

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

REPORT 2008

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Synod Examination
2. Board Day of Discussion – renewing the vision of the Board
3. Review of Public Administration (RPA) – threatened loss of transferors’ rights
4. Minister’s proposals on arrangements for transfer to post-primary school
5. Every School a Good School – a recent consultation on proposals for school improvement
6. Religious Education – New Key Stage 3 teacher resources
7. Safeguarding Trust – report of the work of the CPO and the 2008 edition
8. Building Blocks – Children’s ministry conferences in Jordanstown and Dublin
9. Annual Theological lectures at Queen’s University Belfast
10. Membership
11. Personalia
12. Primary School Boards
13. Denominational Schooling
14. School Insurance
15. Board of Management Training
16. Safeguarding Trust
17. Redeployment Issue for Post-Primary Employers
18. School Funding
19. Follow Me RE Programme

SYNOD EXAMINATION IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The prize winners for 2006/2007 were as follows:

YEAR 1

Morgan Jellett Fund Prize	Brian Von Oosten	The King’s Hospital
	Dearbhla Dowd	The King’s Hospital
2 nd Prize	Michael O’Neill	Newpark Comprehensive School
3 rd Prize	Rachel Healy	Alexandra College

YEAR 2

James Fitzgerald Gregg Prize	Tim Allen	Newpark Comprehensive School
2 nd Prize	Elizabeth Murphy	The King’s Hospital
3 rd Prize	Leanne Ennis	Alexandra College
	Friederike Von Bünau	Wilson’s Hospital

Board of Education – Report 2008

YEAR 3

Morgan Jellett Memorial Prize	Elizabeth Swanwick	Alexandra College
2 nd Prize	Emma Tuthill/Caroline Synnott	Wilson's Hospital
3 rd Prize	Tara Clarke	Wilson's Hospital

Junior Division Prizes:

Emily Betty	Alexandra College
Eleanor White	Alexandra College
Béibhín Lloyd-Keogh	The King's Hospital
Sarah Scales	The King's Hospital
Jennifer Rynne	The High School
David Wolfe	Ashton School
Toluse Akinlabi	Cavan Royal
John Fallows	Royal and Prior
Lysette Golden	Wilson's Hospital
Roisin Manning	Wilson's Hospital
Leslie Middleton	St Aidan's Comprehensive

TRANSITION YEAR

Ferns Fund Prize	Wanda Hogan	Ashton School
2 nd Prize	Michelle Long	Royal and Prior
3 rd Prize	Victoria Gibson	Royal and Prior

YEARS 5 AND 6

Ferns Exhibition Prize	Carmel O'Brien	Ashton School
2 nd Prize	Catherine Warren	Royal and Prior
3 rd Prize	Joanne Robinson	Royal and Prior

Senior Division Prizes:

Andrea Bickerdike	Ashton School
Ruth Graham	Royal and Prior

Hackett Special Prize:

Unfortunately, fewer schools entered scripts into the examination this year and the standard of entries in some categories was disappointing. It was therefore decided not to award the Hackett Special Prize this year.

The constant generosity of the APCK in funding the prizes is greatly appreciated and the Board welcomes the intention to increase the value of the prizes in the coming year. The Board itself provides additional funding in relation to participating schools.

Board of Education – Report 2008

Mrs L Clarke has, with her usual skill and generous time commitment, moderated the scripts and advised on the future structure of the examination. The examination is now based totally on the State syllabi for religious education at Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate level but there is no requirement that pupils should be entered for those exams.

Board of Education Northern Ireland

Board Day of Discussion

The Board held a short conference in November 2007 to consider and renew its vision for the education. Mr Neill Morton, principal of Portora Royal School, spoke at the outset and presented a broad outlook on the challenges and potentials in education in NI today. Through a structured method in topic groups, members then discussed the values which should be shaping the Board's approach to policy matters in education. Themes explored included: the role of the church in the public square, the qualities the church seeks in the NI system of education, and an understanding of ethos. Members agreed that the discussion had been profitable and look forward to a forthcoming report to be used as a reference point for future work.

Review of Public Administration (RPA)

The Transferor Representatives' Council (TRC) has petitioned the Assembly Education Committee regarding its concerns for policy proposals for governance of controlled schools which would remove church transferors' rights to representation on such boards.

In future, it is proposed that transferors will only have rights of representation in schools they formerly owned or which were superseded. The TRC believes that this will lead to a huge loss of rights for transferors and that the proposal will, at a stroke; remove the Christian ethos as of right from the controlled sector of education.

The TRC seeks parity of protection for the Christian ethos in schools attended generally by Protestant children, currently enjoyed in the Catholic maintained sector of education. The TRC is entirely supportive of the right of Catholic schools to safeguard and maintain their Christian ethos in the context of identical funding. The TRC seeks comparative arrangements to make reasonable and equitable alternative provision for the Protestant churches to continue to carry out the role they have always played in education.

To this end, the TRC firstly urged the Education Committee to obtain from the Department written and urgent clarification of specifically how it will protect the Christian ethos in the controlled sector.

Secondly, in the event that the Committee is not satisfied with reassurances given, the TRC seeks support from Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) to block any legislation, which does not protect the Christian ethos of both Protestant and Catholic traditions.

The TRC has also submitted a paper in response to Policy paper 21 which deals with Sectoral support – post review of public administration (RPA). Paper 21 proposes that various sectors (including transferors for the first time) receive a modest amount of

statutory support. Details of the TRC responses to these RPA issues can be found on the Church of Ireland website, under the Information section.

At the time of writing the direction and speed of implementation of the various proposals for RPA within education is unclear. The TRC is using this period to raise public awareness of the various issues of concern to churches and meet with the various political parties' Education Committee representatives on the basis that any changes must eventually be approved by Assembly members.

Minister's proposals on arrangements for transfer to post-primary school

In December 2007 the Minister of Education made an announcement regarding future transfer arrangements from primary to post-primary schools. This was essentially a vision statement with little detail of practical outworking of proposals. The main policy change is to move the point of transition to age 14 using the method of informed parental/pupil election. Post-14 children will have a range of pathways determined by local area planning which might include remaining in the current school, a change of school, or access to courses in other schools through collaborative arrangements. A controversial feature is the removal of the 11 plus test. In future parents of P7 children will choose a post-primary school on the basis of their preferences as they would a primary. If schools are over-subscribed admissions criteria will include community, geographical and family criteria.

The TRC has been consulted by the minister and its views on the new proposals sought. Due to the lack of detail in the minister's statement the TRC was restrained in its response. The TRC response indicated that it seeks a system of transfer which enables equality of opportunity and high quality outcomes for all pupils, and believes there is a strong argument for deferring key pathway decisions until 14 based upon informed parental choice. However it expressed to the minister the view that new arrangements must be built upon firm foundations including: clear transfer procedures, working collaborative arrangements, significant investment in the schools' estate, functioning local area planning, consensus among key stakeholders and high levels of parental confidence. The time for these conditions to develop should not be underestimated and to forge ahead without the necessary preparation would be very risky and unlikely to gain support.

Every School a Good School

This recently published proposed school improvement policy outlines key indicators of a good school including: performance in assessments and examinations, outcomes of inspections, the quality of financial management, the view of governors and parents, collaborative arrangements with other schools etc. The policy also proposes accountability measures along with appropriate support and interventions to drive forward school improvement. The Board welcomes the goal to improve school performance yet cautions against a view of education that overlooks a school's social purpose and its value to a community.

Religious Education – Key Stage 3 resources

The Council for the Curriculum Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) – Religious Education (RE) Advisory group has developed new teacher resources for Key Stage 3 including: a Subject Guide for religious education within the NI Revised Curriculum, a World Religions web-site and materials suitable for teaching the subject areas of prejudice, sectarianism and reconciliation. Planning is underway to continue this project into the future and recognising the need for resources at Key Stage 1 and 2.

Safeguarding Trust

The appointment of Ms Margaret Yarr, the Child Protection Officer NI (CPO) has brought professional expertise to the development and implementation of Safeguarding Trust within dioceses and parishes. During the year Ms Yarr has provided a thorough support and advice service to parishes and dioceses in NI. The CPO has facilitated training for newly ordained clergy and first incumbents, and in addition has provided diocesan training for parish panels in Clogher, Connor and Down and Dromore dioceses. Ms Yarr has also visited a wide range of parishes and rural deanery groups to provide start-of-year basic training. In addition she has overseen the parish evaluation process and provided follow-up reports on each visit. The CPO has herself undergone training and professional development attending a number of training courses including: Child abuse and the Internet, AccessNI – the new vetting service for NI, and Sexual Abuse and Faith Communities.

The writing and production of the 2008 edition of Safeguarding Trust has proved a monumental task and the Board looks forward to its publication in early spring. The delay in the production has been largely due to the complexity of redesigning the book into a loose-leaf binder format and recent legislative changes in the area of child protection. It is the intention of the Board to arrange distribution of the new edition and information sessions for all clergy as soon as possible after publication.

Following the publication of the new edition, it is the aim of the CPO to design a more effective training strategy for parish workers and to review the current method of parish evaluation.

Building blocks – Children’s ministry conferences

In November 2007, the sixth annual Building Blocks conference took place in Jordanstown and Dublin. The NI organising committee comprises representatives of the Church of Ireland, Presbyterian Church, Methodist Church and SU. The Jordanstown event drew over 400 delegates and in Dublin over 300 from a wide range of churches attended. The speaker was Mr Bob Hartman, a well known children’s ministry writer and bible story-teller. These events have become established as an annual resource for inspiration and training for children’s ministry leaders. Details of the conference including seminar notes etc are available at: www.buildingblocks.ie

Annual Theological lectures at Queen’s

The 2008 lectures were delivered by Rev Dr David Wenham, Senior Lecturer, New Testament Studies, Trinity College, Bristol. His theme was *Mountain-top Theology* –

Board of Education – Report 2008

Jesus and Paul. These popular lectures are funded by the Board and arranged by the Church of Ireland Chaplaincy at Queen's University Belfast.

Membership

The Board welcomes the Rt Rev A Abernethy as diocesan for Connor and Professor Ken Bell as a co-opted member.

Personalia

Mrs Rosemary Patterson, Administrative Assistant in the office of the Board of Education NI, has resigned her position to take up a new post of secretary to the Bishop of Connor. The Board sincerely thanks Rosemary for her most effective and dedicated service over the last six years and offers good wishes to her in her new role. A recruitment and selection process is underway to find a full-time Administrative Assistant.

Board of Education Republic of Ireland

Personalia

The late Very Rev RD Harman had been a valued member of the Board of Education from his election as an Honorary Secretary of the General Synod. His incisive questioning and long experience as a school chairperson and school chaplain contributed greatly to the work of the Board. The Board shares the grief of his family and church at his untimely passing.

Dr Shirley Brook attends meetings of the Board of Education (RI) as an observer on behalf of the Methodist Board of Education which in turn welcomes an observer from this Board.

Boards of Management

New boards of management commenced a four year term of office on 1 December 2007. Board members received from the Department of Education a revised copy of *The Constitution of Boards and Rules of Procedure* together with an *Information manual*. The Board of Education had been a party to the revisions included in the Constitution.

Chairpersons, principals and patrons assessors had the opportunity to attend briefing sessions provided by the Secretary on the key changes in the Constitution. Most presentations took place in advance of the formation of the new boards so that chairs and principals would be aware of the changes which came into operation with the new boards.

The changes in the Constitution are significant and include important changes in relation to the appointment procedure for teachers and special education needs assistants. Special education needs assistants are those who support children with special educational needs arising from learning, behavioural or physical difficulties.

The need to be compliant with both statutory and agreed procedures has been repeatedly stressed as difficulties are more likely to arise when errors or omissions occur in the implementation of matters such as teacher appointments or parental complaints. The use

Board of Education – Report 2008

of mediation has been found helpful in relation to resolving a small number of issues within school communities but it is always preferable to resolve matters at the earliest possible moment to prevent the development of entrenched positions.

The role of those who serve on boards of management and give such a vital service on a voluntary basis is greatly appreciated and the Minister for Education and Science, Mary Hanafin TD paid tribute to all those who volunteered their services to ensure that schools are effectively managed on a day to day basis. The provision of an information manual together with the CPSMA Handbook and the Supplementary Handbook provided by the Church of Ireland Primary Management Association all provide valuable resources to assist boards in providing the very best education in accordance with procedures and guidelines. The Board of Education publishes *Education Newsbrief* on a regular basis which is circulated to all schools under Protestant management with copies for each board member.

Denominational Schools

The Minister for Education and Science has announced the development of a community national school under the patronage of County Dublin Vocational Educational Committee. This is a new development at primary level and provides a new pattern for the delivery of education. The Minister has emphasised that such a pattern is not to replace denominational schooling but to provide additional parental choice. The Board has been in correspondence with the Department of Education and Science (DE&S) regarding the provision of religious education in such schools in view of the proposal to merely provide an ethical programme for all students.

The rapid increase in population in North Dublin resulted in a large number of children who were unable to be accommodated in the existing primary schools. This was unfortunate and appears largely to have been the result of unforeseen population growth. The existing schools in that area, including the schools under Church of Ireland patronage, had sought additional accommodation and had this been provided the sudden pressure on places would not have occurred.

The Equality Authority issued a briefing which appeared to cast doubt on the validity of denominational schools enrolment policies. However the response to the Equality Authorities briefing was very firm and underlined the constitutional right and expectation that the Churches, including the Church of Ireland, should continue to be involved in the patronage of the denominational schools.

Primary Schools Insurance

The Diocesan Board of Education of Dublin and Glendalough together with support from the Board of Education and the Church of Ireland Primary School Management Association undertook a study both of the risks inherent in the activities and responsibilities of the boards of management and also examined the policies currently on offer to schools. A review undertaken by Marsh Ireland resulted in a number of general issues been raised with the Ecclesiastical Insurance Office (EIO) which is the insurer for the majority of schools under Church of Ireland patronage. Boards of management are encouraged to avail of the free survey and valuation offered by the EIO where the

Board of Education – Report 2008

increase in the insured value of the buildings has not been increased in recent years. Schools have also been advised to have a contingency plan in place to provide for the immediate resumption of school activities in the event of a school building being a target for significant vandalism or arson. The addition of high cost technology equipment in schools should always be conveyed to the insurer to ensure that cover for theft or accidental damage is in place.

This Board has been aware of issues which have arisen through occasional accidents to children while in the care of schools and the inclusion of all pupils in a pupil accident protection insurance cover is strongly recommended. These general points are not intended to replace professional advice and boards of management are always advised to consult their own insurer or broker in regard to such issues.

Board of Management Training

The Department of Education and Science (DE&S) has committed funding to support training for the current boards of management. The Board of Education, in conjunction with the other Partners in Education, has been planning a series of seminars to resource and support boards in their role and duties. These seminars will be rolled out over the next three years and will be provided on a partnership basis in all dioceses. Patrons and diocesan boards of education have been asked to nominate individuals to sit on steering committees to assist with the implementation of the proposed training.

Safeguarding Trust

Ms Renée English was appointed as Child Protection Officer for the Republic of Ireland with effect from September 2007. Ms English is available on the basis of a three day week and has been in contact with diocesan trainers throughout the Republic and has participated in training and in the revision of Safeguarding Trust.

The new edition of Safeguarding Trust, which was approved by the Standing Committee, had previously been reviewed by Dr Helen Buckley who is a leading expert on child protection in the Republic. Dr Buckley's review confirmed that the policy accords with the best practice guidelines in particular with *Children First* being the guidelines issued by the Department of Health and Children. The format of the new edition is designed to be both user friendly with relevant sections for panel members and leaders and being loose-leaf will allow for updates.

A key change in the edition is the provision that the panel should, having formed a reasonable opinion in line with the objective indicators provided, report all concerns, disclosures or allegations and not just those in which the panel might be considered to have a legal interest. There is the continuing provision for a panel or individual to raise a hypothetical query with the duty social work in the local HSE child and family area before making a decision to report.

The Boys' Brigade Battalion in the Republic of Ireland, except the Diocese of Raphoe, is satisfied that the organisation should be treated as an autonomous organisation. This means that the Boys' Brigade provides its own child protection policy and vets its own leaders.

Board of Education – Report 2008

The vetting process continues to be available for all new appointees to voluntary or paid posts where the individuals have responsibility for unsupervised access to children. Some 20 - 60 vetting requests are processed each week by the authorised signatory and the time from receipt to return to a parish or school can vary between four and eight weeks. A considerable number of forms have to be returned for correction before submission to the Garda Vetting Unit and this inevitably creates further delays. It is very important that the guidelines, provided with a vetting form, are followed in full and that the information is treated in accordance with data protection principles.

Religious Education Certificate for Primary Teachers

A working group including representatives of the Board under the chairpersonship of Mr Sydney Blaine the Principal of the Church of Ireland College of Education has been planning the development of a religious education course for teachers which would provide teachers with additional certification. This course would be both of assistance to teachers and would be welcomed by boards of management as a valuable additional skill. It is likely that the course would be offered as an option for students in the College of Education and subsequently provided on an extra mural basis for practising teachers. Such a course would also be of great assistance to those teachers in schools under Church of Ireland patronage whose training was not in the Church of Ireland College of Education.

Redeployment Panel for the Staff of Closed Schools (Post-Primary)

The Board of Education has not been directly involved in the legal challenge to the cross-sectoral redeployment panel for second-level schools. It has however been very concerned about the potential impact on the employment policies and the culture and tradition of the second-level schools under Protestant patronage posed by the current scheme and the proposed scheme to redeploy over quota teachers. The Board has always supported redeployment but within a sectoral system which works effectively and efficiently at primary level.

Financial Support for Education

The Board has expressed concern regarding the withdrawal of the Summer Works Grant and the redirection of capital payments for extensions and new buildings to the construction of totally new schools. These changes mean that schools which were undergoing a planned maintenance programme over a number of years will find that they will no longer be able to upgrade and improve facilities as they had been doing in the last three years. Schools have also found that they must pay either an additional or increased levy for water and refuse charges together with increases in other areas of expenditure. All these demands upon the finances of schools have not been balanced by a small increase in capitation. The apparent retrenchment by the current Government will damage the delivery of education particularly at a time when schools are expected to cater for a wider range of pupils including those with significant special education needs and those for whom English is an additional language. Pressure on finances will also impact on the improvement of IT and PE in schools.

Staffing

The Board has welcomed the appointment of Ms Vicki Hastie to provide additional support to the work of the Board of Education and in particular to assist Mrs Jennifer Byrne whose role has greatly increased in recent years. Ms Hastie is now handling transport matters as part of her role.

Secondary Education Committee

The Secondary Education Committee is composed of representatives of four Churches including eight members nominated by the Board of Education to represent the Church of Ireland. The report of the Secondary Education Committee is appended as Appendix B.

***Follow Me* The Primary Religious Education Programme**

The module for fifth class was published in May 2007 and in-service for teachers of fifth and sixth class was provided in a number of venues throughout the country. The module for sixth class will be published in May 2008. The format for these two senior texts has led to a demand for a revised version of *Follow Me* in more junior classes. This will be looked at in terms of a review by the Board before a decision is made in regard to the future direction of the programme.

Transport Scheme D (Primary Schools)

The number of qualifying families now stands at 354 and grants totalling €168,950.53 for the school year 2006/2007 were received from the Department of Education and Science (DE&S) and paid out prior to 31 December 2006. Workloads and staff changes in the DE&S are still causing delays in payments, but we continue to liaise with them in an effort to resolve these problems.

Schools have been reminded through *Education Newsbrief* that the DE&S will not pay out retrospective grants. Applications must be made as soon as possible after enrolment. Unfortunately, some families are still losing out on grants because the forms are not completed on time.

Since last year a few auxiliary grants were paid out, in exceptional circumstances, to families experiencing transport difficulties. If other families are experiencing short-term transport difficulties, they should contact the Board.

Grants

The Board provided a grant to support the publication of *Search* a Church of Ireland Journal. The Journal is published three times a year and often includes articles on education. The Board also grant aided the Past Students Association of the Church of Ireland College of Education to assist in the running of its annual conference. This conference is a valuable training resource for teachers as well as providing the opportunity to partake of some relaxation and fellowship.

The Board nominates a teacher to avail of an Arion Study Scholarship for one week and in 2007 Ms Sadie Honner was awarded the scholarship.

Board of Education – Report 2008

APPENDIX A

The following are the members of the Board and its committees as on 31 March 2008.

THE GENERAL SYNOD BOARD OF EDUCATION

THE ARCHBISHOPS AND BISHOPS

THE HONORARY SECRETARIES OF THE GENERAL SYNOD

Rev Canon Dr IM Ellis
Ven REB White

Mr SR Harper
Lady Sheil

Elected members

Armagh	Rev Canon JW McKegey Mr RF Palmer
Clogher	Rev Canon RT Gillian Mr SB Morrow
Derry	Rev Stanley Johnson Mr D West
Down	Rev Canon JR Howard Mr I Davidson
Connor	Ven SB Forde Dr KF Dunn
Kilmore	Very Rev R Ferguson Mrs J Johnston
Tuam	Rev Canon DTS Clements Professor P Johnston
Dublin	Ven EJ Swann Dr K Milne
Meath	Rev Canon JDM Clarke Mr A Oughton
Cashel and Ossory	Rev Canon PA Harvey Mrs A Forrest
Cork	Rev AM Wilkinson Mr WT Perrott
Limerick and Killaloe	Rev Canon R Warren Mr TS Hardy

Board of Education – Report 2008

Co-opted members

Rev Canon RJEFB Black	Ms R Maxwell-Eager
Professor K Bell	Ms H McBain
Mr I Bolton	Mrs H McClenaghan
Mr JE Bunting	Mr RM McKinney
Mr TW Flannagan	Mrs A McNee
Mrs R Forde	Dr TW Mulryne
Ms S Honner	Rev BJB O'Rourke
Mr M Hall	Mrs MP Wallace
Ms S Hall	Mr T Wheatley
Ms E Jackson	Mr T Young
Mr B Levis	

Secretary

Rev Canon JE McCullagh, Church of Ireland House, Church Avenue, Rathmines, Dublin 6

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
(FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2008)**

The Archbishop of Armagh, Most Rev AET Harper (Chairman)	
The Archbishop of Dublin, Most Rev JRW Neill	
Lady Sheil	Mr RF Palmer
Ven REB White	Mr JE Bunting
Ms Eileen Jackson	Rev Canon RT Gillian
Rev BJB O'Rourke	Ven EJ Swann

BOARD OF EDUCATION (NORTHERN IRELAND)

Ex-officio members

Archbishop of Armagh, Most Rev AET Harper	Bishop of Clogher, Rt Rev MGStA Jackson
Bishop of Down and Dromore, Rt Rev HC Miller	Bishop of Kilmore, Rt Rev KH Clarke
The Bishop of Connor, Rt Rev AF Abernethy	Rev Canon Dr IM Ellis
The Bishop of Derry, Rt Rev KR Good	Lady Sheil

Elected members

Armagh	Rev Canon JW McKegney Mr RF Palmer
Clogher	Rev Canon RT Gillian Mr SB Morrow
Derry	Diocese to appoint NI Representative, vacancy Mr V Carson
Down	Rev Canon Robert Howard Mr I Davidson
Connor	Ven SB Forde Dr KF Dunn

Board of Education – Report 2008

Co-opted members

Professor K Bell	Mr RM McKinney
Mr JE Bunting	Mrs A McNee
Mr TW Flannagan	Dr TW Mulryne
Mrs R Forde	Mrs MP Wallace
Mrs H McClenaghan	Mr W Young

Observers

Rev P McDowell	Mrs F Brunt
Dr R Marsh	

Honorary Secretary, Board of Education (Northern Ireland)

Mr JE Bunting

Honorary Treasurer, Board of Education (Northern Ireland)

Mr RM McKinney

Secretary, Board of Education (Northern Ireland)

Rev IW Ellis, Church of Ireland House, 61-67 Donegall Street, Belfast BT1 2QH

BOARD OF EDUCATION (REPUBLIC OF IRELAND)

The Archbishop of Dublin, Most Rev JRW Neill (Chairman)

Bishop of Kilmore, Rt Rev KH Clarke	Ms E Jackson
Bishop of Cork, Rt Rev WP Colton	Professor P Johnston
Rev Canon RJEFB Black	Ms R Maxwell-Eager
Mr M Hall	Dr K Milne
Mr S Harper	Rev BJK O'Rourke
Mr A Oughton	Ven EJ Swann (Vice-Chairman)
Ms S Honner	
Dr S Brook (Observer from the Methodist Board)	

Secretary, Board of Education (Republic of Ireland)

Rev Canon JE McCullagh, Church of Ireland House, Church Avenue, Rathmines, Dublin 6.

Board of Education – Report 2008

APPENDIX B

SECONDARY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

REPORT 2008

Membership

Church of Ireland

The Rt Rev WP Colton, Bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross (Chairman)
The Rev Canon RJEFB Black
Mrs JM Bruton
Rev Canon DTS Clements
Very Rev NN Lynas
Mrs P O'Malley
Rev BJG O'Rourke
Ms EE Oldham

The Presbyterian Church

Mr B Duffy
Rev CM Hunter

The Methodist Church

Rev N Mackey
Dr JW Harris (Deputy Chairman)

The Religious Society of Friends

Mr RH Johnson
Mr D Grubb

Secretary to the Committee and to the Company

Canon John E McCullagh

Administrator (Grants Scheme)

Mr D Wynne

Secondary Education Committee

The Secondary Education Committee (SEC) is a body comprising representatives from the Church of Ireland, the Methodist Church in Ireland, the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and the Religious Society of Friends.

The Committee derives its authority from a resolution passed by the sponsoring Churches in 1965.

The functions of the SEC are twofold. The distribution of a Block Grant provided by the Department of Education and Science (DE&S) to families, where at least one parent is a member of a reformed church, needing assistance to send their children to Protestant

Board of Education – Report 2008

secondary schools and the representation of the interests of the member churches in the post-primary education system.

The Committee operates as a limited company thus allowing both the corporate body and the liability of individual members to be appropriately insured.

Personalia

The Rev Noel Fallows, a representative of the Methodist Church retired from membership of the Committee during the year under review. His interest in education and his concern for pupils were marks of his valuable involvement in the work of the SEC. The Committee has welcomed the Rev Nigel Mackey as the replacement representative for the Methodist Church. Mr Mackey is the Chaplain for Wesley College and brings his particular skills and talents in the field of education to the work of the Committee.

Committee Meetings

The Committee and its Finance Sub-Committee met four times during the year under review. The meetings included the annual general meeting of the Company.

Block Grant Scheme

Enrolments (2007/08) in the twenty-one fee charging schools totalled 9,784 (9,653 in previous year). This figure does not include the five comprehensive schools. In the school year 2006/07 the audited accounts showed the total amount, received from the DE&S, was €5,844,235 (€5,571,568), the grant in aid of fees totalled €5,482,067 (€5,032,711) and capitation adjustment grant €362,168 (€355,607). The net cost of administering the SEC scheme was €48,764 (€78,847). There is a small grant to assist the running of the office but it is necessary to utilise interest from the grant received to provide a further subvention for these costs.

The following numbers of grants were awarded in respect of the 2007/08 school year: 1,544 day grants (1,1433), 981 boarding grants (1,006), 2,525 in total (2,499).

The Committee agreed to increase grants for the school year 2008/09 on a scale from boarding €1,140 - €5,775, (€1,140 - €5,250) day €480 - €2,160 (€480 - €1,998). An increase in certain allowances was also agreed in relation to the reckoning of assessments. This resulted in improved access to grants for a number of families.

The Administrator, Mr Wynne, again attended a number of open days at the request of schools and took the opportunity to discuss issues with individual parents. He also made contact with each school to discuss the functioning of the grant scheme. This ensures that schools have every opportunity to draw attention to the difficulties of any individual family. Participation in the Council of Schools Charities has also been ongoing, providing a yardstick for other charitable bodies.

Redeployment

The Department of Education & Science, through the Teachers Conciliation Council and in line with the social partnership agreement *Towards 2016* has introduced a cross-sectoral redeployment scheme for closed schools. The purpose of the scheme is to ensure

Board of Education – Report 2008

that teachers in schools which are closing are redeployed to other schools. The number of schools closing at anytime are relatively small but the Department of Education & Science has made it clear that the scheme would be a pilot scheme for a further redeployment procedure where teachers are in excess of quota in their existing school.

The schools under Protestant management had stated that they were not a party to the redeployment scheme and also that they believed furthermore that the scheme infringes constitutional rights in relation to issues of ethos and employment rights. Four schools were refused the right to appoint new teaching staff to State paid posts as they had not taken part in the redeployment scheme. Regrettably, with the support of all voluntary secondary schools under Protestant management, the four schools have had to issue legal proceedings against the Department of Education & Science in this matter.

Grant Structure

In the report for 2006 there was reference to a review of denominational membership in relation to eligibility for grants in support of school fees. This review is ongoing and already the Committee has made certain decisions to clarify eligibility of applicant families.

The Committee appreciates the work of the Administrator, Mr David Wynne, and his Assistant Ms B McCauley who give friendly and effective assistance both to applicant parents and to the schools. Mr Wynne arranged a well attended bursars' conference in the spring which considered some of the issues in relation to developments in the assessment of grants, the way in which school accounts would be furnished to the Financial Services Support Unit of the JMB and property management matters.

APPENDIX C

SUNDAY SCHOOL SOCIETY REPORT - 2008

The Society in 2004, having consulted with the Archbishop of Dublin, undertook to fund the post of a Children's Ministry Officer (CMO) as a pilot project for three years and the Rev Anne Taylor was appointed to fill the role on a part-time basis. Over this period the range of work undertaken by the CMO has grown and expanded in range. The Rev Anne Taylor is now a household name in many Parishes as she provides training and information on worship, liturgy and resources for all who request them. Anne also continued to organize training events including *Music for the Unmusical* led by Ian Packham and *Ministry with the under 5s* with Yvonne Scott. A lunchtime clergy lunch was organized with Bob Hartman, *Building Blocks* Keynote speaker to talk to the clergy on *All Age Services*. Each year Anne has also spoken to the Church of Ireland Theological College students on Children's Ministry and is our representative on the Consultative Group on Ministry among Children (CTBI). Anne's role as CMO will complete in August 2008 having undertaken such important and groundbreaking work.

The Society believes that the success of the pilot project has indeed justified the decision of the Society to put such a scheme in place but clearly it is now time for the central Church to consider creating such a post, on a permanent basis, to build on the experience of this pilot project as the ongoing costs are beyond the Society's resources.

The Society learned with sadness of the death of Mrs Norah Bedlow who was not only a faithful and effective employee but also a great supporter of Sunday School work. In other ways the period under review has been a year of important decisions and changes in the Sunday School Society. Mrs Olive Rhodes, Administrator of the Resource Centre retired in June. She has given six years of continued, conscientious and loyal support to the Resource Centre and developed its services in a significant manner. We were very fortunate in our quest for a successor and Gillian Kohlmann who took up her duties in the autumn has continued to develop and improve the range of resources available to parishes, clergy and the general public. Book tokens were distributed once again to the first year students of both CITC and CICE to assist them in their work with children.

Our annual Fun Quiz, *Brainarama* took place in March and was a great success. It has become a favourite event on the calendar. We are indebted again to St. Andrew's College, Booterstown for the use of their premises, facilities and the help of staff on the day.

On 1st December *Building Blocks* the annual ecumenical Children's Ministry Conference, took place in St. Patrick's Training College, Drumcondra. Over 300 attended with many Church of Ireland people travelling from all over the country. Our keynote speaker was Bob Hartman, a well known writer of children's Bible stories. He is also an amazing storyteller and kept all ages enthralled. *Building Blocks* Conference 2008 will take place on Saturday 29th November in St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra.

Board of Education – Report 2008