

## Funding for Primary Education



Representatives of primary management including John McCullagh made a presentation to the Oireachtas Committee on Education and Science. The presentation based in part on your responses regarding deficits in school accounts and the cessation of the summer works grant for the current year was well received by the deputies and senators of all parties. Government representatives stressed that the commitment to

double capitation would take place in the lifetime of the present government. Figures presented showed that ongoing inflation and additional charges would eat away such an increase. Deputies asked for comment on some school accounts being in surplus. They were not pleased to hear that often such funds were required for a local contribution to a building project but that the Minister was not advising those schools of their priority in the building programme. A further question on schools being registered as charities with the Revenue elicited the response that schools were aggregating various charges on parents because of inadequate funding. Mons Dan O'Connor, who had served as Education Secretary for the Dublin Archdiocese and latterly as General Secretary of the CPSMA for the last five years, moves to parochial ministry in September. We thank him for his sage advice, support for denominational schooling, and his concern and respect for our small sector.

## **Marlborough Street's Eye on your Enrolment Practice**



The former Minister for Education and Science, Mary Hanafin T.D., published a report of a major audit of school enrolment practice on the Department of Education and Science's website. The purpose of the audit, conducted by the Department's Regional Office Service, was to examine the disparities that exist in schools in particular locations in relation to the numbers of pupils enrolled who are newcomers, have special educational needs or are from the Traveller community. Over half the primary and second level schools in the country were surveyed under the audit.

The statistical information presented required cautious interpretation, particularly the case in the context of local factors that could be identified in many instances at primary level (e.g. a concentration of newcomer or traveller children living in a particular area impacting on enrolment in the nearest school).

The Minister said that, when interpreted in that context, the statistical information returned does not point to enrolment problems on a system wide scale. It does, however, identify a number of school clusters where the evidence points to some schools assuming more responsibility for enrolling children of all backgrounds and needs within their local community, than others.

## ***Enrolment Practice Cont'd...***

In order to ensure that no schools are directly identified and to ensure that "league tables" for particular areas could not be formed, the published information excludes the names and addresses of schools, but groups them within geographical clusters for comparison purposes. The purpose of putting the information out in the public domain was to facilitate an informed consultation with the education partners about possible policy measures available to ensure that all schools are welcoming and inclusive to all children of all needs in their own local community.

Minister Hanafin has written to the main partners in education setting out some areas for consideration including:

- ✦ The need for enhanced information for parents about their rights should a school refuse to enrol their child
- ✦ Those aspects of the written enrolment policies of schools which may be deemed exclusionary, e.g. pre-enrolling children from birth or providing preference to children of past pupils, thereby putting newcomers to communities at a disadvantage.
- ✦ The potential for improved inter-school co-operation in a given area in order to address enrolment anomalies.

Possible proposals to allow the Minister or an officer appointed by the Minister to intervene in local admissions where inter-school co-operation is not achieved.

Minister Hanafin said that "every parent wants to know that the school they send their child to will be welcoming of them no matter what their background or what particular needs they are presenting with. This audit is not about labelling schools. What it aims to do is to generate a debate amongst schools and the wider education community on enrolment policies and practices and to ask the question - are all schools doing enough to be inclusive of all children from their local community?"

***If you have comments please advise them to The Church of Ireland Board of Education.***

**Most schools construct enrolment policies using denominational membership as the criterion for allocating places on a transparent and objective basis. As one is enrolling pupils it is the child's church membership which counts. Schools may face a difficulty where they weigh the membership of one parent in an inter-church family rather than the church membership of the child.**

**"Grannyng" is a term used in Northern Ireland where families give an accommodation address to indicate they fall into a school's catchment area. Many schools are now requesting a copy of a utility bill to show that the family does reside at the given address.**

**Grannyng may also occur where a grandmother, pillar of the local parish, seeks to have a grandchild enrolled in the parochial school even though the child would be entitled to a preference in another denominational school and may not even live in the catchment area. Facilitating such requests could lead to a section 29 appeal where a neighbour to the child also seeks a place and points to the precedent created by the first enrolment.**



The SESS is based in Cork and provides a nationwide service to teachers and schools. Through this service teachers can avail of a range of continuing professional development programmes to support the teaching and education of students with all special educational needs, including ASDs. The SESS works with teachers and school personnel in a variety of educational settings including mainstream primary and post primary schools, special schools and special classes.

For more information on the Special Education Support Services click on [www.sess.ie](http://www.sess.ie)

# *Dublin & Glendalough Patron's Day*



Mr Colm Cregan of the inspectorate made a fine presentation at the Patron's day in which he suggested the inspector's role is to sell change in the context of giving each child a better education. He noted that whole school evaluations (WSE) increasingly expect boards to obtain hard evidence on learning and teaching and not merely to sign off on curricular policies but to ensure targets are set and monitored and to ensure reviews are built into policies. The achievement or otherwise of targets will point a board towards the responsibilities in providing supports. He stressed that this process could be done incrementally looking at one or two subject areas a year and he suggested that PE should be considered as one of the first areas. We hope to have an article on this topic in the near future.

When speaking about WSE to the Dublin principal's conference Mr. Cregan encouraged boards to make a response to the evaluation reminding his audience that this is a key part of the assessment process which should be an ongoing dialogue. It needs also to be remembered that the DE&S has yet to remove any evaluation reports on the web so they may remain at least until the next report which may be in five to seven years time.

The following response made by one school board of management is a practical example of how to respond positively by setting out some of the future agenda of the board and indeed of steps already taken.

## **Area 1: Observations on the content of the inspection report**

The Board of Management of X N.S welcome the positive comments outlined by the Department's inspectorate and would like in their response to the recent WSE Report to acknowledge the dedication of the staff in the school. They have implemented the Revised Curriculum since 1999 with enthusiasm and as recognised in the report are committed to managing all the needs of the pupils. The Board also identify the strong sense of community and the high level of co-operation among staff, parents and pupils within the school.

## **Area 2: Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection**

We have considered the report's findings and the following recommendations are currently being implemented to ensure our school goes from strength to strength.

- Planning around the curriculum documents is being addressed and common templates will be drawn up. It is hoped that these will be in place in September 2008. These in turn will focus the direction of the monthly progress reports on the learning objectives.
- The SDPS & PCSP support team will support the staff in implementing a variety of methodologies in their classroom. Irish and English facilitators have spent time in all classrooms with a view to expanding the range of listening and speaking strands. They will also advise on differentiated learning plans.
- Discrete oral language time is timetabled in all classes and opportunities created to encourage the children to talk, discuss and debate. Opportunities for paired work, group work and independent learning are being addressed through an increased variety of methodologies.
- Supplementary Reading Resources have been purchased for English and staff and parents are encouraging children to read on a regular basis.
- Team teaching between the Class teacher and the Learning Support teacher is currently happening in one classroom. We will seek to expand this throughout the school.
- We will continue to keep Parents updated on school activities on a regular basis and include them in activities wherever possible. An information evening will take place in spring 2008 to update the Board and Parents further regarding the curriculum.

We at X N.S. remain committed to developing our strengths and the recommendations made will allow us to maintain and further nurture our happy school environment.



## Guidelines for Boards of Management and staff designated to operate the On Line Claims System (OLCS) in Schools

### **These guidelines are due to issue.**

The On Line Claims System was introduced in Post Primary Schools on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2006 and on a phased basis in Primary Schools from April 2007 to March 2008.

### **Roles**

As outlined in previous documentation issued from the Department there are four distinct roles assigned to personnel at school level to operate the system. These roles are:

- **Data Entry**  
The role of the Data Entry person is to input the data i.e. input the details of absences of staff members, claims for casual and non casual staff members and other details to the system.
- **Data Approver**  
The role of the Data Approver is to verify that the data input by the Data Entry person is correct and to approve the data.
- **Local Administrator** (this role was initially assigned to the Data Approver role)  
The role of the Data Administrator is to re-assign Data Entry roles within the school and to reset Data Entry passwords.
- **2<sup>nd</sup> Approver**  
A 2<sup>nd</sup> Approver role is required to approve the leave/claims in respect of the Data Approver's absences and can also approve data entered by the Data Entry person.

### **User ID and Passwords**

Each of the roles has a User ID. The initial User ID for the Data Entry, Data Approver/Local Administrator and 2<sup>nd</sup> Approver were issued by the Department. **The User ID is specific to an individual and should be retained carefully and not disclosed to anybody. You must not ask your computer to remember your security details.**

The designated Data Entry person and Data Approver of the system should be advised to keep their passwords and other information secure at all times and not to pass them to other members of staff. If the user or approver must leave the P.C. unattended s/he should logout of OLCS. The Esinet site is a secure site and as a secure measure if you have not used OLCS for more than one hour you will be automatically logged out of the system.

If you lose your security details or forget them we may ask you to authenticate who you are by asking you for details of memorable data provided when you registered on OLCS.

Boards of Management have a responsibility to ensure that at school level the integrity of the system is maintained at all times.

Boards of Management are advised that under no circumstances should the same person in a school undertake the role of Data Entry person and Data Approver.

The Data Entry person should not be a person employed as a Special Needs Assistant in the school.

## **A SIGN OF THE TIMES**

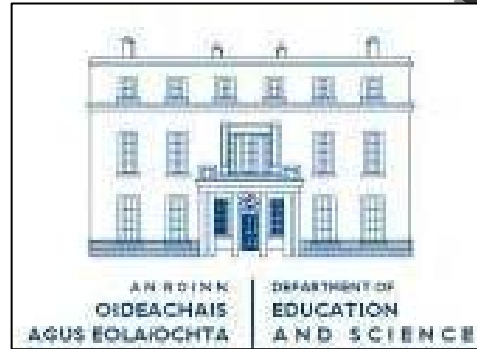
**Does your code of behaviour refer to carrying offensive weapons and do you advise pupils what must not be purchased on trips or outings?**

**The phrase gross misbehaviour may cover such issues but parents are not always accepting of a school's interpretation and no one will want to wait until an injury occurs. Do refer to the [www.newb.ie](http://www.newb.ie) site regarding draft guidelines about behaviour.**

**Circular 0049/2008****School Books Grant Scheme – 2008/2009**

The School Books Grant Scheme for primary schools will operate again in 2008/2009 on the basis of the same criteria as in the current school year.

It is hoped to issue the school books grants in respect of the 2008/2009 school year in July, 2008. School authorities are therefore requested to have application forms returned as soon as possible but before 16<sup>th</sup> May, 2008 in order to facilitate payment of the grant in July.

**Circular 0046/2008 - Guide to water efficiency in schools**

The purpose of this guide is to advise schools on the most appropriate measures to minimise excess consumption of water and to reduce wastage where it exists. The first step in reducing unnecessary water usage in your school is to have a water management plan.

A pilot project in Gorey Community School has reduced its daily water consumption by more than a third by fitting urinal controls, cistern dams and self closing taps with a reported payback of less than eighteen months. A report on this project is available at:

<http://www.wexford.ie/wex/Departments/Waterservices/DownloadsAdviceNotes/Thefile.4550.en.pdf>

Plan and conduct regular checks on fittings and taps and repair any leaks and replace any faulty washers.

**Circular 0107/2007 - The prescribed dates for the School Year 2008/09**

Remember to check with your transport liaison officer regarding school transport for the calendar you select. You do need to agree a common pattern for the all the schools that use dedicated school transport in an area and include some flexibility beyond the minimum of 183 days as the DE&S will require you to make up days if you have to close because of heating breakdown or extreme weather.

**Circular 0048/2008** Arrangements for the 2008/2009 School Year in Relation to Learning Support/Resource Teacher (LS/RT) posts and Resource Teacher (RT) Posts will be in accordance with the provisions set out in [Circular 0034/2007](#). (A copy of this Circular is available on the Department's website - [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie) )

Please note that schools in clustering arrangements should review matters carefully before signing the return form.

**Circular 0062/2008 Web based advertising of teaching posts**

The Minister for Education and Science wishes to inform the Boards of Management of primary schools that with immediate effect websites as advised to them by their respective management bodies may be used for advertising all teaching posts as an alternative to the current practice of placing advertisements in the national newspapers.

However, as an interim measure and to allow web based advertising of posts to become well established a shortened version of the advertisements must also be placed in a national newspaper. This requirement will cease with effect from 1 January, 2009.

In general, the main management bodies have advised the Department that schools represented by them can advertise on any of the following websites:

[www.educationposts.ie](http://www.educationposts.ie)

[www.eteach.ie](http://www.eteach.ie)

[www.staffroom.ie](http://www.staffroom.ie)

Any changes to the list of websites are a matter for each management body.

The procedures for the appointment of teachers to primary schools and the rules governing the advertisement of posts as agreed between the Education Partners are outlined in Appendix D of the Constitution of Boards and Rules of Procedure for Boards of Management of National Schools, reviewed and updated in November, 2007. The review of the procedures includes agreement to allow for web based advertising for all teaching posts specifically with a view to reducing costs for Boards of Management.

### ***Web based advertising cont'd...***

The specific requirements for each advertisement (see Appendix D) set out in the agreed procedures must continue to be adhered to in all advertisements whether done by national newspaper or by website. If using a website, the following shortened form of advertisement must also be put in a national newspaper using the following format:

"Permanent/fixed-term/part-time teacher required from 1 September, 2008 St. Mary's NS, Bray RN12345X. See www..... for details" (Board of Management to insert name of relevant website).

Boards of Management are also reminded that they must not advertise permanent teaching posts until the appropriate redeployment panel is either cleared or when those on the panel have declined in writing the offer of a post.

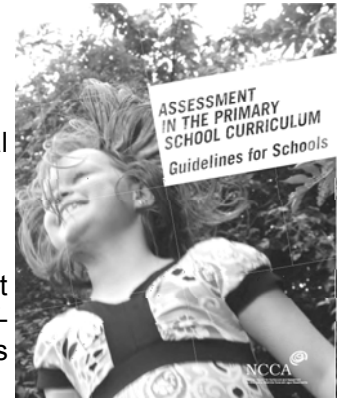
*Editor:* Many schools are including in advertisements the phrase *A list of suitable applicants may be set up from which future vacancies may be filled within a four month period....* Please remember that this panel may only be used to fill either permanent or fixed term posts depending upon the status of the initial post. Do use the phrase *with initial duties* as in your advertisement to provide flexibility in future.

### **Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum Guidelines for Schools**

These guidelines published by the NCCA are designed to be practical and useful for teachers. Copies have been circulated to all schools.

#### **What can you expect to find in the guidelines?**

- a variety of assessment methods for gathering information about children's learning, ranging from child-led methods such as self-assessment and conferencing, to teacher-led methods such as teacher-designed tasks and tests, and standardised testing.
- advice to schools on developing, implementing and reviewing their policy on assessment.
- advice on the legislative requirements for schools in communicating information about children's progress and achievement.



These guidelines should be referenced in your curricular policies and link to the pupil cards and to the implementation of standardised testing.



### **Question asked at the recent Dublin & Glendalough Patron's Day...**

**May a paid employee who is not on the BOM keep the minutes for board meetings?** *No. A board of management is bound by clear directions on confidentiality and it would be incorrect to put a non member of a board in a position where that person was privy to all discussions and decisions of the board. This is separate from an individual attending a portion of a meeting to advise or brief the Board on an issue. It is also true that many principals have opted to take on the paid role as secretary to the Board and the circular governing this payment (0079/2007) states the duties to include Record the minutes of Board meetings - to include issues discussed, decisions taken, including the numbers of those voting for or against a motion, and actions to be taken.*

*Where a principal has declined such a role the Board shall elect a Recording Secretary from amongst its members – Constitution for Boards section 11.*

## Welcome Minister

We welcome Mr Batt O'Keeffe as the new Minister for Education and Science. Mr O'Keeffe was a lecturer in Cork IT before becoming a full-time public representative. He will be launching a conference on the Governance Challenge for Future Primary School Needs to be held on 27 June.



"Chief among my Department's priorities are the promotion of equity and inclusion, quality outcomes and lifelong learning; planning for education that is relevant to personal, social, cultural and economic needs; and enhancement of the capacity of the Department for service delivery, policy formulation, research and evaluation."

The Department's Statement of Strategy is available on the DE&S website by selecting [Statement of Strategy 2005-2007](#).

### Primary Redeployment Panels

There are currently no names for the main or supplementary Church of Ireland Panels. Schools are now free to advertise permanent teaching post vacancies for 08/09.

Please note that any further allocation / withdrawal of posts as a result of the implementation of DEIS and / or special education allocations that may have implications for the panels will be notified to you immediately.

**Luke the Book** is now available as a DVD with 20 animated bible stories from the Gospel of Luke together with a book of lesson plans for teachers. This would provide a resource for your teaching of relevant parts of *Follow Me*. The National Bible Society has issued order forms to schools. This RE resource costs €10 per copy. [www.lukethebook.com](http://www.lukethebook.com)



### Maintenance Matters!



### Share a good recipe



A number of schools who commented on the Summer Works Scheme seem to have forgotten that *Maintenance Matters* provides a template for a maintenance schedule and property log book.

*Maintenance Matters* is a large binder issued to schools some ten years ago by the Department of Education & Science and if it has gone astray either request a copy or see [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie) under publications 1998. On the opening pages of the manual as a highlighted note are two statements.

*Deferred maintenance is a false economy. Prevention is better than cure.* These are not only a reminder for boards but should also be mentioned when you comment to your T.Ds and Senators about the temporary abandonment of the Summer Works Scheme.

Billis National School in Cavan is undertaking a building and extension project. We are adding a new classroom, new learning resource room, new GP room and new school office space. It is an exciting time in the life of the school and reflects the growing population of the area.

Thankfully we have received substantial government funding but find ourselves having to raise €50,000. We are confident we will achieve the target with different fundraisers.

We hope you might send us a favourite recipe for our Billis Cook Book. All it will cost you is a little time!

The recipes can be anything you choose - starter, main, dessert, kids and so on.

Please send your name, address and recipe to: [billisns.recipes@gmail.com](mailto:billisns.recipes@gmail.com)



## News in brief

### **Congratulations and thank you**

The Church Education Society has given almost €25,000 to smaller schools under C of I patronage this year and of course it also provides bursaries for teachers employed in Church schools undertaking certain post graduate courses.

You can also obtain tax relief if you are taking a post graduate course. See circular 0029/2008 and apply before 30 May.

### **Appointing a Fixed-Term Teacher**

The DE&S will write to any school appointing a fixed-term / temporary teacher setting out the following:

Under the Terms of Employment (Information) Act, 1994 & 2001 a Board of Management as employer must provide his/her employee with a written statement of the particulars of the employee's terms of employment, e.g., place & hours of work, responsibilities, disciplinary/grievance procedures, employer policies (health & safety, harassment, sexual harassment, etc).

Under the terms of the Protection of Workers (Fixed Term) Act, 2003 the terms and conditions for a fixed term employee must contain the objective conditions determining the context of the employment, whether it is finishing on a certain date, completing a specific task or the occurrence of a specific event. If an employer is renewing a fixed term contract, the fixed term employee must be informed in writing by the employer of the objective ground justifying the renewal of the fixed term contract and the failure to offer a contract of indefinite duration.

In this regard your attention is drawn to Appendix 8 of the CPSMA handbook Revised 2007 (page 108). The document should be signed by you as the employer and by the employee. A copy should be retained with school records and a copy given to the employee.

### **Paying a substitute teacher for a day...**



The qualified rate per diem is €201.68 and the unqualified rate : €131.36

Part-time hourly rate for a qualified rate is €43.25 and the unqualified rate: €27.12

Untrained Temporary: €28,092 per annum i.e. €1076.73 fortnightly and €76.91 daily.

### **And you thought policies in this country were demanding!**

*Tom Peryer, Director of Education for the diocese of London writes in the Church Times of 4 April :*

In England and Wales the code of practice document on admissions is 125 pages long. It says "you must" or "you should" 327 times and "you must not" or "you should not" a further 87 times. Someone has obviously taken a leaf out of Leviticus. Add to this scores of other legal requirements – "safe" recruitment, administering medicines in schools, dealing with disciplinary matters and so on. Most of these things are not wrong in themselves, but humankind and those running schools cannot bear so much regulation. This over-prescription affects all schools, but there is a worrying and potentially worrying trend in Government at the moment which affects church schools particularly.

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