio-medically, pedagogically and managerially. More generally, the education of all pupils, the selection of teachers, especially principals, and diversity among BoM members are pressing responsibilities of BoMs. Musgrove is particularly scathing about the location of power in headmasters – his context is England – as, in cyberculture, this power will be expanded, not reduced, whereas 'authority' is the value that schools should invest in (1971, p. 152). Interestingly, two problems have been identified as besetting the structure of school management, namely, homosociability and local logics. Homosociability refers to the process by which current leaders effectively 'clone' themselves in promoting those (often men) most likely to succeed them. Local logics refers to the tendency of assessors of future managers – largely, members of BoMs – to privilege those who 'fit with' the existing structures (Grummell, Devine & Lynch 2009, p. 330). Thus, even in the selection of teachers – one of the key duties of BoMs – there are issues of concern, perhaps amplified by the larger issue of recruitment (O'Brien, 2018). If it is difficult to recruit dynamic and effective school leaders, it is even more difficult to persuade a diverse range of people to serve on non-remunerated BoMs.

2.2 SPECIAL EDUCATION

There is no unambiguous definition of what 'pupils with SEN' means (Frederickson & Kline 2009; Griffin & Shevlin 2007; Shevlin *et al*. 2013). In the United States, special educational needs is termed 'learning disabled' (Shobo *et al*. 2012, p. 47). The variety of disabling conditions, their pathologies and the range of responses to those conditions set the parameters for our lack of clarity in the definition of special needs. As Hausstäter & Connolley warn, there are also 'processes that construct disabilities within special education' (2012, pp. 186-187). Various 'induced problems' include, e.g. auditory, visual, speech, motor problems, which will demand compensatory teaching; various academic problems, with, say, reading, writing, and mathematics, which will require individual support; and social and behavioural problems, that will necessitate 'social training and environmental changes' (p. 186). The second type are called statistical, because they are defined not by the individual pupil's problematic learning but by percentages that are agreed, whether internationally or nationally, of those having needs. Also, there is the 'technology of normalization' (p. 182) that constructs a definition of what normality is; against this construction, then, disabilities are established. Thus, in relation to the problems adumbrated above, Hausstätter & Connolley subdivide normality into biological, statistical, and moral and social categories, respectively (p. 186).

McCoy, Banks & Shevlin refer to 'a distinction between forms of SEN that are usually identified in terms of apparently 'objective' criteria (e.g. the existence of a visual impairment) and forms of SEN where subjective and relativistic judgement has a greater influence on diagnosis (e.g. emotional and behavioural difficulties – EBD)' and cite Dyson & Kozleski (2008) in support (2012, pp. 120-121). For its part, the Irish state relies on the Education Act (1998 and the EPSEN Act 2004, not ignoring other acts, such as the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, Equal Status Act 2000-2004, and the Disability Act 2005, for its identification of and response to the needs of all children, not excluding those with disabilities; Gareth Byrne (Byrne 2018, 34) has interestingly drawn attention to the fact that the Education Act 1998 was the first piece of Oireachtas legislation in relation to education in Ireland since the Vocational Education Act 1930, which itself was preceded by – though under a different dispensation – the Intermediate Education (Ireland) Act 1878. The definition used in the EPSEN Act 2004 for learning difficulty is:

a restriction in the capacity of the person to participate in and benefit from education on account of an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or learning disability, or any other condition which results in a person learning differently from a person without that condition.

The person here is not presented as someone with a medical condition; rather, the effects of having a SEN are highlighted and they relate to a child with SEN up to the age of 18 years (see Meaney, Kiernan & Monahan 2005 for this and other legal developments). The NCSE subsequently found an estimated SEN prevalence rate of 17.68% of all children (NCSE 2006, p. 72; also Banks & McCoy 2011, p. 3). This figure, in the light of Banks & McCoy's own research rose to 25% (2011, p. 5). Banks & McCoy addressed the risk of double-counting in so far as possible, given that the 2002 Census (NCSE 2006, p. 74) recorded a prevalence rate of only 2.1%. More recently, Banks & McCoy note that the prevalence rate of pupils with SEN is between 25-28% (2017, p. 442), and expenditure has increased from €605 million to €1.5 billion in the 2005-2015 period. It is clear that as the years progress prevalence rates increase, whether due to better detection, increase in demand or increasing presentation of SENs.

For pupils with SEN, the EPSEN Act 2004, as a logical consequence and working out of the Education Act 1998, is proving itself to be crucial and BoMs rely on its provisions for addressing the needs of their pupils; a number of these provisions have not been implemented, however, though the initial plan was that they would be within five years of the passing of the act. Categorization of children is seen as problematic (NCSE 2006, p. 100), citing the task-force on dyslexia (2000-2001). Some children may not receive additional support because they fall marginally outside current thresholds, and some may not be assessed in the first place (NCSE 2006, p. 100). For their part, Dyson & Kozleski point to the dangers of misdiagnosing children with special needs based on comparisons between the United States and England: in relation to social groupings, such as those composing the 'melting pot' of the United States, there is a disproportional representation of some due to 'the differential achievements of those groups in the school system as a whole' (2008, p. 185). For instance, white Anglo-Saxons tend to outperform Afro-Americans; in England, with other racial mixes, some groups tend to achieve better. More recently, Cooc & Kiru identifies measurement as a challenge in discussing disproportionality; their review of other research, though, indicates that 'structural factors rather than sociocultural barriers' contribute to disproportionality (2018, p. 8). Overall, educational systems are constructed in ways that some groups will find more supportive than others. Ireland, too, has found that Traveller children may appear to preform less well

than members of the settled community but this may not be automatically attributed to less ability. The Irish educational system has a recognized bias in favour of 'settled children' by virtue of how its norms are formulated. Thus, the question of how to define SEN arises anew, and definitional precision remains an intractable problem.

Also, the social context is vital to any engagement with special needs. It plays an important role as barriers to educational progress may be 'financial, family and health related, social/communal, cultural and geographic or a combination of any of these' (DES 2005b, p. 16). This broader notion of educational disadvantage impinges on the provision of resources to children with SEN. The Education Act (Government of Ireland 1998) defines such disadvantage as 'the impediments to education arising from social or economic disadvantage which prevent students from deriving appropriate benefit from education in schools'; this was defined more precisely as 'the impediments to education arising from social or economic disadvantage which prevent students from deriving appropriate benefit from education in schools' (Education (Amendment) Act 2012, see Government of Ireland 2012b, Part 2.4.b). In consequence, the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) action plan was drawn up to assist in enabling inclusive education (DES 2005b; Gilleece 2014, p. 83). With the economic crisis of 2008 came 'necessary cost saving measures' that, in an Ireland already experiencing 'profound economic, social, technological, cultural and demographic changes', created 'a very challenging environment' (OECD 2011, p. 5). Another complicating factor in the provision of adequate resources for children with SEN is the power differential that exists between those who come from socio-economically deprived areas, from which many children with SEN come, and their teachers, who tend to come from the relatively empowered middle-class; nevertheless, there is increasing heterogeneity in the profession (Coolahan 2003, p. 30). In relation to how people see themselves, Breckenridge & Vogler refer to the naturalization of political power into the personal, i.e. the able-bodied person takes 'his enabling body for granted'. This contrasts with 'the lives of many disabled people' for whom 'the intricate practical dialectics of dependence and interdependence…unsettle ideals of social organization as freely chosen expressions of mutual desire' (2001, p. 350).

The effect of how pupils with SEN come to be reported is an instance of how power impacts on pupils with SEN. As terms such as 'students in receipt of learning support' and 'persons with disabilities', as used by school principals in their returns to the Department of Education and Skills (DES), are somewhat open to interpretation, the question of how these figures were aggregated and reported to the Department arises. As the DES – no less than

its counterparts in other jurisdictions (Desforges & Lindsay 2010) – has difficulty in allocating supplemental resources to pupils with SEN so the researcher fails to make fully accurate comparisons between different periods and regions in the allocation of resources to children with special needs. The classificatory system to be used to identify SENs is not universally agreed (Florian & McLaughlin 2008). Nonetheless, a recent ESRI report (2017, above) accepted that some 25-28% of children attending mainstream classes have some form of SEN (p. 442). The disparity in percentages over 50 years raises concerns. Is a lack of correspondence between different definitions of special needs enough to explain the figures? Have the forms of assessment of special needs altered over time? Is the increase due to advanced diagnosis? Is there an increase in the number of children presenting with SEN, as seems to be the case with ASD? Should pupils require a label of SEN before they receive the education to which they are entitled (Grover 2003; Daniels 2006)? What is meant by 'special needs'?

Clearly, while children with needs are distinguished from those without needs, it must also be recognized that some children with needs are also gifted; in Britain they are described as having Dual or Multiple Exceptionality (DME). Some 5-10% of children identified as gifted have a SEN; and, 2-5% of those with SEN are gifted (NAGC 2012).

In Ireland, until 2017, provision for children with SEN was allocated on the basis of whether the condition(s) giving rise to the SEN was of high or low incidence (DES 2005a, 2015a). If high incidence, the General Allocation Model (GAM) applied: increased teaching hours were allocated to a school, depending on its size, percentage of male pupils and socioeconomic status, e.g. its DEIS banding (DES [n.d.; perhaps 2011], p. 7). If the SEN was of low incidence, e.g. sight or hearing impairment, mild or more severe general learning disability (GLD), emotional-behavioural disturbance, autistic spectrum disorder, then specific amounts of resource teaching and/or assistive technologies were provided (DES 2005a). These resources were reduced on a percentage basis due to the recent economic debility of the state. For instance, the number of special needs assistants (SNAs) was capped at 10,575 in 2010 and deployment would no longer be demand-driven. In 2012, a reduction of 15% was imposed on the number of resource teaching hours allocated to pupils.

In 2017, a new or revised allocation model, Special Education Teaching Allocation (SETA, see 1.8.1), was introduced by the DES (DES 2017a and 2017b). Henceforth, a 'school

educational profile' would determine the allocation of resources to be given to that school. The criteria (c13/2017, #7) for the profile include:

- the number of pupils with complex needs enrolled in the school

- standardized test results, in literacy and numeracy

- social context of disadvantage

- social context of gender

- English as an Additional Language (EAL) support

- additional allocations for schools with high concentrations of pupils who require language support.

This model's introduction supersedes all previous models and is intended to give 'greater certainty' to schools about available resources for better planning and timetabling, and to provide 'a greater level of autonomy for schools in how to manage and deploy additional teaching support within their school, based on the individual learning needs of pupils, as opposed to being based primarily on a diagnosis of disability' (DES 2017a, pp. 1-2). However, as an expedient, resources already allocated under the old model in 2015-2017 were fixed until the 2019 review. Currently, schools have been given their new allocation of resources.

2.2.1 What is 'special' about special education?

In spite of the above changes, we need to examine the notion of 'special' in special education. It indicates the individual pupil who stands out from the mainstream as a consequence of requiring educational accommodations and provisions if she or he is to engage in education along with her or his peers. This often conjures the world of disabilities and the medical model, though it need not necessarily do so; perhaps it designates some decrease in ability (Cameron & Thygesen 2015). Simplican (2015) shows how debate on the capacity of the intellectually disabled was stymied by the diagnostic procedures of the medical profession who, in staking their claim to expertise, solidified their right to decide. Anecdotally, pupils manifesting severe behaviours who were forwarded for professional assessment were not found to have a condition; a prerequisite to a diagnosis is that pupils engage with the tests and if they do not there is no condition. Nevertheless, the teacher has to take account of the situation and respond, with measures

designed to help this pupil in this circumstance access education along with her or his peers.

It is important to note that disability, however defined, is intrinsic to human personhood at least at some stage in one's life. It is a truism that human offspring remain dependent on their parents far longer than is the case with other animals. Too, in the last stages of life the human person in general becomes increasingly feeble and has to rely on a younger generation for care and sustenance. For those more obviously 'abled differently', society as such has to assume a caring role. For all children, though, especially concerning the foundations of their formal education, there is a care for the intellectual and physical development in the young that civil and religious authorities have long been aware of. Nevertheless, only relatively recently has attention focussed on the education of those with difficulties of access to literacy and numeracy. Doubtless, other areas within education will be developed too for those with SEN. My concern here is that there is a pressing need for attention in the field of RE. In RE, core dimensions of personhood are put centre-stage educationally. Real accommodations in RE, then, are likely to have profound effects in individuals' lives, perhaps more profound even than the effects of being literate and numerate.

In the twentieth century, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UN 1948, 1989) has led to the establishment of specific rights for those with disabilities or SEN (UN 1971, 1975, 2002). Jeffers (2013) traces a genealogy for this back to Eglatyne Jebb (1876-1928) founder of the Save the Children Fund and drafter of the Geneva Convention (Declaration on the Rights of the Child), via the League of Nations. Examples of 'progressive practice' are provided in Robinson & Stalker (1998) and Yong (2007). Negatively, as Breckenridge & Vogler (2001) argue, mandating the rights of people with special needs is no guarantee of employment, even in the United States of America. In Ireland, too, recognized educational provision for people with SEN normally ceases on their 18th birthday. Yet, Renehan argues that 'education in religion is fundamental to Ireland's history and culture' (2014, p. 39; also, Regan 2010, O'Hanlon 2010).

Ireland's National Disability Study continues to be a source of data relevant to educational (and other) policy (Banks, Maître & McCoy 2015). Corker, Davis & Priestley make repeated reference to the limitations of their own research. Yet, there is a sense of the researchers entering into the mind-world of the young people with disabilities that they

encountered that I found commendable. However, a certain interpretive borderline was crossed on occasion that impaired objectivity. They write:

> *Moreover, we have identified disabled children's ability to differentiate between the adults they encounter in schools and to state why they prefer one adult over another. Disabled children are capable of identifying good practice. Our data suggests that where children encounter disablist practices in schools, they should be encouraged to put forward their own solutions to their problems. If given space, they are capable of empowering themselves where they encounter teachers and other adult helpers, provided these adults reflexively question their own practices.*
> (Corker, Davis & Priestley [n.d.], p. 16)

This statement, with its insider tone and note of advocacy, may undermine the principle of objectivity in that there seems to be a presuming to know the voice of the child at least as well as if not better than those who relate to and with the child on an ongoing basis; they may be correct, of course, but I suggest that the matter of the voice of the child and the voice of the child with SEN may be not less wayward than the voices of adults. This is in no way to lessen either the importance or necessity of cultivating due attention to and dialogue with pupils.

Banks, Maître & McCoy (2015) offer a re-evaluation of earlier data deriving from the 2006 National Disability Survey as well so that 'over-identification among certain groups and bias in processes of disability and SEN identification' could, if evident, be assessed. They recognize how attention has 'moved to examining how best to provide for children and young people with disabilities, particularly in the school context'. They note that 'the inclusion agenda increasingly argues for students with SEN to be educated in mainstream settings for as much of the curriculum as possible'. They state:

> *But crucially research is only now assessing how students actually fare in different settings and what supports are required to maximise their inclusion and engagement.* (Banks, Maître & McCoy 2015, p. vii)

In other words, in claiming an argument for an inclusion agenda they admit that evidence for or against such an argument has yet to be obtained: they do not advert to the problematic revision of the earlier preferment for an inclusion agenda that follows from this lack of evidential warrant.

2.2.2 Inclusion

Given the diversity of the school population, the question of how an education system or individual school caters for that diversity and responds to the individual needs of individual pupils arises. How can schools respond to all pupils with equality and respect? This question raises the issue of inclusion. The conceptualization of inclusion as a principle in education is seen as a positive response to the presence of pupils with disabilities among those without disabilities (DES [n.d.; perhaps 2011]; NCSE 2011; O'Byrne & Twomey 2012).

We have seen that the European Union in its education policy EU 2020 forefronts inclusion. This is reflective of an educational emphasis from a United Nations perspective as well as in educational literature. In 1994 UNESCO adopted the Salamanca Declaration as a statement affirming the right of inclusion, not segregation, for pupils irrespective of their diversity (UNESCO 1994). In EU 2009 and EU 2015 we see Europe following a similar agenda. For human capital to thrive common forms of educational activities have to be shared in, irrespective of social background, gender, etc. or of special needs. This validates a model of inclusion above individual limitations. In its Financing of Inclusive Education: Mapping Country Systems for Inclusive Education, the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education recorded that not all member-countries of the EU reduced their financial support for special education during the financial crisis; some increased their support (EASNIE 2016, pp. 65-66). Ireland did not participate in this survey.

Strategies adopted in schools can have different effects on inclusion. On the one hand, the effort to include children with special needs in mainstream settings increases awareness of the need to differentiate between pupils in situations where there is a possibility of increased funding for certain levels of disability. Here, improvements in resourcing special education have a relationship of dependency on successful labelling of certain pupils. On the other hand, the same effort may work in an exclusionary direction if it results in unnecessary labelling. EASNIE (2016) suggests that '[e]xisting funding and governance mechanisms may increasingly lead schools to connect education equity and effectiveness with the labelling of learners in need of support' (p. 66). To 'foster inclusive education policies' and have reduced labelling EASNIE favours prioritising 'an inclusive design approach to educational accessibility' (p. 67). The inclusive education proposed by

EASNIE is a combination of universal design with compensatory design for those pupils with the greatest needs.

Mel Ainscow (2016) discusses the difficulty – even with schools – of defining inclusion. What counts for him is the construction of an inclusive culture, rather than 'a set of fixed practices or policies', within any given school, and that posseses tolerance of difference, capacity to engage those who are otherwise rejected, and support structures for teachers; experimentation can and should take place. For instance, he advocates that teachers collaborate in designing a lesson or 'lesson study' for pupils; later, in subsequent analysis of pupils' responses fresh ideas and approaches may be developed. He takes this deconstructing-reconstructing approach from Tom Skrtic (Ainscow 2016, p. 159). For Ainscow, education is about making life fairer for pupils (2016, p. 5). Ainscow's account of dealing with the complexities of education within individual settings argues for an approach to BoMs that allows maximum local autonomy coupled with commitment, collaboration and personal and professional expertise to a breaking down of the barriers to pupils' positive educational experience (not: how analyse this people's problems). Thinking about the barriers permits the educator to identify the 'hidden voices' within the school and so improve the school (Ainscow 2016, p. 9). What he presents becomes a working out of what Stuart-Buttle enjoins as research and practice working together: 'how new research knowledge production can effectively communicate and contribute to knowledge transformation' (Stuart-Buttle 2018, p.46).

The United Nations High Commission for Human Rights, in its Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), stated:

> *Recognizing the special needs of a disabled child, assistance extended in accordance with paragraph 2 of the present article shall be provided free of charge, whenever possible, taking into account the financial resources of the parents and others caring for the child, and shall be designated to ensure that the disabled child has effective access to and receives education, training, health care services, rehabilitation services, preparation for employment and recreation opportunities in a manner conducive to the child's achieving the fullest possible social integration and individual development, including his or her cultural and spiritual development.* (#23.3)

Sheelagh Drudy is an Irish academic who, having a child with an intellectual disability, advocates for inclusive education. She argues that the bedrock of a socially cohesive society and of a knowledge economy are egalitarian, effective and inclusive schools with

high-quality teachers (Drudy 2009). For the latter, fortunately, evidence is still strong (Heinz & Keane 2018, p. 536). Jiao challenges the notion that 'managerialist knowledge and techniques' are superior over others: cognizance of economic constraints should not impair 'teleological goals' (2019, p. 4). As Van Mieghem *et al*. argue, inclusive education is 'a complex and multidimensional concept' that has developed differently in various countries (2018, p. 2); in fact, there is no overall synopsis (2018, p. 3). Twenty-six reviews, from 2010 to 2016, of qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods types, were selected and analysed. From them, five themes were abstracted, four of which were substantive concerning the implementation of inclusive education: attitudes towards it; the professional development of teachers in fostering it; practices that enhance it; and, participation of students with SEN (2018, p. 10). The fifth theme concerned the conducting of research, in which there should, because of present ambiguities, always be 'an operative definition' of inclusive education (2018, p. 11). More positive attitudes towards pupils with SEN need to be positively influenced. Attitudes among parents and teachers varied and this was reflected in students' own attitudes to peers with SEN: a range from 'open to hostile' (2018, p. 7). Where attention was paid to addressing pupils' needs, rather than on inclusion *per se*, success in the latter was more likely (2018, p. 10). Hence, professional development for teachers is regarded as vital (2018, pp. 11-12). Eight of the reviews referred to 'social participation'; it was seen as 'the most adequate concept to describe the social dimension of inclusion' (2018, pp. 8-9). This useful study concluded by identifying some gaps in the research that can be addressed:

- the voices of all pupils, with and without SEN, need to be investigated in research projects; and the attitudes of school leaders, too
- workplace based continuous professional development (CPD)
- inclusion of 'financial resources and accommodated infrastructure for implementing' inclusive education
- state/school/district practice
- participation of all students, especially academic, is required
- more studies explicating their research methods, i.e. that provide context.

The concept of inclusion is tied to the justice ideals that pertain to modern society. Schools, no less than that state educational systems must ensure 'procedural justice' (Hollenweger 2011, p. 6). The 1994 world conference on special needs argued that education for all should be 'regular schools with inclusive orientation' (Foreman & Arthur-Kelly 2008, as cited in Obiakor 2011, p. 11). Berhanu states that 'social justice goals and inclusive education are inextricably intertwined' (2010, p. 156). Until September

2017, for a child to be allocated resources because she or he had special needs a diagnosis from a suitably qualified professional was required by the DES (NCSE 2013, pp. 5, 27). This process is known colloquially as labelling, and it has an ambiguous character (Grover 2003; Daniels 2006). The recognized danger of giving a child a label is stigmatization. The West Virginia Department of Education review (2012), for instance, noted that, although not all studies concurred (p. 38), stigmatization did happen. Chakraborti-Ghosh, Mofield & Orellana summarizes that, where students are labelled (with EBD), 'appropriate intervention, positive outcomes and efficient methods to determine student outcomes' may follow (2010, p. 168). Addy & Dixon (1999) also report on children who express personal relief once they have been given a diagnosis following successful labelling. In the Irish context, the new allocation model of 2017, SETA, has not been 'sold' on the basis of an 'immanent critique' of the GAM's labelling; rather, schools are given a degree of freedom over how they allocate those resources that the DES gives them (see below). Still, a SEN diagnosis adds a layer of difficulty for parents in that they now have to ensure appropriate assistance for their child in accessing both SEN services and faith-based education (Russo, Osborne, Massucci & Cattaro 2011, p. 273).

The social context also plays an important role: barriers to educational progress may be 'financial, family and health related, social/communal, cultural and geographic or a combination of any of these' (DES 2005b, p. 16). This broader notion of educational disadvantage impinges on the provision of resources to children with SEN. In line with the socially generated impediments to education noted in the Education Act 1998 the DEIS action plan was drawn up to assist in enabling inclusive education (DES 2005b; NCSE 2011; Weir & Denner 2013). With the economic crisis of 2008 came 'necessary cost saving measures'. Thus, in an Ireland already experiencing 'profound economic, social, technological, cultural and demographic changes', economics created 'a very challenging environment' (OECD 2011, p. 5).

Awareness of the needs for inclusion in the Irish educational system arose as people from diverse cultures with different languages immigrated here and as the range of special needs that some children have come into sharper focus. During the years of Irish economic growth many people from within Europe and outside it came to Ireland, resulting in a great increase in the diversity of children in Irish schools. In 2007, over 150,000 came here; in 2014 this figure fell to between 60,000-70,000. A small or different group of children may come to be marginalized, and marginalized groups tend to have a higher incidence of SEN than others (Frederickson & Cline 2009, pp. 6-8; Messiou 2012, 2017).

A recent study, published in 2018 by the Irish Social Science Data Archive (ISSDA), entitled *National Survey of Public Attitudes to Disability in Ireland, 2017*, is the most recent comprehensive survey of attitudes to disability in Ireland and the first that 'looks at factors influencing the findings which adds a richness to the data nor previously included' (National Disability Authority [NDA] website). It had an important predecessor in the so-called Flood Report (NDA 1996), which provided a 'strategy for equality' that led to the Disability Act 2005 and its inclusion of people with disabilities in mainstream public services. The Flood Report itself recommended the establishment of the NDA with, *inter alia*, a disability support service at local level and the organization of community action plans at local level (NDA 1996, pp. 23-24, #3.12-3.14). This emphasis on localizing action may also be considered a spur to BoMs, which are already *in situ*.

The NDA study (2018a) instructed their researcher '[d]o not prompt what disability means' (Q 2.1a; Q1.1); only at a later stage in the questionnaire were participants told that 'people with disabilities' refers to 'those with physical, hearing, vision, speech, intellectual, or mental health difficulties or with Autism / Autism Spectrum Disorder' (Section 2).

In NDA 2018b the mean comfort scores, on a scale of 1-10 ('very uncomfortable' to 'very comfortable', no other indicators were provided (NDA 2018a)) among participants who were asked to indicate their level of comfort if children with disabilities were in the same class as their child, were a fairly high (Table 1). The response rate was 1294. However, when asked about their reasons for being 'uncomfortable if children with disabilities were in the same class as your child' the response rate dropped to 313 (NDA 2018b); researchers were asked to 'prompt if required – If you don't have children assume that you do to answer this question'.

Level of comfort if my child is in a class with children having conditions	
Children with these:	Mean out of 10
physical difficulties	8.66
vision / hearing disabilities	8.57
intellectual disabilities	8.11
autism	8.05
mental health difficulties	7.77

Table 1: NDA-1: Comfort level if children with conditions are in my child's class

The basis for recording the uncomfortable rate was a rate ≤ 5 on the comfort scores (Q 10, NDA 2018a).

Comparing data with previous surveys carried out by the NDA in 2011, an increase of 14-15 percentage points in support for children with disabilities such as physical, visual/auditory and mental health disabilities was reported (NDA 2018b: 40). Nevertheless, 'mental health difficulties continues to receive the lowest support overall'.

Another complicating factor in the provision of adequate resources for children with SEN is the power differential that exists between those who come from socio-economically deprived areas, from which many children with SEN come, and their teachers, who tend to come from the relatively empowered middle-class. Also, Breckenridge & Vogler refer to the naturalization of political power into the personal, i.e. the able-bodied person takes 'his enabling body for granted'. This contrasts with 'the lives of many disabled people' for whom 'the intricate practical dialectics of dependence and interdependence…unsettle ideals of social organization as freely chosen expressions of mutual desire' (2001, p. 350). The parameters of inclusion are easy neither to delineate nor to ameliorate.

In a recent study, Órla Ní Bhroin developed the notion of attunement out her observation of 'mutually transformative reciprocal interactions' between mainstream and learning support teachers in their inclusive practice (2017, p. 114). Where learning activities are attuned, conceptually, pedagogically and in terms of resources, by the teacher for the pupil with SEN, there is a further degree of attunement whereby 'common pedagogical principles and generic teaching strategies' are engaged in general teaching's engagement with difference, i.e. 'by degrees of deliberateness, attention and intensity of teaching' (2017, p. 122).

This notion of attunement accords with the inclusive thinking that frames Dewey's civic and political thinking. For Dewey, a democracy is 'more than a form of government; it is primarily a mode of associative living, of conjoint communicated experience' (1980 [1916], p. 93). Baldly, this attunes with Plato, too. Plato argued that all life must have its end in view, that is, the good. And the good is predicated upon 'a just and harmonious social order'. However, the harmony of Plato's order conflicted with his elitism; in turn, too, as Dewey clarifies, Plato's ideal became somewhat vitiated (Dewey 1980, p. 94). Dewey himself emphasizes sharing of interests with interactions shaped by 'fullness and freedom' as cornerstones of social life:

> *The two points selected by which to measure the worth of a form of social life are the extent in which the interests of a group are shared by all its members, and the fullness and freedom with which it interacts with other groups.* (Dewey 1980, p. 105)

An attempt has been made by Nilholm & Göransson (2017) to bring conceptual clarity to the notion of inclusion. Their procedural approach complements mine in that the pupils they refer to range from those needing help to decode the alphabet to those with profound disabilities (pp. 437-438). They note (2017, p. 438) that the introduction of 'inclusion' in the 1980s replaced the failing model of 'integration' that had been heralded by The Education for All Handicapped Children Act (USA 1975) and the Warnock Report (UK 1978). One of their sources is Thomas Skrtic's *Behind Special Education* (1991a). Skrtic's own analysis warns of the danger of creating problems for pupils.

Skrtic proposes that teachers be more like problem-solvers than performers; he advocates 'adhocracy', i.e. a principle of innovation that requires constant reinventing in order to solve the problems that arise, as a corrective to the 'machine bureaucracy', as expressed in standardized procedures yielding quantified results, that often controls and defines the work of teachers. He fears that schools operate a division of labour, as a consequence of increasing specialization and professionalization, which ends by formalizing education bureaucratically. This results in schools creating students who do not fit the system. In Skrtic's adhocratic approach, however, professional practice among teachers favours collaboration, mutual adjustment and discursive coupling, which, relying on reflective thought, unifies 'theory and practice in the team of workers', i.e. teachers, as the three 'structural contingencies of the adhocratic form' of education (1991b, pp. 171-176).

Within Irish educational praxis, recognition and employment of structures such as co-work, changing interactions and response to research can be observed. For instance, specific

recommendations from the Growing Up in Ireland Study (GUI), are to be found in Cosgrove *et al*. (2014). Seventeen recommendations were made under seven themes that involve cooperation between educational partners, re-assessing and engagement: assessment and progress; social, emotional and behavioural difficulties; clustering of children with SENs in schools and classrooms; children's engagement and parents' educational expectations; variation in strengths and needs of children with SENs; children's experience of bullying; and home and family environment (Cosgrove *et al*. 2014, pp. 13-14). The one recommendation directed at BoMs, as well as at teachers, is that they undertake professional development in the area of bullying, which was identified as requiring further research (2014, p. 188). Bullying manifests exclusion in a brutal form and its presence is an indicator of a failure of inclusion, within a school setting.

Returning to Warnock (1978), we note that the SEN model began to replace an older, deficit model (Norwich 2016). Three decades later, however, Warnock castigates the 'disastrous legacy' of her eponymous report in relation to children with EBD and autism: mainstream schooling should not be the only medium for them. For Warnock inclusive education is involvement 'in a common enterprise of learning' rather than being under 'the same roof' (2010, p. 32); also, she criticizes both the assumption that having a SEN(s) made children with quite different needs 'the same' and, conversely, the unequal provision in practice to those with very similar needs (Warnock 2005, incorporated into Warnock & Norwich 2010, pp. 11-46: pp. 24-25).. Nevertheless, with her Report, children were to be dealt with according to their needs and functioning. One of the core arguments for the re-introduction of older categories, from c.2003 in England (Norwich 2016, p. 2), was 'national statistical monitoring purposes'. For some, 'additional need(s)' became a more acceptable term than 'SEN'. In Scotland, there is a preference for 'additional support needs'. In relation to EAL, the Scottish model includes it whereas the English one excludes it from SEN. In Ireland's Special Education Teaching Allocation (DES 2017a; SETA), EAL, no longer a 'free-standing' element of SET, is subsumed into the new model.

2.2.3 Revised Allocation Model (SETA)

This revised model of special educational support in primary schools in September 2017 followed on a successful pilot in 2016 (DES 2016); much of its detail has been outlined above. The local school must decide the level of support to be given to that pupil in light of the principle that 'pupils with the greatest level of need should have access to the greatest level of support' (NCSE 2017). Every student who scores at or below a STen score of 4 on standardized tests (mathematics or literacy) now becomes part of how a school's overall

educational profile is established (see 1.8.1 above). It is left to the school's discretion how best to identify pupils' needs, decide how to meet those needs, and monitor and report on progress (DES 2017a, pp. 3, 46-50). Thus, greater trust in being placed in the school to decide the best education for its pupils; this degree of autonomy will doubtless bring its own challenges; in this area, too, the local BoM may expect to play a significantly supportive role by ensuring that the DES constructs an accurate school education profile, is accountable for its weightings and is responsive to the needs which the school identifies.

The new allocation model ensures inclusion because the front-loading of SET resources to a school is premised 'on the basis that no child will be refused enrolment on the grounds that schools do not have sufficient teaching resources to meet that child's needs' (DES 2017c, p. 16). The model also clearly and repeatedly refers to parents (and legal guardians) being consulted as part of 'good collaboration and engagement' (pp. 3, 18), in the educational planning process (p. 10), in target-setting and reviewing progress (pp. 5, 16, 17), in whole-school planning (p. 22), as well as in relation to the principal and examples set forth (*passim*).

Reflecting on Ireland's new model invites us to draw, in particular, on Judith Hollenweger's analysis as her influence grows out of her responses to disability and accords well with SETA. Health impacts on bodily functioning, activity and participation; it provides goals for society, has a vision for the person in society and it structures services to meet the needs of those who are impaired in body, limited in their activities and restricted in participation (Hollenweger 2011). For some, disabilities are the result of human-environment interactions that make people blind to barriers (Hollenweger 2014, p. 9); for others, they are better described as barriers to social participation (Booth & Ainscow 2011). Thus, a newer social model that eschews talk of SEN in favour of that of 'barriers' begins to replace the medical model (Tataryn & Truchan-Tataryn 2013, p. 19). Interestingly, Duns Scotus (c.1266-1308) has been contrasted with Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) on the basis that he offers a social model of disability in his theology (Cross 2017, p. 93). For Hollenweger, the labelling that accompanies the medical or traditional model blinds one to the environment barriers. Hollenweger reminds us of the WHO 1948 definition of health: 'a complete state of physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity' (2014, p. 13). From this is derived the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF), which is so associated with her: a bio-psycho-social model of human health and well-being that makes visible the 'thinking' behind disability categories (2014, p. 21). She is critical of the 'social construction of children with

disabilities' as this may be 'a barrier to participation'; for, in her philosophy, education 'is all about creating enabling environments and opportunities to learn' (Hollenweger 2014, p. 24). It takes a variety of 'functioning and contextual factors', interacting in a complex, to understand disability, as understood by the ICF (Hollenweger 2014, p. 27 and below).

Nevertheless, argues Norwich, we do not have to choose between either a medical model, which tends to reduce a person to one category 'masking the complexity of the experience of disability' (see Hollenweger 2014, p. 8) or a social model; he holds to both a political approach and to 'a causal interactionist model (Norwich 2016, p. 4). Indeed, Norwich already (2014) distinguishes between language that speaks of homogeneity or of 'difficulties'; when we replace these with 'diversity' we speak more inclusively; nevertheless, if there are 'difficult differences' a language of diversity may 'deny the challenges and difficulties associated with disability' (Norwich 2014, p. 497); inclusion entails a multiplicity of values rather than one overarching one (2014, pp. 506-507). Norwich advocates a language of 'additional needs' to replace 'SEN' (2016).

2.2.4 Values and curricula

The notion of multiple values has been raised by Harold Hislop, the Chief Inspector for schools in Ireland (2012, p. 23). He argues for quality assurance in Irish schooling, achieved through external inspection and school-based self-evaluation, as provided for in the Education Act 1998 (2012, pp. 9, 12). Announcing the 're-casting' of curricula in terms of learning outcomes, Hislop feels that this, with attending resources, has the 'potential to provide a further rich source of articulated standards by which schools could evaluate their work and performance' (2012, p. 19).

Hislop further understands parents' associations to be 'the constructively critical friend of their schools' (2012, p. 24). When he refers to BoMs it is in the context of their fulfilling 'the implementation of recommendations from inspection reports' along with the school and staff. This, however, reflects a restricted view of BoMs and their remit. The Education Act 1998 places the onus for the quality of pupils' education on the school's BoM (1998, #15). It also requires the BoM to publish 'a report on the operation and performance of the school' yearly (#20). Furthermore, the BoM should deal with unsatisfactory performance of its teachers. Hislop sees the need for a balancing between giving schools greater autonomy and the 'greater public scrutiny of the work of school leaders, teachers, boards of management and school patrons' (2012, p. 6), the presumption being that the state will perform the latter role, which begs Juvenal's old question, *quis custodiet ipsos custodes*?

The inspectorate has procedures to assist BoMs in dealing with unsatisfactory teacher performance in what Hislop calls 'responsive regulation' (Hislop 2012, pp. 13, 30).

Nevertheless, irrespective of ideals or sanctions delineated and set down, and policy clarified and agreed, and best evidence-based practices in place, identified pupils will not get the type of inclusive education they are entitled to unless and until teachers agree to implement those practices. The body charged with ensuring the type of education to be given in their schools is the local BoM. Thus, there should also be a mechanism established for consultation between BoMs and DES inspectors so that greater accountability from each of these bodies may be effectively established. It is safe to assume that as the state develops its own RE programme it will seek to monitor it for 'quality control' purposes, at least. We may also mention the Roman Catholic church's own 'inspectors', to wit, the Diocesan Advisors. *Share the Good News* (2010) outlines the role of Diocesan Advisors as part of a Diocesan Faith Development Services team (SGN 2010, p. 198). This team 'will also incorporate Family Ministry, Youth Ministry and Special Needs Faith Support' in an approach that 'prioritises partnership between home, parish and school' (SGN 2010, p. 198).

From a values perspective, however, Cipriani cautions:

> *Values are by no means a panacea for all ills. Their implementation alone requires an accurate analysis of the social reality. At most they provide general guidelines but they cannot replace the informed action of individuals thus depriving them of fundamental freedom of action. Values, besides, rather than a defence mechanism appear to be more of a viaticum, a set of instructions for behaviour in the world, to act upon wisely, not out of acquired fear. In actual fact, values resemble scientific theories somewhat: they guide without constricting, they leave room for autonomy with moderation, they avail of 'transcendence' but not in the strictly religious sense but as a means by which to overcome limited, fixed, indefectible principles. In other words, values too change, adapt, come to terms with social realities.* (2012, p. 504)

Returning to Norwich (2016) we see an advocacy, too, for the Swiss development of ICF for Children and Youth (ICF-CY), a subset of ICF, in an English context (Meucci, Leonardi, Sala, Martinuzzi, Russo, Buffoni, Fusaro & Raggi 2014; see Whyte 2006); the World Health Organization (WHO) links its own disability assessment schedule (WHODAS 2.0) directly to ICF. The classification system drawn up in ICF (WHO 2007) is impressive: first come the parts (1-2), then the components (two for each part), and the constructs (four for part 1 and one for part 2); accompanying these are the *domains*, which

are blocks within components; the *categories* are (sub)classes within domains, and the detail of categories are expressed in *levels*. For example, the component 'Environmental Factors' includes conventions (1-3), followed by component-specific coding rules, then qualifiers (first-third levels), then scaling of qualifiers (0-9), which together build up an information matrix; also, there may be optional qualifiers (third-fourth levels), and even additional qualifiers (fifth level). The IFC recognizes that misuse of its classificatory system can arise:

> *In particular, WHO recognizes that the very terms used in the classification can, despite the best efforts of all, be stigmatizing and labelling. In response to this concern, the decision was made early in the process to drop the term 'handicap' entirely – owing to its pejorative connotations in English – and not to use the term 'disability' as the name of a component, but to keep it as the overall, umbrella term.* (WHO 2007, p. 255).

Additionally, the WHO recognizes that 'people have the right to be called what they choose' (WHO 2007, p. 255). The ICF is a classification of people's health characteristics (rather than people themselves) taking into account their personal situations and environmental impacts on them. Specifically, the WHO wants to 'avoid depreciation, stigmatization and inappropriate connotations.' Otherwise, an unhelpful 'sanitation of terms' may result. Furthermore, The ICF may enhance 'disability advocacy':

> *As the primary goal of advocacy is to identify interventions that can improve levels of participation of people with disabilities, ICF can assist in identifying where the principal 'problem' of disability lies, whether it is in the environment by way of a barrier or the absence of a facilitator, the limited capacity of the individual himself or herself, or some combination of factors.* (WHO 2007, p. 256)

What Hollenweger advocates and details is a system that is based on values and research. At the heart of the values is well-being, which goes beyond a health-based or medical model of care. This linking of health and well-being is vital for all who address the situation of people with SEN (Gadamer 1996). In a penetrating analysis Eva Kittay (2009) alerts us to the way people with SEN can be dismissed on seemingly plausible philosophical grounds. The danger of ideal-type thinking in relation to human personhood as, for instance, in human privileging of rationality, is responded to by Kittay (2009) who finds the ontologies used, the empirical data not used, the following of an argument to even a morally repulsive end and the 'methodological distortions' inherent in some thought

experiments 'problematic' (Kittay 2009, p. 222). To counter them, she articulates four maxims (Kittay 2009, pp. 227-234):

- epistemic responsibility – know the subject that you are using to make a philosophical point
- accountability – attend to the consequences of your philosophizing
- epistemic modesty – know what you do not know
- humility – resist the arrogant imposition of your own values.

Kittay bolsters her argument with reference to her daughter, Sesha, who has severe to profound mental disability. As with Young's son, Arthur, there is deep aesthetic appreciation in Sesha (Kittay 2009, p. 229).

> *It is ethically irresponsible to fail to consider the real-world consequences of one's philosophical position, especially for those who are not – and cannot be, in a crucial sense – a party to the debate.* (Kittay 2009, p. 232)

Kittay asks us to follow the stricture against the arrogance of imposing one's own values as though they were the only true and only ones. Best is the practice of care, i.e. care that is respectful of another person's agency: 'best practices of care equally demand that we do not presume that what we value is the only thing that is valuable' (2009, p. 236). In the practice of care, Kittay argues, consistency of standards has its guarantee in accountability. Parents and medical professionals are held accountable for the foreseeable consequences of their deficiencies of care of the young or the ill, respectively. For Kittay, the 'guiding norms' for a care ethics are found within the practice of care itself (Kittay 2009, p. 237). For Noddings the ethic of care is grounded in the human condition (2002b, p. 148). The carer is receptively attentive to the other: as one is attentive to the cared-for other person so that other, to some degree or other, recognizes that care (Noddings 2002a, p. 19). In learning to be cared for we learn to care about others, which is 'perhaps a sense of justice', and this culminates 'in caring relations' (Noddings 2002a, pp. 23-24). In these relationships, conversation is highlighted. Thus, in the classroom, greater formal and informal conversation is advised (Noddings 2002b, pp. 118, 146); this can be naturally extended to include BoMs.

Already in the US, the quality-of-life value has been related to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA; 1997, amended); various domains have been identified, viz. rights, social inclusion, interpersonal relations, self-determination, material, well-being, physical well-being, emotional well-being and personal development (from the 2000

Special Interest Research Group on the Quality of Life, see Turnbull, Turnbull, Wehmeyer & Park 2003, p. 72).

2.3 SPIRITUAL AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

> *Complete education necessarily includes a religious dimension. Religion is an effective contribution to the development of other aspects of a personality in the measure in which it is integrated into general education.* (CCE 1977, #19)

Values that are regarded as profound, that seem to us to call to or from a higher dimension or quality of life (see Turnbull, Turnbull, Wehmeyer & Park 2003), are often encapsulated by one's 'spirituality' or 'religion'. We look at the language we use (2.3.1) before considering the religious dimension of RE (2.3.2). this section concludes with an examination of rights and duties which arises out of debates around RE (2.3.3). Finally, we will look at the BoM's role in RE (2.3.4).

2.3.1 Terminology

One clear if complex set of values has been and continues to be incorporated in the language of religion as something essential, and it applies to religious and/or spiritual education, too. There are many terms – such as 'religious formation', 'catechesis', 'religion class', 'catechism (class)', 'catechetical instruction', 'RE', etc. – that are to be heard in Irish primary schools to the present day. This is notwithstanding a noted narrowing of usage to 'religious education' or 'RE'. This pluriformity, though it may betoken subtle differences of meaning, is also marked by interchangeability with the words being used no matter their provenance. Anne Hession discusses these more fully from an Irish perspective (Hession 2015).

Before discussing 'spiritual' and 'religious' an older terminology centring on catechesis and using terms like 'catechism (class)' and 'catechetical instruction' may be helpful in highlighting distinctions that are more common today; in any case, 'catechesis' is still a widely used term in Roman Catholic education. From Vatican II to modern times, the Roman Catholic church stresses how the faith by which one lives is passed on from generation to generation; this was traditional teaching, of course, but now a certain retrieval of more ancient forms of faith-transmission came to the fore, which is well expressed in the work of Cardinal Ratzinger-Benedict XVI to have a form of catechism which is relatively easy to use.

In 2005, a month before his election as Benedict XVI, Cardinal Ratzinger published the *Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCCC), a shorter form of the CCC; as pope, he offered it as a *vademecum* for 'believers and non-believers alike to behold the entire panorama of the Catholic faith' (Benedict's *motu proprio* in July 2005 approving the publication of the CCCC). The CCCC follows the CCC in structure, development and contents; it presents 'the law of Christ' in a fourfold way: *lex credendi*, *lex celebrandi*, *lex vivendi* and *lex orandi*. Thus and first, 'the profession of faith' follows early church credal documents; second, 'the celebration of the Christian mystery' explores the Gospel message in the sacramental life of the church; third, the 'life of Christ' demonstrates how the believer's actions and choices manifest adherence to the faith; and fourth, 'Christian prayer' explores how the Christian is led to dialogue with God, especially in the dominical prayer, the Our Father. Interestingly, the *Compendium* is distinguished by a deliberate adding of artistic images from Christian iconography recognizing that 'a sacred image can express much more than what can be said in words, and be an extremely effective and dynamic way of communicating the Gospel message' (Ratzinger 2005, Introduction #4). It is distinguished also by adopting a question-and-answer format, which is termed 'dialogical'; there are 598 of these questions-and-answers, some short, some over 100 words long. The idea of catechism-catechesis refers, in the first instance then, to the oral transmission of Christian teaching. Its context is teaching and formation in the faith, beyond learning about and more about learning beyond the world as given. However, one must be alert to distortions that may arise when distinctions between religion and spirituality are made. Sango & Forrester-Jones consider four reason for this: 'all forms of spiritual expression' tend to be social and 'all organized faith traditions' are interested in the personal and spiritual; simplistic dichotomy that one is good and the other bad; many do not experience a difference between the two; and they may entail an 'unnecessary duplication in concepts and measures' (2017, p. 281).

In the past, religion and spirituality have been used synonymously but, today, they are more likely to be contrasted, with spirituality often seen as 'good', religion 'bad'. The dichotomous understanding seems based on the form of one's spiritual/religious life. If spirituality and religion were once subsumed under religion, today as religion 'is becoming reified into a fixed system of ideas or ideological commitments that "fail to represent the dynamic personal element in human piety"' (Hill & Pergament 2003, citing Wulff 1996, p. 46), so spirituality 'is increasingly used to refer to the personal, subjective side of religious experience' in a bifurcation of religion and spirituality that these authors critique; For

Lawson, spirituality is a conscious relationship with God (2012, p. xii). Religion and spirituality both have social contexts, both can have 'helpful and harmful sides, both are hardly distinguished from one another by many people, and their polarization 'may lead to needless duplication in concepts and measures' (Hill & Pergament 2003, pp. 64-65). Hill, Pargament, Hood, McCullough, Swyers, Larson & Zinnbauer (2000) developed a useful categorization of commonality and difference between religion and spirituality that became the basis of other studies such as Schlehofer, Omoto & Adelman (2008). Hill *et al*. (2000) identify characteristics, interesting to psychological research, of both religion and spirituality:

- they develop across the lifespan

- are inherently social-psychological phenomena

- are related to cognitive phenomena

- are related to affect and emotion

- are relevant to the study of personality and in the genetic determinants of personality

- have important relationships with mental health status

- are negatively related to drug and alcohol abuse

- are increasingly recognized as having positive derivative social functions (pp. 54-56).

Thus, we take a more cautious approach and avoid too harsh a distinction between religion and spirituality, allow for a fluidity between the concepts and accept a 'mild' differentiation between them that seems to reflect current usage. Western use of spirituality seems to refer to an individual's personal relationship to the divine or to a dimension of life that transcends the mundane though it may not affirm belief in a god or God. It is presented as freely entered into and marking a choice or commitment on the part of that individual. The element of constructing one's faith seems tied to feelings of freedom and choice. Often and parallel to these feelings are others of rejecting and repudiating: perhaps the religion of one's childhood, bad experiences with ministers or others of 'the faithful', boredom or peer pressure, or intellectual challenges alienated one from a religious structure into which one may have been born but now enable openness to another and

different structure. An element of privacy attends expressions of spirituality; it is a marker of personal religiosity and 'an engagement with the meaning of one's life' (Webster 2004, p. 7), whereas religion tends to a public affirmation of belief or, at least, demonstration of religious actions such as attendance at Mass. Finding life meaningful is more important than the pursuit of happiness (Smith 2017). Building on a study by Oishi & Diener (2014), Smith (2017) argues that meaning – or, more precisely, the lack of it, and not happiness/unhappiness – was the predictor of suicide rates; in the USA, some 40,000 die by suicide yearly and, worldwide, a million. It is in schools that the pupils are taught (or not) to have a sense of life and its worth.

It would not be unnatural to expect that free-like, more individual, self-chosen forms of religiosity in the form of new religious movements (Barker 1989) and spiritualities would take on – as Christianity did in its own formation after the original Easter experience – more stable, structured, and 'traditional', in the sense of passing on that which they had received, religion-like forms. Soon, the message, the authentic transmitters, the legitimate lines of authority and guidance, the structuration of sub-systems (of expansion, regulation, faithfulness and heterodoxy, perseverance and defection and expulsion, etc.) are codified. These processes are natural in preserving the truth of the spirituality in the face of perceived alterations to it. Ideal types and their empirical manifestations entail such structural couplings. Ernst Troeltsch (1865-1923) and Max Weber (1864-1920) explained, for Europeans at the beginning of the twentieth century, some of the changes that were altering the world. The absoluteness of Christianity in terms of authority and global reach was ending, the 'historical method' had begun to dominate, and other religions were jarring with the Christian religion (Troeltsch 1972).

> *Only superficial acquaintance with science can estrange men from God,*
> *and only a superficial understanding of history can lead men to believe*
> *that religion must fade away because of the apparent contradictoriness of*
> *its different kinds of absoluteness…The validity of Christianity is verified*
> *not by arguing the nature and strength of claims to revelation, redemption,*
> *and truth but by judging what lies behind the claim.* (Troeltsch 1972, pp. 158-159)

Troeltsch sought to combine the relative and the absolute. Having distinguished naïve, natural absoluteness from artificial absoluteness, Troeltsch makes further distinctions within the latter: supernatural absoluteness, i.e. a revelation of 'the divine that is more than divine, unassailable from the outside; rational absoluteness, i.e. Christianity assimilates from philosophies, ethics and cultures around it, expressed in such doctrines as incarnation,

revelation and eschatology; and evolutionary absoluteness, which arises from the first two, i.e. Christianity comes, through its engagement or relationship to the world's contingencies, to embody the character of 'absolute religion' itself (1972, pp. 150-158). However, history's realities only tend to the absolute and are, instead, contingent; therefore, we speak of Christianity's artificial absoluteness. This latter contrasts with the naïve absoluteness that is found in Jesus for whom the kingdom of God was the absolute and whose 'marvellous spontaneity' expressed 'so simply what is highest and most profound' (1972, pp. 148, 161; also Schlag 2009, who dedifferentiates even the law).

Agreeing a definition of religious education is, perhaps, even more difficult than one of special needs (Adams, Hyde & Woolley 2008). Though it is easier to talk of events and situations that evoke the religious and spiritual dimension of children with SEN, as Canfield *et al*. (2007) do, the Foucaultian archaeology of this is harder to access let alone assess. The spiritual history of humanity is some 70,000 years old (Vogt 2012; Coulson 2011), yet formally organized religions have existed for only some 4,500 years. What religion is is much contested (Byrne & Kieran 2013; Jackson 2013; Kieran & Hession 2005; Lane 2011; Rieger 2001; Taylor 2007). Broadly conceived, it is the overarching framework of meaning and purpose to which people adhere; it seems to be integral to human growth and names the sense of ultimate truthfulness in life. Andrew Wright, building on critical realism, develops a 'critical religious education'(CRE) that aims to defend the search for truth, perhaps especially in dialogue with those who espouse relativism (2007). Wright appeals to critical realism in spite of its failure, under its foremost expositor, Roy Bhaskar, to engage critically with Christianity (Wright 2013, p. 15). Though Cruickshank (2004) objects to Bhaskar's philosophy of scientific knowledge, an attempt has been made to link Bhaskar with the renowned Jesuit philosopher-theologian, Bernard Lonergan (1904-1984; Walker 2017). Wright's aim is to debate 'a more substantial understanding of the ontological claims and epistemic commitments of Christianity than that currently available within critical realist circles' (Wright 2013, p. 15). Thus, in relation to historical method in Christian sources, Wright enumerates certain contingent 'generic indicators' in order to adjudicate between conflicting historical narratives; these include attentiveness to available evidence and its reception, inclusivity of available evidence, congruence between historical actors and historians and between the sources themselves, coherence between the historical narratives and the events, fertility in accommodating new evidence without resource to fundamental revision, simplicity in the sense of Occam's razor, and depth of its explicative power (Wright 2013, pp. 282-285; see Wright 2007). Wright's agenda is founded on principles of 'ontological realism, epistemic

relativism and judgemental rationality', evidenced in his reading of the 'Anglican theologian and former Bishop of Durham', the historian and critical realist Tom Wright (Wright 2013, p. 54).

Wright distinguishes his own approach as superior to, say, that of Robert Jackson, with whom he often debates:

> *Jackson's democratic solution to the problem of representing religions in school classrooms is to seek to dissipate the hegemony of community gatekeepers and academic scholars by shifting the balance of power to accommodate religious adherents themselves; the critically realistic alternative would be to offer students access to the most powerful and comprehensive retroductive explanations currently available.* (Wright 2013, p. 80)

Retroduction is part of critical realism's tripartite process of abduction, retroduction and iteration; it entails sets of biblical or theological observations which are refined so as to distil their most simple and most likely-to-be-true explanations for those observations. Nevertheless, Wright's answer foreshortens a reflexive critique: must, let alone can, theology, in critical realist clothing or not but as reflection on humanity's *capax infiniti*, be reduced to a human explanatory capacity? This is not to impugn human capacities, of course, but to affirm that theology itself, due to its treatment of grace and divine experience, is perhaps uniquely placed to critically reflect on the transcendent.

Talk of human capacities leads to a consideration of Bronfenbrenner's 'ecological framework for human development' (1979). For him, the macrosystem of the framework designates the wider cultural world of the child while the microsystem designates the more direct influences on the child such as parents and religious institutions. He affirms that children have capacities beyond what adults often think. Likewise, Berryman argues that 'sometimes adults greatly underestimate children's experience of God and the kind of theological thought they are capable of when they have appropriate materials and informed adults to work with them' (Berryman 2009b, p. 5).

An historical *apologia* for a child-like education of Christians or *paideia* (from the Greek *pais*, child) is offered by Paul. In contrasting power with weakness, he parallels Christ's death, 'in weakness', with God's power which is the means by which Christ now lives. The point for Paul is that we, his audience, also weak though 'in union with him [Christ]', 'shall live with him [Christ] by God's power' (2 Corinthians 13:4). This salvific reciprocity is also present when Paul teaches us to 'be kind and tender-hearted to one another, and

forgive one another, as God has forgiven you in Christ' (Ephesians 4:29-32). Taking account of such a *paideia* leads adults to become more child-like in becoming Christ-like. Thus, Paul's *paideia* is a spiritual education. Though different in many ways from this, the Greek educational ideal for citizenship of the *polis* as discussed in Plato's *Republic*, an ideal that was expressed by balance between extremes of excess and deficiency or golden mean (*Republic* 10.619a), sees Plato constructing a theology out of literature so that he can formulate an education of 'mind and character' (*Republic* 2.376c-3.383b).

2.3.2 What is 'religious' about religious education?

Religion concerns people; its reference is to what people hold to (as vital to how they construct meaning in their life), or, in a context of personal commitment to a religion, to what holds them (as, with Augustine, our hearts are at rest only when in the heart of the divine creator). Talk of denominations and religions risks forgetting this more basic understanding because religion is embedded in life (McGuire 2008). As children we are socialized into membership of the community. We are opened to different 'narratives of meaning', which are 'embedded in a dynamic cultural milieu' (Grenham 2012, p. 258). One of the most potent of these socio-cultural lifeworlds in Ireland is the ethos of the Roman Catholic church, the influence of which, though in decline, is still partly formative. If the decline is somewhat due to egregious abuses by some of its leaders, the cover-up of scandals for the sake of 'protecting' the institution has had a devastating effect in alienating 'people in the pews'. Yet, the Roman Catholic church has survived such serious scandals in the past. It has still the 'lived worldwide experiences of cultural and religious diversity' offered by Christian educators (Grenham 2012, p. 274). Its doctrine of perfection – the church as the *communitas perfecta*, the perfect society, in spite of individual failings – was taught whenever wrongdoing was identified within its precincts. Pope Leo XIII, in his encyclical, *Immortale Dei* (1885), picks up an earlier notion of Aquinas (ST Ia-IIae.q90.a3 and rep.obj.3) about the state itself being a perfect society, and affirms the church's perfection as higher because more sublime: it is 'the church, not the state, that is to be man's guide to heaven' (#11). Two further comments may be made on this notion. First, Aquinas is actually taking up a point found in the opening words of Aristotle's *Politics* (I.1), in which the *polis* or state has the capacity to effect the good of its citizens: 'Every state is a community (*koinōnian*) of some kind, and every community is established with a view to some good (*agathou*); for mankind always act in order to obtain that which they think good' (Aristotle 1999). Second, Paul VI went further than Leo XIII by recognizing the dual perfect communities of church and state ('*ambedue sono società perfette*'): Paul

recognized that both aimed 'at the good of the one common subject, the human person' ('*l'una e l'altro agiscona a beneficio di un soggetto commune, l'uomo*', Paul VI 1969). Such discussion presents the church and state in idealized forms on the basis of their inherent necessity to the reality and progress of society; this can have the unfortunate consequence of conflating ideals and their similarly named institutions.

Religious justification, perhaps indoctrination, may accompany too high a notion of the church (or state). For instance, Campbell, reacting to the 2009 Cambridge Primary Review's final report (for which, see Alexander 2010) finds, as one of that review's faults, that it is 'legitimising the continuation of the widespread (though not universal, and usually not very effective) attempts to indoctrinate young children into religious belief, particularly, but not exclusively, in denominational schools' (2011, p. 350; see Wareham 2019). Others who advocate for religious catechesis include Gavin D'Costa, who presents a Trinitarian picture of Christian (Roman Catholic) instruction, with a particular emphasis on 'the Son, the crucified, suffering and risen one' (2013), and Joerg Rieger, whose account emphasizes the marginalized, excluded and wounded (2001). Yet, these authors do not address the particular issue of RE for children with special needs.

In Ireland, the religious formation of young people was seen in the main as what took place in school, and in the primary sector predominantly. It fostered a mentality that, in the words of Murray, assumed that 'once one had left school, one had been taught everything one needed to know, perhaps even everything there was to know about Christian faith' (2012b, p. 270). The tie between the private and the public in the formation of a person's faith was so arranged in the not-too-distant Ireland that growth and maturity were almost wholly excluded from a narrative of faith (or religious) development. When the secular discourses of the wider world, ushered in by new media, corroded that tie, many found that their religious adherence meant very little, was easily jettisoned and even derided. In so far as religion was deemed a legitimate source of meaning and being it was increasingly relegated to the private sphere. One of Europe's greatest social theorists, Jürgen Habermas, for most of his productive career isolated religion to the private sphere (2009). Many still regard religion as 'das Opium des Volkes', the opiate of the people (Marx, cited in McLellan 2000, p. 72). Why teach religion, the source of so much misery in world history, to children at all? Is not religion a further burden, which, even if many later 'buy into' it, becomes intolerable when imposed on those whose specific disabilities make them less aware that they are being brain-washed? Or, if we agree that religion has some merit, why not introduce as many forms of it as possible, as neutrally as possible, and let the children decide,

irrespective of their capacities, maturity or developmental stage? In general, the idea of curtailing, even eliminating, religion's role in public life is the essence of the secularization thesis and this latter thesis requires a heightened sensitivity when juxtaposed with the needs of the young and a still more heightened one with those whose educational needs are greater.

Lane sums up the secularization problematic by saying that 'the yardstick of progress within modernity' would be science (2011, p. 31). For long, Habermas has been one of its strongest proponents, as has Hirst (1994). Nevertheless, and not from any deep reflection on the role of religion in the education of the young and those with SEN, the events of 9/11 have largely vitiated at least the power of the secularization thesis. Now, the issue is religion's future role, and not its demise (Habermas 2009, p. 63). After a long hiatus religion is once again before the eyes of sociologists and we may hope for more informed debate on religious and secular education.

In sum, then, RE is a protean term and means – possibly – what the range of its users intend. At one end, it is forward-looking in that it refers to the teaching of religion to people, usually, school-children, in a classroom setting or semi-formally in, say, a parish or community group. RE also looks back to the past and draws from it religious elements of continuity, faithfulness, vision and ethos (see Scott 2005). As with any educational endeavour, tensions may be expected in the emphases, interpretations and educational choices that arise between different educational settings and the educators themselves; this true of RE no less than other aspects of education. The vast backdrop of past teachings, and their (re-)interpretations and development and the perhaps equally vast canvas of the world ahead to which religion addresses itself impose constraints on what can be taught, how it may be taught and how it should be adequately assessed within any particular framework. Kieran Scott, for instance, follows Walter Brueggemann's analysis of the process and shape of the canon of the Hebrew bible, in constructing three educations – Torah, prophetic and wisdom – that preserve both continuity and change in the process of forming the Bible via the various 'lens and interests' of relevant educators; critical for this is 'the honouring of different teaching forms' as found in the Bible, namely, the roles of the priest, the prophet and the sage (Scott 2005, pp. 84-93). We may be sure that contestation will continue to characterize debate on religion and religious education; this is as it should be, whether we speak of Demosthenes's *agora* or today's civic space. Already, too, Europe offers great diversity in how RE is approached in different states (Avram & Dronkers 2012, 2013).

2.3.3 Rights and duties

> *At the end of the day, rights must be negotiated because rights are held equally by all and circumstances often make it impossible for everyone's rights to be equally implemented (or in especially hard cases, implemented at all).* (Bickenbach 2009, p. 1122)

In Ireland, the right of children to a religious formation is legally enshrined (Government of Ireland 1937-2004, 1999), as is special education and a philosophy of inclusion (Government of Ireland 1998, 2004). The Roman Catholic church in Ireland, with its majority of patrons, explicitly recognizes children among 'those who suffer from handicaps, physical or mental, as well as other forms of disability' (*General Directory for Catechesis* 1998, #189). Yet, none of these aspirational positions provides explicitly for the religious formation of children with SEN.

Indeed, some argue that no pupil should be educated in faith-traditions and beliefs, at least in state-run schools, though pupils can be taught about religions (Nugent & Donnelly 2013). Other voices have been raised to reclaim a discourse of religious value at the core of being human. The Roman Catholic Church has a particular theological construction of what it is to be human. In *Dignitatis Humanae* (*DH*), one of the key documents from the Second Vatican Council (1963-1965), the church affirmed the human right to freedom of conscience and religious liberty, which is based on 'the very dignity of the human person as known through the revealed word of God and by reason itself' (*DH* #2) and called for it to be made a civil right. We have seen that, in relation to education in the Irish context, the 31st amendment to the Constitution (Government of Ireland 2012b, 42A.1) gave a constitutional recognition to the voice of children, in recognition of their human dignity. *DH* also affirms the duties a person takes on in becoming a disciple of Christ:

> *They must take into account their duties towards Christ [tum ad officia erga Christum], the life-giving Word whom they must proclaim, the rights [tum iura] of the human person and the measure of grace [tum ad mensuram gratiae] which God has given to everybody through Christ in calling them freely to accept and profess the faith.* (*Dignitatis Humanae* #14)

The forming and nurturing of faith are detailed by Fowler (1981) and Groome (1991, 2011). The latter offer a conceptual construction of how religious education is to be provided to pupils. Because these approaches highlight both the inclusive character as well

as the differentiated forms of human responses to God they propose a conceptual resource for the development of religious education programmes more suited to children with SEN than might be constructed out of Howard Gardner's account of the complexity of human intelligence (Gardner 1999), though this latter is influential in teachers' daily praxis. James Fowler (2001), responding to criticism that his 'faith development theory' would be better conceived as a system of types – Streib (2001) prefers 'styles', which links experience and interpretation, and 'schemata' (Streib, Hood & Klein 2010, pp. 153-155) – rather than as a sequence of stages such as Piaget and Kohlberg produced, replied with some types of his own, including totalizing, rational critical, conflicted/oscillating, and diffuse, before reiterating his position on the stages as being well-correlated and integrated, sequential, invariant and hierarchical (Fowler 2001, p. 171). Thomas Groome, more noted for his catechetical approach, offers RE as 'an approach of shared Christian praxis' (Groome 1991, 2011). His programme follows five 'movements':

- naming/expressing 'present praxis'
- critical reflection on present action
- making accessible the Christian story/vision
- dialectical hermeneutic to appropriate the Christian story
- decision/response to lived Christian faith.

Rather than a pedagogy it offers a framework or 'meta-approach' (Groome 1991: 280). It becomes, however, a pedagogy in his later work, for instance, in the chapters of his *Will there be faith?* (2011). Groome calls it a 'life to Faith to life' approach, that is, bringing our life to our faith and bringing our faith to our life. For Groome, RE is an enduring human need as well as a pressing social issue. Therefore, he offers an approach to faith formation that sets out to inform, form and transform 'in Christian faith and identity…with the help of God's grace' (2011, pp. 12-13):

- educate people to know, understand and embrace with personal conviction Christianity's core beliefs and values (*inform*)

- grow people's identity through a formative pedagogy and the intentional socialization of Christian family and community (*form)*

- open people to a lifelong journey of conversion toward holiness and fullness of life for themselves and 'for the life of the world' (John 6:51; *transform*).

Gardner's famous multiple intelligences – linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal and naturalist – are presented as offering

a broader panoply of intelligence than so-called standard IQ tests like the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scales (Gardner 1999, 2000). Gardner's eight-fold intelligences are referenced in many primary school classrooms and may be presumed to resonate with classroom teachers who are familiar with the diversity of intelligence displayed in any one classroom and/or require a necessary corrective to an over-rigid and monocular view of intelligence. When challenged that he should include 'spiritual intelligence' as a ninth form Gardner demurred (Gardner 2000; see Edwards 2003). For Gardner, a human capacity 'to deal with existential issues may qualify as an intelligence', yet the concept is 'problematic' (Gardner 2000, p. 28). He distinguishes three connotations of the word 'spiritual':

- the ability to realize certain physical states, such as meditation or consciousness-control
- the attainment of certain phenomenological states, e.g. felt-experiences such as feeling at one with the cosmos
- no reported distinctive feelings.

Because the eight intelligences evince 'certain kinds of computations' (Gardner 2000, p. 29) and the putative spiritual one does not Gardner tends towards its rejection. He distinguishes between the *power* and the *uses* of such capacities, for in the latter are examples of saintliness and evil; unless a spiritual intelligence has power it is not worthy to be considered an intelligence, and its uses are not in themselves 'a proper rationale' for such an intelligence (Gardner 2000, p. 33). I find the calculative mentality evident in Gardner's response to criticism not adequate to the possibility – to say no more of it than that – of a spiritual realm which many, including children and including children with SEN, recognize and to which many respond in religious ways.

When talking of RE in schools funded out of the public purse some will argue that there is no argument: all talk of religion is out. However, the public good as it finds expression in society, which has elements of both Gesellschaft and Gemeinschaft, will demand that its citizens, particularly its young, are formed in certain ways. Thus, the moral qualities of character, one's attitudes, dispositions and habits, are moulded so that society as such benefits from the noble qualities of its citizenry; society itself flourishes when its members flourish. Christians, no less, have views about RE; they want the young not only to know the truth but to live it in their lives and they expect that the educational system will provide appropriate teaching and learning in this regard.

2.3.4 BoMs and RE

Of particular interest in this dissertation in relation to the responsibility of a BoM is the discussion on the ethos of the school (CPSMA 2012, pp. 47-64). The key characteristics of a school that has a Roman Catholic 'characteristic spirit' or ethos are:

a. we are called to be followers of Christ
b. we have a Catholic understanding of education
c. the school is a Christian community
d. the school is an agent of personal growth and social transformation
e. RE is an integral part of the life of the school (CPSMA 2012, p. 36).

Educational progress and the welfare of the pupils has to 'the overriding consideration in all decisions arrived as by the BoM (CPSMA 2012, p 94). Thereafter the Board's duty of care towards the pupils is elaborated as

- ensuring the school premises are safe and 'a good learning environment' is provided
- a code of discipline for pupils is drawn up
- members attend school functions 'when possible' in order to show interest and concern for pupils' (CPSMA 2012, p. 94).

Additionally, the BoM is responsible for the preparation of a 'school plan' in accordance with the Education Act 1998 (#21). Financial accountability, procedures for conducting meetings, and making reports (CPSMA 2012, pp. 78-84) belong to the members according to their roles, which are chairperson, principal teacher, secretary, and treasurer; other discretionary roles include maintenance matter, safety matters, sub-committees (CPSMA 2012, pp. 84-86).

Interestingly, the characteristic spirit of Education and Training Board schools, which are not only publicly funded but, crucially, publicly managed, has yet to be teased out (O'Flaherty, McCormack, Gleeson, O'Reilly, O'Grady & Kenny 2018). Here, the point is that school ethos, even in denominationally run schools, is constantly in dialogue with the world at large; for instance, discussions at a European level filter through to Ireland. With increasing European integration new ideas and structures impact on schools and those responsible for pupils' education. Jackson & Everington (2017) summarize, in light of the Council of Europe's recommendation on teaching about religions and non-religious convictions (Council of Europe 2008) and their own extensive praxis, what the process of

'inclusive religious education' – though inclusion here is not specifically defined as including pupils with SEN – should include:

• acknowledgement of democratic values, e.g. Universal Declaration on Human Rights

• acknowledgement of ground rules for discussion (expression and behaviour)

• commitment to values like accuracy, fairness, responsibility

• sensitivity to all participants.

Discussion of values in education might indicate that part of the context will include management, but this is not always the case. EASNIE's *Financing of Inclusive Education* (2016), of course, engages with issues of SEN and has a chapter on 'a need for effective governance mechanisms for efficient and equitable systems for inclusive education' (pp. 55-63). Though the project involves many countries, Ireland is not among them. Yet, some issues (p. 10) found in those other countries have been identified in Ireland recently, namely:

• models of funding incentivize the labelling of learners

• such models prevent special schools from acting efficiently as resource centres

• increasing numbers of pupils identified with SEN links to the inclusive education's system's ability to 'enable stakeholders to implement the ambition of inclusiveness'.

As the discussion of governance unfolds it is quickly apparent that the project is really concerned not with local structures but with 'an integrated framework that fosters cross-sectoral co-operation and co-ordinated provision' (EASNIE 2016, p. 56), i.e. with macro-level education. Nevertheless, it is instructive for BoMs to note some of the concerns driving the project. Stakeholders can become confused by a lack of joined-up thinking or incur greater costs by compartmentalization in the provision of resources. Health and welfare sectors are brought together with the educational one for joint initiatives. Multi-disciplinary teams, guided by international practice, assist in identifying learners' needs. Time-based mechanisms to deliver targeted services that, developed at macro-level, are required to engage with local stakeholders. Agreements, formally endorsed at ministerial and local levels, can provide capacity for greater 'autonomy in curriculum and pedagogical organisation' (p. 57; also Kelly 2009). Yearly monitoring, especially of evaluation frameworks, for cost-reduction seems, though, to be given greater priority (EASNIE 2016,

pp. 57-63). The statement that local authorities (not otherwise specified here) 'do not always have the capacity to efficiently use the flexibility of resourcing opportunities' (p. 68) perhaps indicates not only where capacity-building is required but also whom the (sole) arbitrators of educational excellence are presumed to be. While deference is given to learners' rights and avoidance of the short- and long-term costs of exclusion, this project focuses on improving 'schools' capacity to be equitable, effective and efficient' (p. 9).

Key to the effectiveness of schools is the quality of the teachers who enter the profession; at their best, teachers not only deliver the curriculum but also embody the vision and ethos of the school; curriculum development has taken place over a long time as different societal pressures were brought to bear (see Walsh 2016) . In Ireland today there is evidence of socio-cultural change; how will this impact on education in the future? In their examination of the 2014 application cohort for initial teacher education (ITA), Heinz, Davison & Keane (2018) conclude that the 'insights offered here with regard to the religious backgrounds and beliefs of (student) teachers in Ireland highlight that authentic commitment to teacher diversity, equality in education and society more broadly, needs to be underpinned by a readiness and determination to critically interrogate some long-standing (and historically rooted) structures and cultural practices of the Irish education system' (p. 12). Behind this statement is a recognition that new entrants into teaching, and *eo ipso*, into likely membership of a BoM at some point, will and should have a different profile from 'traditional' Roman Catholics (see Murray 2018). What, then, will this entail for pupils with SEN, for their RE and for RE in general in primary schools? Attention to such questions points the present research-project towards a potentially viable cartography of RE for pupils with SEN that will assist BoMs in furthering the education of all the pupils in their care (see Smith 1999, p. 118). This element of care (*pace* Humphreys & Ruddle 2010, whose context is illness and who argue that 'compassionate caring' is a responsibility, pp. 138-140) should also entail self-care by BoM members so that the best care possible for pupils can be effected; in a sense, then, care at this level, touches the *cura animae*, care of the soul (see Ignatius of Loyola 2018).

2.4 RELIGIOUS EDUCATION OF PUPILS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

At its simplest, disability studies have to take RE seriously because 'disabled people are often religious' (Imhoff 2017, p. 1). In 2.2 I have already noted that RE encompasses core dimensions of personhood. In terms of pupils with SEN, therefore, particular care should be directed towards their RE. The first part of this section looks at SEN and RE in general

(2.4.1). The Irish dimension, which is central to this research, is then looked at generally (2.4.2) and with reference to special education (2.4.3).

2.4.1 SEN and RE

Accepting that RE is much contested and that it is not always apparent when, and if, it is at play – one person's philosophy is another's religion, is another's morality, is another's meaning of life, is another's debasement, is another's enslavement, etc. – for pupils with SEN, these different understandings in the background, along while other issues, for instance, rights, traditions and citizenship, may crowd the foreground. Carroll, Fulmer, Sobel, Aragon & Coval state that 'inclusive education for students with significant support needs requires a philosophical shift in the beliefs, values, habits and assumed ways of doing things within a school community…[which] influences educational service delivery for students with significant support needs' (2011, p. 121). Though we seem to have begun to enter the realm of religion and philosophy, these authors make no reference to religion or spirituality, key elements of any schools' religious ethos and vision. Jackson refers to certain instrumental accounts, relating RE to promoting knowledge and understanding of culture, the social development of pupils, or students' personal development (2013, pp. 44-45). Even in texts such as Murray (1991, 2012b) only hints are offered as to how children with SEN, in Catholic schools, are to be educated. Research in Scotland on the long-time practice of, and subsequent review and issuing (in 2001 and 2005, respectively) of, new guidelines on 'religious observance' – in effect, an act of Christian worship – were issued. Henceforth, non-denominational schools were free 'to replace worship by what may be a more acceptable and less-divisive emphasis upon spiritual development…defined as 'community acts which aim to promote the spiritual development of all members of the school's community and express and celebrate the shared values of the school community' (Circular 1/2005, p. 2, as cited in Gilfillan, Aitken & Phipps 2013, p. 99). Gilfillan *et al.*'s research revealed, in one of the schools participating, that it seemed 'as if religion was perceived as divorced from learning, the pursuit of truth, the exercise of reason, personal development and identity formation' (2013, p. 104). This is not an uncommon view, I suggest, and it is problematic for education generally when one considers religious education as a human right (Renehan 2014, pp. 39-61). Renehan writes from an Irish perspective but the issues pertain to children's rights as enshrined in formal instruments of the United Nations (UN 1971, 1975, 1989, 2002). Jackson maintains (citing his earlier 2007 work) his agreement with the Delors Report (UNESCO 1996) that education should include four learnings, viz, to know, to do, to live together and to be; for Jackson,

'religious education should be concerned with all of these, especially the fourth' (Jackson 2018, p. 387). Sharing a concern for the foundational relationship of religion to life, is Sarah Coakley. Faced with 'an (admittedly) complex and messy entanglement of beliefs and practices', Coakley offers 'a three-stage heuristic schema' of their relationship (Coakley 2015, pp. 124-127):

- for the neophyte, public, creedal 'beliefs' predominate over 'practices'
- later in the 'devout life', practices and beliefs become 'mutually interactive'
- finally, in the practice of meditation, prayer 'practice' becomes 'silent responsiveness', i.e. there is God's practice *in* us.

In the middle stage, for instance, Christ is recognized in the poor and the stranger, the creeds become rules of life rather than 'tools of judgment' and 'practices' begin to infuse 'beliefs with richer meaning' (Coakley 2015, p. 125).

Against a background of developing international law, rights and conventions, much development has taken place 'on the ground'. Many policy reviews and consequent instructional programmes or interventions – for example, Warnock Report (DES-UK 1978) and Special Education Review Committee (SERC, see DES 1993) in the case of the former, and First Steps, Reading Recovery, Maths Recovery, Write to Read in the latter – have been developed in recent decades to improve children's access to education and remove barriers to their learning and their enjoyment of learning. There has been no comparable theoretical or practical development in RE for children with SEN in spite of otherwise worthwhile developments in religious education, for instance the Irish Episcopal Conference's new curriculum embodied in its catechetical programme, Grow in Love. While there have been some practical advances such as Godly Play and Special Religious Education (SPRED) that have elements of theology, religious education for children, and special educational needs, a cohesive, coherent and systematic conceptualization of the provision of religious education to children with SEN is lacking. Some assume that work already done in literacy will offer a way forward for RE; 'Literacy and learning in religious education' (DfES 2004) may suggest this. Yet, this is presumptuous. The pedagogical approaches that adapt literacy for pupils with SEN may effectively engage these pupils but, in RE, a teacher is not usually endeavouring to teach and reinforce, for instance, a literacy skill` but to enable engagement and facilitate communion at a personal and spiritual level, which may happen only experientially. This is not to be confused with Grow in Love's foregrounding of 'religious literacy', which concerns familiarity with theological and religious concepts and

vocabulary. For a spiritual *paideia* a theology is required; this type of theology is rare though attempts have been made. One such attempt is Anderson's *Toward a Theology of Special Education* (2012).

Anderson eschews any claim to his work being definitive (2012, p. xxi). He builds up a model of religious education for children with SEN that combines: a biblically based drawing out of the principles of hospitality and justice, an exercise in practical theology, formation of and by the character of the teacher, fighting a spiritual warfare, as well as the themes of reconciliation, inclusion and interdependence. His evangelical approach understands special education as spiritual formation, mainly in the sense that the teacher is spiritually formed:

> *I want to stress God's Spirit 'speaking' to us through our experiences with disability and with students who have a disability. This does not negate the need to study the Scriptures, God's primary way of revealing himself and his will to us. But as we reflect biblically on our encounters with students, God will help us to see our students and ourselves through his eyes.*
> (Anderson 2012, pp. 219-220)

On the other hand, there are theologies that engage with disability and theology in ways that go beyond reliance on God to see us through, as it were. Theologies such as Eiesland's eponymous 'disabled God' (1994) speak for physically disabled people (e.g. Gillibrand 2010; Gillibrand's son, Adam, is on the autism spectrum and is nonverbal). Eiesland, in an act of resymbolizing, sees in the crucified Christ God figured as disabled (1994, pp. 89-90). This account has helped in constructing theological responses to disability (Yong 2007; Anderson 2012), though it may not for children with special needs. Little reflection is available on RE for children with SEN (Canfield *et al*. 2007). Where Carroll *et al*. (above) referred to the need for 'a philosophical shift', they failed to make it (2011). Yet, the authors mention neither religion nor spirituality. Ferguson & Parsons (2011), on the other hand, is too narrowly evangelical: these authors offer positively oriented approaches to children with special needs 'to bring them closer to Christ, from perspectives informed by the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints'. Searching for the theological position of religious patrons of schools shows a similar dearth of information and/or reflection.

2.4.2 Roman Catholic primary education

> *'The need for the explicitly religious in education is as real as the need for it in society more generally.'* (Commission for

We have seen how the meagre historical data show some development in both general and special education in line with other scientific advancements in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Change in scientific and conceptual knowledge affected all society including the Roman Catholic church. The singular change in the latter crystallized in Vatican II; RE in Ireland, as elsewhere, took a new impetus from that council and its theological and doctrinal adjudications. The Council's 'new dialogue with the world' led, for instance, to such initiatives as the 1978 pastoral of the US Catholic Bishops on people with disabilities (USCC 1978).

The Irish Department of Education in its revised curriculum (Government of Ireland 1999) for primary schools states that religious education is the curricular area in which 'the child's spiritual development' is expressed (p. 7). One of the general objectives of the 1999 curriculum is that children 'acquire sensitivity to the spiritual dimension of life' (Government of Ireland 1999, p. 36). As does the Education Act (1998), this revision recognizes the rights of church authorities to design and implement religious education programmes in primary schools (Renehan 2014, p. 35). Likewise, the National Children's Strategy (2000), *Our Children – Their Lives*, lists the spiritual as one dimension of any child's development (p. 24); this may or may not overlap with the religious dimension (O'Connell & Meehan 2012, p. 195). Presently, the DES, through the NCCA, is preparing a national curriculum of information on different ways of being religious in Ireland, though it rigorously eschews the notion of formation in any one religious tradition. As I write, responsibility for the formulation of RE programmes lies with individual religious patronal bodies; those religious traditions that form the vision and ethos of schools, under their respective patronage bodies, are tasked with the formulation of RE programmes. Because the vast majority of primary schools in Ireland are under the patronage of the Roman Catholic Church it is to this tradition that we pay most attention.

In its worldwide mission of evangelization no less than in each local school's ethos and mission statements the Roman Catholic church constructs its religious pedagogies from a millennia-old, world-wide perspective (for the European dimension, see Kieran & Hession 2008). Its new openness to the 'modern world', after decades of sterile neo-scholastic theology and punitive treatment of dissenting scholars, meant that the church had new resources available to it from the secular world. Decisively, the church, as adumbrated

above, encouraged contact with other Christians and 'separated brethren', a step, which when taken was swiftly followed by openness to and contact with members of other religions. In my lifetime the church has moved from condemnation of 'others' in its key Lenten ceremonies to mandating RE programmes that encourage both learning about the richness and spirituality of others' religious affiliations and meeting with them and inviting them to speak in one's own class (Grow in Love: Haldane 1999). Once the Vatican Council mandated this new openness to the modern world the church itself found its mission in that world radically reconceived. Paul VI (1897-1978), following the impetus of his predecessor, John XXIII (1881-1963), is the person largely responsible for this openness and the putting in place of ecclesiastical structures to effect the insights, and votes, of the Council. The Council's outcomes also evidence increasing contact with other religions, for example, Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism, and alignments to a theology of care for the earth, the latter especially under Pope Francis. As early as 1964 Paul VI established the 'joint working group' between the World Council of Churches in Geneva and the Vatican as well as the Secretariat for Non-Christians (later the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue). In the mid-1980s, the Vatican began to consider dialogue with new religious movements (NRM). Theologically, these attitudinal changes were seismic and they are also reflected in a more open approach to education. Thus, in the Irish primary school context, the Commission for Catholic Education and Formation of the Irish Bishops' Conference affirms, contrary to impressions given by the NCCA, that the time devoted to showing 'respect for difference and diversity' in the Roman Catholic primary school is much stronger' than might be thought, and that non-religious worldviews are introduced in the CPPRECI while they are not in the NCCA's own curriculum (Commission for Catholic Education and Formation of the Irish Bishops' Conference 2016, pp. 23-24). The issue of time arose again when the NCCA's consultative document on timetabling in schools indicated that RE would in future not be part of the core curriculum but, instead, be part of 'flexible time' (see Commission for Catholic Education and Formation of the Irish Bishops' Conference 2017, pp. 6, 9). As well as damaging RE as a subject, there is in the proposal a marginalization of spiritual development of the pupil (Commission for Catholic Education and Formation of the Irish Bishops' Conference 2017, p. 13) even as empirical evidence shows pupils' willingness to participate in and enjoyment of RE (citing Smyth 2010, Commission for Catholic Education and Formation of the Irish Bishops' Conference 2017, p. 14). In Roman Catholic schools, pupils are invited to put 'their understanding and learning into practice', e.g. in charity, stewardship of creation and social justice (Commission for Catholic Education and Formation of the Irish Bishops' Conference 2016,

p. 27). The Irish Bishops' Conference also accepts a truly pluralist society that lives with and respects difference and states that 'schools are privileged places for intercultural dialogue' (p. 17, citing *Educating to intercultural dialogue in Catholic schools* 2013, p. 6). Roman Catholic primary schools should facilitate three of the four different dialogue-types: dialogue of life, dialogue of works and dialogue of religious experience (pp. 18-19; excluded here is theological dialogue). As a matter of social policy, however, it also needs to be recognized that there is potential for tension between the rights of parents and children 'in relation to choice of religion and religious expression through education' (Smyth 2010, pp. 52-53), especially in contexts where other religious traditions are recognized and taken account of as mandated by Vatican II.

In *Gravissimum Educationis* (*GE* 1965), the Declaration on Christian Education, Vatican II affirmed the universal right to an education first, and then to 'a christian one' (#2). All 'pastors of souls' have a 'very grave obligation' to see that all believers, 'but especially…the young', have a Christian education (#2). First, though, 'the daughters and sons of the church' are exhorted 'to give their services generously in the whole field of education, especially with the aim of extending more rapidly the benefits of suitable education and instruction throughout the world' (#1); this latter is clearly education without christianization of others. A similar order of priority is observed in relation to 'moral and religious education': first and inter alia, the state must 'safeguard the rights of children to an adequate education in schools' (#6) and, following the principle of subsidiarity, be mindful that 'there must be no monopoly of schools which would be prejudicial to the natural rights of the human person and would militate against the progress and extension of education, and the peaceful coexistence of citizens. It would, moreover, be inconsistent with the pluralism which exists today in many societies' (#6). The church itself must assist those (Catholics) being trained in non-Catholic schools (#7); and the church affirms its right 'freely to establish and conduct schools of all kinds and grades' (#8). Thereby, the church preserves: liberty of conscience, parental rights and 'the advancement of culture itself' (#8).

The present Roman Catholic provision of RE to children draws on the *General Directory for Catechesis* (GDC 1998; previously, it had relied on Paul VI's *General Catechetical Directory* 1971). This directory provides that 'those to be catechized' include 'those who suffer handicaps, physical or mental, as well as other forms of disability – especially children – as persons particularly beloved of the Lord' (GDC 1998, #189): of course, this teaching follows directly from *GE*, which had to be curtailed as time at Vatican II began to

run out. In this context, Whittle (2017) draws attention to some issues that follow. First is the ecclesiological one of reception. For some, *GE* is rather indifferently received, while for others its relevance lies in its place within the corpus of work achieved by Vatican II, which is, perhaps, better represented by *Gaudium et Spes*, which was the council's 'pastoral constitution on the church in the modern world' or even by the dogmatic constitution, *Lumen Gentium*. Both of these latter texts speak to peoples of the modern world and present the Christian message as something valuable and positive for the world. This is unsurprising as a reaction to the approach of Vatican I (1869-1870), which had been essentially defensive, treating the world as its enemy, which, for its time, was not surprising given that the church, at least in Italy, was under siege socially and sometimes physically. *GE* was likewise positive in tone towards the modern world and the contribution of Catholic education to the world, yet its day has largely passed. The place of the Roman Catholic church, along with other denominational churches and religions, in education and civil life is under attack today, not least in Ireland (see Commission for Catholic Education 2016, 2017). Whittle singles out 'dialogue' as a key term, not from *GE* but from *GS*, that would enable the church to refresh its dialogue with the world in relation to education; he even argues for 'a non-confessional account of Catholic education' (Whittle 2017, pp. 3, 23-36). There are those who reject the very idea that the Roman Catholic church acts for the common good; this rejection has been bolstered by the abuses and cover-up of those abuses within the church; this is no less a prejudiced view of the church than the one that claims that the church, like Mary, is immaculate; Martin Luther's popular definition of the Christian, and taken by some as true of the church, is *simul justus et peccator*, both righteous and sinner (Lecture on Galatians 3:6), may be an echo of St Ambrose's more racy *casta meretrix*, chaste whore (*In Lucam* III:23), and may caution us all. In a reforming agenda, Vatican II tried to be realistically open to the modern world and offered, in *GE*, a positive presentation of Catholic education: it is not a narrow catechetical approach; indeed, *GE* is perhaps suggestive of other forms of Roman Catholic schools, such as ones for not-Catholics, that can be created.

Irish mainline Protestant churches also avail of the Roman Catholic Alive-O series for their catechetical instruction. We may anticipate a similarly welcoming acceptance of almost all of the current Grow in Love series. This latter programme is based on *Share the Good News* (SGN 2010), which is the national directory for catechesis in Ireland. SGN follows the guidelines of the second Vatican Council (1963-1965) and, more precisely, the *General Directory for Catechesis* (GDC 1998). It also uses and appeals to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC 1992). SGN is formally endorsed by both the Irish Episcopal

Conference and the Vatican (SGN 2010, p. xi). The 2015 curriculum for RE, the first in the Irish Roman Catholic church, was produced on the basis of the SGN and called the *Catholic Preschool and Primary Religious Education Curriculum for Ireland* (CPPRECI; IEC 2015; Commission for Catholic Education and Formation of the Irish Bishops' Conference 2016, p. 21; see Byrne 2018, pp. 42-43). The Grow in Love series, in turn, is the pupil-friendly set of texts that have been approved by the Irish Episcopal Commission to implement this curriculum in Irish primary schools; its final text, for 6th Class, was completed in 2019. The new programme differs from previous curricula in a number of respects. Already in SGN, there is a strong emphasis on child-centred, age-appropriate, context-led, multi-dimensional teaching strategies, that are time-framed and reviewable, reflective, and accessibly comprehensive; it is designed to be 'an instrument that contributes in its own way to peace, reconciliation and new hope in Ireland…and [is an] invitation to all people to enter into dialogue about the meaning for us today of the Christian heritage that has been passed on from previous generations' (SGN 2010, pp. 6-7). It incorporates strongly theological tropes such as 'the deposit of faith' and 'a hierarchy of truths', yet follows the precedent of the CCC, namely, the lived expressions of faith and practice as they are instanced, for example, in the profession of the creed, the sacraments, the life of Christ and prayer (the Lord's Prayer). Importantly, it integrates key statements of Vatican II that themselves mark a radical departure for the Roman Catholic church in the modern world: other Christian denominations and other religions (and none) are affirmed and dialogue with them is witnessed to; the (message of the) Christian way of life is inserted in modern media and in dialogue with the modern world. In this way, the traditional structuring of Roman Catholic catechesis into the profession of faith, the celebration of the sacraments, the path of the ten commandments and prayer is passed on (Francis 2013, #46). SGN builds on John-Paul II's *Catechesi Tradendae* (1979) with its 'moments' of growth to mature faith (see Codd 2017, p. 226). John-Paul offered a definition of catechesis as: 'an education of children, young people and adults in the faith, which includes the teaching of Christian doctrine imparted, generally speaking, in an organic and systematic way, with a view to initiating the hearers into the fullness of Christian life' (CT #18); its tone, language and method must be decided by the context in which faith is being imparted (CT #19); and its aim is to develop 'an as yet initial faith' by nourishing its growth (CT #20). Crediting Paul VI's initiatives on catechesis, especially, *Evangelii Nuntiand*i (1975; CT #2), John-Paul considers catechesis 'a sacred duty and an inalienable right' of the church (CT #14) and associates the church's mission to make disciples with educating and instructing them so that the Body of Christ is built up (CT

#1). Christ is the teacher of 'the living mystery of God' (CT #7), who gave a *missio* to his apostles (CT #10), which was continued by the early Fathers (CT #12). Catechesis has elements of the preached *kerygma* that first arouses faith, of the apologetics that gives reasons for one's faith, of Christian living, of the sacraments, of integration 'into the ecclesial community' or church, and of that witness shown by the apostles and missionaries (CT #18). Christian living recalls the four traditional signs of Christian commitment, namely, *kerygma/martyria*, *koinonia*, *leitourgia* and *diakonia* (SGN, pp. 54-55) and is closely tied to sacramental preparation, especially, that of Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation (CT #66). An important note of both CT and the GDC is responsibility: the church has to act responsibly for those who have begun catechesis by both training them and welcoming them into the life of the church (CT #24; see also GDC #85-86). John Paul specifically includes a mention of children and young people who are 'physically or mentally handicapped': they have 'a right, like others of their age, to know "the mystery of faith" (CT #41). CT also identifies catechesis with evangelization (CT #26): both are 'called to bring the power of the Gospel into the very heart of culture and cultures' (CT #53). In the pedagogy of faith the question of communicating God, and not simply human knowledge no matter how high, is to the fore (see CT #58). For John-Paul the parish is 'the prime mover and pre-eminent place for catechesis' (CT #67). This is not in opposition to the family (CT #68), 'the church of the home', or the school (CT #69), nor to lay organizations (CT #70, nor to special training centres (CT #71).

The handbook of the CPSMA (CPSMA 2012) recognizes that in the past different approaches to RE were operant, such as doctrinal, kerygmatic, and anthropological. The current methodology advocates an integration of these approaches and terms it 'pastoral' because it is aware of connections between home, school and community, envisages the parish as the catechetical community, recognizes the need for spiritual care of all the stakeholders, and promotes greater sharing of 'ideas, responsibilities and resources at diocesan and parish levels' (CPSMA 2012, p. 22). The same handbook offers specific guidelines for teachers on the following principles (see IEC 2015, pp. 25-29):

- RE entails true freedom
- is theocentric
- is a divine pedagogy
- with Jesus Christ as the centre of teaching
- Scripture is a primary source
- liturgy is an essential element

- prayer is integral

- it emphasises moral education

- music and song are important

- inculturation is also important

- memorization is fundamental

- the environment is important

- it develops ecumenical and inter-religious awareness and respect for others' cultures and religions

- appropriate processes for assessment and evaluation are included.

What is immediately obvious in the catechetical programme, IEC 2015, are not the traditional marks of the church but the establishing of 'true freedom' at the head of all the others. However, this 'true freedom' is explicated with reference to the right of parents/guardians to withdraw pupils from RE (IEC 2015, p. 25). With this there are other somewhat untraditional elements, namely, inculturation, with teachers' adopting contemporary language 'suited to today's children and young people' (IEC 2015, p. 27), and ecumenical and inter-religious awareness and respect for others' cultures and religions (IEC 2015, pp. 28-29); among the latter are fellow Christians of other denominations, Jews, Muslims and those religions with which Roman Catholicism have a relationship. The Christian faith has 'the unique truth' and is missionary in relation to other religions; members of other religions can be invited into the school to speak to the children (IEC 2015, p. 28). These positions flow naturally from *Nostra Aetate* (1965) and are therefore fruits of Vatican II. That the language of 'learning outcomes' and 'spiral curriculum' accompany 'skills of religious literacy' such as understanding, communicating, participating, and the developing of spiritual and inter-religious literacies indicate attunement to current educational skills (IEC 2015, pp. 36-39). We also note the reference to divine pedagogy or how God, the divine incarnated in Christ, accommodates Godself to human minds (Rylaarsdam 2014). This is often taken to refer to how scripture and the tradition are combined in teaching people about the 'good news' (see Goizueta & Matovina 2017, p. 12). One of the first theologians to explicate a divine pedagogy of the Trinity was Hilary of Poitiers: God-in-Christ, to use Donald Bailey's terminology, 'is perfect in His own [divine nature] and true in ours [human nature]' (quoted in McKenna 2002, p. 43).

Other changes likely to have significant impact on Roman Catholic primary school education result from Ireland's demographics. For instance, examining the intake of students into undergraduate primary education Heinz & Keane notes the

overrepresentation of Roman Catholics (90.4%) relative to the Irish Roman Catholic population (78.3%) (2018, p. 535). Further, societal views, especially those that attend to the rights of minorities, can effect considerable change. For instance, the 2015 decision of the then Minister for Education, Jan O'Sullivan, to rescind Rule 68 from the Rules for Primary Schools, was defended on the basis of respect for the rights of non-Catholic parents and children: it was a 'symbol of our past' and 'archaic' (McMahon 2016); Rule 68 stipulated that a 'religious spirit should inform and vivify the whole work of the school', which for some was tantamount to indoctrination. The Irish Catholic Bishops' Council for Education responded:

> *Religious education plays a key role in all faith schools. In Catholic schools religious education is based on a Christian vision of the human person with a clear respect for all people irrespective of faiths. This is expressed in a commitment to learning to engage in interreligious dialogue in age appropriate ways. The current political and social situation in Europe would suggest that religious education, as part of the school curriculum, is more important now than ever before.* (Irish Catholic Bishops' Council for Education, 2016)

The statement further recognizes that the DES clarifies that 'the school's stated ethos (that is, the values and principles it promotes) is decided by the owners or patrons/trustees of the school and not by central government' (citing DES, *Advancing School Autonomy in the Irish School System*, December 2015, p. 19). In spite of some caricaturing of them, 'Catholic schools strive to be caring and inclusive communities'.

The CCE of the Vatican made a pertinent observation in 2013 that referenced school management:

> *School leaders are more than just managers of an organization. They are true educational leaders when they are the first to take on this responsibility, which is also an ecclesial and pastoral mission rooted in a relationship with the Church's pastors. School leaders have the particular duty of providing what support is necessary for spreading the culture of dialogue, encounter and mutual recognition between different cultures. Both inside and outside the school, they promote all possible forms of collaboration that help to realize intercultural harmony.* (CCE 2013, #85)

The CCE is clearly putting the managerial dimension of bodies like BoMs into a wider context of care. This context concords with the more-than-managerialism vision supported in the present research-project.

Finally, it is instructive to hear what the patron of those schools to whose BoMs this research-project was directed has to add. Archbishop Martin states that the ultimate goal of education is 'the full human development of our young people' (Martin 2018). Martin asks where does society root its values. For some it will be in the message and person of Jesus Christ, for others in non-religious ideals. Though all share a common purpose in life there are different viewpoints and dialogue enables their communication. The Roman Catholic church has a right to provide 'an integrated vison of life' amidst 'today's splintered society'. He gave two examples of the contribution of the church to future Catholic education: return to the mission of 'radically reaching out to the poor', especially those who find themselves educationally disadvantaged, and renewal of 'the programmes of religious education'. To get some insight into what this means we turn to his sermon of 2017. Roman Catholic education is 'about a path of discovering what faith in Jesus Christ can bring as an additional qualitative dimension to education…[it is] a proposition that attracts'. Second, it requires 'a bond between the faith life of the pupils and that of his or her parents and of the religious community to which they belong'. Third, it is not 'a gated community': schools must 'enter into relationships with schools of other patronage so that it is not a source of division'. The vision of the Archbishop is of building 'a respectful pluralist model of education for a new pluralist Ireland'. For him, faith education is attractive because of Jesus's message, like a door that welcomes in and enables witness to the world of Jesus's care, generosity and love.

2.4.3 Roman Catholic education for pupils with SEN

Griffin & Shevlin (2011), referring to the 1831 establishment of national schooling as bringing 'misery, failure and unfair comparison for those with learning disabilities and special educational needs who could not cope with the curricular requirements or the standards demanded by the teacher' (p. 36), take a somewhat anachronistic view of special education. More germane to the concerns of this dissertation, however, are the emphases that SGN places: on the local parish as the locus for Christian initiation, whereas hitherto the local primary school was the de facto site of catechetical formation; on the supports offered to teachers in forming the pupils in their faith; on the awareness of Christian outreach to those who experience social disadvantage, who have special needs (physical and learning), migrants and those who suffer illness; and on the deaf and Travellers who are given specific mention (pp. 173-177): as Ireland responds to the growing needs of migrants, we may assume that the positive approach of SGN will assist their integration into society (see Fass & Fionda 2019).

Roman Catholic education must also serve the poor, and this independent of whether they are Catholic or not. That broadening of Roman Catholic schools that we experience in Ireland today surely arose from these sentiments of *GE* and, with Grow in Love, Ireland has a catechetical programme for primary schools that is distinguished from earlier programmes such as Alive-O and Children of God by its explicit attention to pupils with SEN, as envisaged in *GE*. This expansion of understanding in relation to those who are to be catechized reflects an imaginative leap that is theologically and educationally focused as well as conceptually constructive. In the United States, too, the National Catholic Partnership on Disability (NCPD [n.d.]) 'works collaboratively to ensure meaningful participation of people with disabilities in all aspects of the life of the Church and society' (NCPD [n.d.]) and has as its goal 'full inclusion of persons with disabilities – in the Church and in Society'. Founded in 1982, it took the 1978 pastoral as its mandate.

Imagination itself is key to progress in responding to the RE of pupils with special needs no less than of those without such needs. In his reflection on the future of Catholic primary education Dermot Lane (2012) did not address the issue of religious education for children with SEN. Nevertheless, he did focus on the centrality of imagination in the learning of children. He was building upon the work of Charles Taylor (2007), while Taylor himself built on Arjun Appadurai's work on imagination. For Appadurai, the imagination is 'a social fact'; it is central to human agency and is 'the key component of the new global order' (1996, p. 31). Though all children learn through play and the use of concrete materials, children with SEN often require more of these if their imagination is to be engaged. For Feldmeier (2007), it is at the intersection of imagination and experience that growth, both human and spiritual, flourishes. One example of this is provided by Batluck: if we look at the Markan Jesus, we see one who on the cross cried out, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' (Mark 15:34). Jesus is not fulfilled but is abandoned by God; in order to understand Jesus's own religious experience we are forced to seek a different construal of growth (2011, p. 340), one that brings the adult imagination up short and requires an understanding of apophasis or that theological approach that validates 'negative theology' in which any attribute or quality that humans attribute to the divine, but which perforce arises only from the finite capacities of humans, has to be named immediately as 'wrong' due to its inadequacy or incomprehensibility before the infinity of the divine. For David Tracy, theology is analogical through and through; this permits mutually critical correlations to be made between society, the church and the academy; while religious classics engage with the modern world, God-talk becomes possible in the midst of the

limitations of human communication so that the similar may be discerned even in the dissimilar (Tracy 1981). Going beyond this openness to the world somewhat but in relation to people with SEN, Pope John-Paul II linked disability to the *imago Dei* (Genesis 1:27): 'In their view of faith and in their conception of man, Christians know that in the disabled person there is reflected in a mysterious way the image and likeness which God Himself impressed upon the lives of His sons and daughters' (1981, p. 3).

Likewise, for those with special needs, the work of Eiesland is noteworthy; people who have physical disabilities are likened to the crucified Christ, 'the disabled God' (1994, pp. 89-90). Yet, how children imagine God depends on how they experience God, and how they experience God entails some opening of their religious imagination. A catechetical-instructional programme such as Godly Play (Berryman 2009a, 2009b; O'Farrell 2016) is designed for all children, though its hands-on, practical nature makes it particularly suited to use by many children with SEN (Cavalletti 1992, 2002). The intensity of the programme allows for encounter in various ways. Interestingly, Cavalletti's programme is adapted from the methods of Maria Montessori in her work with children with special needs. Elsewhere, Ireland has seen the introduction of Special Religious Education (SPRED), a catechetical programme that was designed to meet the needs of people with disabilities in the Roman Catholic archdiocese of Chicago, at least in Armagh and Derry. One of SPRED's founders, Fr James McCarthy, had a brother with developmental disability and another, Sr Suzanne Gallagher SP, was a Montessori teacher. Working with Fr Jean Mesny (?-2013) and Fr Eucharist Paulhus, an educational psychologist, they formulated the four essential elements of the catechetical process of SPRED, namely, to awaken a sense of the sacred, have a sense of being church together, have a sense of Christ and have faith, which here means having an awareness of a relationship with another person (Harrington 1994; SPRED 2103). Ní Cheallaigh's notable work (2002) deals specifically with this programme designed for people of any age with SEN. In general, as affirmed by Baum & Benton (2006), Roman Catholic ministry to people with disabilities within the church 'has grown to include not only ministries *to* Catholics with disabilities but *among*, *with*, and *from* them' (p. 40), as becomes evident in the following two quotations from the preparatory document for the Jubilee Day of the Community with People with Disabilities:

> *The humanity of a person with disabilities brings us nearer to the*
> *"mystery" of the One who chose willingly and freely to be the victim of*
> *violence, rejection, isolation, exclusion, abandonment, psychological,*
> *affective, emotive and social betrayal, to be rejected by mankind but*

sustained by God (cfr Ps 41) in a plan for the redemption of all. (Vatican 2000, Preparation for the Jubilee Day, 3 December 2000, Part 4)

Moreover, persons with disabilities are prophets of how each of us may become in the future, when physical strength diminishes, when we may lose our autonomy, become totally dependent: even then we will want to be treated with dignity and respect and still be responsible for our life and take part in community events. (Vatican 2000, Preparation for the Jubilee Day, 3 December 2000, Part 4)

In this document as a whole I think we should see the hand of Pope John-Paul II, who was in considerable ill-health by this time. Perhaps in response to the United Nations' Human Rights Commission (1998) and the naming of 3rd December as International Day of the Disabled, the Vatican issued its own 'The Person with Disabilities: the Duties of the Civil and Ecclesial community' (2000), which is part five of the *Preparation for the Jubilee Day, 3 December 2000* (Vatican 2000). The Roman Catholic church began with the UN document, then outlined the guiding principles for the church's own commitment:

- conscious acceptance
- personal solidarity
- promoting assistance services.

The church fleshed out what the UN's Standing Rules concerning state interventions on behalf of the disabled:

- promote 'a positive image of the person with disabilities'
- protect 'the guarantee of health-assistance'
- support the need for the state 'to assign adequate resources'
- remove all physical barriers and obstacles that impede access (e.g. in churches; have texts in Braille; ensure maximum access to 'artistic heritage')
- protect the rights of the disabled in all 'formation environments', i.e. schools
- take action in states that do not guarantee 'the means for living a dignified life'
- support matrimony for those with disabilities and give spiritual support to families where there is a person with disabilities
- act 'to guarantee all these spaces of participation', e.g. assist people with disabilities to enter consecrated life
- act within the civil sphere to vindicate rights, e.g. 'the need to protect the private life of individuals and the integrity of the person' (cited from the UN Rules); and ensure that services will (also) be at the disposal of persons with a disability

- 'valorise the experience of persons with disabilities in every ambit of church activities'.

2.5 THEOLOGICAL AND SOCIAL PERSPECTIVES

In this section we seek different perspectives on the issue of people's SEN, or more generally, *in-firmitas*. First, we learn from the discussion on the theological perspectives in general (2.5.1). Then we turn to how some have divined God's presence in the midst of serious physical and intellectual disabilities (2.5.2).

2.5.1 General discourse on religion

Theologically or phenomenologically conceived, according to the Bible or Heidegger, our human relationship to the world is a matter of relatedness rather than instrumentalization, though it is all too often the latter; the realities/phenomena that confront us reveal themselves to us and so we are enabled to reveal ourselves to ourselves in a truth-disclosing manner. When we reify a person, however, we fail to respect them morally. For Axel Honneth, respect, not tolerance, is a better concept as it is 'more closely linked to the legal recognition of individuals and groups' (Gamper 2010). To argue for the socio-political right of children with disabilities to be recognised as social actors might, then, in the larger context of my argument, seem to follow. However, the young, disabled or not, are young and have the right to their being-a-child not only recognized but vindicated; while the construction of the world should be in their favour there does not have to be an onus on them to be the constructors. So, can the state – any state – compensate for what nature and/or society have brought about in terms of (dis)ability? Gorard summarizes the education-cannot-compensate-for-society argument of Bernstein (1970): 'aggregate scores and qualifications for students from less elevated social classes, those living in poverty, in some deprived areas, and for some ethnic minority groups, are considerably lower than average.' He points out that the education system was actually set up to avoid this scenario (Gorard 2010, p. 2). For his part, Gorard's response to this is that schools have a role to play, even in what we call deprived areas. He concludes:

> *Schools, in their structure and organisation, can do more than simply reflect the society we have; they can try to be the precursor of the kind of society that we wish to have.* (Gorard 2010, p. 15)

Here is a challenge put to BoMs. In teasing out the language of religions (2.6.1) and seeking signs of divine presence (2.6.2) we continue this deepening consideration of the human in its fragility and openness to the divine.

Language is another human mode of self-transcendence. Akira Omine (1998) argues that language is the basis of communication between humans and that which transcends them, and this is what is experienced in religion. We do not refer merely to the obvious context of scriptures and concepts with which a given religion has to do, but with the seemingly inherent and intractable inability of religious language to be adequate to its object. RE provokes varied responses.

Thus, there may be, in time, 'a hybridizing of Christian and government discourses' (Bunn & Wood 2012, p. 643), in which dimensions of the religious and secular communities begin to interpolate one another. As children are socialized into membership of the community they are opened to different webs of meaning or 'narratives of meaning', which are 'embedded in a dynamic cultural milieu' (Grenham 2012, p. 258). One of the advantages of Christian education is the 'lived worldwide experiences of cultural and religious diversity…the politics of God's reign' offered by Christian educators (Grenham 2012, p. 274). On the other hand, we saw Campbell reacting to indoctrination in denominational schools (2011, p. 350). He also criticizes the 2009 Cambridge Primary Review's ignoring of 'well-established theories of the relationship between social/cultural reproduction and pedagogy' (Campbell 2011, p. 352). Nonetheless but in an Irish context, denominational education is 'religious education according to the traditions, practices and beliefs' of a one denomination and is provided 'under the patronage of a single religious community' (Darmody & Smyth 2017, p. 7). In this it differs from the other two forms of patronage recognized by the DES, viz, interdenominational and multidenominational, which offer a variety of RE opportunities to pupils (Darmody & Smyth 2017, p. 7). Some ESRI reports – Smyth & Darmody 2011; Darmody & Smyth 2017 – refer to the potentially limiting capacity for actively promoting 'intercultural education' by the 'cathectical [sic] nature' of the 'current structure of Irish primary schools'. On the contrary, this construal of Roman Catholic education is not promoted in or by the RE programme, Grow in Love (nor its predecessor, Alive-O, nor its predecessor, Children of God), that is in place in Roman Catholic schools.

Education, *in nuce*, 'leads out' from a person what is within. Education's domain is also that of religion; both enhance (or disfigure) a deeper understanding of oneself. And, the quest to know where we come from, why we are here and whither we are going is not

simply that of the isolated –alienated? – individual; it is a communal experience. The first basic right of the child as adumbrated by the Geneva Convention is: the child must be given the means requisite for its normal development, both materially and spiritually (Jeffers, 2013, p. 11). Humans are formed in families, communities, structures of human intercourse, and live by them. Social networks are intrinsic to human flourishing and wellbeing. This betokens a debility that is intrinsic to being human. Also, as no child is born self-sufficient so no adult, however able in body or mind, is guaranteed to escape becoming disabled in some way during the course of life. Being frail or vulnerable is part of the human condition and offers a profound challenge to the idealisation of life as always flourishing, always positive (Breckenridge & Vogler 2001, p. 356). For their part, Breckenridge & Vogler (2001, p. 352) have proposed the adoption of the concept of 'disabled modal subject'. They challenge the view that it is the able-bodied person who is to be valorized, while the dis-abled is not. Life can intrude at any stage and bring disability; the realization that this may happen helps to explain the anxiety of some (2001, p. 356).

In Ireland, we saw, education is a matter of the whole person (Government of Ireland, 1999). What are the bounds and limits of the state in fostering the education of the whole person? Is the state the appropriate, let alone best, provider of a holistic education? Or, is its remit 'merely' to ensure that, insofar as is feasible, children should be educated to the fullest extent possible? Donal Murray (2008) appeals to Rabbi Jonathan Sacks and Pope John-Paul II to support his claim that between the state and the individual person are societal elements, such as families, churches, various community groupings, that are also constitutive of society and 'where people grow as people'. It is reasonable, then, to advert to these elements in constructing education. Reason and religion are not opposites, however adversarially individuals may construe their relationship. In dialogue with the wider world, the Roman Catholic church, in *The Catholic School*, asked for 'an effective system of education…which corresponds to the total educational needs of young people today in Catholic schools (CCE 1977, #4). The school wants to create a 'climate' in which the pupil's faith will gradually mature and enable him to assume the responsibility placed on him by Baptism' (CCE 1977, #47). The language concerns what the school contributes to the church, a sort of *institutio ad institutionem loquitur* (see #63), with talk of principles of 'participation and co-responsibility' and subsidiarity (#70). Nevertheless, there is a stated understanding that 'the Catholic school…offers its collaboration to those who are building a new world' (#91). From our point of view this document tends away from what the

church may gain in understanding from developments in education; the dialogue, in other words, seems more monological.

When Benedict XVI spoke at Regensburg (2006) he challenged the notion that the divine should be excluded from 'the universality of reason' because only reason has universal validity. Indeed, he argues, God acts with reason (*sun logō*), for, citing the opening of the gospel of John, in the beginning was the *logos* and the *logos* is God. Though the unlikeness between humans and God is 'infinitely greater' than the likeness, yet there is a valid – reasonable, rational – analogy linking talk of God and of humans: God reveals godself in *logos* and, even as God acts with love, questions of meaning (Tillich 1965) and value are determinative of social being, of what it means to be alive. Is there a meaning to life? What value has any given person's life? What, if anything, survives after death? Though the state may see the importance of such questions it itself is not equipped to deal them. In the west, however, philosophy and theology are the realms for raising the questions that bear on issues of ultimate meaning (Tillich 1965). Secular outlooks on the world – *Weltanshauungen* – and religions underpin and sustain the beliefs of their adherents in specific ways, whether *sub specie mortis* or *sub specie aeternatis*. Taylor (2007) offers an analysis of the modern age and its secularisms, from a philosophical and religious perspective. Religion is in retreat, a process that began – ironically – with Christianity's own reforming process and strengthened with the rise of the notion of the individual at the expense of the social. Today, then, public spaces have become secularized, there is decline in belief and practice, and unbelief in religion is intellectually viable today whereas once it was inconceivable (Taylor 2007, p. 4). Regan (2010) also addresses the wider debate about religion and secularism, while O'Hanlon does so in an Irish context (2010).

Religion's decline, whether to the private sphere (Habermas 2009) or as 'das Opium des Volkes' or as a form of mystical tourism, raises questions; interesting research, focusing on Quechua Indian communities and the Incan archaeological site of Machu Picchu, shows how *turismo mistico* is a growing industry (Hill 2008), with deleterious results for local ethnicities, like the 'indigenous mestizos' (De la Cadena 2000). If religion has a place in society, what is that place? The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UN 1948, #18) guarantees freedom of religion, including to change it and manifest it; this right was born of a desire to end civil strife, such as convulsed the world during WWII. Civil society, for instance, in binding documents of the United Nations, asserts the basic human rights of children, including to religion (1989, #14) and, more specifically, of people with disabilities (UN 1971 base on UN 1948; 1975, 2002). For religion is society, children's RE, in the

context of a multifaith environment, is important in the 'holistic education of children', as Byrne (2013) avers.

Of course, the Roman Catholic Church has a particular theological construction of what it is to be human. In *Dignitatis Humanae* (*DH*), we saw the church affirming the human right to freedom of conscience and religious liberty, based on 'the very dignity of the human person' and known by faith and reason (*DH* #2). Underpinning this is the Judaeo-Christian scriptures; the opening chapters of the first book, Genesis, offer a theological understanding of the human person: 'Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our own likeness…" So, God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them' (Genesis 1:26-27). The so-called second creation account (Genesis 2:4b-24) no less adumbrates the theological relationship between human beings and the divine: 'then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being' (v. 7). Logically and as we saw too, it follows that *DH* valorizes human dignity as a civil right. This tie-in of ecclesial and civil is reflected in Turnbull, Turnbull & Cooper (2018) who affirm that '[s]chools – with their mission and culture – are no longer "merely" places for education. Instead, they become – or can become – communities in which an ethic of dignity prospers' (2018, p. 139), with specific reference to the USA Supreme Court interpretation of the *Endrew F. v. Douglas County School District RE-1*, 2015 case.

Implicit in following the Christian way is the notion of educating others; awareness of educating children with SEN is increasingly taking its place within this notion. Further development may be presumed as the numbers of religious brothers, sisters and priests decline and, consequently, wane in influence, and as the role of laypeople in fulfilling the church's mandate comes into more defined perspective (Murray 2008) and, presumably, less constrained – less ortho-dox? – expression. This is likely to contribute to what O'Sullivan has called, in opposition to 'the climate of consensualism', critical dialogue (O'Sullivan 2012, p. 191). Avoiding consensualism and group-think will require a new way of thinking about education and the challenge of educating those with SEN.

As regards religious learning, Grimmitt's important distinction between learning *from* and learning *about* religion (1987) remains pertinent. The latter retains an element of distance from religion concerning personal commitment to religious practices that cannot be presumed in the former. Learning from religion has a notion of engagement between learner and religion. This is not necessarily formation *in* religion, which is more usually

perhaps called religious instruction or formation or catechesis. All these terms can and have been used interchangeably in people's daily discourse. Included with them are other terms which the academic is more likely to restrict in meaning, for instance, religion (*tout court*), RE, RI, Christian doctrine, religion class, religion study and catechism, but which, in any given individual, may have a restricted meaning or a much more general and non-exclusive sense. The commitment or not that one has to religious faith has coloured reception and use of these terms. Academic discussion and distinctions, therefore, may bear little or no relevance to common usage.

2.5.2 Divining God in disability

Two theologians have given us reflections on close relatives who have relatively severe disabilities. Their accounts deepen our understanding of struggles they have had with the presence of infirmity and how their faith led them to deeper insights of God's work in the world. In these accounts the world of in-firmity becomes pointed and challenging; how would anyone react if faced with such personal difficulties in those we love?

Mark

Theologian Amos Yong is the older brother of Mark, born with Down Syndrome in 1975. The experience led to Yong looking systematically at the Bible and seeking evidence of how disability is treated there (Yong 2007). His purpose is to make us think differently about disability. In this endeavour he builds on the importance of 'speculative eschatology' (2007, p. 281). Thus, out of Luke's account in Acts 2, he develops a 'pneumatical imagination' (Yong 2007, p. 11). In this pneumatology, which he also terms 'trinitarian', Yong sees a place for the different 'voices' in the scriptural account such that the Spirit can communicate with humans.

Later (Yong 2011), he takes a more ecclesiological approach, informing Christian living with people with disabilities. People with disabilities are primarily people; their disability constitutes them. Yet, the measure of personhood for Yong is Christ, the true image of God. However, to remove the disability from the person would be to radically alter that person's identity. Yong builds a notion of human fellowship that is charismatic in its core: in the Spirit those with disabilities bless and are themselves a blessing for others.

Theologically, Yong cites Gregory of Nyssa (c335-395) and his doctrine of *epectasis*, the idea that the soul is drawn ever more – and endlessly – into the divine mystery (2007, p. 275). The doctrine is traced though Gregory's use of Plato, with the ascent of the soul to

God, and of Paul, with his 'straining forward to what lies ahead' (Philippians 3:13). Gregory's commentary on the Song of Songs echoes a view expressed in his *Life of Moses* that 'no limit can be set to our progress towards God' (cited in Yong 2007, p. 277): there is revealed a bride who seeks her Spouse as a passage from one level of perfection to another. Yong parallels this desire of the soul to 'God's deifying grace' (2007, p. 276). We note, too, that Gregory is important to Yong for another reason. Though Gregory is famous as one of the Cappadocian Fathers, along with his brother, Basil of Caesarea, and their mutual friend, Gregory Nazianzus, he was also close to his sister, Macrina, and wrote a biography of her in which he called her 'the common glory of our family'. Macrina is presented as 'a genius in a family of geniuses' (Malone 2000, p. 142). However, it was not until her death that Gregory discovered that his sister bore a scar from a tumour she had in her youth and from which her mother had miraculously cured her. For Gregory, this scar was theologized 'as a memorial of the divine intervention' (cited in Yong 2007, p. 274) that had earlier saved her life.

Arthur

Patristics scholar, Frances Young is also the mother of a son, Arthur, who has severe mental and physical disabilities. From the beginning Young wrote about Arthur and included him in her professional life, going to lectures and sermons and including him in many writings. In *Face to Face*, Young finds an answer to her situation in the book of Job; baffled at first, she at last realizes that what really upset Job was God's absence:

> *What satisfies and at the same time humbles Job is simply the reality and presence of God. What God says is irrelevant. In God's presence the demand of explanation ceases. God is sufficient in himself [sic] to bring a perspective which transcends and transforms. That is more or less my experience. Face to face with God, the problems do not disappear but they do appear different.* (1990, pp. 91-92)

Her book led to a life-long contact with Jean Vanier and the work in L'Arche international and to the community-based Faith and Light movement founded by Marie-Hélène Mathieu and Vanier (see Young 1997). Young does not claim to know what is happening within Arthur in services of worship. It's a mystery, but something is going on; this she knows from the ways he participates, whether shouting out his name in echoing choirs, remaining silent as congregations sing, gazing at plays of light, etc. In 1984 Young was ordained as a Methodist minister. At first, she was focused on her son being part of her vocation; now her theology has deepened as she is focused on Arthur's vocation. Nevertheless, Young is focused too on the theology of suffering.

Young interprets accounts of God's overcoming of sin as having two 'areas of reference': the problem of evil, pain and suffering, and the problem of sin and guilt. In the former, the religious person is dealing with 'the surd-element in life' (1975, p. 124), which itself challenges that person's faith. She asks,

> *How can we believe that God has created the world as a sort of school, to train characters fit for heaven, when two per cent of all human beings born are defective, so limited in their capacity that moral response is out of the question? When people face the reality of evil and suffering personally, philosophical answers are shown up as inadequate.* (1975, p. 124)

Our hope for wholeness and human flourishing means that we have to cope with our destructive compulsions. Christ on the cross forces us to face our inadequacy, accept our guilt, and be healed. At last, after nearly five decades of caring for Arthur, Young faces him in his role of ministering to her (and others). In *Arthur's Call* (2014), which builds on her earlier *Face to Face* (1986; 1990), Young identifies five pointers, or what she calls 'fingerposts', to Arthur's ministry:

1. *he points to truly human values*, over against those of our society's individualism

2. *he points the way to the desert* – of the monks and Jesus; Arthur has been 'the catalyst for discovering the profoundly ambiguous nature of that anxiety which passes for love' (p. 146)

3. *he indicates the presence of Christ*. We 'can become whole when we can live with the cross at the centre of the community' (pp. 148-149). A notional perfection is problematic (p. 150); perhaps, 'the broken crucified body' is made welcome by 'those like Arthur who have profound disabilities' (p. 152).

4. *he points to the Beyond*. Though it is hard to know what Arthur understands, he delights in song, music, space, light. In worship we are 'caught up in something bigger than ourselves' (p. 155) and Arthur helps us 'to recognize that our language is groping and inadequate when it comes to the Beyond' (p. 156).

5. *he points to the mystery of grace*. At the heart of worship is a sense of being taken out of oneself and into the larger whole; perhaps this is what happens when he echoes a preacher's tone, shouts out his own name, hand-claps, though mainly it is 'by his silence and the rapture on his face when singing is lifting his spirit' (pp. 156-157).

Young sums up by speaking of the ministry of her son: 'I've come to believe that persons with even the most profound limitations have a vocation to be a "sign" in the biblical sense: a prophetic sign, pointing beyond themselves' (2014, p. 157). However particular Jesus's suffering on the cross was, it illuminates, rather than overshadows, tragedies in others' lives in which God involves Godself.

From the beginning of her accounts of caring for Arthur Young took grave exception to Jesus's reply, in John 9, to his disciples who asked in respect of the man born blind, 'Who has sinned?' Jesus said no one; this happened so that God's glory should be revealed. From the patent injustice of suffering for the sake of God's glory Young reflected on the Johannine theology of signs: Jesus is not always waving the magic wand of miracle-cures; what Jesus does is enter the deepest darkness of people's lives. John points to the cross as the hour of God's glory. Through the cross, Young found a glimmer of hope. The 'fruits of the Spirit' that Paul talked of were another glimmer for her as they were the most fundamental of human values. Through Arthur, Young learnt that she had 'privileged access to the deepest truths of Christianity' (2014, pp. 40-41); and Andrew Teal learnt that 'the hallmarks of God's presence –'a still welcome, no desire to manipulate or possess, moments of truthful, joyful engagement' – are present in Arthur (2014, p. 161). On the other hand, what the parents of Aleksandra, who was diagnosed with Rett Syndrome, experienced was, from the point of view of their local community, deeply shocking: 'Our family was disabled by our community and our social system for failing to pass as normal and for causing disturbing ripples in the average calm' (Tataryn & Truchan-Tataryn 2013, p. 21).

2.5.3 Knowing the unknown

Even in philosophy, some reality beyond the merely contingent can be appealed to. Pierre Hadot does not shy away from the language of 'spiritual exercises' when writing in philosophical mode; for, 'the disciple, as auditor, reader, or interlocutor, could make spiritual progress and transform himself within' (Hadot 2002, p. 6). This self-transformation, or *askēsis*, is a mastering of self in order to grow spiritually. Happiness at its highest level is, for Aristotle, found in *theōria*, a contemplation of the mind, free from worry about material things, that builds virtue. It is scarcely possible for humans; yet, when experienced, comes as something beyond oneself and one's limitations. For Aristotle, the theoretical (*theōrētikos*) way refers to a knowing in which knowledge is sought for knowledge's own sake or else to a devoting of one's life to the search for this knowledge (Hadot 2002, pp. 80-81); this corresponds to 'the divine Intellect'. For Hadot,

the life of the mind, striving for what it cannot reach and having to accept what seems to be a divine indwelling, 'corresponds to the paradox inherent in the notion of wisdom as opposed to philosophy, in Plato's *Symposium*.'

In situations where BoMs are faced with, say, the dilemma of choosing between an offer of multiple options and forging ahead with a determined plan, there is need for what John Sullivan calls 'constructive confrontation' (Sullivan 2000, p. 147), something required because it leaves intact the dignity of those involved. Using different metaphors – family, business, church, political community, academy – Sullivan (2000) frames his discussion of the contentions that exist in Roman Catholic schools and follow from these metaphors. He explores those contentions that can, and often do, arise between school and the actual communities that have given rise to these metaphors and that, in varied ways, support and challenge the school. One area of contention has relevance for my research, to wit, those, such as the Board of Governors/Managers, who argue that one particular metaphor should have 'relative priority…over the others' (Sullivan 2000, p. 237). Of course, Sullivan's context is the UK and not Ireland, yet I suspect that the usual situation in Ireland is that BoMs rarely if ever consider schools in light of these metaphors, let alone prioritize one over the others. Nevertheless, Sullivan's fundamental point, viz. that contention in schools in modern society and in the modern church is essential, not accidental, to the healthy functioning of the same schools, commands respect. The job of leadership is to steer the school through the contention; leaders need to have 'a willingness to entertain criticism and an adeptness in responding to it' (Sullivan 2000, p. 239).

One of the 'contrasting polarities' that Sullivan (2000) discusses is that between objectivity and subjectivity in RE and how we weigh the balance between them. If we agree that a healthy education tries to balance critical inquiry and 'the play of imagination' in each individual then we may agree that a healthy RE balances the objective world of facts about religion and the subjective world of religious dispositions, attitudes, beliefs, etc. Sullivan argues in this mould (2000, pp. 212f.). There is, on the one hand, analysis of data presented to a pupil, and, on the other, the contribution that the learner brings as she/he synthesizes the information into or onto her/his own internal, subjective cognitive map. From analysis of the world that stands before us, pupils and teachers learn, as Heidegger intimating *Sein* learnt, something of how the world hangs together, what its firmament is, perhaps even what constitutes its *firmitas*. In absorbing the (information of the) world before us we employ emotions, imagination, creativity and the worldview we

already have. In this way, continues Sullivan, we construct ourselves as subjects 'endowed with dignity, capacities, powers and initiative' (2000, p. 217).

Impressive as Sullivan's presentation is, and congenial as I both find it and suggest it would be to many educators, we are confronted with the question of what it can say to pupils with SEN and, tangentially, how BoMs may appropriate it for their role. For this I appeal to the explicative force of the Johari Window (Luft & Ingham 1955): this window has four quadrants, two of which apply to knowledge I have of myself and two to knowledge that I do not have of myself. In sum, there is the quadrant that expresses what I and others know of me (open); the quadrant of what I know of me but others do not (mask or façade); the quadrant of knowledge that I do not have of myself but others do (blind spot); and the quadrant which is knowledge of me that neither others nor I have (unknown self). It is the latter dimension of the self that perhaps contains the engine of personhood and that each individual struggles to unmask or know more adequately; Christians sometimes appeal to scripture, Paul or Augustine in affirming their ignorance of their own deepest selves. Recognizing our opaqueness to all, not least ourselves, is often a marker of internal growth and health for it enforces humility even as it sets an agenda of self-knowledge. For the educator, it counsels due care and respect for the indefinable otherness of the pupil who embodies body, soul and spirit and who has to be guided towards the world-to-be-known around her/him and into her/his own inner-ness. For the BoM member, it evinces a humility that leaves one open to self-correction, growth in awareness of need and willingness to respond. More specifically, Sullivan pictures Catholic leaders, who:

- develop staff collegiality
- favour trust over control; mobilize people (rather than manage structures)
- ensure the school is outward-looking; care about public education, citizenship
- maintain vigilance in relation to the impact of alien ideologies
- keep contact with wider Roman Catholic education and church leaders, in order to nourish the mission
- keep pupils to fore; authority is given for the empowering of others (Sullivan 2000, pp. 155-158).

2.6 CONCLUSION

In pre-modern times, a sort of enchantment favoured religious faith; faith and religious practice were societal norms and if a person contravened these accepted norms then a curse might descend not only on that person but also on family and wider community. Modernity

is marked by what Charles Taylor calls secularity; living in 'a secular age' disenchants us and discourages faith in a process that secularizes public spaces, leads to decline of faith and religious practice and makes unbelief a viable option for many (Taylor 2007, p. 25). Modernity effects a sort of internal secularization in people according as the plurality of voices exceeds the ecclesial one. Who shouts loudest and longest is more likely to become 'accepted wisdom'.

One of the advantages of the approach adopted in this dissertation is its appeal to a dialectical approach that brings theory and practice into fruitful dialogue; in it, faith and experience are correlated; this harmonizes with Stuart-Buttle's understanding of what happens in the newly emerging 'field of Catholic education studies' in which there is a 'drawing closer' and 'closing' of the boundaries between research and practice (2018, p. 53). The *sensus fidelium*, by which the faithful, i.e. Christians in the pews, have a sense of what is true to the faith, can effect theological responses to the situations that confront members of BoMs. The appeal to experience as, for instance, preferring spirituality over religion is a preference, a choice made out of the Zeitgeist, and, as with any choice, is a matter of interpretation.

Because schools are a key site of educational inclusion and opportunity they have a vital role in the education of children with SEN. As noted in Gorard (2010, p. 15) it is incumbent on schools to be a precursor of 'the society we wish to have'. Educators have to be cautious, too, of the so-called 'Pygmalion effect' (see Rosenthal & Jacobson 1992), lest their expectations and biases predetermine outcomes for their pupils. Humans need one another. People with no disabilities are encouraged, in modern society, to live alone, yet the disabled need to live in community. This is aptly expressed in one of the wise sayings that characterize this awareness of people with disabilities and their un-ignorable need for community: 'I smile therefore you are' (Young 2013, p. 108). Often people who work with those with disabilities are clear that 'we receive more than we give when we give to the disabled'. We discover our own need for control and they help us. In L'Arche, the community formed from people who are abled and disabled, there is the sacrament of bodies, broken bodies. Bodies are sacred: 'beauty is perceived in broken bodies' (2013, p. 107).

Schools are embedded in the social world; inclusion names the dynamic at its heart. Also key, though, is religious education (Harmon & Mahon 2012); for, this term seems to be establishing its dominance even in contexts where once 'catechesis', 'Catholic formation', etc. ruled (e.g. Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference 2017a, 2017b). The Vatican had used

'religious instruction' twenty-one times, and 'religious education' twice, in CCE 1988, #44, #66; perhaps because of its title, CCE favours 'Catholic education' (CCE 2013, 2014); it is expedient, therefore, that, in referring to the religious dimension of education, possibly distinguished from a specifically Roman Catholic form of that dimension, the term 'religious education', which is already popular in secular discourse, be co-opted for 'Catholic education'. Unfortunately, this will not always curtail occasional outbursts of terminological acrimony akin to the *odium theologicum* of old. Yet, the foundation of religious education is the dignity of the human person; this 'transcendent dignity', too, is the foundation of the state 'and all human society' (Murray 2012a).

When the Irish state affirmed that the 1999 curriculum 'takes into account the child's affective, aesthetic, spiritual, moral and religious needs' it proceeded to specify that the 'spiritual dimension is a fundamental aspect of individual experience and its religious and cultural expression is an inextricable part of Irish culture and history' and concludes with a direct reference to 'religious education' which 'specifically enables the child to develop spiritual and moral values and to come to a knowledge of God' (Government of Ireland 1999, p. 58). Clearly, religion and morality are subsumed under the more general category of 'the spiritual', which, rightly or wrongly, has to be taken as a theological judgement. The State cannot avoid the latter, I argue, once it engages with spirituality and religion and tries to adjudicate between them. Neutrality, no matter how valued, is not a real option and the state, in seeking to work out an RE programme for primary schools that is *about* religion and avowedly not 'religious formation' or catechesis, presumes to square a circle.

The field of RE for children with SEN may initially seem to refer to a singular curricular area. However, as with literacy and numeracy, the complexity of the human person demands a more comprehensive response than the curricular areas of English and maths infer. Further, the complexity of the process of delivering education to pupils with SEN may prove as much a barrier as the precise needs of given individuals: the 'chain of actions' may need quality control (Nilsen & Herlofsen 2012), especially in light of the gap 'between intention and practice' (Nilsen & Herlofsen 2015, p. 56). Perhaps even more than these foundational pillars of a child's education, essential elements of RE permeate the child's educational process: they vivify – once but no longer the term used for this element of a child's holistic education – that process (Government of Ireland 1999) but are not integrated into the other curricular areas of Irish primary education. For the child with special needs the issues are more convoluted still. This complexity, coupled with meagre public debate or research, underpins the necessity for the present study. Perhaps a 'climate

of consensualism' (O'Sullivan 2012, p. 191) will prevail, perhaps opposition, perhaps defeat. Yet, as the rights of all children, and especially those with special needs, to a full education and to be included in mainstream educational experience are being increasingly voiced and justified, the lack of state reflection on the religious dimensions of special education calls for redress. For instance, the Education Act 1998 fails to offer a definition of 'religious' education, though its framers can hardly have been unaware of the contested nature of the term. However, because it does mention (#15.2.b) the religious as one of the dimensions of education that parents, under the Constitution, have, as right and duty, to provide to their children (Art. 42.1), it seems reasonable to presume that it is or may be on the basis of these two mentions that the importance of and implications for religious education may someday be legally determined. This helps to highlight the role this study plays in focusing attention on an issue of vital importance, and it sets forth an agenda for foundational educational policy, more extensive research and probative accommodations and action plans.

More theologically, Miroslav Volf maintains that 'religions are carriers of compelling visions of flourishing' (Volf 2015, p. xi). Christians agree and go on, therefore, as Hession argues, for 'a more reflexive type of Christian identity' (2013, p. 172). Too, there is a fruitful circularity in adapting religious education programmes to meet the special needs of children: O'Farrell (2016) builds on Berryman (2009a, 2009b) who builds on Cavalletti (2002) who builds on Montessori (1995). Nevertheless, the paucity of research, quantitative or qualitative, and the lack of comment, let alone in-depth analysis, in standard works in the field validate the present study on religious education for children with SEN.

In answer to the question what does the literature say about the RE of pupils with SEN, in a world that suffers from a 'deluge of information' (Gardner 2006), we have moved from the relatively recent position of 'nothing' to a less bleak assessment. With respect to empirical studies in which quantitative data are generated we are still at the nothing stage. And regarding BoMs we have almost no empirical data either and consequently nothing on BoMs' engagement with the RE of pupils with SEN, from any tradition (and not just the Roman Catholic church). Sullivan's focus on the BoM as something beyond the supporters' club of a principal. Instead, a BoM provides a strategic view, acts as a set of critical friends, ensures accountability and is guardian of the school's mission (2000, p. 153) and these have to forefronted today: because education concerns the transformation of lives and the fulfilling of potential (see Cumasú, DES 2019, p. 8), the role of BoMs is conceptualized as transformative and empowering in terms of the lives and futures of

pupils. Whether with secular or religiously tinted glasses, the issues raised by the conceptualization of RE for children with SEN require observation, analysis and critique if the rights of these children to participate in life and society to the fullest possible extent are to be vindicated. Knowing where the gaps in our knowledge are in relation to the RE of pupils with SEN we are now ready to set up the methodological framework that will enable us to garner hard data on this central issue at least in relation to BoMs in some Irish Roman Catholic primary schools and assist in developing a vision of how to bridge these gaps; hence we turn to methodology in the next chapter.

Chapter 3 RESEARCH DESIGN

> *It's easy to lie with statistics but it's hard to tell the truth without them.* (Andrejs Dunkels, cited in Charles Wheelan, *Naked Statistics*, p. xv)

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I outline the design of the project as it evolved from previous investigation, reading of the literature and development of theory. In this section (3.1) the methodology, particularly as it relates to the quantitative dimension, is justified. The design paradigm and the inherent ethic underpinning it are addressed in the next section (3.2). The story of the research's design follows (3.3) before I detail the instruments used to generate the data, to wit, the questionnaires, contact with members of BoMs, and interviews (3.4). The procedures, in chronological order, are outlined (3.5): Questionnaires 1 and 2, with the intervening Feedback, and the final Interviews, which deepen the data and provide critique. A 'mid-term' revision of the initial process was necessitated and this is explained (3.6). An overview of certain theoretical and procedural issues pertaining to the statistical evaluation of collected data (3.7) becomes the propaedeutic to discussions in chapter four. An evaluation of the design, in terms of the process's validity, strengths and limitations, is offered (3.8) before the chapter concludes.

The design is typically classified as mixed methods, i.e. both qualitative and quantitative, even though it exceeds this remit. The literature review has already contributed to the qualitative dimension (Flick 1998; Silverman 2010; Patton 2015) whereas the present chapter principally addresses the quantitative one. More precisely, this is an online, descriptive, quantitative survey-questionnaire, in two iterations, with intervening feedback, and follow-up semi-structured interviews. Driving this design is awareness of both the school-going child who has SEN and the adult who is likely to be or may become a member of a BoM. BoM members, who will be affected by this research, had to be involved in the design itself; therefore, a pilot was first carried out (see Mertens & McLaughlin 2004, p. 22). The process and results seem unique: no evidence of data-collection on the attitudes of Irish primary school Boards of Management to the religious education of pupils with special needs has been found (chapter 2); coincidentally, none was found in relation to second level schools either.

Many elements pertained to the project. One of main ones was the construction of a trustworthy process the outcomes of which would be coherent and credible, both internally and externally, as well as self-recommending, i.e. others would be encouraged to undertake similar research on other cohorts of members of BoMs. Guiding the work was a desire to be faithful to what BoM members think, without authorial intrusion and in as 'neutral' a way as possible. Awareness of such concerns, hopefully, trumps inevitable falls from the ideal. Building on Guba's work (1981), Krefting (1990) helpfully compares the criteria to be employed in qualitative and quantitative approaches to research (Table 2).

Comparison of criteria by research approach		
Guba's criteria	Qualitative approach	Quantitative approach
truth value	credibility	internal validity
applicability	transferability	external validity
consistency	dependability	reliability
neutrality	confirmability	objectivity

Source: Krefting 1991, p. 217 (adjusted)

Table 2: Comparing approaches to research

Research, including the present project, is predicated on faithfulness to what is the case (truth value) and should be reliable both in terms of how it is pursued (being dependable, reliable) and with what personal approach (neutrality, objectivity). I intended the research to be a model for others to adopt (being applicable and transferable because it exhibited 'external validity'), with due and appropriate adaptation. Nevertheless, like prophecy (cf. 1 Corinthians 13:9), knowledge is provisory, and certitude illusory. However, this does not vitiate truth-seeking; it does alert us to the need to be cautious, especially, as here, the attitudes of respondents and participants are overtly and openly sought, and to be humble. Attitudes, though neither permanent nor immutable, become trustworthy indicators of certain adults' beliefs and motivations when they are unconfusedly sought, carefully recorded from and properly distributed to competent respondents/participants who commit their expertise, time and effort, without public credit or remuneration, to the good of others. In relation to BoMs, these others are children on whose behalf the adults, who are nominated by Patrons, teacher-peers, parental and community groups, devote their energy and skills, often *pro bono publico*, and are appointed and act in accordance with ecclesiastical, civic and legal obligations and rights (Education Act 1998; GDC 1998; DES 2015c; CPSMA 2012). Their attitudes should be sought as a group for the sake of those for whom they act, to wit, the pupils, and for the enlightenment and ongoing professionalism of that body of which they are the constituent parts, namely, the local BoM. With this

double imperative, then, I suggested attitudes on the RE of pupils with SEN from BoM members in one patronal district in Ireland. Thus, the quantitative data that the research elicited was designed to fit the purpose of recording BoM members' attitudes (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2011, p. 604). This itself cannot mean that there is complete accord between marks on a scoring sheet and deeply held beliefs: a statement may have been ambiguous, a participant confused, a situation rushed, a determinative mood predominant; there may be a mismatch between statement(s) and expectation, either by researcher or participant (or both); people change their mind or alter one opinion on the basis of another circumstance; assumptions may arise from presumptions, etc. Recognizing that I as researcher had my own assumptions and opinions – attitudes – made me alert to the likelihood of latent or lurking assumptions within myself and to the need to build into the research elements of self-critique (Mertens, 2015, p. 5; also King & Horrocks 2010). On the whole, a researcher trusts that, whatever individual 'errors' there may be, there is a reasonable modicum of accuracy. Because humans, as Pascal averred, tend to be governed more by the *art de persuader* or *esprit de finesse*, with its intuitive principles, than by the *esprit géométrique* (Pascal 1995, p. 183), and as a corrective follow-up strategy, I conducted some interviews so that confusions and misinterpretations by participants could be identified and allowed for, more robust and qualitative data gathered, and more trustworthy information sifted, measured and put to use. For, interviewing can 'provide us with valid knowledge about our conversational reality' (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009, p. 300). Validity itself raises the question of the type of measure that should, or can, be applied; against what scale does one measure? And what is scale? Morel, Coburn, Catterson & Higgs examine 'multiple, legitimate ways to conceptualize scale' while focusing on adoption, replication, adaptation and reinvention (2019, pp. 370-372) as providing a typology that is flexible and dynamic (p.369). Scale, they define, is the outcome or 'desired end-state for how a large number of users engage with an innovation' (p. 370).

Controversy arises in relation to scales that are devised from quantitative data. Attitudes that are developed from statements characterized ordinally, i.e., Likert items, are common in educational, social and behavioural research (see Flora & Curran 2004; Clason & Dormody 1994; Gliem & Gliem 2003; Carifo & Perla 2008). Sometimes, as in the present research, the task is not to test a construct of, say, Roman Catholic orthodoxy in relation to opinions on RE (though an approximation to that may be possible), but rather 'to gain some insight into what people feel or believe about something' (Robson 2011, p. 302); that something, in the present research, is the RE of pupils with SEN. Some of the item-statements used form a summated rating scale (Robson 2011, p. 304; see below),

categorized by Flora & Curran as 'discrete realizations of a small number of categories' (2004, p. 466; Harpe 2015) but most are statements likely – some often, others rarely, a few not – to be heard in conversation in relation to SEN, RE and, finally, RE for pupils with SEN; they are intended to reflect a wide range of opinions; while some reflect my opinions, others do not. There is no pretence that scales here are measured by ratio or that they are concerned with minutely exact correspondences (Connolly 2007, pp. 40-43).

Nevertheless, in relation to Likert scales, I follow Harpe (2015), who recommends *inter alia*:

- scales that have been developed to be used as a group must be analysed as a group, and only as a group

- aggregated rating scales can be treated as continuous data

- individual rating items with numerical response formats as least five categories in length may generally be treated as continuous data (pp. 840-843).

Although accepting Jamieson (2004) and her critique of the use of Likert scales, because her reference point is medical research that requires a degree of exactness that neither pertains to human attitudes nor is appropriate to them, I do not follow her or Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2011) in rejecting the use of Likert scales; their way risks conflating *géométrique* with human beliefs and intuitions (see Douven 2017).

3.2 ETHICAL RESEARCH PARADIGM

Different markers of the research need to be laid bare so that the integrity of the process is affirmed: how the research is underpinned (3.2.1), measured (3.2.2), conceptualized (3.2.3), ethically presented (3.2.4), proceeded with (3.2.5), and formally approved by the University (3.2.6). The educational paradigms that we hold – also called 'myths or habitudes, habitually unexamined attitudes' (Flores, Cousin & Díaz 1991, p. 369) or 'persistence of preexisting understandings even after a new model has been taught that contradicts the naïve understanding' (Pellegrino 2006, p. 4) – are like statistical latent variables: they operate powerfully but unhidden and unrecognized; therefore, we do well to reveal how they underpin this project.

3.2.1 Ontological and epistemological underpinnings

In chapter one, two significant understandings of human personhood – the Heideggerian and biblical – were posited as foundational interpretations. Because they engage with patterns of how one experiences the world and reflexively thinks about it they enable individuals to distinguish themselves from one another even as they establish commonalities of praxis, purpose, engagement and care. Also and arising from them, how one comes to know and how one's opinions can be distinguished from justified beliefs are validated. These were the ontological and epistemological matters underpinning the dissertation and they need to be reiterated here because from them was derived the overarching methodological framework, which included theory, textual analysis and instruments such as questionnaire-surveys, interviews and engagement with the target population, employed in this dissertation. Relatively seamlessly and continuing to engage with them, here, we are moving from theory and text on RE, SEN and RE for pupils with SEN, to a calibration of the instruments themselves such that their design instantiates even as it validates the research itself.

3.2.2 Measuring

The core construct of the research instrument, the questionnaire, was designed to measure attitudes to the RE of pupils with SEN. Naturally and epistemologically, there are component constructs that arise out of this core, namely, RE and SENs (see Steiner 2001, p. 116); it would be strange if they did not for, in the first instance, the thesis-construct itself arose from the conjoining of the sub-constructs and the subsequent realization that in this conceptual coalescing there is a hitherto unmapped intellectual topography, viz. where can one find, in relation to pupils with SEN, that vivifying of the school day that Catholic education espouses (even though, as a value in primary education, this has been formally withdrawn from the Rules for National Schools, see below). As seen from the literature review there is a lacuna, only lately beginning to be addressed in educational practice though it should have arisen earlier, at least out of clear Roman Catholic educational theory dating back to Vatican II (see *GE* 1965). Thus, my identification of BoMs as sites for hermeneutical excavation and mission review is a marker of stakeholder conceptualization: BoMs occupy a strategic, weighty position between state level educational policy and local, contextual educational delivery; their representative, community role and their formal responsibility for a school's vision and ethos mark them as the linchpins of the tenor and direction of local education. How they measure the vision and ethos of their role marks how they measure up to the task.

3.2.3 Process conceptuality

The construction of this research attempts to be faithful to these weighty matters by drawing out the opinions of members of BoMs respectfully and comprehensively. Hence, the importance of weighting the component parts of the research instrument, the questionnaire on attitudes. Because the research was attempting to derive data to support the construction of a new category, the RE of pupils with SEN, I chose to give equal weight, in terms of attitude-statements, to both the RE and SEN sections of the questionnaire. Another section, with the same weighting, related to attitude-statements that combined RE and SEN. By correlating the three sets of attitude-statements – the RE, and SEN, and the RE for pupils with SEN – I intended, in the first instance, to demonstrate what significant numbers of committed education authorities on an issue for which they have responsibility actually believed and, in the second, to provide them with a sufficient body of data with which they could meaningfully dialogue and, possibly and in consequence, contribute to the conceptualization of effective policy, the formulation of educational outcomes and an evaluation process that would critically improve learning and life outcomes for pupils. If a charge is laid that, in addition to the above components of the questionnaire and the unremarkable but necessary gathering of background statistical information on the participants, there is another, unnecessary component, the religious attitudes *per se* of participants, I reply: I saw the latter as a necessary corollary component which might yield categories of critique for latent – perhaps unreflective/unreflexive – beliefs or attitudes that would materially affect the stated ones on RE and SEN. In short, these attitude-statements were designed to make the subsequent analysis more robust and refined through a process of triangulation (Robson 2011, p. 158; Pallant 2013).

3.2.4 Trust and confidentiality

Thus, this research entailed investigation of deeply held beliefs and possibly conflicted positions on matters of faith, education and ethical action. Therefore, it was imperative that I as researcher acted ethically toward not only the participants but all readers of the research-in-process as well as those for whose benefit the research is, in the final analysis, undertaken, namely, pupils with SEN. Fortunately, the participants, as members of BoMs, could be and were taken to be responsible adults, worthy of positions of trust and chosen by peers or higher authorities as such. Care was taken to guarantee confidentiality and anonymity; the questionnaires were so constructed that neither I nor anyone else could know the identity or location of any given participant. It was only in the final, revised stage of the process that any of the participants could be identified by me, though not by

anyone else; therefore, extra warning was afforded to them but all of them stated that they were happy to contribute regardless. The security of DCU's online survey systems was availed of to further guarantee the security and confidentiality of all the data I received; this was graciously assisted by DCU's Information Systems Services department. All participants were informed of the possibility of being able to resile from the research if they so wished. No ethical issues presented themselves beforehand or afterwards that I became aware of. Nevertheless, because it was always possible that a given participant might react in an unforeseen way, care was taken to provide contact details for myself, my Directors and the Ethics Committee of DCU in the information accompanying the Questionnaires.

3.2.5 Procedure, content and learning

As no record of research such as has been undertaken here has been found its nature is essentially exploratory, therefore. The research seeks to state more clearly the problem concerning the RE of pupils with SEN and the responsibility of BoM members to them. It is intended to lead to an improved final research design, with advice on data collection and choice of participants for future researchers. The questionnaires, because they function at a remove, as it were, from the participants themselves are intended to lay bare what is thought of the care of pupils with SEN, under specific headings. Thus, the uniqueness of the problematic, the structure and process of the research, and the adaptations made contribute to BoMs in their essential educational role and offer members a pathway for their own development, personally and professionally, should they so wish.

Because *Questionnaire 1* yielded 96 participants and *Questionnaire 2* yielded 31 out of an estimated population of 3400 members of BoMs, representativeness and generalizability are not met. Nevertheless, this research has not been done before. RE and SEN have not been combined before; BoMs have not been research-targeted before; therefore, the content is also exploratory.

Nevertheless and in light of the exploratory procedure and content, the particular strength of the dissertation is the range of insights gained into a new conceptual area along with actual data that derive from reflective engagement with the issue. Thus, a critiqued process for future researchers, which is provided later, is engendered.

3.2.6 Research ethics

From the above it is already clear that this research engages neither vulnerable adults nor pupils themselves. The DCU Ethics Approval is included (Appendix A) and the Plain Language Statement (Appendix B) itemizes the anonymity, respect for privacy and right to withdraw of all participants. Though no adverse outcomes were expected, their possibility was prepared for and contact details for the researcher, directors of this research and the Ethics Committee were provided on each of the questionnaires.

3.3 DESIGNING THE RESEARCH

The research undertaken comprised a five-stage process, with two main elements, namely, quantitative and qualitative. The first stage began with the literature review (chapter two). The second and fourth stages formed the essential quantitative element, which will be explored in the next chapter. The third stage, which is comprised of feedback from the second stage to the population, is, therefore, rooted in the quantitative element, too. The fifth and final stage was comprised of the semi-structured interviews and, along with the first stage, was qualitative. According as the research progressed it became clearer that an integrated qualitative-quantitative research model was being constructed that went beyond the usual idea of a 'mixed model' one. Robson (2011) prefers the term 'multi-strategy research' (p. 29). This model, though more complex than either a qualitative or quantitative model, attempts to engage Robson's plea for real world research. Exploring this new area of research into BoMs afforded opportunities for description and explanation as well as employment of instruments that complement 'an emancipatory or empowerment purpose' (Robson 2011, p. 39). This section demonstrates *in nuce*, through an outline of the data-gathering (3.3.1), the potential participants (3.3.2) and the piloting (3.3.3), the design's potential to embrace description, explanation and emancipatory action from an exploratory basis.

3.3.1 Bridging a gap

It was my clear intention, from the outset, to offer something of value to BoMs in the archdiocese in recognition of their participation in the research. Relevant data – the feedback (see below) – were promised to BoMs to assist their engagement with the issue of the RE of pupils with SEN, on the presumption that, in the absence of other sources of such data, reflection would have been seriously curtailed. I believed at the time that *Questionnaire 1* and the Feedback formed a natural prolegomenon to what I planned to make the core focus of the dissertation, namely, *Questionnaire 2* and its responses; in other

words, the overarching process should serve to bridge at least some of the gap already identified.

3.3.2 Potential participants

I proposed to survey all current members of BoMs of Roman Catholic primary schools in the archdiocese of Dublin. In this cohort there are a total of 430 schools (information supplied by the education secretariat of the archdiocese, February 2018). The archdiocese embraces the country's largest conurbation, Dublin, as well as a diversity of schools extending over most of Wicklow and parts of Kildare, Laois, Carlow and Wexford. Its current Ordinary is Archbishop Diarmuid Martin, who is also Metropolitan of the ecclesiastical province of Dublin. Archbishop Martin is the Patron of Roman Catholic schools in the archdiocese. Thus, the target population for this research is representative of Ireland, urban and rural, as well as significant in its own right. Because of the active nature played by those surveyed and interviewed they are more properly termed 'participants' (Mertens 2015, pp. 3-4).

Boards of Management are comprised of two representatives of the staff of the school, two representatives of parents, two representatives of the community, and two nominees of the Patron. Thus, there is a total population of BoM member-participants of 3440. In the generation of data-statistics, then, 3440 participants comprise the total population, though it is accepted that fluctuations in this number will exist at any given moment due to resignations, incapacity and, as in the case of my own BoM's chairperson, death. Current BoMs were constituted in December 2015 and will run for a 4-year period. In December 2015 I was chosen as a teachers' representative on my own school's BoM; when, in engaging the research, I contacted BoM members I self-identified as both a researcher and a fellow BoM member. By the latter I hoped to engage the attention, and support, of BoM members who might otherwise not be particularly interested in engaging with research. Academically, however, this self-identification names my status as an insider-outsider researcher. On the one hand, I engaged in the planning, execution and delivery of research under the normal rubrics of academic impartiality and objectivity, fairness and honesty, rigour and depth as any unbiased outsider is expected to preserve. This does not contradict Cipriani's valid point that 'value frameworks and ethical bases' always influence, wittingly or unwittingly, any researcher (2012, pp. 494-495). On the other, I conducted my research as someone who is an insider of the very area that I am investigating. Furthermore, this insider perspective has a double sense: while active as a teacher of pupils with borderline or mild general learning difficulties, I was also recently appointed to the

BoM of my local school and so was a member of the cohort of educationalists I planned to survey as an integral part of my research project. Nevertheless, as a teacher-researcher I was adopting a role that is increasingly recommended for teachers in order that the professionalization of teaching as well as the quality of the contribution of my teaching to my pupils would all alike improve (Houser 1990; Hamza, Palm, Palmqvist, Piqueras & Wickman 2018). This aspect of my research did not involve contact with pupils and, therefore, no obvious cause for ethical concern was seen to arise (see above and Appendix A). The research would constitute a professional boon (Corbin Dwyer & Buckle 2009, p. 61), even though it might be thought that membership of the body to be surveyed could lead to a conflict of interest; I maintain that, in the research, this latter was obviated because of my self-identification (Loughran & Northfield 1996). Indeed, Corbin Dwyer & Buckle (2009) argue for a balancing of both insider and outsider perspectives in research that should 'abandon these constructed dichotomies and [instead] embrace and explore the complexity and richness of the space between entrenched perspectives' (p. 62). Members of BoMs, being persons of high regard in the eyes of colleagues, whether teachers, parents or community members, and patrons, are more likely to think and act independently even as they seek what is best for the children in their care.

Likely members of a BoM might be expected to display a degree of homogeneity beyond that pertaining in society generally. This is even more to be expected where a number of respondents were members of the same BoM and may be presumed to form a 'cluster of concern' among themselves through regular interactions. However, the professionalism often pertaining to members of BoMs argues for greater heterogeneity of opinion, conscious deliberation and principles.

Again, it was clear that there was no insurmountable ethical dilemma posed by my being a BoM member once I stayed alert to holding and demonstrating principles of openness, disclosure, willingness to learn and commitment to dialogical sharing, especially in interviews.

3.3.3 Pilot Survey

At a training session, organized by the Roman Catholic authorities of the Archdiocese of Dublin in June 2016 for BoM members, I was granted permission by the Chair, who supported research in RE, to pilot a questionnaire for the present research. There were some 120 members of BoMs present and I had a response of 32. As I looked at these data I had already progressed in my thinking and was aware of some limitations in the questionnaire, such as the language employed: participants were presumed to come from

the teaching sector, and statements were not broad enough to elicit a diversity of opinions or attitudes. Conversations about my research held at that session, with some of those present, however, were seminal in producing an expanded, more inclusive, reflective questionnaire.

As an additional safeguard I approached two fellow-researchers who were pursuing their own doctorates and requested them to assess my revised questionnaire. In consequence, the language of some statements was altered. For instance, it was felt that the statement 'Having a special need is a curse from God' was 'too strong'. I modified the few statements that were pointed out to me; no other change was required (see Appendix E).

3.4 DESIGNING THE INSTRUMENTS

At this point, the instruments contributed the research's quantitative and qualitative dimensions. The first and second questionnaires were primarily quantitative, though each allowed for qualitative feedback from participants; also, the feedback to the population was quantitative. The semi-structured interviews were qualitative.

The quantitative data collection was empirical and systematic: data were collected, screened and cleaned, analysed and evaluated in order to produce 'hard' data. The purpose of these hard data was to collate, assess and analyze, across a range of BoM member-types, attitudes of those members to the RE of pupils with SEN. Unusually, perhaps, but in line with the exploratory nature of the research, I did not begin with preconceived notions of the outcomes of the analysis. Indeed, various statements to which participants were asked to respond were antithetical to my personal views; all that was required was that the participants could and would respond honestly to a wide range of posed positions. I advised them not to spend too much time reflecting on their responses.

With the intention of offering something of value to BoMs in the archdiocese for their participation in the research, relevant data – the Feedback – were promised to BoMs to enable them to engage with the issue of the RE of pupils with SEN, on the presumption that, *faute de mieux* and without other sources, little or no reflection would have been likely to have been undertaken hitherto. Though this promise did not produce a higher return rate of questionnaires, the obtained data are the first, original and, as such, irreplaceable, and are useful for future reflection and research. The following sub-sections take us through the process of constructing the questionnaires (3.4.1), their scaling (3.4.2) and dissemination to participants (3.4.3), in a more detailed way.

3.4.1 Questionnaires and their Construction

The basic questionnaire took shape quickly. The argument for utilizing Likert-items was initially based on their ease of administration, ubiquity of use and, for participants, simplicity of use. The theorized 'gap' led directly to the construction of a range of item-statements across RE and SEN, following the model of Rensis Likert (1932) that derived from his own doctoral work and which has since proved, in spite of criticism, foundational. Their still controversial use and my plan to make primary and extensive use of them required at least justification to myself. Likert had sought to access and use statistically underlying dimensions of survey participants' attitudes on the basis of their choices on what we have since come to call Likert(-like) items. On a continuum from negative to positive, participants could easily record the strength of their reactions to various statements or 'attitudes' presented to them. This method was universally applicable, allowed for diversity or presentation, and could be commonly coded. Furthermore, when items that applied to a more or less common subject-area were grouped together, they could be summed and averaged into Likert scales; then such scales permitted a more parametric analysis. At the heart of Likert data is the possibility of discovering latent variables within participants' data (see Bargh 2017).

Ostensibly, nominal and ordinal data are not subject to arithmetical operations as they are considered to be categorical. However, ordinal data have been treated as interval; Likert scales are routinely treated as 'continuous interval scales' (Wu & Leung 2017, p. 528). Wu & Leung argue for using more points – they favour 11 (i.e. 0-10) – on Likert items and in the construction of scales, 'making it closer to normality and interval scales' (2017, p. 531). However, their own simulations demonstrate 'closer' alignment between raw and true scores according as the points increase, though there was no suggestion that less points invalidated analysis; they say that still more research is required to prove that 11-point scales are better overall than ones with less points.

Though debate still surfaces on the legitimacy of some statistical uses of Likert(-like) items and scales, their applicability and use has made them ubiquitous and vital to many areas of research that may not otherwise yield essential data. As medical doctors depend on a patient's self-assessment of their pain-threshold, for instance, before prescribing ameliorating medication, so psychologists and educationalists, to name a few, depend on the attitudes that participants display before approving psychological and educational (respectively) procedures for patients and pupils. To the charge that the measure between points of an item is, at best, ordinal and not interval, it can be pointed out that any measure

is *ad hoc* to the extent that people agree (or disagree) with it; for, measuring, which is inescapable, is sometimes undefined, sometimes undefinable. Here, it vitally concerns a necessary aspect of my overall project. For, measuring, inescapable in modern educational culture, is of central concern to BoMs, too.

3.4.2 Language of scale

While the responses on the Likert(-like) items were coded with consecutive integers, the verbal labels corresponded, more or less regularly, to even-spaced levels. The parameters or bounds of the labels represented opposite poles and, on a 5-point item, Likert's own usage, were centred symmetrically around a neutral mid-point that functioned like zero on a number-line. Therefore, I opted for a 5-point item on each attitudinal statement, ranging from 'disagree strongly' to 'strongly agree'. A midpoint of 'neither agree nor disagree' was chosen for the 'neutral' position. I attempted to pre-empt confusion on the neutral position – e.g. did this choice indicate the participant's true neutrality on the statement at issue, did it really imply a lack of information to enable a 'real' choice to be made, or did the participant not wish to indicate her/his own view – by giving it a meaning that approximated a mid-way point between two poles. The reason for the altered placement of 'strongly' at the poles was to provide a visual clue to the value that each pole represented and so avoid directional confusion. Also, in allowing participants to progress through the statements without having to make any qualitative 'comments', my intention was to avoid forcing participants into either a positive or negative position if that was not their actual position. This notwithstanding, in the second questionnaire, participants had to write some comment on a statement before the online questionnaire permitted them to move to the next item.

Because the scoring of items recorded 'strength' should they be regarded as merely nominal/categorical items or ratios? Should calculations focus on proportions or on means and standard deviations? Much debate centres on this question. In the present work, Likert items were treated as ordinal for there was undeniably an order within each item (Carifio & Perla 2008; Norman 2010; Bishop & Herron 2015). On the other hand, others consider using Likert scales an abuse (Jamieson 2004). When constructing a Likert scale, however, the inherent continuous summation or mean demanded that it be treated as continuous data (Boone & Boone 2012). Sullivan & Artino (2013), building on Norman (2010), defend the use of Likert(-like) scales.

Initially, three sets of Likert-items were drawn up before I realized that I should separate out statements that applied more to the personal religious dispositions and attitudes of

participants than those attitudes directed to RE, SEN and RE for pupils with SEN. I envisaged only one scale, to be derived from several items relating to self-definition as a Roman Catholic. Otherwise, no presumptions were made beyond presenting items that might attract a wide range of views. Consequently, I hoped to record a level of diversity true to the population of all BoM members.

It was clear that the language of the questionnaire would have to be adapted to make it more 'friendly' toward non-teaching members. In subsequent discussions with DCU staff and fellow researchers, therefore, I developed a more clear presentation and a more comprehensive range of statements in the questionnaire, though the overall design did not significantly (have to) change from the original: personal and school data that would profile the participants and the contexts they represented, followed by three sets of attitudinal items, which encompassed RE, SEN, and RE in the context of pupils with special needs. As indicated, certain statements were withdrawn from the sets in order to form a distinct set designed around each participant's religious identity; this was added between the personal and school data and the three attitudinal sets.

In sum, in relation to RE, SEN and RE for pupils with SEN, the statements proffered sought to engage a wide spread of opinions, but without predetermining or proposing how those opinions 'should' be responded to.

3.4.3 Contacting participants

The next issue to be decided was the format by which the questionnaire would be conducted. Visiting or writing to each of the members were not options either from a logistical or financial point of view. The time needed, knowledge of who the members were and how they could be contacted ruled out such an approach, as did the financial implications of three postings with stamped self-addressed envelopes for two of these. If I received the expected response-rate (see below) there would be an additional burden of entering all the data into a database within the constraints of professional duties and academic study. Hence, I quickly resolved to engage the services of an online survey programme, viz., SurveyMonkey. The besetting issue was the security of whatever data-collection process was to be chosen, because I had to guarantee it. I sought the guidance of the Information Services System of DCU. Resulting from this consultation I decided to use the Google Forms facility of the university as all data-gathering was protected under the latter, thereby obviating a central concern at the same time as I was being educated into the use of Forms.

Knowing that access to a database of BoM members' contact details could not be provided to me under data protection legislation, I approached the legal advisors of the Archdiocese's education secretariat, explained my circumstances and sought support for a plan whereby I would send to the latter an electronic link to my questionnaire; the Archdiocese, on my behalf, would send this link to all BoM members on their database. This proposal obviated legal difficulties, was acceptable and was employed on three occasions thereafter: dispersal of the first questionnaire, feedback from the first questionnaire, and the second questionnaire.

Each contact with members of BoMs included a brief, opening letter addressed to Principals and Managers. This letter included the electronic link to the questionnaire or feedback, as appropriate (see below), with a request to forward the letter to fellow BoM members. The dissemination of the link to other BoM members depended wholly on whether or not a principal and/or manager undertook to forward this link. Though the language of manager has been largely superseded (CPSMA 2012; DES 2015c; *contra* Government of Ireland 2019, p. 41) by that of chairperson, the former is still widely used in practice and, in the context of my communications, I felt it more likely to catch the eye of any erstwhile chairperson/manager of a BoM.

3.5 Data Procedures

Here the employment of the instruments is detailed: *Questionnaire 1* (3.5.1), the Feedback that I provided to BoMs (3.5.2), *Questionnaire 2* (3.5.3) and the interviews (3.5.4).

3.5.1 First Questionnaire

All members (N=3440) of the cohort of members of Roman Catholic primary school BoMs were to be surveyed. I anticipated a response-rate of about ⅓ or between 1,100 and 1,500. This expectation was based on these considerations: the participants were *ipso facto* persons of responsibility; evidentially, there was no previous survey of this cohort; two charities which teachers, at least, tend to support would benefit; the request had the support of the religious body with responsibility for this educational sector; and the request came from 'one of their own', a fellow-member of a BoM.

At the beginning of November 2017 the first questionnaire (Appendix E) was electronically posted as described above. It comprised a short email of explanation of my research project, with a Google Forms link to the questionnaire which itself began with a plain language statement that made clear the research's purpose, design, ethical approval

and contacts; it concluded with a clear indication of my own membership of a BoM (Appendix B).

The questionnaire ran until the end of the year, i.e. 31st December 2017. There were 63 responses at that stage. Google Forms permits their downloading into a comma-separated-format (csv). These data were later imported, first, into Microsoft Excel. From there, they were imported into SPSS, labelled, cleaned and checked for outliers, missing data, and spelling errors. No participant chose 'other' when recording gender. For 'other' in marital status, two indicated they were divorced, one was cohabiting and one was in a relationship. Any missing data in the background section were regarded as choices made by the participants; there were no missing data in the Likert items.

3.5.2 Data Feedback

From the graphics capabilities of SPSS I constructed histograms of the responses to the attitudinal statements and displayed them in a table in a Microsoft Word file (Appendix F). No demographic information was included.

As no participant had indicated willingness to be interviewed, I again appealed, in the note I attached to the feedback, for volunteers. I provided some information on the return-rate of responses, hoping to encourage more, and I left the link to that first questionnaire 'live'. I also made it clear that cheques had been sent to two charities, to wit, the Irish Wheelchair Association and Sunshine House, in recognition of the response rate, as promised in the initial letter accompanying the questionnaire.

This feedback was emailed, through the good offices of Archbishop's house, to all members of BoMs, i.e. not only to the initial participants. This took place in the first week of February 2017. It is not known how many BoM members received this feedback.

3.5.3 Second Questionnaire

By mid-May 2017 I was ready to send out the second questionnaire (Appendix G); a questionnaire in June tends to be more burdensome on school personnel, due to in-school and DES requirements for testing. Its purpose was to ascertain if the original questionnaire and the feedback had helped BoM members, individually or collectively within their school context, to reflect on the question of the RE of pupils with SEN. Though no set response was expected, the statements were designed to elicit the views of participants to the first questionnaire and its feedback, to the three categories (RE, SEN and RE for pupils with SEN) that I had already determined. Appeal was made again for volunteers to be interviewed.

This questionnaire was shorter than the first one; summative in composition, it still had some Likert-like statements; however, what distinguished it structurally was a form-setting that required each participant to type some comment to each statement, in its corresponding comment-box, before being allowed to proceed to the next item. In the comment-boxes and ideally, the data here should offer a 'thick' description and be more qualitative.

As my concerns about response-rate were pressing by this time, I decided not to begin it with the section on biographical and school-based information but, instead, to begin with the statements-cum-comment boxes themselves. At the end, then, came the biographical information, a replication of what was contained in *Questionnaire 1*, with an explanation that, as I had no way of linking the questionnaires, each participant was being asked to complete this section again.

These data were processed in the same way as those for *Questionnaire 1*. Both the original Excel data and the constructed SPSS data were compared for discrepancies. The data were cleaned and readied for use.

3.5.4 Semi-structured Interviews

The purpose of the interviews was to allow a more qualitative reflection on the overall process (see Bryman 2016, pp. 465-499), especially to see if I had provided a useful spur to BoMs and/or individual members so that they would reflect on the RE of pupils with SEN in their care. This was part of the crafting of 'a coherent logic' to my search for what the participants understood to be really the case (Seidman 2013, pp. 16, 20). The basic requirements from my perspective were some feedback on the sections on RE, SEN and RE for pupils with SEN, and on the overall process; thus, the approach was deductive. Fulfilling these requirements would offer some validation and confirmation for the informational route undertaken and permit critical reflection on the overall process as likely (or not) to have been successful in its intent; here, critical reflection included awareness of how I might have undermined the process due to my insider status as a BoM member who was researching BoMs (see Badwell 2016, p. 3). The interviews were structured on the understanding that the interviewees had of RE, SEN and how these related together. I had not presumed on anyone having given much previous reflection to the latter issue, though it is the centre of my preoccupations, on the basis of the lack of evidence in the literature for SEN and RE being linked together. Hence, the interviewees were 'led' from issues that they might be presumed to have reflected on to one that the immediate conversation was to open up. This was a fruitful strategy in the Vygotskian

sense of engaging people in their zone of proximal development (Frederickson & Cline 2009, p. 330). I also wanted to see what 'participant perspectives' were (Bogden & Biklen 1992); in this way, a deeper insight into behaviour might be gained.

Sometimes the order of questioning was altered to avoid 'premature closure' (Robson, 2011, p. 65), taking into account my relationship with the interviewee; this also left open other avenues of inquiry. Participant were not subjected to intensive questioning nor to questioning on all items raised in the questionnaires; willingness to participate seemed guarantee enough that they would raise with me any issue of contention to themselves and, for my part, exploration of attitudes (Seidman 2013) and informed conversation were the order of the day. Studs Terkel states it well: interviewing 'isn't an inquisition' (cited in Seidman 2013, p. 141). I sought to preserve a balance between imparting information that might convey my personal concerns and maintaining participant spontaneity (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 70); I strove to be faithful to the dialogical process itself. At times, issues raised by other interviewees were brought up again and further comment or response requested. The core questions were designed to lead participants into the central elements of RE, SEN and RE for pupils with SEN: they were framed according to 'your understanding' of them in order to personalize and make them non-threatening. I tried to formulate them, however, so that a tableau of 'leading' questions was not evoked (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 301). Instead, I formulated a list of issues that would guide the interviews (Bryman 2016, p. 468). Of the six types of topics in questions that Patton (2002) notes – behaviours, opinions/values, feelings, knowledge, sensory, and background/demographics – the present focus was mainly on knowledge and opinions/values; statements about one's background, or demographics-type questions, were also elicited, similar to those in the questionnaires. Information and opinion were evoked in a critical and self-reflective process of dialogue. Thus, I sought to produce knowledge between the interviewee-participant and myself even as we moved from fact-gathering to sharing of opinion, in a flexible way (Bryman 2016, p. 468). As the former was a fellow professional I encouraged questioning of myself, though there was no doubt that I was the interviewer (see Kvale & Brinkmann 2009, pp. 300-305).

The interviews were held in a place and at a time of convenience for the participant, usually their workplace. In some cases, interviews had to be cancelled at the last minute and conducted at a later date. Introductions included an explanation of the purpose of the interview, the time to be taken, the assurance of both confidentiality and anonymity, and a request for permission to aurally record the interview; at the end, participants signed the

permission form (see Qu & Dumay 2011). All interviewees obliged. To promote a relaxed and conversational atmosphere recording did not begin immediately but only after informal introductions were made, a relationship established and the topic entered upon. An interview, with introduction and farewell, was typically 25-40 minutes. One interview differed from the others in that it was conducted, at the interviewee's request, over the phone; this resulted in a barely audible recording.

The recordings were processed through Audacity in order to reduce noise-interference, and saved in the MP3 format, from which they were transcribed (Appendix H). Guided by Saldaña (2013), the scripts were coded, primarily for RE, SEN, RE with SEN, and personal, professional, inclusion, and critique. These followed a combination of descriptive and structural codings for elemental methods (Saldaña 2013, pp. 83-91). First, a content or concept represented 'a topic of inquiry' that was foundational (p. 83). Second, the use of basic labels provided an inventory of the topics, i.e. 'topic coding' (p. 88). While this process was begun using a separate column for the codes, this soon proved unwieldy. Instead, I began to code with different colours and different backgrounds for the concepts that I wished to identify in the scripts. This proved more successful in identifying pertinent commentary amidst the overall interview. This process of labelling showed themes as well as underlying patterns in what participants said. From the categories that emerged a more formal conceptualizing of what participants thought about the RE of pupils with SEN; the colour-coding was visually clear and unambiguous though at times a statement 'wandered' between different categories, as is natural in conversations. I was not concerned to build a hierarchy of ideas from the interviews, either in the preparatory phase or in the analysis of the transcripts afterwards. This was not simply a question of managing the data (see Bryman 2016, p. 11). Certainly, I wanted participants' views on the different components of my project in line with the elements, such as SEN and RE, but as I had conceived them for the dissertation rather than for the interviews alone. Further, the amount of statements could not possibly be covered in a short interview (30-60 minutes); to have attempted a point-by-point revision of attitudes would not have been a conversation though it would have been inquisitorial perforce. In this sense, the thematic analysis had been established ahead of interviewing, though in the dialoguing between interviewer and interviewee other issues arose, spontaneously; I had allowed for this, sometimes gaining new insight into issues related directly to the project. In sum, I relied on an approach that would be – and proved to be – dialogical, empathetic and open to 'going with the flow'; building an initial trust and openness from my part drew a corresponding openness from my interlocutors and, if there had been any prior apprehensiveness, it vanished without trace; indeed, I

never noticed it at any stage. Interviewees, no less than myself, sought to be truthful, accurate, responsive and responsible. In all cases, a remarkable degree of candour was initiated and maintained until close of the interview session.

3.6 PROCESS REVISION

The research had been designed so that a focused examination of the results of the second questionnaire would be the central component of this dissertation. However and in light of the actual feedback to both questionnaires, I decided to refocus on the first questionnaire as the data here were more robust and therefore more likely to be statistically fruitful. This section details how this decision came to be made. However, the sequence of steps within the plan did not have to be altered. First, information dissemination (3.6.1) is recorded, then come the data-gatherings involved in both questionnaires as well as the feedback (3.6.2), until the revision is itself revealed (3.6.3).

3.6.1 Disseminating information

Relying on the method used to contact me as a member of a BoM I assumed that there was no other repository of contact-details available for my research. Certainly, the DES website permitted a collection of school email addresses to be made. However, its county catchments did not differentiate schools on a diocesan basis and it did not distinguish between Roman Catholic and other denominational, religious, community, etc. schools.

It was now clear that only some members of any given Board had their contact-details recorded; from the data-collection webpage of the Archdiocese only the Manager and Principal were asked to provide these details; it was unlikely that others would supply their contact details; indeed, it was almost certain that they, the individual members, would not have known about this data-gathering in the first instance. If a busy principal either did not notice or decided not to forward my email to fellow-members of the BoM then the only possible participants were the principal and manager. Indeed, on this same premise, the principal was unlikely to respond either. A couple of principals, in subsequent interviews, said that the delete-button on the computer was as often used on a typical school-day as 'junk mail' was dumped in the waste-paper bin, such was the volume of requests received daily. The participant rate, therefore, depended almost wholly on a principal's early morning decision to forward my message. That message had to grasp the principal's attention immediately. As teachers are generally good responders to requests from charities, and my survey guaranteed monetary support for two well-known charities on a *pro rata* response-basis, it is reasonable to suppose that they, at least, from the cohort of

possible member-participants, would have answered my questionnaire had they received it. The poor response-rate is, then, in all likelihood, evidence that most members did not receive the survey-questionnaires. It is probably also evidence for assuming that of those who did respond a disproportionate number came from a limited set of schools, i.e. those in which the principal forwarded my email to all fellow-members.

3.6.2 Questionnaire 1, Feedback, Questionnaire 2, Interviews

The responses that came (n=63) were small in light of my expectations. Nevertheless, I constructed the feedback data and emailed them to all members (Appendix F). This email would have been subject to the limits noted above for the questionnaire and probably suffered much the same fate; later on, from statements made to me personally, it became clear that not everyone who received *Questionnaire 1* received the Feedback or *Questionnaire 2* or both. On the basis that what I was offering at this stage was a service to members in their role of oversight, and irrespective of whether all or few members engaged with my research, I felt that the data might be useful to all and, therefore, I determined to send the feedback to all members.

As the time approached for the second questionnaire, in May 2017, I was concerned to produce a document that was more likely to be completed; it had to be in line with the first one, not require additional ethical approval, and be disseminated before the pressures that beset schools in June became established. Following discussions with some fellow-researchers I decided, as indicated, on a simpler format of questionnaire: participants would be engaged more immediately with the issues, still under the headings of RE, SEN and RE for pupils with SEN, and this required that personal and school data would be requested at a later stage of the process. A smaller number of items was to be completed and more opportunities for personal comment afforded to participants.

However and perhaps unfortunately, no alteration was made to the mode of contact. I emailed, through the educational secretariat of the Archdiocese, the principals and managers, and included a link for the second questionnaire; I maintained the same Plain Language Statement and format. I also left open the links to the first questionnaire and the feedback. I did this in case participants wished to remind themselves of these earlier stages. Volunteers for interviews were requested again.

The number of participants was even lower (n=25) on this occasion. Interestingly, around the time of *Questionnaire 2* an additional 32 people responded to *Questionnaire 1*; this was unexpected but most welcome. Significantly, 12 participants indicated their willingness to

be interviewed, though most (n=8) took no further action when I contacted them to suggest a meeting place and time. This was surprising. My only explanation is that these participants included their email-addresses in the mistaken belief that doing so was necessary to the process of completing the questionnaire; they had not, in other words, intended to volunteer to be interviewed. Interviews did take place with the others (see Appendix H). Three were successfully interviewed at a time and place of their choosing; there were so many altered arrangements by both parties that one person failed to be interviewed by summer's end.

3.6.3 Response and revision

The possible reasons for the low response rate to *Questionnaire 1* require some investigation. It is simplistic to say that my expectations of a high return rate (c.30-35%) were unrealistic: after all, many surveys achieve barely 0.1% of the total population. It is no less simplistic to hold that the questionnaire was inadequate to its purpose and could not be expected to be of relevance or interest to its designated participants, let alone to educational and religious research more generally. Whatever questions the matter raised, something more immediate had to be done in response.

Following advice from specific users of social media I set up a Twitter account in order to advertise the survey-questionnaire. These efforts did not produce any further responses from potential participants. My use of social media came, as it were, after the horse had bolted; the survey had been sent out and I was then trying, in too short a time and without a contact base, to remedy a situation that had mortified. I had been relying on possible participants seeing my profile, noting their eligibility and taking the trouble to respond.

In response and attempting to strengthen the data already gathered, and eschewing the desired randomness and anonymity of the research pursued to this point, I decided to approach members of BoMs whom I knew. Of the latter, five agreed to be interviewed; their interviews are also in Appendix H. Three others initially agreed but did not follow through; one of them informed me that having read through the questionnaire she would have been happy to complete it anonymously but, under present circumstances, was unwilling to do so. In all, 6 agreed to complete *Questionnaire 2* for me and did so; I entered their data into the database. One participant additionally completed *Questionnaire 1*, which had been included for informational purposes only; these data were not included in this research, so that the randomization of these responses remained intact.

In total, *Questionnaire 1* generated 96 participants, *Questionnaire 2* generated 31, and 8 were interviewed.

3.7 DATA META-ANALYSIS

The multi-strategy design contributed to a richer, more layered exploring of the data, quantitative and qualitative. In this section I outline some of the statistical considerations that informed my analysis.

A variety of statistical software was used to explore the data from the questionnaires, for instance, SPSS (version24), Rattle, R and JASP. Statistical power was attempted using G*Power (Mayr, Buchner, Erdfelder & Faul 2007) to determine the power level $(1-\beta)$. It was undertaken after the surveys had been conducted, because the sample size, the alpha-level and, sometimes, the effect size were known; unfortunately, for the overall dataset derived from Questionnaire 1, it was clear that my sample size was less than a third of the required amount, given the number of variables obtained. The fixed error probability ratio, q, was determined as β/α. When calculating scales, as in the 'Roman Catholic person', I preferred to calculate the mean, rather than sum the scores, for averaging presented a more easily interpretable figure across the range of scores; it would, if required, also permit 'substitution from the mean' into a case where a score was not recorded for a statement. Nevertheless, I preferred to accept non-responses to items as such: if a participant-respondent merely missed to make a choice then substitution could be justified; however, non-responses were likely to have been deliberate, e.g. that some participants, who self-identified as female, chose not to indicate their age was not surprising as 'gentlemen should not ask a lady her age'.

As the alpha coefficient (α) is the common measure of internal consistency between items, especially where the construction of a scale is attempted, close correlations between items approach 1: .90 to .99 being strong, with .00 to .69 being weak. Additionally, where manifest variables hide a number of latent ones principal component analysis (PCA) enabled the latter to be separated prior to the checking of the reliability of each component. PCA, in summarizing correlations among variables, yielded a smaller amount of linear combinations. Because the input variables were sets of Likert items, the variances were relatively similar and, therefore, the total variance in all the variables was more easily captured. The eigenvalues, at >1, captured this variance from the variance of individual components.

In the 'real' world humans cannot understand such notions as incarnation and trinity fully; theologically, they are classified as mysteries because it is part of human limitation that, contrary to certain claims, humans do not have omniscience. However, with a tool like variance built into our theological bag of conceptualities a theologian may appeal to a very secular notion – statistical variance – and employ it for greater theological understanding; so too may educationalists. The history of variance demonstrates that, psychologically as well as theologically, it becomes a marker of individuality, of that which stands out from and contrasts with *l'homme moyen* (the idealized average person) that Adolphe Quetelet (1796-1874) measured as another statistical response to Gauss's bell-shaped curve. This focus on the individual, who otherwise becomes noise in statistical analysis, was established by Francis Galton (1822-1911), founder of questionnaire-surveys such as this dissertation contains, and his concept of 'reversion towards mediocrity', better known today as regression towards the mean and measured by a correlation coefficient (Bub [n.d], pp. 9-14). Galton quantified variation from the mean, proved its legitimacy – for Quetelet such variations were 'errors' – and estimated the effect-size; he developed the standard deviation as a measure of normal variation (Stigler 1989). Galton was motivated by the individual('s differences) in a way that is vital to how management and teachers ought to think about the pupils in their care, most especially those pupils who stand most apart from putative norms. The concept of normality is binary and becomes useful in helping educationalists to understand better what is non-normal; alone, however, on a pedestal, it risks becoming egregiously distorting. On the one hand and perhaps benignly, pupils who fit 'the norm' risk being presumed to be normal and not considered as needing any special concern, while, on the other and more noxiously, a conceptual conflating of 'norm' with 'normal' risks asseverating pupils with *in-firmitas* into non-normal people.

3.8 Validity, Strengths and Limitations

The quantitative aspect of the research and the interviewing produced what I as researcher consider to be data that are accurate, given freely and without ulterior motive. In terms of the anonymity of participants, there was randomization in the responses; yet, the research was designed to contact all members of the research population. In the context of the total population, we see that, between both survey-questionnaires, 107 (96 from the first, 11 from the second) individuals responded; therefore, an overall response-rate of 3.11% was achieved, while 20 individuals (18.69% of participants, or 0.58% of the total population) responded to both surveys. Attempts to conduct an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) failed because of an inadequate ratio of cases to variables: a population size of 3440, with a 5%

margin of error and 95% confidence level, requires a sample size of 346. Considering that I had 107 individual participants, the actual margin of error was 9.33%; counting the individual responses, the margin of error reduces to 8.61%. Thus, while the data are real they are not 'real enough' for certain statistical analytical procedures. However, this research is not an epidemiological study; it is anthropocentric and, therefore, takes account of diversity of opinion and attitude. Indeed, a sometime healthy scepticism about the reliability of p-values and a more open approach to learning from a variety of analyses permits us to examine any data that we have and put it to cautiously optimistic use. Restraint in jumping to hasty conclusions coupled with assiduous attention to the data that is there promise a more judicious evaluation and interpretation of the same data. Also, as a recent evaluation of the use of Likert item data acknowledges, 'respondents leave multiple types of information in their response patterns…[and if] this information is reduced to the semantic commonalities of the participants, we may miss the true value of the collected information' (Arnulf, Larsen, Martinsen & Egeland 2018, p. 2362); in other words, factor analysis and latent variables may not yield wholly representative data as they discard otherwise good information as 'noise'. Still and not discounting the caveats expressed, I cautiously chose to use EFA on individual sets of responses to Likert items (Costello & Osborne 2005) as linkages and oppositions were still manifest. The complexity of data themselves in increasing (McDermott & Turk 2015) such that, the more statistical competency presses, the more a scholar's range of expertise has to broaden; this general issue is compounded here by the phenomenon of 'the SEN industry' (Tomlinson 2012) no less than by the limited data (see de Schoot 2008).

Whether all members received the questionnaires is a question that bedevils this research. At best, those who sent out the two questionnaires and the intervening feedback on my behalf had but two email addresses for each BoM, viz. that of the principal and that of the Chair. When I questioned some principals later about the matter, few were certain that they had distributed the questionnaires or feedback to fellow BoM Members though obviously some did and, no less obviously, some did not. One principal, subsequently questioning a fellow-member, found out that he had not and other members were certain that they had not received any correspondence from me. Two principals had received one questionnaire but not the other. The pressing and increasing pressures on principals mean that a process of swift adjudication is made daily on mail and email; if the import of what they scan is not immediately recognized the only receiver is the rubbish-bin.

The time-frame of this research permitted some, though limited, response to challenges as they arose. Meeting issues head-on and responding to them imbricated the whole process with learning opportunities and possibilities for new approaches. In terms of the samples, randomization was maintained in *Questionnaire 1* but not in *Questionnaire 2*; in the latter, the low response rate led to additional participants being recruited from personal contacts, even at the risk of breaking the element of randomness of responses. Nonetheless, the people asked could be relied on to give appraisals that were honest, i.e. not formed from preconceived notions of what the researcher might be thought to have wanted.

Hence, limitation in data-gathering inhibited analysis. Two points need to be made. First, because the data as provided are *per se* valid, they are to be preserved so that other researchers may incorporate them. Second, the data can be employed statistically in more defined or limited ways such that their usefulness is made clear even in this dissertation (chapter four). A particular fruit of the problem with a low response-rate was the insight that any data that are valid must also be statistically valid, unless one accepts that validity is solely and necessarily dependent on statistical rules, or simply, that the cart is put before the horse. This insight is what led me to investigate Bayesian statistics, deriving from Thomas Bayes (1702-1761) and Pierre-Simon Laplace (1749-1827) (see Bernstein 1996). Where a Bayesian approach (Bayes & Price 1763) is taken, I argue that the data gathered can be indeed statistically useful and validly employed in view of additional data being gathered at some later juncture; thus, the challenge to replicate my research is offered.

Perhaps the diocesan secretariat could have been asked to send out some reminders to fill in the questionnaires; however, I was loath to encroach on the support already shown. Nulty discussing the 'adequacy of response rates to online and paper surveys', noted the 23% differential between online (33%) and paper (56%) as evidenced across nine different surveys (2008, p. 302; also Pedersen & Nielsen 2016). There is increasing evidence of a decline in response in first world countries (e.g. Rindfuss, Choe, Tsuya, Bumpass & Tamaki 2015, p. 799). Given that the research was directed at the total population of members of BoMs a more efficient means of contacting them should be devised for future research; this should also be effected at an earlier stage of planning when separate 'gatekeepers of the contact lists' could be sourced. Two contacts from a BoM of eight members means that one can be certain only that 25% are initially contacted and that an undue reliance is placed on the few to contact the many. Contacts from the DES's list of schools should also be used, with appropriate apologies for cross-posting and duplication of requests for survey completion. The risk of multiple answering is, I believe, in the

circumstances, negligible. Social media in a variety of formats, e.g. blogs and Facebook, in addition to Twitter, would have effected greater social purchase and profile, especially if begun in time and within educational circles, e.g. the Catholic Primary School Managers Association (CPSMA), Catholic Clerical Managers Association (CCMA), Educational Studies Association of Ireland (ESAI), Irish Association of Teachers in Special Education (IATSE), and the Irish National Teachers Organisation (INTO). In today's 'network society' religion itself can be networked (Campbell 2012; see Stuart-Buttle 2018); the present project did not take cognizance of this either and missed an opportunity for its wider dissemination. Given that Ireland has an increasing migrant population I should have been alert to the possibility that ethico-epistemological issues which arise when western scholars conduct research among non-western populations may also have applied here (see Durham, Brolan & Mukandi 2014). Also, neither questionnaire sought to guage participants' attitudes to pupil disaffection with school life (McCoy, Darmody, Smyth & Dunne 2007) or with RE alone. In sum and though I was aware of the uniqueness of the research, I presumed that it would be more likely to be filled in by prospective, less research-jaded participants; in future, more attention should be paid to ensuring a higher response-rate.

Though the statements presented as Likert(-like) items were generally reported as clear, some participants did offer criticism about the clarity; at times, this was reported on the basis of not knowing what the researcher wanted, (though, all the researcher wanted was the participant's personal response to the statement). In spite of the alterations made on the basis of the Pilot, the overall 'feel' of the survey instruments must still be considered unduly 'teachery'. If a researcher could feel more secure in obtaining a far higher response-rate, then more types of statements could be experimented with at the piloting stage, so that the issued questionnaire would have a broader appeal at least in terms of breadth of opinion. Some accommodation, too, should be constructed for participants who, though presently participating, were not privy to questionnaires or feedbacks dispatched at an earlier point.

Though the possibility of responding to the questionnaires had been left 'live' for longer than initially planned, in retrospect I feel that they should have been left open longer. Certainly, the process was about one individual's research project; but, included in that project, is the notion of service, firstly, to the community of BoM members, a community not usually recognized in practice but one that achieves a somewhat greater cohesion by engaging with issues such as those raised by the questionnaires, and, secondly, to the

pupils themselves. The possibility of engaging with these issues could have been assisted more.

One of the hitherto unsuspected advantages of using Google Forms was that it permitted participants to compare their opinions and attitudes with the aggregated scores – and corresponding pie-charts – of all previous participants. Also, participants can more easily focus on those aspects of the responses which particularly interest them. And what interests a member is more likely to come onto the agenda of BoM meetings and/or discussions.

It is appropriate, therefore, at the conclusion of this research that the data as gathered be again made available for members; the fruit of my work does not have to depend on new endeavours, only on possibilities being left available. I suggest that members may wish to compare their own views with those recorded here; this could serve as a spur to debate at BoM level.

3.9 CONCLUSION

Inevitably, the formal distinction between knowledge gained through reading the insights of others and knowledge gained from a process designed and executed by oneself (with guidance, permission, and willing support from others, of course) reinforces a conceptuality that, in consequence of carrying out this research, I believe should be replaced by a more holist and integrated one that tends to the unification of knowledge-production. Aside from an historical aetiology as it were of the design and data-collecting processes employed in this research I also refer to the positive contribution that certain statistical concepts, such as variation, may help not only psychologically but also theologically in the task of understanding humans in all their variability and uniqueness (3.7). Furthermore, in this shaping of a research design around the conceptualization of an integrated multi-method approach I offer the usually distinct data-gathering mechanisms – qualitative (theory- and text-based in chapter two, interviewing in chapter four) and quantitative (survey-questionnaires in two iterations in chapter four) – as merging into a singular viewpoint that itself reflects both secular and religious understandings of personhood, whether of a pupil with SEN or an adult member of a BoM, a viewpoint that commends itself to people of faith or no faith.

The distinctive approach adopted here makes design-naming difficult. On the one hand, it seems to extend typical classroom action research (McNiff 2013) to the level of boards of management. On the other, the project's attempt to gather information that seems not to

have been sought hitherto indicates what Slavin calls 'descriptive research' (2009, p. 20). The methods employed gather information and concepts from a wide range of literature and individual opinions, perform analysis and will attempt constructive modelling for BoMs so that pupils with SEN, in particular, will enjoy an enhanced educational experience in primary school. Perhaps, then, wide-range mixed methods for model construction suffices as an *ad hoc* designation.

Chapter 4 FINDINGS

> *...not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything*
> *that counts can be counted.* (William Bruce Cameron, 1963,
> *Informal Sociology*, p. 13)

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Having discussed the instruments and stages of the quantitative dimension of the research in the previous chapter we are now in a position to engage with the empirical findings from that dimension. The three sources of data from the latter are *Questionnaire 1*, *Questionnaire 2* and the Interviews. These sources become the operational structure of this chapter not only on the basis of a simple and straightforward presentation of a large amount of data but also because future use of the data by BoMs is facilitated as the chronological development of the research, in which they partook, is preserved. Those BoM members who participated in the research are enabled to engage with their own responses.

The data from *Questionnaire 1* are presented first (4.2). It is followed by the data from *Questionnaire 2* (4.3). A shorter section is devoted to the Interviews (4.4), which are presented in full in Appendix H. Descriptive and analytical tools from statistics (Mertens & McLaughlin 2004; Nimon 2012; Mertens 2015; Morel, Coburn, Catterson & Higgs 2018) are employed to both record facts and infer certain conclusions from those facts about the population parameters of members of BoMs in Roman Catholic primary schools in the Archdiocese of Dublin. Thus, in both questionnaires, one section, termed 'background information', has the same items and this forms an introduction to the individual questionnaires. Also, both questionnaires address the areas of RE, SEN and RE for pupils with SEN. Nevertheless, both questionnaires are constructed differently and, therefore, require to be analyzed separately. The first questionnaire has Likert items, with minimal commentarial expansion, while the second has few Likert items with greater capacity for comment embedded in its structure. By presenting much of the data in tabular form I intend that these will be preserved for use by future scholars and BoM members. While the interviews also dealt with RE, SEN and RE for pupils with SEN, their semi-structured nature requires that they also be analyzed separately. Data from the interviews are extracted and the 'voices' of participants are enabled to be heard, independently of choices made on

the questionnaire(s). By these means at least some attitudes of BoM members in an Irish context are recorded and reflected on in a way that has not been done hitherto.

4.2 *QUESTIONNAIRE 1*

In this section the data gathered via the first questionnaire, *Questionnaire 1*, are presented. The overall profile of those who responded, in terms of role, membership status, length of service, gender, marital status, age cohort, whether one has a relative with a SEN, and the type of school, is presented first; these data have been disaggregated according to representation on a BoM (4.2.1). The next section outlines the self-descriptions that members gave (4.2.2). Participants' attitudes to RE (4.2.3), SEN (4.2.4) and to RE for pupils with SEN (4.2.5) follow. In 4.2.6 a specific comparison is made between the earliest stage of data collection, as represented in the Feedback (Appendix F) sent to members, and the final number of participants in *Questionnaire 1*.

4.2.1 Profile of participants

The following table (Table 3) summarizes much background information on the participants, their relationship to the BoM and the type of school for which they have a duty of care.

Variables chosen		Total %	Principal %	Patrons' nominee %	Teachers' nominee %	Parents' nominee %	Community nominee %
Role on BoM	Chairperson	15.2	2.9	60.0	0.0	0.0	
	Secretary	27.2	70.6	0.0	12.5	0.0	
	Treasurer	7.6	0.0	10.0	12.5	6.7	
	Ordinary mem.	47.8	23.5	30.0	75.0	86.7	
	Other	2.2	2.9	0.0	0.0	6.7	
Membership prior to 2015	No	24.0	7.9	25.0	50.0	46.7	
	Yes	76.0	92.1	75.0	50.0	53.3	
Length of service (yrs)	≤4	41.7	23.7	40.0	87.5	73.3	
	5-8	24.0	28.9	15.0	12.5	20.0	
	9-12	15.6	15.8	20.0	0.0	6.7	
	13-16	9.4	13.2	15.0	0.0	0.0	
	17-20	3.1	5.3	5.0	0.0	0.0	
	21-24	3.1	7.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	
	25-29	3.1	5.3	5.0	0.0	0.0	
Gender	Female	54.2	65.8	30.0	100.0	40.0	
	Male	45.8	34.2	70.0	0.0	60.0	
Marital status	Married	82.3	71.1	85.0	75.0	100.0	
	Single	8.3	15.8	0.0	25.0	0.0	
	Religious life	5.2	7.9	10.0	0.0	0.0	
	Other	4.2	5.3	5.0	0.0	0.0	
Age cohort	25-29	1.1	0.0	0.0	12.5	0.0	
	30-34	5.5	8.1	0.0	25.0	0.0	
	35-39	7.7	8.1	0.0	25.0	7.7	
	40-44	16.5	13.5	0.0	25.0	61.5	
	45-49	14.3	10.8	15.8	12.5	23.1	
	50-54	24.2	29.7	31.6	0.0	0.0	
	55-59	14.3	21.6	21.1	0.0	0.0	
	60-64	6.6	5.4	10.5	0.0	0.0	
	65-69	7.7	2.7	15.8	0.0	0.0	
	70-74	2.2	0.0	5.3	0.0	7.7	
Close relative with a SEN(s)	No	68.8	68.4	75.0	75.0	53.3	
	Yes	31.3	31.6	25.0	25.0	46.7	
Parental status	Not a parent	24.0	36.8	10.0	37.5	0.0	
	Is a parent	76.0	63.2	90.0	62.5	100.0	
School gender	Girls only	19.8	13.2	35.0	12.5	13.3	
	Boys only	13.5	13.2	15.0	12.5	26.7	
	Mixed	66.7	73.7	50.0	75.0	60.0	
School placement	Inner city	6.3	13.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	
	Suburban	85.4	73.7	95.0	100.0	100.0	
	Rural	8.3	13.2	5.0	0.0	0.0	
School's class cohorts	JI-6th	65.6	68.4	55.0	62.5	73.3	
	JI-2nd	6.3	7.9	5.0	12.5	6.7	
	3rd-6th	13.5	7.9	25.0	0.0	13.3	
	Other	14.6	15.8	15.0	25.0	6.7	
School's 'special' status	Mainstream	64.6	71.1	40.0	87.5	80.0	
	" + special cl.	30.2	23.7	60.0	12.5	13.3	
	Special school	5.2	5.3	0.0	0.0	6.7	
School's DEIS status	non-DEIS	68.8	73.7	55.0	87.5	53.3	
	Band 1	13.5	18.4	10.0	0.0	20.0	
	Band 2	16.7	7.9	35.0	12.5	26.7	
	Band 3	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	

Table 3: Profile of participants in *Questionnaire 1*

4.2.2 Participants' self-descriptions

In the following tables the counts (frequencies) and percentages of participants' responses to statements about personal beliefs are presented.

Practising Roman Catholic

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Additive %
Valid	disagree strongly	7	7.3	7.4	7.4
	disagree	5	5.2	5.3	12.6
	neither agree nor disagree	19	19.8	20.0	32.6
	agree	28	29.2	29.5	62.1
	strongly agree	36	37.5	37.9	100.0
	Total	95	99.0	100.0	
Missing	-99	1	1.0		
Total		96	100.0		

Table 4: I am a Roman Catholic

In Table 4 we see that 66.7% of participants, choosing either agree or strongly agree, describe themselves as practising Roman Catholics. Almost ⅕ neither agree nor disagree that they are and ⅛ disagree with the statement. Although the disaggregated data, on the basis of roles on BoMs, are presented in section 4.5 it may be instructive to make some further if brief distinctions between the choices made. The first graph relates to the self-description of being a practising Roman Catholic according to representation on a BoM (Figure 4.1).
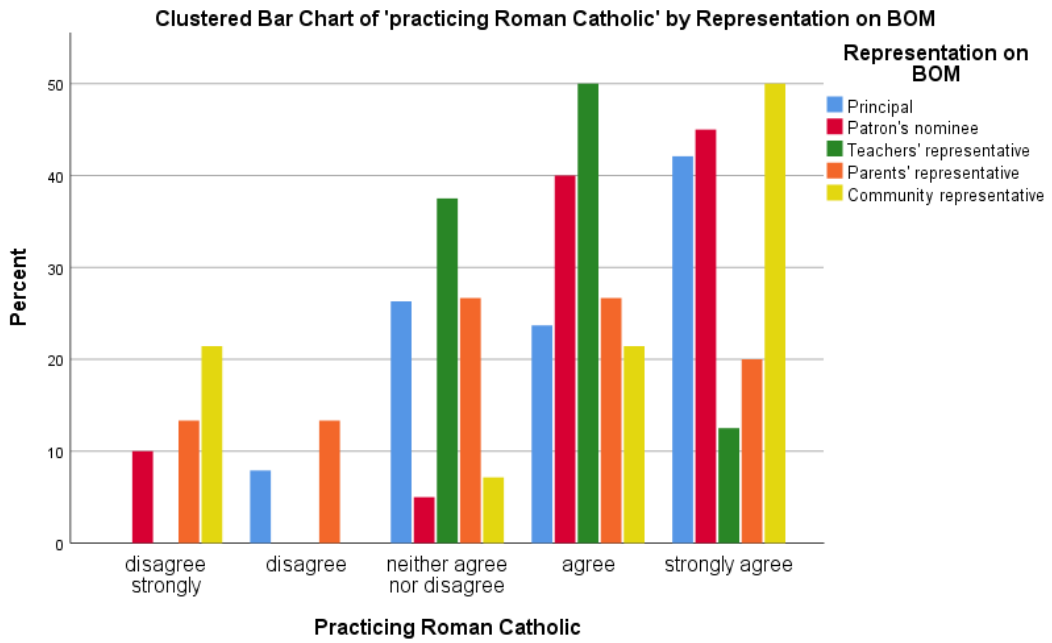
Figure 4.1: Self-description as a 'practicing Roman Catholic'

65.8% of principals either agreed of strongly agreed, as did 85% of patron's nominees, 62.5% of teachers' representatives, 46.7% of parents' representatives and 71.4% of community representatives. 37.5% of teachers' representatives neither agreed nor disagreed; and over a quarter of principals (26.3%) and parents' representatives (26.7%) were similarly unsure.

Christian

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Additive %
Valid	disagree strongly	3	3.1	3.3	3.3
	disagree	2	2.1	2.2	5.5
	neither agree nor disagree	7	7.3	7.7	13.2
	agree	19	19.8	20.9	34.1
	strongly agree	60	62.5	65.9	100.0
	Total	91	94.8	100.0	
Missing	-99	5	5.2		
Total		96	100.0		

Table 5: I am a Christian

82.3% self-describe as Christian (Table 5); it is not clear if a distinction is being drawn between 'being Christian' and 'being a Christian'; the former could possibly be used by someone who might not otherwise call her/himself a follower of Christ but may be, loosely, say, a good Samaritan.

Non-Christian

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Additive %
Valid	disagree strongly	77	80.2	87.5	87.5
	disagree	6	6.3	6.8	94.3
	neither agree nor disagree	1	1.0	1.1	95.5
	strongly agree	4	4.2	4.5	100.0
	Total	88	91.7	100.0	
Missing	-99	8	8.3		
Total		96	100.0		

Table 6: I am a non-Christian

Those disagreeing with 'being a non-Christian' (Table 6) amount to 86.5%, which is higher than the 82.3% who claimed to be Christian (Table 5), and is mildly anomalous. Only 4.2% wholly agree with being non-Christian.

The distinction between those claiming to be Christian and those who do not is highlighted in the following graphs. The first graph is the self-description as Christian (Figure 4.2):
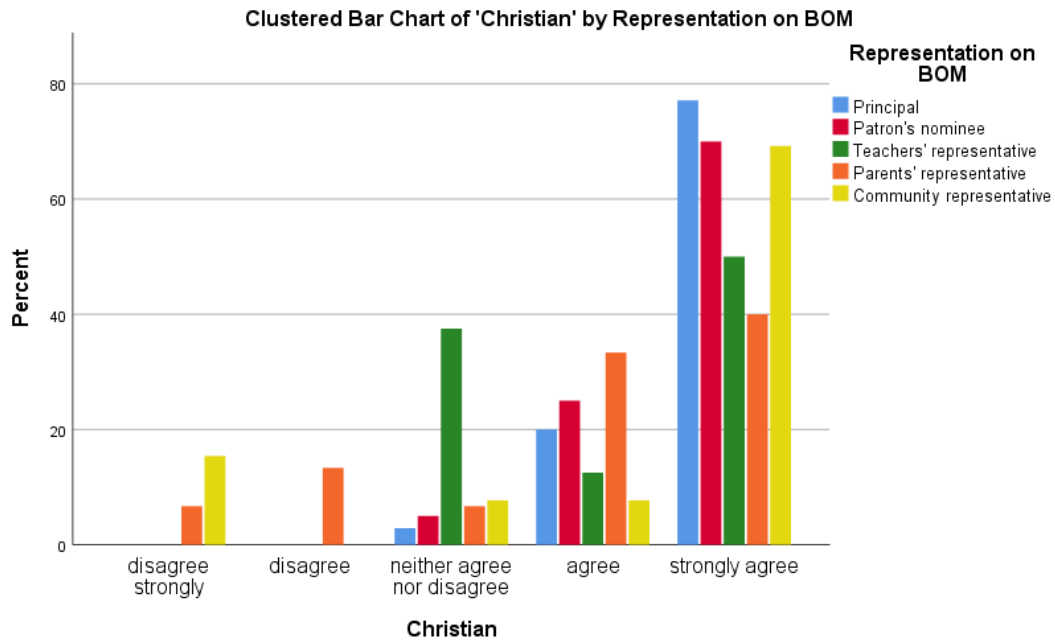
Figure 4.2: Self-description as a 'Christian'

This graph contrasts clearly with that for being non-Christian (Figure 4.2):
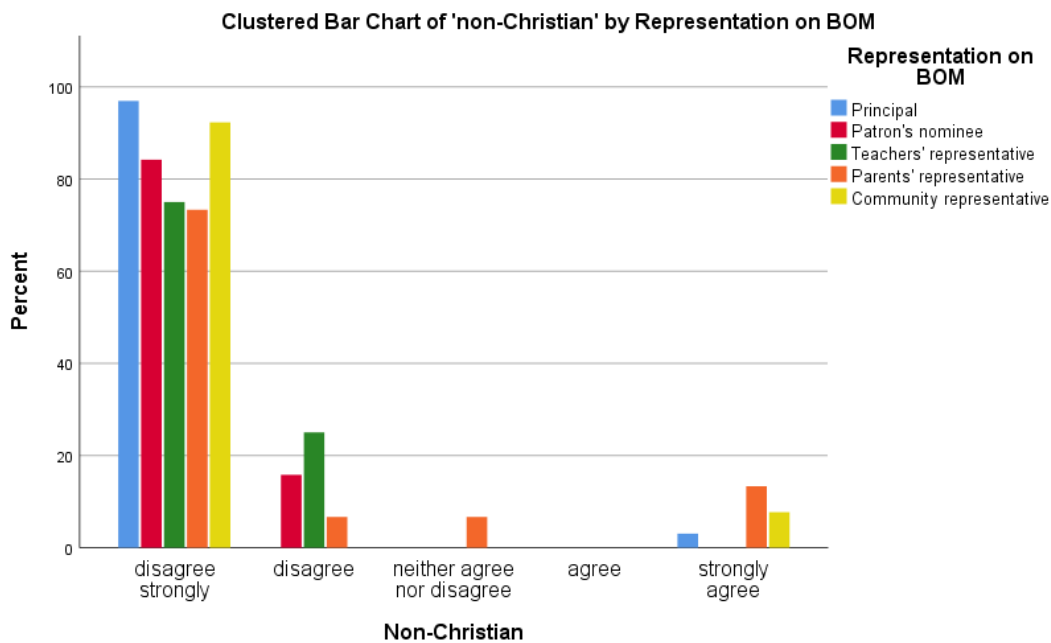
Figure 4.3: Self-description as a 'non-Christian'

97% of principals disagreed strongly with the non-Christian statement, three-quarters of teachers' representatives and slightly less than three-quarters (73.3%) of parents' representative did. While no teacher's representative strongly agreed with the non-

Christian statement, 13.3% of parents' representatives did. 77.1% of principals strongly agreed they were Christian, only 40% of parental representatives did. This is evidence of a differentiation between school and home in terms of religious adherence. While strong agreement was expressed by principals (77.1%), patron's nominees (70%) and community representatives (69.2%), teachers' representative, at 50%, were closer to parents' representatives.

Spiritual person

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Additive %
Valid	disagree strongly	2	2.1	2.2	2.2
	disagree	4	4.2	4.3	6.5
	neither agree nor disagree	21	21.9	22.6	29.0
	agree	39	40.6	41.9	71.0
	strongly agree	27	28.1	29.0	100.0
	Total	93	96.9	100.0	
Missing	-99	3	3.1		
Total		96	100.0		

Table 7: I am a spiritual person

In the statement 'I am a spiritual person' (Table 7), 68.9% self-describe as 'spiritual', with only 6.3% disagreeing; over ⅕ (22.6%) are 'neutral'.

Further evidence of principal-parents' representatives divergence is provided by reactions to the statement on being a spiritual person (Figure 4.4).
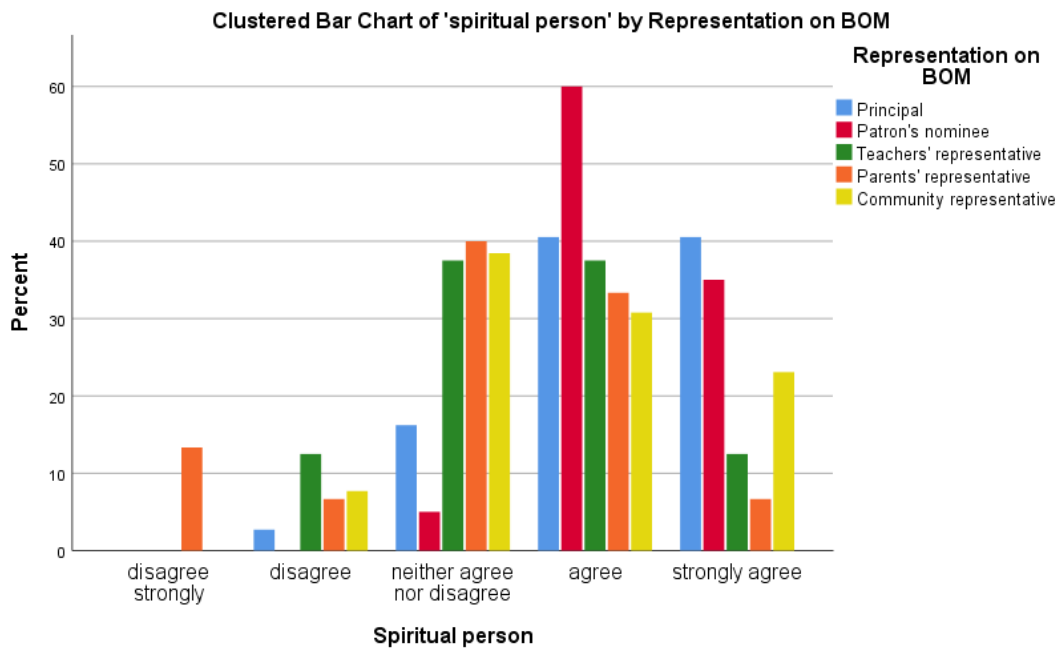
Figure 4.4: Self-description as a 'spiritual person'

20% of parents' representative either disagreed or disagreed strongly with the statement, and 40% neither agreed nor disagreed. 81% of principals agreed or strongly agreed with it and 16.2% neither agreed nor disagreed. 95% of patron's nominees agreed or strongly agreed while only 40% of teachers' representatives and 53.9% of community representatives did. The uncertain category of spirituality is perhaps better reflected by those who neither agree nor disagree with the statement: 16.2% of principals, 5% of patron's nominees, 37.5% of teachers' representatives, 40% of parents' representatives, and 38.5% of community representatives.

Non-religious

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Additive %
Valid	disagree strongly	55	57.3	60.4	60.4
	disagree	13	13.5	14.3	74.7
	neither agree nor disagree	15	15.6	16.5	91.2
	agree	2	2.1	2.2	93.4
	strongly agree	6	6.3	6.6	100.0
	Total	91	94.8	100.0	
Missing	-99	5	5.2		
Total		96	100.0		

Table 8: I am non-religious

While no distinctions were provided between 'religious' and 'spiritual' the terms were not treated as synonymous by participants. In the statement 'I am non-religious' (Table 8), 70.8% disagreed with the statement on being non-religious, which is slightly higher than being spiritual. Over 5% chose not to respond. Figure 4.5 shows this graphically.
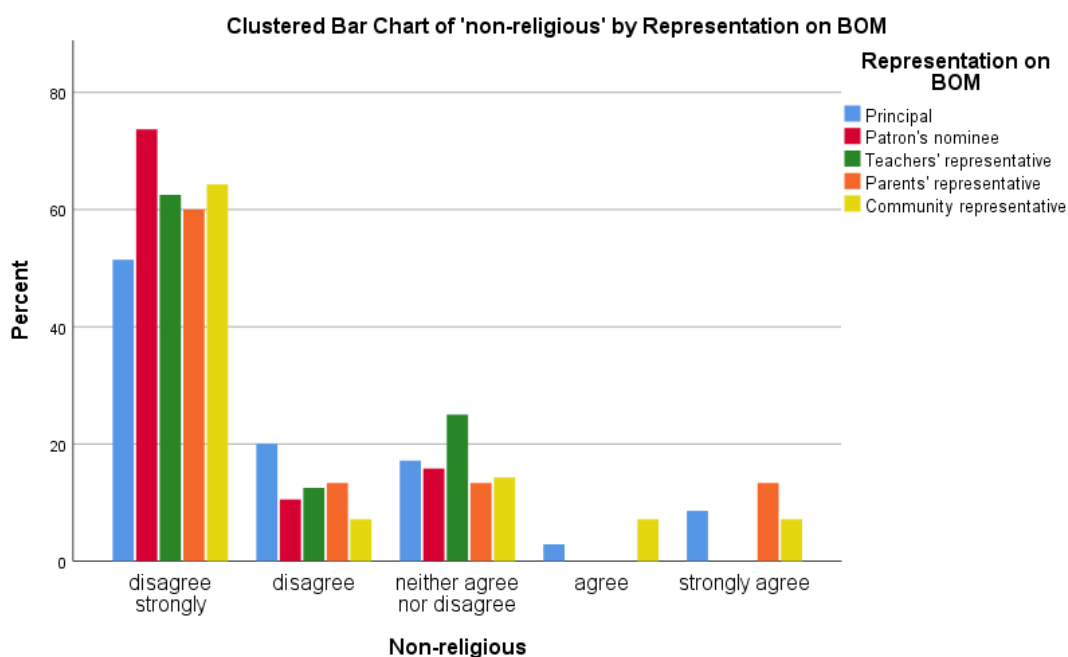
Figure 4.5: Self-description as 'non-religious'

More spiritual than religious

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Additive %
Valid	disagree strongly	9	9.4	9.8	9.8
	disagree	7	7.3	7.6	17.4
	neither agree nor disagree	38	39.6	41.3	58.7
	agree	25	26.0	27.2	85.9
	strongly agree	13	13.5	14.1	100.0
	Total	92	95.8	100.0	
Missing	-99	4	4.2		
Total		96	100.0		

Table 9: I am more spiritual than religious

Interestingly, 39.5% agreed that they were more spiritual than religious (Table 9) while the same amount were 'neutral'. On the other hand, 16.7% seem to regard themselves as more religious than spiritual. Figure 4.6 indicates how the different members made their choices. The 'neutral' category now shows greater variability: principals and parents' representatives were predominantly 'neutral'.
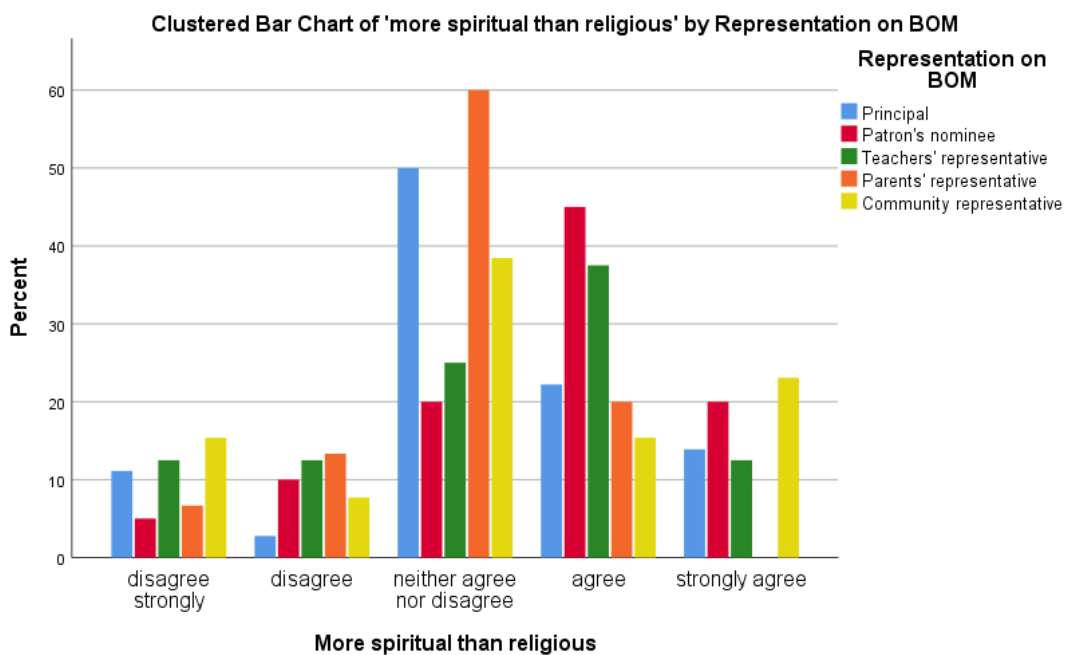
Figure 4.6: Self-description as 'more spiritual than religious'

Reads the Bible regularly

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Additive %
Valid	disagree strongly	52	54.2	55.3	55.3
	disagree	21	21.9	22.3	77.7
	neither agree nor disagree	13	13.5	13.8	91.5
	agree	4	4.2	4.3	95.7
	strongly agree	4	4.2	4.3	100.0
	Total	94	97.9	100.0	
Missing	-99	2	2.1		
Total		96	100.0		

Table 10: I read the Bible regularly

Roman Catholicism has sought to encourage reading of the Bible. In Table 10, 8.4%
indicate that they read the Bible regularly but a large 76.1% do not; 'regularly' was not
defined.

Prays regularly

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Additive %
Valid	disagree strongly	11	11.5	11.6	11.6
	disagree	13	13.5	13.7	25.3
	neither agree nor disagree	27	28.1	28.4	53.7
	agree	20	20.8	21.1	74.7
	strongly agree	24	25.0	25.3	100.0
	Total	95	99.0	100.0	
Missing	-99	1	1.0		
Total		96	100.0		

Table 11: I pray regularly

Do people pray regularly today? In Table 11, 45.8% pray regularly, though a quarter disagree and more than a quarter (28.4%) are 'neutral', which cannot be interpreted here. No one was asked at the interview stage about any of their personal religious practices, including prayer, reading the Bible, etc.

Professionally interested in special needs

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Additive %
Valid	disagree strongly	21	21.9	22.3	22.3
	disagree	8	8.3	8.5	30.9
	neither agree nor disagree	15	15.6	16.0	46.8
	agree	8	8.3	8.5	55.3
	strongly agree	42	43.8	44.7	100.0
	Total	94	97.9	100.0	
Missing	-99	2	2.1		
Total		96	100.0		

Table 12: I am professionally interested in special needs

Over half (52.1%) of members regard themselves as professionally interested in SEN (Table 12), while 30.2% disagree. This figure probably reflects actual contact with pupils who have SEN, which would exclude some BoM members.

Personally interested in special needs

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Additive %
Valid	disagree strongly	6	6.3	6.5	6.5
	disagree	12	12.5	13.0	19.6
	neither agree nor disagree	17	17.7	18.5	38.0
	agree	27	28.1	29.3	67.4
	strongly agree	30	31.3	32.6	100.0
	Total	92	95.8	100.0	
Missing	-99	4	4.2		
Total		96	100.0		

Table 13: I am personally interested in special needs

Different to the previous statement (Table 12), 59.4% self-describe as being personally interested in SEN (Table 13). Almost ⅕ (18.5%) are 'neutral'.

Well-informed about religion

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Additive %
Valid	disagree	8	8.3	8.4	8.4
	neither agree nor disagree	23	24.0	24.2	32.6
	agree	41	42.7	43.2	75.8
	strongly agree	23	24.0	24.2	100.0
	Total	95	99.0	100.0	
Missing	-99	1	1.0		
Total		96	100.0		

Table 14: I am well-informed about religion

⅔ of participants feel themselves well-informed about religion (Table 14). Almost a quarter are 'neutral'.

Well-informed about special needs

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Additive %
Valid	disagree strongly	1	1.0	1.1	1.1
	disagree	8	8.3	8.6	9.7
	neither agree nor disagree	19	19.8	20.4	30.1
	agree	37	38.5	39.8	69.9
	strongly agree	28	29.2	30.1	100.0
	Total	93	96.9	100.0	
Missing	-99	3	3.1		
Total		96	100.0		

Table 15: I am well-informed about special needs

Similarly, 69.9% feel well-informed about SEN (Table 15). Yet, ⅕ are 'neutral'.

Has a special need(s)

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Additive %
Valid	disagree strongly	83	86.5	88.3	88.3
	disagree	8	8.3	8.5	96.8
	neither agree nor disagree	1	1.0	1.1	97.9
	agree	2	2.1	2.1	100.0
	Total	94	97.9	100.0	
Missing	-99	2	2.1		
Total		96	100.0		

Table 16: I have a special need(s)

How well do people recognize their own special needs? This statement (Table 16) would require more probing statements to be properly informative. Though a large majority (94.8%) disagree that they have a special need, 2.1% agree.

Particularly concerned for the human development of pupils with special needs

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Additive %
Valid	disagree strongly	2	2.1	2.1	2.1
	disagree	1	1.0	1.1	3.2
	neither agree nor disagree	12	12.5	12.8	16.0
	agree	30	31.3	31.9	47.9
	strongly agree	49	51.0	52.1	100.0
	Total	94	97.9	100.0	
Missing	-99	2	2.1		
Total		96	100.0		

Table 17: I have particular concern for the development of those with special needs

In relation to the human development of pupils with SEN (Table 17), 84% agree that they have a particular concern for the human development of pupils with SEN. When we

compare this with 52.1% agreement on having a professional interest in SEN (Table 12) and 59.4% on having a personal interest in SEN (Table 13) we note a seeming conflict of opinion where a relative alignment of response would be expected. To presume that some participants distinguished a personal attitude in favour of helping those with SEN (84.3%) from a putative interest in, say, the study of SEN (59.4%) is confounded by the low 52.1% expressing a professional interest in SEN.

Uninterested in religious education

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Additive %
Valid	disagree strongly	43	44.8	46.7	46.7
	disagree	22	22.9	23.9	70.7
	neither agree nor disagree	19	19.8	20.7	91.3
	agree	4	4.2	4.3	95.7
	strongly agree	4	4.2	4.3	100.0
	Total	92	95.8	100.0	
Missing	-99	4	4.2		
Total		96	100.0		

Table 18: I am uninterested in religious education

Though 67.7% disagree that they are disinterested in RE, 8.4% agree that they are uninterested (Table 18).

Committed to the religious education of all pupils

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Additive %
Valid	disagree strongly	1	1.0	1.1	1.1
	disagree	7	7.3	7.4	8.5
	neither agree nor disagree	22	22.9	23.4	31.9
	agree	29	30.2	30.9	62.8
	strongly agree	35	36.5	37.2	100.0
	Total	94	97.9	100.0	
Missing	-99	2	2.1		
Total		96	100.0		

Table 19: I am committed to the RE of all pupils

In Roman Catholic schools RE is a required subject. In this statement (Table 19), 66.7% feel committed to RE for pupils. Nearly 23% are 'neutral' and 8.3% disagree.

The next four statements related to participants' sense of answerability or accountability for pupils' spiritual (Table 20), religious (Table 21), moral (Table 22) and intellectual (Table 23) development.

Answerable for pupils' spiritual development

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Additive %
Valid	disagree strongly	4	4.2	4.3	4.3
	disagree	12	12.5	13.0	17.4
	neither agree nor disagree	34	35.4	37.0	54.3
	agree	26	27.1	28.3	82.6
	strongly agree	16	16.7	17.4	100.0
	Total	92	95.8	100.0	
Missing	-99	4	4.2		
Total		96	100.0		

Table 20: I am answerable for pupils' spiritual development

16.7% do not feel answerable for pupils' spiritual development, more than ⅓ (35.4%) are 'neutral' and 43.8% feel answerable (Table 20).

Answerable for pupils' religious development

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Additive %
Valid	disagree strongly	6	6.3	6.4	6.4
	disagree	13	13.5	13.8	20.2
	neither agree nor disagree	30	31.3	31.9	52.1
	agree	29	30.2	30.9	83.0
	strongly agree	16	16.7	17.0	100.0
	Total	94	97.9	100.0	
Missing	-99	2	2.1		
Total		96	100.0		

Table 21: I am answerable for pupils' religious development

19.8% do not feel answerable for pupil's religious development, 31.3% are 'neutral', and 46.9% feel answerable (Table 21).

Answerable for pupils' moral development

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Additive %
Valid	disagree strongly	3	3.1	3.2	3.2
	disagree	6	6.3	6.5	9.7
	neither agree nor disagree	20	20.8	21.5	31.2
	agree	34	35.4	36.6	67.7
	strongly agree	30	31.3	32.3	100.0
	Total	93	96.9	100.0	
Missing	-99	3	3.1		
Total		96	100.0		

Table 22: I am answerable for pupils' moral development

9.4% do not feel answerable for pupils' moral development, 20.8% are 'neutral', and 66.7% feel answerable (Table 22).

Answerable for pupils' intellectual development

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Additive %
Valid	disagree strongly	3	3.1	3.2	3.2
	disagree	3	3.1	3.2	6.4
	neither agree nor disagree	15	15.6	16.0	22.3
	agree	33	34.4	35.1	57.4
	strongly agree	40	41.7	42.6	100.0
	Total	94	97.9	100.0	
Missing	-99	2	2.1		
Total		96	100.0		

Table 23: I am answerable for pupils' intellectual development

While only 6.2% do not feel answerable for pupils' intellectual development, 15.6 are 'neutral', and 76.1% feel answerable (Table 23). Thus, we see a pattern of increasing

answerability as we move from spiritual and religious to moral and, finally, intellectual answerability.

Someone loved and gifted by God

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Additive %
Valid	disagree strongly	6	6.3	6.4	6.4
	disagree	3	3.1	3.2	9.6
	neither agree nor disagree	23	24.0	24.5	34.0
	agree	22	22.9	23.4	57.4
	strongly agree	40	41.7	42.6	100.0
	Total	94	97.9	100.0	
Missing	-99	2	2.1		
Total		96	100.0		

Table 24: I am someone loved and gifted by God

On the statement about feeling 'loved and gifted by God' (Table 24), 9.4% disagree that they feel loved and gifted by God, while 64.6% do feel so loved and gifted; almost a ¼ (24.5%) were 'neutral'.

Guided by the Bible in daily relationships with others

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Additive %
Valid	disagree strongly	19	19.8	20.4	20.4
	disagree	22	22.9	23.7	44.1
	neither agree nor disagree	27	28.1	29.0	73.1
	agree	16	16.7	17.2	90.3
	strongly agree	9	9.4	9.7	100.0
	Total	93	96.9	100.0	
Missing	-99	3	3.1		
Total		96	100.0		

Table 25: I am guided by the Bible in my daily relationships

If 43.7% do not feel guided by the Bible, only 26.1% do feel guided by it while a similar amount (28.1%) are 'neutral' (Table 25).

4.2.3 Attitudes to RE

In this section we look at the statements that centre on attitudes to RE, though there may be some overlap when we come to the attitudes on RE for pupils with SEN.

Religious schools play an important role in society

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Additive %
Valid	disagree strongly	4	4.2	4.2	4.2
	disagree	4	4.2	4.2	8.3
	neither agree nor disagree	14	14.6	14.6	22.9
	agree	35	36.5	36.5	59.4
	strongly agree	39	40.6	40.6	100.0
	Total	96	100.0	100.0	

Table 26: Religious schools' role in society

77.1% feel that religious schools play in important role in society, with 8.4% disagreeing (Table 26). When there is much debate about broadening the patronage of primary schools, these figures are probably reflective of an 'evolving situation' within Irish life. Nevertheless, this is high support for religious schools in a society that has been assailed with stories of clerical child-abuse.

Parents have the primary role in teaching religion to their child(ren)

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Additive %
Valid	neither agree nor disagree	15	15.6	15.6	15.6
	agree	16	16.7	16.7	32.3
	strongly agree	65	67.7	67.7	100.0
	Total	96	100.0	100.0	

Table 27: Primary role of parents in teaching religion

Interestingly, no one disagreed with the primacy of parents in the RE of their children (Table 27). Still, 15.6% are 'neutral' on the issue.

RE's purpose is educating children in the Roman Catholic tradition

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Additive %
Valid	disagree strongly	8	8.3	8.3	8.3
	disagree	7	7.3	7.3	15.6
	neither agree nor disagree	30	31.3	31.3	46.9
	agree	29	30.2	30.2	77.1
	strongly agree	22	22.9	22.9	100.0
	Total	96	100.0	100.0	

Table 28: RE's purpose is to form Roman Catholics

Roman Catholicism had understood RE as only formation in Catholicism prior to Vatican II (1963-1965). However, the statement here (Table 28) does not adequately encapsulate this older teaching. Hence, the statement captures neither the older, pre-Vatican II understanding nor the broader, post-Vatican II understanding of an education that is *religious*, i.e. not exclusively denominational. There is agreement that RE's purpose is to form Roman Catholics (53.1%), though almost ⅓ are 'neutral' and 15.6% disagree.

RE is an integral part of the education of children

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Additive %
Valid	disagree strongly	1	1.0	1.0	1.0
	disagree	3	3.1	3.1	4.2
	neither agree nor disagree	20	20.8	20.8	25.0
	agree	43	44.8	44.8	69.8
	strongly agree	29	30.2	30.2	100.0
	Total	96	100.0	100.0	

Table 29: RE is integral to pupils' education

The Roman Catholic church, the Irish Constitution and the Primary Curriculum hold that religion is integral to education. ¾ of members agree with this (Table 29), 20.8% are

'neutral' and 4.2% disagree. One would expect almost complete agreement on this statement in light of this confluence of state and church views.

RE does more harm than good

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Additive %
Valid	disagree strongly	66	68.8	70.2	70.2
	disagree	16	16.7	17.0	87.2
	neither agree nor disagree	9	9.4	9.6	96.8
	agree	1	1.0	1.1	97.9
	strongly agree	2	2.1	2.1	100.0
	Total	94	97.9	100.0	
Missing	-99	2	2.1		
Total		96	100.0		

Table 30: RE does more harm than good

Much of secularism is based on the harm that religion does. In the statement about RE doing 'more harm that good' (Table 30), 3.1% agree while 87.2% disagree, and 9.6% are 'neutral'.

The Holy Spirit is the one who strengthens belief

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Additive %
Valid	disagree strongly	7	7.3	7.4	7.4
	disagree	16	16.7	17.0	24.5
	neither agree nor disagree	31	32.3	33.0	57.4
	agree	24	25.0	25.5	83.0
	strongly agree	16	16.7	17.0	100.0
	Total	94	97.9	100.0	
Missing	-99	2	2.1		
Total		96	100.0		

Table 31: The Holy Spirit strengthens belief

Roman Catholic teaching sees the Spirit as con-firming Christians in their faith. ⅓ are 'neutral' about this, while 42.5% agree and almost a quarter (24.5%) disagree (Table 31). In terms of Roman Catholicism, these figures are highly contrastive and may reflect a degree of unfamiliarity with both the credal and prayer-life of the church.

RE forms pupils in the virtues and values of Jesus

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Additive %
Valid	disagree strongly	4	4.2	4.2	4.2
	disagree	8	8.3	8.4	12.6
	neither agree nor disagree	26	27.1	27.4	40.0
	agree	34	35.4	35.8	75.8
	strongly agree	23	24.0	24.2	100.0
	Total	95	99.0	100.0	
Missing	-99	1	1.0		
Total		96	100.0		

Table 32: RE forms pupils in Jesus's virtues and values

Roman Catholic teaching is that RE forms people into the way of Christ. 59.4% of participants agree and 12.6% disagree. Interestingly, 27.4% are 'neutral' (Table 32).

RE contributes to the building of character in pupils

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Additive %
Valid	disagree strongly	3	3.1	3.2	3.2
	disagree	4	4.2	4.2	7.4
	neither agree nor disagree	23	24.0	24.2	31.6
	agree	33	34.4	34.7	66.3
	strongly agree	32	33.3	33.7	100.0
	Total	95	99.0	100.0	
Missing	-99	1	1.0		
Total		96	100.0		

Table 33: RE contributes to character-building

Roman Catholic teaching is that RE is necessary to character formation. In the statement on RE's contribution to character-building 7.4% disagree though 68.4% agree (Table 33).

Our school must welcome and fully respect pupils of other faiths and none

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Additive %
Valid	neither agree nor disagree	2	2.1	2.1	2.1
	agree	11	11.5	11.6	13.7
	strongly agree	82	85.4	86.3	100.0
	Total	95	99.0	100.0	
Missing	-99	1	1.0		
Total		96	100.0		

Table 34: Our school must welcome pupils of all faiths and none

Roman Catholic teaching is that their schools must be open to all pupils, without proselytizing. 97.9% of members agree with this (Table 34); only 2.1% are 'neutral'.

Sacramental preparation (e.g. First Communion, Confirmation) is best done in the parish (rather than the school)

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Additive %
Valid	disagree strongly	8	8.3	8.5	8.5
	disagree	17	17.7	18.1	26.6
	neither agree nor disagree	26	27.1	27.7	54.3
	agree	19	19.8	20.2	74.5
	strongly agree	24	25.0	25.5	100.0
	Total	94	97.9	100.0	
Missing	-99	2	2.1		
Total		96	100.0		

Table 35: Sacramental preparation should be parish-based

The revised RE programme, Grow in Love, advocates parish-based sacramental preparation. This statement (Table 35) elicited a diversity of views. Overall, 26.6% disagreed that sacramental preparation should be parish-based, 45.7% agreed and 27.7% were 'neutral'.

The Bible alone is sufficient for the faith development of pupils

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Additive %
Valid	disagree strongly	59	61.5	62.8	62.8
	disagree	22	22.9	23.4	86.2
	neither agree nor disagree	12	12.5	12.8	98.9
	agree	1	1.0	1.1	100.0
	Total	94	97.9	100.0	
Missing	-99	2	2.1		
Total		96	100.0		

Table 36: The Bible alone suffices for faith-development

The statement about the sufficiency of the Bible for faith development (Table 36) might reflect a more evangelical or Lutheran approach but a Roman Catholic theology finds multiple sources for faith development, especially in tradition, what has been handed down through the ages, and the praxis of Christian life. 86.2% disagreed with it.

In RE, pupils should learn about other religions

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Additive %
Valid	neither agree nor disagree	14	14.6	14.7	14.7
	agree	20	20.8	21.1	35.8
	strongly agree	61	63.5	64.2	100.0
	Total	95	99.0	100.0	
Missing	-99	1	1.0		
Total		96	100.0		

Table 37: RE pupils should learn about other religions

Since Vatican II, Catholics are educated to be open to other religions. That pupils should learn about other religions in RE (Table 37) was endorsed by 85.3%, with no one disagreeing. This statement had a goodness-of-fit of χ^2 (2, n=96) = 41.33, *p*= < .001.

The state should not interfere with the spiritual dimension of pupils' lives

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Additive %
Valid	disagree strongly	5	5.2	5.3	5.3
	disagree	12	12.5	12.6	17.9
	neither agree nor disagree	32	33.3	33.7	51.6
	agree	16	16.7	16.8	68.4
	strongly agree	30	31.3	31.6	100.0
	Total	95	99.0	100.0	
Missing	-99	1	1.0		
Total		96	100.0		

Table 38: The state should not interfere with pupils' spiritual dimension

The State should not interfere in the spiritual dimension of pupils' lives (Table 38) was held by 48.4%, while 17.7% disagreed. This statement was intended to contrast with a notion of the state 'interfering' with pupils' religious education, which is an issue of current debate.

Jesus Christ is our means to understanding God

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Cum. %
Valid	disagree strongly	6	6.3	6.5	6.5
	disagree	8	8.3	8.6	15.1
	neither agree nor disagree	33	34.4	35.5	50.5
	agree	18	18.8	19.4	69.9
	strongly agree	28	29.2	30.1	100.0
	Total	93	96.9	100.0	
Missing	-99	3	3.1		
Total		96	100.0		

Table 39: Jesus Christ is our means to understanding God

The centrality of Christ to Christians is reflected in this statement about him being our means to understanding God (Table 39). 49.5% agree and 14.6% disagree, with more than

⅓ (34.4%) 'neutral'. Christianity is named from Jesus Christ though distinctions between Christian religion, Christianity, cultural Christianity and Christendom are made increasingly. From a faith perspective, one would expect a high agreement level.

Teaching ecology has no place in RE

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Additive %
Valid	disagree strongly	35	36.5	37.2	37.2
	disagree	20	20.8	21.3	58.5
	neither agree nor disagree	35	36.5	37.2	95.7
	agree	2	2.1	2.1	97.9
	strongly agree	2	2.1	2.1	100.0
	Total	94	97.9	100.0	
Missing	-99	2	2.1		
Total		96	100.0		

Table 40: Teaching ecology is not part of RE

Recently, papal teaching has been clearly pro-ecology. Pope Francis has made care for our common earth one of the distinctive features of his pontificate. This negative statement (Table 40) was rejected by 57.3%, with 36.5% 'neutral'; as such, it must be treated with a certain caution; its goodness of fit indicates the need for further investigation, χ^2 (4, n=96) = 58.02, p= < .001. A positively framed statement should be made in future research in order to gauge people's agreement or not with the present papal agenda and with the worsening ecological crisis.

Religion demands that an option be made for the poor and disadvantaged

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Additive %
Valid	disagree strongly	3	3.1	3.2	3.2
	disagree	2	2.1	2.1	5.3
	neither agree nor disagree	30	31.3	31.9	37.2
	agree	19	19.8	20.2	57.4
	strongly agree	40	41.7	42.6	100.0
	Total	94	97.9	100.0	
Missing	-99	2	2.1		
Total		96	100.0		

Table 41: Religion entails an option for the poor

This statement on the option for the poor and disadvantaged (Table 41) reflects Catholic social thinking from an earlier generation, yet 61.5% feel that such an option should be made, though almost ⅓ (31.9%) were 'neutral', χ^2 (4, n=96) = 58.87, *p*= < .001. The present pope, Francis, has said that one of the key statements made to him at the time of his election, by Cardinal Hummes, was that he should not forget the poor. It would seem more likely that the pope's actions that follow his election indicate the deep influence that the Superior General of the Jesuits (1965-1983), Fr Pedro Arrupe SJ, had on him; Arrupe gave international prominence to the phrase 'option for the poor'.

Our school should be completely secular

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Additive %
Valid	disagree strongly	47	49.0	50.0	50.0
	disagree	17	17.7	18.1	68.1
	neither agree nor disagree	18	18.8	19.1	87.2
	agree	4	4.2	4.3	91.5
	strongly agree	8	8.3	8.5	100.0
	Total	94	97.9	100.0	
Missing	-99	2	2.1		
Total		96	100.0		

Table 42: Our schools should be completely secular

This statement might seem out of place in the context of a BoM of a denominational school; yet, unless the statement is made, it is not certain what members actually hold in relation to secularity. ⅔ of members disagree that their school should be wholly secular (Table 42). 12.5% agree that it should be secular, while almost ⅕ are 'neutral'.

In summary form, I present an exploratory factor analysis of the factor loadings for attitudes to RE (Table 43); the factor-labels have been shortened for readability, e.g. RE1_relschs_imp_role_society becomes R1 (see Survey 1 – Variables and Statements on Questionnaire 1 in Appendix I for a complete list). Perhaps unusually, I chose oblimin as the rotation; after all, I am presuming some degree of correlation is present, hence the more usual orthogonal rotations seem unsuitable. The fit indices display the Root Mean Squared Error of Approximation (RMSEA); it has a 95% confidence interval. The Tucker Lewis Index (TLI) and the Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC) are also employed in testing model fit. The path diagram indicates, by line density and colour (green indicates a positive loading, red a negative one), the strength and direction of the statement-factor relations. Three factors loaded; however, factors 2 and 3 did not load well; the former had only one item unique to it and the latter's three items all cross-loaded; see also the correlations (Table 44). When statements RE1-4, 6-8, 14 and 16 were tested together they produced a reliability scale Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.870$, with a 95% confidence interval of 0.827-0.905.

Factor Loadings for attitudes to RE

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Uniqueness
RE10_Sacraprep_bestparish	.	.	0.480	0.679
RE11_Bible_sufficient_faithdevelop	.	.	.	0.837
RE12_RE_learnaboutrreligions	.	.	0.655	0.515
RE13_State_notinterfere_spiritdimen	.	.	.	0.860
RE14_JChr_ourunderstandGod	.	0.914	.	0.109
RE15_ecology_notinRE	.	.	.	0.894
RE16_Religion_OptPoorDisadvantaged	.	.	.	0.721
RE17_oursch_secular	-0.614	.	.	0.590
RE1_relschs_imp_role_society	0.759	.	.	0.379
RE2_parents_primaryrole_religion_rchildren	.	.	.	0.707
RE3_purposeRE_RCtrad	0.582	.	.	0.507
RE4_RE_integral_educchildren	0.697	.	.	0.514
RE5_RE_doesmoreharm	-0.633	.	.	0.660
RE6_HolySpiritstrengthensbelief	0.425	0.483	.	0.346
RE7_RE_formspupils_virtuesvaluesJesus	0.717	.	.	0.256
RE8_RE_contributes_characterinpupils	0.800	.	.	0.410
RE9_sch_welcomerespectall	.	.	0.647	0.552

Note. Applied rotation method is oblimin.

Table 43: Factor loadings for RE statements

The factor correlations for RE statements are in Table 44: Factor correlations for RE statements

Factor Correlations

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
Factor 1	1.000		
Factor 2	0.538	1.000	
Factor 3	-0.005	-0.079	1.000

Table 44: Factor correlations for RE statements

The χ^2 was barely significant, $p= .048$ (Table 45).

Chi-squared Test

	Value	df	p
Model	111.157	88	0.048

Table 45: Chi-squared test for SEN statements

I also report the fit indices (Table 46), which indicate a good fit, and the path for the data in relation to attitudes to SEN (Figure 4.7).

Additional fit indices

	RMSEA	RMSEA 90% confidence	TLI	BIC
Model	0.064	0.005 - 0.081	0.925	-290.505

Table 46: Fit indices for RE statements

Path Diagram
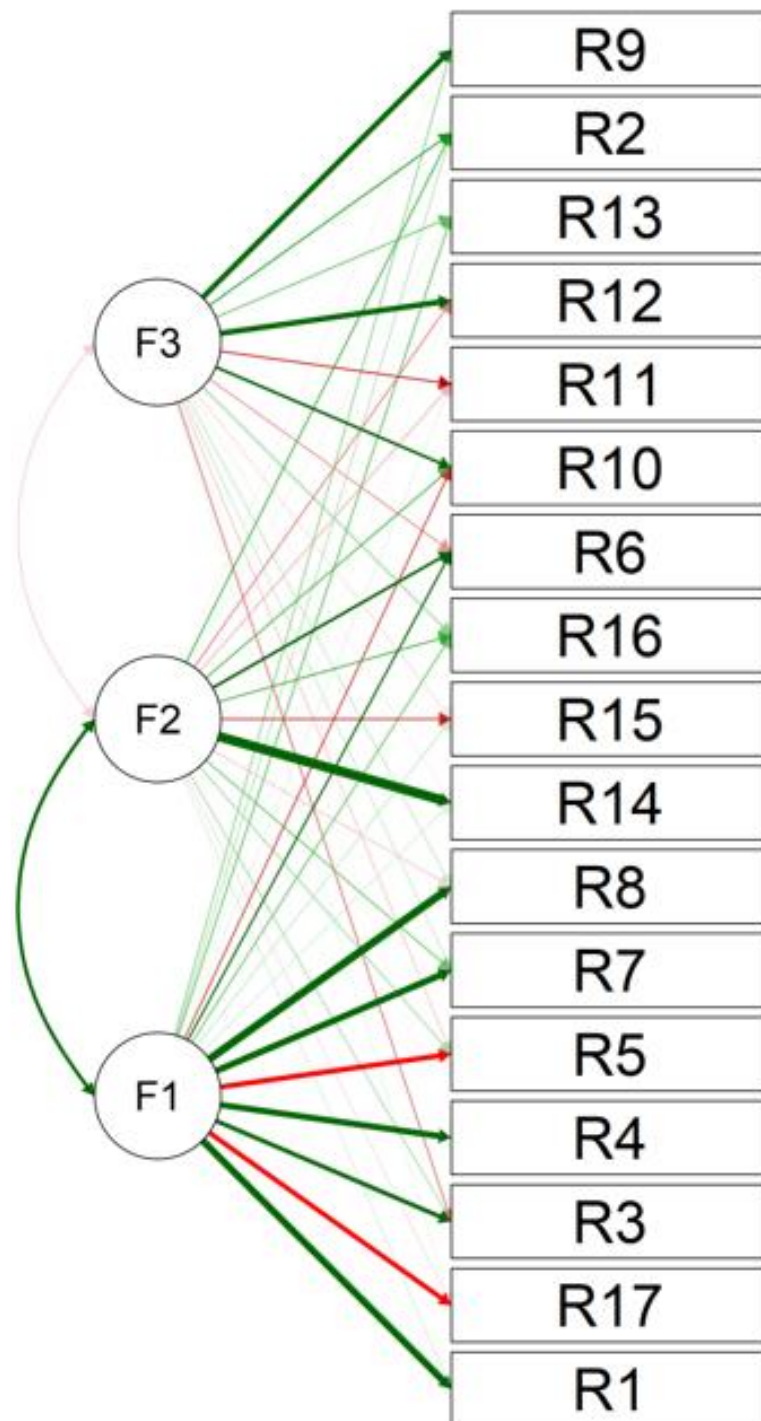
Figure 4.7: Path of statements on RE

4.2.4 Attitudes to SEN

In this section we detail the attitudes of members to special (educational) needs.

Parents have to struggle greatly to secure rights for their child(ren) with SEN

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Additive %
Valid	disagree	1	1.0	1.1	1.1
	neither agree nor disagree	7	7.3	7.4	8.4
	agree	28	29.2	29.5	37.9
	strongly agree	59	61.5	62.1	100.0
	Total	95	99.0	100.0	
Missing	-99	1	1.0		
Total		96	100.0		

Table 47: Parents struggle for the rights of children with SEN

Due to personal experience with parents who want to do their best for their children I expected that this experience might be replicated in other schools. This statement (Table 47) was endorsed, by 90.7%; in fact, 61.5% strongly agreed, which indicates clarity in members' minds about parents' struggles for their children's rights.

Having special needs is a gift from God

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Additive%
Valid	disagree strongly	45	46.9	46.9	46.9
	disagree	17	17.7	17.7	64.6
	neither agree nor disagree	26	27.1	27.1	91.7
	agree	5	5.2	5.2	96.9
	strongly agree	3	3.1	3.1	100.0
	Total	96	100.0	100.0	

Table 48: Having a SEN is a gift from God

This provocative statement (Table 48) is, unfortunately, open to multiple meanings; yet, the high disagreement level (64.6%) indicates that it is taken quite negatively; only 8.3% agreed with it; there was a significant score on goodness-of-fit, χ^2 (4, n=94) = 61.50, $p=$ < .001, to indicate further investigation.

Mainstream pupils benefit from having pupils with SEN in class with them

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Additive %
Valid	disagree	2	2.1	2.1	2.1
	neither agree nor disagree	16	16.7	16.7	18.8
	agree	36	37.5	37.5	56.3
	strongly agree	42	43.8	43.8	100.0
	Total	96	100.0	100.0	

Table 49: Mainstream pupils benefit if those with SEN are present

Inclusion has been one of the issues investigated in the earlier work of this research-project, the literature review. Ireland is committed to providing an inclusive education; other statements were provided to tease out the fulness of commitment to the principle of inclusion, which the present statement presumed to test. Inclusion benefits mainstream pupils as well (Table 49): 81.3% agree that mainstream pupils benefit from inclusion.

Our school has a shared vision for the inclusion of pupils with SEN

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Additive %
Valid	neither agree nor disagree	7	7.3	7.3	7.3
	agree	26	27.1	27.1	34.4
	strongly agree	63	65.6	65.6	100.0
	Total	96	100.0	100.0	

Table 50: School has a vision for inclusion of pupils with SEN

This statement (Table 50) offered a strong affirmation of one's local school; it also addressed inclusion, but in the context of the local school. No one disagreed and over 65% strongly agree.

Pupils with SEN do not have enough attention paid to them

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Additive %
Valid	disagree strongly	18	18.8	18.9	18.9
	disagree	23	24.0	24.2	43.2
	neither agree nor disagree	21	21.9	22.1	65.3
	agree	20	20.8	21.1	86.3
	strongly agree	13	13.5	13.7	100.0
	Total	95	99.0	100.0	
Missing	-99	1	1.0		
Total		96	100.0		

Table 51: Pupils with SEN have not enough attention paid to them

The generality of this statement (Table 51) about pupils with SEN not having enough attention shown them – by the State, BoM, teachers, parents, peers? - undermines its usefulness. 44.8% agree with the statement, though 43.2% disagree with it.

Pupils with SEN have the same rights to full education as those without such needs

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Additive %
Valid	disagree strongly	2	2.1	2.1	2.1
	disagree	1	1.0	1.0	3.1
	neither agree nor disagree	3	3.1	3.1	6.3
	agree	9	9.4	9.4	15.6
	strongly agree	81	84.4	84.4	100.0
	Total	96	100.0	100.0	

Table 52: Pupils with SEN have the same rights as those without a SEN

91.8% feel that those with a SEN have the same rights as those without any SEN and only 3.1% disagree (Table 52). If all citizens are considered equal in a society then this attitude is to be expected. Of course, the statement does note entail vindication of these rights, nor, as we shall see next, does it mean there is adequate resourcing for pupils with SEN.

The state resources well the education of pupils with special needs

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Additive %
Valid	disagree strongly	43	44.8	45.3	45.3
	disagree	26	27.1	27.4	72.6
	neither agree nor disagree	15	15.6	15.8	88.4
	agree	9	9.4	9.5	97.9
	strongly agree	2	2.1	2.1	100.0
	Total	95	99.0	100.0	
Missing	-99	1	1.0		
Total		96	100.0		

Table 53: The state resources well the education of those with SEN

That the State resources well the education of pupils with SEN was rejected (72.6%) (Table 53); 11.6% felt that the State did resource well their education. Whether true or not, the widespread perception is that state services, whether to health, housing or education, are inadequate to the manifest needs of many in society, especially in areas of lower socio-economic status.

The parish prioritizes pupils with special needs

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Additive %
Valid	disagree strongly	26	27.1	27.4	27.4
	disagree	24	25.0	25.3	52.6
	neither agree nor disagree	37	38.5	38.9	91.6
	agree	4	4.2	4.2	95.8
	strongly agree	4	4.2	4.2	100.0
	Total	95	99.0	100.0	
Missing	-99	1	1.0		
Total		96	100.0		

Table 54: The parish prioritizes pupils with SEN

A strong rejection (52.7%) of the idea that the local parish prioritizes pupils with SEN was registered (Table 54), especially given that 38.5% were 'neutral'. No easy solutions will be found to answer this; already parishes struggle to maintain services as more and more parishioners are no long volunteers.

Any pupil may experience a special need(s) at some stage of their education

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Additive %
Valid	disagree strongly	3	3.1	3.2	3.2
	disagree	8	8.3	8.5	11.7
	neither agree nor disagree	22	22.9	23.4	35.1
	agree	35	36.5	37.2	72.3
	strongly agree	26	27.1	27.7	100.0
	Total	94	97.9	100.0	
Missing	-99	2	2.1		
Total		96	100.0		

Table 55: Any pupils may have a SEN as some stage

Is having a SEN a life-long condition? Certain conditions are conatal, of course, and injuries can be acquired at any stage of one's life and leave one seriously impaired thereafter; but, do people think that some conditions may alter over time? A rigid prejudice has led to gross mistreatment of people with disabilities throughout history, as already noted. While 11.7% disagree 63.6% agree that any pupil could have a SEN at some stage (Table 55).

Inclusion of all pupils benefits pupils with SEN more than those without such needs

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Additive %
Valid	disagree strongly	13	13.5	13.8	13.8
	disagree	18	18.8	19.1	33.0
	neither agree nor disagree	25	26.0	26.6	59.6
	agree	24	25.0	25.5	85.1
	strongly agree	14	14.6	14.9	100.0
	Total	94	97.9	100.0	
Missing	-99	2	2.1		
Total		96	100.0		

Table 56: Inclusion is more beneficial for pupil with SEN

Diversity of opinion marks views on who benefits from inclusion (Table 56): 33% disagree, and 40.4% agree.

Parents think pupils with SEN slow down their own child(ren)'s progress

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Additive %
Valid	disagree strongly	15	15.6	15.6	15.6
	disagree	18	18.8	18.8	34.4
	neither agree nor disagree	31	32.3	32.3	66.7
	agree	28	29.2	29.2	95.8
	strongly agree	4	4.2	4.2	100.0
	Total	96	100.0	100.0	

Table 57: Parents think that pupils with SEN slow down their pupil's education

This statement is a perception about others' attitude to pupils with SEN slowing down other pupils (Table 57). There is no strong view for or against the statement.

Pupils with special needs are fully part of society

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Additive %
Valid	disagree strongly	6	6.3	6.3	6.3
	disagree	17	17.7	17.7	24.0
	neither agree nor disagree	11	11.5	11.5	35.4
	agree	22	22.9	22.9	58.3
	strongly agree	40	41.7	41.7	100.0
	Total	96	100.0	100.0	

Table 58: Pupils with SEN are fully part of society

For 64.6% of participants pupils with SEN are fully part of society (Table 58). However, 24% do not think so. The statement does not distinguish if a value-judgement is being offered or if society is being critiqued and this lack undermines the interpretation that can be put on this statement.

It is my duty to see that appropriate education is given to pupils with special needs

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Additive %
Valid	disagree strongly	2	2.1	2.1	2.1
	neither agree nor disagree	3	3.1	3.2	5.3
	agree	9	9.4	9.6	14.9
	strongly agree	80	83.3	85.1	100.0
	Total	94	97.9	100.0	
Missing	-99	2	2.1		
Total		96	100.0		

Table 59: BoM member's duty to educating pupils with SEN

A strong 94.7% feel that it is their duty to see that pupils with SEN are given an appropriate education (Table 59).

In sum, the following tables and figure offer an overview of the relationships between the statements on attitudes to SEN; they guided my viewing of connections between items. Three factors loaded, following an exploratory factor analysis (Table 60). However, only the first one had more than two statements that loaded uniquely.

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Uniqueness
SEN18_Parents_struggle_rights	.	.	0.617	0.584
SEN19_specneed_giftGod	.	0.632	.	0.596
SEN20_Mainstream_benefit_PSEN	0.507	.	.	0.527
SEN21_Oursch_sharedvision_PSEN	0.725	.	.	0.498
SEN22_PSEN_toomuchattention	.	.	.	0.830
SEN23_PSEN_sameeducrights_nonSEN	0.448	.	.	0.805
SEN24_State_resources_PSEN	.	.	-0.429	0.817
SEN25_parish_prioritizes_PSEN	.	0.700	.	0.501
SEN26_anyP_SEN_somestage	.	.	.	0.867
SEN27_inclusion_benefitsPSENmore	.	.	.	0.950
SEN28_parents_PSENslowtheirchildren	.	.	.	0.952
SEN29_PSEN_fullysociety	.	.	.	0.911
SEN30_myduty_PSEN_appropreduc	.	.	.	0.885

Note. Applied rotation method is oblimin.

Table 60: Factor loadings for SEN statements

The factor correlations are provided in Table 61.

Factor Correlations

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
Factor 1	1.000		
Factor 2	0.294	1.000	
Factor 3	0.188	-0.134	1.000

Table 61: Factor correlations for SEN statements

The χ^2 was not significant (Table 62).

Chi-squared Test

	Value	df	p
Model	51.912	42	0.141

Table 62: Chi-squared test for SEN statements

The fit indices (Table 63), which give mixed information (RMSEA at 0.06 is acceptable, TLI at 0.748 is less than 0.9 and may not be a good fit) and the path for SEN statements follow (Figure 4.8).

Additional fit indices

	RMSEA	RMSEA 90% confidence	TLI	BIC
Model	0.060	0 - 0.09	0.748	-139.790

Table 63: Fit indices for SEN statements

Path Diagram
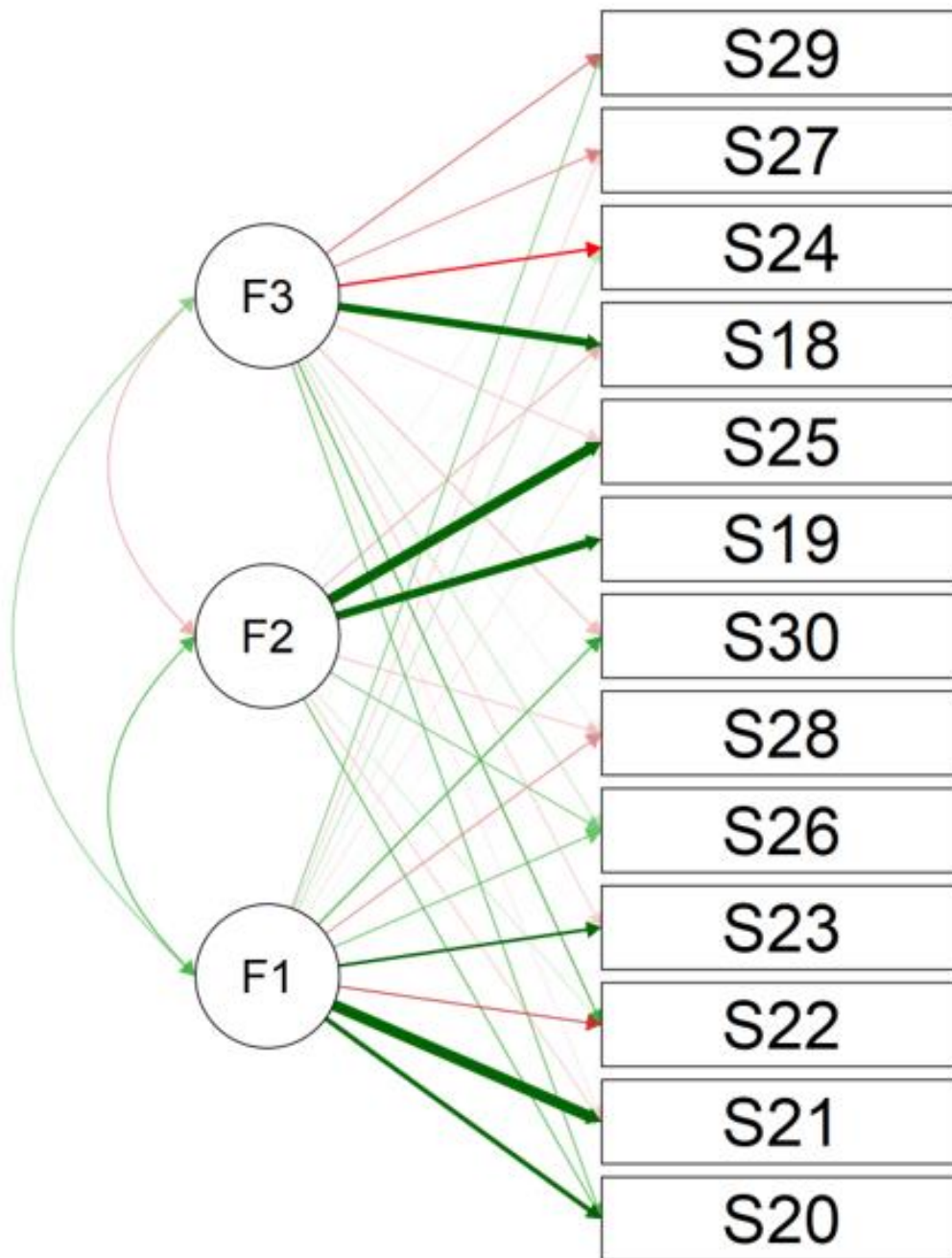
Figure 4.8: Path for SEN statements

4.2.5 Attitudes to RE for Pupils with SEN

In this section the attitudes of BoM members to the RE of pupils with SEN are presented.

RE should teach about the giftedness of pupils with special needs

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Additive %
Valid	disagree strongly	10	10.4	10.5	10.5
	disagree	7	7.3	7.4	17.9
	neither agree nor disagree	26	27.1	27.4	45.3
	agree	27	28.1	28.4	73.7
	strongly agree	25	26.0	26.3	100.0
	Total	95	99.0	100.0	
Missing	-99	1	1.0		
Total		96	100.0		

Table 64: RE should teach about the giftedness of pupils with SEN

If 17.9% disagree that RE should teach about the giftedness of pupils with SEN (Table 64), 54.7% agree that it should. 27.4% are 'neutral' on the issue. However, the statement is ambiguous as a participant could read it as referring primarily to the notion of giftedness of having pupils present who have a SEN or to the personal gifts that pupils who have SEN may have.

Pupils with SEN in mainstream RE helps other pupils' understanding of creation

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Additive %
Valid	disagree strongly	17	17.7	17.9	17.9
	disagree	12	12.5	12.6	30.5
	neither agree nor disagree	25	26.0	26.3	56.8
	agree	19	19.8	20.0	76.8
	strongly agree	22	22.9	23.2	100.0
	Total	95	99.0	100.0	
Missing	-99	1	1.0		
Total		96	100.0		

Table 65: Inclusion of pupils with SEN helps pupils' understanding of creation

If creation refers to God's making of all that is, is there an awareness of those with SEN in all that God has made? In this table (Table 65), 43.2% agree while 30,5% disagree, with 26.3% 'neutral'. Connecting inclusion and creation was, perhaps, too jarring and would have benefitted from more careful phrasing. This statement could also distinguish between those who objectify pupils with SEN while making mainstream pupils 'normative' and those who would reject such an approach.

RE should teach that Jesus is someone with special needs

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Additive %
Valid	disagree strongly	28	29.2	29.5	29.5
	disagree	18	18.8	18.9	48.4
	neither agree nor disagree	42	43.8	44.2	92.6
	agree	3	3.1	3.2	95.8
	strongly agree	4	4.2	4.2	100.0
	Total	95	99.0	100.0	
Missing	-99	1	1.0		
Total		96	100.0		

Table 66: RE should teach that Jesus has a special need(s)

Presentations of Jesus have powerful effects; should Jesus be also presented as someone with special needs? This statement (Table 66) on what RE should teach finds agreement from 7.4%, disagreement from 48.8% and 44.2% are 'neutral'. Given that the literature review showed strong evidence of scholars dealing specifically with this issue, it should have been addressed with other statements, such as 'Jesus had special needs of some kind'.

Pupils with special needs challenge our religious ideas of what human perfection is

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Additive %
Valid	disagree strongly	20	20.8	21.3	21.3
	disagree	15	15.6	16.0	37.2
	neither agree nor disagree	24	25.0	25.5	62.8
	agree	21	21.9	22.3	85.1
	strongly agree	14	14.6	14.9	100.0
	Total	94	97.9	100.0	
Missing	-99	2	2.1		
Total		96	100.0		

Table 67: Pupils with SEN challenge 'human perfection'

Do we presume that we agree on what human perfection is? Does having a SEN challenge it (see Table 67)? Participants were evenly divided (37.2% agree, 37.2% disagree), with a quarter 'neutral'. Yet, no statement sought to find out what participants think human perfection is. Had this been done, more fruitful commentary could have been made in a comparison with whatever it is that participants consider Jesus to be (or have been).

Our school does not cater well for the religious education of pupils with special needs

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Additive %
Valid	disagree strongly	39	40.6	41.5	41.5
	disagree	26	27.1	27.7	69.1
	neither agree nor disagree	22	22.9	23.4	92.6
	agree	2	2.1	2.1	94.7
	strongly agree	5	5.2	5.3	100.0
	Total	94	97.9	100.0	
Missing	-99	2	2.1		
Total		96	100.0		

Table 68: Our school is lacking in the RE of pupils with SEN

Reflecting on one's own school, are pupils with SEN catered for well in terms of RE (Table 68)? 69.1% disagree and 7.4% agree; almost a quarter are 'neutral'. In light of support for other statement, this one could have been most interesting. However, its negative phrasing leads me to be wary of too positive an interpretation.

Parents have the primary role in teaching religion to their child(ren) with special needs

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Additive %
Valid	disagree strongly	6	6.3	6.3	6.3
	disagree	2	2.1	2.1	8.4
	neither agree nor disagree	23	24.0	24.2	32.6
	agree	22	22.9	23.2	55.8
	strongly agree	42	43.8	44.2	100.0
	Total	95	99.0	100.0	
Missing	-99	1	1.0		
Total		96	100.0		

Table 69: Parents as primary educator of RE to those with SEN

Parents are children's primary educators, for Church and State. This statement (Table 69) refers specifically to RE for those with SEN: 8.4% disagree though 67.4% agree. The outcome here raises the question of who the primary educator of RE is considered to be; a different type of statement should have been constructed to elicit such information. From the teaching of the Roman Catholic church's perspective, the answer is that parents are always the primary teachers of their children. The state affirms the constitutional priority of parents, though it recognizes that it may at times have to intervene for the sake of the child.

Religion should teach that pupils with special needs manifest God's presence in the world

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Additive %
Valid	disagree strongly	15	15.6	15.8	15.8
	disagree	15	15.6	15.8	31.6
	neither agree nor disagree	34	35.4	35.8	67.4
	agree	15	15.6	15.8	83.2
	strongly agree	16	16.7	16.8	100.0
	Total	95	99.0	100.0	
Missing	-99	1	1.0		
Total		96	100.0		

Table 70: RE should teach that those with SEN manifest God's presence

Christians are taught that the presence of God is everywhere. Of course, moral evil exists and is one of the greatest challenges to faith in divine goodness. What, though, of physical and/or mental limitations; is God to be discerned in them? Many argue, as seen above, for a clear yes. Taking this another logical step forward, should RE teach that pupils with SEN manifest God's presence in the world (Table 70)? 31.6% disagree and 32.6% agree and 35.8% are 'neutral'.

Parish leadership team must be part of RE for pupils with special needs

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Additive %
Valid	disagree strongly	5	5.2	5.3	5.3
	disagree	9	9.4	9.5	14.7
	neither agree nor disagree	28	29.2	29.5	44.2
	agree	31	32.3	32.6	76.8
	strongly agree	22	22.9	23.2	100.0
	Total	95	99.0	100.0	
Missing	-99	1	1.0		
Total		96	100.0		

Table 71: Parish leadership must be part of RE of pupils with SEN

In Grow in Love, the parish is the base for catechesis, i.e. that form of RE that passes on the lived faith of the Christian community to the next generation; if this holds, then it must also be the case that the parish has duties, deriving from its mission, to be part of the RE, and life, of pupils with SEN. Just over half of participants felt that the parish team should be part of RE for pupils with SEN (Table 71): 55.8% agree, 14.8% disagree and almost 30% (29.5%) are 'neutral'.

Pupils with special needs make Jesus present in RE

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Additive %
Valid	disagree strongly	18	18.8	18.9	18.9
	disagree	18	18.8	18.9	37.9
	neither agree nor disagree	31	32.3	32.6	70.5
	agree	14	14.6	14.7	85.3
	strongly agree	14	14.6	14.7	100.0
	Total	95	99.0	100.0	
Missing	-99	1	1.0		
Total		96	100.0		

Table 72: Pupils with SEN make Jesus present in RE

Inclusion of pupils with SEN in RE makes Jesus present (Table 72): the views are split fairly evenly. 37.9 disagree, 29.4% agree and 32.6% are 'neutral'. On the one hand, everyone has a role to play in making Jesus present in any RE setting; on the other, and given Jesus's own option for those in any kind of need, we may wonder if pupils with SEN do not make Jesus present.

Our school welcomes pupils with minor special needs more than those with severe needs

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Additive %
Valid	disagree strongly	38	39.6	40.4	40.4
	disagree	22	22.9	23.4	63.8
	neither agree nor disagree	16	16.7	17.0	80.9
	agree	10	10.4	10.6	91.5
	strongly agree	8	8.3	8.5	100.0
	Total	94	97.9	100.0	
Missing	-99	2	2.1		
Total		96	100.0		

Table 73: Pupils with minor SEN are more welcome that those with severe needs

Inclusion continues to be a major thematic in the literature on education. There is a view that a monocular understanding of inclusion had pervaded to the detriment of some pupils; inclusive policies in schools can also hold positive discrimination in favour of those with special needs in a way that is faithful to the principle of inclusion and also enhances it. However, in relation to pupils with major needs inclusive attitudes may harden. Is there discrimination between those having minor and those having severe needs? 19.1% feel that those with minor needs are favoured; yet, 63.8% disagree with this view (Table 73).

RE for pupils with special needs is not a civic right

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Additive %
Valid	disagree strongly	45	46.9	48.4	48.4
	disagree	15	15.6	16.1	64.5
	neither agree nor disagree	25	26.0	26.9	91.4
	agree	3	3.1	3.2	94.6
	strongly agree	5	5.2	5.4	100.0
	Total	93	96.9	100.0	
Missing	-99	3	3.1		
Total		96	100.0		

Table 74: RE for pupils with SEN is not a civic right

Though 'civic rights' are not defined or illustrated the statement that RE is not such a right (Table 74) was disagreed with strongly (48.4%; 64.5% overall) and agreed with by 8.6%.

RE is more real when pupils with special needs participate

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Additive %
Valid	disagree strongly	20	20.8	21.3	21.3
	disagree	8	8.3	8.5	29.8
	neither agree nor disagree	31	32.3	33.0	62.8
	agree	17	17.7	18.1	80.9
	strongly agree	18	18.8	19.1	100.0
	Total	94	97.9	100.0	
Missing	-99	2	2.1		
Total		96	100.0		

Table 75: Pupils with SEN make RE more real

Nearly 30% disagree with the statement (Table 75) that pupils with SEN make RE 'more real', while 37.2% agree and ⅓ are 'neutral'.

By way of summary, an exploratory factor analysis had been carried out on all the attitudes in relation to RE for pupils with SEN (Table 76). Again, this helped me to see where statements were connected to one another.

We note that only one factor loaded.

Factor Loadings

	Factor 1	Uniqueness
SENRE31_REteach_giftedness_PSEN	0.719	0.483
SENRE32_PSENhelp_underst_creation	0.833	0.305
SENRE33_REteach_JwithSEN	0.609	0.629
SENRE34_PSEN_challengeus_hperfection	0.645	0.585
SENRE35_oursch_poor_REofPSEN	.	0.987
SENRE36_parents_primrole_RE_childrenSEN	.	0.949
SENRE37_RE_PSEN_signsgrace	0.806	0.350
SENRE38_parishleadership_partRE_PSEN	.	0.873
SENRE39_PSEN_JpresentinRE	0.860	0.260
SENRE40_oursch_Pminor_morethanPsevere	.	1.000
SENRE41_REforPSEN_civicright	.	0.993
SENRE42_RE_morereal_withPSEN	0.676	0.543

Note. Applied rotation method is oblimin.

Table 76: Factor loadings for statements on RE for pupils with SEN

The one factor, not surprisingly correlated to 1.00 and the χ^2 (Table 77) indicated statistical significance, $p= <.001$; therefore, the model presented was rejected.

Chi-squared Test

	Value	df	p
Model	93.620	54	$< .001$

Table 77: Chi-squared test for RE for SEN statements

The fit indices (Table 78), which corroborate the χ^2 that may otherwise have been distorted because of the sample size, do not indicate a good fit, and path (Figure 4.9) for the data are also included.

	RMSEA	RMSEA 90% confidence	TLI	BIC
Model	0.094	0.057 - 0.117	0.866	-152.855

Table 78: Fit indices for RE for SEN statements

Path diagram
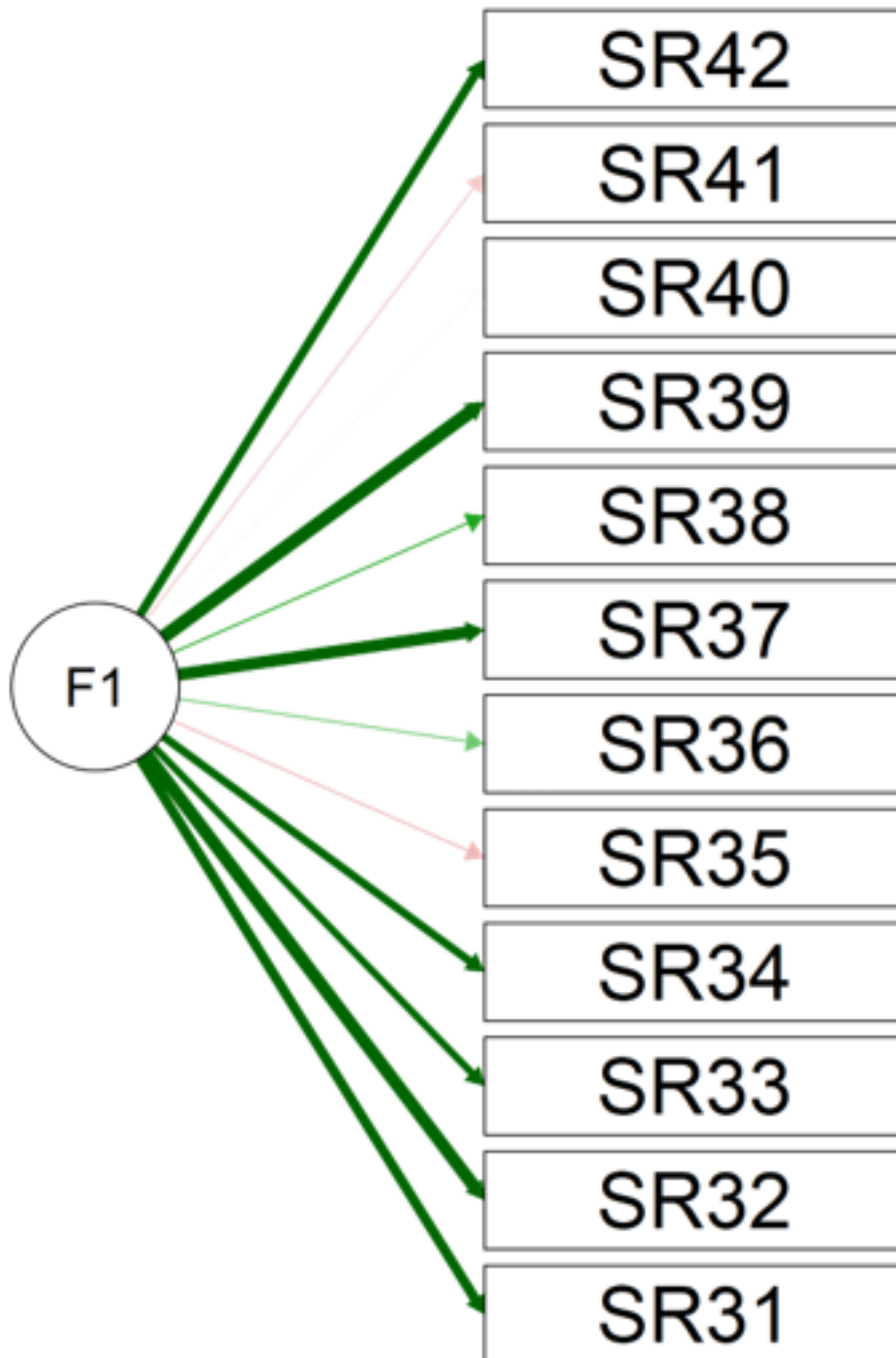
Figure 4.9: Path of RE for SEN statements

4.2.6 Attitudes presentation

On one occasion, May 2017, I engaged with one BoM as a group on the basis of the Feedback date (Appendix F). Though the outcomes of the discussion were limited to comments of appreciation for the research, it was helpful in encouraging ongoing reflection on an issue of importance to schools and BoMs; the meeting encouraged me to pursue this topic further. It is opportune, therefore, to compare the data that I presented to this BoM, by way of a handout, with the data that resulted from the completed *Questionnaire 1*.

	Feedback (n=63)	Questionnaire 1 (n=96)
	%	%
Answerability of a BOM member		
• spiritual development	54	44
• religious development	53	47
• moral development	73	67
• intellectual development	80	76
RE S1-S17		
RE is integral to education	77	75
RE contributes to building character	71	68
State should not interfere with spiritual dimension of pupils	51	48
Our school should be completely secular	9	13
SEN S18-S30		
Having a special need is a gift from God	9	8
Mainstream benefit from presence of pupils with SEN	86	81
Parish prioritizes pupils with SEN	11	8
Parents think inclusion benefits pupils with SEN the most	42	40
Parents think pupils with SEN slow down their own children	37	33
It's my duty to see pupils with SEN get appropriate education	94	93
RE for SEN S31-S42		
RE should teach about giftedness of pupils with SEN	60	54
RE should teach Jesus is someone with SEN	11	7
Our school does not cater well in RE for pupils with SEN	8	7
RE should teach that pupils with SEN manifest God's presence	35	32
Our school welcomes pupils with minor SEN (v. severe) needs	22	19
RE is more real when pupils with SEN participate	50	37

Table 79: Comparing Feedback items, presented to a BoM, with *Questionnaire 1*

We should expect very little difference between both data-sets (Table 79) if the additional participants on Questionnaire 1 matched the first cohort of participants (Feedback group). This is, in fact, what we observe in the data-sets with two exceptions. Allowing a 6% variability as 'normal', we note a 10% reduction in support for the statement on BoM members' answerability for the spiritual development of pupils. A slightly higher reduction, 13%, is noted for the statement that RE is more real when pupils with SEN participate in 'normal' classes.

4.3 *QUESTIONNAIRE 2*

Again, a profile of participants is presented (4.3.1), which is followed by the views expressed by the BoM members (4.3.2).

4.3.1 Profile of participants

The number of those who responded anonymously to the online form (Appendix G) was 25. Another 6, whom I personally contacted, filled in a hardcopy of the questionnaire. Therefore, the total number of participants to this questionnaire is 31. However, I had asked another five BoM members, from three Boards, and who are known to me, to fill it in: 4 ordinary members and 1 chairperson. Though initially willing, no response was received; all, less one, were reminded at least once. Later, one person told me that the details requested were too personal, though she elaborated further by saying that, were she responding anonymously online, she would have felt comfortable filling it in.

All 31 participants who completed this second Questionnaire (Table 80) indicated membership of a BoM, making their contributions valid. 65% of them had filled in *Questionnaire 1*, and 35% had not. It should be noted that the comments below came almost exclusively from the first 25 participants, i.e. those who replied online.

Variables chosen	Total %	Principal %	Patrons' nominee %	Teachers' nominee %	Parents' nominee %	Community nominee %
Role on BoM — Chairperson	0	50	40	0	20
Secretary	66.7	0	0	20	0
Treasurer	0	0	60	0	20
Ordinary mem.	16.7	50	0	80	60
Other	16.7	0	0	0	0
Membership prior to 2015 — No	8.3	75	60	60	40
Yes	91.7	25	40	40	60
Length of service (yrs)* (* counts) — ≤4	5	3	3	4	1
5-8	3	0	2	1	1
9-12	3	0	0	0	3
13-16	1	0	0	0	0
17-20	0	0	0	0	0
21-24	0	0	0	0	0
25-29	0	1	0	0	0
Gender — Female	66.7	25	80	60	40
Male	33.3	75	20	40	60
Marital status — Married	75	50	60	80	60
Single	25	0	40	0	0
Religious life	0	25	0	0	0
Other	0	25	0	20	40
Age cohort* (* counts) — 25-29	0	0	0	0	0
30-34	1	0	1	0	0
35-39	2	0	2	0	1
40-44	0	0	0	2	0
45-49	1	0	0	2	1
50-54	3	2	1	1	2
55-59	5	2	0	0	1
60-64	0	0	1	0	0
Close relative with a SEN(s) — No	75	50	60	40	80
Yes	25	50	40	60	20
Parental status — Not a parent	41.7	25	60	0	20
Is a parent	58.3	75	40	100	80
School gender — Girls only	16.7	0	0	20	20
Boys only	25	25	20	20	80
Mixed	58.3	75	80	60	0
School placement — Inner city	33.3	0	20	0	20
Suburban	66.7	100	80	100	80
Rural	0	0	0	0	0
School's class cohorts — JI-6th	50	50	40	20	40
JI-2nd	16.7	0	20	40	20
3rd-6th	8.3	50	40	40	0
Other	25	0	0	0	20
School's 'special' status — Mainstream	50	0	60	40	20
" + special cl.	33.3	100	40	60	40
Special school	16.7	0	0	0	40
School's DEIS status — non-DEIS	75	75	60	40	60
Band 1	25	0	40	20	20
Band 2	0	25	0	40	0
Band 3	0	0	0	0	20

Table 80: Profile of participants in *Questionnaire 2*

4.3.2 Participants' views

The initial question put to participants related to the first questionnaire. Thereafter the questions concerned the feedback they had been sent and the process of engaging with the research.

Accuracy of Questionnaire 1

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Additive %
Valid	disagree strongly	2	6.5	7.1	7.1
	neither agree nor disagree	10	32.3	35.7	42.9
	agree	12	38.7	42.9	85.7
	strongly agree	4	12.9	14.3	100.0
	Total	28	90.3	100.0	
Missing	Not filled	3	9.7		
Total		31	100.0		

Table 81: Affirmation of accuracy of *Questionnaire 1*

Of those who commented, 57.2% (16) were in agreement on the basic accuracy of *Questionnaire 1* and were not surprised at the feedback (Table 81); some commented on not receiving either *Questionnaire 1* or the Feedback. In much of the commentary on succeeding statements, reference was repeatedly made to failure to receive *Questionnaire 1*, the Feedback or both; these comments seemed to me born of frustration at not being able to respond to something unknown; the views expressed are treated as truly felt and their validity is not impugned by any dearth of information that neither participants nor I would have wished them to lack; others' comments show that there were occasions when misunderstanding, which is not always avoidable, arose from statements or from presumptions about either my position or wording. Indeed, own analysis of responses to Questionnaire 1 indicate that in some cases a lack of clarity in the formulation of statements was problematic. More broadly, only in-depth discussion, and perhaps not even then, reveals what participants (and questioner) intend by their statements. Here, the comments served as a warning for future research. I will not refer further to these comments below.

Feedback helped me

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Additive %
Valid	disagree strongly	3	9.7	10.7	10.7
	disagree	5	16.1	17.9	28.6
	neither agree nor disagree	10	32.3	35.7	64.3
	agree	10	32.3	35.7	100.0
	Total	28	90.3	100.0	
Missing	Not filled	3	9.7		
Total		31	100.0		

Table 82: Project feedback helped personally

Comments on Table 82 were more tentative. Some had already thought about the issue or were now doing so (14), one person had 'never thought about this before', while another 'did not find the urge or desire to reflect on RE specifically for pupils with special needs', which may accord with another's comment that 'for me, the needs of all children are the same from an RE viewpoint'.

Feedback helped our Board

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Additive %
Valid	disagree strongly	7	22.6	25.0	25.0
	disagree	7	22.6	25.0	50.0
	neither agree nor disagree	14	45.2	50.0	100.0
	Total	28	90.3	100.0	
Missing	Not filled	3	9.7		
Total		31	100.0		

Table 83: Project feedback helped our BoM

Though half of those who responded were 'neutral' on the helpfulness of the feedback the other half found that it did not help. From the comments, either the issue was not discussed at BoM level or the data had not been received (13 replies; Table 83). 4 have still to bring it to Board or are presently discussing it. One participant wrote that the questionnaire was discussed 'but no clear consensus emerged beyond the importance of the issue'.

This process helped me be a more responsible Member

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Additive %
Valid	disagree strongly	5	16.1	17.9	17.9
	disagree	7	22.6	25.0	42.9
	neither agree nor disagree	9	29.0	32.1	75.0
	agree	7	22.6	25.0	100.0
	Total	28	90.3	100.0	
Missing	Not filled	3	9.7		
Total		31	100.0		

Table 84: This project helped me to be a more responsible BoM member

In Table 84 a quarter of those who responded agreed that the process helped personally; however, three-quarters there were either 'neutral' or disagreed. 14 comments explicitly affirming the participants' sense of responsibility, e.g. 'I feel I am always a responsible Board member', 'my awareness of responsibility is constant'. One participant wrote: 'This is something I (as a non-Christian) considered long before I agreed to be on the BOM'. Other comments showed alertness to the statement itself: 'I think anything that helps us assess our position, helps us to be more aware of our responsibilities', 'has helped me consider broader issues' and 'that others also think the issue is important affirms my own convictions'. One participant commented that this was 'Not an area I had thought about previously', while another wrote 'I don't think it has influenced my thinking'.

I am now more aware of SEN

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Additive %
Valid	disagree strongly	11	35.5	36.7	36.7
	disagree	4	12.9	13.3	50.0
	neither agree nor disagree	6	19.4	20.0	70.0
	agree	7	22.6	23.3	93.3
	strongly agree	2	6.5	6.7	100.0
	Total	30	96.8	100.0	
Missing	Not filled	1	3.2		
Total		31	100.0		

Table 85: Greater awareness of SEN

Half of participants disagreed that they are now more aware of SEN (Table 85). For 13 who commented, pre-existing awareness of SEN was affirmed; this probably explains the

high figure who disagreed. Two answered with 'yes' and one with 'no', while a third commented 'it has highlighted questions that had not arisen in our context'.

I am now more aware of RE

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Additive %
Valid	disagree strongly	7	22.6	23.3	23.3
	disagree	7	22.6	23.3	46.7
	neither agree nor disagree	7	22.6	23.3	70.0
	agree	8	25.8	26.7	96.7
	strongly agree	1	3.2	3.3	100.0
	Total	30	96.8	100.0	
Missing	Not filled	1	3.2		
Total		31	100.0		

Table 86: Greater awareness of RE

While awareness of RE (Table 86) was affirmed by 29%, 45.2% disagreed. One participant stated that it has 'made me feel more strongly about how it – religious education – is for all'. One participant referred to the role RE 'can play in promoting an equality agenda and the concept of social justice, perhaps'. Another referred to a recent school process on the characteristic spirit of Catholic schools that made staff 'aware of the ERBE documents, etc.' Though personally aware, another commented that 'Irish society is conflicted on the issue'.

I am now more aware of RE for pupils with SEN

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Additive %
Valid	disagree strongly	5	16.1	16.7	16.7
	disagree	6	19.4	20.0	36.7
	neither agree nor disagree	6	19.4	20.0	56.7
	agree	9	29.0	30.0	86.7
	strongly agree	4	12.9	13.3	100.0
	Total	30	96.8	100.0	
Missing	Not filled	1	3.2		
Total		31	100.0		

Table 87: Greater awareness of RE for pupils with SEN

There was a lot of variability in both the Likert choices and comments on awareness of RE for pupils with SEN (Table 87). Some commented 'always aware' (x2), 'no change', 'had

reflected on this before' while others had not reflected on the matter before (x4). One participant was 'more aware that there are little alternative programmes for SEN children', another that 'I had not given the issue much thought before the questionnaire', and another that 'it has focused my attention on this, though not for the first time'.

I reflect more now on my responsibility to pupils with SEN

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Additive %
Valid	disagree strongly	8	25.8	27.6	27.6
	disagree	5	16.1	17.2	44.8
	neither agree nor disagree	9	29.0	31.0	75.9
	agree	3	9.7	10.3	86.2
	strongly agree	4	12.9	13.8	100.0
	Total	29	93.5	100.0	
Missing	Not filled	2	6.5		
Total		31	100.0		

Table 88: More reflection on responsibility to pupils with SEN

The comments accompanying Table 88 are similar to the previous ones, i.e. generally affirming a pre-existing sense of responsibility in this area, e.g. 'I focus on this daily'. Thus, the figures in the table itself do not represent disagreement on 'responsibility' but rather with the 'more now' dimension of the statement. However, one participant commented that the process 'had made me more conscious of this', though one participant added that 'the issue should be discussed at Board level' and another that it 'needs to be discussed at next board meeting'.

I reflect more now on my responsibility to RE of pupils with SEN

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Additive %
Valid	disagree strongly	6	19.4	20.7	20.7
	disagree	6	19.4	20.7	41.4
	neither agree nor disagree	7	22.6	24.1	65.5
	agree	6	19.4	20.7	86.2
	strongly agree	4	12.9	13.8	100.0
	Total	29	93.5	100.0	
Missing	Not filled	2	6.5		
Total		31	100.0		

Table 89: More reflection on responsibility to RE of pupils with SEN

32.3% agreed that they reflect more now on their responsibility to the RE of pupils with SEN, while 38.8% disagreed. The comments accompanying Table 89 were noticeably shorter: 14 were no more than two words each. One participant commented that the responsibility is 'shared with parents as primary educators'. Another's affirmation was expanded: 'enough to table it as a BoM agenda item'. Interestingly, another person commented that 'the religious ethos of the pupils is a reflection of the board's make up'.

Teaching Jesus as the perfect one sets too high a standard

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Additive %
Valid	disagree strongly	7	22.6	22.6	22.6
	disagree	6	19.4	19.4	41.9
	neither agree nor disagree	8	25.8	25.8	67.7
	agree	7	22.6	22.6	90.3
	strongly agree	3	9.7	9.7	100.0
	Total	31	100.0	100.0	

Table 90: Teaching Jesus as perfect sets too high a standard

Perhaps predictably, this statement on presenting a 'perfect Jesus' provoked different responses; the comments on teaching a 'perfect Jesus' (Table 90) were the longest in general and, perhaps more clearly than in comments on other statements, reflected different understandings of the statement at hand. For one participant 'teaching pupils about "Jesus" is inappropriate', it is religious indoctrination, though it is 'not an issue' for one while another is 'not sure'. The following are some of the responses:

- Jesus gave an example that all are called to follow in their own way

- standards can never be too high

- I don't think Jesus is presented to children (SEN or otherwise) as 'perfect'

- sets too high a standard for everyone (not especially those with a disability

- Jesus can be presented as the one who includes all because God is love

- he is our guiding light and is what we all would want to be like so [I] don't think his perfection is a problem. None of us are perfect

- I don't think this is attainable for children

- I think we are overthinking this – we are teaching pupils about Jesus – not the standard that we as people set for ourselves. As Son of God, Jesus is not a role model that we compare ourselves to, but rather a deity we aspire to follow

- this is a complex matter, but in general the image of Jesus that we teach will influence the perception that children have of him.

For one participant the statement was 'farfetched' but for another 'this seems logical'.

It would be helpful to present Jesus as broken

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Additive %
Valid	disagree strongly	11	35.5	35.5	35.5
	disagree	8	25.8	25.8	61.3
	neither agree nor disagree	8	25.8	25.8	87.1
	agree	1	3.2	3.2	90.3
	strongly agree	3	9.7	9.7	100.0
	Total	31	100.0	100.0	

Table 91: Helpfulness of presenting Jesus as 'broken'

Contrasting with a 'perfect Jesus' the next statement (Table 91), presents a 'broken Jesus', such as the theology of Eiesland does; the comments on Jesus as 'broken' provoked a large response, though they were more tentative: 'I am not sure what you mean by "broken"',

'not able to process such concepts', 'I don't know that that would be helpful'. For one participant it is 'odd and slightly offensive in the context of SEN'. Another wrote: 'don't think children with sen need to think about broken to be fixed. I have a sen. It does not need to be fixed. It just means I learn differently'. While presenting Jesus as human helps (x2), for another participant, 'presenting Jesus as broken shows/can help to show his empathy with those who are broken', for another 'this would be very unhelpful since it suggests that pupils with SEN are "broken"'. Another commented: 'if society tends to reject those who have disabilities then presenting the possibility of identifying with someone who also has disabilities might be helpful – of course, it could be distorting, too'.

The state is better to develop the RE of pupils with SEN

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Additive %
Valid	disagree strongly	17	54.8	54.8	54.8
	disagree	3	9.7	9.7	64.5
	neither agree nor disagree	6	19.4	19.4	83.9
	agree	4	12.9	12.9	96.8
	strongly agree	1	3.2	3.2	100.0
	Total	31	100.0	100.0	

Table 92: The State as developer of RE for pupils with SEN

A clear rejection of the notion of the state being better – though no contrast was offered – at developing the RE of pupils with SEN was registered: almost 55% 'disagreed strongly'. A range of opinions was evident, however (Table 92). Some participants were against (x8), while others were pro (x2). However, general commentary was more nuanced:

- the State does not have the expertise to teach RE

- joint responsibility of church, state and parents

- not a state responsibility in a secular society

- the state is secular in nature, faith is a belief that should form part of a personal relationship with god

- I believe in a separation of church and state, irrespective of whether a child has special needs or not

- not with the way things are going in terms of how religion is viewed in our secular society

- yes, the state represents all peoples of the state therefore is the best body to oversee RE for all pupils with or without SEN

- the state has become apathetic to RE for all pupils

- the State acts often out of procedural, bureaucratic, fiscal and legalistic considerations – it seems rarely to lead to moral or spiritual understanding.

Thus, there is a spectrum of views from having full responsibility to a having a role to having no role.

The church is better to develop the RE of pupils with SEN

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Additive %
Valid	disagree strongly	2	6.5	6.5	6.5
	disagree	4	12.9	12.9	19.4
	neither agree nor disagree	8	25.8	25.8	45.2
	agree	10	32.3	32.3	77.4
	strongly agree	7	22.6	22.6	100.0
	Total	31	100.0	100.0	

Table 93: The Church as developer of RE for pupils with SEN

The situation is almost reversed in Table 93: 54.9% agreed that the Church is 'better' at developing RE for pupils with SEN. Yet, the comments to the statement also represent a range of views, with an element of critique, too. For some participants, there is clearly a key role for the church (x10). However, many qualified their own views and there was explicit reference to partnerships between: 'school, home and parish'; 'parents first and foremost, church second, and school third'; 'church, state and parents'; 'church and other stakeholders, especially parents'. The term 'church' elicited various opinions: 'institutional Church', 'Catholicism is not the only Church', 'different denominations working together', 'clergy, laity and those with SEN working together'. One participant wrote that 'the Church can help to renew itself through the RE of pupils with SEN', as another cautioned that 'it is wrong and short-sighted to single out one religious opinion above all others for pupils with multi-cultural backgrounds with or without SEN'. The participant who commented on a procedural, bureaucratic state further commented that 'the Church has proven to act like a

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State', yet 'its structure is not essentially bureaucratic and legalistic but guided by the teaching of Jesus and so may be expected to understand better the reality of people who struggle with and through life'.

4.4 INTERVIEWS

Of the original 25 participants to *Questionnaire 2*, 13 consented to be interviewed, and 12 did not. However, when contacted by email, at the address supplied by each participant, 8 never replied. There was no observable pattern to this. Four of the remaining five were interviewed. Through a series of delays, on both parties' behalf, over three months, one was not interviewed. In order, then, to strengthen the accounts of those who volunteered to be interviewed and to ensure that I would obtain some critique of my overall process I proceeded to ask another four members, all personally known to me and whom I felt would not feel inhibited in any discussion with me.

4.4.1 Profile of interviewees

As indicated in Table 94, a certain representation of BoM membership was achieved in those interviewed. However, efforts made in three schools, by personal contacts, failed to produce any parent or community representative who would agree to be interviewed. Unsurprisingly, those who agreed to be interviewed tended to have the closest connection to their school, i.e. principals, teachers' appointees and chairpersons. It is regrettable that those parents and community representatives whom I directly approached declined to do so as their perspectives may diverge from those of 'professional' educators, for, in the Roman Catholic tradition, parents are the primary educators, and this principle is reflected in the Irish Constitution, too. If asked to speculate on what their views would be, past experience would lead me to say that parents want, first and foremost, what is best for their children; once school representatives explain how that which they propose will assist the pupil – the parents' child – they will encounter cooperation and willingness to support. In those areas with which I am familiar, it must be admitted that parents are often mystified by the 'educational system'; in this respect we fail them by not have more effective communication; however, whatever issues were raised by any unwillingness to engage with my research, these exceed the latter's remit.

Name	Date of Interview	Sex	BoM position	Status	Code
O_ E_	13-06-2017	F	Chair	lay	OE
N_ T_	16-06-2018	M	Principal	lay	NT
X_ D_	20-06-2017	M	Chair	priest	XD
D_ N_	22-06-2017	F	Teachers' appointee	lay	DN
E_ B_	04-10-2017	M	Principal	lay	EB
F_ R_	08-10-2017	M	Archbishop's appointee	priest	FR
E_ I_	06-12-2017	M	Principal	lay	EI
N_ O'M_	20-12-2017	F	Teachers' appointee	lay	NO

Table 94: Profile of Interviewees

Most of the interviewees were male (n=5); only 3 were female. 6 were laypeople and 2 religious (Table 94).

4.4.2 Participants' views

In this section I provide a general introduction to the interviews and then summarize some of the views expressed using the following sub-headings as guides: SEN, RE, Irish culture, spiritual and religious, RE for pupils with SEN, children's lives, the state's RE programme and care. I conclude with a heading called 'critique'; in the later interviews participants were specifically asked to offer some critique of the process that I had engaged in as a way of offering advice to any subsequent researchers in this area. For a more complete transcription of participants' views, see Appendix H.

All interviewees were forthcoming in their comments and the interview was at times free-flowing and conversational, with exchanges of opinions and information. In general, the topic of this research had not been addressed by interviewees hitherto. For instance, EI could not recall receiving any information from me; so much arrives at his desk daily; he speculated that my low response-rate was due to the heavy workload of principals. The latter was addressed by DB, too, though he took particular note of my research; for him, the topic as it related to pupils with SEN was particularly interesting in light of the profile of his school, which has a more pronounced percentage of pupils with SEN. It was EI who raised the issue of having 'someone in the school that's assigned, that would be assigned' to such a specific subject area.

Also, while apologetic for their answering, I could only praise their cooperation and openness in responding to my questions. In the nature of things, questions on one's core beliefs, and religious and/or spiritual views and critique of the person interviewing them might not be a usual recipe for interviews, but even the initially reluctant (e.g. DN) were satisfied in the end.

SEN

In relation to SEN, EB spoke about his own school and its cohort of pupils, many more or whom have SENs in comparison with schools generally. OE was unsure whether the state or the church was better at dealing with pupils who are 'problematic'. Personally, OE felt that she could not have been a teacher: they 'are so overloaded'. The attitude teachers should have to children with needs is kindness, and this is true and maybe so of any child. There has to be 'the right fit with the right child', and this fit applies between SNAs and pupils, too. NT referred to the change brought about by the National Council for Special Education (NCSE); hitherto under the DES, the school was directed to operate under the Department of Health's 'early years' initiative. The DES could then refuse certain supports; stress resulted for staff. NT saw the root of the problem as Ireland not having 'a rights-based approach to children', especially to those with SEN. In fact, his reference to the UN Conventions on the Rights of the Child was inaccurate in that Ireland has already ratified it (1992), but 'right' in the sense that lack of compliance, identified by the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC) and restated by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, in its concluding observations, dated 4th February 2016, means that Ireland has still much to do in redressing children's rights. As the last country in the EU to ratify the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, in 2018, Ireland finally becomes subject to compliance with international law in the promotion, protection and ensuring of 'the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms of all persons with disabilities…[and the promotion of] respect for their inherent dignity' (CRPD 2006, art. 1).

NO felt very challenged in her early career as a teacher 'trying to do everything'; only as she began to prioritize did her approach become different, especially when she taught children with SEN: there are 'completely different expectations and levels' for them – 'it's so child-dependent'. Teaching children with SEN leads a teacher to the realization that what they need is, not the vast array of curricular subjects, but 'to get through life'; this leads to a curriculum devised around the child (NO).

As with EI, EB thought that the local BoM would be guided by the teachers if implementation of a programme was raised.

RE

Personally, NO felt she 'had a lot faith', a result of the way she was brought up and of the school she attended, especially the nun-principal; without the example of her parents 'so engaged in their faith' she doubts that she would have the level of faith that she actually has today. DN felt that RE 'wouldn't necessarily come from the home'; it comes 'from within the school'. She felt that overseeing RE should come from the church: 'it should be done cooperatively between the school and the church'. RE should not all be left to teachers; the church has 'a certain amount of input', but its numbers are falling. Nevertheless, 'a lot of lay people are willing to get involved'; a parish committee could be formed. Indeed, as DN stated, 'home, school and church' should cooperate. DN also spoke of the importance of having a place like a church for kids to visit. NO felt that a lot of scripture and RE 'is so abstract it's beyond them [pupils SEN]'. She realistically added: 'it's beyond all of us to be honest'.

Formal RE is not necessarily tied to affirmation of faith or religious practice: children's religion is not asked in some schools: 'children of all faiths and no faiths' are included (NT). For NO, learning about other religions 'is a good thing'; it helps to counter 'racism towards other religions and faith'; also, 'they all [religions] have the same core values' and children might, in learning about other religions, then 'look at their [own] faith a bit more or [be] more interested or more curious about their faith but', she added, 'a lot of it has to happen at home too'.

Irish culture

EB spoke of fairly regularly conducted research requests, 'for masters and doctorates', coming to his desk, on many issues; he particularly notices those that relate to his school's concerns, especially pupils with SEN. Therefore, when he saw my research-project he was happy to fill out the questionnaires, both of whom he had received. OE also referred to past 'younger academics coming in who really had a lot of chips on their shoulders and very antagonistic and all the rest of it'; they are in contrast with those 'now coming in who….never had any contact with the Church so they're marvelling at people who went out on the missions, because they never knew about them', and this is 'a very different world'. OE referred to a residual kind of Catholic culture that most people in Ireland have due to their own education; there has been 'an awful lot of emphasis', negatively on it.

Referencing influences by the state, church and school, she said that 'it really boils down to what's happening at home and what's being taught there and what the beliefs are'. In times of 'faith and crisis' we all need something to hang onto. Materialism is filling a 'want and need'; religious observances, like Sunday Mass, are not necessarily the answer; she referred to a particular priest whose short comments mean more than the Mass.

For NT, his school was established to 'prevent school failure', a feature of his school in the 1960s. His school is unique in having only 3-5 year-olds. It is under the patronage of the Catholic archdiocese, yet it does not have a remit of teaching religion. Knowing of my research, NT still offered to do an interview, in addition to completing the questionnaires, as a service he offers to scholars doing research. Teaching religion, he said, really begins now that the new RE curriculum is in place and has a focus on the early years. Nonetheless, there was informal teaching of RE in the school, especially as the community is 'multi-denominational' and 'multi-cultural'. The school endeavours to be responsive to the needs of the area, which has an inner-city profile. After-school activities are organized to bring locals into the school; these include doodling for senior infants, literacy programme, music, physiotherapy, upstairs playground. Local parents are trained in child-care and given work within the school.

For EI, principal, it is important 'to establish an environment that promoted Christian values'; this was personally important to him and 'probably important to the rest of the staff'. Interestingly, both FR and I recalled a priest of our acquaintance who established a particularly good rapport with pupils in the primary schools but who, in later years, was taken by now-grown ex-pupils to have been a disciplinarian and authoritarian; this wrong view arose, we felt, arose from his regular role with pupils. Personally, FR had been made fun of and abused by older teenagers as he entered his own presbytery on night.

EI was clear that BoM members are 'volunteers', with 'busy lives' and 'families'. While things can be discussed at BoM meetings, 'the agenda's pretty long' and the follow-up is usually left to the principal (EI). In relation to BoMs having a member who is responsible for reporting on RE to the Board, EB said 'I'm not sure there would be too many volunteers'. For NO, specific training would be needed so that a programme agreed at a BoM could be implemented with the staff. RE comes bottom of the list because the focus is on exams (NO).

NT is happy he receives a budget from the DES to run his school, though he knows many principals do not want this role.

For DN, 'spiritual' connotes leading by example and hoping that children 'will pick up' how we lead our lives; we would hope for children to 'be good people and to be kind to each other'. DN believes in an afterlife, a heaven, God, 'but for me it's more like a crutch than a safety net' and it is nice for children 'to have a sense that if something bad happens within your life, that there is something out there or some higher being that...they can speak to or reflect or talk to'. NT felt that everyone has 'a spiritual dimension', and this is independent of whether he sees that 'a being religious or not'. Indeed, 'religious' is a term with connotations, 'different connotations for different people and, I suppose, politically current "spiritual" sounds more accepting' also, being kind and generous and being supportive of your children is something spiritual in everyone. For a lot of the parents he had met, First Holy Communion was not a religious but a social one. Also, he quoted a good friend approvingly: 'it's much easier to be brought up in a faith formation to question is there a God or isn't there a God, than [to be] someone who hasn't been brought up in it'. Not having a faith structure in one's life makes it 'very hard to search and seek'. Here, it is as if seeking is part of the core structure of one's being. For OE, spirituality is, on the one hand, 'airy-fairy', it is like 'hugging trees', in which case it needs to be 'carefully defined'; and, on the other, has a 'more positive impact than saying "religious"', because of the connotations of this word (NT). DN, on the other, considered both 'spiritual' and 'religious' applied to her. She wanted children to have experiences, like visiting a church and going to Mass, such as she had in her schooldays. She was aware that this might be a carry-over from her own upbringing. Schools in the archdiocese, such as his own, are inclusive, said NT: children of all faiths and none are welcome. Inclusion means, then, that the faith formation element is there for those who want it (NT). For EI, inclusivity is connected to diversity of religions and he approves of 'creating awareness of other faiths, of other religions'; he would have to consult with the rest of the staff before he would commit to having both a denominational and a state RE programmes, but it would be 'good for everyone, good for the school community'. NT's opinion is that parents do not want to take responsibility for the faith formation of their children influences decisions to go against divesting schools from the church. Thus, patronal divestment might present a challenge for those parents who would have to take on a more active role in faith formation (NT).

NO spent time in an Islamic society; she respected the local traditions, sometimes joining in the calls to prayer; in her own life she began and ended each day with prayer, though the experience abroad 'would make you think about your own faith a bit more'. CN feels she is

more spiritual than religious; she wants 'children to be good people...to be good to everyone, to be nice to everyone, be kind'. She is not 'into the whole doctrine side of it'. Her class is 'more kind of *ad hoc*', for instance, doing prayers, songs, and stories; she is 'not a huge fan' of the catechetical programme as it is 'very text oriented and quite heavy', a comment that resonates with NO. The teacher leads by example, so that the children 'will pick up...how you lead your life'. Though she believes in an afterlife, God, etc., for her, this is 'more like a crutch than a safety net; and it's nice for kids to have that, to have a sense that if something bad happens within your life that there is something out there or some higher being...that they can speak to or reflect or talk to'. This is the message she tries to get across to her pupils. For FR, a priest, contact between pupils and priests is declining due to the scandals; however, he had noted the caring relationship that an SNA can form with pupils who have SEN, and it is 'lovely'.FR also finds in his school evidence that it is a 'Catholic school' and a 'Christian school'

NT raised the issue of teachers who wish to teach in a faith environment. While attention is directed towards offering parents and pupils a wider range of school-types, attention needs to be given to those teachers who do not want to work in a school-type that is not religiously focused.

In certain communities, what is in form a religious ceremony, e.g. First Holy Communion, is for parents (only) a social occasion (NT). Also, being brought up in a religious way, even if rejected later in life, is more to the benefit of the person than never having been religiously educated. For OE, her faith was 'a simple faith' and she stated that 'I have no theology', having agreed that people today do not have much theology.

NT holds that parent and child have a spiritual dimension; 'spiritual' is more politically acceptable (NT).

NT alone raised the issue of school divestment: 'the reality that certain schools may be divested but where does it leave the person who wants to be in a school that has a Catholic ethos, a Catholic faith formation…?' He said: 'my view on this is that parents don't wish to take the primary responsibility of their children's faith formation, that they're happy for us in the school to do that; so by actually divesting a school to a non-denominational, to another patron body, would mean that parents and the parish would have to take a more active role. That might be a challenge for some parents'. This idea of who takes responsibility for RE takes different configurations, but it is proving to be a recurring theme.

Promoting Christian values is something the principal regards as important and feels that the rest of staff concur (EI). These cash out as inclusion and respect for one another. They have not cropped up at BoM meetings (yet). Indeed, inclusion and respect might not be a high priority area for discussion by the Board (EI). 'In order for us to say we are inclusive' the needs of children, whether 'educational or spiritual', said NT, have to be on a 'a rights basis approach'.

For NO all religions teach that people should be treated with respect for all are the same; what have to be got across are the social and moral values. Pushed to it, NO felt that children have a right to RE.

OE agrees that there is little or no theology; OE regards herself as having 'a very simple sort of faith', but when relating what Jesus did on the cross spoke of despair, drama and hope. Recalling that in her youth Christmas was 'the big one', OE later considered Easter the more significant. Her parents, she thinks, had a religious upbringing of 'doom and gloom', whereas she had one of 'the God of love'. She spoke of how her religion 'evolved'. She appreciated that RE nowadays involved learning about other religions, but 'the presumption was 'that you knew about your own faith'.

RE for pupils with SEN

For some I had to explain the nature of my research, especially this aspect of RE for pupils with SEN (OE, EI, NO). NT was not clear what this would entail as it is not part of what he deals with, but, 'as a professional' he was certainly interested. In a previous position, dealing with pupils having MGLD, NT had help from a Diocesan Advisor who had had experience with special education. A local priest who is on the BoM acts as chaplain to the school offering 'spiritual support' (NT). Due to the 'many priority areas in schools' RE for pupils with SEN is likely to get informal support within the school; however, formally, 'I just don't know whether it would be tackled'. For EI, nevertheless, this 'would be something well worth considering'. EB referenced differentiation in relation to literacy and numeracy, but 'it would never have really occurred to people that maybe that should apply as much in something like religion'. EB felt that the BoM would 'tread warily': it would not want to seem to be dictating to teachers about what to teach, yet it had responsibility for policy in the school. Again, presenting Jesus as someone with a SEN was most interesting, as was the idea of Jesus as 'nearly the perfect being', even amidst so many presentations of him nailed to a cross, has been ingrained in us so that it came as a bit of a shock to think of him as not perfect (OE); OE said 'oh my god, I never thought about that…but how can you

make him less perfect…how do you revise that…but actually it's really interesting'. She went on to recall that as an adult and parent, OE looked at Good Friday as 'such a tragic event'.

For mild GLD pupils RE centred around story-telling, though with pupils having moderate GLD, some non-verbal, there was almost no RE (NO). Part of the BoM's role might be to provide resources or prepare teachers like herself for teaching children with moderate SEN.

Children's lives

Catholic parishes do not have enough personnel 'to go round and give the commitment that is needed' (OE); perhaps we are looking at European models like Saturday or Sunday schools for passing on of the Catholic faith. Yet, there is willingness by people in parishes for 'faith based kind of programmes and catechesis and...upskilling people in their faith' (OE). The priest-participant, FR, found 'a pastoral sense' in his role on his local BoM.

NT has children with ASD mixing with others to demystify for children and parents 'the challenge of having a child with SEN'. OE spoke of ensuring the right fit between child and SNA; otherwise, it is 'like a red rag to a bull'. For NO, in dealing with a boy in an ASD unit, she noted how he liked 'scripture songs', he 'really enjoyed it'; and this 'means a lot for their parents'.

Expectations and levels differ radically from child to child, according to their disability and ability to cope (NO). The level of abstraction involved in the sacraments is too much for many of these pupils and consideration should be given to receiving the sacraments at an older age level. Sometimes, participants reflected on their own childhood. For instance, as a child OE thought Christmas was 'the big one'; only as an adult did 'Easter become more significant'. Yet, OE claimed that she had 'no background in religion, theology, spirituality'.

For DN, children should 'be made aware of other religions and other communities', even if the particular focus is on sacramental preparation. OE also was impressed by and interested in the religions that are taught in school nowadays. However, OE thanked God she never became a teacher; after laughing, she referred to the priorities in a school and 'something like the religious or spiritual dimension of it…being way down the list of priorities'. She was aware that it is not easy to teach a group of children and go through a wide curriculum.

There did not seem to be much information about the new programme, ERB and Ethics, that the NCCA was piloting for the state (OE, NT, NO); FR spoke of 'quite a campaign going on now…to take religion out of schools altogether'; for him, this may refer to RE as faith formation; he did not mention the state's plans. I normally explained this as teaching *about* religion(s), rather than *forming* pupils *in* a particular denomination. Interviewees were not unhappy with this, and referred to this kind of knowledge as useful today. NT did not see a problem as the RE programme for children is quite general 'which is good'. In a multicultural society one shouldn't know another's religion unless they communicate that fact.

EI felt that the DES's new programme is positive: 'creating awareness of other faiths, of other religions and I suppose it helps develop an understanding of diversity'. DN was not aware of it prior to our discussion, but reflected that 'people believe in and people have different religions'; it is good for children to develop 'a sense of acceptance for all religions and, where it's fine to have your own belief, it's great to accept other peoples' and be accepting of all communities'.

If ERBE is mandated for schools, especially denominational ones with a pre-existing RE programme, then an already overcrowded curriculum will become worse. DN, nevertheless, felt that 'teachers tend to work around things like that', while still hoping to 'cover as much as you can'. Still, the existing curriculum makes it hard to fit in RE, she thought. NO spoke of curriculum demands and trying fit everything on one's timetable. DN felt that another body, not the state, should nourish the religious dimension of pupil; church and state should be separate; in terms of nourishing faith, this should be 'at a more local level…from people within your parish who know the kind of dynamics of your schools, your area'.'

Church and state should be separate (DN). If the church is 'the natural body' to nourish one's spiritual dimension, it should be 'an all-inclusive approach to everybody'; church for her is more the local church. Also, the abuses have put a huge question mark over the church's 'authority and its legitimacy'. The way forward lies in 'open discussion' and she thinks there needs to be a balance between 'spiritual and religious formation'. When asked about the state leading the RE of pupils, OE declined at first, with a laugh, to answer. OE mentioned, in the context of Educate Together schools, 'an awful lot of [negative] emphasis' on Catholic schools.

There should be more of an onus, said OE, on the parish, where 'you're being part of a community of faith as well as living in a particular parish or town or whatever'. Later, though, she spoke of there not being enough people in the parish 'to go around'. The parish should have 'a huge role' but this has not happened. Yet, no matter what support is given, it 'really boils down to what's happening in the home and what's being taught there and what the beliefs are there'.

Care

Care as a specific topic did not form part of the interviews as it was not a stated thematic. Nevertheless, as an underpinning concern for the welfare of pupils it may be said to imbue both the willingness of the interviewees to partake and their understandings of how their roles impinged on pupils' lives. Explicitly, NT referred to his wish to support a researcher of pupils with SEN. OE spoke of the 'many levels of care needed for children'; NT expressed frustration when attempting to have the care needs of a child who had had a tracheostomy addressed by the DES. FR referenced the care that a particular SNA gave to one pupil as the building up, over a year, of a personal relationship that 'was lovely to see'. In order to care for pupils in a squeezed curriculum, NO recommended that SPHE and RE should be brought together into 'one programme'; this was because it was so hard to fit 'everything into my weekly timetable as it is'; this would then make it 'a lot easier' for people to 'see the link between religion or faith…[and] how we go about our daily lives'. Her school was in the process of building up a care team; DN's school already such a team.

Critique

OE regarded my project as 'a learning process'. EI identified the workload of a principal as the reason for a poor response rate to my project. He could not recall receiving the questionnaires or feedback. Therefore, he counselled 'a survey that caught the eye very quickly' when I asked for critique. To the same question, EB noted my research immediately, and that was because the topic related to SEN and this is a live issue in his school. EB also referred to the ease with which morning mail enters the bin. This view was shared by EB and NT. Indeed, all participants made reference to how busy people are in their lives today. EI recommended that BoMs have a designated person, a subject-specific member, in this case for RE, to whom questionnaires such as mine could be more fruitfully directed. EB thought that this idea might be workable, too.

EB, a busy principal, noted that researchers doing masters or doctorates ask 'on a fairly regular basis' for assistance from principals, i.e. to complete questionnaires. Lack of time is the major problem: 'unless they [their research types] grab you, you would definitely be passing by on them because they can take quite a long time'. My research was focused and unambiguous and so, seeing my questionnaires, EB was clear about what was being sought, and in a context where he gets fairly regular requests to fill in surveys; no problems arose for him in completing the questionnaires, he said. His advice was not to have too detailed a questionnaire; rather, something 'shorter more concise' and 'that gets to the point quicker' is what a busy principal can deal with; his warning for researchers generally is that 'you can't respond to everything'. NT's critique of me was that I did not have a rights-based approach either in terms of the state or the church; for him, to be inclusive is to have this approach.

DN wanted a balance struck between religious and spiritual formation; they should be carried out during the school day. The only interviewee to ask me my reflections was DN. I took this as another expression of engagement with the issue of RE for pupils with SEN from one BoM member to another, who was also at the time a teaching colleague.

The only real way my research would have been successful would have been through personal contacts (EI). For NO, all religions teach the same core, the same values; so, a new programme is good.

When asked for her critique, NO 'would have loved', in relation to preparation for teaching RE to pupils with SEN, if BoMs had given her some guidance' for this and 'for any subject'. She was very interested in my research, yet she had not heard of it; she thought it should come up in BoM correspondence and whether the BoM was going to engage or not with it could be discussed. She commented that while there are literacy and numeracy 'teams' in the school, there is none for RE, nor SESE, nor SPHE. NO felt, in light of the curriculum's demands, that RE and SPHE should be formed into one subject. If that happened people would 'see the link between religion or faith, how we go about our daily lives'. For EB, the physical books used in RE are nicely presented but 'can be very off putting fore children with special needs'; surely, RE 'lends itself to other approaches'.

In sum, the views expressed were wide-ranging, conversing was pleasant and engaging and, though some interviews went over the allotted time, participants were eager to engage; personal details and opinions were shared and, at times, open dialogue developed rather

than mere recording of answers to a researcher's questions. The semi-formal approach enabled a free-flowing narrative to be fostered.

4.5 COMPARING *QUESTIONNAIRES 1* AND *2*'S PARTICIPANTS

In this section we compare the participants in the two questionnaires, *Questionnaire 1* and *Questionnaire 2* and the interviews. There is a degree of variability, as may be expected, shown between them. There is some variety in the types of participants to both Questionnaires. This was a little unexpected as I presumed that Chairpersons and Principals (i.e. usually, the Secretaries of BoMs) would be the main participants. The spread of representation is therefore welcome. The sometime concordance of data between both Questionnaires and the variety and range of responses argue for data that, in terms of quality and diversity, are somewhat robust and thereby permit comparison and drawing of inferences. Comparisons are made between the responses to both questionnaires in relation to background information. The latter was elicited at the beginning of the first questionnaire and at the end of the second one, as explained, for strategic purposes. Because the research focused on BoMs the data presented are also briefly analysed in terms of the membership disaggregated according to members' representation on their BoMs (see Table 3 and Table 80). This strategy was intended to locate differences between members' responses. It could have been pursued on the basis of members' roles – or, indeed, any other variable(s) recorded on the questionnaires, were space available – but it seemed more opportune and possibly enlightening to maintain attention on the types of persons chosen to constitute BoMs. The interviewees were chairpersons, principals or teachers.

Comparison between Members' role on BoM

	Questionnaire 1				Questionnaire 2			
	Frequency	Percent	Valid %	Additive %	Frequency	Percent	Valid %	Additive %
Chairperson	14	14.6	15.2	15.2	3	9.7	9.7	9.7
Secretary	25	26.0	27.2	42.4	11	35.5	35.5	45.2
Treasurer	7	7.3	7.6	50.0	1	3.2	3.2	48.4
Ord. Mem.	44	45.8	47.8	97.8	14	45.2	45.2	93.5
Other	2	2.1	2.2	100.0	2	6.5	6.5	100.0
Total	92	95.8	100.0					
Missing	4	4.2						
Total	96	100.0			31	100.0	100.0	

Table 95: Comparing Members' role on BoMs

In comparing the roles of members on BoMs (Table 95) four did not indicate their role (*Questionnaire 1*), which probably reflects confusion between the positions of principal and secretary, which are often combined in the one person; all completed *Questionnaire 2*. The percentage of ordinary members was virtually the same on both questionnaires (45-46%). A larger percentage of secretaries (normally principals) responded to *Questionnaire 2* (35.5%) than to *Questionnaire 1* (26%).

Comparison between Members' representation on BoM

	Questionnaire 1				Questionnaire 2			
	Frequency	Percent	Valid %	Additive %	Frequency	Percent	Valid %	Additive %
Principal	38	39.6	39.6	39.6	12	38.7	38.7	38.7
Patron's nominee	20	20.8	20.8	60.4	4	12.9	12.9	51.6
Teachers' "	8	8.3	8.3	68.8	5	16.1	16.1	67.7
Parents' "	15	15.6	15.6	84.4	5	16.1	16.1	83.9
Community "	15	15.6	15.6	100.0	5	16.1	16.1	100.0
Total	96	100.0	100.0		31	100.0	100.0	

Table 96: Comparing Members' representation on BoMs

Participants were mainly principals and nominees of the Patron on *Questionnaire 1*: 39.6% the former and 20.8% the latter; as the first recipients of the email requesting participation in the present research-project this is not surprising in the case of the principals. On *Questionnaire 2* the percentages were 38.7% and 12.9%, respectively. That approximately twice the percentage of teacher's nominees responded to *Questionnaire 2* (16.1%) reflects my personal requests to members of BoMs. As mentioned, participants came from all categories of representation (Table 96); e.g. approximately 16% each from Parents and the Community, on both Questionnaires.

Principals comprised 39.6% (*Questionnaire 1*) and 38.7% (*Questionnaire 2*). These would not, as above, be unexpected given the logistics of how members were contacted. Perhaps surprising is the comparatively low response from teacher-members on *Questionnaire*1 (8.3%), as compared with double that on *Questionnaire 2* (Table 96).

Comparison between Members' gender

	Questionnaire 1				Questionnaire 2			
	Frequency	Percent	Valid %	Additive %	Frequency	Percent	Valid %	Additive %
Female	52	54.2	54.2	54.2	18	58.1	58.1	58.1
Male	44	45.8	45.8	100.0	13	41.9	41.9	100.0
Total	96	100.0	100.0		31	100.0	100.0	

Table 97: Comparing Members' gender

On a breakdown according to gender and across the questionnaires, a slight majority of participants (54% on *Questionnaire 1*; 58% on *Questionnaire 2*) were female (Table 97). No one opted to choose other than the dichotomous 'female' or 'male' across both questionnaires. This balancing of genders among participants differs somewhat from the profile of primary teachers, who tend to be female, even as it approximates society's male-female ratio.

Most Members had a relatively short experience of membership of BoMs (Table 98): 41.7% of *Questionnaire 1* and 51.6% of *Questionnaire 2* had four or less years of service on a BoM; 24% of *Questionnaire 1* and 22.6% of *Questionnaire 2* had between five and eight years of service. This suggests a good renewal rate of the membership; also, it is a healthy sign that new members can be found for boards and that a certain rejuvenation is ensured by new 'talent'.

Length of time members have been on a BoM

	Questionnaire 1				Questionnaire 2			
	Frequency	Percent	Valid %	Additive %	Frequency	Percent	Valid %	Additive %
for 4 years or less	40	41.7	41.7	41.7	16	51.6	51.6	51.6
for 5-8 years	23	24.0	24.0	65.6	7	22.6	22.6	74.2
for 9-12 years	15	15.6	15.6	81.3	6	19.4	19.4	93.5
for 13-16 years	9	9.4	9.4	90.6	1	3.2	3.2	96.8
for 17-20 years	3	3.1	3.1	93.8				
for 21-24 years	3	3.1	3.1	96.9				
for 25-28 years	3	3.1	3.1	100.0	1	3.2	3.2	100.0
Total	96	100.0	100.0		31	100.0	100.0	

Table 98: Comparing Members' length of service on BoMs

Apart from one person, there was no service longer than 16 years for participants on *Questionnaire 2*, while approximately ⅒ (9.3%) served from 17-28 years on *Questionnaire 1*. These figures confirm that changing representation on BoMs is established as a regular pattern. Still, that membership exceeds ten years may be an indication that a more considered policy on term-membership should be at least discussed. Even principals may feel that serving so long reflects older practice and that fixed terms should be introduced to the role of principalship.

Age-wise (Table 99), the largest cohort of participants were in the 50-54 years range (23% of *Questionnaire 1* and 29% of *Questionnaire 2*) and 67% were between 40 and 59 on *Questionnaire 1* and 76% on *Questionnaire 2*; only 13.5% (*Questionnaire 1*) and 22.6% (*Questionnaire 2*) were under forty years of age. While these figures indicate that experience and years of service count when choices are being made as to who will serve on BoMs, perhaps bringing some younger people onto BoMs might enable younger voices to be heard and, at least, a wider representation be present on BoMs.

Comparison between Members' age cohorts

	Questionnaire 1				Questionnaire 2			
	Frequency	Percent	Valid %	Additive %	Frequency	Percent	Valid %	Additive %
25-29 years	1	1.0	1.1	1.1				
30-34 years	5	5.2	5.5	6.6	2	6.5	6.5	6.5
35-39 years	7	7.3	7.7	14.3	5	16.1	16.1	22.6
40-44 years	15	15.6	16.5	30.8	2	6.5	6.5	29.0
45-49 years	13	13.5	14.3	45.1	4	12.9	12.9	41.9
50-54 years	22	22.9	24.2	69.2	9	29.0	29.0	71.0
55-59 years	13	13.5	14.3	83.5	8	25.8	25.8	96.8
60-64 years	6	6.3	6.6	90.1	1	3.2	3.2	100.0
65-69 years	7	7.3	7.7	97.8				
70-74 years	2	2.1	2.2	100.0				
Total	91	94.8	100.0					
Missing	5	5.2						
Total	96	100.0			31	100.0	100.0	

Table 99: Comparing age cohorts of Members

Almost a third (31% on *Questionnaire*1 and 36% on *Questionnaire 2*) had a close relative with at least one special need (Table 100). These data may or may not reflect national percentages, either for society in general or teachers specifically; we cannot say. We may not unreasonably infer, however, that those who respond to questionnaires, such as those sent by me, that deal with SEN are more likely than not to have close personal connections to people who have a SEN. Clearly, there is considerable awareness of SEN reflected in these figures.

Comparison between Members having a relative with a SEN

	Questionnaire 1				Questionnaire 2			
	Frequency	Percent	Valid %	Additive %	Frequency	Percent	Valid %	Additive %
No-SEN relative	66	68.8	68.8	68.8	20	64.5	64.5	64.5
SEN relative	30	31.3	31.3	100.0	11	35.5	35.5	100.0
Total	96	100.0	100.0		31	100.0	100.0	

Table 100: Comparing Members with/without a SEN

Most members who responded indicated that they had been members before the initiation of the mandate of the current set of BoMs (Table 101).

Comparison between Members' membership prior to December 2015

	Questionnaire 1				Questionnaire 2			
	Frequency	Percent	Valid %	Additive %	Frequency	Percent	Valid %	Additive %
No	23	24.0	24.0	24.0	12	38.7	38.7	38.7
Yes	73	76.0	76.0	100.0	19	61.3	61.3	100.0
Total	96	100.0	100.0		31	100.0	100.0	

Table 101: Comparing those who were Members before December 2015

Three-quarters (76%) of participants were already members (*Questionnaire 1*); this figure drops to 61.3% on *Questionnaire 2*, though it is still a substantial majority. These figures may also indicate a level of commitment to issues of SEN that are born out of long experience on a BoM such as may not be expected of those with less experience.

In the comparison of marital status (Table 102) most participants are married (82.3% on *Questionnaire 1* and 67.7% on *Questionnaire 2*). the figures for those in religious life were low (5.2% on *Questionnaire 1* and 3.2% on *Questionnaire 2*). While 4.2% state their marital status as 'other' on *Questionnaire 1* and 12.9% chose this status on *Questionnaire 2* comments added indicate that some participants had a marriage that broke down. I was

more surprised by the number of religious who participated in the survey; the societal decline in religious is not, I suggest, reflected in participants in these questionnaires.

Comparison between Members' marital status

	Questionnaire 1				Questionnaire 2			
	Frequency	Percent	Valid %	Additive %	Frequency	Percent	Valid %	Additive %
Married	79	82.3	82.3	82.3	21	67.7	67.7	67.7
Single	8	8.3	8.3	90.6	5	16.1	16.1	83.9
in Religious Life	5	5.2	5.2	95.8	1	3.2	3.2	87.1
Other	4	4.2	4.2	100.0	4	12.9	12.9	100.0
Total	96	100.0	100.0		31	100.0	100.0	

Table 102: Comparing Members' marital status

The figures for parenthood are less contrastive (Table 103). 76% of *Questionnaire 1* participants and 67.7% of those on *Questionnaire 2* are parents.

Comparison between Members' parental status

	Questionnaire 1				Questionnaire 2			
	Frequency	Percent	Valid %	Additive %	Frequency	Percent	Valid %	Additive %
Is not a parent	23	24.0	24.0	24.0	10	32.3	32.3	32.3
Is a parent	73	76.0	76.0	100.0	21	67.7	67.7	100.0
Total	96	100.0	100.0		31	100.0	100.0	

Table 103: Comparing Members' parental status

Comparisons as to whether schools are in the city (inner or suburban) or in the country (Table 107) are probably in line with general demographics in that most participants are in suburban schools (85.4% on *Questionnaire 1* and 80.6% on *Questionnaire 2*). No participant came from a 'rural' school on *Questionnaire 2* though 8.3% did on *Questionnaire 1*.

Participants represented a mixture of school types based on gender (Table 104). We would expect a balance between 'girls only' and 'boys only' schools. Thus, 19.8% on *Questionnaire 1* and 12.9% on *Questionnaire 2* were of the former type; 13.5% on *Questionnaire 1* and 19.4% on *Questionnaire 2* were of the latter, though these figures mirror rather than directly correspond with one another.

Comparison between schools' gender-type

	Questionnaire 1				Questionnaire 2			
	Frequency	Percent	Valid %	Additive %	Frequency	Percent	Valid %	Additive %
Girls only	19	19.8	19.8	19.8	4	12.9	12.9	12.9
Boys only	13	13.5	13.5	33.3	6	19.4	19.4	32.3
Mixed	64	66.7	66.7	100.0	21	67.7	67.7	100.0
Total	96	100.0	100.0		31	100.0	100.0	

Table 104: Comparing the gender-type of schools

It is unsurprising that most of the schools were of mixed gender (Table 104), on *Questionnaire 1* and *Questionnaire 2*: 66.7% and 67.7% respectively. A general preference in society for having boys and girls mixing together at school-going age is reflected in these figures.

Looking at the 'special' status of participants' schools we see that the majority were actually mainstream schools (Table 105). 64.6% of *Questionnaire 1* and 38.7% of *Questionnaire 2* came from mainstream schools

Comparison between schools' 'special' status

	Questionnaire 1				Questionnaire 2			
	Frequency	Percent	Valid %	Additive %	Frequency	Percent	Valid %	Additive %
Mainstream	62	64.6	64.6	64.6	12	38.7	38.7	38.7
Mainstream with Spec. Class(es)	29	30.2	30.2	94.8	15	48.4	48.4	87.1
Spec. School	5	5.2	5.2	100.0	4	12.9	12.9	100.0
Total	96	100.0	100.0		31	100.0	100.0	

Table 105: Comparing the 'special' status of Members' schools

Another 30.2% of *Questionnaire 1* were mainstream with at least one special class, while the figure rises to 48.4% in *Questionnaire 2*. Special schools comprised 5.2% of *Questionnaire 1* and 12.9% of *Questionnaire 2* (Table 105). Of course, these figures neither capture either the amount or severity of SEN in the 'special' situations nor say anything about the prevalence of SEN within mainstream schools.

The data for the DEIS status of participants' schools also reflect the 'non-special' type of school (Table 106). 68.8% of *Questionnaire 1* and 64.5% of *Questionnaire 2* schools were non-DEIS, i.e. were not in a special programme to overcome socioeconomic disadvantage.

Comparison between schools' DEIS status

	Questionnaire 1				Questionnaire 2			
	Frequency	Percent	Valid %	Additive %	Frequency	Percent	Valid %	Additive %
Non-DEIS	66	68.8	68.8	68.8	20	64.5	64.5	64.5
DEIS 1 (urban)	13	13.5	13.5	82.3	7	22.6	22.6	87.1
DEIS 2 (urban)	16	16.7	16.7	99.0	3	9.7	9.7	96.8
DEIS 3 (rural)	1	1.0	1.0	100.0	1	3.2	3.2	100.0
Total	96	100.0	100.0		31	100.0	100.0	

Table 106: Comparing the DEIS status of Members' schools

However, 14% of *Questionnaire 1* and 23% of *Questionnaire 2* were in the highest category of DEIS, while 17% of *Questionnaire 1* and 10% of *Questionnaire 2* were in the second highest category (Table 106). On each questionnaire there was one school that had a designation of 'rural DEIS'.

Comparison between schools' placements

	Questionnaire 1				Questionnaire 2			
	Frequency	Percent	Valid %	Additive %	Frequency	Percent	Valid %	Additive %
Inner city	6	6.3	6.3	6.3	6	19.4	19.4	19.4
Suburban	82	85.4	85.4	91.7	25	80.6	80.6	100.0
Rural	8	8.3	8.3	100.0				
Total	96	100.0	100.0		31	100.0	100.0	

Table 107: Comparing the placement of Members' schools

Class cohorts within schools indicate some small contrastive elements (Table 108). It is to be expected that the majority would come from full vertical schools, i.e. Junior Infants to 6th Class; 65.6% on *Questionnaire 1* and 41.9% on *Questionnaire 2*. One might also expect that the amount of junior schools and senior schools would balance one another; however,

participants to *Questionnaire 1* were 6.3% for the former and 13.5% for the latter, while *Questionnaire 2*'s were closer to expectations at 19.4% and 22.6% respectively. From the point of view of the research-project, it was gratifying to have a range of class cohorts represented.

Comparison between schools' class cohorts

	Questionnaire 1				Questionnaire 2			
	Frequency	Percent	Valid %	Additive %	Frequency	Percent	Valid %	Additive %
JI - 6th Class	63	65.6	65.6	65.6	13	41.9	41.9	41.9
JI - 2nd Class	6	6.3	6.3	71.9	6	19.4	19.4	61.3
3rd - 6th Class	13	13.5	13.5	85.4	7	22.6	22.6	83.9
Other	14	14.6	14.6	100.0	5	16.1	16.1	100.0
Total	96	100.0	100.0		31	100.0	100.0	

Table 108: Comparing class-cohorts of Members' schools

4.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter's primary concern has been to preserve those data that members of BoMs provided in two questionnaires and in interviews and make them available for future use, especially comparisons with similar projects in other dioceses or with different BoM cohorts of the Dublin archdiocese. This collection of data is immediately useful to us, as the following chapter discusses. However, the data's pertinence will become more pointed as other researchers investigate BoMs not only in other dioceses but in other religious contexts, for instance, Church of Ireland, Presbyterian, Methodist and Muslim schools, as well as communities that cater for members of new religious movements and in contexts where RE is not taught as part of faith formation. The attitudes collected, as snapshots taken in one time and place, are not templates for the future; the data presented are not comprehensive enough even as a statement of where BoM members are in the singular context of one set of Roman Catholic primary schools under one Patron in the one time-frame of the present research-project. Nevertheless, their usefulness comprises in their being the first known survey of its kind in the British Isles; therefore, they serve as a yardstick by which other's research can be both conducted and appraised. Already, as in

NO's reflection on a former pupil that echoes Young's account of Arthur's participation in song and religious ceremony, the diversity and richness of the data point to the complexity and importance of the issues raised by this study. This complexity offers clues for the future of RE for pupils with SEN and for BoM members who seek to respond to the needs of the times. Also, the data here both provide a foundation for other research and offer a template for future data-gathering.

Chapter 5 DISCUSSION AND SYNTHESIS

Human expressions 'always fall short of the mystery of God' (CCC 1997, p. 42)

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I engage with the multiplicity of information sources – an extensive literature, two questionnaire-datasets, a set of interviews, personal experience of special education in a school setting – and, finally, place them in a theologically informed dialogue with one another in order to construct a pedagogics of care that serves Boards of Management in their deliberations on how best to respond to the needs of pupils with SEN in the pedagogies they construct. However, if we take the school as 'a laboratory of life' (Parhan, Sauri, Majid & Nurihsan 2014; Borg [n.d.]) and apply the concept broadly, with due attention to a dialogical methodology, then a useful framework emerges. From the beginning I stress that suggestions made are to be taken as incentivizing and imaginative construals with which BoMs may engage, to whatever extent they want, in order to further their vison and mission for the pupils in their care. The plan for this chapter, therefore, sets out to answer the questions with which I began, viz. what do BoM members think about the religious education of pupils with special needs, and how might they be assisted in their role. To address these questions I had to be cognizant of 'salient issues' as they arose from the literature, the questionnaires and the interviews. Not unsurprisingly, lessons, too, have been learnt from the project that will guide subsequent research into this vital educational area, which has so much to contribute to pupils, whether they have a SEN or not; perhaps the key learning for all is how knowledge about pupils with SEN, through the prism of their RE, offers insight into the education of all pupils. As a matter of record, we noted that, while there is a growing body of research on pupils with SEN, there is a serious deficit in relation to the RE of those pupils, which, in consequence of what we know from philosophy and, particularly, from theology, is a worrisome lacuna that demands redress at some level. My thesis continues to be: BoMs have a vital role in education that is so crystalized in the RE of pupils with SEN that all pupils stand to benefit. The flourishing of pupils through their education rests on this thesis. In my attempts to assist in the latter, I have been concerned to offer to BoM members theologically informed insights that I have gained from this research so that they may feel themselves more prepared for their own role on a BoM. This is not to say that any given idea should be slavishly endorsed, let alone that

it be 'swallowed whole' as Francis Bacon (c. 1560-1626) averred, but that the values that inhere in certain insights and learnings and which are at play here are worthy of serious attention.

I suggest that that ludic principle underpinning the *Aistear* programme, rather than a top-down prescriptive model, is closer, and more applicable, to the approach this research-project's conclusion commends for reflection. Aware of the pressures exerted on BoMs I do not wish to be just another source of pressure at this constructive stage of my research; but, having considered the points made above and which will be made below, members may be encouraged to think differently about what they want to achieve *qua* BoM member and thereby find their role more deontically satisfactory and personally satisfying.

I first outline the structure of this chapter, one that is suggested, somewhat ironically in light of earlier criticisms in the literature of the medical model approach to SEN, by the medically framed model of translational research (see Sanislow, Ferrante, Pacheco, Rudorfer & Morris 2019); this structure assists by making us alert to what the research-project has been directed towards (5.2); it enhances our understanding of how evidence, practice and conceptual analysis cooperate for people's good. Elements of this model are used as reflective indicators that link the quantitative and qualitative dimensions of the present project into a review of key points; these points, from a more comprehensive list, are bridge-like edifices that, diversely, help to traverse the gap in knowledge about RE for pupils with SEN that has been excavated contextually in Roman Catholic primary school BoMs in the archdiocese of Dublin (5.3). From these sources, a preliminary and tentative model of bridge-building, which is suggestive and conceptually enriched because it arose from my efforts to 'bridge the gap' of knowledge of how BoMs, in assisting pupils who have special needs, may appeal to religious education for ideas and guidance, is offered for consideration by BoMs (5.4). As a prelude to the next chapter with its more pithy listings, some commendations (5.5) are made before concluding (5.6).

5.2 THEORY-AND-ACTION MODEL − TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH

In 1972, Ernest Hilgard, we saw, suggested a model of translating research into action that elicited helpful conceptual distinctions. A new form of research has arisen in the last decade in the biomedical field that now offers an evidence-based model that may fruitfully assist BoMs in developing their own pedagogies especially in light of the attention we have directed towards the religious education of pupils with special needs; this is called translational research. While a universally accepted definition still evades scholars, the

concept and its application have wide appeal (Harris, Taylor, Thielke, Payne, Gonzales & Conde 2008; Rubio, Schoenbaum, Lee, Schteingart, Marantz, Anderson, Platt, Baez & Esposito 2010). The concept arises from gaps, called 'translational blocks', identified in the application of new biomedical and genomic discoveries, which proliferate exponentially, to positive outcomes for patients in beds. From an initial two gaps (T1 and T2), which represent gaps in 'translating' from research to humans and from research to specific humans (patients), respectively, further modifications were made such that there is now a 'translational research continuum' (see Figure 5.1). T3 came to designate the gap between research and practice, dealing, for instance, with comparative effectiveness research, health services and implementation research. T4 designates the gap in translating research to communities and as such deals with 'population level outcomes research, monitoring of morbidity, mortality, benefits, and risks, and impacts of policy and change' (ICTR [n.d.]).
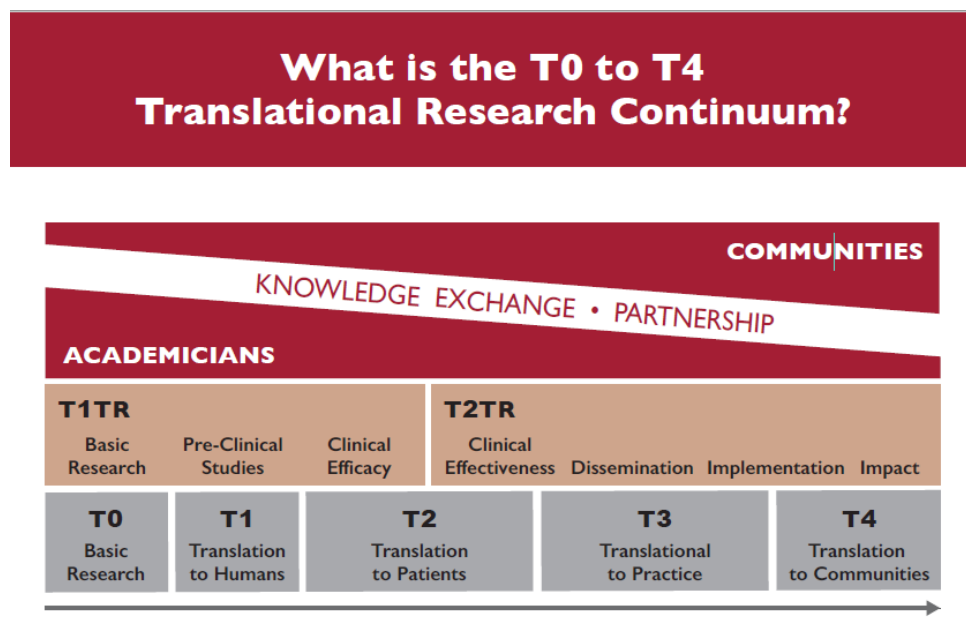
Source: University of Wisconsin-Madison Institute for Clinical and Translational Research

Figure 5.1: A medical model of translational research

In addition to enhancing 'the translational stream' (Stanislow *et al.* 2019, p. 782), this approach primarily serves a pedagogical and theological agenda. Though the theological study by Annadale & Carter (2014) referenced translational research, including Harris *et al.* 2009, it did not make use of the concept. Noteworthy, too, is a change in language that reflects a conceptual enhancing of the translational model. The research model developed by the US National Institute of Environmental Health Services (NIEHS) refers to the 'translational bridges' (Pettibone *et al.* 2018, pp. 5-6) along the continuum; thus, in this

chapter the language of 'bridges' more properly reflects the positive thrust of a pedagogics of care that this research-project promotes.

The fundamental stage of this process requires attention to the educational needs of local pupils and how they are to be assisted. The BoM, responding to those needs, especially, and as is increasingly common, those of pupils with SEN, begins both by questioning itself in order to ascertain its own self-understanding and by seeking to empower local educators to provide the best education for all. The BoM sets in train a process by which those needs are translated into action, are adjusted as evidence is gathered, become outcomes or results for pupil betterment and, at a structural level, feed into a renewal or re-imagining of the fundamental stage and so on to further replication of the process.

Future replication has been simplified by inclusion of the questionnaires (Appendices E and G) and semi-structured interview questions (Appendix J). I would advise that pilot surveying, including piloting of the interviewing process, be conducted, nevertheless, as local conditions, unforeseeable, may vary.

New efforts, incorporating social media and communications from stakeholders such as patrons, DES, CPSMA, to encourage participation, must be made that reach and appeal to BoM members. By participation here I intend not only engagement with the research tools but also with an internal BoM process to improve effectiveness and commitment to the vision and ethos of the school.

At each iteration of the tool, then, testing of its robustness and contribution to knowledge and change-process is carried out. Doubtless, there will be adjustments made to the tools and, in consequence, to the specific nature of the issues raised through the process. However, this eventuates in the more global issue of what to do with multiple re-iterations of this research over time. Clearly, while the primary aim addresses the benefits to be gained by pupils as a result of their local BoM's engaging with and promoting of such a process, a more comprehensive framework of a pedagogics of care should be constructed out of the individual processes, given that they 'naturally' include stakeholders beyond the local situation. All that is initially required is that stakeholders are alert to this potentially rich stream of educational experiences and data, maintain a record of their individual processes and later, perhaps a decade hence, promote the founding of a specialized, perhaps national, unit to collate, evaluate and publish accounts of these processes in a way that both clarifies what at present eludes definition and establishes cohesive and perduring principles for a national pedagogics of care. Oddly, a specialized unit cannot be outlined because it should not be: values, moral positions, personal stories and life-changing

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practices are all entailed in a pedagogics of care and from them new approaches, principles and values may be rightfully expected. A space or *chōra*, akin to a Heideggerian clearing, has to be made for the new to emerge into being (see Tracy 1981, p. 455); and if not made, at least not foreclosed by unwise, prejudicial prognostications.

A change-process that results in better outcomes for pupils, especially those with SEN, will also benefit BoM members and school staffs, parents/guardians and the local community. People want the best for their children and what brings that about thereby benefits those who 'produce the goods'. What additional *bonum* the RE dimension of education produces is pluriform. Thus, in the situation that the state proceeds to implement a programme about religion and the religions (ERB and Ethics) it may be presumed that some, perhaps many, pupils will, on the basis of accurately and unbiasedly presented information, have their intellectual and inner spiritual life deepened and enriched, especially if their *Umwelt* or environment is predisposed to life's spiritual dimension. For Roman Catholic pupils there will be a word-deed synergy where what is taught finds its natural resonance in the Christian way of life, the 'civilization of love' (Pope Paul VI), that Christ initiated in his teaching on the kingdom of God.

In sum, we have moved from the literature review including the concepts that are core to the project (chapters one and two), via the research methodology that incorporated quantitative and qualitative dimensions and data collecting (chapter three), to a systematic presentation of the findings (chapter four). The focus in this chapter is on a discussion that unpacks some of these findings and suggests core building-blocks for BoMs to use in their individual explorations of a pedagogics of care for pupils with SEN…at least.

Data presentation

Before engaging with the substantive findings, however, I use a few boxplots to provide an overview of how some of the data displays, depending on whether a participant is female or male. This encourages our use of this female-male distinction later. On occasion, almost identical patterns of response are discernible (Figure 5.2). On others, differences of response may be greater (Figure 5.4, Figure 5.5) or less (Figure 5.3).

In Figure 5.2, the breakdown between females and males on the statement that RE for pupils with SEN is a civil right is presented first. Opinions are shared between them; the majority opinion favours a disagree-neutral position. Second, the role of parents in the RE of their children is positively distributed and presented; thus, women and men agreed on this issues.
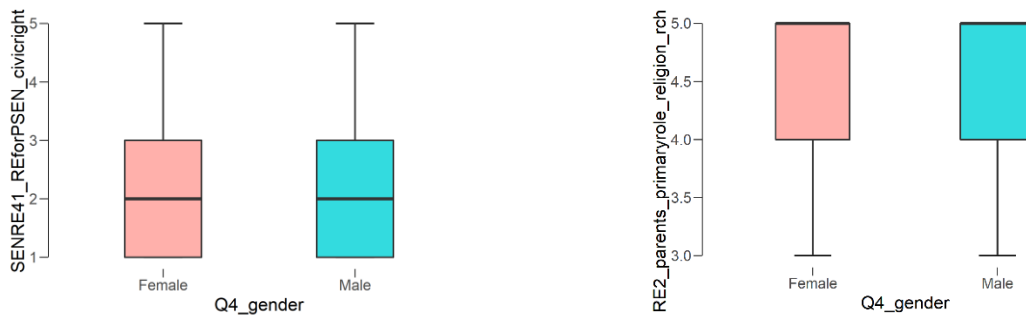
Figure 5.2: Civil right and Parental role

Apart from a few outliers, the datasets in Figure 5.3 show the same medians for females as for males in both boxplots; however, there is variation otherwise. In the first part, the integrality of RE for education is largely shared between females and males and is positively oriented; in the second part, the challenge of pupils with SEN to our notion of human perfection is also largely shared if here it is negatively oriented; more males in the first part strongly agree, while more females tend to agree in the second part.
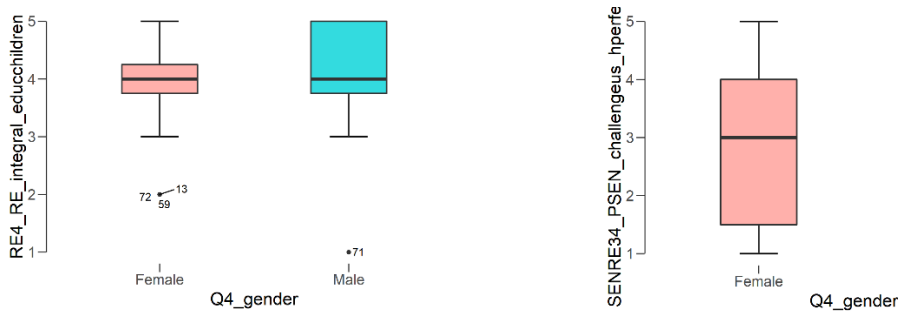
Figure 5.3: RE as integral and Challenge of pupils with SEN

However, in Figure 5.4, outliers, i.e. at least 1.5 times below the lower quartile range, in relation to the statement that pupils with SEN have the same educational rights as those without SEN are presented, with more of the male outliers less strongly agreeing, even though most females and males agree strongly with the statement. The second part, on the statement that parents of pupils without SEN believe that pupils with SEN slow the progress of their children, presents a degree of variation between females and males; looking at the interquartile ranges, more females, occupying the first to second quartiles, though with a couple of outliers who strongly agree, are unsure or disagree while males are spread evenly between the first and third quartile, i.e. the IQR.
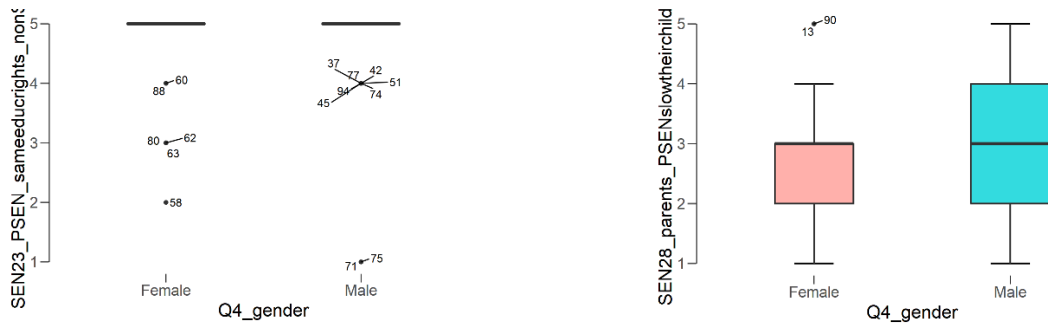
Figure 5.4: Same rights and Pupils with SEN slow others

In Figure 5.5, a still greater degree of variation is displayed. On the first statement, that sacramental preparation is better if parish- rather than school-based, females are largely in the second to third quartiles with four strongly disagreeing; the males, with the same median and so being neutral, however, are spread between the first to fourth quartiles. In the second part, on the statement that the presence of pupils with SEN help other pupils' understanding of creation, males are represented across the full quartile range with a median between neutral and agreement; females in the interquartile range are balanced between agreement and disagreement with the median at neutral.
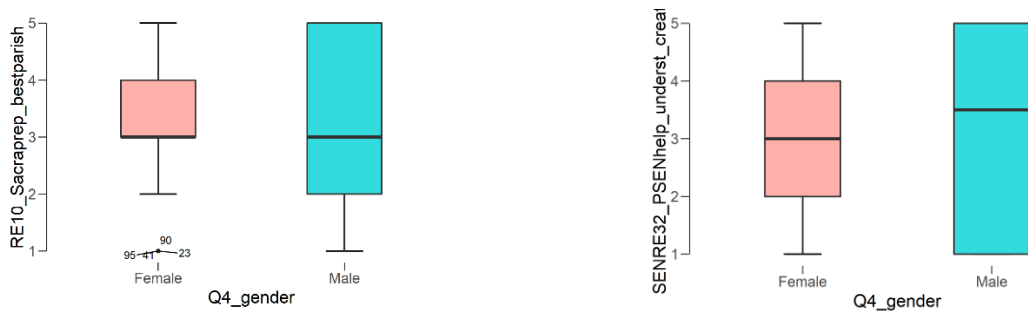
Figure 5.5: Parish for preparation Understanding creation

From these figures (Figure 5.2 - Figure 5.5), females and males agree together on some statements, whether that is towards agreement or disagreement with any given statement, disagree amongst themselves, or have degrees of variability between their positions. Thus, it is worthwhile, at the beginning of this discussion to include the distinctive views of females and males. Interestingly, while this is the first time for doing so on the important topic of RE for pupils with SEN from a BoM's perspective, it may well be the last; as BoMs come to represent the views of younger and younger members, the self-designation of the latter into a (merely) binary female-male option will hardly hold; having allowed for gender self-designation, I was, having seen the numbers of younger members who

participated, a little surprised to note that no one chose other than from the dichotomous female-male categories.

5.3 QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE BRIDGES

In this section I attempt to draw a few inferences from the data that have been collected. A selection has been made, though certainly only a fraction of all that is possible; still, we must beware lest too much is made from too little material. The points brought out are interesting in themselves but, more than that, they provide not only an agenda for future research, the importance of which will only intensify now, but also distinct messages, hinted at throughout, about theological inadequacies in how RE for all pupils is taught but how, too, RE for pupils with SEN offers to educational stakeholders new possibilities for development; for, BoMs are uniquely placed to bridge the gap identified and they can do this in ways that benefit from research that is partly quantitative and partly qualitative. In the following I begin by taking a bird's eye view of linkages (or not) within the data that I have gathered (5.3.1). Then I look at findings from the actor-participants in my project (5.3.2). Ambiguity within data is adumbrated (5.3.3). Then, I look at the one construct that I had pre-planned, a putative Roman Catholic person (5.3.4). Thereafter, I turn more of the qualitative data (5.3.5).

5.3.1 Quantitative bridging

To help get an overview of relationships between statements-variables I conducted some network analysis in order to analyse their network structure: the node-labels corresponding to statements are in the 'short code' (sc) column of Appendix I; positive connections are in blue, and negative ones in red, with strength being indicated by the width of the links between nodes. Except for conceptualizing a 'typical' Roman Catholic, the questionnaire was not constructed with an architectonic in view; rather, I wished to see how members of BoMs responded to a wide range of matters related to pupils, SEN, RE and their connections. Nevertheless, a brief overview is instructive. First, I show the network for participants' own self-understanding (Figure 5.6). There are quite a few connections between statements, in comparison with network analyses of the other sets of statements-variables below. There is strong opposition between being Christian or not, while there is an equally strong connection between being professionally interested in and being well-informed on SEN. There is also a strong connection between being responsible for pupils' moral and intellectual development, and another one between being responsible for pupils'

spiritual and religious development. I would have expected that all four would correlate strongly together, but they do not; this will be examined more below.
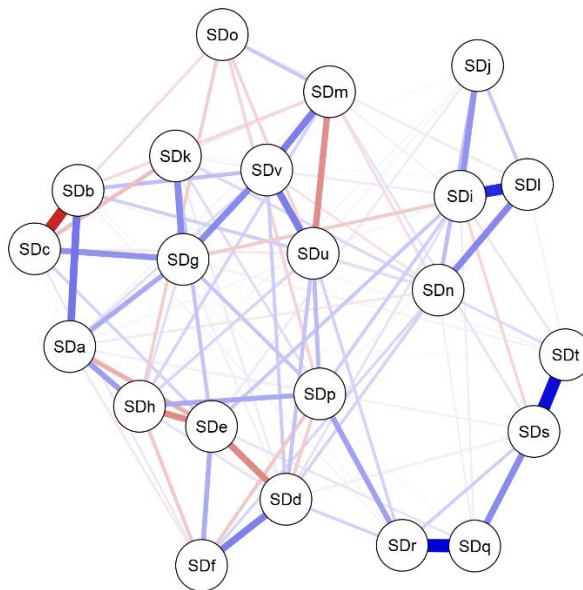

Figure 5.6: Network of self-identifying statements

The centrality measures for self-identifying statements are presented in Table 109.

Centrality measures per variable

Variable	Betweenness	Closeness	Strength
		Network	
SDa	-0.21	0.35	0.50
SDb	-0.76	-0.32	0.85
SDc	-0.49	-0.11	-0.04
SDd	-0.67	0.76	1.06
SDe	0.78	1.02	0.98
SDf	-1.21	-0.44	-0.84
SDg	1.96	1.46	1.02
SDh	0.15	1.09	0.53
SDi	1.78	0.17	0.90
SDj	-1.21	-1.63	-2.16
SDk	-0.39	0.30	-0.88
SDl	0.78	9.96e -3	-0.09
SDm	-0.85	-0.08	-0.11
SDn	-0.94	-0.96	-0.21
SDo	-1.21	-1.51	-2.31
SDp	1.69	2.06	0.51
SDq	0.24	-0.67	-0.56
SDr	1.23	-0.09	0.06
SDs	0.42	-1.22	0.11
SDt	-0.76	-1.58	-1.28
SDu	-0.39	0.78	1.25
SDv	0.06	0.62	0.69

Table 109: Centrality measures for self-identifying statements

In the following figure (Figure 5.7), the network for RE statements is shown. As expected we see a strong opposition between RE as integral to education and seeing RE as doing more harm than good. That 'our school' should welcome pupils of all faiths and none connected strongly with learning about other religions, which accords with the views of Vatican II. Another strong connection is that between the Holy Spirit as strengthening belief and Jesus Christ being our means to understanding God. This latter is suggestive of a trinitarian informed understanding of God. Not as strong, but still a clear connection is made between statements that RE contributes to building character and forms pupils in the virtues and values of Jesus.
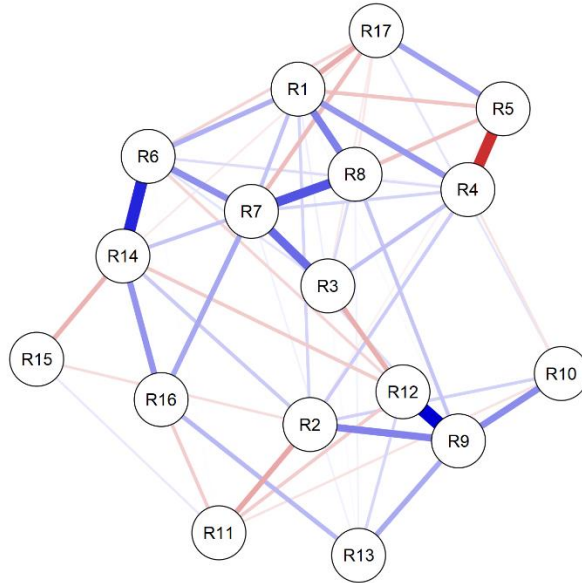
Figure 5.7: Network of RE statements

The following table (Table 110) presents the centrality measures for the RE statements.

Centrality measures per variable

Variable	Network		
	Betweenness	Closeness	Strength
R1	-0.08	0.53	0.74
R10	-1.15	-1.27	-1.15
R11	-1.15	-1.39	-1.16
R12	0.51	0.53	0.43
R13	-0.91	-0.95	-1.24
R14	1.46	0.91	0.80
R15	-1.15	-1.78	-1.78
R16	-0.20	0.23	-0.73
R17	-1.15	-1.01	-0.40
R2	0.63	0.44	0.04
R3	-0.08	1.05	-0.29
R4	0.39	-0.21	0.55
R5	-0.80	-0.84	-0.05
R6	0.51	0.77	0.65
R7	0.87	1.35	1.98
R8	0.03	1.08	0.30
R9	2.29	0.56	1.31

Table 110: Centrality measures for RE statements

The third network, for SEN, is shown below (Figure 5.8). It is not surprising that there is so little connection between the statements; they were not designed according to any

template. On the other hand, this may provide a rationale for constructing statements on SEN so that a scale may be produced.
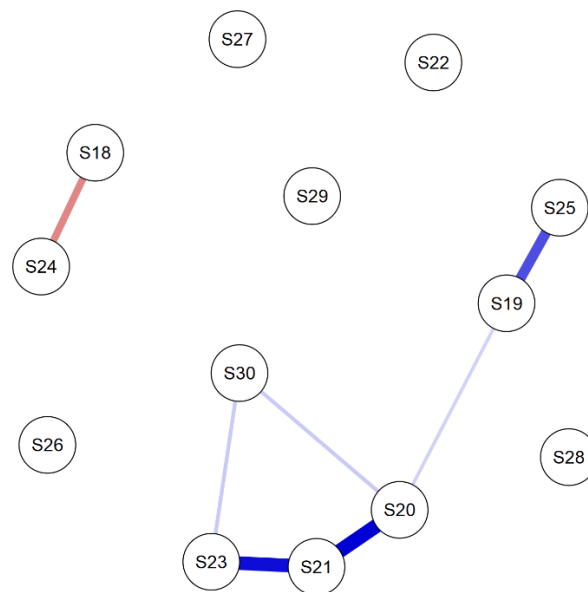
Figure 5.8: Network of SEN statements

In the following table the centrality measures for SEN statements are given (Table 111). There is no evidence for a network here; only a few statements – e.g. that mainstream pupils benefit from the presence of pupils with SEN in class with them, our school has a shared vision for the inclusion of pupils with SEN and pupils with special needs have the same rights to full education as those without such needs – are linked.

Centrality measures per variable

Variable	Betweenness	Closeness	Strength
		Network	
S18	-0.49	0.00	-0.16
S19	1.32	0.00	0.49
S20	2.67	0.00	1.30
S21	0.87	0.00	2.21
S22	-0.49	0.00	-0.91
S23	-0.49	0.00	0.94
S24	-0.49	0.00	-0.16
S25	-0.49	0.00	0.20
S26	-0.49	0.00	-0.91
S27	-0.49	0.00	-0.91
S28	-0.49	0.00	-0.91
S29	-0.49	0.00	-0.91
S30	-0.49	0.00	-0.25

Table 111: Centrality measures for SEN statements

Finally, the network for the RE of pupils with SEN is presented (Figure 5.9). Some statements are closely aligned but, again, there is little evidence of statements being linked together comprehensively. Parents having the primary role in the education of their children with SEN links with the parish leadership team being part of the RE of pupils with SEN; the roles of parents and parish are linked in Roman Catholic teaching (see below). There is an opposition between seeing RE for pupils with SEN as not a civic right and holding that RE should teach about the giftedness of pupils with SEN, with the latter being lightly connected with teaching that pupils with SEN manifest God's presence in the world, which is most strongly connected to pupils with SEN making Jesus present in RE; oddly, perhaps, the latter is not linked directly to seeing Jesus as someone with SEN.
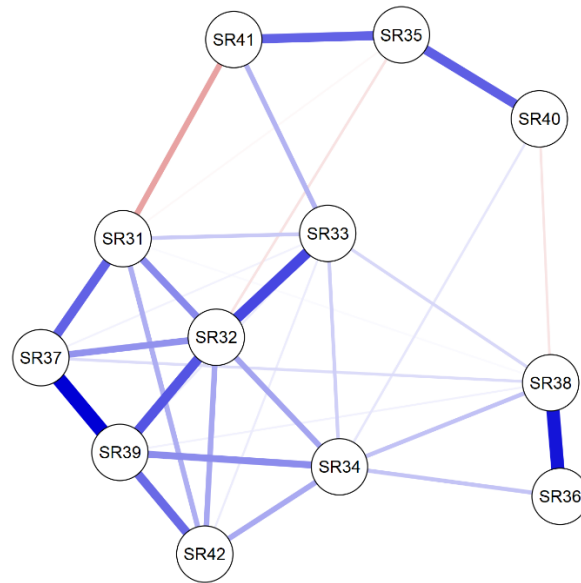
Figure 5.9: Network of RE for pupils with SEN statements

The centrality measures for statements on the religious education of pupils with SEN is presented in Table 112.

Centrality measures per variable

Variable	Network		
	Betweenness	Closeness	Strength
SR31	1.70	1.36	0.88
SR32	-0.17	0.66	1.47
SR33	-0.36	0.56	-0.06
SR34	0.95	0.52	0.14
SR35	0.39	-0.90	-0.69
SR36	-1.11	-1.43	-1.06
SR37	-0.36	0.82	0.66
SR38	-0.73	-1.28	-0.29
SR39	0.02	1.02	1.63
SR40	-0.92	-1.37	-1.57
SR41	1.70	-0.06	-0.86
SR42	-1.11	0.11	-0.25

Table 112: Centrality measures for RE for pupils with SEN statements

What is obvious from having scanned these network analyses is their value in showing links amongst a large range of statement-variables, if only within the defined areas. Below, though only a few of the investigative possibilities can be undertaken due to constraints of space, it is important to demonstrate the significance of that type of research that I am encouraging be done in other diocesan, denominational and interreligious settings.

5.3.2 Identifying actor-participants

A clear majority of participants self-identified as Christian (Table 5) and this correlates with those who disagree that they were non-Christian (Table 6). However, less agreed that they were Roman Catholic (Table 4), a figure that correlates with their self-identification as both spiritual (Table 7) and rejection of being non-Christian (Table 6). Yet, 12% disagreed that they were Roman Catholic. While 16.7% indicated agreement that they are more religious, some 40% agreed that they were more spiritual than religious (Table 9). This chimes with the discussion in chapter two on the religion-spirituality distinction, with the latter having the lion's share. Only 64.6% agreed that they feel loved and gifted by God and almost 1/10 (9.4%) disagreed (Table 24). Later, I look at this statement again as it may indicated a serious problem in schools' catechesis. Three self-identified as female religious and two as male religious.

Belief and practice

How does this picture of themselves correlate with how they agreed or disagreed with (a) basic Roman Catholic beliefs, (b) practice of being Roman Catholic, (c) challenging positions, and (d) inclusion, given that 2/3 agree they are well-informed on religion (Table 14), a figure that also correlates with the same number who disagreed with the statement that they are disinterested in RE (Table 18)? Having earlier highlighted interpretive ambiguity in and misunderstanding of a variety of the statements, caution should also be exercised in the following. At best, the attitudes presented are indicative, not conclusive, and were so even at the time of their completion. The grouping of attitude-statements was determined, wisely or not, by me; other attitudes, e.g. on the Trinity and Eucharist, should have been explored; and some statements, e.g. that RE contributes to the building of character in pupils and religion should teach that pupils with SEN manifest God's presence in the world, because they were too 'loaded' with possible meanings, demanded corresponding ones for clarity. Nevertheless, the uniqueness of the data is singularly worthwhile to any research in this vital area.

(a) Roman Catholic dogmatic beliefs

Here we look at those statements that reflect the 'persons' of the Trinity, one of Christianity's most central doctrines and God's relationship to humans: the Holy Spirit is the one who strengthens belief (Holy Spirit), self-identification as someone loved and gifted by God (Loved), RE forms pupils in the virtues and values of Jesus (RE on Jesus), and Jesus Christ is our means to understanding God (Jesus Christ). The following table (Table 113) presents their correlation matrix.

Kendall's Tau B Correlations

		Holy Spirit		Loved		RE on Jesus		Jesus Christ
	Kendall's tau B	—						
Holy Spirit	p-value	—						
	Upper 95% CI	—						
	Lower 95% CI	—						
	Kendall's tau B	0.49	***	—				
Loved	p-value	< .001		—				
	Upper 95% CI	0.60		—				
	Lower 95% CI	0.37		—				
	Kendall's tau B	0.58	***	0.57	***	—		
RE on Jesus	p-value	< .001		< .001		—		
	Upper 95% CI	0.69		0.67		—		
	Lower 95% CI	0.48		0.48		—		
	Kendall's tau B	0.61	***	0.40	***	0.48	***	—
Jesus Christ	p-value	< .001		< .001		< .001		—
	Upper 95% CI	0.71		0.52		0.60		—
	Lower 95% CI	0.51		0.27		0.36		—

$* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001$

Table 113: Correlations for core Roman Catholic beliefs

Table (Table 113) shows the τ-B correlations; checking for the direction of these correlations showed that they were all positive, and where statistically significant remained so, though the confidence intervals differed. These results require other statements and interviewing to test how participants and interviewees regard them theologically; the strong positive correlations indicate that this would be an area of fruitful investigation. Perhaps one might be surprised that I include the statement about being loved and gifted by God in so central a position theologically. To recognize God in one's life is not a little thing; if one is committed to being a Christian but not able to make this recognition is, I think, quite a serious matter, whether theologically or existentially. Perhaps such a failure reflects the uncertainty of changing times or inadequate faith-formation or misrecognition for any human can be disenchanted amidst the acids of modernity or (Heideggerian) thrownness. In light of catechetical programmes like Grow in Love Roman Catholic pupils should learn about their being loved and gifted by God; to learn this merely notionally is RE as information about Christianity, which the state may be thought to promote; to accept

it with assent, on the other hand, is formation in Christianity, which the church claims is the better education for life.

Perhaps the core of Christian faith, namely, that in Jesus Christ God is disclosed to humanity as saviour, friend, intimate and lover of humanity, is encapsulated in the statement that 'Jesus Christ is our means to understanding God' (Table 39). Rowan Williams portrays Christ as the heart of creation (2018). It would appear extraordinary, therefore, that half (49.5%) agreed, that 14.6% disagreed and that over a third (34.4%) were neutral on the centrality of Christ. It is instructive to note that Table 32, on RE forming pupils in the virtues and values of Jesus, is somewhat reflective of these views: 59.4% agreed, 12.6% disagreed and 27.4% were neutral). What is the edifice of Christian thought, in terms of theology, dogmatics, ecclesiology, the moral life and in terms of praxis and ecclesial life, if not the revelation of God in the life and work of Christ and the sending of the Spirit to continue Christ's presence in the church, itself defined as 'the body of Christ'; so, the figures obtained seem at odds with a theologically coherent view of God working in the world. On the statement about the Holy Spirit strengthening belief (Table 31), less than half agreed (42.5%) while almost a quarter disagreed (24.5%). The idea of cultural Christianity hardly seems adequate to explain them. Perhaps some more expansive view of divine work in the world has begun to replace the centrality that has been traditionally placed in Christ. Or, perhaps, too small a value has been placed on establishing a personal connection to Christ in one's prayer life. Or, some combination of both. Certainly, from theological and relational perspectives, these figures demand further investigation.

(b) Roman Catholic teachings

When we look at some of the statements that indicate Roman Catholic practice we see that almost half reported that they pray regularly (Table 11), yet almost the same amount do not read the Bible regularly (Table 10), though a quarter disagreed about praying (and another quarter were neutral). These results are surprisingly low, I suggest. However, other statements that may plausibly be conjoined as Roman Catholic beliefs or teachings, at a less dogmatically assertive level, produce another picture (Table 114). The statements looked at are: parents have the primary role in teaching religion to their children (RE role 1), RE contributes to the building of character in pupils (Character), our school must welcome and fully respect pupils of other faiths and none (Welcome all), sacramental preparation is best done in the parish (Parish preparation), in RE pupils should learn about other religions (Religions), religion demands that an option be made for the poor and

disadvantaged (Option for poor), and that parents have the primary role in teaching religion to their child(ren) with special needs (RE role 2).

Kendall's Tau Correlations

		τ-B	p	Lower 95% CI	Higher 95% CI
RE role 1	Character	0.22 *	0.01	0.13	0.32
RE role 1	Welcome all	0.27 **	0.01	0.18	0.36
RE role 1	Parish preparation	0.22 *	0.01	0.12	0.33
RE role 1	Religions	0.06	0.55	-0.04	0.16
RE role 1	Option for poor	0.21 *	0.02	0.11	0.31
RE role 1	Primary role 2	0.47 ***	< .001	0.37	0.57
Character	Welcome all	0.22 *	0.02	0.14	0.30
Character	Parish preparation	-0.03	0.74	-0.16	0.10
Character	Religions	0.01	0.89	-0.10	0.12
Character	Option for poor	0.29 **	0.00	0.16	0.41
Character	Primary role 2	0.18 *	0.04	0.06	0.31
Welcome all	Parish preparation	0.25 **	0.01	0.17	0.32
Welcome all	Religions	0.39 ***	< .001	0.29	0.48
Welcome all	Option for poor	0.11	0.25	0.03	0.19
Welcome all	Primary role 2	0.20 *	0.04	0.12	0.28
Parish preparation	Religions	0.24 **	0.01	0.14	0.34
Parish preparation	Option for poor	0.04	0.67	-0.10	0.17
Parish preparation	Primary role 2	0.17 *	0.05	0.04	0.31
Religions	Option for poor	0.09	0.35	-0.02	0.20
Religions	Primary role 2	0.17	0.07	0.06	0.28
Option for poor	Primary role 2	0.19 *	0.04	0.06	0.31

* p < .05,   ** p < .01   *** p< .001

Table 114: Correlations for important Roman Catholic teachings

This table (Table 114) shows the τ-B correlations; again checking for the direction of these correlations showed that they were all positive though the confidence intervals differ. Alone, the correlation between 'in RE, pupils should learn about other religions [Religions]' and 'parents have the primary role in teaching religion to their child(re) with special needs [Primary role 2]' did not report a statistically significant level (τ-B = 0.17, p = .07, confidence interval range of 0.06 to 0.28) and was no longer statistically significant at α = .05. In Roman Catholic teachings, established by the magisterium or teaching authority within the church, parents have the primary responsibility for the education of their children, with or without SEN. The schools, to which parents have the right to entrust elements of that education, must be welcoming of all pupils irrespective of any religion or none, which, as openness to other Christian denominations and other faith-traditions, is possibly the more revolutionary theological change to emerge from Vatican II. Schools must assist in forming the character of pupils, too. The parish, after the home, is the natural former of faith. The views on the role of the local parish offer a considered challenge to

Roman Catholic parishes (see Table 54). Only 8.4% thought they prioritized pupils with SEN. A more diverse set of views were expressed on sacramental preparation being parish-based (Table 35). The parish we have noted, is under severe pressure at a time when its role is being brought more and more to the fore; perhaps, the decline in the 'professional religious' class will create opportunities for lay involvement in catechesis and RE, which is outside the school, though the pressures of modern living in the west make this hard to envisage. The statement about an option for the poor being part of religion was answered positively (61.5%, Table 41). However, almost a third (31.9%) were unsure. Roman Catholic social teaching, as expressed in the option for the poor and disadvantaged, is a specialist area that I have only hinted at; nevertheless, what we have seen of God's opting for the weak and oppressed, 'the widow, the orphan and the stranger' is the scriptural and theological bedrock of this option; Fr Arrupe SJ was surely influential on the theological formation of the present pope. On the role of RE in education, Table 29 showed that a quarter of participants either disagreed or were neutral on the issue of RE being integral to education. For the Roman Catholic church, it is integral, and so, too, is it in the Irish Constitution and the DES's own curriculum. Therefore, it behoves us to investigate why so many hold with the statement.

Some of the 'stand-alone' statements in the questionnaires derived from expressly stated teachings of the Roman Catholic church, as least following Vatican II, and the views on them are revealing. To have a SEN can be seen as a gift from God in the sense that God enters the life of every person, baptized or not and theology teaches that God cooperates with all people for their good. However, is this to mean that a SEN should be a gift from God? One participant wrote: 'Parents may not see the special need of their child in isolation as a gift from God but will hopefully see their child as a gift'. Over a life-time, people like Frances Young, Nancy Eiesland, Amos Yong, etc., may come to accept such a position, but if so, it will be hard-fought, I suggest. For those of us able to relate to people who may not be able to relate to us grace is necessary. Theologically, there is little or no difficulty with this being God's position, as it were, for the answer has been given in God's sending of Jesus into the world to save us (John 3:17; Romans 8:3) when we could not do it for ourselves. However, in human terms, this is 'a hard saying', as the sometime followers of Jesus found when confronted, say, with his claim to be giving them his flesh to eat (John 6:52-66).

Quite a positive view was expressed of pupils learning about other religions in RE. While once this might have seemed an unusual position to hold, it is, since 1965, part of Roman

Catholic teaching that we recognize divine grace at work in other religions (and, indeed, in anyone, believer or not, who sincerely seeks truth). *Nostra Aetate* counsels us to esteem these religions as well as 'acknowledge, preserve and encourage the spiritual and moral truths found among non-Christians, together with their social life and culture' (*NA # 2*), and 85.3% agreed with this. Also, 97.9% agreed that 'our school' must welcome pupils of all faiths and none. Why less agree with 'teaching about' than with 'welcoming' others might be worth investigating, in case some see an opposition between the two statements. One participant commented that 'I believe an understanding of other religions is critical for the next generation to encourage tolerance & acceptance of people'. This indicates an inclusive if generic attitude towards people of other faiths.

Again, although the statement was framed negatively, 57.3% rejected the notion that ecology was not part of RE and 36.5% were unsure (Table 40). Pope Francis has placed ecology front and centre in the concerns of the Roman Catholic church, especially in his encyclical *Laudato Si'* (2015) and the apostolic exhortation, *Querida Amazonia* (2020); the pope's theology is employed as a basis for deeper reflection below.

   (c) challenging positions

The following statements (Table 115) were likely to prove controversial: having SEN is a gift from God (Gift), RE should teach about the giftedness of pupils with SEN (Giftedness), RE should teach that Jesus is someone with special needs (Jesus's SEN), pupils with special needs challenge our religious ideas of what human perfection is (Perfection), Religion should teach that pupils with special needs manifest God's presence in the world (Grace).

Kendall's Tau Correlations

		τ-B		p	Lower 95% CI	Upper 95% CI
Gift	Giftedness	0.43	***	< .001	0.33	0.53
Gift	Jesus's SEN	0.43	***	< .001	0.32	0.53
Gift	Perfection	0.24	**	0.01	0.12	0.36
Gift	Grace	0.43	***	< .001	0.33	0.53
Giftedness	Jesus's SEN	0.37	***	< .001	0.25	0.48
Giftedness	Perfection	0.41	***	< .001	0.29	0.53
Giftedness	Grace	0.55	***	< .001	0.45	0.66
Jesus's SEN	Perfection	0.33	***	< .001	0.20	0.45
Jesus's SEN	Grace	0.39	***	< .001	0.27	0.52
Perfection	Grace	0.40	***	< .001	0.28	0.53

* p < .05,   ** p < .01   *** p< .001

Table 115: Theologically challenging concepts about Jesus

As noted, the idea that Jesus can be presented as someone with SEN and that God is, in consequence, somehow 'disabled', proved challenging for some of both those interviewed and participants in the questionnaires. Some reacted with surprise and what I took to be openness to further exploration of the notion, which, from my perspective and at its most elemental, indicated that a conceptual innovation proved itself in a piece of quantitative-qualitative research; more importantly, it showed that those tasked with oversight of education were themselves open to engaging with it and that that challenge in itself was welcomed; and more profoundly still, it establishes the identity of pupils with SEN, at whatever degree or level, with Jesus, which a Christian may not unreasonably and possibly faithfully assume, is the mark of most God-talk. In this project, what was celebrated as Eiesland's singular contribution to both disability studies and theology came to be recognized in the lives of people like Arthur, Mark, Sesha and Aleksandra.

(d) Socio-cultural - inclusion

The state is widely perceived to be failing to adequately resource special education (Table 53) with only 11.6% feeling that it did resource special education adequately; however, 72.6% rejected this view. This is in light of 91.8% agreeing that those with SEN have the same rights as those without (Table 52). Where rights are recognized socially but not advanced structurally becomes another argument for BoMs to clarify what their pupils require if their educational needs are to be met and then to present, preferably as a body of BoMs, to the state an evidence-based programme of resourcing for SEN and call for an adequate response.

A positive picture of inclusion for pupils with SEN was presented: 92.7% felt that their school 'has a vision for inclusion of pupils with SEN', with no demurrals. However, looking at other responses a less cohesive and perhaps less coherent image emerges. While many (63.8%) disagreed with the view that those with severe special needs are not as welcome as those with minor SEN, 19.1% felt that there was such discrimination (Table 73). Also, while a quarter disagree with the statement that pupils with SEN are 'fully part of society' some 64.6% believe that they are (Table 58). Members divided almost evenly – between agreement, not knowing and disagreement – on whether pupils with SEN manifest God's presence in the world (Table 70). Over half (54.7%) thought that RE should teach about the giftedness of pupils with SEN (Table 64).

In attempting to balance pupils' needs and the BoM system ecclesial and socio-cultural systems have to be examined: if society succeeds in integrating pupils with SEN into its field of normalcy, in spite of disabilities and with attention to their demands, then a better prospect lies in store not just for that child but for the wider society itself which is now enriched in its self-understanding. While I believe that this view is achievable through ever-deeper refinements in international awareness of special needs and organizations that fight for rights of those who are disabled, it seems more likely to meet with success through the ethico-theological argumentation of religiously inspired leaders. The latter have resources for wider understanding of what it is to be a human, in all its debilitating and debased, superhuman and noble aspects; not a few such leaders may be found on BoMs, I suggest.

Commitments

Two-thirds agreed that they are committed to the RE of all pupils (Table 19). In relation to SEN, 59.4% agreed they were personally interested, 52.1% agreed they were professionally interested (Table 12), and 66.6% (Table 15) agreed they were well-informed on SEN. Only 2.1% agreed that they themselves had a SEN (Table 16), a prevalence rate which would be far less than is thought for society. Teachers in Roman Catholic schools are required to have a professional catechetical qualification; however, there is no comparable requirement made of other members of BoMs nor opportunity afforded to aspire to one. Though we cannot say that any departure from the commitment to RE that is required of teachers in their professional duties is due to lack of clarity on the distinction between education *in* and *about* religion; perhaps a difference of views between teacher-members and non-teacher-members of a BoM is in evidence; surely, how individual

educationalists view and enact commitment to RE will change even more than has been adumbrated in this research.

5.3.3 Handling ambiguity in the data

Without deeper investigation, as face-to-face interviews might provide, it is impossible to be certain about the meaning of data provided in attitude-responses to questionnaires. In relation to the present research, too, this is true even though some interviews were carried out. It proved difficult to obtain willing interviewees; their number was small, though most helpful; and the range of issues thrown up by the questionnaires was so large that conversations that 'covered all the bases' would have been far beyond the capacities of this project. Indeed, expansive as the first questionnaire was, infelicities in expression and ambiguities in meaning, not to mention a significantly inadequate response-rate, all contributed to a widespread caution having to be issued about adequate and sufficient interpreting of the data such that statistically substantive statements concerning results could be made with statistical power, effect size and validity. The data were not sufficient or adequate. This does not vitiate the research, For, first, it recognizes the reality of research when scope outweighs return and will outpaces capacity. Second, any data obtained retain their own integrity and legitimacy: making it available, as is done here, makes further research not only possible but more likely; it provides a) a model for that research, b) a baseline for comparisons on results, and c) a standard by which to judge the adequacy and sufficiency of those results; and it both validates the efforts of those who engaged with the research as BoM members worthy of being so and permits them to compare their own views with the overviews that this research does present.

To begin, I break down the data further, into responses by females and by males. There is a difference between the responses of females (n=52) to males (n=44) in terms of being Roman Catholic: 76.5% of female respondents, compared with 56.9% of males, affirmed this religious identity; however, in the Irish census for 2016, 78.3% self-identified as Roman Catholic (CSO 2017, p. 72), which itself was down on the 2011 figure of 84.2% and the 2002 figure of 88%. The percentages deepen on the statement concerning Christian identity: 88% of female respondents affirmed it while 82.9% of male respondents did. Curiously, on a statement that would seem to be more inclusive, i.e. being a spiritual person, the level of affirmation decreased (70% female and 72.1% male). This latter is supported by responses – 38% and 45.2%, respectively – to being more spiritual than religious. Traditionally in Ireland, women have been more religious, which is to say, 'openly' Roman Catholic, than men, and the statistics may be doing little more than re-

affirming the common perception. If this is the case, any surprise at members' lower level of self-identification as spiritual may change as more of the present younger generation become members in the future.

Attitudes toward religious identity

	Female*	Male*
Practising Roman Catholic	76.5	56.9
Christian	90.0	82.9
Spiritual person	70.0	72.1
More spiritual than religious	38.0	45.2
Felt loved and gifted by God	72.6	58.1
Bible guided their relationships	24.0	30.2

Note: *Valid percentages of aggregated 'agree' and 'strongly agree'

Table 116: Attitudes toward religious identity

It is probably not surprising today that the Bible does not play a central role in guiding members' relationships, though were a comparison possible with members from other Christian denominations the results might be different given a historically stronger and longer dedication to biblical reading; in time, it may be expected that Roman Catholics will become more familiar with the Bible as this is the very model presented in the Grow in Love catechetical programme. I have highlighted that of the many who self-identify as Christian (90% female, 82.9% male) only 72.6% and 58.1%, respectively, feel loved and gifted by God; the figures are less if the comparison is based on being a practising Roman Catholic. This is surely a matter of concern for religious educators as believers should have more certainty, at least doctrinally, about God's love for them (and all creation), as maintained in decades of catechetical programmes in primary schools. BoMs should be sites of Christian affirmation, in the first instance, and agents of it in the second.

The diversity of responses to member's sense of answerability for pupils' spiritual, religious, moral and intellectual development has been flagged as unusual; again, it prompted me to investigate further by disaggregating the responses by gender (Figure 5.10). If an argument is made that females tend to be more empathetic than males then Table 117 offers some confirmation. However, males tend to be more concerned with the human development of pupils with SEN (88.4%, compared with 80.4% for females) and feel slightly more answerable for pupils' spiritual development (47.6%, compared with 44% for females).

Attitudes towards role		
	Female*	Male*
well-informed on religion	67.3	67.5
well-informed on SEN	80.0	58.2
personal interest in SEN	66.0	57.1
concerned with human development of pupils with SEN	80.4	88.4
uninterested in RE	8.0	9.5
committed to RE of all pupils	82.4	51.2
answerable for pupils' spiritual development	44.0	47.6
answerable for pupils' religious development	54.9	39.5
answerable for pupils' moral development	68.0	69.8
answerable for pupils' intellectual development	84.3	69.8

Note: *Valid percentages of aggregated 'agree' and 'strongly agree'

Table 117: Attitudes towards role on BoM

Running a multinomial test on a variety of the factors (attitudes) that arose in the research-project showed that the null hypothesis (H_0) of equal frequencies across the choices is to be rejected on a number of occasions. All four statements about participants' sense of being answerable for the spiritual, religious, moral and intellectual development of pupils proved to be statistically significant, below the 0.001 level.

- being answerable for pupils' spiritual development, χ^2 (4, n=92) = 30.17, $p= < .001$
- being answerable for pupils' religious development, χ^2 (4, n=96) = 23.13, $p= < .001$
- being answerable for pupils' moral development, χ^2 (4, n=96) = 41.46, $p= < .001$
- being answerable for pupils' intellectual development, χ^2 (4, n=96) = 61.96, $p= < .001$.

This is not surprising given that perhaps deeply private, personal beliefs are being communicated. What is quite surprising is the mismatch between high acceptance of answerability for intellectual development (76.1%) and moral development (66.7%) and lower for religious development (46.9%) and spiritual development (43.8%) already adverted to; interestingly, Table 79 also reflects some variability, where nothing significant was expected, on answerability for intellectual development. Why is moral development different from either religious or spiritual development? I would have expected a degree of concord between these, in light of the explicit Roman Catholic identity of the boards. The difference between views on religious and spiritual development is not significant between themselves but, compared with the other two, it is. Why BoM members do not feel more answerable perhaps reflects the privatization of religion that is accelerating in Irish society, a scenario in which religion goes by the way, is not seen and does not address us; at the least it indicates a degree of cognitive dissonance (Leon Festinger) where people try to reduce the lack of fit between their belief and practice. In the case of the statement on it

being 'my duty to see that appropriate education is given to pupils with special needs' (Table 59) agreement reached 94.7%; still, as above, 69.1% rejected the view that our school does not cater well for the RE for pupils with SEN (Table 68). Furthermore, given both the state's willingness to dip its toe into the provision of religious education and the strongly denominational identity of the schools in question, a conversation is required lest pupils' religious and spiritual education suffers where BoMs are not clear about, perhaps committed to, their responsibilities in these areas of education. This is not necessarily an indicator of carelessness in thinking though it may well be a reflection of larger, society-wide cognitive frameworks, in which the mismatch needs to be highlighted and debated beyond the confines of the present research.

When asked if 'our school' did not cater well for the RE of pupils with SEN more than two-thirds (69.1%) disagreed. While one must be cautious about putting a positive interpretation on a negatively phrased statement – evidence against something is not evidence for something else – a very clear majority reject the view that their school does not cater well for that education in RE; only 7.4% agreed with the statement. The strength of the views, across members with different roles, is noteworthy.

5.3.4 Theoretical construct – 'Roman Catholic person'

The scale for being a Roman Catholic person was composed from attitude-statements in SD (Table 118), following an examination of how the addition and subtraction of various attitude-statements affected Cronbach's α: being a practising Roman Catholic, Christian, spiritual person, praying regularly, guided by Bible, read the Bible regularly, loved and gifted by God, answerable for pupils' religious development, answerable for pupil's spiritual development, and committed to the RE of all pupils. A factor analysis of these yielded a KMO measure with a sampling adequacy of 0.825 and was highly significant ($p < 0.001$, df = 45) in Bartlett's test of sphericity; identifying as Roman Catholic alone accounted for 51.51% of variance. Nevertheless, the construction of a Likert scale of 'Roman Catholicity' adds a degree of robustness even as it permits the use of parametric measuring.

Reliability analysis on items for proposed RC-person variable

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Practicing Roman Catholic	30.69	49.606	.708	.704	.879
Christian	30.05	53.786	.588	.548	.887
Spiritual person	30.57	55.872	.461	.431	.894
Reads the Bible regularly	32.67	53.469	.551	.474	.890
Prays regularly	31.26	48.946	.719	.631	.878
Committed to the religious education of all pupils	30.52	52.652	.665	.625	.883
Answerable for pupils' spiritual development	31.02	54.094	.526	.744	.891
Answerable for pupils' religious development	31.07	51.266	.679	.804	.881
Someone loved and gifted by God	30.58	49.776	.734	.620	.877
Guided by the Bible in daily relationships with others	31.76	49.175	.726	.577	.878

Note: Calculations are unweighted

Table 118: Constructed Roman Catholic identity

The reliability of the scale is reflected in Cronbach's α (Table 119):

Scale Reliability Statistics

	sd	McDonald's ω	Cronbach's α	95.0% Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
scale	0.748	0.895	0.894	0.860	0.923

Note: Of the observations, 86 were used, 10 were excluded listwise, and 96 were provided.

Table 119: Roman Catholicity scale

Levene's test of homogeneity of variance was significant ($p < .01$), which violated the test; however, the sample size (n=96) and the distribution between females (n=55) and males (n=44) are moderately robust against this violation.

ANOVA - RP_P

Cases	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p	η²
Q4	1.21	1.00	1.21	1.88	0.17	0.02
Residual	60.38	94.00	0.64			

Note. Type III Sum of Squares

When a similar disaggregation is applied to the constructed 'Roman Catholic person' a picture of divergency emerges (Figure 5.10). Density distribution plots for this variable yielded contrasting presentations:

Roman Catholic person, disaggregated into female and male

Female   *Male*
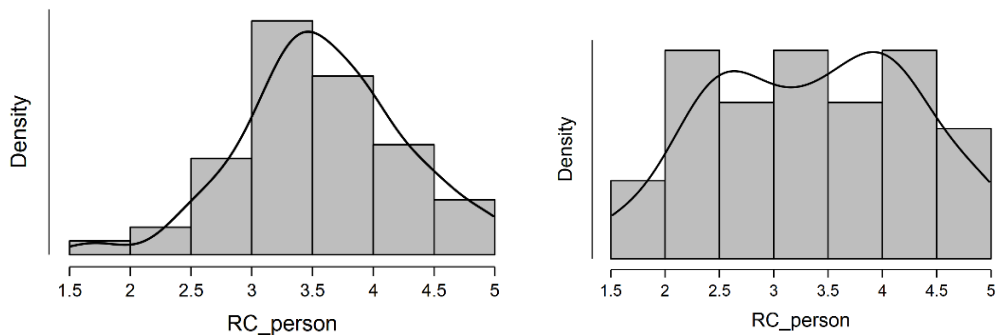
Figure 5.10: Roman Catholic construct, disaggregated into female and male

In both cases the distributions are non-symmetric. For female members skewness is negative (-0.1175) and kurtosis is 0.4057. For males the distribution is bimodal, and skewness is -0.08325 and kurtosis is -0.8435.

In conducting a t-test on 'Roman Catholic person' disaggregated by gender generated a plot (Figure 5.11) and descriptives (Table 120) were generated:
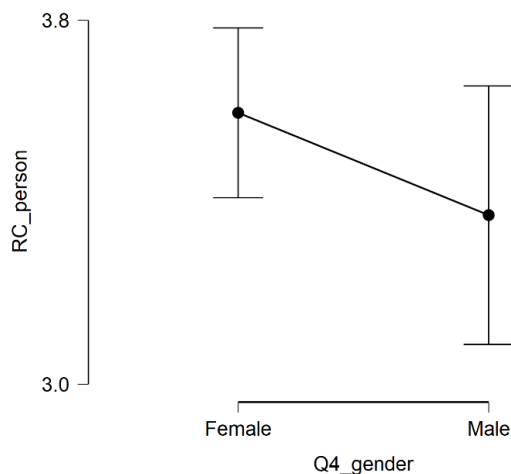
Figure 5.11: Plot of 'Roman Catholic person', by male and female

and

Descriptives for Female and Male Roman Catholic persons

| | Group | N | Mean | SD | SE | 95% Credible Interval | |
						Lower	Upper
RC_person	Female	52	3.597	0.670	0.093	3.410	3.783
	Male	44	3.372	0.934	0.141	3.088	3.656

Table 120: Female and male 'Roman Catholic persons'

Inspection of the data by Q-Q plot adds confirmation of the assumption of robustness (Figure 5.12).

Q-Q Plot
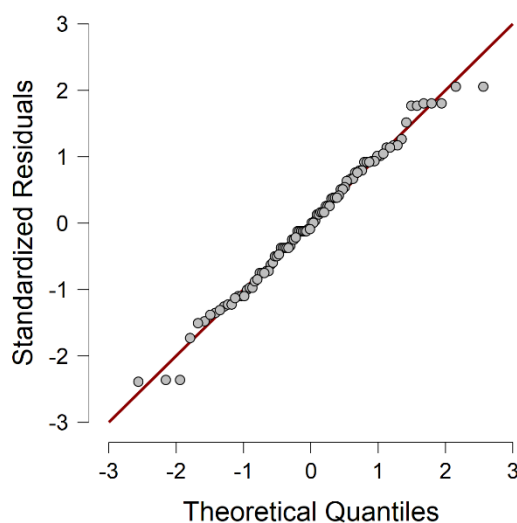
Note: Theoretical quantiles derive from normal distribution, mean = 0, SD = 1

Figure 5.12: Q-Q plot for RP_person by gender

Using the above information, a number of ANOVAs were conducted on different statements from the questionnaires; as each of the following was calculated separately on the Likert scale, Roman Catholic person, the η^2 may be interpreted as partial η^2 also, to provide a reasonably accurate effect size calculation. Many ANOVAs did not indicate statistical significance ($\alpha = .05$, for all of the below); those that did include the following statements:

1) RE does more harm than good was significant ($F = 6.68$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = 0.24$)

2) the state should not interfere with the spiritual dimension of pupils' lives ($F = 1.07$, $p = .05$, $\eta^2 = 0.05$)

3) having special needs is a gift from God ($F = 2.42$, $p = .05$, $\eta^2 = 0.10$)

4) mainstream pupils benefit from the presence of pupils with special needs in class with them ($F = 4.84$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = 0.14$)

5) pupils with special needs do not have enough attention paid to them ($F = 3.81$, $p = .01$, $\eta^2 = 0.14$)

6) having pupils with special needs in mainstream RE helps other pupils' understanding of creation ($F = 5.01$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = 0.18$)

7) RE is more real when pupils with special needs participate ($F = 6.68$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = 0.24$).

Looking at the above statements in light of their estimated effect sizes, we see that only two (1, 7) approach a large effect size (at 0.28), three (4, 5, 6) have a medium effect size (at 0.13), and two (2, 3) have a small effect size (at 0.12). So, it is clear that the statements that religion does more harm than good and that RE is more real when pupils with SEN participate are 'stronger' statistically than the others. However and interestingly, what is more revealing in terms of this research is that, given a calculated effect size, I was now in a position to employ G*Power (ver. 3.1.9.7) to calculate the sample size that would have been required *a priori* for trustworthy analysis. Employing an $\eta^2 = 0.24$, $\alpha = .05$, with power $(1-\beta) = .95$, with only 2 groups, a total sample size of 228 was returned; changing power to .80 reduced the total sample size to 140, which remained significantly larger than the 96 that my project had available to it.

5.3.5 Qualitative bridging

In this section, in addition to the literature, I take into account the responses to Questionnaire 2 and the Interviews that were conducted subsequently.

Additivity from Questionnaire 2

If one must treat the data from Questionnaire 1 cautiously, the same is more true of data from Questionnaire 2, due to the much smaller participation rate (n=31). Additionally, this participation rate does not share the randomness associated with the first questionnaire. I had to ask certain individuals (n=6) to participate in order to boost the numbers (n=25); also, five more had been asked but had declined. I have no reason to doubt the veracity of the six participants; indeed, knowing them personally, I can more assuredly vouch for their *bona fides* than I can for participants unknown to me whose carefulness I am constrained to take on trust. Nevertheless, without trust, there would be no point in ever carrying out research.

Two-thirds of Questionnaire 2's participants had taken part in Questionnaire 1. More than half (57.2%) to those who responded (16 of 28, Table 81) agreed that Questionnaire 1 was accurate to their perceptions of issues; this statement would warrant further debate even though part of the answer was due to participants not having seen Questionnaire 1. Only 35.7% (Table 82) agreed that the Feedback had been helpful and another third were

neutral, mainly, it is fair to say, due to their not having received it in the first instance. No one agreed that the Feedback had helped their BoM; this result was disappointing, as my intent in sharing this information was to assist BoMs, by providing data with which they could debate the strength or otherwise of their own attitudes and be provoked into new avenues of possibility for pupils with SEN in their schools. However, half of those who responded (n=28), were neutral, which was acceptable given that BoMs almost never discussed it (Table 83); when it was discussed, as was the case with one BoM to which I made a presentation, there was consensus that the issue was important. A quarter of those who responded, i.e. seven, agreed that the project had helped them be 'a more responsible BoM member' (Table 84). Almost one-third (n=9) were neutral and 12 disagreed that it had been helpful. While these figures might seem disappointing for a researcher and, perhaps, even unsatisfactory as a response from any BoM member, caution is required. The statement is ambiguous; how should one interpret 'responsible': as a reflection on oneself, as a board member, i.e. in a role, as otherwise not responsible, or something else? One comment stated that that person always felt responsible. Furthermore, the statement needed an explicit context, something that was most likely lost because of proximity to the earlier statements that may have enjoyed less weighted meaning.

Did the project help one be more aware of SEN (Table 85)? This issue engaged 30 participants, of whom nine were in agreement. However, eleven strongly disagreed, which would be disappointing save that thirteen were already aware of SEN before responding. A participant commented that 'trying to be inclusive means for me accepting and supporting all children of all beliefs and none', which, however and realistically, 'can be hard at times'.

Including pupils in special and religious education

Inclusion has been the accepted model for pupils with SEN since 1994; DEIS was Ireland's initiative to overcome problems of inclusion created by social inequalities (DES 2005b; Gilleece 2014); yet, patronage of schools remains a tetchy issue in spite of work done that enjoys wide acceptance (DES 2012, 2014; Coolahan, Hussey & Kilfeather 2012), while barriers to inclusion are well documented (Travers, Balfe *et al*. 2010). The importance of inclusion demands a shift in our understanding of SEN (Carroll, Fulmer, Sobel, Aragon & Coval 2011): to see school as a laboratory for life (Borg [n.d.]), in the developing network-society and not just as preventing failure, as NT averred. Norwich raises the problems of inclusion and how we understand it (1995, 2014) as debate continues (Nilhom & Görannson 2017; Messiou 2012, 2017). Part of the problem with

inclusion is that the paradigm, which morally encompasses the right of all children to a proper education, has been constructed as a practice that makes all of them subject to the one education(al) process. Thus, Ireland's SETA model (2017), is underpinned by a model that states that all students, irrespective of their special educational needs, are welcomed and enabled to enrol in their local schools. An inclusive model is perhaps better theorized as one where those with or without SEN have the opportunity to engage together as part of their mutual preparation for life on the basis of human enrichment and diversity (Norwich 2014, p. 497). Inclusion is a binary concept marking who is 'in' and who is 'out' even as it seeks to place everyone within. However, it can be extended, as in Roman Catholic ministry, to include *among*, *with* and *from* people with disabilities (Baum & Benton 2006); for perspectives on special and inclusive education, see Day & Travers 2012. The literature has begun to employ 'equity' more (Ainscow 2016; Ainscow, Dyson, Godrick & West 2016; see Berhanu 2010 for the Swedish context). While Obiakor reported on 'regular schools with inclusive orientation' (2011, p. 11), he promoted 'normalcy' in the lives of those with SEN; thus, schools are required to be 'accessible, equitable, and inclusive' (2011, p. 10; also Frederickson & Cline 2009; O'Byrne & Twomey 2012). A critical element has to be infused into our work towards equity for pupils: closing a gap or overcoming a barrier entails bridging a divide. In marrying teaching strategies and pedagogical principles, especially in collaborations between special class and mainstream teachers, the notion of attunement (Ní Bhroin 2017) has been a particularly suggestive model for a certain type of inclusion, in which attuning mainstream and support teachers enacts inclusion for the betterment of pupils; furthermore, it accords with associative living (Dewey) and the good end-in-view of life (Plato). Though the role of parents or guardians in the education of pupils lies at the very core of the latter as we have seen from foundational texts of church (*GE*) and state (Irish Constitution, Education Act 1998, etc.), its academic treatment belongs to a different sort of project; nonetheless, if Hislop regards parents' associations as 'constructively critical friend[s] of their schools' (2012, p. 24), what should be said of BoMs? I suggest that they are constructively critical, and far more: whatever may be said of present realities, the potential for BoMs to exercise a skilled, professional, committed and Christian service to the education – not indoctrinating or deluding (Wareham 2019) – of their children would entice parents and their associations to mutual engagement and cooperation. To this end, further research and replications of the present project are essential. Also, at a research level, disability studies might engage constructively with religion, as Imhoff suggests (2017), so that a certain congruence may be developed between the work that BoMs support and that the scientific community

pursues. Rare as this idea may be its potential for the good of pupils commends it most highly, I believe.

The complexity of modern primary education, as it undergoes curriculum revision, new pedagogical methodology and engagement with research-based evidence, demands ongoing collaboration that combines the sometimes differing goals and aims of stakeholders, is strategically open-ended, i.e. accepts adhocracy, and is directed toward the betterment of society. When Brahm Norwich writes of 'appreciating the benefits of ideological impurity and living hopefully with it' he is adopting an adhocractic stance (Norwich 1995, p. 100; Skrtic 1991a, 1991b; Ainscow 2016). I suggest that, as one of the few to do so, Ní Cheallaigh (2004) should be followed in her advocacy of inclusion as directed towards RE. It is difficult to locate discussions of religion and spirituality as such in relation to those with SEN (Ault 2010); instead, discussions were incorporated into other issues. In 1999, John Haldane was calling for spirituality in education (also O'Connell & Meehan 2012); childhood had its own spiritual dimension (Adams, Hyde & Woolley 2008). There is a need for debate, too, on whether scholars are prepared to converse in a language that bridges the religion-spirituality divide.

Personal knowledge and professional knowledge, such as teachers build from their contact with pupils, forms a model for BoMs: members bring their personal knowledge and skill-sets, to which, through collaborative inquiry, they build into a BoM-type of professional knowledge or collaborative inquiry (Ainscow *et al.* 2016). Throughout the project, personal encounters with and stories of disability, each marked by love and suffering, have been related to help ground it: Frances Young's son Arthur (Young 1986, 1990, 2014), Amos Yong's brother Mark (Yong 2007), Gregory Nazianzus's sister Macrina (Malone 2000), John Gillibrand's son Adam (Gillibrand 2010), Eva Kittay's daughter Sesha and Myroslaw Tataryn and Maria Truchan-Tataryn's daughter Aleksandra. For, humans are always persons-in-relationship (Augustine's *Confessions*; MacMurray 1961; Ware 2009); Augustine discovered this in examining the *infirmitas* of others which brings a sense of our own *infirmitas* (*Confessions* XIII.17.21, p. 285). Somewhat differently, Heidegger understood Dasein as constituted by relationship to being: one is thrown into the world; relatedness is, in that sense, given to humans. What they do with it determines the authenticity of their relations. Conversation, seen by Noddings (2002b) as crucial 'in caring relations', could become a tenet of a BoM's pedagogics, to be practised and taught.

Under the European Union continuous research in SEN occurs (e.g. EU 2009, 2015; European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education 2012, 2016). Education is

a core of democracy (Dewey 1980) and special education is not only about pedagogical practices but also the formation of character (see Hilgenheger 1993), and, though there is a lack of clarity in the definition of SEN (Hausstäter & Connolley 2012; McCoy, Banks & Shevlin 2012; see Desforges & Lindsay 2010), there is disagreement on how to label and classify disability (Florian & Curran 2004), and also evidence of disproportionality in it (Dyson & Kozleski 2008; Cooc & Kiru 2018), and it is disdainfully described as an industry (Tomlinson 2012). Labelling risks stigmatizing a pupil and is inherently ambiguous (Grover 2003; Daniels 2006). It can, too, be positive and a source of relief to pupils themselves (Addy & Dixon 1999; Chakraborti-ghosh, Mofield & Orellana 2010). Human dignity, lauded by the Roman Catholic church, is the human right to freedom of conscience and religious liberty; it is known by faith and reason (*DH* #2). This dignity prospers where schools have 'an ethic of dignity' (Turnbull, Turnbull & Cooper 2018, p. 139). One of the ways that a school exhibits such an ethic is by holding to a 'limits model' of disability, which begins from an understanding of human life as 'an experience of limits' (Creamer 2009, p. 341): the limiting that is experienced by each and all of us conceptually deconstructs the individualizing, yet totalizing, othering of people labelled as different from 'us' because of physical, mental or moral limitations. A quality-of-life framework, beyond remediation and alleviation of negative conditions for pupils with SEN, adopts a proactive and positive direction for educational provision (Turnbull *et al*. 2003).

Generally, religion can be examined from many points of view, e.g. historical, anthropological, social phenomenon, cultural studies, theological. For some, the term denotes an outmoded, perhaps debased, form of human consciousness; for others, it is a form of human associativity that is 'merely' a social fact; for others, it is the pinnacle of human development and spirit. Yet, we have seen that religion resists precision whether lexical, historical, cognitive, cultural or even theological. What can be said for religious education if both education and religion prove so elusive and resistant to being tied down? Is meaning to be precluded therefore? Is there only 'the pale cast of thought' that Hamlet wearied of?

The right to religion is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UN 1948, #18; Dolan, Gundara & King 2011). Rights are legally vindicated; the European Court of Human Rights has to adjudicate between, say, individuals' religious rights and the state's neutrality on matters of religion (Ringelheim 2012). Rights, essential to internationally binding frameworks, are 'human creations' (Cowden 2016, p. 153) and their application

within UN frameworks require caution: for instance, that all children may flourish, in spite of it being a right or a value that most if not all might be willing to sign up to, is not readily amenable to enforceable prescription. How would one measure human flourishing such that evidence for it could be ascertained by educationalists? Flourishing belongs to the whole of one's personhood, yet so much of that personhood often lies hidden, perhaps especially from the young and, more especially, from oneself. Onora O'Neill believes that rights-language is better contextualized within duties or obligations; she distinguishes three sets of the latter, those that involve all people, those that involve specific people and those that involve people who, though they remain unspecified, are not coextensive with all people, and it is the latter's 'imperfect obligations' that would apply, for example, to teachers and BoMs who, though fulfilling their duty did 'less than they ought' for the care and education of pupils (O'Neill 1988, pp. 457-458). Society, at some fundamental level, therefore, expresses affirmation for religion and for human flourishing in spite of weighty doubts regarding their definition. St Ambrose said, and Cardinal Newman liked to quote: *non in dialectia complacuit Deo salvum facere populum suum*, it is not in human thinking that God saves people.

Education about religion and beliefs is much debated in Ireland (Darmody & Smyth 2017) and a SEN diagnosis adds a layer of difficulty for parents in that they now have to ensure appropriate assistance for their child in accessing both SEN services and faith-based education (Russo, Osborne, Massucci & Cattaro 2011, p. 273). Religion is both lived and hermeneutical (see McGuire 2008; Anderson 2012): what binds people to an understanding of the transcendent or divine constantly undergoes change, either growth or distortion or something between these boundaries, and how we understand, if profound enough, binds us to a putatively better way of living. Pollefeyt & Richards (2019) offer a specific response to the *areligiosity* of today through promotion of 'interreligious literacy' in combination with philosophical and religious hospitality and inter-hermeneutical dialogue; they offer a model of RE called 'living art' (2019, p. 2). One moves between different 'rooms' and the route is not fixed, sometimes it becomes a detour. How religion and spirituality come to expression today is not fixed either. The attitudes of teacher education applicants toward the teaching of RE has begun to be documented (Heinz, Davison & Keane 2018; Heinz & Keane 2018). Low levels of religious practice among new entrants to teaching are being noticed (Heinz, Davidson & Keane 2018; Murray 2018) and there may be a hybridization of religious and state discourses (see Burr & Wood 2012). Schwartz (2006) offers BoMs a theoretical model of human values that permits us to concentrate on four dynamics that interplay together: self-transcendence, which opposes

self-enhancement, and openness to change, which opposes conservatism. Cipriani warns that values, disconnected from concrete situations, may not solve all ills; like scientific theories, they 'leave room for autonomy with moderations' and they are transcendent in the sense of being 'a means by which to overcome limited, fixed, indefectible principles' (Cipriani 2012, p. 504). This approach is suggestive of adhocracy. Building 'inclusive public values within policies that can accommodate the notion of difference' into schools, as recommended by UNESCO (see Dolan, Gundara & King 2011, p. 25), can be embodied in BoMs.

The Roman Catholic church has long placed RE within a school context (GE; CCE 1977, 1988, 1997, 2007, 2013; GDC 1998). Its focus is neither insular nor monolithic as it seeks to engage civic society and other religions (see, for instance, CCE 1997, 2013, 2014); sometimes, clarification of the role of RE in education comes as reaction or response to a challenge, e.g. CCEFIBC 2016, 2017. The Roman Catholic church's teaching on catechesis (GE 1965, Paul VI's *General Catechetical Directory* 1971, and the *General Directory for Catechesis* 1997 (original)) demonstrates a growing awareness of making provision for pupils with SEN, which is also shown in language shifts: from 'maladjusted children and adolescents' (GCD 1971, #91) to 'the disabled and the handicapped' and 'persons particularly beloved of the Lord' (GDC 1998, #189-190). It repeatedly emphasizes the importance of RE and relates it to the dignity of the person and one's freedom of religion (Benedict XVI 2005).

RE is part of multicultural life in Ireland (ESRI 2012). Religion should not be taught in state-funded schools though teaching about religions is acceptable in state schools (Nugent & Donnelly 2013). Yet, RE is a human right (Renehan 2014, pp. 39-61) and for Codd (2017) RE must be firmly placed within an ecclesial framework even as it belongs conversationally (Cullen 2017). Religion, as a core element of humanity, promotes RE as profoundly connected to human learning-to-be, which Jackson held (2007) in agreement with Jacques Delors (UNESCO 1996) and still reiterates (Jackson 2018, p. 387). Jackson & Everington (2017) argue that teachers, especially those at the beginning of their careers, should adopt 'an impartial approach' to RE and provide 'an inclusive religious education' to pupils, given the situation (in England). As Jackson worked to extend teachers' knowledge of RE (1997, 2013), Joyce Mercer (2002, 2016) developed her own approach out of work in Asia and the work of David Ng. We saw that Andrew Wright's critical realism in RE or 'critical religious education' (2007, 2013), which combined faithfulness to the truth (realism) with critical openness concerning how one can know it, did not seem

adequate to preserving theology's own 'talk about God' (2.3.1). Indeed, Coakley argues that people move from beliefs to beliefs-with-practices to understanding of how the divine operates within us (2015). Thomas Groome's life-to-faith-to-life approach links the personal and social in RE (2011), continues his exploration of 'a shared Christian praxis' (1991) and is subsumed into the latest catechetical programme, Grow in Love.

Kilkelly (2010) and Kieran & Hession (2005, 2008) engage the Irish and European dimensions of RE for pupils in a Roman Catholic context. Handing on the faith is what parents do (John-Paul 1979); RE programmes today, such as Grow in Love, following from Share the Good News (2010), are explicit in their attention to pupils with SEN, something already envisaged in *GE* (1965). How is a person with severe SEN to be counted as a person? Faced with this question Gillibrand, from his personal experience felt that our definition of personhood is inadequate (Gillibrand 2010). Is sacramental experience precluded for those with severe SEN? It does not seem so, according to Young; Gillibrand, Foley (1994), Harrington (1994) and Yong. The possibility of conflict over the choice and expression of religion between pupil and parent or guardian is real (Smyth 2010); BoMs may have a mediating role if such conflict arises, however unlikely, in the primary school.

John Hull (1992, 1999) engaged RE from the inside of disability and, recognizing the problematic connection of religion and disability, also sought to see potential for the development of a spirituality of disability (2014). Jesus related to children (Gundry-Volf 2000) and God relates to us as children, who at birth have 'an infinite openness' to existence (Rahner 1971, p. 49). For Rahner, human knowing and freedom find their source in the experience of God. Researchers examining the spirituality of pupils (see Lawson 2012) agree and respond by developing suitable resources (see below) such as Godly Play (Berryman 2009a, 2009b; Cavalletti 1992, 2002; O'Farrell 2016).

BoM members can learn from the dialogical structure of human encounters as reflected in Bronfenbrenner's investigations into dyadic (and larger) relationships (1979, p. 5). As the 'ecological transitions' that occur throughout a lifespan, Bronfenbrenner associates them with changes in a person's role. An ecology of a BoM might alert members to the changing roles they occupy in virtue of the centrality a BoM enjoys in the education of local pupils. What settings enhance educational provision for all pupils (Bronfenbrenner 1979, p. 109)? A certain ease and empathy with fellow members will promote cohesion and cooperation among members, thus motivating them to other empathetic relationships to the benefit of pupils.

The Gravissimum Educationis Foundation reports that 'on average, 35% of students is neither Catholic nor Christian [in approximately 216,000 Catholic schools], with a remarkable presence of Muslim and Buddhist students' (2015, online). The *General Directory for Catechesis* (1998) outlines the fundamental tasks of RE are promoting knowledge of the faith, liturgical education, moral formation and teaching to pray, combined with education for community life and initiating mission (#85, pp. 85-90).

The rights of children leads Jeffers (2013) to apply the development and participation rights, from the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), specifically to schools; for him, the voice of pupils is not adequately heard; though his context is second level schooling (similar to Leslie Francis), the issue of curricular justice was prominent as it hinged on schools responding to curricular needs of students: how pupils with SEN are discriminated against becomes an issue of justice (Creamer 2009). Thus, promotion of pupils' voices in schools is a task for BoMs.

For DN 'a lot' of the oversight for the RE of pupils with SEN should come more from the church, than from the BoM or school. More can be expected in relation to RE for pupils with SEN in the future; I note here that the interviews preceded, at least for the senior classes in primary schools, the introduction of the Grow in Love programme, which does incorporate discussion of special needs. Nevertheless, while EI thought the idea was 'worth considering', NT felt that RE for pupils with SEN gets 'informal support' in schools. Though the commandment to love is at the heart of Jesus's teaching of the *basilou tou theou*, God's kingdom, its working out in daily faithfulness is highly challenging, especially when it demands suffering, perhaps death in some repressive societies, and standing against quotidian mores in more liberal ones. To the charge of indoctrinating children clarification of terms is needed. One person's educating is another's indoctrinating; so, the question is to what do we object when we charge something said or written with being indoctrination. Unless children's character is being in-formed there is scarcely education of any kind, good or bad, in question. A general charge of indoctrination levelled *tout court* at Christian education is a lazy catch-cry for a more serious discussion. Individual doctrines, such as Christ's incarnation, the nature of God as triune and the eucharist as transubstantiation, form part of the patrimony of Christianity and have to be understood within the language-games of theology.

Imagining anew – Christ, infirmitas, care

Imagination is central to education (Blenkinsop 2009), no less than to research (Boden & Epstein 2006) or the human (Lane 2012; Taylor 2007: Appadurai 1996). Mercer (2016)

relates imagination and RE, and children and RE (2002). Understanding by contemporary lights, humans often reason amiss. Safford & Safford (1996) thematized the treatment of people with special needs (especially in the United States of America) who, in pre-Christian and early Christian times, were treated as if the devil had cursed them; in Ireland, too, malign forces were also considered to influence the human realm. In an absence of empirical evidence there is a human urge to manufacture 'explanations' that at least purport to account for phenomena. Feldmeier (2007) traces human and spiritual growth to the intersection of imagination and experience. The importance of imagination as a social fact is stressed in Appadurai (1996, p. 31). The revised curriculum in Ireland centres on the notion of play and the role of imagination in the developing child's brain (*Aistear*). What, for instance, are the 'guiding metaphors that shape our behaviors and thoughts' (Falcone 2016, p. 382)? For him, the work of Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914) is one imaginative framework for teachers of RE (2016). Another, that of Sullivan's notion of contention (2000) between different metaphorical understanding of education, whether in school or ecclesial settings, is worthwhile. Adeptness in response is a value to be cultivated in BoMs (Sullivan 2000, p. 239).

This project, as necessitated by the response-level to the questionnaires, became more of a learning process than the primary data-gathering I had planned. I had been encouraged to explore the *infirmitas* of humanity (Laes 2017, 2018; Pudsey 2017; Kuuliala 2017; Krötzl *et al*. 2016) by the phenomenological excavation Heidegger undertook into the beingness of all that stands before and glimmers to us with that beingness, and by a radically new understanding of disability (Eiesland 1994, 2004; Kittay 2010; Hull 2012, 2013; Brock & Swinton 2012); BoMs are singularly well-placed to respond to these; comparable to Young was NO's experience of children in an ASD unity. Our struggles to name it reflect the newness of this understanding which is itself in process of coming to consciousness and BoM members can uniquely participate and effect change by the way they live out a vision and ethic for their local school. Just as the OECD keeps disability and its remediation on the European educational agenda (e.g. 2007, 2011, 2017, 2019) at regular intervals lest personal disabilities blind people to societal barriers that may be present, so BoMs may keep a focus on pupils with SEN by linking local oversight and state-policy on education. Norwich states that 'individual difficulty versus organisational inflexibility is a false causal opposition, as the social and the individual are not exclusive alternatives between which causal accounts are chosen' (Norwich, 1995, p. 102). Health, which is 'a complete state' that is not an absence of un-healthy conditions (WHO 1948), is still an enigma (Gadamer 1996). In its absence, as sometimes with pupils with SEN, educationalists work to enable

them to learn (Hollenweger 2014, p. 24). There has been a revolution in both practical care and conceptualization of disability such that the lives of people with disabilities, in spite of problems that persist, are far, perhaps immeasurably, better that those of people who lived two or more generations ago (see McConkey *et al*. 2016). This also requires that we formulate an ethics of care (Mattingly 2017): by seeming to be real, negative behaviours may become so, thus 'shaping a child's future life chances' (Mattingly 2017, p. 267). This is a more serious expansion on the Pygmalion effect. Breckenridge & Vogler drew our attention to the inherent flaw in the idea of being able-bodied: 'no one is ever more than temporarily able-bodied' (2001, p. 349). With Eiesland's seminal work, *The Disabled God*, Christian theology began to see its fundamental image of God – Christ hanging on a cross – afresh: Christ, the disabled God. Now, defining a person as disabled becomes a matter of imposition: those conditions – social structures of injustice and stigmatization – that impose categories of exclusion on people are seen as the fundamental barriers to inclusion and community (also WHO 2007, p. 255). EB thought that a new concept, 'a new perspective that hadn't really been thought of before', was being introduced; it proved new for the BoM and for teachers. The process was interesting (OE); it made OE reflect on how children with SEN viewed Jesus as having a special need: 'could they relate to him', she wondered, for this was 'completely knew to me'. It was also challenging in that participants had not hitherto considered Jesus, the 'perfect being' as had been taught, as having a SEN. This contrasted with the imagery presented to all of us in sacred spaces: he hangs on a cross, is wounded and beaten. OE found that the research-project had made her think about something she 'had never thought about' before 'in any great detail'. Indeed, Jesus having a SEN and being perfect should be treated as two sides of the one coin.

For NT, what stood out was the failure of both church and state 'to respond to the rights of the child with special needs [in a way] that is pragmatic'. BoM members will be attentive to their exemplifying of values they intend teachers to impart to pupils. Sometimes, these may even be 'existential' in that they impart a sense of what it is to be human at its best (Vos 2018, p. 23). For Aristotle, the work of a human *qua* human, rather than as functionary of the *polis* or state, determines what one is: an animal has a specific function and this determines its meaning; a hammer has its meaning from its function or work (*ergon*). The human has various powers, such as rationality, perception, action and feeling; the ergon that determines the human is its rationality, its power to reason. So, a good human life, which requires various virtues of courage, justice, wisdom, etc., is happy by virtue of its rationality. Indeed, if we live virtuously then, by and large, we will be happy, though it is always possible that chance will thwart (the pursuit of) happiness. In the words

of Vos, children do not set out to become completely like their exemplars; rather, they follow 'the *ideal* of personhood as embodied in these persons and the *virtuous qualities* displayed by them' (2018, p. 26, emphasis original).

Following an ideal is always the making of a response. When is called for, in BoMs' responses and those of all educational stakeholders, and argued for throughout this dissertation, is care. We have seen 'care' used in multiple contexts (1.3.2). Care of and for children is part of the Christian vision of education (Martin 2017, 2018). It is emphasized as a primary category educationally (see Noddings 2002a, 2002b); care for each other and for the earth as 'integrity of creation' (Smyth 1995; Niles 2003; Schleicher 2017; Pope Francis 2015, 2020), visions shared by the World Council of Churches and the Roman Catholic church; care for the soul (McMinn & Phillips 2001). Shepherding of sheep (Psalm 23), especially in light of the parable of the lost sheep (Luke 15:1-7) or Jesus as the good shepherd (John 10:7-17), evokes an image of care for BoMs; even though the imagery may not be existential for many today it retains scriptural, patristic and episcopal warrants in theology and ecclesial life.

Where specification of classroom practice, especially of literacy and numeracy, is increasing, especially in DEIS schools (Burns 2015, p. 101 and *passim*), a focus on the care that has to be directed towards often vulnerable pupils may be at risk of being side-lined unless teachers and other BoM members consciously choose to make it a priority focus. Burns builds his argument from data-derived praxis with these dimensions: promoting experiential learning, implementing a holistic approach to pupil development and developing pupil's critical thinking skills (2016, p. 99). Yet, in discussing teachers' ethic of care he adumbrates Lingard & Keddie (2013) who argue for 'pedagogies that make a difference', which contrast with 'existing pedagogies of indifference' that, even if they show a necessary element of care for pupils, do not demonstrate the sufficiency of this care, they claim that teachers and schools cannot make 'all *the* difference'. For Lingard & Keddie care, in its strong sense, entails social justice. It is a societal given that the attentive BoM will seek evidence that care of pupils is put at the centre of pedagogical praxis. This is to talk of care in a broader sense than that of Lingard & Keddie (2013) and Burns (2016). Indeed, it is to talk of care beyond Heidegger's *Sorge* and beyond what 'care needs' in medical or DES circulars reference. Care begins with the caring attitude of the carer to the person who needs care. It is a dimension of an educator's professional role (Burns 2016); it defines the role of doctor and nurse for patients; it names the attitude of

the successful craftsperson. And it is a theological principle in that it witnesses to the divine in relation to humanity and creation.

The philosophically sensitive treatment of care as respectfulness of the other's agency (Kittay 2010) argues for the accountability of care (see O'Neill 2013a). Kittay (2010) shares a call for an ethics of care, grounded in practices of care, with Noddings who grounds this ethic in the human condition itself (2002b, p. 148). For pupils, it is better to concentrate on this ethic of care than on a certain type of 'character formation' on the basis that humans are always beings-in-relation (MacMurray 1961; Noë 2009; Harrington 1994), and they are in 'the now' (Arendt 1996) where memory rather than thrownness before death is what determines their existential awareness. Too, what is claimed as care can easily be surreptitious control or domination (see Junker-Kenny 2005). Not surprisingly, moral formation is part of education, also (Zagzebski 2017; Vos 2018).

Continuing theological reflecting

Theology challenges the secularization thesis, as upheld by Hirst (1994) and Habermas (2004); and it needs to do this with the tools of secular knowledge. The post-9/11 world-order played its part in the decline of the ideology of secularization; Habermas did reflect on faith in 'a post-secular age' (2010); but, what is interesting is that this did not strike him earlier (2004). Because, as treaties and protocols of bodies like UNESCO and the UN proclaim, religion acts to bind people together, theology is right to confront naïve denials of its demise. Gareth Byrne (2013, 2018) argues for the value of RE in modern Irish society, not merely in some enclave of it, which is stronger than the argument for RE in denominational schools (Darmody & Smyth 2017). Education's moral and social empowering of people is a democratic impulse (*DE*). It is opposed to proselytism and ideological thinking, though it always risks eliciting them. A schools' statements of vision and ethos, if they are to oppose such latter negative forms of thinking, must be made matters of social and Christian thinking and action. Nevertheless, today's world adds solvent – the putative acids of modernity – to the social glue of religion (Grimmitt 2010). A more amorphous, less clearly defined religiosity, often under the banner of spirituality *simpliciter*, finds ever wider acceptance; this has been adverted to in the literature and some of the interviews. Also, the failures of churches and religious institutions to live up to their ideals, especially with respect to clerical child abuse, has assisted in lessening adherence to church practice; will it impact on commitment to the ethos and vision statements of schools?

Because thinking *sub specie aeternitatis* operates with an inner hermeneutic, perhaps even an apophatic one, that relativizes all forms of human thinking even as it postulates a transcendent thinking, however inadequately formulated and beyond human kenning its expression may be, it is uniquely placed to puncture the hubristic balloons of merely human conceptualities and enable a necessary if not always adequate critique of humans' ultimate solution to problems (see Kittay 2009). This more general argument for an at least overall theological sensitivity in educational matters is considerably strengthened in the context of BoMs with their formal remit and their duties to pupils, community and state. For, BoMs, in the majority of Irish schools, are constituted by Roman Catholic patrons and are required to deal directly with Roman Catholic education secretariats; the Education Act (1998) enshrines this in civil law. The issue that I have raised – RE for pupils with SEN – for BoMs bears directly on theological reflection. If the latter concerns RE then it does so also in relation to SEN itself. RE, SEN and education are inextricably bound together and theological reflecting concerns each of them. To hone in on education, SEN and RE with theological lenses (accepting and challenging the risk of blinkered ones) will help to ensure that our overall response to actual pupils' needs will be better because more nuanced and humble, less inadequate or conceptually reduced, and open to critique in hope of better outcomes for all pupils but especially those with SEN.

BoM members seek in work and before their pupils to find what Flannery O'Connor calls 'the almost imperceptible intrusions of grace' (Speech, 14 October 1963, see O'Connor 1993, p. 58). For Timothy Radcliffe OP we are 'alive in God' (2019); for David Tracy all talk of God is analogical (1981); for Amos Yong a pneumatical imagination allows space for the Holy Spirit to communicate with humans (2011); and for Tataryn & Truchan-Tataryn a theology that is trinitarian can 'embrace difference' (2013; also D'Costa 2013 and Rieger 2001). These theologians relate human experience to the divine; each builds on traditional bases yet is open to modernity's challenges. Scott finds in the Hebrew scriptures the roles of priest, prophet and sage (2005) and offers them as different models of being a teacher. The stories we tell of ourselves become theological resources (David Ng, as recounted in Mercer 2002). Noddings traces our sense of community to the human need 'to feel part of something larger than ourselves' (2002b, p. 65). Do these ideas risk the type of category errors that Mazenod warns against (2017), in which what derives from one intellectual domain is inappropriately translated into another? However, the risk has to be undergone for often the result is a new or richer insight. As Yong (2011) reconfigures the church as the people of God including those with disabilities he is using his life-experience in tandem with his scriptural explorations; he enables the church to challenge those forms

of exclusion that an ableist worldview legitimates. Young and Yong again and again refine their theologies in light of what they learn from loved ones who have disabilities (also Teal 2014). For, learning from and about religion differ from one another in terms of degrees of personal engagement (Grimmitt 1987).

Theology seeks to construct 'a spiritual *paideia*' (2.4.1). Theological education should teach about disability (Annadale & Carter 2014), in a global context (Appadurai 1996). Underpinning the present research is the idea that human pedagogies for RE derive from a divine pedagogy that itself derives from faith in the teaching that has been passed down from those who witnessed Jesus's pedagogy (see Goizueta & Matovina 2017; Rylaarsdam 2014; IEC 2015).

Though pupils have a religious sense that is sophisticated (Berryman 2009a, 2009b; Cavalletti 1992, 2002), it is BoM members, along with other adults, who tend to be more challenged by issues of 'ultimate concern' (Tillich 1965); this remains operative though unbelief in religion, once not even thinkable, today is 'intellectually viable' (Taylor 2007, p. 4). Religions are carriers of 'visions of flourishing' (Volf 2015, p. xi). To hold that religious experience is foundational to human living is, with Kant and Rahner, to see it as co-constitutive of humanity such that all persons, whether disabled or not and regardless of the severity of any given disability, experience (or, at least, are capable of experiencing) something beyond their material givenness (see Imhoff 2017). This is what we mean by religious experience being transcendental. This human potentiality, therefore, binds all humans with one another and constitutes community at its most expansive and diffuse dimensionality. It justifies this research-project's appeal to Heidegger doubly: first, as a thinker who addresses humanity from a non-Roman Catholic yet profoundly challenging phenomenological perspective; second, as a thinker who, perhaps with other proponents of the existential phenomenon of in-the-world-being, can be addressed by the Roman Catholic perspective. For, in the present work, especially as Irish culture becomes less defined religiously, core elements of doctrinal Roman Catholicism have begun to fall away. Disentangling religion (and the secular) from culture is difficult if not impossible (Bunn & Wood 2012; Grenham 2012). It is from this less clear Roman Catholicism that increasingly more members of BoMs and teachers will be drawn with the risk that pupils with SEN will not have their full humanity, including its transcendent dimension, adequately addressed.

This binding-together of humanity seems more and more thematized as 'spiritual'; yet, it is this very transcendent boundedness that makes me want to call it 'religious'. The

amorphousness that attends many uses of spirituality, while sometimes opposed to and at other times highly correlated to religion and sometimes coterminous with it, may well be a necessary societal reflection of underlying changeableness and relative uncertainty at the present stage of the Anthropocene (Paul Crutzen).

Uncertainty characterizes the spirituality-religion distinction. DN described herself as more spiritual (than religious); she taught through prayers, songs and stories and not by doctrines; she characterized this as *ad hoc*. The spiritual, when it evokes the transcendent, operates on behalf of the fully animated person (Webster 2004); it is not only a mark of a person, it authentically marks persons such that to deny it would render them less than what they truly are. There is 'something lacking if there isn't an engagement with that [spiritual] side of your persona' (OE). For NT, people are more spiritual than religious, yet 'you're part of practising a religion'. He further said that 'religious' was a word with connotations for different people, and 'spiritual' sounded more politically correct. Hill *et al.* 2000; Hill & Pergament 2003 attempt to distinguish both and they are much explored (Hill, Pargament, Hood, McCullough, Swyers, Karson & Zinnbauer 2000; Hill & Pargament 2003; Schlehofer, Omoto & Adelman 2008).

Religiosity in Ireland is undergoing change as pluralism breaks down hitherto monolithically Roman Catholic institutions (Breen & Reynolds 2011; Hession 2013, 2015). The intellectual expansion of the Roman Catholic church at Vatican II still continues, including in Ireland, especially the official reception of religious diversity within Christian denominations (*Unitatis Redintegratio*) and with other religions (*Nostra Aetate*), based on the dignity of all humans (*DH*), which has directed the Roman Catholic understanding of education into a new openness (*GE*). The subsequent directories on Roman Catholic education were among the first to name the rights of people with SEN to educational equality (SGN 2010; IEC 2015). BoMs promote a pastoral model of RE that integrates approaches formerly treated as distinct, to wit, doctrinal, kerygmatic, and anthropological (CPSMA 2012).

The introduction of learning about other religions appealed to interviewees. Awareness of the interreligious background of much RE attention has to be paid to other Christian denominations, Judaism, other religions and new religious movements (GDC 1998, #197-201), which greatly improves on the single mention of other religions in GCD 1971, #40). To find 'mutual ground' between religion and modernity is a constant debate and a dialogue (O'Hanlon 2010; Byrne & Kieran 2013; Hession 2015; see Lyons 2012; Omine 1998). Religions are part of society's diversity (EI) and so part of inclusion (NT, EI).

When we discuss religions we are dealing with our core values and so it is useful for our own faith development (NO). DN expects that while the Catholic ethos is what would 'largely' be explained to children they need to be made aware of 'other religions and other communities' and to develop a sense of acceptance for all religions': interreligious education is part of RE (Hession 2013).

One interviewee-participant (NO) told of her experience teaching in a Muslim society. She adapted her prayer-life to the customary calls to prayer; the experience made her more self-reflective about her own faith. Learning about other religions 'is a good thing, to be honest', she said. Other interviewees told of their more local experiences, raising a family (OE) and dealing with educational authorities on behalf of their pupils (NT).

For the one priest recorded (FR), the pastoral role he has on the BoM and within the school is most important; he did not see a contradiction between being on a BoM and relating to children in classrooms. Also, he was the only interviewee to mention children in the local community who 'are homeless or living in hotels'; he was struck by the change in one family once they took up residence – 'a place of their own' – in a new house on the estate.

Religion has been characterized as 'caught not taught' (NO). Teaching RE should be 'between all three parties home, school and church rather than it being left to one sole entity' (DN). On whether there is a right to RE, NO thought about it and commented that it is 'a hard question', but she supposed that children did have that right. The conversation continued at the level of discussing the decisions of parents to send their child to a Catholic school; if they made that decision then they should respect it and engage in the RE lessons of that school. Some parents avoid RE in their home though they want it 'done' or 'covered' in the school (NT), while OE felt that RE 'in the faith' is more parish-based, or should be; nevertheless, there are not enough people to carry it through. OE thought that relevance in what priests say is even more important than the Mass. For DN, 'it's nice…for kids to have a certain experience' of religion, as 'we' had when we were children. Not a safety net but more of a crutch, religious experience may help one when bad things happen in life.

In drawing any map of how pupils with SEN are to be accounted, their voice must have a central place (Smith 1999, p. 136). Teachers and SNAs have to have 'the right fit' with pupils (OE, FR). Teaching is a 'child-dependent' profession (NO) yet RE for pupils with SEN was not a familiar notion in the interviews and I had to explain it (OE, EI, NO). Local priests were referred to as being helpful but sometimes those priests were either overworked or cautious about speaking with children and so avoided regular contact; one

person spoke of a priest who found it very difficult to gain access to the school, such was the level of security there, and another (FR) of how a helpful priest was later taken – at least by some older teenagers – to be (only) an authoritarian person. More amusingly, OE was very clear that she left her own children to school and 'they learnt…thank God, touch wood, everything like that…thank God I never became a teacher'.

Faced by pupils with SEN what is the BoM member to do? Max van Manen (2007) called this the phenomenology of practice. Participants were reflective in their comments and offered me advice. BoMs can assist parents who struggle to deal with a child with SEN and who needs RE appropriate to her or his condition (see Russo *et al*. 2011). A member should be able to liaise between BoM and classrooms because she or he had a designated role from the board (EI). Looking back through her own school's RE policy, OE noted that all pupils with SEN are 'integrated back into their classes' for that half-hour session; the implication is that accommodation for the particular needs of those pupils may not have been considered at the level of policy construction. Nevertheless, BoMs should beware of managerialist structures but hold to their 'teleological goals' (see Jiao 2019). Yet, attention has to be paid to effective 'governance mechanisms for efficient and equitable systems for inclusive education' (EASNIE 2016, pp. 55-63). Constructive confrontations (Sullivan 2000), perhaps mainly with ourselves, may mark 'internal growth and health' (2.5.3) and thus suggest their usefulness to school leaders and BoMs intent on responding to pupils'. This internal renewing suggests a *cura animae*, care for the soul, at least as it concerns a profound care of oneself; it may also become a sharing in a ministry of care to others that is normally associated with religious or spiritual leaders (Ignatius of Loyola 2018; Webb-Mitchell 1996, 2001) though also with those who are profoundly disabled (Young 986, 2014). On a Roman Catholic BoM the members receive not just a mission to serve but also a call to discipleship (Rowan Williams 2016); they respond by collegiality, trust, outward focus, vigilancy towards the alien, contact with church leadership and focus on pupils (Sullivan 2000, pp. 155-158).

Measuring and being ethical

In the lifetime of this project Ireland has seen a new model of resource allocation, SETA (2017), introduced into primary schools, based on a school's educational profile, which is constructed from a series of measures: number of pupils with complex needs, standardized test results, social disadvantage, gender, language support issues (DES, circular 13/2017, #7). The measuring is conducted centrally by the DES. On the other hand, there should be a requirement to involve local communities; here, BoMs can set a standard for how local

schools are empowered to offer more appropriate measures of their pupils than any single bureaucracy can be expected to. Measurement is itself highly complex as a comceptuality; for instance, Heidegger noted that measuring time can be instrument-based, i.e. there is some standard; it is something inherent in Dasein, i.e. in humans; and something that, having being measured, can be lost in forgetfulness, much like the revealing *technē* of ancient Greeks that became modernity's uncontrollable technology. Perhaps unexpectedly, however, the measuring of health offers a paradigmatic response to this issue. The development of the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF), especially in the bio-psycho-social model associated with Judith Hollenweger (2014), aims, precisely in the exigency of its medical model, to move beyond that medical model of disability that has already been discussed above (see Simplican 2015; also IHME 2018) and replace it with a model that examines barriers to health, particularly environmental ones, thereby achieving 'social participation' (Booth & Ainscow 2011). Though it is not discussed here, because of its inappropriateness to primary pupils, which is also the case in the voluminous research by Leslie Francis, Heinz Streib's 'religious schema scale' is one attempt in RE to measure differences in religious styles (Streib, Hood & Klein 2010). For, the labelling of barriers as such is already more suggestive of overcoming them than ever a language of disability could be; the classification system relates to health characteristics, not to people, in an attempt to avoid stigmatizing people (2.2.4), and language is vital: being human is about being in communication (Iitaka 2016; Omine 1998)). There is, then, a sad irony in the continued use of disability-language, as in this project; nevertheless, my focus on BoMs permits us to move beyond structural disability to structural overcoming of barriers by paying attention to those things that help us see, and then move, beyond the gaps and barriers that those with SEN experience.

How do we parse measurement when it refers to attitudes, especially religious ones? What one holds one can quantify; pointing to this or that, I can number each; but, how may one quantify what one is, how one acts and expresses oneself? An integration of outer and private is, I believe, entailed in being religious; of course, it surely is necessitated also in the self-defined spiritual person. For Gundry-Volf, children are the measure of the kingdom of God (2000, p. 480); she reminds us that the children's proclamation of Jesus as son of David was messianic. There is a difficulty in measuring attitudes, where 'individual response patterns are allowed to be widely different from the norm' (Arnulf, Larsen, Martinsen & Egeland 2018); noise in the data is sometimes valuable and not to be discarded. When we look at changes in our own conscience we should not be surprised as the notion that our own introspections change too, which adumbrates Cardinal Newman's

'to live is to change, and to change often is to become more perfect' (Churchland 2019; MacFarquhar 2007). Goodness is fragile (Nussbaum 2001) though Kittay & Carlson (2010) engage with morality philosophically: the moral life, in the context of educating pupils, is, again, an ethics of care (Noddings 2002b, p. 99). Schools are about changing life opportunities (Gorard 2010) and education about the enabling of learning. Hence, BoMs function as enablers: of development in conscience, sense of goodness and morality and being open to the opportunities that life affords; thus, BoMs enable pupils without disabilities to participate with them in developing what capacities pupils with SEN have. What are the 'core capacities' (Cowden 2016, p. 86) that permit normal human functioning? BoMs have a duty of pupil capacity-building.

Resources

Though interviewee-participants displayed interest in a wide range of educational issues, that of getting help, having resources and being trained came up as important if teachers are to help those with SEN (NT, DN, OE); NT noted that he was given a budget with which to run his school and was surprised that other principles seemed opposed to this model. The catechetical programme was felt to be 'too heavy' (DN, NO), even though 'the new ones are generally very good but they can be wordy', which can put children off (EB). Surely, EB commented, 'the subject [RE] lends itself to other approaches'. This permits an endorsement of approaches like the Godly Play programme recently introduced in St Patrick's College DCU. Funding such a resource would be costly to schools, however. Costlier still, and on a different scale, is what O'Brien names the crisis in finding principals for our schools today (2018). BoMs, regardless of hoped-for benefits from this research-project, have as their most powerful, authoritative role the appointment of teachers and, most especially, principals. Where shortages compound 'the agony of choice' between candidates, there pupils and their communities will suffer, and that for perhaps a lifetime. BoM responsibilities in this regard may become more onerous (Hislop 2012, p. 6). *Mutatis mutandis*, care must be exercised in the choice of BoM members themselves (Grummell, Devine & Lynch 2008). However, the DES, I suspect, is unlikely to be the first to support BoMs in obtaining independent managerial, personal skills or in funding continuous professional development for members.

5.4 MODELLING BRIDGE-BUILDING

> *…our differences, which could seem like a barrier or a wall, can become a bridge.* (Pope Francis 2020, #37)

5.4.1 Bridging the quantitative-qualitative gap

An advantage of the approach to a non-reductive integration of qualitative and quantitative that I advance agrees with Richard Pring (2015): many different research methods are called for in the attempt to understand human beings (Pring 2015, p. 73). The metaphor of the bridge evokes an initially less threatening process of engagement, certainly better than that of walls which, though sometimes useful – 'good walls good neighbours make' – better serves notions of distinction, difference and alienation. However, that of bonding excites a wholly other cognitive association: a tying of people cohesively into a shared view or approach that is deeply personal and steadfast, the latter hints at that bonding that '*religio*' once evoked. Likewise, spirituality, in its looseness, evokes the bridging metaphor and so more comfortably accommodates entities less unlikely to disagree amongst themselves. On a continuum, bridging precedes bonding.

Is there a presence within human lives that calls them beyond their current understandings and misunderstandings? As a Christian I am influenced by the convictions of those – such as parents and family, teachers, lay and religious – in whose care I was educated in the Christian faith and by the arguments of scholars such as Martin Buber, Hans-Georg Gadamer, Emmanuel Levinas, Bernard Lonergan, Karl Rahner and Paul Tillich who dialogued with modernity, appealing to its characteristics and insights, even as they tried to persuade today's 'cultured despisers of religion' that reality has higher dimensions that might be able to help them to comprehend goodness, beauty and the oneness of 'the world'.

Faith development is one of the understandings of RE; one participant commented: 'I am proud to be in a school where faith is important and respected'. As a cooperation between parents, parish and school, RE 'is a process that contributes to the faith development of children, adolescents and adults…helps people to develop religious ways of thinking, feeling and doing, which gives expression to the spiritual, moral and transcendent dimension of life and can lead to personal and social transformation (IEC 2011, p. 57). Quests that sought to connect the world with the divine, like Fowler's theory of faith development (2001) and Groome's shared Christian praxis (1991) or life-to-faith-to-life (2011), command attention as evocative explorations and pedagogies for people as they connect meaning and truth with their lived experiences.

The language of 'pedagogy of God' (2.3.1) does not come without risk, for when a teacher offers what is the pedagogy of the church as God's pedagogy, there is a real dangerous that teaching the former may be confused with the One who authors the flatter. Instead, human

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pedagogy has to be matched by a 'pedagogy of provocation' that breaks open, wakes up, nurtures curiosity, creates receptivity, arouses wonder, questions, speaks prophetically, uncovers indifference, unmasks presuppositions and prejudice (Pollefeyt & Richards 2019, p. 8). Today, there is a sense that the Roman Catholic church is trying to renew itself. The general context for much of the work of the Vatican in religious education is increasingly within the remit of evangelization, which is self-consciously differentiated from proselytism. Evangelization expresses a faith that is committed to self-expression. From Paul VI to Francis the role of evangelization, including its formal structure as a pontifical council, has been increasing. As I write there is an expectation of an imminent, wide-ranging restructuring of pontifical councils and congregations, with that for the 'new evangelization 'taking precedence even over the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. If this comes to pass, a comprehensive renewal of Roman Catholic religious education may be expected. An older conceptuality of evangelization as increasing church numbers has been replaced by a more engaged new evangelization. In 2010 Benedict XVI established the Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelization. He made it clear that this council should promote 'the use of the Catechism of the Catholic Church as an essential and complete formulation of the content of the faith for the people of our time' (Benedict XVI 2013, citing Benedict XVI 2010, art.3.5). This may not be quite the vision of Francis, however, and it is to some of the latter's theology we now turn.

5.4.2 Bridging earthly and heavenly houses – Franciscan model

The Vatican may speak of catechesis to both Roman Catholics and non-Roman Catholics, it may consider its approach dialogical (Ratzinger 2005) and it may be open to elements of truth found in other religions (*Nostra Aetate*, 1965) but these overtures do not in themselves constitute a recognition of mutuality as they instead demonstrate who are the holders of truth in its fulness. If Benedict XVI's new evangelization is fundamentally grounded in such an ontotheology then dialogue with the wider world would seem ineluctably restricted; indeed, it would stymie certain developments envisaged here for BoMs. However, in a speech from 2017 Pope Francis indicated a different approach. He shared three theses on education:

- humanize education – to offer horizons open to transcendence
- grow a culture of dialogue – to recognize truth
- sow hope – for a common growth with others.

Francis challenges a modern culture of difference (*una cultura dello scarto*) with an education that practises the 'grammar of dialogue' which 'forms the encounter and

enhancement of cultural and religious diversities'. He speaks of the need of young people today for a 'life that builds the future'. For him, schools render great service to the church when they are at the service of growth in humanity, dialogue and hope. This seems an authentic distillation of the vision of Vatican II's *GE*. The challenge to BoMs then is to transmit that form of life which is 'capable of the future'. BoMs have to know how to take risks in the world – Francis spoke of hope as a '*saper rischiare nel modo giusto, proprio come l'educazione*' (2017). Because the answers to how pupils with SEN are to be educated, schools, supported by their BoMs, take calculated risks; because of their groundness in the community, BoMs are less likely to err whereas state-organized initiatives or pedagogies may be more likely to.

Imaginative constructing is needed. Accepting the accuracy of the transcendental understanding of humanness, something is not yet thematized. Like the imprint (*typos*) of nails on the resurrected Christ's hands, the teaching-standard (*typos didachēs*) is what determines those who are now 'slaves of righteousness', i.e. 'under grace', from those who were 'slaves of sin', i.e. 'under the law' (Romans 6:17, cf. Francis 2013, # 41). Pope Francis's calling of a synod to discuss the Amazon indicates a radically new departure in the politics of a theology of creation; from now on, ecology has been placed at the centre of theological debate and the doctrine of creation has taken on a vibrant relevance, which is appropriate in times when climate change threatens the survival of millions and, therefore, the future capacity for life and flourishing that today's pupils should be heirs to. Still, how does one achieve a coherent oneness in the diverse theological agendas – Christian unity, interreligious dialogue, ecology – that have arisen since, perhaps from, the church's opening to the modern world at Vatican II? The language of *oikos*, house(hold), I believe, helps. It has the potential to bring into one framework both the human and earthly and the divine. Etymologically, economics, ecology and ecumenism are all born from the one seed: *oikos*. First, there is the careful managing of one's household, whether personal or state; then there is the care of the house that is the home of all people, the earth; and finally, there is the care of the household of peoples, the people of God, who have separated themselves and need to be recalled to their original oneness. Pope Francis has dedicated himself to establishing ecology's proper place in the theology of creation; in doing so, he seems attuned to the needs of people threatened by environmental depredation and climate change. His vision is founded on theology, not merely on humanity's temporal exigencies:

Environmental education should facilitate making the leap towards the transcendent which gives ecological ethics its deepest meaning. It needs educators capable of developing an ethics of ecology, and helping people, through effective pedagogy, to grow in solidarity, responsibility and compassionate care. (Pope Francis 2015, #210)

There is 'a general breakdown in the exercise of a certain virtue in personal and social life' that results in imbalances such as the present ecological crisis. Instead, the pope holds that we now 'have to dare to speak of the integrity of human life' (#224) and cultivate a spirituality that brings peace into the inner life of persons. The link between human flourishing and care for the earth is recognized and validated by this encyclical, though Barbara Ward (Baroness Jackson of Lodsworth) long championed the notion of the 'planetary community' (Ward 1979). Earth is a home that has been entrusted to us (Pope Francis 2015, #243). Echoing his predecessor, Benedict XVI, Francis affirms a 'human ecology' through which we learn 'to accept our body, to care for it and to respect its fullest meaning' (#155). This entails a new lifestyle, an 'ecological education and spirituality' (#202) that can 'motivate us to a more passionate concern for the protection of our world' (#216). It echoes Jesus's own attitudes towards the lilies of the field or the rich young man (Matthew 10:21) and is captured in love, which must be extended into the civic and political realms (#228-232). Naturally, Francis extends his attempt at constructing a remedy: the place of the sacraments and the Sabbath rest in the human stewardship of creation (#233-237). Theologically and echoing St Bonaventure, he reads the human person as bearing 'a specifically Trinitarian structure' that is exercised when we 'live in communion with God, with others and with all creatures' (#240). Though he does not reference them here, many of Francis's points were made in the World Council of Churches' octennial assemblies in Vancouver (1983) and, more comprehensively, in Canberra (1991) in relation to the conciliar process called 'Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation' (Niles 2003; Smyth 1995).

Pope Francis's call for a 'balanced lifestyle' (2015, #225) in which 'solidarity with those in greatest need' is joined to 'the capacity for living together and communion', sensing 'our shared responsibility for others and the world' and upholds the ideal of 'a civilization of love' that is both civic and political (Francis 2015, #230-232). Bodiliness discloses the body's 'inner nature as a temple of the Holy Spirit and is united with the Lord Jesus, who himself took a body for the world's salvation' (2015, #236). Therefore, incorporated into Christian spirituality is 'the value of relaxation and festivity': 'And so the day of rest [Sunday], centred on the Eucharist, sheds it light on the whole week, and motivates us to

greater concern for nature and the poor' (Francis 2015, #237). In the journey of life, this celebratory vision brings joy to Christian hope for arrival in 'our common home in heaven' (see Francis 2015, #243-244). For BoMs it encourages a positively motivated engagement with the body, as site of God's work and ours; because it is both humans should celebrate it.

The faith of the Christian believer reveals, then, God's love so that we can respect nature and find in it 'a grammar written by the hand of God and a dwelling place entrusted to our protection and care' (Francis 2013, #55). This faith based on love is 'concretely placed at the service of justice, law and peace' (Francis 2013, #51); thus, it unites believers with all others for the common good. Following St Bonaventure, we are challenged to 'read reality in a Trinitarian key' (Francis 2015, #239). The human person 'grows more, matures more and is sanctified more to the extent that he or she enters into relationships, going out from themselves to live in communion with God, with others and with all creatures' (Francis 2015, #240). This trinitarian dimension of human relationship, the *vestigia Trinitatis*, is given in the theology of personhood, and it is independent of health and sickness, dementia and genius. The BoM is offered the opportunity to promote this Christian understanding of the pupil, made in the *imago Dei*, and enact it in the pedagogies it employs. If it can attempt this it cooperates with the divine pedagogy. At this point we have already moved to the question of how a BoM can establish a criterion or measure for its work, one that is beyond the many individual measures mentioned before but which is capable of a) sustaining members' efforts on behalf of pupils with SEN, and b) offering renewable resources, as it were, for the future.

Scriptural measure – Ephesians 4:13

In the letter to the Ephesians we are offered a Pauline view of Christ as the measure of all. In chapter four, maturity and impotent childhood are contrasted: *hēlikia*, stature, growth, sign of age, is opposed to the infant state (*vēpioi*) in which we have been tossed about by every wind from human sleight or from the craftiness of error's cleverness (v.14). Instead, as a consequence of his ascension, Christ 'gave gifts to men…until we all arrive at the unity both of the faith and the full knowledge of the son of God, at the complete man (*andra teleion*), at the measure (*metron*) of the adult growth (*hēlikia*) of the fulness of Christ (*tou plērōmatos tou christou*)' (vv. 8-13). The Christian, the author of Ephesians is keen to impress, should grow into Christ 'in all things (*en panta*)' by 'truth-speaking in love (*alētheuontes de en agape*)'. For balance, we should also remember the song in Paul's letter to the Philippians (2:6-11): here Christ, still sharing the divine nature 'emptied

himself' (*heauton ekenōsen*) in order to assume our condition. This kenotic Christology is also a model of the emptying of oneself, in the sense of ridding ourselves of whatever restrains human flourishing, that characterizes Christians.

In conclusion, the model of care that is proposed on the basis of this research-project entails movement and dialogue between different stakeholders for the sake of the education of pupils. The theological framework presented offers a good design, but one that should be neither prescriptive nor exclusive. Measures of success, while unscientific in a positivist sense, are adhoc enough, if shorn of its theological skin, to meet different contextual problems and rigorous enough, when 'one puts on Christ' in terms of its demands on members who would try to live out its other-directedness, to offer clear guidance for care-in-action, to be attuned to the needs of pupils with SEN as well as to fellow-members of their local BoM. Primarily, it is to be lit within by a vision that encourages present and future flourishing. An attuned adhocracy becomes a process of collaborative reinventing in service to pupils with SEN, and ultimately with all pupils.

5.5 COMMENDATIONS

Some particular recommendations arising from this research-project will be indicated in the next chapter. Here we continue with some of the commendations that have arisen from the research. Skrtic's adhocracy of 'structural contingencies' (1991b) – collaboration, mutual adjustment and discourse coupling – proves its worth doubly. It attunes to the way so much of human life progresses as people 'muddle through' and, on the other hand, it structures innovation into the problem-solving approach that underpins much educational thinking today and thereby becomes a cornerstone of a new model of BoMs.

The Cumasú document (DES 2019) aims to 'strengthen leadership, teaching and workforce planning', yet no reference to BoMs is made. This may be due to an oversight; however, it may be due to a certain invisibility concerning BoMs and their mediating role, that has been advocated for above. Under its Goal 3, equipping 'education and training providers with the skills and support to provide a quality learning experience' (DES 2019, p. 28), management is mentioned, though along with other stakeholders in the context of 'a range of inspection and evaluation models providing transparency and quality assurance' (DES 2019, p. 28).

If criteria are measures by which standards are judged, then the standard set in this thesis is care, not as Heidegger might have framed it, but by those committed to the education of pupils in their care. The criteria offered here are diverse but arise naturally from within the

field of education and supernaturally from the religious commitment of those following a Roman Catholic vision and ethos. The crux of the Christian standard is Christ himself, though not all members can be expected to accept this; this is part of the reason why care for those with *infirmitas*, whether bodily, mental or spiritual, is a profoundly human response in and of itself, and why it offers the central thematic for that sort of pedagogics that any BoM may be inspired to communicate. It does not contradict nor is contradicted by commitment to Christian theological positions, though for those who hold the latter the *imago Christi*, image of Christ, presents a distinctly personal model by which to be guided.

Engaging with education in a Heideggerian mode, though refracted through an Arendtian prism, may turn our questions back on ourselves; in looking at the pupil and her or his needs I am asked what am I going to do. Max van Manen calls this the 'phenomenology of practice' (van Manen 2007, p. 13). To care makes an opportune beginning.

When asking people to become members of BoMs is account taken of people who model disability? That is, are potential members who have disabilities, whether physical, emotional and behavioural, learning or intellectual invited onto BoMs? To be what one proclaims is usually the most potent of all witness.

One of the named policy areas in the electronic database for SEN in Ireland suggesting 'a paucity of local evidence to draw on' is 'leadership for inclusion' (Travers *et al*. 2018, p. 100). In addition, I would suggest that management, vision and ethos, religious education, and religious education for pupils with SEN also need to be encouraged as research areas worthy of being categorized.

In its cohort study released in November 2018, 'Growing Up in Ireland' did not indicate any data collection in relation to these children's religious or spiritual attitudes (ESRI 2018). This should be remedied in future data-gathering. To begin to explore how to do this would alone constitute a major contribution to educational debate.

Another resource, different from the process here, though inspired, perhaps, by a desire to serve the education of pupils throughout Europe, is the Strategic Education Governance Policy Toolkit (OECD 2019). Working across state boundaries, with its multi-cultural and multi-religious dimensions, would enrich education for all.

Central to indoctrination is Wareham's notion that it creates in the indoctrinated pupil 'a barrier [between beliefs an individual holds and the evidence or reasons she has for holding them] that causes her to be closed-minded' (Wareham 2019, p. 44). All of us, not least

BoM members, need to be vigilant lest we be afflicted with the beliefs-evidence dichotomy.

Quite apart from already mentioned limitations in conducting this project, legitimate fears have been raised concerning 'the role of cognitive processes involved in reading and processing [Likert] items', that is, a difference in how participants read and researchers process 'may influence the observed statistics, distort measures, or even create artificial numbers in cases in which respondents do not really hold any attitudes' (Arnulf, Larsen, Martinsen & Egeland 2018, p. 2346). Our research has to be self-critical, too.

BoMs are less bound to the rules and more open to what works in their situation than a Department of Education can (afford to) be. Responding locally – whether by self-criticism or recognition for what worked – helps attune the mind for keener oversight, more directed management, more attention to those needing it the most. Rather than conceptual frameworks, this concerns the development of skill-sets that wed ideas and praxis, as George Steiner avers: 'All human constructs are combinatorial. Which is simply to say that they are *arte-facts* made up of a selection and combination of pre-existing elements.' (Steiner 2001, p. 116).

Finally, while the dissertation is directed towards Roman Catholic BoMs, it is clear that I do not presume that membership comprises practising Roman Catholics and nor should it. This is exemplified in the dissertation's dialogue-partners who include thinkers not identified with religion as such let alone Christianity, let alone Roman Catholicism. The future of BoMs will increasingly encompass different perspectives on spirituality and religion; this can be part of pupils' opportunity for growth in religious experience; so long, then, as those for whose sake education is overseen by BoMs have their fundamental educational rights vindicated by the same BoMs, so long will dialogue and encounter between believers in the human remain fruitful for well-being and personal growth. If this is true for Roman Catholic BoMs, I suggest that, *ceteris paribus*, the BoMs of other Christian traditions and religions may gain insights from the present work.

5.6 CONCLUSION

Having begun this project on an unexamined topic, which was seen to grow in importance as the ramifications of BoMs as bridging structures between society and the individual person, between state bureaucracy and the local school, between those with a SEN and those without, between members who claim their Christianity and those who are secular, etc. Personhood as marked by shared beingness, fallenness, communication, relationality

and communion became transformed through the prism of Christian discipleship to reveal something transcendent, whether conceived as a Heideggerian glimmering or a religious epiphany. Being a member of a BoM was expressed variously, in evocative terms, adhoc-like, for further consideration amidst mutual dialogue, in order to expand what at present is a legal entity enshrined in state law and answerable to its patron, again juridically conceived, into something more visionary and responsive to the needs of vulnerable pupils, in particular.

Comments from the respondents to Questionnaire 2 were diverse and engaged, even though there was often partial agreement not only on SEN but also on RE. This evidence of educational social actors having different voices and opinions requires a larger forum for articulation. In a real sense, we have here evidence of a need for a 'republic of discourse' (Arendt). Even though these sentiments are noble one may rightly expect problems: Kant described humans as made '*aus so krummen Holze*', from crooked timber, such that they can never produce something wholly straight (cited in Berlin 2013, p. viii). Those who are '[p]itched past pitch of grief' ('No worse, there is none' by Gerard Manley Hopkins) by the suffering of others, incorporated into themselves, may agree with Gillibrand when he writes of Jesus as 'the solvent of traditional moral distinctions' (2010, p. 54): punishing as having a disability is it is not some crude divine punishment or even a test; we make God too much in our likeness and Christian educators need to look at what Jesus reveals of God.

In sum, this chapter has a) named some of the possible findings from my research; while some are more tentative, others are more robust because they arise from evidence-based research and the scholarly combats of experts or from the lived experiences of educators/members of BoMs; b) sought to offer a vision of what BoMs might look like when they engage with the fruitful issues that the research has either shown or provoked in one person's thinking; c) commended a few issues for the development of further scholarship on RE for pupils with SEN. Following from this, the final chapter offers a more extensive, if succinct, résumé of individual recommendations that arose through the research.

Chapter 6 MANAGING A PEDAGOGICS OF CARE

> *Following Heidegger's reasoning, we can assume that when I look at a tree, it is not just a tree but it is the tree I am looking at, different from any other tree. Indeed, the way we look at it affects our sensitivity, our emotions, our personal experiences as regards nature, our predispositions to read the 'divine' in all of creation. It is up to us catechists to rediscover this unity in our own persons.* (Fr Jean Mesny, SPRED 2013)

6.1 INTRODUCTION

All research is limited, whether by external circumstances, characteristics of the researcher, or both. Teaching has its limitations, too. So has learning, and so has living. In spite of these realities, there is also the reality of what one actually achieves, in spite of, though sometimes because of, limitations. Meeting with interviewees, reading the attitudes and comments of participants to the questionnaire, studying with a cohort of engaged educationalists, all have furnished proof of commitment to educating pupils with SEN. Acceptance of the education-challenge, especially when presented within a RE framework, has been provocative, for participants and researcher alike; if what provokes induces debate, then the present research-project will have done some good; then, it remains to make the research available to as many BoMs as possible. If the previous chapter has been modelled on the metaphor of bridge-building, the task ahead is metaphorically horticultural: how do we grow care for pupils with SEN? The implicit argument in this chapter forms a capstone to the whole research-project: religious education presents a natural educational context for growing the care of pupils, all pupils, of course, but led by care of pupils with special needs.

Because the pupil-plants before the teacher-horticulturalist are individual and unique, their care does not come pre-packaged, as it were. Each school, led by its BoM, has to search and struggle to find its response(s) to pupils with SEN. Because of this fluidity of address and content, efforts – debates, disagreements, experiments – to effect due care for such pupils is properly called a pedagogics. Also, as many teachers echoing Oscar Hammerstein II, attest, the roles of pupil and teacher are often reversed and 'if you become a teacher, by your pupils you'll be taught'.

First, I present a review and recapitulation of points raised by this research, with recommendations for future actions and research (6.2). Second, a vison for BoMs is offered, not prescriptively but suggestively (6.3).

6.2 RECAPITULATION

I begin by listing some individual points that were made by others or arose through the research (6.2.1). I then summarize key implications of the project (6.2.2).

6.2.1 Summary of individual points

In the following points I summarize some key points that have arisen from this research-project. These points are addressed to teachers, especially teachers of RE, and other BoM members. However, they also are addressed to those who currently determine BoMs, viz. Patrons and Trustees, the DES and others, such as Colleges of Education, that are key stakeholders in Irish education. Though it did not arise through the research, the legal parameters to change in BoMs would have to be attended to lest they fall foul of legislation and/or constitutional principles.

- RE for pupils with SEN is not really reflected on in Irish primary education

- RE for pupils with SEN is important for those pupils in terms of their inclusion with others pupils not deemed to have SEN

- RE for pupils with SEN adds a qualitative dimension to RE as such

- RE for pupils with SEN is important as a principal condition of education

- (RE) teachers need assistance in furthering the aim of educating pupils with SEN

- all pupils need to be included in the process of educating pupils with SEN

- BoMs need to be alerted to their responsibility to pupils with SEN in particular

- BoMs need training to exercise their responsibility better and extend what they can offer to their school from an extra-school base

- Patrons need to provide adequate and ongoing training to BoMs

- debate between educational stakeholders needs to be fostered

- further research should be commissioned – by DES, Patron, Trustees, Colleges of Education – on helping BoMs fulfil their mandate

- have liaison with constitutional lawyers and others in the legal profession to see if

a) adequate regard is given by the state and its institutions to the religious education of all children and especially pupils in primary schools, but more especially those with impairments, and

b) if not, how it may be remedied

- have liaison with Colleges of Education on the formative and induction phases of initial teacher education (ITE) and theorize how cooperation with BoMs might be effected.

Recommendations that might enhance the learning experience, especially in RE, for pupils with SEN would include:

- that the DES examine – by a process not dissimilar to the research undertaken here – the views of other major stakeholders in the RE of all pupils, of whom those with SEN are a subset, in relation to the constitutional requirements of the state to vindicate the RE rights of pupils who may be presumed to always be severely restricted in making personal decisions in relation to the religious and spiritual aspects of their lives

- that Colleges of Education incorporate modules on the RE of pupils with SEN into at least four of the sixteen mandatory elements of their ITE programmes, to wit, inclusive education, parents in education, differentiation, and legislation relevant to school and classroom (Teaching Council 2017, p. 14); that is to say, integrate the topic into the conceptual framework (see Teaching Council 2017, p. 9) of colleges of education

- that in their induction for new primary school managers the CPSMA construct a module on the RE of pupils with SEN

- that in their induction programme for members of BoMs the education secretariat of the Archdiocese of Dublin construct a module on the RE of pupils with SEN

- that the CPSMA liaise with other denominational and other religious educational agents to ascertain if there are commonalities between them and, in relation to contrasts and oppositions, how these throw light on the fundamental issue of religious education for pupils with special needs.

6.2.2 Implications

Critique

I have learnt first the value of making statistical thinking and theological thinking begin to work together for the benefit of each. Mutuality of correlations are to be found in their cooperation and arrogance of either may be restrained by the effort to work with the other.

Other implications involve better processes for engaging in research such as this so that participation is maximized. Modern media has a host of links to people and while I am a neophyte in this world it is 'the way to go'.

Prospectives and future research

Behind the rhetoric of academia is the goal of more knowledge and, if nothing else, the present research points to a rich vein of intellectual gain. Research patterned on mine is possible in any other diocese in the country, with or without extension into other denominations or religions, in awareness of the pitfalls and of the benefits to be reaped if successful.

A useful agenda is offered by Winzer, though her context is the USA, for special education in the twenty-first century:

> *As special education enters the new millennium, the profession must specifically confront a plethora of unresolved and new problems. The varied issues include, but are not restricted to providing effective teacher training and preventing teacher attrition; mediating research practices; resolving the research to practice disconnect; solving the dilemma of universally accepted definitions; finding appropriate and nonstigmatizing terminology; discovering ways to accommodate culturally and linguistically different special learners; responding to the needs for clearer definition and assesment processes; managing the increasing role of instructional and assistive technology; practicing early identification and early intervention; improving transition programs for adolescents; providing access to the general curricula for students with special needs; assessing accountability and high-stakes testing; and understating globalization and the philosophy of inclusion…* (Winzer 2009, pp. 219-220)

Re-membering the BoM

My main interlocutors were members of BoMs. Sometimes, visible in certain responses, misunderstanding arose as to my purpose. This becomes a springboard for face-to-face dialogue and debate: items that were clear to me were anything but to others and meanings

quite different from my own were drawn and imputed. This is what makes human research so fascinating. Singular behaviour by thousands of amoeba or viruses, for instance, may be expected by the epidemiologist, but not by the social statistician of human behaviours. Though we may all be placed on the bell-curve on a vast Gaussian plane, islands of meaning and nuggets of individuality are everywhere apparent. Indeed, trying to figure out why this one case differs from the rest is often what brings about the quest to learn more. This is a personal view of a BoM member. Hopefully, others will feel that their views are worthy of being aired and brought into an Arendtean agora of ideas for the purpose of voicing difference and achieving consent.

What is at risk of being lost in debates about interventions to address pupils' needs is awareness of the role of character-building and moral formation. Especially, in the case of pupils with SEN, the centrality of role-modelling by the teacher is vital (Zagzebski 2017; Vos 2018).

If role-modelling is so vital from teachers, then BoMs must be alert to their own modelling for teachers. What are the 'moral messages that have exemplary meaning' that we send out (Vos 2018, p.18)? Do they generate a mimetic desire that will produce a corresponding virtue? When we reflect on the actions of others, whether saint, hero or sage, and come to admire them, then they are role-models for us and we emulate them (Zagzebski 2017, pp. 9, 20). We must heed Vos's warning, too, lest, in following someone we consider an ideal of what personhood is, we fall into the trap of following the person rather than the ideal she or he presents; for, what may happen when any human reveals feet of clay? The recent case of Jean Vanier's sexual misconduct is a case in point. What we admire, Zagzebski cautions too, may not be admirable (2017, p. 33); her emphasis on reflection is essential. Virtue, as a strength of one's inner and positive character, rather than imitation of action, occurs when the latter has been internalized, and one acts for the same of the value that the action represents, rather than, say, out of pleasure or other motive that may also accompany the act; a child does something good because a reward may attend on it, a child becomes good in doing the action because it is the right thing to do even though its doing may cost, not gain, something. Honesty, truth-telling, being generous are our sometimes acts; they become our virtues when we absorb them into our being, which is to say, when they become essential to our identity. Care-giving, I argue, is another such virtue. Zagzebski's exemplars of saintly, heroic and wise virtue, are all presented in varying aspects of caring-for-others, in terms of behaviour and motive, each a virtuous disposition.

Supporting the BoM

The EU, through the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education, states that 'support for school and system leaders' is a crucial theme in raising achievement among all learners (2012, pp. 20-22). It might be worth investigating how BoMs might benefit from a scheme designed to realize such support. A model that is distributive rather than top-down would assist BoMs greatly even as it draws other international stakeholders in education into debates on leadership.

With hints from many sources I end by extolling a shared experience of learning, not just with fellow members but with teachers and the whole school community in service to pupils who require our best efforts to be made for their sake. I seek to appeal to those who do not share the Christian faith (or my version of it) perhaps even more than to those who perhaps already, and far more faithfully and better, share a view of divine pedagogy (see Rylaarsdam 2014; Goizueta & Matovina 2017). Eschewing the arrogance of prescriptive encomiums on this or that pedagogical strategy, accommodation or experiment I hope that BoMs will face their educational challenges in a dialogic and mutually enriching strategy that does not profess to have the answer before the problem is explicated.

Benefitting pupils with SEN

Perhaps the singular benefit of this research is the awareness it has raised in a number of educator-members of BoMs. Even without formal and developed programmes stemming from such awareness, pupils with SEN will benefit from their educators' deeper alertness – attunement – to their individual needs.

Because RE is the subject par excellence in which one's most inner core is activated and one's essential belief-system excited and made manifest, RE is most naturally aligned with the leading-out of what lies *in nuce* within each pupil.

BoMs, whose fundamental and driving attitude is directed to such vulnerable groups as pupils with SEN and who encourage and support their teachers in bringing out what is best, and for the best personally and socially in those (and all) pupils, are, in Pauline imagery, embodying Christ by growing a pedagogics of care.

6.3 BoMs in Light of a Pedagogics of Care

In the previous chapter I drew out certain implications from this research-project. These were couched in caveats and in conditions of restriction due to the limitations imposed by

what occurred during the process itself. However, it behoves us now to present an overarching statement of what a pedagogics of care might realistically entail were a Board of Management to engage more fully with it. There is no presumption that BoMs are failing to show care; indeed, there is clear evidence that they – no less than the legal process that gave legislative effect to BoMs, the Education Act 1998 – repeatedly do, often in straitened circumstances. There is, nevertheless, a desire to offer, from what members, the literature and reflection have contributed, a theologically enriched vision for BoMs in the future, from which some, a few or perhaps but one idea may be taken for further investigation and application.

To order this final reflection *à la* Heidegger and *à la* Christian theology on a pedagogics of care I take five theological tropes as encapsulating core dimensions of this pedagogics. First, we look at 'the call' to be a member of a BoM, perhaps especially as a teacher (6.3.1). Second, that call shows itself forth and becomes present-in-the-world, a phenomenon, by the various members of the BoM and their particular way of acting, especially towards pupils with SEN (6.3.2). Third, this acting of the BoM shows forth for the world no less than for the pupil herself or himself what is in the pupil that can be brought forth (6.3.3). Fourth, the fulfilling of one's role *qua* BoM member manifests what is in them as educators (6.3.4). Finally, in that self-manifestation a life of dedication and service is celebrated (6.3.5).

6.3.1 Called forth – *vocatio*

The teacher-caring of pupils is a vocation in which an individual is called forth to the task of *educatio*. It is a task that properly belongs to parenting by which I mean not so much a duty that if fundamentally found in parents, though it is that, but rather a quality of being-in-the-world that distinguishes parent-like nurturing of a pupil in order to develop and bring to maturity that pupil's character and inner worth.

BoM members, whether teachers of not, experience a calling-forth by the very way they are made members. They come from a diversity of backgrounds, with different skill-sets, in order to extend the range of voices that may be heard on behalf of education. BoM members, united in a common vision, help define the uniqueness that a BoM plays in a local community. In theological terms, members are set aside for a special role, as children are baptized or priests and kings anointed to fulfil a holy task; the holiness shares in the 'wonder and awe' that people have before God as they become deeply aware of their inherent unworthiness to be instruments of a divine *paideia*. They share in John's baptism

of Jesus in the river Jordan, for John was an instrument of God's will though he well knew his own unworthiness (Mathew 3:13-17).

6.3.2 Shown forth – *phainōmenon*

I have made much of Heideggerian analysis of human being in the world because it alerts us, in a singularly significant way, to the need to pay attention to what lies before us and really see what presents itself before us, not as spectacle but as deepest reality. It hints at the attention a teacher must pay to pupils with SEN, to what she or he can learn from pupils with SEN, to what level of care is called for in response.

In a hermeneutics of retrieval we examine the nature of care itself and conceptualize it, examine how a new model of care might evolve, and attempt to establish a metrics of care that any pedagogics should be trying to set in train. Care is a response to society's disabled members; it responds appropriately even where reciprocity cannot be expected, e.g. pupils with severe ASD. It has to be open to changing circumstances, hence my stress on adhocracy and attunement. Hollenberger's model of care and the theological insight that Rahner gives of childhood *coram Deo* communicate, in their several ways, how caring is a communal process: people are interdependent and give trust to and receive it from others in turn, which seems not unlike the way God is portrayed as acting towards us; sometimes, a special event brings about a revelation of 'the heart of the matter'. Putting care at the heart of the *polis*, the civilized community, becomes an imperative when so much political energy is sometimes put into avoidance of care. Here, too, members will be called to a profound humility, not unlike Young as she learnt from Arthur and came to recognize him as ministering to her and others (see Teal 2014), or like Jesus in answering his mother' request (John 2:1-12). Before God, Augustine taught, each one is made a question to oneself (*Confessions* X.33.50); and the answer, for a Christian, is not ours to give.

6.3.3 Showing forth – *ereignis*

Education is a showing, by hand, of the way forward; it is marked by clarity of purpose, the *modus operandi* of teachers. BoM members, with diversity and variety of talents and skills, grow in knowledge of one another in order to demonstrate or 'enown' their care for pupils. They develop communicative structures so that no one is 'left out of the loop' and are aware of the necessity to have and share different viewpoints so that decision-making emerges from the communicative process – itself convergent and consensually arrived at – as a more or less natural outcome. From self-reliance expressed in a trusting environment mutual reliance will tend to predominate and, from individual viewpoints, a shared

commitment to the education of pupils with (and without) SEN will be fostered. The leader will distribute her or his leadership as a *primus inter pares*, as one coming to serve.

In the event of meeting the challenge of a pupil with SEN, a BoM member who follows the way of Christ comes to see something of the reality of Christ already there, here and now, in the pupil. This showing forth occurs in the gospels when Jesus, feeling compassion for the hungry crowd makes present God's bounty in the feeding of the multitude (Luke 9:12-17).

6.3.4 Attuned adhocracies – *epiphaneia*

Multiple manifestations of BoMs may be expected to emerge as individual ones engage with their context or 'local realities' in the construction of pedagogies attuned to those realities. The religious use of 'epiphany' refers to manifestatory moments of Jesus's divinity in the Gospels, e.g. the titular visit of the three magi to the 'stable' at Bethlehem (Matthew 2:1-12), the baptism in the Jordan (Matthew 3:13-17, //Mark 1:9-11 and Luke 3:21-23), the transfiguration on Mt Tabor (Matthew 17:1-8, //Mark 9:2-8 and Luke 9:28-36). Also, it is possible to interpret other occasions as revelatory of a mystery, e.g. Peter's shedding of tears after betraying Jesus and the cock crowing three times (John 18:13-27). The more secular use of 'epiphany' indicates moments of rare clarity, when the surface is lit by a certain revelatory light and meaning is disclosed. Both James Joyce in *Dubliners* and Emmanuel Lévinas in describing the response that the face of another evokes from me employ 'epiphany' to capture these revelatory moments of truth-disclosure. As each evangelist and each writer used 'epiphany' for specific purposes, so each BoM can be considered to make its own form of a caring pedagogy in light of the issues that mark their school. There will be a degree of adhocracy, therefore, even as BoMs try to attune themselves to the educational needs that present themselves.

Of course, there must also be support-structures for new-styled BoMs. What form and degree of complexity they take will depend on decisions taken by members. Nevertheless, suggestions can be made from the many bodies that interact with education, and external and professional advisory groups to BoMs should be considered, e.g. home-school-community liaison teacher (HSCL), local parent of local pupil with SEN, local public representative, local secondary school counsellor, teacher with responsibility for RE; these would be tasked with offering expert advice to the local BoM on the care of pupils in the school. Within BoMs, patronal, school, parental and community representations could be tasked with linking national and local imperatives for the educational advancement of pupils, with particular attention to those with SEN as they help to focus the BoM's work.

Other stakeholders, e.g. local DES Inspector, Parents' Association, Parish Team, Student Council, teacher with responsibility for RE, the SENCO, local College of Education representative could be tasked with designing, implementing and supporting BoM initiatives. More widely, there are 'interested parties', such as DES, Mater CAMHS, NEPS, Patron, and Túsla, who can be tasked with liaising with BoM on the educational care of pupils.

6.3.5 Service – *diakonia*

Concerning specific needs, care will demand craft or skill in dealing with them, as Richard Sennett makes clear; he warns, too, lest people become obsessive in their crafting of good for others: 'the relentless pursuit of excellence as a badge of distinction' can lead to feelings of superiority, not diaconal service, social isolation and disconnection that are the enemy of what this project wishes to validate (see Sennett 2009, p. 245). Best practice should be aligned with identification skills to ameliorate both risks and pupils' SEN. While communications between pupil, parents/guardians, teachers, professionals and BoM members have to be organized, a vision of what is best for each pupil in her or his situation is maintained by BoMs; so, practices of review and safeguarding, as well as continual professional development (CPD), for teaching staff and for members, should be promoted.

Essential to delivery of care is how it is evaluated. How does a BoM measure its service of care? What yardstick can it employ? At a minimal level, policies of safety and risk-reduction, health and well-being, action-delivery on diagnosed conditions, etc. have their own measures built in: either this place or action is safe or it isn't, these foods are healthy or not, that temperature-check indicates intervention or not, etc. At another level, different educational initiatives and experiments that have been locally constructed (or adapted) and adopted may be recorded so that their delivery can be accounted for and assessed. However, the level that evaluates a BoM is different in substance from these. More nebulous, it is no less important in the education of pupils with and without SEN. True care will be expressed in the planning, delivery and assessment of the education that this school provides: is education that is appropriate being provided, are pupils cared for in body, spirit and mind, i.e. holistically and integrally, is one pupil included as all others are, is each pupil seen-and-heard as individual, are expectations of pupils modelled for them, are actions characterized by willingness to experiment and be elastic enough to engage with unusual circumstances of individual pupils, etc.? I suggest that whatever model a BoM creates of and for itself should arise consensually, that decisions emerge through a logics of rational debate that constructs assent rather than are imposed, and that members

actively pursue what they deem to be optimal for all. Such ideals have to be incarnated, of course, and therein lies the rub! In the world and as a *mensura gratiae*, nonetheless, the BoM does not have to be right all the time, though it does have to act rightly and it has to have its eye fixed on the right.

Indeed, local networking is key to effective planning and practice so a wider networking will be necessary if a more stable, nationwide approach to management is to be constructed. Inspiration may be taken from a context of great divisiveness, Sri Lanka. A Sri Lankan word *tulana*, with a common heritage in Pali and Sanskrit, is used by Aloysius Pieris SJ to name his research centre that is devoted to Christian and Buddhist source material: because it means 'discernment, weighing things up, consideration or discerning action' (from *tuleti* in Pali: to weigh, examine, compare, match, equal), it is used by Pieris for the bringing together of diverse voices and positions, in divided communities, for common action. The BoM's identity might, therefore, be labelled as tulana, though I would add, with Pierre Hadot, that the mastery of oneself, *askēsis*, transforms the self spiritually (2002) in a way that parallels Aristotle's development of virtue by contemplation (*theōria*), for active service and contemplation do not have to be seen as agonistic, let alone antagonistic.

Also, as and when success is seen, it should be celebrated and thanks rendered. Implied here is the notion that a BoM has a thanksgiving or eu-charistic quality. That a member is called to serve these pupils in this community in this time and place, though at times onerous, is a cause for joy; the privileged person recognizes the gift that has been offered; the undoubted duty transmogrifies into accepted willing service as the gift works change in the member; and, for the Christian, the body of Christ, perhaps vulnerable and beaten, becomes 'really present' and thus transforms service into sharing. Though the synoptic gospels of Mathew, Mark and Luke have clear accounts of the institution of the Eucharist (Matthew 26:26-29, //Mark 14:22-25 and Luke 22:14-20), as does Paul who 'handed on' the tradition he 'had received' (1 Corinthians 11:23-26), that of John does not. Instead, the Johannine Jesus extensively preaches the bread of life (John 13-17; note also John 6:55-56) and, at the moment when the gospel account would be expected to recount the institution of the Eucharist, he kneels down and washes the feet of the disciples; for John, Jesus's presencing of himself for his community is expressed in service (John 13:1-17); here, Jesus portrays himself as 'lord and master', but in order that his disciples may emulate his service: 'I have set an example for you, that you should do as I have done for you' (John 13:15). The BoM member, who is in Christian discipleship, is enjoined to be of

service to the pupils in her or his care precisely because it is a making present of Jesus's care for others.

6.4 CODA

Primarily, it is the work that a BoM does that sets it apart. Linking societal developments and preserving traditions of worth, the BoM acts cohesively for the education of the pupils in its care. How the members of BoMs act itself becomes a bellwether for education. In the uniqueness of their care for the most vulnerable of their pupils they distinguish themselves as transformers, for the good, of those pupils. By extension, then, and recognizing the unique needs of individual pupils, especially of those with SEN, BoM members become defined less by oversight and quasi-judicial, legal responsibilities and more by their acting from a consciously ethical and chosen attitude of care. What they model as care becomes in turn the generative principle or engine of their school's teaching. The school becomes a laboratory whose pedagogy gives effect to its pedagogics of care.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

DCU Research Ethics Committee Approval

Ollscoil Chathair Bhaile Átha Cliath
Dublin City University

DCU

Prof Gerry McNamara
School of Education Studies

23rd June 2016

REC Reference: DCUREC/2016/091

Proposal Title: Attitudes and Perspectives of Members of Boards of Management of Roman Catholic Primary Schools in the Archdiocese of Dublin to the Religious Education of Pupils with Special Educational Needs

Applicant(s): Prof Gerry McNamara & Mr John O'Grady

Dear Gerry,

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,

Dónal O'Mathúna

Dr Dónal O'Mathúna
Chairperson
DCU Research Ethics Committee

DCU
Research & Innovation

Taighde & Nuálaíocht Tacaíocht
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APPENDIX B

PLAIN LANGUAGE STATEMENT

PLAIN LANGUAGE STATEMENT

Name of Researcher: John O'Grady   Contact: john.ogrady8@mail.dcu.ie

Name of Principal Investigators:

Dr Gareth Byrne   Contact: gareth.byrne@dcu.ie

Prof Gerry McNamara   Contact: gerry.mcnamara@dcu.ie

This is a research survey, conducted under the auspices of Mater Dei Institute of Education (MDI) and Dublin City University (DCU), and forms part of a doctoral programme. It has been approved for use by the Research Ethics Committee of DCU.

The 1998 Education Act establishes the duty of Boards of Management (BOM) to 'manage the school on behalf of the patron and for the benefit of the students and their parents and to provide or cause to be provided an appropriate education for each student' (#15). The present questionnaire, directed to Members of BOMs of Roman Catholic primary schools in the Archdiocese of Dublin, seeks to gather data on the attitudes of members of BOMs to religion and religious education, especially that of pupils with special needs. This is a topic of interest to many, perhaps especially decision-makers, as it is under-researched. That BOMs were newly constituted in December 2015 makes this survey opportune and appropriate. The research seeks to benefit BOMs in their providing for appropriate educational opportunities for pupils with special needs.

The notion of 'special (educational) needs' or SEN is highly complex. Some needs are relatively common and others, though rare, are severe; other needs arise from a mixture of common and rare conditions. Here, 'special needs' is left vague deliberately; it includes pupils who
- perform at or below the 10th percentile in standardized tests
- have moderate as well as severe and profound needs such as deafness, blindness, emotional and behavioural disturbance, autistic spectrum disorder, speech and language difficulties.

This research is part of an inadequate but developing response within society to the needs of certain young citizens as they engage with formal schooling. The specific context is the religious and theological response to the personhood of a child, particularly one with special needs.

As a respondent, you are asked for your permission to engage in this research in the knowledge that you may withdraw without penalty at any later point up to submission. First, your views and attitudes (as presently held and keeping your school in mind) are sought. Subsequently and within a couple of months, I intend to

send a summary of the findings from the survey to your Board. These might form the basis of a reflection process; in any event, you are free to engage with them or not. Approximately six months later, I will issue a follow-up survey, which will again be totally anonymous. Second, I ask for volunteers, too, who are willing to be interviewed. Not all who volunteer will be interviewed as my aim is to meet with members from different school profiles. The conversations will be sound-recorded. They will be anonymous, with all identifiable information removed. The results can be consulted in the subsequent thesis.

Original data, whether from surveys or interviews, will be used anonymously in any published research; they will be retained by the Researcher in password protected files on a private computer, and available only to him and his directors; they will be retained only as long as University regulations demand and then will be destroyed by the Researcher in accordance with regulations.

In participating, there are no foreseeable risks beyond everyday living. Should you require further information, please contact either myself, at john.ogrady8@mail.dcu.ie, Dr Gareth Byrne at gareth.byrne@dcu.ie, Professor Gerry McNamara, at gerry.mcnamara@dcu.ie, or the Research Ethics Committee of the University at rec@dcu.ie.

Please complete the survey as clearly and honestly as you can, without reflecting too long on your answers. There are no right and wrong answers. What you write is completely private and confidential: NO INFORMATION THAT IDENTIFIES YOU OR YOUR SCHOOL IS GATHERED.

The survey will take 20-30 minutes to complete.

In addition to the feedback that I offer, and as a carrot to encourage the necessary response rate, I will donate €500 to charity for each set (or part thereof) of 1000 responses. The money will be shared equally between the Irish Wheelchair Association and Sunshine House.

By completing this online survey you are agreeing to participate in it and allowing your data to form part of the aggregated whole.

Please use my email address - john.ogrady8@mail.dcu.ie - to contact me directly if you consent to being interviewed. (Please note that if you merely noted your consent in your response to the survey I have no way of identifying you.)

Is oth liom a scríobh nach bhfuil leagan Gaelach le fáil. Más mian leat do thráchtanna a scríobh as Gaeilge beidh fáilte is fiche romhat é sin a dhéanamh.

Thank you for your time and consideration and for taking the trouble to read this. Beir bua is beannacht.

Signature: John O'Grady   Date: 1st November 2016

APPENDIX C

LETTER TO PRINCIPALS AND CHAIRS OF BOMS

The following is the email message accompanying the sending of a Google Forms link to Principals and Chairs of BoMs of primary schools in the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Dublin; the link led directly to Questionnaire 1 (see Appendix E).

Date of sending: 11 November 2016

Content:

Dear Principal/Chair of Board,

Below is a link to a survey-questionnaire that is part of a doctoral programme I am on in Mater Dei Institute and Dublin City University. It seeks the attitudes of Members of Boards of Management of Roman Catholic Primary Schools in the Archdiocese of Dublin to the religious education of pupils with special educational needs.

This topic is most important for our schools and I hope that any discussion my survey may engender will be to the benefit of pupils with special needs.

To encourage as many Members of BOMs as possible to agree to be surveyed I will donate €500 for each set of 1,000 responses (or part thereof) to charity (details within the survey).

The survey is completely anonymous and no reply can be identified.

I hope that you will encourage your fellow BOM Members to partake by forwarding this email to them and asking them to complete it; at the end, the form will be automatically returned to me.

Please contact me at john.ogrady8@mail.dcu.ie if you would like any further clarification.

Finally, I wish to record my gratitude to Mons. Dan O'Connor who has facilitated this email to you but not compromised your email-address in doing so.

Le gach dea-ghuí,

John O'Grady

(researcher, learning support teacher, BOM member)

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW AND CONSENT FORM

INTERVIEW

Interviewee: _____   **Place: _____**   **Date: /   /2017**

Q.1 My role on the BOM is:	**Q.2** I am currently
its Chairperson	principal
its Secretary	patron's nominee
its Treasurer	teachers' representative
ordinary Member	parents' representative
other: _____	community representative

Q.3 I have been a Member of a BOM prior to December 2015	**Q.4** I am Male ☐ Female☐
Yes ☐ No ☐	**Q.5** I am Married ☐ Single ☐
If Yes,	In Religious Life ☐
for 4 years or less for 21-24 years	**Q.6** My age is
for 5-8 years for 25-28 years	under 20 50-54
for 9-12 years for 29-32 years	20-24 55-59
for 13-16 years for 33-36 years	25-29 60-64
for 17-20 years for 37+ years	30-34 65-69
[*all are inclusive*]	35-39 70-74
	40-44 75-79
	45-49 80+

Q.7 I have a close relative(s) with a special educational need Yes ☐   No ☐

Q.8 I am a parent   Yes ☐   No ☐

Q.9 School Profile: *Please tick all that apply*

☐ Girls only	☐ Inner-city
☐ Boys only	☐ Suburban
☐ Mixed	☐ Rural
☐ Junior Infants to 6th Class (full vertical)	☐ Non-DEIS
☐ Junior school (Junior Infants to 2nd Class) only	☐ DEIS Band 1
☐ Senior school (3rd to 6th Class) only	☐ DEIS Band 2
☐ Special School	☐ DEIS Band 3
☐ With a Special Unit(s)	

Please indicate if you are willing to be interviewed: Yes ☐   No ☐

The survey, questionnaire and interview have been explained: Yes ☐   No ☐

Signed: _____   **Dated**:   /   /2017

APPENDIX E

QUESTIONNAIRE 1

Survey of Board of Management (BOM) Members of Roman Catholic Primary Schools in the Archdiocese of Dublin on Attitudes and Perspectives to the Religious Education of Pupils with Special Educational Needs

PLAIN LANGUAGE STATEMENT

Name of Researcher: John O'Grady Contact: john.ogrady8@mail.dcu.ie

Name of Principal Investigators:

Dr Gareth Byrne Contact: gareth.byrne@dcu.ie

Prof Gerry McNamara Contact: gerry.mcnamara@dcu.ie

This is a research survey, conducted under the auspices of Mater Dei Institute of Education (MDI) and Dublin City University (DCU), and forms part of a doctoral programme. It has been approved for use by the Research Ethics Committee of DCU.

The 1998 Education Act establishes the duty of Boards of Management (BOM) to 'manage the school on behalf of the patron and for the benefit of the students and their parents and to provide or cause to be provided an appropriate education for each student' (#15). The present questionnaire, directed to Members of BOMs of Roman Catholic primary schools in the Archdiocese of Dublin, seeks to gather data on the attitudes of members of BOMs to religion and religious education, especially that of pupils with special needs. This is a topic of interest to many, perhaps especially decision-makers, as it is under-researched. That BOMs were newly constituted in December 2015 makes this survey opportune and appropriate. The research seeks to benefit BOMs in their providing for appropriate educational opportunities for pupils with special needs.

The notion of 'special (educational) needs' or SEN is highly complex. Some needs are relatively common and others, though rare, are severe; other needs arise from a mixture of common and rare conditions. Here, 'special needs' is left vague deliberately; it includes pupils who

> • perform at or below the 10th percentile in standardized tests

> • have moderate as well as severe and profound needs such as deafness, blindness, emotional and behavioural disturbance, autistic spectrum disorder, speech and language difficulties.

This research is part of an inadequate but developing response within society to the needs of certain young citizens as they engage with formal schooling. The specific context is the religious and theological response to the personhood of a child, particularly one with special needs.

As a respondent, you are asked for your permission to engage in this research in the knowledge that you may withdraw without penalty at any later point up to submission. First, your views and attitudes (as presently held

and keeping your school in mind) are sought. Subsequently and within a couple of months, I intend to send a summary of the findings from the survey to your Board. These might form the basis of a reflection process; in any event, you are free to engage with them or not. Approximately six months later, I will issue a follow-up survey, which will again be totally anonymous. Second, I ask for volunteers, too, who are willing to be interviewed. Not all who volunteer will be interviewed as my aim is to meet with members from different school profiles. The conversations will be sound-recorded. They will be anonymous, with all identifiable information removed. The results can be consulted in the subsequent thesis.

Original data, whether from surveys or interviews, will be used anonymously in any published research; they will be retained by the Researcher in password protected files on a private computer, and available only to him and his directors; they will be retained only as long as University regulations demand and then will be destroyed by the Researcher in accordance with regulations.

In participating, there are no foreseeable risks beyond everyday living. Should you require further information, please contact either myself, at john.ogrady8@mail.dcu.ie, Dr Gareth Byrne at gareth.byrne@dcu.ie, Professor Gerry McNamara, at gerry.mcnamara@dcu.ie, or the Research Ethics Committee of the University at rec@dcu.ie.

Please complete the survey as clearly and honestly as you can, without reflecting too long on your answers. There are no right and wrong answers. What you write is completely private and confidential: NO INFORMATION THAT IDENTIFIES YOU OR YOUR SCHOOL IS GATHERED.

The survey will take 20-30 minutes to complete.

In addition to the feedback that I offer, and as a carrot to encourage the necessary response rate, I will donate €500 to charity for each set (or part thereof) of 1000 responses. The money will be shared equally between the Irish Wheelchair Association and Sunshine House.

By completing this online survey you are agreeing to participate in it and allowing your data to form part of the aggregated whole.

Please use my email address - john.ogrady8@mail.dcu.ie - to contact me directly if you consent to being interviewed. (Please note that if you merely noted your consent in your response to the survey I have no way of identifying you.)

Is oth liom a scríobh nach bhfuil leagan Gaelach le fáil. Más mian leat do thráchtanna a scríobh as Gaeilge beidh fáilte is fiche romhat é sin a dhéanamh.

Thank you for your time and consideration and for taking the trouble to read this. Beir bua is beannacht.

Signature: John O'Grady   Date: 1st November 2016

*Required

Research conducted in Mater Dei Institute under DCU

E-3

Background Information

In this section you are asked to supply data on yourself, your role on the Board of Management, and on your school.

1. **Q.1 My role on the BOM is: ***

   Mark only one oval.

   its Chairperson

   its Secretary

   its Treasurer

   ordinary Member

   Other:

2. **Q.2 I am currently ***

   Mark only one oval.

   principal

   patron's nominee

   teachers' representative

   parents' representative

   community representative

3. **Q.3 I have been a Member of a BOM prior to December 2015 ***

   Mark only one oval.

   No *Skip to question 5.*

   Yes *Skip to question 4.*

4. **Q. 3a I have been a Member of a BOM**

   Mark only one oval.

   for 4 years or less

   for 5-8 years

   for 9-12 years

   for 13-16 years

   for 17-20 years

   for 21-24 years

   for 25-28 years

   for 29-32 years

   for 33-36 years

   for 37 or more years

Skip to question 5.

from Section 2 or Section 3

5. **Q.4 I am**   *Mark only one oval.*

female

male

Other:

6. **Q.5 I am**   *Mark only one oval.*

married

single

in Religious Life

Other:

7. **Q.6 My age is** *Mark only one oval.*

under 20

20-24

25-29

30-34

35-39

40-44

45-49

50-54

55-59

60-64

65-69

70-74

75-79

80 or more

8. **Q.7 I have a close relative(s) who has a special educational need** *Mark only one oval.*

No

Yes

9. **Q.8 I am a parent** * *Mark only one oval.*

No

Yes

Profile of the School

The following sub-sections seek to build up a profile of the school of which you are a BOM Member.

10. **Q.9a My school's Profile (please tick all that apply)** *Mark only one oval.*

girls only

boys only

mixed (both boys and girls)

11. **Q.9b (Profile contd.)** * *Mark only one oval.*

inner city

suburban

rural

Classes in the School

Please distinguish between a primary school that caters for pupils from Junior Infants to 6th class, or one that caters only for pupils from Junior Infants to 2nd Class, or one that caters only for pupils from 3rd Class to 6th Class. If your school has a different configuration of class-groups, please use the Other option.

12. **Q.9c (Profile contd.) *** *Mark only one oval.*

Junior Infants to 6th Class (all classes or 'full vertical')

Junior Infants to 2nd Class only ('Junior school')

3rd Class to 6th Class only ('Senior school')

Other

Special Class, Special School

Some schools have a special class(es), with increased resources, to enable children who have significant educational needs to be included in an 'environment with children who do not have such needs' (The Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act, 2004). In certain circumstances, a school may be composed of special classes and is called a Special School. Disabilities that may require the provision of a special class include, for instance, specific speech and language difficulties, dyslexia, and autistic spectrum disorder.

13. **Q.9d (Profile contd.) *** *Mark only one oval.*

Mainstream School (no Special Class)

Mainstream School with a Special Class(es)

Special School

Other:

DEIS

A DEIS school is part of the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools initiative of the Department of Education and Skills. This initiative seeks to give additional support and resources to schools with significant levels of disadvantage. Three levels of disadvantage are recognized, Band 1 being the most severe.

14. **Q.9e (Profile contd.) *** *Mark only one oval.*

non-DEIS

DEIS Band 1 (urban)

DEIS Band 2 (urban)

DEIS Band 3 (rural)

Attitudes to Religion, Religious Education, Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Teaching Religious Education (RE) to Pupils with SEN

Please respond to each statement in the following 4 sections by choosing the degree of response that best characterizes how you feel about that statement, from 1 (disagree strongly) to 5 (strongly agree), with the intervening stages of 2 (disagree), 3 (neither agree nor disagree), and 4 (agree). There is space at the end of each section for any additional comment you would like to make. Please answer from within the context of the school of which you are a BOM member (whether or not you are a parent or teacher) and without over-deliberating on your response.

It is your attitude to the statements that is important; the statements are not intended to reflect any one person's views

.

"I describe myself as"

These statements relate to your understanding of yourself in relation to religion/spirituality/God/the divine and special educational needs. If you consider a No or Yes as appropriate for some/most/all of the following then choose 'disagree strongly' or 'strongly agree' respectively. On the other hand, if you may prefer to answer on a scale.

15. **a. a practicing Roman Catholic**   *Mark only one oval.*

1	2	3	4	5
⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭

disagree strongly   strongly agree

16. **b. a Christian**   *Mark only one oval.*

1	2	3	4	5
⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭

disagree strongly   strongly agree

17. **c. a non-Christian**   *Mark only one oval.*

1	2	3	4	5
⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭

disagree strongly   strongly agree

18. **d. a spiritual person**   *Mark only one oval.*

1	2	3	4	5
⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭

disagree strongly   strongly agree

19. **e. non-religious**   *Mark only one oval.*

1	2	3	4	5
⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭

disagree strongly   strongly agree

20. **f. more spiritual than religious**   *Mark only one oval.*

1	2	3	4	5

disagree strongly   strongly agree

21. **g. someone who reads the Bible regularly**   *Mark only one oval.*

1	2	3	4	5

disagree strongly   strongly agree

22. **h. someone who prays regularly**   *Mark only one oval.*

1	2	3	4	5

disagree strongly   strongly agree

23. **i. someone professionally interested in special needs**   *Mark only one oval.*

1	2	3	4	5

disagree strongly   strongly agree

24. **j. someone personally interested in special needs**   *Mark only one oval.*

1	2	3	4	5

disagree strongly   strongly agree

25. **k. well-informed about religion**   *Mark only one oval.*

1	2	3	4	5

disagree strongly   strongly agree

26. **l. well-informed about special needs**   *Mark only one oval.*

1	2	3	4	5

disagree strongly   strongly agree

27. **m. having a special need(s) of my own**   *Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5
	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭

disagree strongly   strongly agree

28. **n. particularly concerned for the human development of pupils with special needs**

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5
	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭

disagree strongly   strongly agree

29. **o. being uninterested in religious education**   *Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5
	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭

disagree strongly   strongly agree

30. **p. committed to the religious education of all pupils**

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5
	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭

disagree strongly   strongly agree

31. **q. answerable for pupils' spiritual development**   *Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5
	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭

disagree strongly   strongly agree

32. **r. answerable for pupils' religious development**   *Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5
	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭

disagree strongly   strongly agree

33. **s. answerable for pupils' moral development**

Mark only one oval.

1	2	3	4	5
◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

disagree strongly   strongly agree

34. **t. answerable for pupils' intellectual development**

Mark only one oval.

1	2	3	4	5
◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

disagree strongly   strongly agree

35. **u. someone loved and gifted by God** *Mark only one oval.*

1	2	3	4	5
◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

disagree strongly   strongly agree

36. **v. guided by the Bible in my daily relationships with other**

Mark only one oval.

1	2	3	4	5
◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

disagree strongly   strongly agree

37. **Additional comment**

Religious Education These statements relate to attitudes to the subject of religious education

(RE). You are free to regard RE more widely than as a discrete educational subject.

38. **1. Religious schools play an important role in society**

Mark only one oval.

1	2	3	4	5
◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

disagree strongly   strongly agree

39. **2. Parents have the primary role in teaching religion to their child(ren)**

Mark only one oval.

1	2	3	4	5
◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

disagree strongly   strongly agree

40. **3. The purpose of RE is to educate children in the Roman Catholic tradition and its beliefs and practices** *Mark only one oval.*

1	2	3	4	5
◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

disagree strongly   strongly agree

41. **4. RE is an integral part of the education of children**

Mark only one oval.

1	2	3	4	5
◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

disagree strongly   strongly agree

42. **5. RE does more harm than good**

Mark only one oval.

1	2	3	4	5
◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

disagree strongly   strongly agree

43. **6. The Holy Spirit is the one who strengthens belief**

Mark only one oval.

1	2	3	4	5
◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

disagree strongly   strongly agree

44. **7. RE forms pupils in the virtues and values of Jesus**

Mark only one oval.

1	2	3	4	5
◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

disagree strongly   strongly agree

45. **8. RE contributes to the building of character in pupils**   *Mark only one oval.*

1	2	3	4	5
◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

disagree strongly   strongly agree

46. **9. Our school must welcome and fully respect pupils of other faiths and none**

Mark only one oval.

1	2	3	4	5
◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

disagree strongly   strongly agree

47. **10. Sacramental preparation (e.g. First Communion, Confirmation) is best done in the parish (rather than the school)** *Mark only one oval.*

1	2	3	4	5
◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

disagree strongly   strongly agree

48. **11. The Bible alone is sufficient for the faith development of pupils**

Mark only one oval.

1	2	3	4	5
◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

disagree strongly   strongly agree

49. **12. In RE, pupils should learn about other religions**

Mark only one oval.

1	2	3	4	5
◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

disagree strongly   strongly agree

50. **13. The state should not interfere with the spiritual dimension of pupils' lives**

Mark only one oval.

1	2	3	4	5
◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

disagree strongly   strongly agree

E-14

51. **14. Jesus Christ is our means to understanding God** *Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5
	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

disagree strongly   strongly agree

52. **15. Teaching ecology has no place in RE** *Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5
	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

disagree strongly   strongly agree

53. **16. Religion demands that an option be made for the poor and disadvantaged** *Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5
	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

disagree strongly   strongly agree

54. **17. Our school should be completely secular** *Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5
	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

disagree strongly   strongly agree

55. **Additional comment**

Pupils with Special Needs (SEN)

These statements relate to your attitudes to pupils with special educational needs (SEN). Here 'special needs' and 'special educational needs' are used interchangeably and irrespective of the degree of need(s).

56. **18. Parents have to struggle greatly to secure rights for their child(ren) with special needs**

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5
	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

disagree strongly   strongly agree

57. **19. Having special needs is a gift from God**

Mark only one oval.

1	2	3	4	5

disagree strongly   strongly agree

58. **20. Mainstream pupils benefit from the presence of pupils with special needs in class with them**

Mark only one oval.

1	2	3	4	5

disagree strongly   strongly agree

59. **21. Our school has a shared vision for the inclusion of pupils with special needs**

Mark only one oval.

1	2	3	4	5

disagree strongly   strongly agree

60. **22. Pupils with special needs do not have enough attention paid to them**

Mark only one oval.

1	2	3	4	5

disagree strongly   strongly agree

61. **23. Pupils with special needs have the same rights to full education as those without such needs**

Mark only one oval.

1	2	3	4	5

disagree strongly   strongly agree

62. **24. The state resources well the education of pupils with special needs**

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
disagree strongly	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	strongly agree

63. **25. The parish prioritizes pupils with special needs**

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
disagree strongly	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	strongly agree

64. **26. Any pupil may experience a special need(s) at some stage of their education** *Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
disagree strongly	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	strongly agree

65. **27. Inclusion of all pupils benefits pupils with special needs more than those without such needs**
Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
disagree strongly	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	strongly agree

66. **28. Parents think pupils with special needs slow down their own child(ren)'s progress** *Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
disagree strongly	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	strongly agree

67. **29. Pupils with special needs are fully part of society** *Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
disagree strongly	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	strongly agree

68. **30. It is my duty to see that appropriate education is given to pupils with special needs** *Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5
	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

disagree strongly   strongly agree

69. **Additional comment**

Pupils with special needs (SEN) in RE classes These statements

relate to your attitudes to the education of pupils with special needs

70. **31. RE should teach about the giftedness of pupils with special needs**

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5
	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

disagree strongly   strongly agree

71. **32. Having pupils with special needs in mainstream RE helps other pupils' understanding of creation**
Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5
	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

disagree strongly   strongly agree

72. **33. RE should teach that Jesus is someone with special needs**

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5
	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

disagree strongly   strongly agree

73. **34. Pupils with special needs challenge our religious ideas of what human perfection is**

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5
	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

disagree strongly   strongly agree

74. **35. Our school does not cater well for the religious education of pupils with special needs**

Mark only one oval.

	1		2	3	4	5
	⬭		⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭

disagree strongly   strongly agree

75. **36. Parents have the primary role in teaching religion to their child(ren) with special needs**

Mark only one oval.

1	2	3	4	5
⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭

disagree strongly   strongly agree

76. **37. Religion should teach that pupils with special needs manifest God's presence in the world**

Mark only one oval.

1	2	3	4	5
⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭

disagree strongly   strongly agree

77. **38. The parish leadership team must be part of religious education for pupils with special needs**

Mark only one oval.

1	2	3	4	5
⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭

disagree strongly   strongly agree

78. **39. Pupils with special needs make Jesus present in RE**

Mark only one oval.

1	2	3	4	5
⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭

disagree strongly   strongly agree

79. **40. Our school welcomes pupils with minor special needs more than those with severe needs**

Mark only one oval.

1	2	3	4	5
⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭

disagree strongly   strongly agree

80. **41. RE for pupils with special needs is not a civic right**

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5
	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭

disagree strongly   strongly agree

81. **42. RE is more real when pupils with special needs participate**

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5
	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭

disagree strongly   strongly agree

82. **Additional comment**

E-20

APPENDIX F

FEEDBACK SENT TO BOMS

Content:

INTRODUCTION

First, a most sincere thank you to you and the other Members who took the time and made the effort to complete the Survey. Thanks also to Msgr. Dan O'Connor, Aisling Clarke and Declan Lawlor who permitted and helped distribute the Survey to Members of primary school Boards of Management. As promised, all responses are completely anonymous and no person or school can be identified. I hope you find the following data interesting.

Second, 63 survey-responses were made by the end of 2016; another one was made in January 2017 (not included below; the survey-catchment is about 3,000 individual Members).

Third, the Survey will remain open in case anyone else is encouraged to bolster the research by adding to the database (Ctrl + click the link below). It would make the survey-statements more robust and serviceable to Boards and their discussions of the religious education of pupils with special needs. Recent statements from the Department are adding a piquant urgency to such discussions, I feel.

Fourth, please consider doing an interview with me! (Contact email address below)

Fifth, €250 have been sent, in the name of BoM Members, to each of: the Irish Wheelchair Association and Sunshine House.

Finally, another, shorter survey will issue towards the end of this academic year to see if the data have contributed (or not); my academic research will focus on this.

Go raibh míle maith agat as bheith páirteach san suirbhé seo! Gan dabht, tá sé tábhachtach domsa; ach, tá súil agam go bhfuil sé ar a laghad úsáideach duitse freisin.

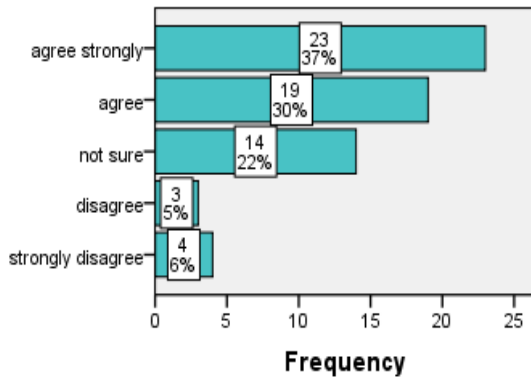Le gach dea-ghuí is beannacht,

John O'Grady

Contact: john.ogrady8@mail.dcu.ie
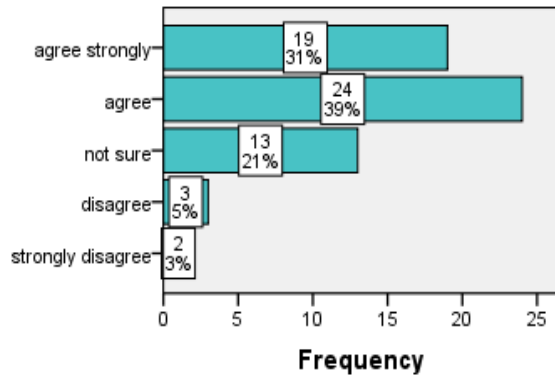
Original Survey link (new respondents only):

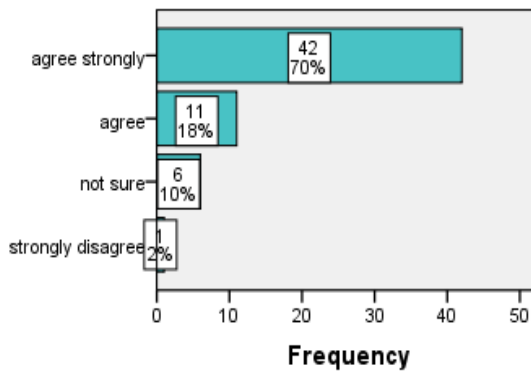### BOM SURVEY LINK, USING GOOGLE FORMS

PERSONAL ATTITUDES

a. a practicing Roman Catholic

Response	Frequency	%
agree strongly	23	37%
agree	19	30%
not sure	14	22%
disagree	3	5%
strongly disagree	4	6%

b. a Christian

Response	Frequency	%
agree strongly	42	70%
agree	11	18%
not sure	6	10%
strongly disagree	1	2%

c. a non-Christian

Response	Frequency	%
agree strongly	1	2%
not sure	1	2%
disagree	4	7%
strongly disagree	50	89%

d. a spiritual person

Response	Frequency	%
agree strongly	19	31%
agree	24	39%
not sure	13	21%
disagree	3	5%
strongly disagree	2	3%

e. non-religious

Response	Frequency	%
agree strongly	6	10%
not sure	11	19%
disagree	10	17%
strongly disagree	31	53%

f. more spiritual than religious

Response	Frequency	%
agree strongly	10	17%
agree	19	32%
not sure	23	38%
disagree	3	5%
strongly disagree	5	8%

g. someone who reads the Bible regularly

j. someone personally interested in special needs
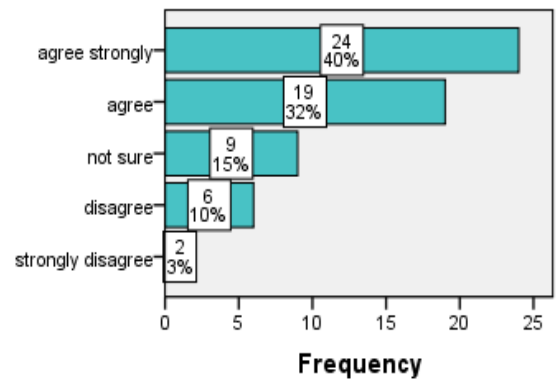
h. someone who prays regularly
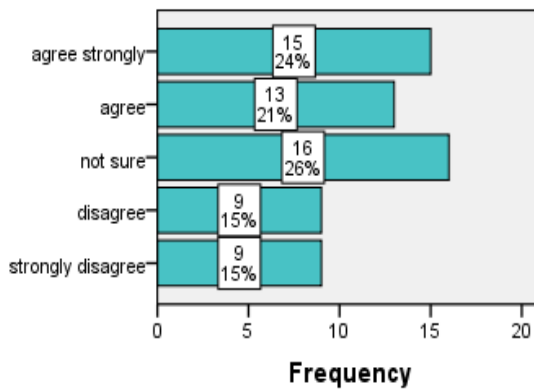
k. well-informed about religion
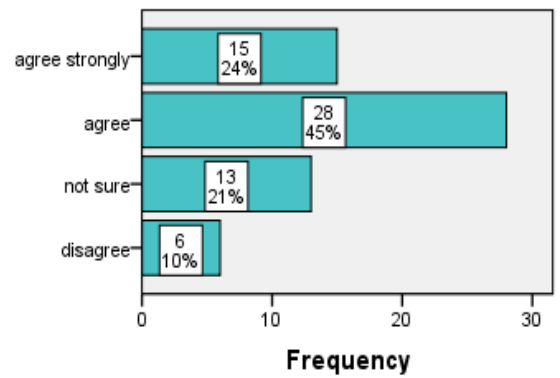
i. someone professionally interested in special needs
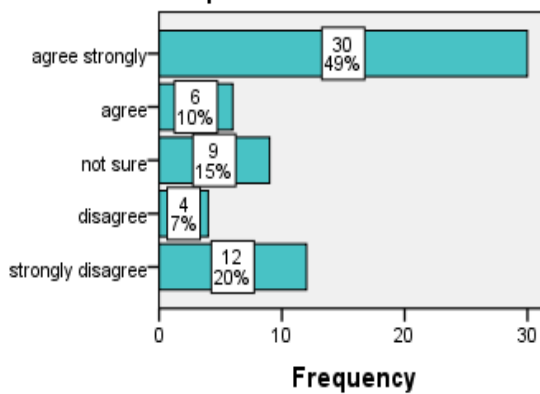
l. well-informed about special needs
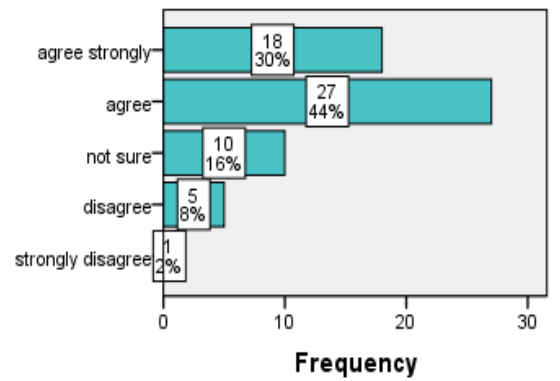
m. having a special need(s) of my own
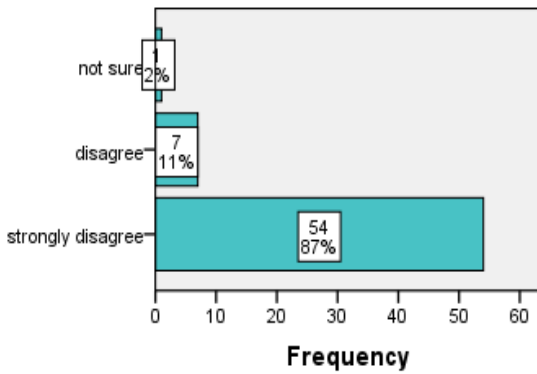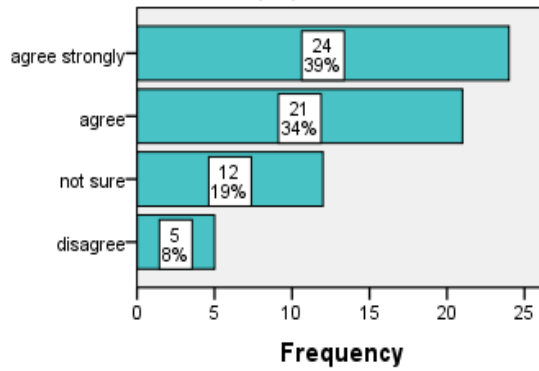
not sure: 1, 2%
disagree: 7, 11%
strongly disagree: 54, 87%

Frequency

p. committed to the religious education of all pupils

agree strongly: 24, 39%
agree: 21, 34%
not sure: 12, 19%
disagree: 5, 8%

Frequency

n. particularly concerned for the human development of pupils with special needs

agree strongly: 35, 57%
agree: 18, 30%
not sure: 5, 8%
disagree: 1, 2%
strongly disagree: 2, 3%

Frequency

q. answerable for pupils' spiritual development

agree strongly: 13, 22%
agree: 19, 32%
not sure: 19, 32%
disagree: 8, 13%
strongly disagree: 1, 2%

Frequency

o. being uninterested in religious education

agree strongly: 3, 5%
agree: 4, 7%
not sure: 12, 20%
disagree: 13, 21%
strongly disagree: 29, 48%

Frequency
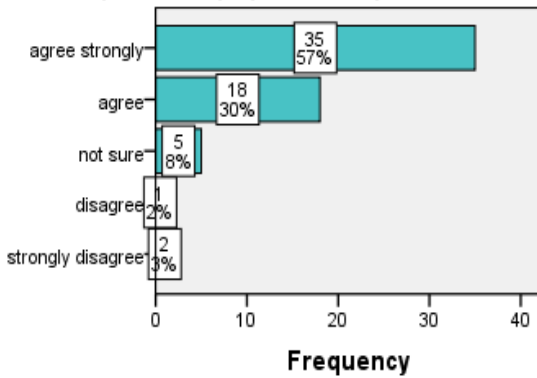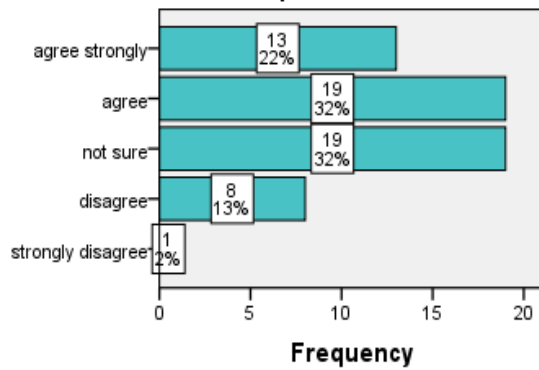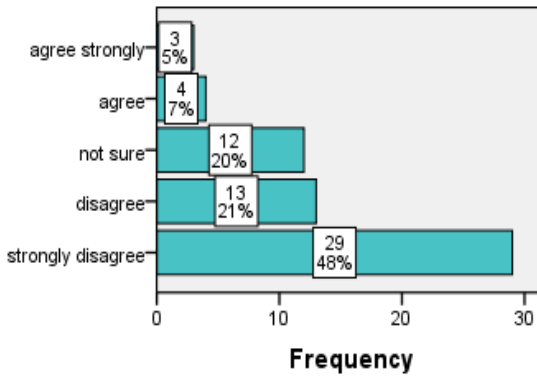
r. answerable for pupils's religious development
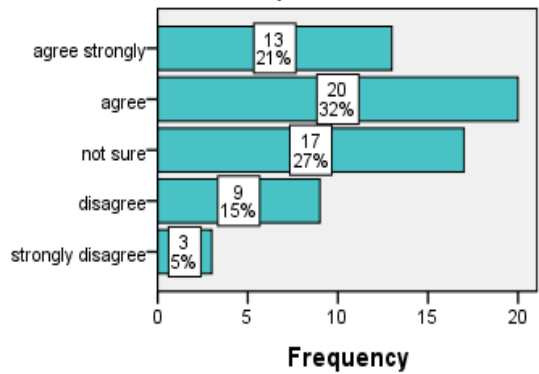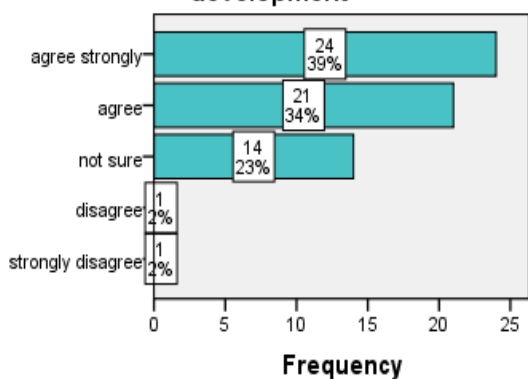
agree strongly: 13, 21%
agree: 20, 32%
not sure: 17, 27%
disagree: 9, 15%
strongly disagree: 3, 5%

Frequency

s. answerable for pupils' moral development

Response	Frequency	Percent
agree strongly	24	39%
agree	21	34%
not sure	14	23%
disagree	1	2%
strongly disagree	1	2%

v. guided by the Bible in my daily relationships with other

Response	Frequency	Percent
agree strongly	7	12%
agree	11	18%
not sure	19	32%
disagree	11	18%
strongly disagree	12	20%

t. answerable for pupils' intellectual development

Response	Frequency	Percent
agree strongly	30	48%
agree	20	32%
not sure	9	15%
disagree	2	3%
strongly disagree	1	2%

u. someone loved and gifted by God

Response	Frequency	Percent
agree strongly	32	52%
agree	12	19%
not sure	14	23%
disagree	1	2%
strongly disagree	3	5%

F-5
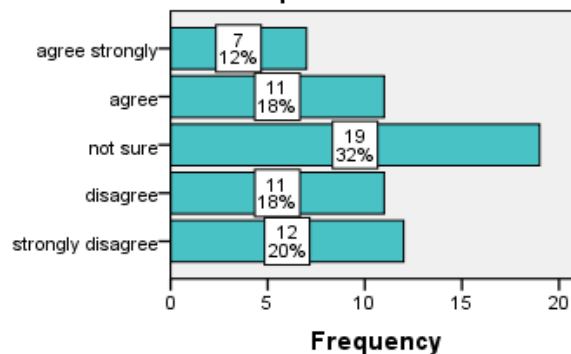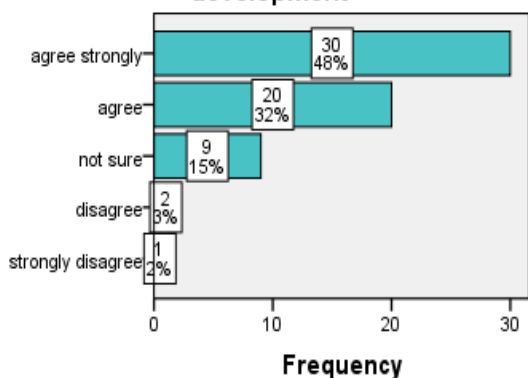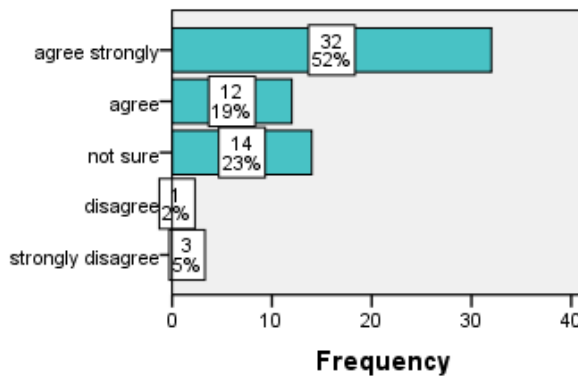
ATTITUDES TO RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

1. Religious schools play an important role in society

Response	Frequency	Percent
agree strongly	28	44%
agree	24	38%
not sure	8	13%
disagree	2	3%
strongly disagree	1	2%

2. Parents have the primary role in teaching religion to their child(ren)

Response	Frequency	Percent
agree strongly	40	63%
agree	12	19%
not sure	11	17%

3. The purpose of RE is to educate children in the Roman Catholic tradition and its beliefs and practices

Response	Frequency	Percent
agree strongly	14	22%
agree	25	40%
not sure	18	29%
disagree	4	6%
strongly disagree	2	3%

4. RE is an integral part of the education of children

Response	Frequency	Percent
agree strongly	18	29%
agree	30	48%
not sure	13	21%
disagree	2	3%

5. RE does more harm than good

Response	Frequency	Percent
agree	1	2%
not sure	6	10%
disagree	12	20%
strongly disagree	42	69%

6. The Holy Spirit is the one who strengthens belief

Response	Frequency	Percent
agree strongly	12	19%
agree	16	26%
not sure	20	32%
disagree	9	15%
strongly disagree	5	8%

F-6

7. RE forms pupils in the virtues and values of Jesus

Response	Frequency	Percent
agree strongly	18	29%
agree	23	37%
not sure	17	27%
disagree	2	3%
strongly disagree	2	3%

10. Sacramental preparation (e.g. First Communion, Confirmation) is best done in the parish (rather than the school)

Response	Frequency	Percent
agree strongly	17	28%
agree	12	20%
not sure	16	26%
disagree	12	20%
strongly disagree	4	7%

8. RE contributes to the building of character in pupils

Response	Frequency	Percent
agree strongly	24	39%
agree	20	32%
not sure	15	24%
disagree	3	5%

11. The Bible alone is sufficient for the faith development of pupils

Response	Frequency	Percent
agree	1	2%
not sure	8	13%
disagree	14	23%
strongly disagree	38	62%

9. Our school must welcome and fully respect pupils of other faiths and none

Response	Frequency	Percent
agree strongly	52	84%
agree	9	15%
not sure	1	2%

12. In RE, pupils should learn about other religions

Response	Frequency	Percent
agree strongly	40	65%
agree	15	24%
not sure	7	11%

13. The state should not interfere with the spiritual dimension of pupils' lives

	Frequency
agree strongly	20 (32%)
agree	12 (19%)
not sure	17 (27%)
disagree	10 (16%)
strongly disagree	3 (5%)

14. Jesus Christ is our means to understanding God

	Frequency
agree strongly	20 (33%)
agree	12 (20%)
not sure	21 (34%)
disagree	4 (7%)
strongly disagree	4 (7%)

15. Teaching ecology has no place in RE

	Frequency
agree strongly	1 (2%)
agree	2 (3%)
not sure	24 (39%)
disagree	11 (18%)
strongly disagree	24 (39%)

16. Religion demands that an option be made for the poor and disadvantaged

	Frequency
agree strongly	30 (48%)
agree	11 (18%)
not sure	20 (32%)
disagree	1 (2%)

17. Our school should be completely secular

	Frequency
agree strongly	4 (6%)
agree	2 (3%)
not sure	12 (19%)
disagree	12 (19%)
strongly disagree	32 (52%)

ATTITUDES TO SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS

18. Parents have to struggle greatly to secure rights for their child(ren) with special needs

agree strongly: 42 / 67%
agree: 17 / 27%
not sure: 4 / 6%

Frequency

21. Our school has a shared vision for the inclusion of pupils with special needs

agree strongly: 42 / 67%
agree: 15 / 24%
not sure: 6 / 10%

Frequency

19. Having special needs is a gift from God

agree strongly: 2 / 3%
agree: 4 / 6%
not sure: 19 / 30%
disagree: 12 / 19%
strongly disagree: 26 / 41%

Frequency

22. Pupils with special needs do not have enough attention paid to them

agree strongly: 10 / 16%
agree: 15 / 24%
not sure: 11 / 18%
disagree: 15 / 24%
strongly disagree: 11 / 18%

Frequency

20. Mainstream pupils benefit from the presence of pupils with special needs in class with them

agree strongly: 29 / 46%
agree: 25 / 40%
not sure: 8 / 13%
disagree: 1 / 2%

Frequency

23. Pupils with special needs have the same rights to full education as those without such needs

agree strongly: 55 / 87%
agree: 5 / 8%
not sure: 2 / 3%
disagree: 1 / 2%

Frequency

24. The state resources well the education of pupils with special needs

Frequency

Response	Frequency	Percent
agree strongly	2	3%
agree	2	3%
not sure	10	16%
disagree	18	29%
strongly disagree	31	49%

28. Parents think pupils with special needs slow down their own child(ren)'s progress

Frequency

Response	Frequency	Percent
agree strongly	3	5%
agree	20	32%
not sure	16	25%
disagree	12	19%
strongly disagree	12	19%

25. The parish prioritizes pupils with special needs

Frequency

Response	Frequency	Percent
agree strongly	4	6%
agree	3	5%
not sure	25	40%
disagree	15	24%
strongly disagree	16	25%

29. Pupils with special needs are fully part of society

Frequency

Response	Frequency	Percent
agree strongly	27	43%
agree	14	22%
not sure	7	11%
disagree	12	19%
strongly disagree	3	5%

26. Any pupil may experience a special need(s) at some stage of their education

Frequency

Response	Frequency	Percent
agree strongly	17	27%
agree	24	39%
not sure	13	21%
disagree	6	10%
strongly disagree	2	3%

30. It is my duty to see that appropriate education is given to pupils with special needs

Frequency

Response	Frequency	Percent
agree strongly	53	84%
agree	6	10%
not sure	2	3%
strongly disagree	2	3%

27. Inclusion of all pupils benefits pupils with special needs more than those without such needs

Frequency

Response	Frequency	Percent
agree strongly	11	18%
agree	15	24%
not sure	15	24%
disagree	10	16%
strongly disagree	11	18%

ATTITUDES TO SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

31. RE should teach about the giftedness of pupils with special needs

Response	Frequency	Percentage
agree strongly	22	35%
agree	16	25%
not sure	16	25%
disagree	4	6%
strongly disagree	5	8%

34. Pupils with special needs challenge our religious ideas of what human perfection is

Response	Frequency	Percentage
agree strongly	12	19%
agree	12	19%
not sure	16	25%
disagree	11	17%
strongly disagree	12	19%

32. Having pupils with special needs in mainstream RE helps other pupils' understanding of creation

Response	Frequency	Percentage
agree strongly	18	29%
agree	15	24%
not sure	15	24%
disagree	6	10%
strongly disagree	9	14%

35. Our school does not cater well for the religious education of pupils with special needs

Response	Frequency	Percentage
agree strongly	4	6%
agree	1	2%
not sure	14	23%
disagree	16	26%
strongly disagree	27	44%

33. RE should teach that Jesus is someone with special needs

Response	Frequency	Percentage
agree strongly	4	6%
agree	3	5%
not sure	29	46%
disagree	11	17%
strongly disagree	16	25%

36. Parents have the primary role in teaching religion to their child(ren) with special needs

Response	Frequency	Percentage
agree strongly	28	44%
agree	15	24%
not sure	13	21%
disagree	2	3%
strongly disagree	5	8%

37. Religion should teach that pupils with special needs manifest God's presence in the world

Response	Frequency	Percent
agree strongly	13	21%
agree	9	14%
not sure	21	33%
disagree	10	16%
strongly disagree	10	16%

41. RE for pupils with special needs is not a civic right

Response	Frequency	Percent
agree strongly	4	6%
agree	2	3%
not sure	15	24%
disagree	10	16%
strongly disagree	31	50%

38. The parish leadership team must be part of religious education for pupils with special needs

Response	Frequency	Percent
agree strongly	15	24%
agree	19	30%
not sure	19	30%
disagree	7	11%
strongly disagree	3	5%

42. RE is more real when pupils with special needs participate

Response	Frequency	Percent
agree strongly	18	29%
agree	13	21%
not sure	19	30%
disagree	5	8%
strongly disagree	8	13%

39. Pupils with special needs make Jesus present in RE

Response	Frequency	Percent
agree strongly	12	19%
agree	9	14%
not sure	22	35%
disagree	8	13%
strongly disagree	12	19%

40. Our school welcomes pupils with minor special needs more than those with severe needs

Response	Frequency	Percent
agree strongly	7	11%
agree	7	11%
not sure	11	18%
disagree	11	18%
strongly disagree	26	42%

Part 2 of Survey of Board of Management (BOM) Members of Roman Catholic Primary Schools in the Archdiocese of Dublin on Attitudes and Perspectives to the Religious Education of Pupils with Special Educational Needs

PLAIN LANGUAGE STATEMENT [unchanged from November 2016]

Name of Researcher: John O'Grady   Contact: john.ogrady8@mail.dcu.ie

Name of Principal Investigators: Dr Gareth Byrne   Contact: gareth.byrne@dcu.ie

                                               Prof Gerry McNamara   Contact: gerry.mcnamara@dcu.ie

This is a research survey, conducted under the auspices of Mater Dei Institute of Education (MDI) and Dublin City University (DCU), and forms part of a doctoral programme. It has been approved for use by the Research Ethics Committee of DCU.

The 1998 Education Act establishes the duty of Boards of Management (BOM) to 'manage the school on behalf of the patron and for the benefit of the students and their parents and to provide or cause to be provided an appropriate education for each student' (#15). The present questionnaire, directed to Members of BOMs of Roman Catholic primary schools in the Archdiocese of Dublin, seeks to gather data on the attitudes of members of BOMs to religion and religious education, especially that of pupils with special needs. This is a topic of interest to many, perhaps especially decision-makers, as it is under-researched. That BOMs were newly constituted in December 2015 makes this survey opportune and appropriate. The research seeks to benefit BOMs in their providing for appropriate educational opportunities for pupils with special needs.

The notion of 'special (educational) needs' or SEN is highly complex. Some needs are relatively common and others, though rare, are severe; other needs arise from a mixture of common and rare conditions. Here, 'special needs' is left vague deliberately; it includes pupils who
• perform at or below the 10th percentile in standardized tests
• have moderate as well as severe and profound needs such as deafness, blindness, emotional and behavioural disturbance, autistic spectrum disorder, speech and language difficulties.

This research is part of an inadequate but developing response within society to the needs of certain young citizens as they engage with formal schooling. The specific context is the religious and theological response to the personhood of a child, particularly one with special needs.

As a respondent, you are asked for your permission to engage in this research in the knowledge that you may withdraw without penalty at any later point up to submission. First, your views and attitudes (as presently held and keeping your school in mind) are sought. Subsequently and within a couple of months, I intend to send a summary of the findings from the survey to your Board. These might form the basis of a reflection process; in any event, you are free to engage with them or not. Approximately six months later, I will issue a follow-up survey, which will again be totally anonymous. Second, I ask for volunteers, too, who are willing to be interviewed. Not all who volunteer will be interviewed as my aim is to meet with members from different school profiles. The conversations will be sound-recorded. They will be anonymous, with all identifiable information removed. The results can be consulted in the subsequent thesis.

Original data, whether from surveys or interviews, will be used anonymously in any published research; they will be retained by the Researcher in password protected files on a private computer, and available only to him and his directors; they will be retained only as long as University regulations demand and then will be destroyed by the Researcher in accordance with regulations.

In participating, there are no foreseeable risks beyond everyday living. Should you require further information, please contact either myself, at john.ogrady8@mail.dcu.ie, Dr Gareth Byrne at gareth.byrne@dcu.ie, Professor Gerry McNamara, at gerry.mcnamara@dcu.ie, or the Research Ethics Committee of the University at rec@dcu.ie.

Please complete the survey as clearly and honestly as you can, without reflecting too long on your answers. There are no right and wrong answers. What you write is completely private and confidential: NO INFORMATION THAT IDENTIFIES YOU OR YOUR SCHOOL IS GATHERED.

The survey will take 20-30 minutes to complete.

In addition to the feedback that I offer, and as a carrot to encourage the necessary response rate, I will donate €500 to charity for each set (or part thereof) of 1000 responses. The money will be shared equally between the Irish Wheelchair Association and Sunshine House.

By completing this online survey you are agreeing to participate in it and allowing your data to form part of the aggregated whole.

Please use my email address - john.ogrady8@mail.dcu.ie - to contact me directly if you consent to being interviewed. (Please note that if you merely noted your consent in your response to the survey I have no way of identifying you.)

Is oth liom a scríobh nach bhfuil leagan Gaelach le fáil. Más mian leat do thráchtanna a scríobh as Gaeilge beidh fáilte is fiche romhat é sin a dhéanamh.

Thank you for your time and consideration and for taking the trouble to read this. Beir bua is beannacht.

Signature: John O'Grady   Date: 1st November 2016

* Required

Research conducted in Mater Dei Institute under DCU

Continuation from Questionnaire of November 2016

The First Questionnaire, sent out to Boards in November 2016, had a limited response: 63 by the end of year, with 5 more since the beginning of 2017. If you did not complete it at the time you may still do so. The following link will lead you to that First Questionnaire:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeLdcskFQ3IIgdmw-ku- VkUcriCNRi3yTzIUxLvDj0rR-2VRQ/viewform?c=0&w=1&usp=mail_form_link

1. **I filled in the first Questionnaire** * *Mark only one oval.*

>   Yes

>   No

2. **I am a member of a primary school BOM in the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Dublin** * *Mark only one oval.*

>   Yes

>   No

3. **I consent to be interviewed - here are my contact details:**

Filling in this Questionnaire

Thank you for reading this. I would greatly appreciate it if you would give your responses to the following statements. It should take 10-15 minutes to complete. Please respond to each of the following statements by choosing the response that best characterizes how you feel about that statement, from 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (disagree strongly). Please answer from within the context of your school and without over- deliberating on your response.

A. Relating to the February Feedback

The statements below refer to the feedback from the First Questionnaire (November 2016), which was sent out in February 2017. If you need to see this Feedback again it can be found at:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B052lLqo9SoiaGpJUHYxVE5xQTg/view? usp=sharing

4. **a) The responses to the First Questionnaire were generally accurate. ***

Mark only one oval.

1	2	3	4	5
◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

disagree   strongly
strongly   agree

5. **Please expand ***

6. **b) The informational feedback from the First Questionnaire helped me to reflect on the issue of the religious education of pupils with special educational needs. *** *Mark only one oval.*

1	2	3	4	5
◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

disagree   strongly
strongly   agree

7. **Please expand ***

8. **c) The informational feedback from the First Questionnaire helped our Board of Management (BOM) to reflect on the religious education of pupils with special educational needs. *** *Mark only one oval.*

1	2	3	4	5
◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

disagree   strongly
strongly   agree

9. **Please expand ***

10. **d) The Questionnaire, Feedback, etc. have helped me be a more responsible Member of my BOM.** ***** *Mark only one oval.*

1	2	3	4	5
◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

disagree   strongly
strongly   agree

11. **Please expand ***

B. Relating to Awareness

The statements below refer to Special Educational Needs (SEN), religious education (RE) and religious education for children with special educational needs.

12. **a) This process has made me more aware of the issue of SEN. ***

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭	
disagree strongly						strongly agree

13. **Please expand ***

14. **b) This process has made me more aware of the issue of religious education (RE). *** *Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭	
disagree strongly						strongly agree

15. **Please expand ***

16. **c) This process has made me more aware of the issue of the RE of pupils with SEN. *** *Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭	
disagree strongly						strongly agree

17. **Please expand ***

C. Relating to Sense of Responsibility on a BOM

18. **a) This process has made me reflect more on my responsibility to pupils with SEN. *** *Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5
	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
	disagree strongly				strongly agree

19. **Please expand ***

20. **b) This process has made me reflect more on my responsibility to the RE of pupils with SEN. ***
Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5
	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
	disagree strongly				strongly agree

21. **Please expand ***

D. Relating to Possible New Ways of thinking about the RE of pupils with(out) SEN

The following statements are intended to provoke different ways of thinking about what we teach to pupils in RE so that account is taken of those with special needs.

**22. a) To teach pupils that Jesus is the perfect one that we are to follow sets up too high a standard for children, especially those who have a disability. ***Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5
	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
	disagree strongly				strongly agree

23. Please expand *

24. b) To present Jesus as 'broken' would be helpful for pupils with SEN.

***Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5
	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
	disagree strongly				strongly agree

25. Please expand *

26. d) The State is the best placed body to develop the RE of pupils with SEN.
***Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5
	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
	disagree strongly				strongly agree

27. Please expand *

28. e) The Church is the best placed body to develop the RE of pupils with SEN.

*_Mark only one oval._

	1	2	3	4	5
	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
	disagree strongly				strongly agree

29. Please expand *

Skip to question 30.

E. Background Information

In this section you are asked to supply data on yourself, your role on the Board of Management, and on your school. If you completed the First Questionnaire you will have provided this information. However, I have no way of relating those initial responses to the questionnaire you are presently filling in. Hence, with your indulgence, I ask you to repeat the information below.

30. **Q.1 My role on the BOM is: ***_Mark only one oval._

     its Chairperson

     its Secretary

     its Treasurer

     ordinary Member

     Other:

31. **Q.2 I am currently ***_Mark only one oval._

     principal

     patron's nominee

     teachers' representative

     parents' representative

     community representative

32. **Q.3 I have been a Member of a BOM prior to December 2015 *** *Mark only one oval.*

No *Skip to question 34.*

Yes

33. **Q. 3a I have been a Member of a BOM *** *Mark only one oval.*

for 4 years or less

for 5-8 years

for 9-12 years

for 13-16 years

for 17-20 years

for 21-24 years

for 25-28 years

for 29-32 years

for 33-36 years

for 37 or more years

from Section 7 or Section 8

34. **Q.4 I am *** *Mark only one oval.*

female

male

Other:

35. **Q.5 I am *** *Mark only one oval.*

married

single

in Religious Life

Other:

36. **Q.6 My age is** *Mark only one oval.

under 20

20-24

25-29

30-34

35-39

40-44

45-49

50-54

55-59

60-64

65-69

70-74

75-79

80 or more

37. **Q.7 I have a close relative(s) who has a special educational need**
***Mark only one oval.

No

Yes

38. **Q.8 I am a parent *** *Mark only one oval.*

No

Yes

Profile of the School

The following sub-sections seek to build up a profile of the school of which you are a BOM Member.

39. **Q.9a My school's Profile (please tick all that apply) ***_Mark only one oval._

    girls only

    boys only

    mixed (both boys and girls)

40. **Q.9b (Profile contd.) *** _Mark only one oval._

    inner city

    suburban

    rural

Classes in the School

Please distinguish between a primary school that caters for pupils from Junior Infants to 6th class, or one that caters only for pupils from Junior Infants to 2nd Class, or one that caters only for pupils from 3rd Class to 6th Class. If your school has a different configuration of class-groups, please use the Other option.

41. **Q.9c (Profile contd.) ***_Mark only one oval._

    Junior Infants to 6th Class (all classes or 'full vertical')

    Junior Infants to 2nd Class only ('Junior school')

    3rd Class to 6th Class only ('Senior school')

    Other

Special Class, Special School

Some schools have a special class(es), with increased resources, to enable children who have significant educational needs to be included in an 'environment with children who do not have such needs' (The Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act, 2004). In certain circumstances, a school may be composed of special classes and is called a Special School. Disabilities that may require the provision of

a special class include, for instance, specific speech and language difficulties, dyslexia, and autistic spectrum disorder.

42. **Q.9d (Profile contd.) *** *Mark only one oval.*

Mainstream School (no Special Class)

Mainstream School with a Special Class(es)

Special School

Other:

DEIS

A DEIS school is part of the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools initiative of the Department of Education and Skills. This initiative seeks to give additional support and resources to schools with significant levels of disadvantage. Three levels of disadvantage are recognized, Band 1 being the most severe.

43. **Q.9e (Profile contd.)** * *Mark only one oval.*

       non-DEIS

       DEIS Band 1 (urban)

       DEIS Band 2 (urban)

       DEIS Band 3 (rural)

APPENDIX H

INTERVIEWS

The following table provides some basic background to the individual interviewees. All the references to names (and codes) have been altered in order to preserve anonymity and privacy.

Name	Date of Interview	Sex	BoM position	Status	Code
O_ E_	13-06-2017	F	Chair	lay	OE
N_ T_	16-06-2018	M	Principal	lay	NT
X_ D_	20-06-2017	M	Chair	priest	XD
D_ N_	22-06-2017	F	Teachers' appointee	lay	DN
E_ B_	04-10-2017	M	Principal	lay	EB
F_ R_	08-10-2017	M	Archbishop's appointee	priest	FR
E_ I_	06-12-2017	M	Principal	lay	EI
N_ O'M_	20-12-2017	F	Teachers' appointee	lay	NO

[The interviews, which once began below, were deleted from this published version of the dissertation.]

APPENDIX I

CODEBOOK – VARIABLES AND LABELS

SURVEY 1 – VARIABLES AND STATEMENTS ON QUESTIONNAIRE 1

Variable	sc*	Label
ID	1	ID
Q1_BOMrole	Q1	Role on the BOM
Q2_current	Q2	Representation on BOM
Q3_Member_preDec2015	Q3a	Membership of a BOM prior to December 2015
Q3_Mship_length	Q3b	Length of service on a BOM
Q4_gender	Q4	Gender
Q5_marital_status	Q5	Marital status
Q6_age	Q6	Age cohort
Q7_relativeSEN	Q7	Having a close relative with a SEN(s)
Q8_parent	Q8	Parental status
Q9a_sch_sex	Q9a	School gender
Q9b_sch_place	Q9b	School placement
Q9c_sch_classes	Q9c	School's Class cohorts
Q9d_sch_SpClass	Q9d	School's 'Special' status
Q9e_sch_DEIS	Q9e	School's 'DEIS' status
SDa_practicingRC	SDa	Practicing Roman Catholic
SDb_Christian	SDb	Christian
SDc_nonChristian	SDc	Non-Christian
SDd_spiritualperson	SDd	Spiritual person
SDe_nonreligious	SDe	Non-religious
SDf_morespiritualthanreligious	SDf	More spiritual than religious
SDg_Bibleregularly	SDg	Reads the Bible regularly
SDh_praysregularly	SDh	Prays regularly
SDi_SENprofessioninterest	SDi	Professionally interested in special needs
SDj_SENpersonalinterest	SDj	Personally interested in special needs
SDk_religion_informed	SDk	Well-informed about religion
SDl_SEN_informed	SDl	Well-informed about special needs

SDm_ownSEN	SDm	Has a special need(s)
SDn_PSEN_concerned_hdevelop	SDn	Particularly concerned for the human development of pupils with special needs
SDo_RE_uninterested	SDo	Uninterested in religious education
SDp_REallPs_committed	SDp	Committed to the religious education of all pupils
SDq_ans_Ps_spiritualdevel	SDq	Answerable for pupils' spiritual development
SDr_ans_Ps_religiousdevel	SDr	Answerable for pupils' religious development
SDs_ans_Ps_moraldevel	SDs	Answerable for pupils' moral development
SDt_ans_Ps_intellectualdevel	SDt	Answerable for pupils' intellectual development
SDu_lovedgiftedbyGod	SDu	Someone loved and gifted by God
SDv_Bible_guiderelationships	SDv	Guided by the Bible in daily relationships with others
SD_comment	SD	Additional comment
RE1_relschs_imp_role_society	R1	Religious schools play an important role in society
RE2_parents_primaryrole_religion_rchildren	R2	Parents have the primary role in teaching religion to their child(ren)
RE3_purposeRE_RCtrad	R3	The purpose of RE is to educate children in the Roman Catholic tradition and its beliefs and practices
RE4_RE_integral_educchildren	R4	RE is an integral part of the education of children
RE5_RE_doesmoreharm	R5	RE does more harm than good
RE6_HolySpiritstrengthensbelief	R6	The Holy Spirit is the one who strengthens belief
RE7_RE_formspupils_virtuesvaluesJesus	R7	RE forms pupils in the virtues and values of Jesus
RE8_RE_contributes_characterinpupils	R8	RE contributes to the building of character in pupils
RE9_sch_welcomerespectall	R9	Our school must welcome and fully respect pupils of other faiths and none
RE10_Sacraprep_bestparish	R10	Sacramental preparation (e.g. First Communion, Confirmation) is best done in the parish (rather than the school)
RE11_Bible_sufficient_faithdevelop	R11	The Bible alone is sufficient for the faith development of pupils
RE12_RE_learnaboutrreligions	R12	In RE, pupils should learn about other religions
RE13_State_notinterfere_spiritdimen	R13	The state should not interfere with the spiritual dimension of pupils' lives
RE14_JChr_ourunderstandGod	R14	Jesus Christ is our means to understanding God

RE15_ecology_notinRE	R15	Teaching ecology has no place in RE
RE16_Religion_OptPoorDisadvantaged	R16	Religion demands that an option be made for the poor and disadvantaged
RE17_oursch_secular	R17	Our school should be completely secular
RE_comment	R	Additional comment
SEN18_Parents_struggle_rights	S18	Parents have to struggle greatly to secure rights for their child(ren) with special needs
SEN19_specneed_giftGod	S19	Having special needs is a gift from God
SEN20_Mainstream_benefit_PSEN	S20	Mainstream pupils benefit from the presence of pupils with special needs in class with them
SEN21_Oursch_sharedvision_PSEN	S21	Our school has a shared vision for the inclusion of pupils with special needs
SEN22_PSEN_toomuchattention	S22	Pupils with special needs do not have enough attention paid to them
SEN23_PSEN_sameeducrights_nonSEN	S23	Pupils with special needs have the same rights to full education as those without such needs
SEN24_State_resources_PSEN	S24	The state resources well the education of pupils with special needs
SEN25_parish_prioritizes_PSEN	S25	The parish prioritizes pupils with special needs
SEN26_anyP_SEN_somestage	S26	Any pupil may experience a special need(s) at some stage of their education
SEN27_inclusion_benefitsPSENmore	S27	Inclusion of all pupils benefits pupils with special needs more than those without such needs
SEN28_parents_PSENslowtheirchildren	S28	Parents think pupils with special needs slow down their own child(ren)'s progress
SEN29_PSEN_fullysociety	S29	Pupils with special needs are fully part of society
SEN30_myduty_PSEN_appropreduc	S30	It is my duty to see that appropriate education is given to pupils with special needs
SEN_comment	S	Additional comment
SENRE31_REteach_giftedness_PSEN	SR31	RE should teach about the giftedness of pupils with special needs
SENRE32_PSENhelp_underst_creation	SR32	Having pupils with special needs in mainstream RE helps other pupils' understanding of creation
SENRE33_REteach_JwithSEN	SR33	RE should teach that Jesus is someone with special needs
SENRE34_PSEN_challengeus_hperfection	SR34	Pupils with special needs challenge our religious ideas of what human perfection is
SENRE35_oursch_poor_REofPSEN	SR35	Our school does not cater well for the religious education of pupils with special needs

SENRE36_parents_primrole_RE_childrenSEN	SR36	Parents have the primary role in teaching religion to their child(ren) with special needs
SENRE37_RE_PSEN_signsgrace	SR37	Religion should teach that pupils with special needs manifest God's presence in the world
SENRE38_parishleadership_partRE_PSEN	SR38	The parish leadership team must be part of religious education for pupils with special needs
SENRE39_PSEN_JpresentinRE	SR39	Pupils with special needs make Jesus present in RE
SENRE40_oursch_Pminor_morethanPsevere	SR40	Our school welcomes pupils with minor special needs more than those with severe needs
SENRE41_REforPSEN_civicright	SR41	RE for pupils with special needs is not a civic right
SENRE42_RE_morereal_withPSEN	SR42	RE is more real when pupils with special needs participate
SENRE_comment	SR	Additional comment

*sc stands for 'short code'; it designates nodes in some statistical outputs.

SURVEY 2 – VARIABLES AND STATEMENTS ON QUESTIONNAIRE 2

Variable	sc*	Label
ID	1	ID
s1_s2	2	Survey1 and Survey2
T1_quest1	ST1	First Survey completed
T2_BOMmember	ST2	Membership of a BOM
T3_consent	ST3A	Consent to be interviewed
T3_consent_txt	ST3B	Contact details
T4_AFeb_acc	ST4	Accuracy of 1st Questionnaire
T5_AFeb_acc_txt	ST5	Comment on accuracy of 1st Questionnaire
T6_AFeb_helpedme	ST6	Feedback helped me
T7_AFeb_helpedme_txt	ST7	Comment on feedback helped me
T8_AFeb_helpedBOM	ST8	Feedback helped our Board
T9_AFeb_helpedBOM_txt	ST9	Comment on feedback helped our Board
T10_Aall_helped_me	ST10	This process helped me be a more responsible Member
T11_Aall_helped_me_txt	ST11	Comment on this process helped me be a more responsible Member
T12_BAware_sen	ST12	I am now more aware of SEN
T13_BAware_sen_txt	ST13	Comment on I am now more aware of SEN
T14_BAware_RE	ST14	I am now more aware of RE
T15_BAware_RE_txt	ST15	Comment on I am now more aware of RE
T16_BAware_RE_sen	ST16	I am now more aware of RE for pupils with SEN
T17_BAware_RE_sen_txt	ST17	Comment on I am now more aware of RE for pupils with SEN
T18_CBOM_sen	ST18	I reflect more now on my responsibility to pupils with SEN
T19_CBOM_sen_txt	ST19	Comment on I reflect more now on my responsibility to pupils with SEN
T20_CBOM_RE_sen	ST20	I reflect more now on my responsibility to RE of pupils with SEN
T21_CBOM_RE_sen_txt	ST21	Comment on I reflect now more on my responsibility to RE of pupils with SEN

T22_DREsen_Jtoohigh	ST22	Teaching Jesus as the perfect one sets too high a standard
T23_DREsen_Jtoohigh_txt	ST23	Comment on Teaching Jesus as the perfect one sets too high a standard
T24_DREsen_Jbroken	ST24	It would be helpful to present Jesus as broken
T25_DREsen_Jbroken_txt	ST25	Comment on It would be helpful to present Jesus as broken
T26_DREsen_statedevelsRE	ST26	The state is better to develop the RE of pupils with SEN
T27_DREsen_statedevelsRE_txt	ST27	Comment on The state is better to develop the RE of pupil\s with SEN
T28_DREsen_churchdevelsRE	ST28	The church is better to develop the RE of pupils with SEN
T29_DREsen_churchdevelsRE_txt	ST29	Comment on The church is better to develop the RE of pupils with SEN
T30_E_BOMrole	SQ1	Role on the BOM
T31_E_current	SQ2	Representation on BOM
T32_E_Member_preDec2015	SQ3A	Membership of a BOM prior to December 2015
T33_E_Mship_length	SQ3B	Length of service on a BOM
T34_E_gender	SQ4	Gender
T35_E_marital_status	SQ5	Marital status
T36_E_age	SQ6	Age cohort
T37_E_relativeSEN	SQ7	Has a close relative with a SEN(s)
T38_E_parent	SQ8	Parental status
T39_E_sch_sex	SQ9A	School gender
T40_E_sch_place	SQ9B	School placement
T41_E_sch_classes	SQ9C	School's Class cohorts
T42_E_sch_SpClass	SQ9D	School's 'Special' status
T43_E_sch_DEIS	SQ9E	School's 'DEIS' status

*sc stands for 'short code'; it designates nodes in some statistical outputs.

APPENDIX J

INTERVIEW TEMPLATE

Format: semi-structured; voice-recorded

Core questions:

- Reactions(s) to receiving the First Questionnaire (November 2016)

    o Response to the Feedback (February 2017)

    o Any questions, issues, surprising inclusions / exclusions…

- What area appeals to you most, and why:

    o RE,
    o SEN,
    o RE for children with SEN

- Does the BoM have a role in this area?

- What do you think of the new initiatives from the DES (programme of information about religions)

- What connections do you see between RE for pupils with SEN and 'normal' pupils?

INTERVIEW

Interviewee: _____ **Place:** _____ **Date:**   /   /201

Q.1 My role on the BOM is:

    ☐ its Chairperson

    ☐ its Secretary

    ☐ its Treasurer

    ☐ ordinary Member

    ☐ other: _____

Q.2 I am currently

    ☐ principal

    ☐ patron's nominee

    ☐ teachers' representative

    ☐ parents' representative

    ☐ community representative

Q.3 I have been a Member of a BOM prior to December 2015

    Yes ☐   No ☐

    If Yes,

☐ for 4 years or less	☐ for 21-24 years
☐ for 5-8 years	☐ for 25-28 years
☐ for 9-12 years	☐ for 29-32 years
☐ for 13-16 years	☐ for 33-36 years
☐ for 17-20 years	☐ for 37+ years

[all are inclusive]

Q.4 I am   Male ☐   Female ☐

Q.5 I am   Married ☐   Single ☐

    In Religious Life ☐

Q.6 My age is

☐	under 20	☐	50-54
☐	20-24	☐	55-59
☐	25-29	☐	60-64
☐	30-34	☐	65-69
☐	35-39	☐	70-74
☐	40-44	☐	75-79
☐	45-49	☐	80+

Q.7 I have a close relative(s) with a special educational need   Yes ☐   No ☐

Q.8 I am a parent   Yes ☐   No ☐

Q.9 School Profile: *Please tick all that apply*

☐ Girls only

☐ Boys only

☐ Mixed

☐ Inner-city

☐ Suburban

☐ Rural

☐ Junior Infants to 6th Class (full vertical)

☐ Junior school (Junior Infants to 2nd Class) only

☐ Senior school (3rd to 6th Class) only

☐ Special School

☐ With a Special Unit(s)

☐ Non-DEIS

☐ DEIS Band 1

☐ DEIS Band 2

☐ DEIS Band 3

Please indicate if you are willing to be interviewed: Yes ☐   No ☐

The survey, questionnaire and interview have been explained: Yes ☐   No ☐

Signed: _____   **Dated**:   /   /2017