Global Researchers Advancing Catholic Education

OVERVIEW

Overview of GRACE (Ireland) Research Project and Summary of Findings and Recommendations

Authors: O'Connell, D., Doherty, D., Conway, E., Duffy, E., McCormack, C., Meehan, A., & Ó Caoimh, B.

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Acknowledgements:

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About the GRACE (Ireland) Research Project

Global Researchers Advancing Catholic Education (GRACE) is an international research-based partnership between academics in universities and Catholic education bodies across three different continents (Mary Immaculate College, Limerick; Notre Dame University, Fremantle, Australia; Roche Center for Catholic Education, Boston College; St Mary's University, London; University of Glasgow; and the International Office for Catholic Education). GRACE provides an opportunity for scholars and practitioners of Catholic education and theology in their respective countries to affirm, study, collaborate, and respond meaningfully to challenges in Catholic education. Among its aims is to strengthen the argument for the importance of faith-based schools in a plural society.

This GRACE (Ireland)[1] research project – entitled *Identity and Ethos in Catholic Primary and Secondary Schools in Ireland, Exploring the Attitudes and Behaviours of Stakeholders* – aims to establish a clear baseline and a set of signposts for the advancing of Catholic education at primary and secondary levels in the Republic of Ireland. The objectives of the research are:

- to complete a stakeholder mapping that identifies all the relevant actors and assesses their vision and roles – actual and potential – in contributing to the provision of Catholic education at both primary and secondary levels
- to capture and classify the values that underpin stakeholders' approaches
- to establish stakeholders' capacity to progress and further Catholic education.

Four Irish ecclesial documents underpin this research:

- The Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference pastoral letter for Catholic schools *Vision 08* (ICBC 2008)
- *Share the Good News – The National Directory for Catechesis in Ireland* (IEC 2010)
- *Understanding and living the ethos in a Catholic voluntary secondary school: a process centred on conversations* (CSP 2016)
- *Understanding and living the ethos in a Catholic primary school: a process centred on conversations* (CSP 2019).

The Overview to the six reports considers in some detail the underlying vision for Catholic schools that is charted in these documents with reference to how identity and ethos are expected to be amplified in Catholic schools.

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[1] With the support of the Mater Dei Centre for Catholic Education DCU in the analysis of the data and write-up of reports.

About the Authors

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Professor Eamonn Conway DD is a priest of the archdiocese of Tuam and holds the Inaugural Chair of Integral Human Development at the University of Notre Dame Australia (UNDA). He is co-founder of the Global Researchers Advancing Catholic Education (GRACE) Project. He has co-edited Catholic education and pope Francis' dream for a synodal church" (2024) and edited two volumes of 'Catholic education in detraditionalised cultural contexts', (2022, 2023) for the international peer-reviewed journal Religions.

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Acronyms

AMCSS Association of Management of Catholic Secondary Schools

AMRI Association of Missionaries and Religious of Ireland

APTCS Association of Patrons and Trustees of Catholic Schools

ATCS Association of Trustees of Catholic Schools

BoM Board of Management

CCE Congregation for Catholic Education

CEIST Catholic Education, an Irish Schools Trust

CEP Catholic Education Partnership

CESC Catholic Education Services Committee

CPD Continuing Professional Development

CSP Catholic Schools Partnership

CPSMA Catholic Primary Schools Management Association

CT Catechesi Tradendae

ERST Edmund Rice Schools Trust

GDC General Directory for Catechesis

GE Gravissimun Educationis

ICBC Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference

IEC Irish Episcopal Conference

JMB Joint Managerial Body for Secondary Schools

PBST Presentation Brothers Schools Trust

RE Religious Education

SCRE Senior Cycle Religious Education

SET Spiritan Education Trust

SGN Share the Good News

SSS Secretariat for Secondary Schools (SSS)

Abstracts to Each Report

Overview

Overview of GRACE (Ireland) Research Project and Summary of Findings and Recommendations

The Overview includes an explanation of GRACE and GRACE Ireland, the nature of this research project, and the methodology used, along with a summary of the findings and recommendations from each report.

Report 1

Leaders and Staff in Catholic Schools in Ireland: Demographics and Religious Profile

Our school communities are becoming increasingly diverse and secular. While the vast majority of school leaders and members of staff report they believe in God and are Roman Catholics, only a minority practise their faith. Age emerges as the dominant determinant of religiosity, and the findings reveal a diminishing pool of Catholics from which to recruit voluntary and professional school leaders.

Report 2

Stakeholders in Catholic Schools in Ireland: Training, Knowledge and Support

Recent Irish ecclesial documents emphasise specialised role training on Catholic identity and ethos, together with ongoing adult faith development, as vital in equipping Catholic school personnel in Ireland for their respective roles. This report considers whether the lived experiences of such personnel match the rhetoric of such documents and finds significant areas of disparity between official aspirations and on-the-ground reality.

Report 3

Commitment to Faith Development & Religious Practice in Catholic Schools in Ireland

This report examines the findings relating to faith development and religious practices in the schools surveyed. It finds that patrons need to review initial teacher education for Catholic teachers, and to implement urgently proper induction and CPD for key school personnel, BoM members, principals, etc., followed up by effective mechanisms for holding all those responsible to account for upholding the Catholic ethos of their schools.

Report 4

Principals as Leaders of Identity and Ethos in Catholic Schools in Ireland

The role of school principal is increasingly complex. In Catholic schools, the expectation to lead identity and ethos adds an extra dimension to that complexity. This report focuses on the role of the principal as leader of Catholic school identity and ethos.

Report 5

Religious Education as an Expression of Identity and Ethos in Catholic Schools in Ireland

Most European countries accept the necessity of school-based RE. In Ireland, the Catholic bishops uphold RE as an expression of school ethos and recognise the importance of RE in holistic education. This report focuses on the role and reality of RE as an expression of Catholic school identity and ethos.

Report 6

Catholic Schools in Ireland: Responsibility, Oversight and Governance

This report sets out the vision for leadership in Catholic education as articulated primarily by the Irish Episcopal Conference. This is then followed by a reflection on this leadership and oversight of Catholic education as experienced by school communities in light of the GRACE survey findings. These findings indicate that despite a well-articulated vision for Catholic education, the implementation and oversight of the vision needs significant amelioration. It concludes with a list of 20 recommendations.

Methodology

This mixed-methods study employed an explanatory sequential design whereby two distinct forms of data collection were applied, with priority given, in the first instance, to the collection and analysis of a large body of quantitative data. This process was followed by a targeted qualitative strand of semi-structured interviews designed to amplify, explain and elaborate on the quantitative results (Creswell 2012, 2022; Shorten and Smith 2017). This design allows for connection and integration where the quantitative data inform the questions to be explored during the qualitative strand (Creswell 2022), and the qualitative findings help explain the quantitative results in more depth (Creswell 2022). Ethical approval was obtained from the Mary Immaculate College Research Ethics Committee.

The Research Instruments

Two self-developed and pilot-tested survey questionnaires (see Appendix 1) were distributed to four cohorts of primary and secondary school stakeholders. The surveys were analogous but non-identical, and both were web-based. At primary school level, these cohorts included members of boards of management (BoM), principals (including deputy principals), teachers, and other school staff (including ancillary, support, and administrative staff). In the secondary school context, these included BoM members, principals (including deputy principals), teachers of Religious Education (RE), and all teaching staff.

Where possible, the primary questionnaire mirrored the template of the secondary questionnaire, which had been designed and distributed first. The purpose of this mirroring was to facilitate cross-referencing and comparison. However, to take account of the operational and personnel distinctions that pertain in the primary and secondary school contexts, the primary school survey also incorporated a number of additional or differently worded questions specific to this context. The questionnaires were circulated to all Catholic primary and secondary schools in the Republic of Ireland. We are grateful to the Catholic Primary Schools Management Association (CPSMA), the diocesan education secretaries, and primary school diocesan advisors for the distribution of the questionnaires. For the distribution of the second level questionnaires, we are grateful to principals, the Association for Patrons and Trustees for Catholic Schools (APTCS), the CEOs of the various trusts, and the National Association of Post-Primary Diocesan Advisors (NAPPDA). Table 1 below gives a breakdown of the number of respondents at both levels.[2]

Table 1 Number of survey respondents at primary and second levels

Cohort	Primary	Secondary	Total
Board of Management	1,162	95	1,257
Principal or Deputy Principal	1,111	117	1,228
Teachers - Classroom or Subject	794	302	1,096
RE Teacher		129	129
Other Staff	122	74	196
Total	3,189	717	3,906

At the close of each questionnaire, respondents were invited to self-select for follow-up interviews by inserting their email address. All were assured that this information would be decoupled from their survey responses to protect anonymity. As a result, 52 interviews were conducted, 28 at primary and 24 at second level. The table below gives a breakdown of the number of interviewees at both levels.

Table 2 Interview cohorts by number

Primary		Secondary	
Board of Management	7	Board of Management	6
Principals	8	Principals/Deputy Principals	6
Teachers	12	RE Teachers	6
Other Staff	1	Teaching Staff	6

During the primary data collection phase, the research team prepared frequency tables as responses were coming in. Once the entire dataset was available, the team generated a set of frequency tables and graphs (mainly bar graphs) for each variable. The frequency tables and associated cross tabulations were organised thematically, and their presentation served to inform the formulation of questions for the interviewees. Qualitative data were analysed thematically, using NVivo software. Figure 1 below provides a visual illustration of the design procedures implemented in this study.

Tables and figures throughout the reports are numbered according to the report number. In this overview, they are numbered 1, 2, etc. In Report 1 they are 1.1, 1.2, etc. The slight exception is in Report 3, where there is a subdivision of numbering to reflect the logic of some numbered headings – 3.1.1, 3.1.2, etc. The first number in that case refers to the report number, the second to the numbered heading, and the third to the order of figures under that heading.

Figure 1 Visual model for mixed methods explanatory sequential design procedures

PHASE	PROCEDURE	PRODUCT
Quantitative Data Collection	*Cross-sectional online surveys Secondary: (n = 717) Primary: (n = 3,189)	*Numeric data
Quantitative Data Analysis	*Data screening/cleaning (univariate, multivariate) *Frequencies, cross tabulation pivot tables *Google Forms *MS Excel Spreadsheet Software	*Missing data/anomalies *Descriptive statistics,
Connecting Quantitative and Qualitative	*Purposively selecting participants from each cohort *Developing interview questions	*Secondary: (n = 24) Primary: (n = 28)
QUALITATIVE Data Collection	*Individual in-depth interviews Zoom communications platform	*Text data: Interview ~ transcripts
QUALITATIVE Data Analysis	*Coding and thematic analysis * Theme development NVivo 12 qualitative software	*Codes and themes *Similar/different themes and categories *Visual Model of Integrated Analysis
Integration of the Quantitative and Qualitative Results	*Interpretation and explanation of the quantitative and qualitative results	*Discussion *Implications *Future Research

Source: Adapted from Ivankova et al., 2006, p. 16

Exclusions

It should be noted that the cohorts identified for participation in both phases of the research are those with direct, on-the-ground responsibility for the delivery of Catholic education in Ireland and are, thus, key stakeholders. Other crucial stakeholders exist, including pupils and their parents/caregivers/guardians, patrons, and trusts. It is also recognised that the research excludes the large Catholic education sector in Northern Ireland. The exclusion of each of these stakeholders from both phases of the study was influenced by the research aims, which focus on the practices, perceptions and capacities of school staff and management in the Republic of Ireland. It was also influenced by the need to place parameters around the research, by the limited resources available in terms of time, personnel and finance, and by the separate educational jurisdiction that applies in Northern Ireland. (for a substantive explanation of the research method used in this work, along with the Profile of Survey Respondents, please follow the link: www.mic.ul.ie/GRACE).

Irish Ecclesial Documents on Catholic Education: An Overview

This research study is informed by the philosophy and theology of Vatican II and the body of post-conciliar documents on Catholic education from *Gravissimum educationis* (1964) to *The identity of Catholic schools for a culture of dialogue* (2022).

The core teaching of these magisterial texts has been synthesised for the Irish context in four ecclesial documents including the Irish Catholic bishops' pastoral for Catholic schools *Vision 08* (ICBC 2008); *Share the Good News – The National Directory for Catechesis in Ireland* (IEC 2010); *Understanding and living the ethos in a Catholic voluntary secondary school: a process centred on conversations* (CSP 2016a) and *Understanding and living the ethos in a Catholic primary school: a process centred on conversations* (Veritas 2019). The key themes of these documents have provided a conceptual scaffold for this research on identity and ethos in Catholic schools in Ireland. Their content shaped the survey questionnaires utilised in the research and also provides a benchmark by which to discuss and interpret research findings.

This Overview begins by presenting the underlying vision for Catholic schools charted in the four foundational documents mentioned above. It considers each document in turn and in order of publication date, with reference to how identity and ethos are expected to be amplified in Catholic schools. It places a focus on what these documents state about the training provision and adult faith development support necessary to equip BoM members and school staff to understand and fulfil their respective roles. It concludes by outlining the patronage and trustee structures that exist to oversee and support Irish Catholic schools in delivering their mandate.

The Bishops' Pastoral Letter for Catholic Schools *Vision 08* (ICBC 2008)

In recognition of growing debates surrounding the role of the Catholic Church in the public sphere, this pastoral letter sets out the Irish bishops' understanding of 'the nature and purpose' of the Catholic school (ICBC 2008a, para.1) The former is defined as one holding 'a distinctive vision of life and a corresponding philosophy of education, based on the Gospel of Jesus Christ' (ICBC 2008a, para.2). Faith in God is foundational to Catholic school identity and ethos, and in its attitudes and actions a Catholic school is motivated by 'a sacramental view' of reality which is attuned to God's presence in the ordinary moments of life (ICBC 2008a, para.2). A deepening awareness of this reality is served by RE and by prayer and liturgy, which are emphasised as central and indispensable curricular components. Educational excellence that fosters intellectual and practical reason, together with the promotion of 'dialogue and understanding between faith, tradition, culture, and heritage' (ICBC 2008a, para.2) are also understood as key hallmarks of a Catholic school, all in service of the holistic development of the pupil over market-driven or competitive ends (ICBC 2008a, para.6).

A distinctive vision of life and a corresponding philosophy of education, based on the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

This philosophy informs the key purposes of the Catholic school which, along with fostering pupils' personal growth and the realisation of their full potential, emphasises their individual and collective role in societal transformation. As pupils are educated through the lens of Gospel values, the Catholic school enables them 'to act with justice and integrity in an imperfect world, now and when they are adults themselves' (ICBC 2008, para.5).

Through its values and actions, the aim is the creation of a school community that is welcoming, pastorally supportive, and inclusive of all belief systems and none. This spirit of community extends beyond the school to the parish and wider community, and *Vision 08* recognises the work of schools to further develop such linkages for the good of all.

While this document does not address itself to individual roles within the school, it underlines the need for 'the ongoing professional development' of staff and for 'the training and formation of board members', and speaks of a 'commitment to the personal and professional nurture of all school personnel' as indispensable to the life of the school (ICBC 2008b, p.7).

Share the Good News – The National Directory for Catechesis in Ireland (IEC 2010)

The purpose of *Share the Good News – The National Directory for Catechesis in Ireland (SGN)* is to 'lay down a framework and principles, suited to local needs in Ireland, for the presentation of the Good News of Jesus Christ' (IEC 2010, p.2).

Faith development of the Catholic community through evangelisation, catechesis and RE is its raison d'être, and in a comprehensive chapter entitled 'Sharing our faith with the young', *SGN* identifies six fundamental tasks that are instructive for all levels of catechesis and RE, including those which take place in schools. Originally set out in the *General Directory for Catechesis* (Congregation for the Clergy 2017, 2020), these include:

> **promoting knowledge of the faith; liturgical education; moral formation; teaching to pray; education for community life (including the ecumenical dimension); and missionary initiation (including inter-religious dialogue)**
> **(IEC 2010, p.142).**

Share the Good News also reiterates the key characteristics of a Catholic School as expressed in *Vision 08* (IEC 2010, pp.142–145), which are referenced above.

Share the Good News on Role Training and Role Responsibilities

On repeated occasions, *SGN* underscores the importance of initial and continuing training for BoM members (IEC 2010, p.108, p.201, p.207) who are 'responsible for the development of the school on behalf of the Patron/Trustees, with the support of management bodies' (IEC 2010, p.203). It makes it clear that the initial training of BoMs should include a specific focus on Catholic ethos (IEC 2010, p.207). It emphasises the board's key role in ensuring that the school's mission statement, accompanying policies and decision-making are in tandem with this ethos. It also underlines their responsibility to support the principal and staff in actualising the Catholic ethos in the school, along with the need for the BoM to review ethos-related issues, at least annually, and 'report on this to the Patron' (IEC 2010, p.207).

> *It emphasises the board's key role in ensuring that the school's mission statement, accompanying policies and decision-making are in tandem with this ethos.*

SGN also stresses the priority of 'in-depth and continuing formation' of principals (IEC 2010, p.146, p.157) and the 'ongoing education and training' of 'the Principal and Deputy Principal, the Head of the Religious Education Department (Post-Primary), the Coordinator of Religious Education (Primary) … as well as others in leadership roles' (IEC 2010, p.203, p.207). It highlights that a fundamental responsibility of the principal is to 'encourage, develop and promote' the Catholic ethos of their school and also to ensure the provision of occasions for reflection on the spiritual and religious well-being of the school community' (IEC 2010, pp.207–208). Notably, nine years after the publication of *SGN*, the Genesis Report (CPSMA/CSP/AMCSS, 2019), which reports on research carried out on behalf of a number of the key representative bodies in Irish Catholic education, reiterates the need for particular attention to be focused on 'training to develop Catholic school leaders of the future' (p.59). The document underlines the need for the principal to safeguard 'a consistent and coordinated

approach to Religious Education' and to the faith formation of Catholic pupils (IEC 2010, p.146, pp.156–157), with the expectation of support from diocesan advisors in these endeavours (IEC 2010, p.156, p.209). It also points to the principal's role at primary level in encouraging the faith education of children of other traditions where parents wish to provide such education. It expresses the expectation that at secondary level 'all students, Catholic or otherwise, should be able to attend second-level Religious Education classes which follow the Department syllabuses, investigating the spiritual and moral questions central to human living' (IEC 2010, p.144, pp.156–157).

The document underlines the need for the principal to safeguard 'a consistent and coordinated approach to Religious Education' and to the faith formation of Catholic pupils.

The National Directory also affirms the Irish bishops' support for the training and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) of teachers, emphasising that all who teach in Catholic schools be 'fully informed about the life and teaching of the Catholic Church, so that they can initiate genuine dialogue between their pupils and the Catholic community to which many of the students belong' (IEC 2010, p.201, p.214). The document makes particular reference to the ongoing training and support needs of teachers in special education settings (IEC 2010, pp.171–172).

SGN makes it clear that while 'the freedom of conscience of teachers in matters of personal religious belief and practice' will be respected, as part of their role, all teachers are expected to promote the ethos, mission statement and policies of their school. To support this, new teachers, as part of their induction, should have 'an opportunity to focus on the Catholic character of the school'. All staff should also be facilitated in taking part in a review of ethos each year (IEC 2010, p.208, p.215).

Teachers at primary level and RE teachers at secondary level are also expected to participate in the faith formation and faith development of Catholic pupils and to engage with the RE curriculum in a way that supports their pupils'/students' spiritual and moral development (IEC 2010, p.58, p.146, p.155, p.215).

Together with the supports offered by patrons/trustees and their management/representative bodies, the National Directory also points to the training, resource provision and in-service support provided to principals and teachers by the IEC through diocesan advisors (IEC 2010, p.146, p.156, pp.158–159, p.209) and the management support from diocesan education offices (IEC 2010, p.146, p.198). It also stresses the need for effective collaboration between dioceses and religious congregations and their trustee bodies in order to establish 'appropriate networks and strategies for the up-skilling of school management and staff' (IEC 2010, p.200).

Share the Good News on Adult Faith Development

In a reiteration of *Catechesi Tradendae* (John Paul II 1979, para.43) and the General Directory for Catechesis (Congregation for the Clergy 2017, 2020), *SGN* also affirms the centrality of adult faith development as the 'chief form of catechesis … since it deals with persons who are capable of an adherence that is fully responsible … all the other forms, which are indeed necessary, are in some way oriented to it' (IEC 2010, p.102). For the latter reason, it is recognised as 'fundamental to the ethos overseen by the Board of Management and lived and celebrated in the school' (ICE 2010, p.120). Consequently, it advises BoMs to 'support and facilitate individuals and groups of teachers in taking initiatives designed to help them to engage with their own ongoing faith development' (IEC 2010, p.147). Denoting the school principal 'as a spiritual leader', the National Directory highlights their crucial role in supporting faith in schools and emphasises their need to develop 'a more explicit understanding of the philosophical, theological and spiritual underpinnings of Catholic education', together with 'skills that help teachers, parents and students grasp the importance and challenge of the Christian message in a way that is appropriate to their development' (Tuohy et al. 2000, cited in IEC 2010, p.208).

Finally, *SGN* addresses seven faith development objectives and corresponding indicators of achievement with regard to schools. These objectives include:

1. The members of the Catholic Church in Ireland will contribute energetically to developing a holistic understanding of education in school.
2. The Catholic school will operate according to a Mission Statement and Ethos Policy that openly reflects its Catholic spirit.
3. The Catholic school, primary or post-primary, will be characterised by respect, generosity, justice, hospitality and critical reflection.
4. The Board of Management in a Catholic school will take responsibility, on behalf of the Patron/Trustees, for developing the school, overseeing its Catholic ethos, and supporting the Principal in the daily management of the school, according to that ethos.
5. The Principal will ensure that the decisions of the Board of Management, and particularly the ethos statement set out by the Board, are lived out in the day-to-day running of the school.
6. Staff in a Catholic school will know, understand and sustain the Catholic ethos within which they are employed.
7. Religious Education and faith formation will be evident strengths in the schooling provided by a Catholic school.

(IEC 2010, pp.204–210)

Understanding and living the ethos in a Catholic voluntary secondary school: a process centred on conversations (CSP 2016a)

As its title suggests, this manual has the aim of assisting secondary schools to comprehend and express their Catholic ethos. Recognising that 'those associated with Catholic schools often say that they can point to their ethos but find it hard to articulate what exactly it is' (CSP 2016a, p.5), the document revisits an invitation to conversation initiated in *Vision 08* while endeavouring to enhance school ethos through a whole school, self-facilitated, dialogical process.

Designed to take place annually over a three-year cycle, the process involves five distinct steps, which are defined as 'a shared responsibility between trustees and the school community' (CSP 2016a, p.5). They begin in Year One with an invitation to participate from patrons/trustees. Step two tasks BoMs with initiating the process in the school through first familiarising themselves with a set of facilitation resources designed for use, as appropriate, with different groups of school constituents including the BoM, staff, students and parents. These resources focus on understanding the nature of Catholic voluntary secondary schools in Ireland, the Christian mission of the schools, and the challenges and opportunities facing them now and into the future.

Once the BoM has considered and discussed these resources, in consultation with trustee representatives, they move to step three to devise an implementation plan. Though the suggestion is made that an implementation group be set up comprising representatives from each of the aforementioned constituent groups, the school is free to choose its own approach. The main aims of the process during its first year are to increase whole school awareness of the voluntary nature of the school and to understand the school's place as part of a large network of Catholic voluntary schools. To reinforce this, and to share learning and experience, the Catholic Schools Partnership (CSP) and/or trustees commit to arranging a series of regional meetings at the end of each year of the process.
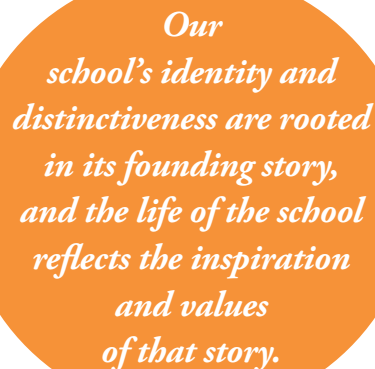
During Year Two of the process, the school moves to step four, where a strong emphasis is placed on holding conversations with all constituent groups about the vision and values reflected in the founding story of the school. The purpose of this is to raise awareness of the original transformative goals of the school's Founder and to encourage a reimagining of the founding intentions in order to 'discover what is distinctive in their service of the community and the common good in the twenty-first century' (CSP 2016a, p.5). The aim of these conversations is to give joint expression to the reimagining process and to articulate its relevance for current circumstances. To concretise the deliberations of each school grouping, the school is asked to produce a pamphlet that synthesises their collective insights and which will become a reflection resource for the school community.

Taking cognisance of the reimagining process, in Year Three, step five of the process commences. Here the school adopts three targets to focus on for the year ahead which will develop and support their Catholic ethos. Schools are encouraged to adopt targets that may have arisen from their series of conversations, from recommendations by trustees, or from a suggested list of 33 targets (CSP 2016a, pp.30–32) that coalesce under three headings and can be summarised as follows:

- **Our school's identity and distinctiveness are rooted in its founding story, and the life of the school reflects the inspiration and values of that story**

Reflections of the accuracy of this statement will be found in a confidence amongst BoM members and staff who are able to positively articulate the school's founding story and its underlying and lasting values, which will be embedded in all school policies, literature, cross-curricular teaching, and school prayer. Emphasis will be firmly placed on providing opportunities for new and existing staff, as well as for parents and students, to develop their understanding of the school's ethos, while the visual imagery and symbolism on display within the school will reflect its founding story and the Catholic Christian tradition from which it emanates (CSP 2016a, p.30).

Our school's identity and distinctiveness are rooted in its founding story, and the life of the school reflects the inspiration and values of that story.

- **Our school continues the ministry of Christ**

A school that sees itself as continuing the ministry of Christ will, supported by its trustees, take steps to foster the faith development (also referred to as spiritual development and faith formation) of the whole school community – students, staff, BoM members and parents. Facilitating a deepening awareness of what it means to be a follower of Jesus Christ will inform its life and activities, which will be sustained by the celebration of the liturgical seasons, regular community and personal prayer, social justice outreach, and the provision of ongoing training for BoM members and CPD for staff. Compassion and care for others will be articulated in the school's mission statement and reflected in its pastoral processes. RE will hold a central place in the school curriculum through appropriate resourcing and timetabling, and the school will involve itself in Catholic Schools' Week and in collaborative activities with other Catholic schools in the local, national and global contexts (CSP 2016a, pp.30–31).

- **Our school is in dialogue with the Church and the world around us**

The school, aware of its role in the parish and diocesan community, will consciously develop 'deeper relationships with the local Church' as part of its ethos (CSP 2016a, p.31). In its curriculum, it will embed Catholic social teaching 'with its emphases on the dignity of the human person, the importance of family life, solidarity with those in need, promotion of peace and justice, and the stewardship of creation' (CSP 2016a, p.31). Compassionate right relationship with God, self, others and the planet, vivified by a reflective Christian spirituality, will be at the heart of a Catholic school. It will be reflected in school policies, local and global charitable activities, social justice outreach, the celebration of diversity, and the support of students and families of other faiths or beliefs which 'move beyond mere tolerance to a deeper encounter between people' (CSP 2016a, pp.30–31).

Our school is in dialogue with the Church and the world around us.

It is advised that the individual targets chosen from the above thematic areas be regularly monitored and evaluated throughout the year at BoM, staff and trustee meetings. At the end of the academic year, a short report should be submitted to the BoM for dissemination throughout the school community and included in the school plan (CSP 2016a, p.8). It is envisaged that the school continue to select three further targets for each subsequent year in an ongoing and cyclical process of understanding and living their school's ethos. While this manual does not provide a specific definition of what is understood by ethos, and schools are accorded the freedom to express this for themselves through the recurring process, it is clear that the above headings and their accompanying targets are reflections of how a school claiming a Catholic ethos would be expected to operate. They are further bolstered by the resources accompanying the process in which six key hallmarks of the Catholic school are identified:

- Catholic schools continue the work of Jesus the teacher.
- Catholic schools are part of a living tradition.
- Catholic schools respect both faith and reason.
- Catholic schools integrate religious education in the curriculum while providing opportunities for catechesis.
- Catholic schools give expression to the teachings of the Second Vatican Council.
- Catholic schools educate to intercultural dialogue. (CSP 2016b, pp. 21–29)

Catholic schools respect both faith and reason.

The manual also pays attention to the need for CPD for all staff to allow them to 'deepen their understanding of the school's ethos' and to 'develop their understanding of Jesus Christ' (CSP 2016a, p.30). The provision of a range of faith development opportunities, supported by trustees, for all school stakeholders, is also a key concern (CSP 2016a, pp.30–31), while the need for significant resources to be allotted to ensure that 'the mission of each voluntary school' is imbibed and understood by all stakeholders is emphasised (CSP 2016a, p.31).
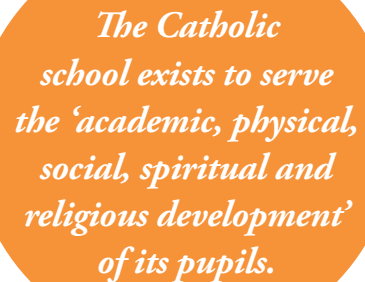
Catholic schools educate to intercultural dialogue.

Understanding and living the ethos in a Catholic primary school: a process centred on conversations (CSP 2019)

This document for Catholic primary schools shares the intentions of its secondary counterpart, with similar aims expressed in its title. From the outset, it is clear that it understands ethos, also referred to as 'characteristic spirit', as being expressed in a school's 'choices, actions and priorities' (CSP 2019, p.7). The primary initiative is also a self-facilitated process, and shares other similarities with its secondary equivalent, including being an invitational process emanating from the patron, initiated by the BoM, and involving the school community – in this instance BoM members, staff, 5th and 6th class pupils, and parents. It, too, is envisaged as an ongoing, cyclical process, but in the primary context it occurs annually within a four-year cycle and, unlike its sister document, it identifies and invites the school to work on ethos-related targets from the outset in Year One. Other differences include the suggestion of three facilitation models from which BoMs may adopt one model to be led by different combinations of BoM members, staff and/or parents. It also differs in the inclusion of eight rather than five process steps. It does not mention regional meetings of schools. An adaptation from the secondary model sees the process centred around an ethos reflection questionnaire that focuses on the extent to which five core characteristics of a Catholic school are reflected in the school. Each characteristic is amplified by targets, numbering 40 in total (CSP 2019, pp.16–20). While the five characteristics – and their corresponding targets and actions – express an analogous philosophy to those outlined at secondary level, they employ somewhat differing language and include the following:

- **The school is founded on a Catholic understanding of education**

Espousing a 'Christian concept of the world' (CSP 2019, p.8) and founded on a Catholic anthropology underpinned by Gospel values, the Catholic school exists to serve the 'academic, physical, social, spiritual and religious development' of its pupils (CSP 2019, p.16). It is a locus of welcome and inclusion for those of other faiths and none where 'the religious freedom and the personal conscience of individual students and their families must be respected' in a spirit of dialogue and a 'culture of encounter' (CSP 2019, p.8).

> *The Catholic school exists to serve the 'academic, physical, social, spiritual and religious development' of its pupils.*

- **The school is a Catholic community**

The school is rooted in the three interdependent communities of parents, the school and the parish. Parents are recognised as the foundational community and the 'most important educators of their children' (CSP 2019, p.17).

- **The school is an agent of personal growth and social transformation**

Right relationship with God, oneself, others, and the earth animates the life of the school, and pupils are awakened to the link between faith and justice. Compassion and support for those who suffer or are disadvantaged, educationally or otherwise, are the hallmarks of relationships within the school.

- **Religious Education is an integral part of the life of the school**

Three key aspects of the RE programme are emphasised:
  - It is 'inspired by *Share the Good News – The National Directory for Catechesis in Ireland*'.
  - It includes 'faith formation, prayer and sacramental experiences, and a growing awareness of being stewards of God's creation'.
  - There is support for 'staff, principals, pupils, parents and members of boards in opening their hearts and minds to the presence of God'.
  (CSP 2019, p.19)

- **We are called to be followers of Christ**

To animate the process at primary level, and having each completed the tasks set out in the ethos reflection, the BoM and facilitators together identify one characteristic to work on during the coming school year. The facilitators then work with school staff, parents and 5th and 6th class pupils on the chosen characteristic, asking them to complete the tasks in the ethos reflection that relate to this characteristic. Once this is completed, responses from each grouping are reviewed. Facilitators choose one target, in liaison with the BoM, for the whole school community to work on over the coming year. The manual includes a range of concrete options, lesson plans and resources to address each target. At the end of the first year, the BoM reviews a progress report submitted by facilitators and completes their own report form, which is filed in school records, shared with the patron, and disseminated in the school community. Over the subsequent three years, the same process is to be followed annually, with a different characteristic and corresponding target chosen each year. After an overall review of progress, along with a review of the facilitation model, the process is repeated again in Year Five for another four-year cycle.

It is these characteristics, targets and actions, together with those identified for primary level, along with the understandings put forward in *Vision 08* and *SGN* – underpinned by conciliar and post-conciliar documents – that have informed the questions of the primary and secondary school survey questionnaires.

It should be noted that training for board members and regular in-service for staff on Catholic identity, school ethos and spiritual development (CSP 2019 pp.52–55, p.59) are also concerns of this document. As at secondary level, it is expected that 'members of staff are provided with opportunities to develop their understanding of Jesus Christ' (CSP 2019, p.20), and it is envisaged that adults associated with the school would 'participate in opportunities for spiritual support and growth provided in partnership with the diocese and other bodies' (CSP 2019, p.19), with the hope indicated that 'all staff are as proficient in speaking about the area of spiritual development as about the area of academic development' (CSP 2019, p.62).

The foregoing synopsis has presented the underlying vision for Catholic education as articulated in IEC documents. The section that follows considers the structures that have been developed to support those associated with Catholic schools in the animation of this vision.

The Structure of Catholic Education in the Republic of Ireland: A Complexity of Role, Management and Representative Functions

Influenced by its historical evolution and by contemporary developments surrounding educational provision, Catholic education in Ireland has a multifaceted and complex system of responsibility, oversight and representation, which is illustrated in Figure 2 below (ATCS 2012; Coolahan et al. 2012; CSP 2016b; McGraw and Tiernan 2022).

Figure 2 Structural relationships in Irish Catholic education
Source: McGraw and Tiernan 2022, p.89.
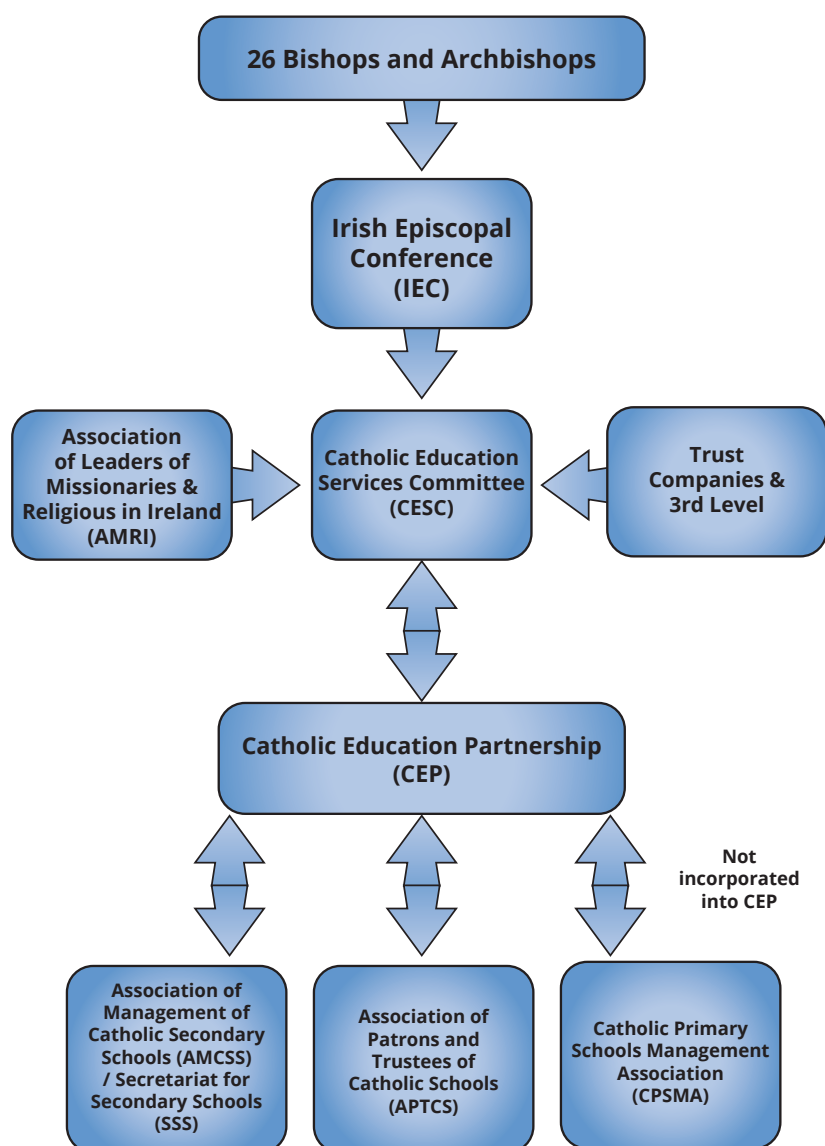
Primary authority and responsibility rests with the Irish Episcopal Conference (IEC), including its individual bishops and archbishops, and its Commission for Catholic Education and Formation, which encompasses four councils, namely, the Councils for Education, Catechetics, Doctrine, and Ecumenism and Dialogue. The Council for Education 'articulates policy and vision for Catholic education in Ireland, North and South, on behalf of the Episcopal Conference. It has responsibility for the forward planning necessary to ensure the best provision for Catholic Education in the country' (ICBC n.d.).

The Primary Sector

At primary level, 89 per cent of all schools in the State have the Catholic Church as their patron (McGraw and Tiernan 2022, p.25). Of this, the overwhelming majority are diocesan-owned, with fewer than 5 per cent under the ownership or trusteeship of a religious congregation or trust (McGraw and Tiernan 2022, p.86). In all cases, the local bishop holds ultimate responsibility and, as patron, 'delegates some of his responsibility to the Board of Management which is accountable to him' (CPSMA 2016, p.84). Both patrons and schools are assisted in their respective roles by diocesan education offices, diocesan education secretaries and diocesan advisors (IEC 2010, p.146, CPSMA 2016, p.84).

Support is also provided to patrons, trustees, BoMs and principals by the Catholic Primary Schools Management Association (CPSMA), which provides advice and guidance to its member schools. The CPSMA also collaborates with other management bodies, acts as a representative and an advocate at national level, and provides training for BoMs on issues such as 'child protection, appointment procedures, the board of management, board finances, legal issues, anti-bullying and data protection' (CPSMA n.d.). While ongoing training on Catholic ethos is not directly referenced in this list of available training, the organisation's *Board of Management Handbook* (2016) explores school ethos in detail (CPSMA 2016, pp.24–27) and provides an open-access ethos training video link. It also reprints, in full, a series of extracts from *SGN* that specifically deal with 'Children's Religious Education in School' (CPSMA 2016, pp.13–17; IEC 2010, pp.140–148) and 'Faith Development in Catholic Schools' (CPSMA 2016, pp.18–21; IEC 2010, pp.204–10). The handbook also reiterates the understanding of a Catholic school set out in *Vision 08* (CPSMA 2016, p.22, pp.24–25) and recommends reference to this pastoral letter as an important document when drawing up an ethos statement.

The Secondary Sector

At secondary level, while primacy continues to reside with the IEC, patronage and trusteeship for Catholic voluntary secondary schools rest principally with religious congregations and/or their trust companies, of which there are several. They include Catholic Education – an Irish Schools Trust (CEIST); the Le Chéile Schools Trust; the Spiritan Education Trust (SET); the Presentation Brothers Schools Trust (PBST); the Loreto Education Trust; the Edmund Rice Schools Trust (ERST); and the Jesuit Education Trust. Unlike their aforementioned counterparts, both of the latter two trusts operate both primary and secondary schools. Additional trust companies also exist for diocesan and stand-alone lay Catholic secondary schools (JMB 2021, pp.9–10; McGraw and Tiernan 2022, pp.86–87). Individual congregations, with and through their trust bodies, commit to support the work of the BoMs and principals of their schools through training, information provision, publications, and recruitment assistance (JMB/AMCSS/SSS 2021, p.9). In common with the primary sector, diocesan education offices, education secretaries, and diocesan advisors are also tasked with exercising a training and support role (IEC 2010, p.198).

At national level, a number of representative and managerial organisations also exist to support Catholic schools. These include the Catholic Education Partnership (CEP), which was established in 2020 by the Catholic Education Services Committee (CESC), a joint committee comprising representatives from the IEC, the Association of Missionaries and Religious of Ireland (AMRI), trust body representatives, and the Catholic third level sector (McGraw and Tiernan 2022, p.89). The CEP replaced the Catholic Schools Partnership (CSP) and holds an advocacy and coordinating remit for primary, secondary, third level and adult Catholic education. On behalf of the IEC, it represents 'the joint position of Catholic Patrons and Management nationally with Government, DES and … other relevant education bodies' and seeks to 'provide an authoritative and unified voice for Catholic education in the public forum' (CEP 2023). While it does not involve itself directly in training provision for individual schools, it is recognised as having 'a lead role in supporting the formation needs of the family of Catholic education communities while recognising the unique character of each such community' (JMB/AMCSS/SSS 2021, p.11).

At secondary level, the CEP also exercises 'a governance and ownership role' (JMB/AMCSS/SSS 2021, p.11) with regard to the Secretariat for Secondary Schools (SSS) and the Association of Patrons and Trustees of Catholic Schools (APTCS). The SSS is made up of two divisions: the Joint Managerial Board for Secondary Schools and the Association of Management of Catholic Secondary Schools. These bodies offer 'professional development, support and advice' (JMB/AMCSS/SSS 2023a) to all voluntary secondary schools and provide collective representation at national level. Management-related training for BoM members and principals also falls under the JMB/AMCSS remit, and a broad range of available training is listed on the organisation website (JMB/AMCSS/SSS 2023a). While ethos training is not specifically referred to in the list of services provided, a commitment to providing support for school ethos is clearly expressed:

> **JMB works to support the development of the characteristic spirit of all our schools and has produced Guidelines on the Inclusion of Students of other Beliefs in Catholic Schools as well as having active membership of the Catechetical Commission Workgroup on Religious Education and the Steering Group for Catholic Schools' Week**
> **(JMB/AMCSS/SSS 2023b).**

Also among its range of support publications is the Manual for Boards of Management of Catholic Voluntary Secondary Schools (2021). Known as 'the Blue Book', it has been updated on nine occasions since its first publication in 1985, incorporating amendments that reflect the rapid pace of change in Irish educational policy in recent decades.

While this manual makes no reference to *SGN* or to *Understanding and Living the ethos in a Catholic voluntary secondary school,* it refers to the conceptualisation of Catholic education set out in *Vision 08,* with particular reference to Catholic schools as inclusive and participative communities and to the importance of establishing strong collaborative links with Catholic parents as the primary educators of their children in faith (JMB/AMCSS/SSS 2021, p.11). In a chapter entitled 'The religious and educational character of the school' (JMB/AMCSS/SSS 2021, pp.14–19), it addresses itself to the key aims of a Catholic school and sets out specific areas of responsibility for trustees, BoMs and principals with regard to school ethos. Its contents reflect and align with many of the faith development indicators of achievement outlined in *SGN* and the ethos-related targets suggested in the secondary edition of *Understanding and living the ethos.*

Twelve areas of practical involvement are indicated for trustees, namely:

1. ensuring an appropriate level of awareness among the school community of the founding purpose and ethos
2. ensuring that the characteristic spirit is reflected in the school mission statement
3. providing opportunities for all the partners to acquire insights into the values and beliefs that are inherent in the founding intention
4. ensuring that school management links the policies and activities of the school with its characteristic spirit
5. appointment and training of members of BoMs
6. selection of principals and deputy principals
7. support for principal and teaching staff
8. regular contact with key personnel in the school
9. approval of the school plan
10. approval of policies regarding admissions and other important issues
11. evaluation of the school's progress, especially in the context of the characteristic spirit
12. curriculum and timetabling, with particular reference to the characteristic spirit. (JMB/AMCSS/SSS 2021, p.6).

With regard to BoMs and principals, the manual affirms the formers' responsibility to ensure that 'the curriculum of the school is in accordance with the religious and educational criteria defined by the trustees' and that 'the whole organisation of the school is characterised by Gospel values in practice' (JMB/AMCSS/SSS 2021, p.15).

Noting that the latter function is delegated to the principal, five key areas are deemed essential for the practical animation of the school's ethos. These are formal instruction and formation in the Catholic faith; the provision of regular Masses and liturgies; the involvement of students in social awareness projects; opportunities for retreats; and visits by clergy (JMB/AMCSS/SSS 2021, p.15).

While the manual does not address the faith development of staff, it does affirm the BoM's responsibility to ensure the ongoing 'professional development of staff through support for in-service training and qualifications' (JMB/AMCSS/SSS 2021, p.62).

The second organisation for which the CEP exercises a governance role is the Association of Patrons and Trustees of Catholic Schools (APTCS). Established in 2021, it currently represents 346 voluntary secondary school and 96 community schools under joint patronage and provides 'services and advice to Patrons and Trustees on ethos, property and financial matters' (APTCS, 2023). Its vision statement commits to working in partnership with its patrons and trustees and with the CEP, the SSS and the CPSMA in order to 'provide and contribute to initial and ongoing professional development for key personnel within the Catholic secondary school system (especially for patrons, trustees and management)' (APTCS 2022, p.6) and, in conjunction with the SSS, it provides induction training for new BoM members (JMB/AMCSS/SSS 2021, p.23).

This synopsis has outlined the stated aims and aspirations surrounding primary and secondary Catholic education in Ireland. It has considered statements about the nature and purpose of Catholic schools and sketched the respective roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders. It has pointed to the collective recognition, as reflected in the four ecclesial documents, of the need for, and importance of, initial and ongoing training and faith development to support school personnel in their roles. It has also presented an overview of the multiplicity of managerial, representative and support structures that have evolved to assist patrons, trusts, BoMs and school staff in fulfilling their roles.

Summary of Findings and Recommendations

All the reports listed below indicate the need for further research in Catholic education.

Report 1 Leaders and Staff in Catholic Schools in Ireland: Demographics and Religious Profile

Summary of Findings

- There are high levels of affiliation to Roman Catholicism across all personnel cohorts included in this survey. Roman Catholics constitute 94 per cent of those who responded to the survey questionnaire. The proportion of Roman Catholics, as a percentage of all personnel, ranges from almost 98 per cent of principals, deputy principals, and religious education teachers to 88 per cent of teaching staff.

- The proportion of respondents who believe in God (86%) is lower than the proportion of respondents who identify as Roman Catholic (94%), and among self-declared Catholics, just 91 per cent believe in God.

- Most self-declared Roman Catholics do not attend a religious service each week, although almost 60 per cent of them do so at least twice per month. Board of management (BoM) members attend religious services more frequently than do other personnel cohorts, while religious education teachers (at secondary school level) have the second highest level of attendance at services. Less than a quarter of teachers attend a religious service each week.

- Age emerges as a determinant of religious identity and religiosity across all personnel cohorts, and there are notable differences between younger and older personnel. Older people are more likely to adhere to Roman Catholicism and be religious, while younger people are less likely to believe in God, attend religious services, or identify as religious. The patterns that emerge from this survey in respect of the influence of age indicate that the make-up of personnel in Catholic schools is becoming increasingly non-Catholic, and this trend is likely to continue over the coming years.

- Secondary data on religious affiliation and religiosity in Ireland indicate that Catholic schools are operating in an increasingly secular environment, and whatever demand there may be for Catholic education, there is a declining pool of personnel from which to recruit the people who can give effect to it.

There are no recommendations, given the descriptive nature of this report.

Report 2 Stakeholders in Catholic Schools in Ireland: Training, Knowledge and Support

Summary of Findings

- At primary level, almost a third (32%) of board of management (BoM) members, over half of principals and deputy principals (54%), and 60 per cent of teachers report receiving no training or continuing professional development (CPD) from their patrons or trusts to assist them in their roles. At secondary level, 14 per cent of BoM members, over a fifth (22%) of principals and deputy principals, and 46 per cent of RE teachers state likewise. Hereafter, where principals are referenced in this report, research findings also include deputy principals.

- Of those who received training, 29 per cent of primary school BoM members and a comparable percentage (28%) of secondary school BoM members experience it as ongoing or as occurring at least once a year or more. This applies to just over a quarter (26%) of primary school principals and 60 per cent of secondary school principals, 5 per cent of primary school teachers, and 46 per cent of secondary school RE teachers. For the remainder, training was once-off or less often than yearly.

- Slightly less than three-quarters (71%) of primary school BoM members and more than half (54%) of secondary BoM members who received training believe that the Catholic ethos was not covered in that training to a large extent. The same can also be said of under three-quarters (70%) of primary principals and over a third (38%) of secondary principals.

- Among those who received training, on a scale of 1–10, where 1 equals not useful and 10 equates to very useful, over half (58%) of primary teachers and almost two-thirds (64%) of RE teachers awarded their training a score of 6 (out of 10) or higher, and 8 per cent of teachers at primary level and 14 per cent of secondary RE teachers awarded it a score of 10.

- In the primary cohort, 40 per cent of principals and teachers disagreed or strongly disagreed that opportunities for faith development are offered to them, while the same applied to 29 per cent of staff in the secondary context.

- At primary level, 80 per cent of the combined cohorts of BoM respondents, principals and teachers are unsure or say they have not heard of the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference pastoral letter for Catholic Schools: *Vision 08* (ICBC, 2008). At secondary level, this applies to 60 per cent of the total BoM, principal and RE teacher cohorts.

- Across these cohorts, of those who have heard of *Vision 08* at primary level, almost three in five (59%) report little to no familiarity with it. The same applies to over two in five (42%) of the combined secondary BoM, principal and RE teacher cohorts.

- Of the combined BoM and staff cohorts at primary level, 83 per cent are unsure or state they have not heard of *Share the Good News – National Directory for Catechesis in Ireland* (*SGN* hereafter) (IEC, 2010). The same can be said of almost three-quarters (72%) of secondary BoM members, principals and RE teachers.

- At primary level, more than half (58%) of the combined BoM and staff cohorts who have heard of *Share the Good News* have little to no familiarity with it. This is also the case for almost half (49%) of the secondary BoM, principal and RE teacher cohorts.

- Over three-quarters (78%) of primary BoM members and staff are unsure or report that have not heard of *Understanding and living the ethos in a Catholic primary school: a process centred on conversations* (CSP 2019). At secondary level, and in relation to *Understanding and living the ethos in a Catholic voluntary secondary school* (CSP 2016a), the same applies to 44 per cent of BoM members, principals and RE teachers.

- Of those who have heard of the aforementioned documents, in the primary context over half of board members and staff (52%) have little to no familiarity with it. At secondary level, this applies to almost one-third of the combined BoM, principal and RE teacher cohorts.

Summary of Recommendations

- To build on the positive findings and to mitigate the challenges that have also been identified, there is an urgent need for increased resources to be allocated by patrons and trusts to both introductory and ongoing training/CPD for all school personnel, particularly with regard to identity and ethos. As noted, this recommendation echoes similar calls for support made in the Genesis Report (CPSMA/CSP/AMCSS 2019, p.59). These additional resources are required across both school levels, with the need particularly acute at primary level, especially among principals and teachers. To inform the allocation of extra resources, it is recommended that an in-depth evaluation of training provision – including quality, quantity and accountability – take place at both school levels.

- As outlined in the Overview to this series and alluded to in Section 1 above, the structure of Catholic education in Ireland involves a range of diocesan education offices, managerial and representative organisations, and trust bodies, all of whom hold some responsibility for training. In order to avoid possible duplication or overconcentration on particular areas of training (such as governance over school ethos), it seems clear from the research findings that more clarity

is needed around the parameters of responsibility (that is, who does what, when, where, why and how?), and around the feasibility for delivery (that is, to what degree are the varying bodies able to meet the demand that exists?). In particular, it is notable that more organisations exist to support training at secondary level than at primary level, which is by far the larger sector. Given the reported inadequacy of training provision, particularly at primary level, what appears to be an imbalanced distribution of support is an issue that merits greater attention.

- As well as at national level, there is a need for more clarity around the parameters of responsibility around the provision of training at school level too. Official policy indicates that it is a shared responsibility between patrons/trust, BoMs, the school principal and individual initiative. Chief responsibility lies with patrons and trusts and their BoM delegates who, in turn, devolve operational responsibility to principals. In this scenario, where everyone has some responsibility, unless it is crystal clear which aspects of overall training policy and delivery are to be overseen, monitored and evaluated, and by whom, there is the risk that everyone's responsibility becomes no one's responsibility in the assumption that someone else is taking care of it. This, then, is also recommended as an area that requires further examination by all stakeholders.

- The quality and quantity of patron/trust training for teachers at both levels in delivering the RE curriculum also merits some consideration. While those who received such training reported generally positively regarding its usefulness, this was slightly more the case at secondary level than at primary level, with fairly small percentages at both levels awarding top marks in terms of efficacy.

- When it is considered that 33 per cent of primary principals and 50 per cent of teachers disagreed or strongly disagreed that faith development opportunities are offered to them, and the same applied to 29 per cent of staff in the secondary context, it is clear that this is a further area that does not appear to be receiving the priority accorded to it in ecclesial documents. While this affects both school levels, it is especially acute at primary level, especially among the youngest age cohort. It is therefore recommended that this is a matter which requires much greater attention by patrons/trusts and their representative and managerial bodies.

- This report has established a general lack of knowledge regarding the four ecclesial documents that inform both Irish Catholic education and this research study. Despite the familiarity deficit, the research findings still offer some reassurance that there is evidence of a nurturing of Catholic identity and ethos in schools which correlates with official expectations, in spite of gaps in a number of areas highlighted in this and accompanying reports. Nevertheless, the persistence of such a lack of knowledge of the content of these documents raises questions about the effectiveness of the dissemination of the latter and the practicality of their being utilised in schools. Further investigation into the processes of dissemination of these ecclesial documents among stakeholders is warranted. Why is it that there is such a lack of knowledge and familiarity with these documents? It is recommended that there is a shared understanding between all the stakeholders about the ecclesial nature and purpose of Catholic education.

- A further area for consideration is the variety of language, emphases, targets and indicators of achievement presented in the ecclesial documents – and in other support handbooks from managerial and representative bodies – to convey comparable understandings of Catholic identity and ethos. While these documents are largely equivalent and there are no contradictions between them, it is suggested that arriving at an economy of terminology about what is core to Catholic identity and ethos might assist understanding of these concepts and of how they can be embodied in schools. A related point is the interchangeability of language that occurs when discussing areas such as faith development as 'spiritual development' or 'faith formation' or 'catechesis'. Pertinent examples occur in *Understanding and living the ethos at primary level* when the CSP details one of its organisational aims as being to 'support Catholic educators in the core activities of learning and teaching in order to foster high quality lifelong learning and faith development for all learners' (2019, p.7). No further mentions are made of faith development in this document. However, 'the spiritual development of pupils' (CSP 2019, p.16. p.19, p.62) is emphasised as a central educational aim, and 'faith formation' (CSP 2019, p.19. p.59) is recognised as an integral component of the RE programme. Its sister document for second level also emphasises the centrality of 'the spiritual development' and 'faith formation' of students (CSP 2016a, p.30), and it stresses the importance of 'faith development, for the Board of Management, students, staff and parents' (CSP 2016a, p.31). Though it is not uncommon for such terminology to be used synonymously, it has been observed elsewhere that when 'a certain fluidity exists in the use of terms' (Renehan and Williams 2015, p.76; Horrell 2018, p.7; Cullen 2013, p.6; Cunnane 2000, p.2), it can lead to 'a lack of definitional consensus' (Doherty 2020, p.38), which may hinder clarity and understanding.

- The foregoing observations and recommendations are relevant here given the suggestion made by a primary BoM member that providing documentation may, in some instances, be considered the equivalent of in-person training provision by patrons, trusts and their representatives, particularly with regard to identity and ethos. This is also implied in the attention given to these concepts in the four ecclesial documents and in the BoM publications from both the CPSMA and the JMB/AMCSS. However, in light of the research findings, and if the websites of the latter two organisations are also indicators of provision, it could be concluded that disproportionate attention is given to face-to-face governance training compared with identity and ethos training that may be more reliant on reading and information materials, chiefly directed at BoMs and/or principals. It is therefore recommended that, if they are envisaged as fundamental training mechanisms, more attention is brought to bear on how official documents from patrons/trustees and support publications from managerial and representative bodies can be appropriated in ways that are meaningful and practical to those in schools with the task of actualising the richness of the philosophy contained within them.

Report 3 Commitment to Faith Development & Religious Practice in Catholic Schools in Ireland

Summary of Findings

1. Mission statements based on Gospel values and if they influence policy.

- At primary level, the vast majority of school staff (86%) confirm that their schools have mission statements based on Gospel values. Their Board of Management (BoM) members are less convinced: just three out of five of them (59%) can affirm this to be the case and only two out of five (40%) believe that school policy documents are linked to them.

- The vast majority of secondary school staff (89%) and BoM members confirm the existence of mission statements based on Gospel values. However, a lesser number, just over two-thirds, are satisfied that policy development is largely linked to these statements.

2. How well Catholic schools live the Catholic ethos.

- The majority of primary principals (69%) report that they ensure their staff understand Catholic ethos 'to a large extent'. This finding is confirmed by teachers, who also report in large numbers that 'to a large extent' they 'respect' (77%) and 'witness' (62%) to the ethos. At secondary level, staff members are more likely to 'respect' (68%) than to 'witness' (57%) to Catholic ethos, but clearly the majority of staff report doing both.

- In contrast, less than half of primary BoM members (43%) surveyed report that they ensure that teachers uphold the school's ethos; most of the remainder (42%) report leaving this responsibility to the principal. At secondary level, however, the vast majority of BoM members (86%) report ensuring that teachers uphold the school's ethos.

- Whereas just over four-fifths of those surveyed, at both primary and secondary level, state that they respect and witness to their school's Catholic ethos, this figure becomes less reassuring on closer examination. It is evident, in fact, that commitment to Catholic ethos among teachers is on a trajectory of decline, dropping steadily at primary level and more dramatically at secondary level across the age cohorts. At primary level, there is a significant gap between the numbers who identify as 'respecting' and 'witnessing' to the Catholic ethos. Just over half (53%) of the youngest cohort of primary teachers state that they witness to the ethos to a large extent. It is interesting to note that the 50–59 age category has a significantly higher rate (75%) of witness to a large extent than the older 60–69 age category, which is less than the 30–39 age cohort (57% versus 59%). At secondary level, almost 3 in 10 teachers (28%) aged 18–29 report not 'witnessing' to Catholic ethos at all, or doing so only to a limited extent.

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While BoM members, both primary and secondary, report high levels of confidence that their schools are being run in accordance with the ethos and educational philosophy of their trustees, notably fewer members report that issues in relation to Catholic identity appear regularly as agenda items at BoM meetings. Just under 30 per cent at primary level and 40 per cent at secondary level report that such matters are 'to a large extent' regularly tabled at their meetings.

3. Prayer and the liturgical life of the school.

- Prayer forms an integral part of board meetings according to 72 per cent of BoM respondents in the primary sector, and in almost all cases (96%), primary principals report that some time is devoted to prayer during the school day. Similarly, the majority of principals (82%) agree at least to some extent that meetings in school usually begin with a prayer. Teachers' views regarding frequency of prayer in school differ somewhat: three out of five (59%) report praying with their pupils a few times each day, and a further one in five (20%) just once a day. A minority (13%) state that they pray with pupils only very occasionally, rarely, or never at all.

- At secondary level, the situation is different: over half of respondents (53%) agree that time is set aside at least to some extent for daily prayer with pupils.

- There is a lack of clarity regarding the provision of a sacred space or prayer space in primary schools. The majority of principals (59%) reported yes, with just half of teachers (48%) and less than a third (32%) of other staff agreeing. The majority of secondary respondents (70%), in contrast, agreed that sacred spaces are provided.

- In regard to marking particular religious celebrations in primary schools, approximately four out of five respondents (78% to 85%, depending on the feast) report marking the main liturgical seasons. At secondary level, over 90 per cent of principals respond similarly, but the percentage drops to just over 80 per cent for the rest of the staff.

4. Provision of opportunities to develop a personal faith in Jesus Christ.

- Just under two out of five (38%) of BoM members at primary level perceive that their board ensures to a large extent that pupils in their schools have opportunities to develop a personal faith in Jesus Christ, with just half (52%) of all respondents satisfied that this is true to some or at least to a limited extent. Just under three out of five primary school principals (57%) agree that their decision-making is influenced by the person of Jesus Christ to a large extent, and a higher number (76%) report taking the faith formation of their pupils seriously. A similar number (72%) report providing the opportunity to develop a personal faith in Christ as a central educational aim in their schools. The number of teachers who agree with their principals that this is the case, however, is lower (51%), and for other school staff it is lower still (48%). Notably, a fifth of teachers and other personnel (21%) disagree that developing a personal faith in Christ is a central educational aim. Related questions regarding how the message of Christ is at the heart of the life of the school yielded similar responses.

- At secondary level, levels of agreement in respect of the provision of opportunities for the development of a personal faith in Jesus Christ are generally lower than at primary level. Just under half (45%) don't agree that this can be considered a central educational aim in their school. Once again, we see BoM members and principals responding significantly more positively than

school teaching staff and other personnel. One-fifth of all respondents disagreed with the statement. It is worth noting as well that one-half of RE teachers (50%) either are neutral or disagree that developing a personal relationship with Christ is a central educational aim in their schools.
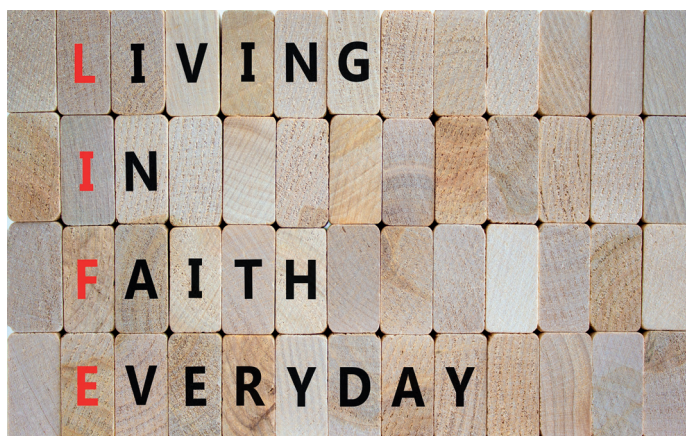
5. Provision of opportunities for the faith development of pupils and staff.

- The vast majority (92%) of BoM members in primary schools report positively regarding how faith development is considered a central educational aim of their school. Three-quarters (76%) of principals also report high levels of commitment to this aim and 80 per cent affirm that opportunities in this regarded are actually provided to pupils. The figure for teachers in response to the same question, however, is just over half, at 56 per cent.

- Just over half of primary teachers (53%) report that their RE classes include faith formation, sacramental experience, and awareness of stewardship for creation to a large extent, with most of the remainder (39%) reporting that this happens only to some or to a limited extent. Another matter is the frequency of RE classes: only one in six (17%) teachers provide RE daily; just under one in five (18%) report teaching it four times a week, and one in four (25%) report teaching it on three days a week. Almost one in ten (8%) report rarely or never teaching RE.

- While one in three (33%) primary principals report that they have had opportunities for faith development made available to them, this figure falls to less than one in five (18%) among teachers.

- In regard to secondary schools, four out of five respondents (78%) across the board reported positively in regard to the provision of faith development opportunities for pupils. Over half of principals (55%) state that they ensure to a large extent that faith formation is integral to RE classes, and almost all (91%) say that they try at least to some extent to support and develop the faith life of their staff. Meanwhile, the majority of BoM members in secondary schools perceive that their board attends to the matter of faith formation (see Figure 3.4.1 in Report 3), yet only just over half of the principals report being held to account by the board in regard to Catholic identity (Figure 3.4.2 in Report 3). Furthermore, less than half of secondary personnel, including BoM members, report agreement in regard to the provision of faith development opportunities for themselves.

6. Care for others, especially the poor, and the moral development of pupils.

- At both primary and secondary levels across all cohorts, there is wide agreement that moral education in accordance with Catholic principles is promoted in their schools and that their schools promote care for others, especially the poor. There is a notable gap in the level of agreement on this, however, between levels expressed by principals and teachers. Furthermore, the number of teachers who are either neutral, in disagreement with, or say they do not know, in regard to both of these matters, is not insignificant.

7. Respect and welcome for pupils of other faiths.

- In primary schools, almost three-quarters (71%) of all staff agree that pupils of other faiths in Catholic primary schools are 'free' to express their beliefs, but just half (49%) take the view that such pupils are 'welcome' to practise their beliefs. According to this research, the view from the classroom was bleaker, with only two out of five teachers (42%) confirming that their school 'welcomed' pupils in this way.

- At secondary level, the 'freedom' to express their beliefs (77%) and the 'welcome' to do so (61%) is reported as somewhat higher than at primary level, at 71 per cent and 49 per cent respectively.

8. Respect and witness to the Catholic ethos by staff.

- The survey clearly demonstrated that there is a significant differentiation to be noted between 'respecting' and 'witnessing' to the Catholic ethos. Figure 3.2.3 (Report 3) shows that just over half (53%) of the youngest cohort of primary teachers state that they witness to the ethos to a large extent. It is interesting to note that the 50–59 age category has a significantly higher rate (75%) of witness 'to a large extent' than the older 60–69 age category, which is less than the 30–39 age cohort (57% versus 59%). However, over four-fifths in all age categories state that they witness to the Catholic ethos, whether 'to some extent' or 'to a large extent'. Overall, the trajectory in terms of witness and respect for ethos indicates a decline among younger cohorts, though this is not as steep at primary level as is the case at secondary level, as we shall see below.

Summary of Recommendations

The following steps towards Mission and Practice Integrity are suggested by the findings that have been under discussion here:

- Patrons need to implement effective mechanisms that hold BoMs to account in regard to holding schools to account for their Catholic ethos (quis custodiet custodes?). This needs to be accompanied by development of appropriate selection and recruitment criteria and provision of induction and CPD programmes for board members.

- Mechanisms also need to be put in place both to audit and monitor how Catholic ethos is being lived out on a daily basis in schools. This needs to be accompanied by development of appropriate selection and recruitment criteria for key school personnel and the provision of induction and CPD programmes that specifically relate to the school's role in faith development for both staff and pupils.

- Current initial teacher education programmes, both at Catholic and secular Higher Education Institutions, as well as staff induction and CPD programmes, all need to be reviewed in light of the Catholic Church's vision and requirements for Catholic schools. In conducting this review, the findings of declining commitment to Catholic ethos among younger teachers needs examination and response at programmatic level.

- The lived reality in Catholic schools, as evident from this research, needs to be better registered and taken into account in composing key documents and directives of the Irish Episcopal Conference and of management and trust bodies. In this regard, recent research and declarations from the Dicastery for Culture and Education need to be given careful consideration and incorporated.

- Careful research and investigation are required in regard to (1) how many schools under Catholic patronage are required to serve the mission of the Catholic Church in Ireland, and (2) how many can be meaningfully provided, given the findings in regard to commitment to Catholic ethos among teachers under 29, and who will be the future principals (see Conway et al. 2023).

Report 4 Principals as Leaders of Identity and Ethos in Catholic Schools in Ireland

Summary of Findings

- Personal commitment is strong among current principals of Catholic schools. For instance, 88 per cent of principals say they model a Christian way of life. At primary level, 83 per cent agree with the statement 'my Christian faith helps me to promote the wellbeing of all students'. At second level, 97 per cent agree with that statement. However, whereas 86 per cent of principals aged 50 or over at second level describe themselves as committed and practising Catholics, this figure falls to 56 per cent for those under the same age.

- Among principals, there is a linear relationship between a) age and belief in God, with the pattern more pronounced at second level, and b) age and how important God is in their lives. Whereas 61 per cent of those over 60 years rate this importance at the highest level (5 in a 0–5 point scale),

this gradually falls by age bracket to less than a third (30%) of those under 39 years. These patterns give rise to a succession concern, confirmed by the qualitative data.

- Principals are more likely to agree with ethos-related indicators than other cohorts surveyed. For instance, 85 per cent of secondary principals agree that parents of incoming students are formally introduced to the school's Catholic ethos, whereas the corresponding figure for staff stands at 58 per cent. At primary level, only 49 per cent of teachers agree that parents of incoming students are formally introduced to the school's Catholic ethos, compared with 66 per cent of principals.

- Qualitative findings reveal that strategic use of the competency-based process to appoint principals (second level) has the potential to influence the identity and ethos of a Catholic school. The 'leadership of a faith school' competency allows for the appointment of principals who are willing and able to lead Catholic school identity and ethos.

- Among primary principals, 54 per cent have not received professional development from their patron/trust to lead the ethos of their school. This compares less favourably with 22 per cent at secondary level who state they have not received training from their patron or trust 'for their role as a faith leader.' The qualitative data uncover an almost universal appeal from principals for meaningful ethos-related professional development and support.

Summary of Recommendations

Recommendation 1: The key competency 'Leadership of a faith school' should be embedded in the process at primary level. Those charged with appointing principals, such as BoMs and appointment process selection committees, understand the depth and breadth of this competency, consider it deeply, and employ it carefully in the principal appointment process.

Recommendation 2: A support system for existing and emerging leaders, in consultation with those leaders, is put in place as a matter of urgency. This should include practical support around areas identified by principals, such as leading liturgy and faith development opportunities for staff.

Report 5 Religious Education as an Expression of Identity and Ethos in Catholic Schools in Ireland

Summary of Findings

- 84 per cent of primary school principals state that they ensure Religious Education (RE) receives its allotted time. However, the reality is disputed by data from other cohorts. For instance, just 17 per cent of teachers say they teach RE every day, and 40 per cent of teachers teach the subject twice a week or less.

- 33 per cent of teachers follow the curriculum and textbooks approved by the Irish Episcopal Conference (IEC) only to some/a limited extent, and 5 per cent not at all. This stands in marked contrast to the 90 per cent of principals who report they always or mostly ensure that the curriculum and textbooks are used.

- Qualitative findings reveal three main reasons why some teachers are not fully meeting RE requirements: lack of personal faith/commitment to RE; time pressures/curriculum overload; and lack of external support and oversight of RE.

- 79 per cent of those who teach RE in Catholic secondary schools hold a degree or equivalent in RE.

- The qualitative data uncover significant concern about Senior Cycle Religious Education (SCRE), with an overall sense pervading the data of SCRE as directionless. Qualitative evidence emerged of a lack of standards, lack of support, and lack of oversight of SCRE. Participants identified focus on the quality and oversight of RE as a priority for patrons and trusts.

- Catholic schools at both levels are clearly sensitive to the presence of pupils of faiths and worldviews other than Christian. For instance, 71 per cent of respondents (primary) agreed that students of a faith other than Christian have the freedom to express their faith.

- Experience of the role of diocesan advisor varies considerably in both primary and secondary schools. For instance, 25 per cent of primary school teachers interviewed had never heard of the diocesan advisor and had no idea of their role.

Summary of Recommendations

Recommendation 1: A system of sustained, life-giving support for teachers of Religious Education needs to be developed and implemented in consultation with teachers as a matter of urgency.

Recommendation 2: A first step to address the plight of Senior Cycle Religious Education (SCRE) is the development of a set of indicators for second level RE, similar to those indicators for RE in primary schools (CSP 2019). This should include a programme/suite of programmes for SCRE appropriate to the reality of Catholic schools in Ireland today. Once developed, SCRE needs to be resourced and supported to meet these indicators.

Recommendation 3: A model of oversight of RE needs to be developed, supported and implemented as a matter of urgency. The indicators of RE at primary level and development of a similar set at second level might be helpful in this regard, with evaluation and support of RE to meet these indicators. However, both sets need to be resourced and implemented so that oversight of RE can occur in a clear, transparent and effective way.

Although the findings presented in this report could be informative for school patrons, policymakers, researchers, school leaders, RE teachers, and students and their parents, some limitations should be outlined. Firstly, the study at second level focused on SCRE rather than Junior Cycle Religious Education (JCRE). The experience of stakeholders in Catholic schools of the State-sponsored approach to RE at Junior Cycle, how/if JCRE is adapted for Catholic schools, and how/if it upholds the ethos of the school, is an area for further research. Finally, the data pertain to the perspectives of RE teachers, school staff, principals, deputy principals and BoM members. The voices of both students and their parents regarding RE would add to this field of research. These limitations should be addressed in future reports and research papers.

Catholic Schools in Ireland: Responsibility, Oversight and Governanc

Summary of Findings

The documents from both the Department of Education and the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference (ICBC) outline very clearly the wide range of responsibilities that rest with all patrons and trusts in the oversight of their schools. Furthermore, the patrons and trusts delegate these responsibilities to their Boards of Management (BoMs), who in turn entrust a significant level of responsibility to the principals and deputy principals in their schools. This survey has examined how these responsibilities are in fact being discharged by the various levels of oversight, leadership and management.

Catholic schools exist primarily as instruments of the Church's mission, as stated in the official statements of the Church and those of the ICBC. Being part of the Church's mission constitutes an essential dimension of the ethos of a Catholic school. This includes proposing the Gospel message to all those involved and facilitating the Catholic members of the whole school community in developing

their relationship with the person of Jesus Christ. Catholic schools are inclusive communities, welcoming of all their members irrespective of their beliefs, while paying particular attention to how the message of the Gospel is explicitly proposed and lived on a day-to-day basis.

When one looks at how the patrons and trusts are exercising their responsibilities, it appears that they are not proactive in communicating the primary importance of their ethos to the school communities; nor do they appear to demand accountability from them regarding the implementation of ethos-related issues, as the data from the survey indicate.

In the primary school sector, training is provided for BoMs, but the provision is uneven. Over two-thirds (68%) of primary BoM respondents have had some training from their patron or trust to specifically prepare them to serve on the board of a Catholic school, leaving close to another third (32%) without training. In terms of the efficacy of training provided, 29 per cent of primary BoM members report that their training specifically covered Catholic ethos to a large extent, while for almost half (49%), this is true only to some extent. Over a fifth (22%) are unsure or say that they did not really or did not at all receive ethos-specific training.

The significant lack of training for primary school BoMs and the quality of that training raise significant concerns about how seriously the patrons are taking their responsibilities in this regard. Question may be raised as to how well the patrons are equipped to discharge their responsibilities or if they have explicitly delegated this responsibility to someone capable of competently discharging it. If proper education and training in matters of ethos are not provided for BoMs, it is very hard to expect that BoMs will be in any significant position to oversee the expression of ethos in the life of the school.

In terms of accountability, again there are issues brought to light in the survey. Just over a quarter (26%) of BoM respondents perceive that their board reports to their patron or trust on the school's faith life, while the vast majority, at 73 per cent, either do not engage in this practice or are unaware if it occurs. Given that the faith life of the school is one of the central reasons for the Church's involvement in the first place, it appears quite startling that such a low level of oversight is demanded in this regard. The Catholic Primary Schools Management Association (CPSMA) *Board of Management Handbook* (2016) states that 'Board of Management members will have an opportunity, at least once a year, to review issues related to the Catholic ethos in the school and to report on this to the Patron' (#149). The survey evidence indicates that the policy set out by the CPSMA is generally not being followed. Even where BoMs provide a report to the patron, it would appear that the level of interest in such reports is incredibly low. Of those who do submit a report, only 14 per cent receive some form of feedback, whether written (4%), through a feedback meeting (2%), or through feedback being given by a patron or trust nominee (8%). All the evidence here points to the need for a radical review of how the systems of accountability are exercised in the primary sector.

If the interest of the patrons is as low as this survey suggests, it is hard to expect that BoMs or others in leadership roles will be motivated to attend to ethos issues to any significant extent. It is remarkable, however, that so much good work is done despite this apathy on the part of patrons. Furthermore, given the incongruity between the stated vision and expectations of the bishops and how they exercise accountability, a serious credibility gap arises about their commitment to Catholic education that needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

Summary of Recommendations

In light of the findings of the surveys it is recommended that:

1. Greater clarity be provided to all stakeholders about the various levels of responsibility for the safeguarding and promotion of the Catholic ethos of schools.
2. Patrons and trustees invest in significant training for BoMs so that all members are familiar with a comprehensive vision of the nature and purpose of Catholic education and schooling.
3. Patrons and trustees ensure that every school has a mission statement that has been formulated in partnership with all the stakeholders.
4. Patrons and trustees take a more proactive role in the recruitment of members of BoMs, not leaving the responsibility with the school principal.
5. Patrons and trustees take measures to be better informed as to the actual day-to-day realities in their schools.
6. Ethos be a priority item on the agenda of each BoM meeting.
7. Principals and deputy principals be required to have a qualification in faith-based school leadership.
8. All new members of staff receive substantial orientation on the school's ethos on commencement of employment in a school.
9. Systems of accountability be put in place to ensure compliance with the school's ethos.
10. Regular in-service be provided for all staff relating to ethos and founding vision.
11. Opportunities for faith development be offered regularly for all staff members.
12. Serious attention be given to the quality of the curriculum for Religious Education and its implementation.
13. The role of diocesan advisors be reassessed with a view to their being more proactive in ensuring that the Catholic ethos of schools is being upheld, that Religious Education and the statutory allocation of time is provided, and that faith formation is provided for all.
14. Communications systems regarding ethos be strengthened within schools, between principals and BoMs, and between BoMs and patrons and trustees.
15. Patrons and trustees support the development of research work on Catholic education and disseminate the resulting data and information to all stakeholders.
16. Patrons of primary schools make greater efforts to divest a significant proportion of their schools and ensure a better compliance with a Catholic ethos of those that remain.
17. Proper systems of accountability with respect to the implementation and development of ethos in schools be put in place and proper oversight exercised by each responsible level.
18. Systems of accountability for the maintenance of ethos be benchmarked against the vision of Catholic education set out in official Church documents and the documents on education published by the IEC.
19. The IEC be more proactive in engaging in consultations with all stakeholders in Catholic education when preparing guidelines and directives for schools.
20. Effective systems be put in place to advocate for Catholic education with government, the public, parents, teachers' unions, and the media.

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Appendix 1 Content of Survey Questionnaires

Variable Categories	Variables	Respondents at primary school	Respondents at secondary school
About the school	Location *(county)* Diocese Patron Body / Trust *(secondary only)*	All Respondents	All Respondents
About the respondent	Role (BoM, Principal, Teacher, RE Teacher, Other) Length of service / involvement	All Respondents	All Respondents
Training and Knowledge	Receipt of training / CPD Experience of training CPD Knowledge of, and familiarity with, key documents	BoM, Principals, Teachers	BoM, Principals, RE Teachers
Mission and Ethos	Ethos-related commitment and practices Reporting to the patron Mission statement and policy Oversight and support roles Oversight of RE	BoM, Principals	BoM, Principals
Religious Education	RE in the school / classroom The Diocesan Advisor	Principals, Teachers	Principals, RE Teachers
Faith – beliefs and practices – in the school	Faith development Ethos Prayer Celebration of the Christian Year Inclusion (of others)	Principals, Teachers	All Respondents
Patronage	Patronage Preference	Principals, Teachers	
Commitment	Ethos – respect, witness Attendance at ceremonies	Teacher	Subject Teachers
Personal attributes	Gender Age cohort Religious affiliation Frequency of attendance at religious services Belief in God and importance of God Practice of faith	All Respondents	All Respondents