

Board of Education – Report 2012

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**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, 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.

**A. Board of Education (Northern Ireland)**

**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 to 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) to promote the interests and safeguard the rights of transferors in the future;
- Make submissions to relevant government consultations in particular regarding legislative changes to establish the new Education and Skills Authority (ESA) and the proposed Controlled Sector Body;
- 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;
- Provide a training and advisory service to bishops, dioceses and parishes in the implementation of Safeguarding Trust. Prepare for requirements under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups legislation;
- 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 and a partner in the Building Blocks conferences.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. **Establishment of the Education and Skills Authority (ESA)**  
The Board welcomes the announcement of an agreed way forward for the establishment of the ESA; in particular that transferors' existing legal rights have been protected and that they will have a role by right on a key decision-making body for schools in Northern Ireland.
2. **Controlled sector support body**  
The announcement of a new body to advocate and represent controlled schools is welcomed as an important and long-awaited development for this sector.
3. **Shared Education**  
In response to the Draft Programme for Government transferor churches have supported creative approaches to shared education and continue to discuss the potential of such sharing with colleagues from the Catholic Trustees.
4. **Stranmillis – Queen's University Belfast (QUB) proposed merger**  
A lack of political agreement within the Assembly prevents this proposal going ahead. The Board reflects on the uncertainty that this decision and other prevailing pressures bring to the future viability of teacher training institutions.
5. **The Way Forward for Special Education Needs (SEN) and Inclusion**  
The Department of Education published a summary of its consultation on proposals for SEN and recommends the removal of 'statements' of Special Educational Needs. Churches express concerns particularly regarding the resources available to provide supported inclusion in mainstream schools.
6. **Religious Education (RE):** Concern is expressed for the future curriculum support for RE teachers under the new arrangements for ESA.
7. **Consultations responded to:** Two important responses by the Transferor Representatives' Council.
8. **Safeguarding Trust:** Report of the work of the Child Protection Officer NI.
9. **Building Blocks - Children's Ministry Conferences:** Report of the two annual conferences for children's ministry workers.
10. **Annual Theological Lectures at Queen's University Belfast (QUB):** 2012 lectures were well attended and widely appreciated.
11. **Personalia:** Appreciation of the contribution of two former Board members.

## Report

1. **Establishment of the Education and Skills Authority (ESA)**  
The Board has expressed its welcome of the statement from the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2011 announcing a political agreement on the establishment of the ESA. The chief areas of agreement include: the establishment of a single body to subsume the functions of the five Education and Library Boards and three other statutory bodies, the inclusion of transferors and trustees by right on the ESA Board, and the provision of new support bodies for the controlled and Catholic schools' sectors. The Board welcomes the representation of the four churches together on ESA which should ensure a significant voice for Christian faith in the future system of education in NI. It is

observed that while these are key elements of the agreement many important details will emerge in the legislation which must be passed by the Assembly with a target date for completion of July 2012.

The Transferor Representatives' Council (TRC) on behalf of the three church's Boards of Education has also welcomed this announcement by OFMDFM and the significant progress that has been made in arriving at an agreed and inclusive framework for the establishment of a single Education and Skills Authority for Northern Ireland. In particular, the Transferors welcome the fact that their existing legal rights have been protected and that churches will have a role by right on a key decision-making body for schools in Northern Ireland. This, alongside the establishment for the first time of a sectoral support body for controlled schools, to broadly mirror a similar body for maintained schools, will provide a firm and equitable basis to move forward in dealing with so many of the educational challenges that lie ahead.

The Board offers thanks to the three secretaries of the churches' Boards of Education for the persistent lobbying they have undertaken with the political parties to present the views of transferors on this key issue.

## **2. Controlled sector support body**

One of the key elements within the OFMDFM statement on the ESA is the establishment of a controlled sector support body. This voluntary body will match as far as possible a Catholic Trustee Support Body. The present Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) will lose its statutory basis and become a voluntary body. It is envisaged that these bodies may have a range of roles including: advocacy and representation for the sector, co-operating with the ESA in the nomination of governors; working with schools to develop their collective ethos; participating in the planning of the schools' estate; promoting and facilitating shared education and building cooperation with other sectors. The TRC has welcomed the development of this body and has urged its establishment as priority in parallel with the creation of the ESA.

## **3. Shared Education**

Over the past year there has been a growing interest and significant debate on this topic. The Board has supported the development of shared education initiatives across the main school sectors. In November 2011 the secretary attended a conference organised by a number of different educational programmes including the Queen's University Shared Education Programme, the North Eastern Education and Library Board and the Fermanagh Shared Education Project. This conference show-cased many examples of shared education projects between schools which were funded by some well known international funding agencies. This approach to shared education has received support from the political parties as it is a key strand in the Programme for Government (PfG). The Programme includes commitments to: establish a ministerial advisory group to explore and bring forward recommendations to the Minister of Education to advance shared education, ensure all children have the opportunity to participate in shared education programmes and substantially increase the number of schools sharing facilities. The TRC in its

response to the consultation on the PfG has warmly endorsed creative solutions to sharing education and continues to discuss the potential of such sharing with colleagues from the Catholic Trustees.

**4. Stranmillis – Queen’s University Belfast (QUB) proposed merger**

The minister for the Department of Employment and Learning (DEL) Dr S Farry MLA made an important announcement regarding the merger on 28th November 2011. The minister has concluded that there is insufficient political support within the Assembly to pass the necessary legislation to discontinue Stranmillis and create a merger with QUB. It appears that there has been a growing sense of unease politically and also considerable opposition to a merger from within the staff of Stranmillis. Both Unionist parties have now adopted a position that opposes a merger of Stranmillis with QUB which excludes St Mary’s College.

The transferor churches are concerned about the lack of certainty this announcement gives to the future of Teacher Education, particularly for Stranmillis which has a key role in the preparation of teachers for employment in the controlled sector of schools. While there is no political agreement to enable a merger, the status of the two colleges will remain unchanged, yet Stranmillis, unlike St Mary’s, will continue to have no formal representation for churches.

The minister has commenced a study of the teacher education infrastructure in Northern Ireland to produce objective analysis of the financial stability and sustainability of the two university colleges. The current economic climate, the context of falling pupil numbers, school closures and an oversupply of teachers, are prevailing factors likely to significantly impact the future of both institutions.

Since this announcement the Executive has decided that DEL will no longer be a government department and plans to divide its responsibilities between the Department of Education and the Department of Enterprise Trade and Investment. The effect, if any of this departmental reorganisation upon Initial Teacher Education is not clear at this time.

**5. The Way Forward for Special Education Needs (SEN) and Inclusion**

In February 2012 the Department of Education published its report of responses to the 2009 consultation on this important area of policy change. This policy review will have significant impact upon the educational support of children with a SEN or disability who make up 20% of the school population. The most significant change proposed is to remove ‘statements’ of SEN which legally guarantee extra help to pupils with special needs and replace them with ‘Coordinated Support Plans’ (CSPs). In the new system only pupils in special schools and those in mainstream classes with the greatest level of need will get a CSP. There will be an enhancement of early identification of need and intervention by schools with appropriate external supports. The department proposes to reduce the bureaucracy involved in obtaining the CSP reducing the time limit from 26 to 20 weeks.

The TRC on behalf of the Education Boards of the three transferor churches had submitted a very comprehensive response to this consultation. It drew attention to the view of parents of children with SEN, that ‘statements’ were difficult to obtain, however, having one did provide an important gateway to other services. The TRC

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did support what might be termed ‘supportive inclusion’ within schools but was concerned with the lack of necessary information regarding financial and resource support to bring the potential benefits of the proposals. The full TRC response can be found at:

[http://www.deni.gov.uk/appendix\\_8\\_-\\_updated\\_responses\\_from\\_statutory\\_education\\_partners.pdf](http://www.deni.gov.uk/appendix_8_-_updated_responses_from_statutory_education_partners.pdf)

### **6. Religious education (RE)**

Members of the TRC Executive meet regularly with RE Advisers from the Education and Library Boards (ELBs). There remains a concern about the extent of future curriculum support for RE teachers within the new arrangements for the ESA. The RE Advisory Group working with the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) continues to develop resources to support the teaching of RE; recent work has concentrated on devising non-statutory guidance for the revised RE syllabus. The churches acknowledge the continued support of CCEA at a time of budgetary restraint and sincerely appreciate the commitment of the group’s members to this work.

### **7. Consultations responded to:**

- a. June 2011: Public consultation: proposed discontinuance of Stranmillis University College and its proposed merger with QUB – submission by TRC to the Department for Employment and Learning;
- b. January 2012: Draft Programme for Government – submission by the TRC to the Assembly Education Committee.

### **8. Safeguarding Trust**

The Child Protection Officer NI (CPO NI) continues to provide advice and guidance regarding the implementation of Safeguarding Trust to parishes, dioceses, mission agencies and related organisations throughout Northern Ireland. She liaises closely with the PSNI and Social Services whenever issues relating to child protection arise within parishes.

The annual Safeguarding Trust training event for newly ordained clergy and first incumbents was facilitated by the CPO (NI) in October 2011. In addition, four training days were held in March 2012, in Clogher Diocese, for clergy and panel members from both jurisdictions, facilitated by the CPO NI and Ms Renée English CPO RI. Parish panel training is planned in other dioceses later this year.

A Memorandum of Co-operation between Faith and Worship Organisations in NI and the Police Service for NI (PSNI), which deals with management of sex offenders in their attendance at places of worship, has been a most significant development. This will ensure safer management through formal agreements in the small number of situations where offenders wish to return to parish worship. The CPO (NI) has attended a number of relevant training courses dealing with this issue including the national Church of England and Methodist Church Safeguarding Conference 2012 and the National Organisation for the Treatment of Abusers (NOTA) conference ‘*Sexual Violence: Facilitating reintegration and preventing recidivism*’.

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The CPO (NI) is part of a working group which is reviewing and updating ‘*Our Duty to Care*’, and is also a member of the Belfast Local Adult Safeguarding Panel. Membership of both groups is providing helpful insight as guidance is developed particularly for working with vulnerable adults in church settings.

The Diocesan Evaluation Teams met in February 2012 for information sharing and distribution of this year’s evaluation visits. The Board of Education offers sincere thanks to the evaluators for their continuing diligence and expertise in carrying out these parish visits.

Mrs Claire Geoghegan (AccessNI co-ordinator in the office of the Board of Education in Belfast) continues to provide an important service to parishes processing in excess of one hundred applications for Enhanced Disclosure checks to AccessNI per month. The long-awaited outcome of the review of the Vetting and Barring Scheme is still a ‘work in progress’ by government departments. In the meantime the current definitions of regulated activity with the requirements to carry out AccessNI checks and when appropriate to make referrals to the Independent Safeguarding Authority all still apply.

### **9. Building Blocks Children’s Ministry Conferences**

In November 2011, the ninth annual Building Blocks conference took place in Belfast and Dublin. The organising committees comprise representatives of the Church of Ireland, Presbyterian Church, Methodist Church, Scripture Union and also some new churches from the Dublin area. The Belfast and Dublin events together drew over 400 delegates from a wide range of churches, with the Church of Ireland having the largest representation at both venues. The key-note speaker was Mr Nick Harding a well known author of resources for Children’s ministry leaders. Nick also led a morning seminar on All-age Worship for Intern-Deacons in the Church of Ireland Theological Institute as part of their practical training programme. This was followed by a lunch time talk to the clergy of Dublin & Glendalough.

These conferences which feature a variety of practical seminars have become established as important sources of inspiration and training for children’s ministry leaders. Details of the conferences including seminar notes are available at: <http://www.buildingblocks.ie>

On the wider issue of this Board’s role within Children’s Ministry, the Secretary is a member of the Children’s Ministry Network group which is presently considering potential areas of work for such a group across all the dioceses of the Church of Ireland. The Board awaits the outcome of the Network’s report to Standing Committee this year regarding a future role for this proposed body.

### **10. Annual Theological Lectures at Queen’s University Belfast (QUB)**

The 2012 lectures were held on the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> February and were delivered by the Revd Dr Graham Tomlin, the Principal of St Paul’s Theological Centre and Dean of St Mellitus College, London. The subjects of his lectures were: *Culture and Character* and *Community and Virtue*. These annual lectures which continue to be well attended and appreciated by a wide range of people are arranged by the Church of Ireland Chaplaincy at QUB and funded by this Board.

**11. Personalia**

The Board offers its sincere thanks to Dr Wilfred Mulryne who resigned in 2011 because of his relocation to England. Dr Mulryne has contributed much to the work of this Board from his wide knowledge of education and experience as a school principal in NI.

During the past year members were saddened by the death of Mr Leslie Johnston, elected member for Armagh diocese. Mr Johnston was a highly esteemed member whose professional experience as a senior social worker was greatly valued by this Board and the diocese where he also served as a faithful member of the Safeguarding Trust Support Team.



**B. Board of Education (Republic of Ireland)**

**ROLE**

- shall have 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 educational partner to the Department of Education and Skills (DE&S) and other educational bodies;
- support, through the *Follow Me* programme, religious education in primary schools under Protestant management;
- co-ordinate and encourage the participation in the Synod Examination in Religious Education;
- provide training and advice to Bishops and boards of management;
- provide training and an advisory service to Bishops, dioceses and parishes in the implementation of Safeguarding Trust;
- facilitate Garda vetting of workers and volunteers in Church of Ireland primary schools and parishes.

**Review**

On a national level, the provision of primary level education is facing serious challenges. Budget 2012 set out the areas to be initially affected as follows; school transport; teacher retention, resource hours, Special Needs Assistants (SNA) hours, capitation and capital funding. These budgetary measures are beginning to impact on schools across the State. Smaller primary schools are especially vulnerable and were the subject of a “value for money” small schools review in 2011. Currently twenty five per cent of Church of Ireland primary schools are considered to be small schools and the budgetary measures are a major concern. The Minister has also confirmed that, based on legal advice from the Attorney General, he is not in a position to review the decision to withdraw particular funding to fee-charging secondary schools. However, an increase in funding was made available to the SEC in support of student fees (which is outlined in the Secondary Education Committee (SEC) Report included in this book of reports).

Representatives of the Board and House of Bishops have met with the Minister on a number of occasions since his appointment in March 2011 and have also met with a range of TDs and Senators. In addition, the Board is in contact with senior officials from the Department of Education and Skills on a regular basis. In 2012, the Board will continue to lobby at a national political level with a view to supporting schools and their Patrons as they seek to maintain the viability of the network of Church of Ireland schools across the State.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

- Personalia
- Submissions to the Department of Education and Skills
- Transport Scheme D
- Proposed new Post Primary Schools.

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- Safeguarding Trust
- Garda Vetting
- Conferences
- Grants

### **Personalia**

The Board wished Archbishop John Neill well in his retirement in January 2011 and welcomed his successor as Archbishop of Dublin and Glendalough, the Most Rev Dr Michael Jackson, formerly Bishop of Clogher, as the Board's new Chair.

The Board was sad to learn of Mrs Jennifer Byrne's decision to resign her position with the Representative Church Body. Mrs Byrne gained the widespread respect of all the Education Partners and was of invaluable assistance to Boards of Managements and Principals in Church of Ireland schools during her time with the Board of Education. The Board wishes Mrs Byrne every success in her new role as Deputy Diocesan Secretary for the United Dioceses of Dublin and Glendalough.

Ms Eimear Ryan was appointed Education Advisor to the Board. Ms. Ryan is a solicitor and was part of the RCB legal department and retains a practising link with that department in her new role. The Board warmly welcomes Ms Ryan and looks forward to her advising it in its work.

Mr Ruairí Quinn, TD was appointed Minister for Education and Skills in March 2011. The Board wished the Minister well on his appointment.

In February 2012, the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills, Ms Bridget McManus, retired from her post and was succeeded as Secretary General by Mr Seán Ó'Foghlú. The Board wished Mr Ó'Foghlú well on his appointment.

Other appointments:

The Secretary, with the approval of the Board, accepted an invitation to serve on the Board of "Le Chéile." The Secretary was also elected a Governor of the Incorporated Society for Promoting Protestant Schools in Ireland and to the Board of the APCK and the Committee of the Sunday School Society. He looks forward to representing the Board on each of these bodies.

### **Submissions to the Department of Education and Skills**

The Board made the following five formal submissions to the Department of Education and Skills in 2011;

1. Incidental schools inspections at primary level: wherein the Board generally welcomed the introduction of this method of inspection by the inspectorate.
2. Submission on school enrolment: wherein the Board highlighted that Church of Ireland and Protestant schools at both primary and post primary level have particular requirements in relation to enrolment policies that are necessary to support the purpose and role of schools to the Protestant community across the state.
3. Vetting Bureau Bill 2011: wherein the Board highlighted its concerns in relation to the use of information gathered in the vetting process and offences that were to be considered relevant for child protection purposes.

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4. Submission on cost savings to be achieved following the publication of the National Plan for Economic Recovery: wherein the Board expressed the view to the Department that Education should not be subject to such reductions and that the targets given for reductions were unreasonable and would be difficult to achieve in practice.
5. Submission on the Value for Money Review of Small Schools: wherein the Board gave a lengthy submission on the importance of rural schools to local communities and presented evidence from a number of academic sources to highlight that other EU countries subsequently regretted decisions to close small schools in rural/sub-urban areas. The submission also highlighted the shortcomings of the evidence which suggests learning outcomes for children in larger schools are better than those for children in smaller schools.

The Board also made a lengthy written submission to the National Forum on Primary School Patronage which was supported by an oral presentation to the Forum in April 2011 and a second oral submission in November 2011. The Board is very grateful to The Rt Rev Paul Colton, Bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross and to Dr Anne Lodge, Principal of Church of Ireland College of Education who together with the Secretary represented the Board at the Forum over three days in April and also in November 2011.

#### **Transport Scheme D (primary)**

The number of qualifying families for this grant stands at 312 and grants totalling €166,902.10 for the school year were received from the Department of Education and Skills at the end of December 2011. This scheme will be administered by the Department of Education and Skills for any new applicants from 2011.

#### **Proposed New Post Primary Schools**

The Minister for Education and Skills announced his intention to build twenty new post primary schools across the State to open in 2014. The Archbishop of Dublin and Glendalough, acting on substantial evidence of parental demand, applied to the Minister for patronage of the proposed new post primary school in Greystones, Co Wicklow. Following an approach from Co Dublin VEC, the Archbishop of Dublin and Glendalough agreed to be the “designated partner” in Co Dublin VEC’s application for the proposed new post primary school in Mulhuddart, Co Dublin in conjunction with the other local Protestant and Pentecostal Churches. The Minister will make a decision on the awarding of patronage in mid 2012.

#### **Safeguarding Trust**

The Child Protection Officer (CPO RI) continues to provide advice and guidance on a range of issues to parishes and dioceses throughout the Republic. There has been an increased level of demand in 2011.

Training in Safeguarding Trust for panels and workers was carried out during the year by the diocesan trainers and by the CPO. Safeguarding Trust implementation was further enhanced by the setting up of a team of parish evaluators for the Dioceses of Meath and Kildare. Training was provided for the team and for members of the Select Vestries of these dioceses. Parish evaluations are ongoing in other dioceses.

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A meeting for diocesan support teams was held in Church of Ireland House in November 2011. There was a good attendance and wide diocesan representation. A presentation was made by Ms Jan Perrin HSE Information and Advice Officer, Children First. She briefed the group on upcoming developments in child protection in the Republic, including the plan to place the National Child Protection Guidance ‘Children First’ on a statutory basis. This was a lively and informative meeting.

The Board greatly appreciates the contribution to Safeguarding Trust implementation which is provided by dedicated volunteers from the diocesan support teams.

The CPO provided Safeguarding Trust training for students of the Church of Ireland Theological Institute.

A training/refresher day for clergy, co-presented with Ms Margaret Yarr (CPO NI) was held in October and was attended by 15 members of clergy.

The CPOs attended the Church of England and Methodist Church Annual Safeguarding Conference, entitled ‘Surviving and Thriving’.

Further valuable training attended by the Secretary and the CPO was a seminar entitled ‘Inside the Minds of Sex Offenders,’ delivered by Mentor Forensics.

The CPO maintained her registration as a Keeping Safe trainer, delivering the revised programme which includes disability awareness. She also maintains links with voluntary and statutory organisations and is a member of a number of child protection committees.

A link has been made with the Garda National Bureau of Criminal Investigation at Harcourt Square. The CPO is the designated liaison person for purposes of reporting concerns of child abuse, current or historical, to this unit. The NBCI has requested to be informed of all cases involving allegations against Church workers, even when they have been reported to An Garda Síochána at local level. A small number of child abuse concerns have been reported to the HSE.

It is notable that a number of historical allegations concerning Church workers relate to events of several decades ago, some of which were not disclosed at the time. This is consistent with research findings of the lifetime impact of abuse. It reinforces the need for preventive child protection practice.

The CPO has offered to meet individuals making allegations and this offer has been taken up in two cases to date.

### **Garda Vetting**

Following the resignation of Mrs Jennifer Byrne, Ms Eimear Ryan was appointed an authorised signatory for Garda Vetting. Ms Ryan works in conjunction with the CPO Ms Renee English, the second authorised signatory, in the processing of Garda Vetting application forms for school ancillary staff and parishes. Ms Ryan has undergone training with An Garda Síochána in Thurles in relation to this function.

The process of Garda Vetting is a slow and methodical procedure which can take many weeks. The authorised signatories endeavour to “turn around” vetting applications in the shortest possible time but are also relying on the under-resourced Garda Central Vetting Unit. However, the Board is pleased to advise that the Church of Ireland has been chosen to pilot a new online Garda Vetting procedure. Dr Fennelly, Ms Ryan and Ms English will liaise with An Garda Síochána in relation to this project and it is hoped that the

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rolling out of the pilot project will commence in summer 2012. An online system of processing vetting applications will replace the cumbersome paper based system and should speed up the process enormously. The Board looks forward to reporting on the progress of this project to General Synod 2013.

#### **Conferences**

The Secretary attended the ASTI and INTO annual Conferences held in Cork and Sligo respectively in May 2011.

The Secretary was also invited to attend the annual conferences for the IVEA, ACCS, NTF and the National Parents Council Post Primary.

The Secretary and/or Ms Ryan also attended the CPSMA and NABMSE annual Conferences in 2011.

These annual conferences are tremendous opportunities to promote the role of the Church of Ireland in education, through meeting key decision makers involved in the provision of Irish education.

CIPSMA held its first annual conference in the Kings Hospital, Dublin in March 2011 on the theme of school patronage. This venture was a great success and brought a sense of solidarity to principals and chairs of Boards of Management in Church of Ireland primary schools who gathered from around the country.

#### **Grants**

The Board continues to provide grant aid to the Church of Ireland College of Education towards the provision of the course leading to the Certificate in Religious Education.

The Board continues to provide grant aid to Past Students Association of the Church of Ireland College of Education to assist in the running of its annual conference, to Building Blocks to offset the deficit in running the annual Conference and also toward the publication of *Search*, a Church of Ireland Journal.

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### Synod Examination in Religious Education

The prize winners for 2010/2011 were as follows:

#### First year

Alexandra College	Flora Perry-Knox-Gore	Morgan Jellett Fund Prize
Alexandra College	Aislinn Redbond	Morgan Jellett Fund Prize
The Kings' Hospital	Eva McLoughlin	Morgan Jellett Fund Prize
Newpark Comprehensive	Cillian O'Brien	Junior Division Prize
Newpark Comprehensive	Claire Mullen	Junior Division Prize
Alexandra College	Julie Ryan	Junior Division Prize
Newpark Comprehensive	Ricky Davis	
Cavan Royal	Charlie Cosnett	Junior Division Prize
Monaghan Collegiate	Nicole McCarron	Junior Division Prize
The Kings' Hospital	Emer King	
Monaghan Collegiate	Rory Gallagher	
Monaghan Collegiate	Nathalie Kingham	
Royal & Prior	Lucy McClintock	
Royal & Prior	Roanne Lecky	
Royal & Prior	Jordan Neilands	

#### Second year

Alexandra College	Zena Sheehan	James Fitzgerald Gregg Prize
Alexandra College	Rachael Slattery	James Fitzgerald Gregg Prize
The Kings' Hospital	Jack Kyle	James Fitzgerald Gregg Prize
Alexandra College	Louise McCollum	Junior Division Prize
Royal & Prior	Kirsty McKinney	Junior Division Prize
The Kings' Hospital	Jessica O'Leary	Junior Division Prize
The Kings' Hospital	Nadia Hourihan	Junior Division Prize
Cavan Royal	Priye Joe-Otuma	
Royal & Prior	Julie Moore	
Royal & Prior	Ellen Patterson	
Monaghan Collegiate	Shannon Forde	
Monaghan Collegiate	Natasha Wilson	
Newpark Comprehensive	Rebecca Sullivan	
Newpark Comprehensive	Sean Bean	
Newpark Comprehensive	Sinead Gallagher	
Cavan Royal	Melissa Heaslip	
Monaghan Collegiate	Clive McCoy	

#### Third Year

Alexandra College	Emily McCollum	Morgan Jellett Memorial
Alexandra College	Ellen O'Toole	2 <sup>nd</sup> Prize

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**Transition Year**

Wilson's Hospital	Rebecca English	Ferns Fund
Wilson's Hospital	Holly Lacey	2 <sup>nd</sup> Prize
Wilson's Hospital	Chloe Taylor	3 <sup>rd</sup> Prize
Wilson's Hospital	Avril Simpson	

**Fifth/Sixth Years**

The Kings' Hospital	Sarah Scales	Ferns Exhibition
Royal & Prior	Georgina Smith	2 <sup>nd</sup> Prize
Wilson's Hospital	Araceli Martin	3 <sup>rd</sup> Prize
The Kings' Hospital	Catherine Jennings	Senior Division Prize
Wilson's Hospital	Katie Coyle	Senior Division Prize
The Kings' Hospital	Oisin Leonard	
Royal & Prior	John Fallows	Senior Division Prize
The Kings' Hospital	Ramon Moran	
Wilson's Hospital	Macarena Cuervo	
Royal & Prior	Lewis Alcorn	
Wilson's Hospital	Ana Sanchez	

The Board would like to thank Rev David McDonnell who kindly agreed to act as Examiner again this year.

**Appendix A**

**THE GENERAL SYNOD BOARD OF EDUCATION**

The following are the members of the Board and its committees as on 31 March 2012.

**THE GENERAL SYNOD BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**THE ARCHBISHOPS AND BISHOPS**

**THE HONORARY SECRETARIES OF THE GENERAL SYNOD**

Mr Samuel Harper

Mrs Ethne Harkness

Ven Robin Bantry White

Rev George Davison

***Elected members***

Armagh

Rev Canon John McKegney

Vacant

Clogher

Rev Bryan Kerr

Mr Samuel Morrow

Derry

Rev Canon Henry Gilmore

Mr Desmond West

Down

Rev Canon Robert Howard

Mr James Bunting

Connor

Ven Stephen Forde

Dr Kenneth Dunn

Kilmore

Very Rev Raymond Ferguson

Mrs Brigid Barrett

Tuam

Rev Canon Doris Clements

Professor Paul Johnston

Dublin

Rev Gillian Wharton

Ms Ruth Handy

Meath

Rev Canon John Clarke

Mr Adrian Oughton

Cashel and Ossory

Rev Canon Patrick Harvey

Mrs Avril Forrest

Cork

Rev Adrian Wilkinson

Mr William Perrott

Limerick and Killaloe

Ven Robert Warren

Mr Thomas Hardy



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***Co-opted members***

Mr Thomas Flannagan	Mr Michael Hall
Mrs Rosemary Forde	Mr Alan Cox
Mrs Helen McClenaghan	Mr Ian Coombes
Mr Roy McKinney	Ms Susie Hall
Mrs Patricia Wallace	Ms Rosemary Maxwell-Eager
Ms Claire Bruton	Ms Sadie Honner
Rev Canon Robert Black	Ms Eileen Jackson
Rev Brian O'Rourke	Mrs Patricia Conran
Rev Anne Taylor	Ms Stephen Farrell
Dr Anne Lodge	

***Secretary to the General Synod Board of Education:***

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

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

Rev Ian Ellis, Church of Ireland House, 61-67 Donegal St, Belfast BT1 2QH.

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
(FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2013)**

Two members of the House of Bishops

Rev George Davison  
Ven Robin Bantry White  
Rev Canon John McKegney  
Mr James Bunting  
Mr Thomas Flannagan  
Ms Eileen Jackson  
Rev Brian O'Rourke  
Ms Sadie Honner

**BOARD OF EDUCATION (NORTHERN IRELAND)**

***Ex-officio members***

The Archbishop of Armagh, Most Rev Alan Harper  
Bishop of Clogher, Rt Rev John McDowell  
Bishop of Down and Dromore, Rt Rev Harold Miller  
Bishop of Kilmore, Rt Rev Kenneth Clarke  
The Bishop of Connor, Rt Rev Alan Abernethy  
The Bishop of Derry, Rt Rev Kenneth Good

Lay Hon Secretary of General Synod, Mrs Ethne Harkness  
Clerical Hon Secretary of General Synod, Rev George Davison

***Elected members***

Armagh	Rev Canon John McKegney Vacant
Clogher	Rev Bryan Kerr Mr Samuel Morrow
Derry	Rev Malcolm Ferry Mr Malcolm McSparron
Down	Rev Canon Robert Howard Mr James Bunting
Connor	Ven Stephen Forde Dr Kenneth Dunn

***Co-opted members***

Mrs Patricia Wallace  
Mrs Helen McClenaghan  
Mr Thomas Flannagan  
Mr Roy McKinney  
Mrs Rosemary Forde  
Canon Wilfred Young  
Professor Kenneth Bell  
Mr David Brown (CIYD)

***Observers***

Rev Canon Peter McDowell  
Mr James Kerr

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

Mr James Bunting

***Honorary Treasurer, Board of Education (Northern Ireland)***

Mr Roy McKinney

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

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

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

***Ex officio members:***

The Archbishop of Dublin  
Honorary Secretaries - Ven Robin Bantry White, Mr Samuel Harper

***Elected by House of Bishops:***

Bishop of Kilmore, Rt Rev Kenneth Clarke  
Bishop of Cork, Rt Rev Paul Colton

***Diocesan Representatives:*** Mr Adrian Oughton, Rev G Wharton

***Post primary representatives:*** Mr Michael Hall, Ms Rosemary Maxwell-Eager

***Third level representatives:*** Professor Paul Johnston, Dr Anne Lodge

***Primary representatives:*** Rev Brian O'Rourke, Ms Eileen Jackson

***CIYD:*** Ms Claire Bruton

***Sunday School Society:*** Rev Anne Taylor

***Co-options:*** Rev Canon Robert Black, Ms Sadie Honner

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

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

**APPENDIX B**  
**SECONDARY EDUCATION COMMITTEE**  
**REPORT 2012**

**Membership**

***Church of Ireland***

The Rt Rev Paul Colton, Bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross (Chairman)  
The Rev Canon Robert Black  
Mrs Joan Bruton  
Mr Edward Lindsey  
Mrs Patricia O'Malley  
Rev Brian O'Rourke  
Ms Elizabeth Oldham  
Mr Adrian Oughton  
Mr Geoffrey Perrin

***The Presbyterian Church***

Rev Mary Hunter (Deputy Chairman)  
Mrs Eleanor Petrie

***The Methodist Church***

Rev Nigel Mackey  
Dr John Harris

***The Religious Society of Friends***

Mr Alan Harrison  
Mr David Grubb

**Secretary to the Committee and to the Company**

Dr Ken Fennelly

**Administrator (Grants Scheme)**

Mr David 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 Skills (DE&S) to ensure necessitous Protestant children may attend Protestant secondary schools and the representation of the interests of the member churches in the post-primary education system.

## Board of Education – Report 2012

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

### **Block Grant Scheme**

Enrolments (2010/11) in the twenty-one fee charging schools totaled 9,803 (9,794 in previous year). This figure does not include the five comprehensive schools. In the school year 2010/11 the audited accounts showed the total amount, received from the DE&S, was €6,481,720 (€5,381,185), the grant in aid of fees totalled €6,541,479 (€6,580,259) and the capitation adjustment grant was incorporated (€244,126). The net cost of administering the SEC scheme was €109,130 (€115,752). There is a small grant to assist the running of the office.

The following numbers of grants were awarded in respect of the 2010/11 school year: 1,681 day grants (1,588), 837 boarding grants (894), 2,518 in total (2,482).

The Committee agreed to retain the grants for the school year [2011/12] on a scale from boarding €570 - €7,767 (€1,140 - €7,767) day €240 - €820 (€480 - €2,820). 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 David Wynne and Mrs Bridie McAuley, Administrative Assistant, attended a number of open days at the request of schools and took the opportunity to discuss issues with individual parents. Mr Wynne also made contact with each school to discuss the functioning of the grant scheme.

### **Educational Developments**

In 2011 a dialogue was continued between representatives of the Protestant schools sector and the Department of Education. This dialogue reached a hiatus on the fall of the Fianna Fail/Green Government. While these discussions have not closed, the new Minister has not initiated the resumption of that dialogue. Protestant fee-charging schools were disappointed to have a further one point rise on their pupil teacher ratio (ptr) imposed on them in the Budget in late 2011. This puts the (ptr) in (Protestant and Catholic) fee-charging schools at two points above all other second level schools in the State. Budget 2012 also announced plans by the D.E &S to conduct an analysis of all fee-charging schools to determine schools net income from fees. The DE&S has been in contact with schools recently and has also met with the Committee on Management in this regard.

In 2011, Wilson's Hospital School, a fee paying boarding school, entered the Department of Education and Skills' Free Tuition Scheme. This entitles the School to the full Pupil / Teacher Ratio and the return of Department Support and Services Grants. The SEC boarding grant remains payable to support boarding families on the same basis as all other pupils attending SEC boarding schools. The School retains its Admissions Policy and ethos and remains under the Trusteeship of the Archbishops and three Bishops of the Church of Ireland.

The SEC exists to increase access for children from Protestant traditions to attend second level schools from of a Protestant tradition. In this regard, the SEC notes with concern the continuing trend of low levels of Protestant children transferring to Protestant second level schools from primary level. It is noted that the increased budget cuts at primary level may well lead to the closure of up 20% of Protestant primary schools over the next four/five years which may significantly impact on this situation in the long term.

#### Board of Education – Report 2012

However, mention was made in last years Report on focused discussions between the SEC and the Department of Education and Skills on securing the future of the “Block Grant”. Given the overall context of policy in relation to second-level fee-charging schools, the SEC had ongoing concerns about the security of the grant, despite numerous reassurances from Ministers for Education over many years. It was put to the Department of Education and Skills that the annual payment of the “Block Grant” to the SEC has never had any formal footing and has been at the discretion of the Minister of the day since its inception in 1968. After a series of negotiations, a Memorandum of Understanding was agreed between the Department of Education and Skills and the SEC. The level of the “Block Grant” will, from January 2011 onwards, be determined by analyzing the level of need expressed through applications. This will be done at four year intervals. This will give stability to the level of funding received, which in the past had always fluctuated. In recent years the SEC had been unable to cope with this fluctuation since it no longer had reserve funding following a direction from a previous Minister for Education and Science to disperse its reserve funding. A key provision of the Memorandum of Understanding is that the status of the grant is no longer solely at Ministerial discretion but is sewn into the “ordinary” round of Department of Education and Skills annual funding.

#### **Administration**

The Committee maintains a review and appeal procedure, in the form of an appeals sub-committee, for applicants who are dissatisfied with a decision by the grants office. The Appeals Committee considers a number of appeals annually. Each case was reconsidered on agreed criteria and is determined by the level of need and the amount of funds available after the current years grant payments have been made. A number of applicants had their grants increased.

The Committee appreciates the work of the Administrator, Mr David Wynne and the Administrative Assistant Ms Bridie McCauley and, during grants processing, Ms Penny Dewar. The office is under the management of the Secretary Dr Kenneth Fennelly. The Committee is also grateful for the advice and assistance it receives throughout the year from its auditors Deloitte and in particular Mr Tom Cassin, Partner, Deloitte.

**APPENDIX C**

**SUNDAY SCHOOL SOCIETY REPORT**

**SUNDAY SCHOOL SOCIETY FOR IRELAND**

The most exciting and interesting development in 2011 was the setting up of the Children's Ministry Network. We are extremely grateful to the Rev Anne Taylor who, on our behalf, did a great deal of work to get it set up. We look forward to future developments.

Training children's ministry leaders remains the priority of the Society. One very successful evening event is our Autumn Training Evening held in Holy Trinity, Rathmines. Numbers still show us that it is needed and appreciated by many leaders around the Diocese and further a field. Our speaker in 2011 was Ms Barbara McDade who is the Programme Co-ordinator with the Presbyterian Church.

The national children's ministry conference 'Building Blocks' was fully booked in 2011. Participants from Church of Ireland parishes made up approximately half of the 250 attending the Dublin Conference and came from parishes throughout the dioceses. The key-note speaker was Mr Nick Harding, Children's Ministry Adviser for the Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham. He was very ably supported by a team of excellent seminar leaders. Rev Anne Taylor chairs the Dublin Committee and Mrs Heather Wilkinson is the venue co-ordinator. The 2012 'Building Blocks' Conference will take place on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> November in Belfast and Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> November in Dublin and the key-note speaker will be well known children's story writer Mr Bob Hartman.

The Sunday School Society Resource Centre continues to survive in a time of extreme economic difficulty and we finished the year with a very small deficit. Much of this was due to some generous donations from loyal supporters and parishes for which we are extremely grateful. However we cannot afford to be complacent as we struggle all year to improve on sales and so be able to continue to provide a service to the Church of Ireland. Ms Gillian Kohlmann and Ms Betty Cox, in spite of reduced working hours, work very diligently to fulfil orders in the shortest possible time. Please remember us when you need books and other resources and help us to survive through these difficult times.