

Board of Education – Report 2020

**BOARD OF EDUCATION OF THE GENERAL SYNOD  
OF THE CHURCH OF IRELAND**

The aims of the General Synod Board of Education are to:

- Define the policy of the Church in education, both religious and secular and, in promotion of this policy, to take such steps as may be deemed necessary to co-ordinate activities in all fields of education affecting the interests of the Church of Ireland;
- Maintain close contact with Government, the Department of Education and Skills, Diocesan Boards of Education, and other educational and school authorities with a view to ascertaining the most efficient and economical use of resources including funds, transport facilities and teachers;
- Study any legislation or proposed legislation likely to affect the educational interests of the Church of Ireland and take such action with respect thereto as it may deem necessary;
- Deliberate and confer on all educational matters affecting the interests of the Church;
- Make such enquiries as it shall deem to be requisite and communicate with government authorities and all such bodies and persons as it shall consider necessary.

**Board of Education NI - General Synod Report 2020**

**AIMS**

The current aims of the Board of Education NI are, to:

- Develop, in conjunction with other churches, a clear and shared vision of education shaped by core values of the Christian faith;
- Advise the Synod of developments in educational policy in NI and represent the Church as an educational partner to the Department of Education and other educational bodies;
- Liaise with other churches within the Transferor Representatives' Council (TRC) in promoting the interests and safeguarding the rights of transferors;
- Facilitate the nomination of transferor governors to controlled primary and post-primary schools;
- Make submissions to relevant government departmental consultations;
- Engage with the Education Authority, the Controlled Schools Support Council and other sectoral bodies;

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- Engage with Institutions of Higher Education regarding the future preparation of teachers for the Controlled sector;
- Seek, in conjunction with other churches, continued curriculum support of the RE core syllabus in schools;
- Contribute to training and support for children's ministry in parishes, in particular as a member of the Church of Ireland Children's Ministry Network.

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. **New Decade, New Approach:** Financial crisis in schools putting pressure on all staff, education of children suffering;
2. **Education Authority:** Budget cuts and school rationalisation;
3. **Transferor Representatives' Council (TRC):** Draft of revised RE curriculum and supporting Collective Worship in Schools. Working closely with CSSC on 'ethos in schools';
4. **Controlled Schools Support Council (CSSC):** Supporting governors and giving a voice to the controlled sector;
5. **Board of Education NI Funding Scheme:** Connecting Parishes with local schools;
6. **Children's Ministry:** Funding support for diocesan projects;
7. **Membership.**

### REPORT

#### 1. 'New Decade, New Approach'

The Board of Education is encouraged by the re-establishment of the local devolved government in Northern Ireland. The Secretary on behalf of the TRC has met with the new Minister for Education and a number of the members of the Education committee in Stormont to outline the concerns the church have for education in NI.

The Board of Education is concerned that the government will uphold their promises of sufficient additional funding that is required. This will hopefully impact on areas such as: ending the teachers' dispute and working to rule; bringing most schools into a surplus rather than deficit situation; providing sufficient funds to bring all school buildings up to current standards.

The Board of Education welcomes the prospect of a significant review in the education system as long as there are the funds and the will to make any changes that may be proposed. The Board of Education wants to protect and improve the status of Religious Education in schools as a full part of the curriculum. The Board of Education commends the Controlled Schools Support Council in stating that all Controlled Schools have a Christian Ethos in which those of all faiths and

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none are welcome. The board of Education would wish that this Christian ethos is protected under any review of education.

The Board of Education (NI) through the TRC have been making clear representations to the Department of Education, the Education Authority and other sectoral bodies.

### 2. **Education Authority (EA)**

Rev Amanda Adams is the Church of Ireland TRC representative on the EA Board. Although the Education Authority is the management authority for 522 controlled schools in Northern Ireland it also has statutory responsibilities in respect of all schools and Youth Service Provision. Consequently the EA Board has oversight responsibility for a budget of over £2 billion per annum, the welfare and performance of over 44,000 staff who provide an education for over 340,000 pupils, including those with special needs. The Board members are accountable to the Department of Education and ultimately the Minister of Education for their performance. Rev Adams chairs the Shared Education committee and is a member of a number of the other committees and working groups as well as the main EA Board. The Board of Education (NI) wishes to take this opportunity to thank her for her continuing hard work and the wisdom that she displays in all of this work and for the valuable contribution that she makes on behalf of the church.

TRC representation on the Education Authority Board ensures that the three main Protestant churches can maintain their direct influence in education in furtherance of their statutory rights and missional role of the Church. In addition to this, TRC representation on the Education Authority Board enhances the advocacy role of the Controlled Schools Support Council (CSSC) which represents over 96% of Controlled Schools in Northern Ireland, to this end a Memorandum of Understanding and Protocol between the TRC and CSSC help ensure that strategic and generic issues affecting Controlled Schools can be given proper consideration by the Education Authority Board and Executive. The TRC representation on the Education Authority also provides a de facto voice for the over 1500 transferor governors who serve on the Governing Boards of their local schools. The separate but complimentary roles undertaken by Dr Hamill, through the TRC and CSSC, and Rev Adams, through the TRC and EA, have greatly enhanced the effectiveness of the church in influencing the provision of education for children and young people in Northern Ireland.

In relation to the work of the Education Authority, the principal challenge continues to stem from severe budgetary constraints. During the current financial year 2019/20, despite achieving savings of over £20million, it is anticipated that there will still be a funding gap of £30million. School deficits also continue to rise with many schools struggling to meet increasing demands, particularly in respect of Special Education. Whilst Area Planning seeks to rationalise school places to meet changing demographic needs, this is a slow and

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cumbersome process. The overall ‘Area Strategic Plan’ is under review. Rationalising the school estate is part of an overall 10 year programme of transformation that the EA is implementing in conjunction with the Department of Education to improve educational provision in Northern Ireland.

The Education Authority has continued to make steady and positive progress in the area of Shared Education which not only provides educational benefits but also has significant societal benefits. Shared Education allows schools from different sectors, religious and socio-economic backgrounds to work together in partnership. Peace IV funding has enabled sharing to extend to include cross-border school partnerships as well. Educational benefits include sharing good practice, sharing resources, broadening curriculum choices and widening the social interactions of children and young people. The cross community work represented by Shared Education has not only significance for education but also for the church as it provides for a practical and positive expression of Christian unity.

### **3. Transferor Representatives’ Council (TRC)**

TRC has held meetings with a range of key stakeholders in the education sector including the Minister for Education, Permanent Secretary for Department of Education, the Education Authority, Stranmillis College, Controlled Schools Support Council (CSSC), and Council for Catholic Maintained Schools, Catholic Trustees Support Service, and Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education. The TRC has also engaged with local political parties to ensure they keep education at the forefront of their policies.

The TRC has gained a place on the Department of Education Area Planning Strategic Group and Dr Hamill is the TRC representative on this committee.

TRC representation on the Education Authority Board ensures that the three main Protestant churches can maintain their direct influence in education in furtherance of their statutory rights and missional role of the Church. In addition to this, TRC representation on the Education Authority Board enhances the advocacy role of the Controlled Schools Support Council (CSSC) which represents over 96% of Controlled Schools in Northern Ireland, to this end a Memorandum of Understanding and Protocol between the TRC and CSSC help ensure that strategic and generic issues affecting Controlled Schools can be given proper consideration by the Education Authority Board and Executive.

The TRC has been working closely with the CSSC on matters to do with Ethos in Schools. TRC launched their Ethos Toolkit for schools and this has been well received and is being used across the Controlled Sector.

The TRC has run four seminars supported by Love for Life and Evangelical Alliance across NI to look at how to deal with tricky moral issues that may occur in schools.

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The TRC has been working with representatives from the Catholic Church to agree the conditions required for creating Jointly Managed Church Schools. The working group have agreed on an ethos document (see appendix). This document is being put forward for approval at the Presbyterian General Assembly and the Methodist Conference. The motion before synod asks for approval of the ethos document and permission to continue with talks regarding legal implications.

The TRC is now chaired by Miss Rosemary Rainey OBE (Methodist representative). Mrs Helen McClenaghan has been a welcome and wise addition to TRC as a temporary Church of Ireland replacement for Bishop Good.

### 4. Controlled School Support Council

The Controlled Schools' Support Council (CSSC) is the advocacy body for Northern Ireland's controlled schools. Established in September 2016, it is gone from strength to strength and more than 95% of controlled Schools are members.

Dr Hamill is the Church of Ireland TRC representative on the CSSC Board. CSSC has gone from strength to strength raising the profile of the Controlled Sector. CSSC has lobbied on behalf of the sector on a range of issues including funding, standards, state of buildings and vexatious complaints. The Board of Education (NI) is delighted the impact CSSC has made in such a short period of time. The CSSC is also involved in Area Planning which is a major and comprehensive review of educational provision across Northern Ireland. CSSC supports schools facing changes and comments directly on the individual development proposals published by the Education Authority.

CSSC has recently launched an ethos toolkit to help schools examine their ethos and explore its development with staff and governors, with an implicit aim of embedding Christian values within all aspects of school life. The toolkit has been successfully rolled out for use by Controlled Schools across NI.

### 5. Board of Education NI Funding Scheme

The Board of Education NI has launched a funding scheme aimed at empowering parishes to engage more with their local schools. To date the Board has provided funding support for four projects, totalling £6300:

- Willowfield Parish - To fund finance awareness classes for Key Stage 2 in local East Belfast Schools. It is based on material developed by Christians Against Poverty.
- Holywood Parish - Initially for P7 in Holywood Primary School, the grant will help towards resources to deliver puppet ministry around Personal Development and Mutual Understanding focussing initially on Drug Awareness. With the resources they hope to expand the range of classes offered and the number of schools it will be offered to.

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- Florencecourt Parish - Working with a composite P4/5 looking at the current and historical links between St John's Parish and Florencecourt Primary School.
- Ardtree and Desertcreat - Involves P5-P7 pupils in Donaghey and Ballytreah Primaries. It will involve a Parish team visiting the school and running classes on the Psalms. They will finish off the project with a concert bringing both schools together.

### 6. Children's Ministry

The Board of Education has provided funding support for three projects under the Children's Ministry scheme for dioceses, totalling £2000:

- Armagh - A one day conference exploring how to support men to better engage in Children's ministry.
- Down and Dromore with Derry and Raphoe - A series of Makaton training sessions for clergy and volunteers.
- Connor - A diocesan weekend of support events for those working with children in parishes.

The Board of Education (NI) has been part of discussions to merge the Sunday School Society for Ireland and the Children's Ministry Network into a new Children's and Family Board. The Board of Education (NI) welcomes this development and looks forward to the new ministry strand as a core part of the work of the Church of Ireland.

### 7. Membership

Rev Malcolm Kingston joined as representative from Armagh Diocese.

Rev Catherine Simpson joined as representative from Down and Dromore Diocese.

Rev Malcolm Ferry joined as a co-opted member, he had formerly been a member for Derry Diocese.

Mr Jim Bunting retired after many years, the Board wishes to thank him for his loyal service.

The Board wishes to thank Dr Peter Hamill for his ongoing service and commitment to the Board.

## BOARD OF EDUCATION (NORTHERN IRELAND)

### *Ex-officio members*

The Archbishop of Armagh, Most Rev Dr RL Clarke (retired February 20)

Bishop of Clogher, Rt Rev FJ McDowell

Bishop of Down and Dromore, Rt Rev D McClay

Bishop of Kilmore, Rt Rev SF Glenfield

Bishop of Connor, Vacant

Bishop of Derry, Rt Rev A Foster

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Lay Hon Sec of General Synod, Mr K Gibson  
Clerical Hon Sec of General Synod, Ven GTW Davison

***Elected members***

Armagh	Rev M Kinston Mr TW Flannagan
Clogher	Vacant Mrs S Hogg
Derry	Vacant Mrs A Reid
Down	Rev C Simpson Vacant
Connor	Rev I Magowan Dr KF Dunn

***Co-opted members***

Miss F Boyd  
Mrs R Forde  
Mrs H McClenaghan  
Dr I Hickey  
Prof R Pritchard  
Rev AE Adams  
Rev Malcolm Ferry  
Mr M Johnston  
CIYD: Mr S Henry

***Honorary Secretary, Board of Education (Northern Ireland)***  
Vacant

***Honorary Treasurer, Board of Education (Northern Ireland)***  
Mr M Johnston

***Secretary, Board of Education (Northern Ireland)***  
Dr PJ Hamill, Church of Ireland House, 61-67 Donegall Street, Belfast BT1 2QH

**GENERAL SYNOD BOARD OF EDUCATION - EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Two members of the House of Bishops  
Ven GTW Davison  
Hon Sec: Mr K Gibson  
Mr J Bunting

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Mr T Flannagan  
Mr M Hall  
Rev BJJ O'Rourke  
Mr A Oughton

### **Appendix – covering issues that may arise when creating a Jointly Managed School**

#### **Governance**

- The Mission Statement is normally drawn up in consultation with the whole school community – staff, governors, students, parents. In the case of a JMCS, the Trustees would have a significant role in drawing up the Mission Statement as it is likely that the Mission statement would be in place prior to the school's formation
- The make-up of the Board of Governors will be as per DE guidelines: 4/9<sup>th</sup> Trustee (1 must be a parent of children at the school), 2/9<sup>th</sup> EA , 1/9<sup>th</sup> DE, 1/9<sup>th</sup> Parent, 1/9<sup>th</sup> Teacher + Principal (non-voting).
- The name of the school will be determined by the Trust body overseeing the school in consultation with the community.
- The uniform (colour, badge design ect.) is normally agreed by the Board of Governors in consultation with the students/parents
- The Scheme of Management for the school can put in place the need to have a Faith sub-committee/ ethos sub-committee if so desired
- Quality control of RE and collective worship will be a focus of the Board of Governors and the Trustee Body it will also involve Church support services.
- The outline ethos of the school will be set by the Trustee Body. The maintenance of the ethos will be a matter for the Board of Governors with ongoing Trustee support and monitoring.  
The details of how this arrangement will operate can be set out in the Scheme of Management of the school (or for all JMCS projects)
- The moral framework of the school will be set within the ethos and Mission statement of the school. It will be for the Board of Governors to ensure that the policies and practices of the school are in keeping with the school's ethos. This will include consideration of how the school determines the suitability of outside organisations to engage with the school.

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- There will need to be agreement on the ‘theology of the architecture’ which must reflect it as a church school. This may include things like symbols and pictures on display, and prayer spaces both in the building and in the playground.  
There will be a need to agree this ‘theology of architecture’ as part of the local community discussions – what would /would not be acceptable. This would then form the basis of a policy on symbols/images so that everyone was clear on the type of school they were committing to.
- Main selling point of JMCS to be emphasis on high educational values and community focus – not just a 9-5 school but a building for all the community. Faith based ethos / high quality education/ high standards of pastoral care/ emphasis on inclusion/diversity/all cultures and backgrounds educated together
- There will be Policy for governance at sensitive times, eg the Pope or the Queen dies. This will be a matter for the Board of Governors but is likely to be guided by statutory holidays/ closures

### **Staffing**

- *All staff must be sympathetic to Christian faith.* Specific posts may require certain denominations and this could be protected under FETO or any new arrangement put in place.
- The principal’s commitment to the school’s ethos can be part of the assessment process. It may be difficult to define their Christian faith
- Training is required above and beyond usual professional development in relation to the ethos of the school and how this impacts on policy development
- Staff policies to be developed:
  - *Staffing and recruitment*
  - *Admissions*
  - *Critical incident /bereavement*
  - *RE policy*
  - *Transition from nursery*
  - *School potential parent leaflet*
  - *Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Policy*
  - *Child protection*
  - *Positive Behaviour*

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The school will require all of the policies required of any school. These will be the responsibility of the Board of Governors who will ensure the policies reflect the ethos of the school. It may be necessary for the Trustee Body to provide guidance to the school on some sensitive policy areas through the Scheme of Management.

### **Church links**

- Local clergy will provide:
  - Key role in the community discussion prior to the establishment of the school
  - Pastoral support/ chaplaincy
  - Invitation to school to visit Churches
  - Participation in/ Leading assemblies
  - Sacramental preparation as required
- There should there be a Founders day when all Church leaders are invited to attend
- Carol services and any other church services may be:
  - In school with representatives of all Churches participating
  - Rotational services in all local Churches
  - Sacramental celebrations – all invited to attend

### **Teaching of RE, assemblies and faith development**

- RE curriculum will be delivered as follows:
  - Follow the NI curriculum
  - Schemes of work determined by the Board of Governors in discussion with Trustee Body
  - Day to day delivery a matter for the principal
  - Core curriculum determined by CCEA
  - Sacramental preparation by suitable qualified person
  - Education in other faiths as per curriculum
- Use and teaching of prayers and bible:
  - Custom and practices agreed by Board of Governors in line with school ethos
  - Prayers for all
  - Local sensitivities considered and an agreed understanding in place
  - An agreed child friendly version of the bible will be used

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- Church trails / walks will be encouraged, with a welcome by local clergy – normal school practice on off site visits observed
- The celebration of the church calendar, Christmas, Easter etc., will be agreed by Trustee Body in scheme of management and with support of Board of Governors
- Assemblies will be agreed by staff in conjunction with the Board of Governors, they may include:
  - Collective themes – lead by children / local clergy attending, participating
  - Liturgy of the Word – lead by local clergy – content/themes agreed with the principal
- The sacraments be taught to those who wish:
  - In school preparation by suitably qualified staff
  - Linkage and engagement with local clergy
  - Everyone invited to celebration
  - Constructive alternative for those who don't wish to partake
- There will be a focus on celebrating togetherness in faith through:
  - Assemblies
  - Prayer space in school
  - Common prayer
  - Church visits
  - Curriculum exploring/ sharing faiths

### Other issues

Pastoral Issues policy needs to be drawn up for critical incidents. School should have high level of pastoral / emotional support.

All schools have critical incident policies and these link to support services:

- EA supports
- Chaplaincy
- Pastoral care co-ordinator
- Child centred approach

- Local traditions, customs and practice eg Loyal Orange Arch to be resepcted and dealt with locally.
- Established protocols for external agencies using the school. All groups aware of and respectful of the ethos of the school
- Expression of cultures to be encouraged in a respectful way. Poppy's / Lilies / Football / rugby tops – any other symbols that may cause issues to be dealt with through an agreed list of what is acceptable practice.

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- History teaching - NI curriculum – content agreed and monitored by Board of Governors
- A range of all sports which all can experience
- Extra-curricular activities to be as *wide a range as is possible for the school; may include Irish dancing, Scripture Union*  
Extra-curricular activities can be sample experiences and are invitational

### **Additional relevant points (drawn from the 2015 DE circular)**

#### Governance:

- The Trustee body (this requires further discussion and legal advice as to how this body or company would be constituted):
  - are the person or persons in whom the premises and site of the school or college are to be vested;
  - will nominate governors;
  - will be the named party to legal contracts on behalf of the school
- Education Authority remains the funding authority and is responsible for the payment of rates, landlord maintenance, purchasing and invoicing and carrying out the internal audit function; responsible for paying non-teaching staff & non-teaching payroll

#### Board of Governors

- Education Authority appointed governors would also reflect both religious traditions

#### Ethos

- Proposed ethos, arrangements for worship and approach to religious education must be agreed prior to any proposal being brought forward
- Specific requirements for the development and maintenance of religious ethos to be reflected in the Scheme of Management for the school
- Formal agreement between the school trustees of the main Transferor Churches and Catholic Church should reflect these arrangements
- Board of Governors to implement the agreed ethos and reflect this ethos in the Scheme of Management – DE expects that the ethos would be within a Christian Framework which respects both the religious ethos of the Catholic Church and Transferor Churches with neither dominating

#### Employing Authority

- Board of Governors will be employer of teachers
- Education Authority employer of non-teaching staff

#### Accommodation

- Due regard to be given to maximising the potential of existing school premises

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- Jointly managed schools formed by the amalgamation of existing grant aided schools will attract additional points associated with rationalisation when applications for new school builds are being assessed

### Home to School Transport

- Jointly managed primary and post-primary schools will be classified as within both ‘controlled and voluntary’ and ‘Catholic maintained’ categories. This area requires further discussion with the Department of Education.

## DRAFT ETHOS FOR JOINTLY MANAGED CHURCH SCHOOLS

### CHRISTIAN VISION OF EDUCATION – CHRIST THE MODEL AND INSPIRATION

The Christian vision of education today and its core values are rooted in Scriptural faith and take their inspiration from the person and the teaching of Christ. Christian faith permeates everything that takes place within the school community. It touches upon every subject, every activity that is engaged in and every relationship. It enriches not only the curriculum but the manner in which it is taught. It shapes the environment of the school which will be evidently Christian. It becomes the defining spirit of the school.

Christian education within Jointly Managed Church Schools:

- serves the community in putting the pupil at the centre;
- recognises in each pupil someone created in the image and likeness of God, with a dignity and destiny that transcend all other values;
- develops the potential of every pupil as a human being;
- develops the formation of the whole person spiritually, socially, physically, morally and intellectually;
- prepares pupils to engage as responsible members of society, motivated by the Gospel, personal integrity and moral courage, which are the hallmarks of an authentic Christian personality.

Jointly Managed Church Schools:

- reflect the foundational Christian value of the revelation of God and humankind’s response, through our concern for, and attitude to, others and the world in which we live;
- offer an understanding of the world and the place of humanity in it within the context of belief in God and the Christian faith;
- reflect this understanding in daily worship and by the values espoused by the schools;
- reflect this understanding in the relationships which the schools seek to promote at all levels;

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- foster tolerance of and respect for the beliefs and rights of others of different religious faiths or none;
- help to support families in fulfilling the responsibility to bring up that child in the Christian faith;
- promote excellence in teaching and learning;
- foster a sense of community in which people respect each other and care for each other;
- welcome diversity and strive for tolerance and inclusivity, while maintaining their own distinctive characteristic.

Gospel values inform the life of Jointly Managed Church Schools, which are fully integrated into the local faith communities. A Jointly Managed Church School is a sign of the reconciliation and shared discipleship that the Gospel brings.

### **CORE VALUES**

The vision of Christian education encourages the inclusion of core values within the life of the school and its community, based upon Scripture, respective traditions of the Christian churches and shared Christian understanding, which reflect:

- The rights and responsibilities of the individual;
- Relationships within the school;
- Preparation for adult life.

#### **(i) CHRISTIAN FOUNDATION**

Jointly Managed Church Schools promote:

- Scriptural understanding and living;
- Love of God and neighbour;
- Community cohesion;
- Forgiveness and reconciliation;
- Charity and neighbourliness;
- Justice, compassion and peace in the world;
- Responsibility in developing and using God-given talents;
- Stewardship of creation.

#### **(ii) CHILD-CENTRED INTEGRAL FORMATION OF THE PUPIL**

Jointly Managed Church Schools promote:

- High standards of education;
- Reflection on the purpose of life;
- Safeguarding, welfare and high-quality pastoral care;
- The intrinsic value of the individual;

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- A sense of self-worth and self-esteem;
- The nurturing of young people in Christian faith and hope;
- Life-long learning;
- The acceptance that rights and privileges bring responsibilities;
- The role of conscience in discerning right or wrong attitudes and actions.

**(iii) INTERRELATIONSHIP LEVEL**

Jointly Managed Church Schools promote:

- Respect for the dignity and rights of every person in the school community and in wider society;
- Faithfulness in relationships;
- Friendship / loyalty;
- Appreciation of individual differences;
- Mutual understanding, tolerance and a capacity to share;
- Interdependence and teamwork;
- Fairness / equity of opportunity;
- Honesty / integrity;
- Caring attitudes;
- Positive ways of resolving conflict.

**(iv) PREPARATION FOR ADULT LIFE**

Jointly Managed Church Schools promote:

- Opportunities for growing in relationship with God;
- Responsible citizenship and lifelong Christian living;
- Exploration of the values which build community;
- The value of supportive family relationships;
- The development of social skills;
- Commitment to care for the environment;
- A willingness to challenge injustice;
- An appreciation of the Christian heritage in this land and in the world;
- An appreciation of culture and the arts;
- An appreciation of the richness of cultural and religious traditions.

**SUMMARY**

Jointly Managed Church Schools are responsive to the needs of local communities, providing a rich and educationally effective foundation based on the enduring values and teachings of Christ. They offer a positive and forward-looking approach to the holistic formation of children, to enable them to become confident and caring members of society.

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### **Board of Education RoI - General Synod Report 2020**

#### **AIMS**

- Shall have the power to represent the Board of Education of the General Synod in all educational matters applying solely to the Republic of Ireland;
- Will advise the General Synod of developments in educational policy in the Republic of Ireland and will represent the Church as an education partner with the Department of Education and Skills and other educational bodies;
- Support, through the *Follow Me* programme, religious education in primary schools under Protestant management;
- Provide support, training and advice to primary level patrons and boards of management;
- Undertake the processing of garda vetting applications for non-teaching employees and volunteers in Church of Ireland primary schools and employees and volunteers in parishes and other Church of Ireland organisations.

#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1. Personalia
2. Education Policy Development at National Level
3. Advisory Service to Schools and School Support
4. Training to Boards of Management (primary level)
5. Admissions to Schools: New Regulations
6. New Boards of Management elected
7. Forum for Consultation with Education Partners at Department of Education and Skills
8. Small Schools Symposium
9. Financial Support Services Unit (FSSU)
10. Ecumenical Observers to the Board
11. Religious Education (RE)
12. Special Education Developments
13. National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) Developments
14. Second Level Schools Service
15. Secondary Education Committee (Grants)
16. Re-configuration of Patronage, Primary Level.
17. Report from the Church of Ireland Centre, DCU (CIC, DCU).

#### **Listing of Board Members (Appendix A)**

##### **1. Personalia**

Following the General Election in February 2020, the Board thanked Minister Joe McHugh for his contribution to the field of education during his time in office. As a recognised Management Body for schools at primary level, the secretariat of the Board maintains a

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strong relationship with the Department of Education and Skills and the Board looks forward to working with the next Minister for Education and Skills.

The Most Rev Dr Richard Clarke, Chairman of the General Synod Board of Education and the Executive of that Board, retired from Office in February 2020. The Board wishes to thank Archbishop Clarke for his contribution to education and wishes him every good wish in his retirement.

The Board noted with sadness that death of the Rev Dr David Tuohy, SJ, in February 2020. Fr Tuohy made an important contribution to the outworking of the five marks of mission of the Anglican Communion in the diocese of Dublin and Glendalough. In the context of the work of this Board, Fr Tuohy and Rev Prof Anne Lodge published ‘Small Schools, Value for Learning’ (2016) which formed the research basis for engagement with the State on the issue of small schools in the community. The Board extended its sympathies to the Jesuit Community in Dublin on the death of Fr Tuohy, SJ.

Mrs Joyce Perdue was nominated to the Council of the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) and Ms Eileen Jackson resigned as the nominee of the Board for Early Childhood and Primary Education at the NCCA. The Board wishes to record its thanks to Ms Jackson for her contribution to the work of the NCCA on behalf of the Board.

### **2. Policy Development**

Board members and the board secretariat, were involved in consultations and representations with a range of national bodies and agencies in the course of 2019 including:

- The Department of Education and Skills (DES)
- The Teaching Council
- Schools' insurers
- The Financial Support Service Unit (FSSU)
- The School Procurement Unit (SPU)
- Steering Committee on Board of Management training
- SEAI with regard to energy awareness and reporting requirements on energy
- The Centre for School Leadership (CSL)
- The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA)
- The National Council for Special Education (NCSE)
- Belong To
- The Intereuropean Commission on Church and School (ICCS)
- The European Federation for Teachers of Religious Education (EFTRE)

In addition, the secretariat of the board had regular engagement with its primary and post-primary management body colleagues, the Irish Primary Principal's Network and unions representing teachers, SNAs and ancillary staff. The Board also has authority to represent patrons on various matters and had regular engagement with other patron bodies in this regard. In conjunction with the Church of Ireland Primary Management Association, the Board holds an annual conference for all COI/Protestant primary schools and uses this event to bring developments in governance and other related education issues to COI/Protestant primary schools. In 2019 the annual conference was addressed by Ms Mary

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Mitchell O'Connor, formerly Minister of State, Higher Education. The Board arranges a conference for school leaders in Protestant second level schools every second year. In addition, the Board maintains links with colleagues at European level and contributes to policy development at the Council of Europe through its involvement in the ICCS. The secretary of the Board also participated in a number of seminars and events with students at the Church of Ireland Centre, DCU. The maintaining of this connection between school management and student teachers is greatly valued.

### **3. Advisory Service and School Support**

The secretariat of the Board is largely funded by an annual devolved grant from the Department of Education and Skills. The Board wishes to record its thanks to the DES for this financial support. In return for DES funding, and as part of a Service Level Agreement with the DES, the Board is obliged to provide an advisory service to Boards of Management of schools under protestant patronage at primary level. This is carried out on behalf of the Board by the secretariat of the Board, the secretary and Ms Eimear Ryan. The provision of advice to schools is primarily via the phone and by email correspondence. An analysis of the volume of phone calls received/returned in 2019, indicates that in excess of 4,500 phone calls were fielded by the secretariat in relation to school matters. This is in addition to the queries that were handled by email. Advice relates to a range of issues but primarily involves explanatory advice on the interpretation and implementation of DES circulars, agreed procedures and legislation which effects the education sector. Where a board of management is dealing with a contentious matter (such as a parental complaint, an employment matter, child protection matter) the secretariat, where necessary, acts as a link between board of management, the insurance company and the patron of the school concerned. In circumstances where a school is dealing with an extremely serious matter, Boards of Management are required to take specialist legal advice. The provision of advice to schools in relation to a wide range of issues, coupled with the necessity to attend regular offsite meetings, is a rising challenge within the existing staffing resources of the secretariat.

In addition to the provision of general advice to schools, the redeployment panels are administered by the education secretariat on behalf of the Patrons. This is a significant body of work which is undertaken each year as part of the recruitment process for schools. It requires significant engagement with schools which have teacher vacancies for the upcoming school year and the allocations section of the DES. The processing of garda vetting applications on behalf of non-teaching staff and volunteers in primary schools is also under the remit of the Board.

The secretariat updates schools in relation to policy developments affecting schools and the publication of new DES circulars and procedures and provides guidance where necessary in respect of the implementation of same.

In order to ensure that the advice given to Boards of Management is correct and up to date, the secretariat of the Board attend relevant conferences and seminars each year. In 2019

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the Secretary obtained the Advanced Diploma in Education Law from the Honourable Society of the Kings Inns.

### **4. Training to Boards of Management**

The Board also arranges for the delivery of training to boards of management of schools under its remit and participates in the national steering group on Board of Management training. Ms Eileen Flynn acts as training co-ordinator and her role is funded by the Church of Ireland Primary Management Association.

### **5. Admissions to Schools: New Regulations**

As referenced in the 2019 Board of Education report, a number of provisions of the Education (Admissions to School) Act were commenced in October 2018 and guidance was provided to schools in this regard. In January 2020, the Minister for Education and Skills signed a Commencement Order for the remaining provisions of the Act. This Order provided that the new provisions in relation to admissions would come into effect for the 2021/2022 school year. The legislation to include the accompanying regulations requires that new admissions policies in accordance with the requirements of the Act must be drafted by all schools after consultation with the Patron, the staff of the school and the parents of current pupils. The Act also introduces particular procedures and timelines for school admissions processes with the aim of providing greater transparency to parents. The Board issued further guidance to schools in relation to the updated requirements in respect of admissions arising from the legislation.

Further information can be found at:

[www.education.ie/en/Parents/Information/School-Enrolment/](http://www.education.ie/en/Parents/Information/School-Enrolment/)

### **6. New Boards elected in 2020**

The term of office for new Boards of Management commenced on 01 December 2019. The election of the new board members was approved by the re patron of each school and ratified by the Minister. Member of Boards of Management serve in a voluntary capacity for a period of four years. They provide an essential and invaluable service to schools and local communities and the Board wishes to record its grateful thanks to all who serve on school Boards of Management.

### **7. Primary Level Forum**

The Primary Level Forum was established in 2018 to facilitate consultation on the development of education policy matters at primary level between the DES and Education Partners. The Forum enables proposals to be debated among all education stakeholders and allows those formulating public policy to have the benefit of collective input and experience. It also affords the Education Partners the opportunity to signal to the DES, in an open and transparent way, potential issues in relation to the implementation of particular proposals.

### **8. Small Schools Symposium**

In June 2019 the Department of Education and Skills organised a symposium on the future of small primary schools. The premise of the symposium was that small schools are a

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valuable part of the local community and play a pivotal role in sustaining rural populations and that the purpose of the symposium was to discuss how best to support small schools to ensure that they continue to be sustainable into the future. The DES invited the Board to participate in the symposium. In preparation for engagement in the symposium, feedback was sought from all schools with four teachers or less in respect of the challenges they experience. Issues raised by the schools included: an increasing administrative burden, challenges associated with being a teaching principal, the shortage in State funding and the necessity for local fundraising. This information, along with the information contained in the ‘Small Schools Value for Learning’ (Lodge and Tuohy, 2016) assisted in preparing for the symposium. A delegation consisting of Archbishop Jackson, Rev Prof Anne Lodge, Dr Ken Fennelly and Ms Eimear Ryan attended the symposium on behalf of the Board. Archbishop Jackson delivered the formal submission on behalf of the Board to the Symposium and the other members of the delegation contributed to the afternoon workshop sessions. The matters raised at the symposium were subsequently raised at the Primary School Forum with a view to influencing government policy on this issue, to include exploring alleviations that could be made to benefit small schools and their communities.

### **9. Financial Support Services Unit (FSSU)**

In 2019, the Board reported in relation to the extension of the FSSU advisory service to primary schools. This was coupled with the obligation for all schools to prepare their accounts using a standardised national template together with a requirement to submit accounts annually to the FSSU commencing in February 2020. The Board secretariat frequently engages with the FSSU in relation to financial matters affecting schools and the FSSU has undertaken significant preparation work to ensure that schools are in a position to comply with their reporting obligations.

### **10. Ecumenical Observers to the Board**

The terms of reference for the Board provide for representatives of both the Methodist Church and the Presbyterian Church to attend Board meetings as observers. Ms Karen Jardin attends the Board as the Observer from the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. The Presbyterian Church is the patron for a number of primary schools in the Republic of Ireland and is also the patron body for St Andrews College, Dublin at second level. The Board welcomes the ecumenical connection with the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and is grateful to Ms Jardin’s contribution to the work of the Board.

Ms Daphne Wood attends the Board as the Observer from the Methodist Church in Ireland. The Methodist Board of Education is the Patron of Rathgar National School at primary level and Wesley College at second level. It is also involved in Gurteen Agricultural College. Ms Wood is also the principal of St Andrews National School, Bray, Co. Wicklow, a school which is under the patronage of the Archbishop of Dublin and Glendalough but operates a “tri-partite” arrangement regarding representation of the Church of Ireland, Methodist and Presbyterian church’s locally in the management of the school. This connection with the Methodist church is also welcomed and Ms Woods’s contribution to the Board is greatly valued.

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The Secretary of the Board also attends meetings of the Methodist Board of Education as an observer and the relationship in education management demonstrates a practical outworking of the Covenant relationship between the two churches.

### **11. Religious Education Update**

In 2019, three RE Certificate courses (Follow Me) were coordinated and taught by Mrs Jacqui Wilkinson (Church of Ireland Centre, DCU). Weekly evening courses were run in Dublin and Cork over a period of five weeks and eight teachers from Leinster schools and nine teachers from Cork schools completed the sessions and were awarded certificates. A course was then held in Letterkenny where 12 teachers from the county gathered for three afternoon and evening sessions at the end of June. The General Synod Board of Education funded these courses for participants, all of whom are teachers employed in Church of Ireland, Methodist, Presbyterian or Society of Friends schools. These teachers have classroom experience in teaching the Follow Me programme but did not complete their Initial Teacher Education in the Church of Ireland College of Education or via the specialised track with the Church of Ireland Centre in DCU. It is planned to run further courses for eligible teachers in 2020.

In relation to the Follow Me RE curriculum, the Board has held off initiating revisions to this curriculum for a number of years as it awaited the NCCA proposals to introduce a new curriculum on Education about Religious Beliefs and Ethics. Following recent discussions with the NCCA, the Board has decided that it is now timely to conduct this review and a Steering Committee has been established to start this process. The RE Steering Committee will draw on expertise in the field of RE curriculum development from within the Anglican tradition. However, it is also intended that the revision of the curriculum will be carried out in consultation with the Methodist, Presbyterian Churches and the Society of Friends.

### **12. Special Education Developments**

- Front loading of SNAs

In Mid December 2019, the Government proposed the introduction of a new model for allocation of SNAs for mainstream primary and post-primary schools with effect from the 2020/2021 school year. This follows NCSE advice in May 2018 - ‘Comprehensive Review of the SNA Scheme – a new school inclusion model.’

This means that the allocation from 2020/2021 onwards will be based on the school profile used for the allocation of Special Education Teachers. The additional 1,064 SNAs in Budget 2020 will facilitate the transition to this model.

This model is being piloted in 75 schools currently with a review to take place at the end of this school year. Consultations with the education partners took place on 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> February 2020. Strong representations were made by all partners to have this model deferred until the 2021/2022 school year to allow for a full review of the School Inclusion Model and Frontloading of SNAs in the pilot schools.

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- Total Inclusion Model

In October 2019, the National Council for Special Education (NCSE), published a progress report entitled ‘An Inclusive Education for an Inclusive Society?’ The report outlines the risk that Ireland might be in breach of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities which requires that children with disabilities can access inclusive, quality and free primary and secondary education. Other countries have been criticised by the UN committee for not educating all children together in mainstream classes within their local school.

The NCSE has undertaken further consultation in December/ January 2020 which included an online questionnaire (5,000 responses). It is expected that this work will finish in June 2020 when the policy advice is published. In finalising the report, the NCSE has stated that the best interests of children and their needs is the fundamental consideration.

To access the report: <https://ncse.ie/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Progress-Report-Policy-Advice-on-Special-Schools-Classes-website-upload.pdf>

### **13. NCCA Developments:**

Since June 2018, the NCCA has been in the process of conducting a review of the Relationships and Sexuality Programme (at both primary and second level). The review included an examination of the RSE curriculum, the approach to teaching and learning, supports needed, and ways to improve the experience of RSE for students and involved two phases of consultation both in 2018 and 2019. The Rt Rev Michael Burrows and the secretary engaged in the first round of these consultations and the Rev Prof Anne Lodge and the secretary participated in the second phase of consultations. In 2019 the Rev Prof Anne Lodge joined the Advisory Group on RSE that was established after the consultations phase concluded. The report on those consultations can be found at: <https://www.ncca.ie/en/resources/report-on-the-review-of-relationships-and-sexuality-education-in-primary-and-post-primary-schools>

It is understood that the Advisory Group will bring forward recommendations on revisions to the RSE curriculum to the Minister for Education and Skills in 2021.

2019 marked twenty years since the introduction of the current primary level curriculum and this anniversary has initiated a Review and Redevelopment process of the primary curriculum. In 2019 the Board engaged in various consultations arising out of this Review and Redevelopment and continues to be represented at NCCA Board level by Mrs Joyce Perdue.

Further information on the Review and Redevelopment of the primary curriculum can be found at: <https://www.ncca.ie/en/primary/primary-developments/primary-curriculum-review-and-redevelopment>

### **14. St Patrick’s Schools Service**

In September 2019 the Board organised the annual service for the opening of the academic year for Church of Ireland and Protestant second level schools at St Patrick’s Cathedral, Dublin. The service was attended by Minister of State, Ms Mary Mitchell O’Connor, who

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read a lesson, and a range of invited guests. Over five hundred students participated in the service and the address was given by Ms Avril Ryan of Gaisce, the President's Award. The Board wishes to record its thanks to the Dean of St Patrick's Cathedral, the Very Rev William Morton, Ph.D., D.Litt, for facilitating the service and to the Rev Canon Charles Mullen for organising the liturgy. The Board also wishes to thank Mr Gavin Woods, Ms Kellie Bermingham, Mr Andrew Smith for all their assistance in organising the service.

### **15. Secondary Education Committee (SEC):**

The Board noted the appointment of Dr Eimhin Walsh as Grants Manager to the SEC and wishes him well in his new role. The Board notes that the annual report to the churches from the SEC will be available after its approval at the AGM of the SEC; and will be forwarded to General Synod when available.

### **16. Primary School Re-configuration of Patronage**

During 2019 a number of patrons progressed the re-configuration of patronage of their schools to other patron bodies. The complexities involved in these situations presented significant challenges for the Patrons which have been brought to the attention of the DES.

### **17. Report from the Church of Ireland Centre DCU**

The following report from the Church of Ireland Centre, DCU has been provided:

The core work of the Church of Ireland Centre focuses on the Church of Ireland Centre pathway through the Bachelor of Education programme. The Centre delivers the key components of that pathway. These components are: (a) the Religious Education Certificate in teaching the *Follow Me* Programme co-ordinated for 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year B.Eds by Mrs Jacqui Wilkinson; (b) teaching the *Religions, Ethics, Morals and Values* modules to 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> years. These modules, taught by Mrs Wilkinson and Rev Prof Anne Lodge, compliment the RE Certificate; (c) co-ordinating the five modules to 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> years to particularly prepare the students to work in small schools and to teach multi-level classes; (d) procuring specialist supports in Irish for 1<sup>st</sup> years; (e) Ms Geraldine O'Connor organises and oversees the majority of the Church of Ireland Centre students' placements in schools under Church of Ireland and other reformed Christian patronage. The 120 B.Ed students across 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year following this pathway are also part of the larger B.Ed cohort in DCU. This large initial teacher education programme has several pathways through it, including one for student teachers from the deaf community who are proficient in Irish Sign Language instead of the Irish language.

The Centre Director Rev Prof Lodge also takes responsibility each year for reviewing all applicants wishing to follow the Church of Ireland Centre pathway through the Bachelor of Education programme. To this end, the Centre produces information for post-primary schools and deals with many enquiries about the pathway. In September 2019, a new cohort of 31 students commenced 1<sup>st</sup> year of the B.Ed programme following the Church of Ireland Centre pathway. These students come from all around the Republic of Ireland and have settled in very well to their university studies. The final CICE legacy students graduated in November 2019. These were also the first set of DCU graduates. These

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graduates are working in primary schools all around the Republic of Ireland, many having found one-year and permanent teaching jobs already.

During 2019, Mrs Wilkinson and Rev Prof Lodge made arrangements with the Bachelor of Religious Education (initial teacher education programme for post-primary religion teachers) and the MA in Chaplaincy give inputs about Church of Ireland schools and context and to offer support to Church of Ireland students.

Another of the Church of Ireland Centre's important roles is liaising with primary schools under Church of Ireland and other reformed Christian patronage. The Centre sends a detailed Newsletter out to its school network three times a year. The Centre also runs occasional events enabling student teachers to meet personnel from the schools. On Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2019, Rev Prof Lodge invited four principals from small Church of Ireland schools to speak at a full morning's seminar on various aspects of leadership in small schools. Final year students praised their inputs, and noted how much they learned from these experienced practitioners and how it had planted the seed of possible future school leadership in some of their minds. The Centre was most grateful to both Dr Fennelly and Mr Pauric Clerkin, the CEO of the Irish Primary Principals' Network, who both attended and facilitated this event.

In late 2019, Mrs Wilkinson was very busy editing the collection of prayers written by children and personnel in Church of Ireland primary schools. DCU very generously undertook to fund the publication of this book launched in early 2020 and the GS Board of Education RI funded the distribution of the publication to schools. The intention is to deliver this to all Church of Ireland primary schools in the Republic of Ireland, and to share it with interested colleagues in Northern Ireland. Rev Prof Lodge worked on the Church of Ireland College of Education chapter for an important book, also financially supported by DCU, documenting the four institutions that came together in 2016 in the DCU incorporation. This book will be launched in late Spring 2020.

We invite members of General Synod to visit the Church of Ireland Centre's website to read our online Newsletters and catch up with our latest news and the range of our activities: <https://www.dcu.ie/church-of-ireland-centre/index.shtml>

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**Appendix A**

The following are the members of the General Synod Board of Education as of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020:

**THE GENERAL SYNOD BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**THE ARCHBISHOPS AND BISHOPS**

**THE HONORARY SECRETARIES OF THE GENERAL SYNOD**

Ms H. Corrigan	Mr K Gibson
Rev Canon GV Wharton	Ven G Davison (bishop-elect, Diocese of Connor).

***Elected members***

Armagh	Rev M Hagan
Clogher	Mr T Flannagan
Derry and Raphoe	Rev A. Quill
Down	Mrs H Kerr
Connor	Rev Canon H Gilmore
Kilmore	Mr D West
Tuam	Rev Canon JR Howard
Dublin	Mr JE Bunting
Meath	Rev I Magowan
Cashel, Ferns and Ossory	Dr KF Dunn
Cork	Very Rev N Crossey
Limerick and Killaloe	Mrs C Poynzt
	Rev Canon DTS Clements
	Professor P Johnston
	Rev Dr W Olhausen
	Ms S Rushe
	Rev Canon JDM Clarke
	Mrs F Higgins
	Rev Canon PA Harvey
	Mrs M Jacob
	Ven AM Wilkinson
	Mr W. Baker
	Rev J Godfrey
	Mrs M Brickenden

***Co-opted members (including representatives of teachers)***

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1. Mrs R Forde
2. Mrs H McClenaghan
3. Mr RM McKinney
4. Mrs MP Wallace
5. Rev Canon BJJG O'Rourke
6. Very Rev N Sloane (Sunday School Society)
7. Rev Prof A Lodge (Third Level)
8. Mr M Hall (ISA)
9. Mr S Thompson (ISA)
10. Mr A Forrest (ISA)
11. Mr K Sparling (ASTI)
12. Mrs S Hall (ASTI)
13. Mr S Henry (CIYD)
14. Mr B Williams (TUI)
15. Mrs J Perdue
16. Ms R Fraser
17. Ms S Richards
18. Mr A Oughton

Observers:

Ms K Jardine  
(Presbyterian Church)  
Ms D Wood  
(Methodist Church)

*Secretary to the General Synod Board of Education:*

Dr K Fennelly, Church of Ireland House, Church Avenue, Rathmines, Dublin 6.

*Secretary to the Board of Education (NI) (in attendance)*

Dr PJ Hamill

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**BOARD OF EDUCATION (NORTHERN IRELAND)**

*Ex-officio members*

The Archbishop of Armagh.  
Bishop of Clogher, Rt Rev FJ McDowell  
Bishop of Down and Dromore, Rt Rev David McClea  
Bishop of Kilmore, Rt Rev Dr SF Glenfield  
Bishop of Connor, (bishop-elect, Ven G Davison)  
Bishop of Derry, Rt Rev KR Good

Lay Hon Sec of General Synod, Mr K Gibson  
Clerical Hon Sec of General Synod, Ven G Davision

*Elected members*

Armagh	Rev M Hagan Mr TW Flannagan
Clogher	Vacant Mrs Sue Hogg
Derry	Rev MRK Ferry Ms A Reid
Down	Rev Canon JR Howard Mr JE Bunting
Connor	Rev I Magowan Dr KF Dunn

*Co-opted members*

Miss F Boyd  
Mrs R Forde  
Mrs H McClenaghan  
Dr I Hickey  
Mr RM McKinney  
Prof R Pritchard  
Canon W Young  
Rev AE Adams

Observer: Vacant

CIYD: Mr S Henry

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*Honorary Secretary, Board of Education (Northern Ireland)*  
Mr JE Bunting

*Honorary Treasurer, Board of Education (Northern Ireland)*  
Mr M Johnston

*Secretary, Board of Education (Northern Ireland)*  
Dr PJ Hamill, Church of Ireland House, 61-67 Donegall Street, Belfast BT1 2QH

**GENERAL SYNOD BOARD OF EDUCATION - EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

The Archbishop of Armagh  
The Archbishop of Dublin and Glendalough  
Rev Canon GV Wharton  
Mr K Gibson  
Mr J Bunting  
Mr T Flannagan  
Mr M Hall  
Rev BJJ O'Rourke  
Mr A Oughton

**BOARD OF EDUCATION (REPUBLIC OF IRELAND)**

*Ex officio members:*

The Archbishop of Dublin and Glendalough (Chair)  
Honorary Secretaries – Ms Hazel Corrigan, Rev Canon GV Wharton

*Elected by House of Bishops:*

Bishop of Tuam, Killala and Achonry, Rt Rev PW Rooke  
Bishop of Cashel, Ferns and Ossory, Rt Rev MAJ Burrows

*Diocesan Representatives:* Ms. Rosemary Maxwell-Eager, Rev Canon H. Gilmore

*Post primary representatives:* Mr M Hall, vacant (second-level teacher)

*Third level representatives:* Professor P Johnston, Rev Prof A Lodge

*Primary representatives:* Rev Canon BJJ O'Rourke, Mrs J Perdue

*CIYD:* Mr S Grasham

*Sunday School Society:* Very Rev N Sloane

*Co-options GS BOE:*

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Mr A Forrest

Mr A Oughton

Observers:

Ms K Jardine

(Presbyterian Church)

Ms D Wood

(Methodist Church)

*Secretary, Board of Education (Republic of Ireland)*

Dr K Fennelly, Church of Ireland House, Church Avenue, Rathmines, Dublin 6

### **APPENDIX 1: DRAFT ETHOS FOR JOINTLY MANAGED CHURCH SCHOOLS**

#### **CHRISTIAN VISION OF EDUCATION – CHRIST THE MODEL AND INSPIRATION**

The Christian vision of education today and its core values are rooted in Scriptural faith and take their inspiration from the person and the teaching of Christ. Christian faith permeates everything that takes place within the school community. It touches upon every subject, every activity that is engaged in and every relationship. It enriches not only the curriculum but the manner in which it is taught. It shapes the environment of the school which will be evidently Christian. It becomes the defining spirit of the school.

Christian education within Jointly Managed Church Schools:

- serves the community in putting the pupil at the centre;
- recognises in each pupil someone created in the image and likeness of God, with a dignity and destiny that transcend all other values;
- develops the potential of every pupil as a human being;
- develops the formation of the whole person spiritually, socially, physically, morally and intellectually;
- prepares pupils to engage as responsible members of society, motivated by the Gospel, personal integrity and moral courage, which are the hallmarks of an authentic Christian personality.

Jointly Managed Church Schools:

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- reflect the foundational Christian value of the revelation of God and humankind's response, through our concern for, and attitude to, others and the world in which we live;
- offer an understanding of the world and the place of humanity in it within the context of belief in God and the Christian faith;
- reflect this understanding in daily worship and by the values espoused by the schools;
- reflect this understanding in the relationships which the schools seek to promote at all levels;
- foster tolerance of and respect for the beliefs and rights of others of different religious faiths or none;
- help to support families in fulfilling the responsibility to bring up that child in the Christian faith;
- promote excellence in teaching and learning;
- foster a sense of community in which people respect each other and care for each other;
- welcome diversity and strive for tolerance and inclusivity, while maintaining their own distinctive characteristic.

Gospel values inform the life of Jointly Managed Church Schools, which are fully integrated into the local faith communities. A Jointly Managed Church School is a sign of the reconciliation and shared discipleship that the Gospel brings.

### **CORE VALUES**

The vision of Christian education encourages the inclusion of core values within the life of the school and its community, based upon Scripture, respective traditions of the Christian churches and shared Christian understanding, which reflect:

- The rights and responsibilities of the individual;
- Relationships within the school;
- Preparation for adult life.

### **(v) CHRISTIAN FOUNDATION**

Jointly Managed Church Schools promote:

- Scriptural understanding and living;
- Love of God and neighbour;
- Community and cohesion;
- Forgiveness and reconciliation;
- Charity and neighbourliness;
- Justice, compassion and peace in the world;
- Responsibility in developing and using God-given talents;
- Stewardship of creation.

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**(vi) CHILD-CENTRED INTEGRAL FORMATION OF THE PUPIL**  
Jointly Managed Church Schools promote:

- High standards of education;
- Reflection on the purpose of life;
- Safeguarding, welfare and high-quality pastoral care;
- The intrinsic value of the individual;
- A sense of self-worth and self-esteem;
- The nurturing of young people in Christian faith and hope;
- Life-long learning;
- The acceptance that rights and privileges bring responsibilities;
- The role of conscience in discerning right or wrong attitudes and actions.

**(vii) INTERRELATIONSHIP LEVEL**  
Jointly Managed Church Schools promote:

- Respect for the dignity and rights of every person in the school community and in wider society;
  - Faithfulness in relationships;
  - Friendship / loyalty;
  - Appreciation of individual differences;
  - Mutual understanding, tolerance and a capacity to share;
  - Interdependence and teamwork;
  - Fairness / equity of opportunity;
  - Honesty / integrity;
  - Caring attitudes;
  - Positive ways of resolving conflict.

**(viii) PREPARATION FOR ADULT LIFE**  
Jointly Managed Church Schools promote:

- Opportunities for growing in relationship with God;
- Responsible citizenship and lifelong Christian living;
- Exploration of the values which build community;
- The value of supportive family relationships;
- The development of social skills;
- Commitment to care for the environment;
- A willingness to challenge injustice;
- An appreciation of the Christian heritage in this land and in the world;
- An appreciation of culture and the arts;
- An appreciation of the richness of cultural and religious traditions.

**SUMMARY**

Jointly Managed Church Schools are responsive to the needs of local communities, providing a rich and educationally effective foundation based on the enduring values and

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teachings of Christ. They offer a positive and forward-looking approach to the holistic formation of children, to enable them to become confident and caring members of society.

### **Appendix 2: Covering issues that may arise when creating a Jointly Managed School**

#### **Governance**

- The Mission Statement is normally drawn up in consultation with the whole school community – staff, governors, students, parents. In the case of a JMCS, the Trustees would have a significant role in drawing up the Mission Statement as it is likely that the Mission statement would be in place prior to the school's formation.
- The make-up of the Board of Governors will be as per DE guidelines: 4/9<sup>th</sup> Trustee (1 must be a parent of children at the school), 2/9<sup>th</sup> EA , 1/9<sup>th</sup> DE, 1/9<sup>th</sup> Parent, 1/9<sup>th</sup> Teacher + Principal (non-voting).
- The name of the school will be determined by the Trust body overseeing the school in consultation with the community.
- The uniform (colour, badge design ect.) is normally agreed by the Board of Governors in consultation with the students/parents.
- The Scheme of Management for the school can put in place the need to have a Faith sub-committee/ ethos sub-committee if so desired.
- Quality control of RE and collective worship will be a focus of the Board of Governors and the Trustee Body it will also involve Church support services.
- The outline ethos of the school will be set by the Trustee Body. The maintenance of the ethos will be a matter for the Board of Governors with ongoing Trustee support and monitoring.  
The details of how this arrangement will operate can be set out in the Scheme of Management of the school (or for all JMCS projects).
- The moral framework of the school will be set within the ethos and Mission statement of the school. It will be for the Board of Governors to ensure that the policies and practices of the school are in keeping with the school's ethos. This will include consideration of how the school determines the suitability of outside organisations to engage with the school.
- There will need to be agreement on the ‘theology of the architecture’ which must reflect it as a church school. This may include things like symbols and pictures on display, and prayer spaces both in the building and in the playground.  
There will be a need to agree this ‘theology of architecture’ as part of the local community discussions – what would/would not be acceptable. This would then form the basis of a policy on symbols/images so that everyone was clear on the type of school they were committing to.
- Main selling point of JMCS to be emphasis on high educational values and community focus – not just a 9-5 school but a building for all the community. Faith based ethos / high quality education/ high standards of pastoral care/ emphasis on inclusion/diversity/all cultures and backgrounds educated together

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- There will be Policy for governance at sensitive times, eg the Pope or the Queen dies. This will be a matter for the Board of Governors but is likely to be guided by statutory holidays/ closures.

### **Staffing**

- *All staff must be sympathetic to Christian faith.* Specific posts may require certain denominations and this could be protected under FETO or any new arrangement put in place.
- The principal's commitment to the school's ethos can be part of the assessment process. It may be difficult to define their Christian faith.
- Training is required above and beyond usual professional development in relation to the ethos of the school and how this impacts on policy development.
- Staff policies to be developed:
  - *Staffing and recruitment*
  - *Admissions*
  - *Critical incident /bereavement*
  - *RE policy*
  - *Transition from nursery*
  - *School potential parent leaflet*
  - *Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Policy*
  - *Child protection*
  - *Positive Behaviour*

The school will require all of the policies required of any school. These will be the responsibility of the Board of Governors who will ensure the policies reflect the ethos of the school. It may be necessary for the Trustee Body to provide guidance to the school on some sensitive policy areas through the Scheme of Management.

### **Church links**

- Local clergy will provide:
  - Key role in the community discussion prior to the establishment of the school;
  - Pastoral support/ chaplaincy;
  - Invitation to school to visit Churches;
  - Participation in/ Leading assemblies;
  - Sacramental preparation as required.
- There should there be a Founders day when all Church leaders are invited to attend
- Carol services and any other church services may be:
  - In school with representatives of all Churches participating;
  - Rotational services in all local Churches;

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- Sacramental celebrations – all invited to attend.

**Teaching of RE, assemblies and faith development**

- RE curriculum will be delivered as follows:
  - Follow the NI curriculum;
  - Schemes of work determined by the Board of Governors in discussion with Trustee Body;
  - Day to day delivery a matter for the principal;
  - Core curriculum determined by CCEA;
  - Sacramental preparation by suitable qualified person;
  - Education in other faiths as per curriculum.
- Use and teaching of prayers and bible:
  - Custom and practices agreed by Board of Governors in line with school ethos;
  - Prayers for all
  - Local sensitivities considered and an agreed understanding in place;
  - An agreed child friendly version of the bible will be used.
- Church trails / walks will be encouraged, with a welcome by local clergy – normal school practice on off site visits observed;
- The celebration of the church calendar, Christmas, Easter etc., will be agreed by Trustee Body in scheme of management and with support of Board of Governors;
- Assemblies will be agreed by staff in conjunction with the Board of Governors, they may include:
  - Collective themes – lead by children / local clergy attending, participating;
  - Liturgy of the Word – lead by local clergy – content/themes agreed with the principal.
- The sacraments be taught to those who wish:
  - In school preparation by suitably qualified staff;
  - Linkage and engagement with local clergy;
  - Everyone invited to celebration;
  - Constructive alternative for those who don't wish to partake.
- There will be a focus on celebrating togetherness in faith through:
  - Assemblies;
  - Prayer space in school;
  - Common prayer;
  - Church visits;
  - Curriculum exploring/ sharing faiths.

**Other issues**

Pastoral Issues policy needs to be drawn up for critical incidents. School should have high level of pastoral / emotional support.

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All schools have critical incident policies and these link to support services:

- EA supports;
- Chaplaincy;
- Pastoral care co-ordinator;
- Child centred approach.

- Local traditions, customs and practice e.g. Loyal Orange Arch to be respected and dealt with locally.
- Established protocols for external agencies using the school. All groups aware of and respectful of the ethos of the school.
- Expression of cultures to be encouraged in a respectful way. Poppy's / Lilies / Football / rugby tops – any other symbols that may cause issues to be dealt with through an agreed list of what is acceptable practice.
- History teaching - NI curriculum – content agreed and monitored by Board of Governors;
- A range of all sports which all can experience;
- Extra-curricular activities to be as *wide a range as is possible for the school; may include Irish dancing, Scripture Union*. Extra-curricular activities can be sample experiences and are invitational.

### **Additional relevant points (drawn from the 2015 DE circular)**

Governance:

- The Trustee body (this requires further discussion and legal advice as to how this body or company would be constituted):
  - are the person or persons in whom the premises and site of the school or college are to be vested;
  - will nominate governors;
  - will be the named party to legal contracts on behalf of the school;
- Education Authority remains the funding authority and is responsible for the payment of rates, landlord maintenance, purchasing and invoicing and carrying out the internal audit function; responsible for paying non-teaching staff & non-teaching payroll.

Board of Governors

- Education Authority appointed governors would also reflect both religious traditions.

Ethos

- Proposed ethos, arrangements for worship and approach to religious education must be agreed prior to any proposal being brought forward;
- Specific requirements for the development and maintenance of religious ethos to be reflected in the Scheme of Management for the school;
- Formal agreement between the school trustees of the main Transferor Churches and Catholic Church should reflect these arrangements;

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- Board of Governors to implement the agreed ethos and reflect this ethos in the Scheme of Management – DE expects that the ethos would be within a Christian Framework which respects both the religious ethos of the Catholic Church and Transferor Churches with neither dominating.

### Employing Authority

- Board of Governors will be employer of teachers;
- Education Authority employer of non-teaching staff.

### Accommodation

- Due regard to be given to maximising the potential of existing school premises;
- Jointly managed schools formed by the amalgamation of existing grant aided schools will attract additional points associated with rationalisation when applications for new school builds are being assessed.

### Home to School Transport

- Jointly managed primary and post-primary schools will be classified as within both ‘controlled and voluntary’ and ‘Catholic maintained’ categories. This area requires further discussion with the Department of Education.

## Sunday School Society – Report 2020

### **REPORT 2020**

[Website: www.cm.ireland.anglican.org](http://www.cm.ireland.anglican.org)  
[Facebook: www.facebook.com/churchofirelandchildrensministry](http://www.facebook.com/churchofirelandchildrensministry)

#### **MEMBERSHIP**

Very Rev Niall Sloane, Chairperson  
Ms Claire Burrows, Hon Secretary  
Rev Eugene Griffin, Hon Treasurer  
Rev Rob Clements  
Dr Ken Fennelly  
Ms Hazel Bolton  
Ms Heather Wilkinson  
Ms Lynn Storey

Ms Lydia Monds, Children's Ministry Development Officer for the Sunday School Society,  
in attendance

Topic for Discussion: As the Sunday School Society and Children's Ministry Network work  
towards a merger how can we ensure the legacy of Children's Ministry in the Church of  
Ireland is positive and building the Kingdom?

*'The greatest legacy one can pass on to one's children and grandchildren is not money or  
other material things accumulated in one's life, but rather a legacy of character and  
faith'*  
*Billy Graham*

#### **Introduction**

The Sunday School Society (the “Society”) was founded in 1809 and, according to its Constitution, has the following aims:

- To promote Religious Education among children in a parochial context;
- To promote the establishment of clubs and facilitate the conducting of same throughout the Church of Ireland;
- To provide opportunities and courses for the training of club leaders;
- Provision of help and advice for clergy and leaders regarding the use of resources in clubs;
- To work where appropriate with the clergy and organisations which promote children's ministry.

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### **Fundraising Appeal**

The Sunday School Society for Ireland wishes to extend a very warm thank you to all parishes and dioceses that supported its annual appeal. This support allows the excellent work to continue.

### **Vision**

The Sunday School Society has set a vision for where they would like to see children's ministry in the Church of Ireland in 10 years' time. The Society would like to see a children's ministry that:

- Has structures put in place so that centrally circulated resources reach children in parishes.
- Is child centred (recognising that it is a Christ centred church, but emphasising a desire that those who are more traditionally on the margins will have a more visible space in the Church)
- Has a well-resourced, amply funded Children's and Family Ministry/Department so that parishes know where to go with a query or a need for support.
- Is an intentional Children's Ministry that would infiltrate every aspect of Church life.
- The welcome, inclusion and participation of children becomes normalised in churches

The Sunday School Society for Ireland, together with the Children's Ministry Network continues to work towards these goals through immediate, short-term and long-term actions.

### **National Children's Ministry Training Conference: Building Blocks**

Building Blocks took place in November in the Kilternan Parish Centre, Dublin. Participants travelled from across the island of Ireland and enjoyed a fantastic day of training, faith building and fellowship. There were resource stalls and ideas for people to take home and everyone left encouraged and enthusiastic.

Mr Martyn Payne spoke at the clergy lunch about all age services and giving tips on "How to ACE all age services" all the time. Martyn was also one of the keynote speakers on Saturday, he was joined by Rev Sharon Moughtin-Mumby who is the author of Diddy Disciples.

The Building Blocks team is a small ecumenical team. However, three of the members are also members of Sunday School Society and/or Children's Ministry Network. We would like to take this opportunity to thank them for all their hard work and effort.

### **Make Yourself at Home Packs**

The Make Yourself at Home packs have been used by a number of parishes, all considering how church can become a more welcoming environment. Resources are now available to download from the Children's Ministry Networks website. We are constantly building on these resources and have already added supplemental resources including top tips for

## Sunday School Society – Report 2020

welcoming people to church and resource ideas for Advent. Over the next few months we will be adding material about planning for a Baptism service, and some resources to help visitors and children engage with the Baptism service.

Make Yourself at Home was promoted at a number of diocesan synods. This will be continued throughout 2020.

### **Children's Ministry Newsletters**

SSSI and CMN jointly produce a resource filled Newsletter at key times throughout the Church Calendar which is disseminated through diocesan Networks and provides additional and fresh ideas for parishes, Sunday Clubs and families.

The SSSI Children's Ministry Development Officer attended multiple diocesan synods with these newsletters and other creative resources further to disseminate useful resources.

### **Children's Ministry Facebook and Website**

We continue to generate a lot of engagement in our Facebook page. The page is updated regularly sharing tips, ideas and resources, engaging members of the Facebook community. Our website hosts all our resources and newsletters to date alongside different opportunities for training.

### **Diocesan and Parish Trainings**

Throughout the year different parishes and dioceses engaged with training and resource events. One example is where a Mothers' Union spent an evening looking at how to make Pew Bags to help young children and visitors engage with services. These bags contain age appropriate material which children can discover during the service and can be themed to match the time of year or occasion in church.

### **Good Wishes**

Good wishes are expressed to the Children's Ministry Development Officer, Ms Lydia Monds on the birth of Oisín.

Gratitude is expressed to Ms Kirsty Lynch who has been covering Ms Monds' maternity leave. Good wishes are likewise extended to her for her marriage.

### **Merger Talks**

At time of writing, a business plan has been put together between the SSSI, CMN and the central Church authorities. This has been approved by the Allocations Committee and steps are being taken to create the new Children and Family Ministry Board and to make provision for the appointment of a Children and Family Ministry Co-ordinator for the Church of Ireland. The Co-ordinator will work across the whole of Ireland supporting dioceses in their strategy and resourcing of children's and family ministry.

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### **SSSI Disestablishment Diocesan Grant Scheme**

In 2019 five dioceses took up the offer of the Diocesan Grant Scheme. Each diocese receiving the grant will be required to fill in an annual report showing the impact of the grant. We were very happy to be able to support these ventures.

Grants up to €1000 were given for a peace banner making workshop, reusable holiday Bible club resources, transport for Diocesan school's services, an overnight residential Light Party, and a baptism preparation course.

It was very encouraging to hear about the wide range of activities undertaken by dioceses across the island of Ireland.