

Voices, Values and Visions

A Study of the Educate Together Epistemic Community and its Voice in a Pluralist Ireland

Volume 2 of 2

By

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**This thesis is submitted to Dublin City University in fulfilment of the
requirements for a Ph.D. Degree**

July 2006

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Appendix A

APPENDIXES

*the Stanley Letter*²⁹⁵

Copy of a Letter from the Chief Secretary for Ireland, to His Grace the Duke of Leinster, on the Formation of a Board of Commissioners for Education in Ireland.

Irish Office, London, October, 1831.

My Lord – His Majesty's Government having come to the determination of empowering the Lord Lieutenant to constitute a Board for the Superintendence of a System of National Education in Ireland, and Parliament having so far sanctioned the arrangement as to appropriate a sum of money in the present year as an experiment of the probable success of the proposed system, I am directed by His Excellency to acquaint your Grace that it is his intention, with your consent, to constitute you the President of the new Board: And I have it further in command, to lay before your Grace the motives of the Government in constituting the Board, the powers which it is intended to confer upon it, and the objects which it is expected that it will bear in view, and carry into effect.

The Commissioners, in 1812, recommended the appointment of a Board of this description to superintend a system of education, from which should be banished even the suspicion of proselytism, and which, admitting children of all religious persuasions, should not interfere with the particular tenets of any. The Government of the day imagined that they had found a superintending body, acting upon a system such as was recommended, and intrusted the distribution of the National grants to the care of the Kildare-street Society. His Majesty's present Government are of opinion that no private society deriving a part, however small, of their annual income from private sources, and only made the channel of the munificence of the Legislature, without being subject to any direct responsibility, could adequately and satisfactorily accomplish the end proposed; and while they do full justice to the liberal views with which that society, they cannot but be sensible that one of its leading principles was calculated to defeat its avowed objects, as experience has subsequently proved that it has. The determination to enforce, in all their schools, the reading of the Holy Scriptures without note or comment, was undoubtedly taken with the purest motives; with the wish at once to connect religious with moral and literary education, and, at the same time, not

to run the risk of wounding the peculiar feelings of any sect by catechetical instruction, or comments which might tend to subjects of polemical controversy. But it seems to have been overlooked that the principles of the Roman Catholic Church (to which, in any system intended for general diffusion throughout Ireland, the bulk of the pupils must necessarily belong) were totally at variance with this principle; and that the indiscriminate reading of the Holy Scriptures without note or comment, by children, must be peculiarly obnoxious to a Church which denies, even to adults, the right of unaided private interpretation of the sacred volume with respect to articles of religious belief.

Shortly after its institution, although the society prospered and extended its operations under the fostering care of the Legislature, this vital defect began to be noticed, and the Roman Catholic Clergy began to exert themselves with energy and success against a system to which they were on principle opposed, and which they feared might lead in its results to proselytism, even although no such object were contemplated by its promoters. When this opposition arose, founded on such grounds, it soon became manifest that the system could not become one of National Education.

The Commissioners of Education, in 1824-5, sensible of the defects of the system, and of the ground, as well as the strength of the objection taken, recommended the appointment of two teachers in every school, one Protestant and the other Roman Catholic, to superintend separately the religious education of the children; and they hoped to have been able to agree upon a selection from the Scriptures, which might have been generally acquiesced in by both persuasions. But it was soon found that these schemes were impracticable; and, in 1828, a Committee of the House of Commons, to which were referred the various Reports of the Commissioners of Education, recommended a system to be adopted which should afford, if possible, a combined literary and a separate religious education, and should be capable of being so far adapted to the views of the religious persuasions which prevail in Ireland, as to render it, in truth, a system of National Education for the poorer classes of the community.

For the success of the undertaking much must depend upon the character of the individuals who compose the Board; and upon the security thereby afforded to the country, that while the interests of religion are not overlooked, the most scrupulous care should be taken not to interfere with the peculiar religious tenets of any description of Christian pupils.

To attain the first object, it appears essential that the Board should be composed of men of high personal character, including individuals of exalted station in the Church; to attain the latter, that it should consist of persons professing different religious opinions.

It is the intention of the Government that the Board should exercise a complete control over the various schools which may be erected under its auspices, or which, having been already established, may hereafter place themselves under its management, and submit to its regulations. Subject to these, applications for aid will be admissible from Christians of all denominations; but as one of the main objects must be to unite in one system children of different creeds, and as much must depend upon the co-operation of the resident clergy, the Board will probably look with peculiar favour upon applications proceeding either from –

- 1st. The Protestant and Roman Catholic clergy of the parish; or
- 2nd. One of the clergymen, and a certain number of parishioners professing the opposite creed; or
- 3rd. Parishioners of both denominations.

Where the application proceeds exclusively from Protestants, or exclusively from Roman Catholics, it will be proper for the Board to make inquiry as to the circumstances which lead to the absence of any names of the persuasion which does not appear.

The Board will note all applications for aid, whether granted or refused, with the grounds of the decision, and annually submit to Parliament a Report of their proceedings.

They will refuse all applications in which the following objects are not locally provided for:

- 1st. A fund sufficient for the annual repairs of the school-house and furniture.
- 2nd. A permanent salary for the master and no less than pounds.
- 3rd. A sum sufficient to purchase books and school requisites at half-price.
- 4th. Where aid is sought from the Commissioners for building a school-house, it is required that at least one-third of the estimated expense be subscribed, a site for building, to be approved of by the Commissioners, be granted for the purpose, and that the school-house, when finished, be vested in trustees, to be also approved of by them.

They will require that the schools be kept open for a certain number of hours, on four or five days of the week, at the discretion of the commissioners, for moral and literary education only; and that the remaining one or two days in the week be set apart for giving, separately, such religious education to the children as may be approved of by the clergy of their respective persuasions.

They will also permit and encourage the clergy to give religious instruction to the children of their respective persuasions, either before or after the ordinary school hours, on the other days of the week.

They will exercise the most entire control over all books to be used in the schools, whether in combined moral and literary, or separate religious instruction; none to be employed in the first, except under the sanction of the Board, nor in the latter, but with the approbation of those members of the Board who are of the same religious persuasion with those for whose use they are intended. Although it is not designed to exclude from the list of books for the combined instruction, such portions of Sacred History or of religious and moral teaching as may be approved of by the Board, it is to be understood that this is by no means intended to convey a perfect and sufficient religious education, or to supersede the necessity of separate religious instruction on the day set apart for that purpose.

They will require that a register shall be kept in the schools, in which shall be entered the attendance or non-attendance of each child on Divine Worship on Sundays.

They will, at various times, either by themselves or by their Inspectors, visit and examine into the state of each school, and report their observations to the Board.

They will allow to the individuals or bodies applying for aid, the appointment of their own teacher, subject to the following restrictions and regulations:

- 1st. He (or she) shall be liable to be fined, suspended, or removed altogether, by the authority of the Commissioners, who shall, however, record their reasons.
- 2nd. He shall have received previous instruction in a model school in Dublin, to be sanctioned by the Board.

N.B. – It is not intended that this regulation should apply to prevent the admission of masters or mistresses of schools already established, who may be approved of by the Commissioners.

- 3rd. He shall have received testimonials of good conduct, and of general fitness for the situation, from the Board.

The board will be intrusted with the absolute control over the funds which may be annually voted by Parliament, which they shall apply to the following purposes:

- 1st. Granting aid for the erection of schools, subject to the conditions hereinbefore specified.
- 2nd. Paying Inspectors for visiting and reporting upon schools.
- 3rd. Gratuities to teachers of schools conducted under the rules laid down, not exceeding pounds each.
- 4th. Establishing and maintaining a model school in Dublin, and training teachers for country schools.

5th. Editing and printing such books of moral and literary education as may be approved of for the use of the schools, and supplying them and school necessaries, at not lower than half-price.

6th. Defraying all necessary contingent expenses of the Board.

I have thus stated the objects which His Majesty's Government have in view, and the principal regulations by which they think those objects may be most effectually promoted: and I am directed by the Lord Lieutenant to express His Excellency's earnest wish that the one and the other may be found such as to procure for the Board the sanction of your Grace's name, and the benefit of your Grace's attendance.

A full power will of course be given to the Board to make such regulations upon matters of detail, not inconsistent with the spirit of these instructions, as they may judge best qualified to carry into effect the intentions of the Government and of the Legislature. Parliament has already placed at his Excellency's disposal a sum which may be available even in the course of the present year; and as soon as the Board can be formed, it will be highly desirable that no time should be lost, with a view to the estimates of the ensuing year, in enabling such schools, already established, as are willing to subscribe to the conditions imposed, to put in their claims for protection and assistance; and in receiving applications from parties desirous to avail themselves of the munificence of the Legislature in founding new schools under your regulations.

I have the honour to be, &c.,

(Signed) *E.G. Stanley.*

Appendix B

*the General Lesson*²⁹⁶

Christians should endeavour, as the Apostle Paul commands them, to 'live peaceably with all men' (Rom. ch. xii. v. 18), even with those of a different religious persuasion.

Our Saviour, Christ, commanded his disciples to 'love one another'; he taught them to love even their enemies, to bless those that curse them, and to pray for those that persecute them. He himself prayed for his murderers.

Many men hold erroneous doctrines; but we ought not to hate or persecute them. We ought to seek for the truth, and to hold fast what we are convinced is the truth; but not to treat harshly those who are in error. Jesus Christ did not intend his religion to be forced on men by violent means. He would not allow his disciples to fight for him.

If any persons treat us unkindly, we must not do the same to them; for Christ and his Apostles have taught us not to return evil for evil. If we would obey Christ, we must do to others, not as they do to us, but as we should wish them to do to us.

Quarrelling with our neighbours, and abusing them, is not the way to convince them that we are in the right, and they in the wrong. It is more likely to convince them that we have not a Christian spirit.

We ought to show ourselves followers of Christ, 'who, when he was reviled, reviled not again' (1 Pet. ch. ii. v. 23), by behaving gently and kindly to every one.

Appendix C

EDUCATION

ARTICLE 42

1. The State acknowledges that the primary and natural educator of the child is the Family and guarantees to respect the inalienable right and duty of parents to provide, according to their means, for the religious and moral, intellectual, physical and social education of their children.
2. Parents shall be free to provide this education in their homes or in private schools or in schools recognised or established by the State.
3. 1° The State shall not oblige parents in violation of their conscience and lawful preference to send their children to schools established by the State, or to any particular type of school designated by the State.
2° The State shall, however, as guardian of the common good, require in view of actual conditions that the children receive a certain minimum education, moral, intellectual and social.
4. The State shall provide for free primary education and shall endeavour to supplement and give reasonable aid to private and corporate educational initiative, and, when the public good requires it, provide other educational facilities or institutions with due regard, however, for the rights of parents, especially in the matter of religious and moral formation.
5. In exceptional cases, where the parents for physical or moral reasons fail in their duty towards their children, the State as guardian of the common good, by appropriate means shall endeavour to supply the place of the parents, but always with due regard for the natural and imprescriptible rights of the child.

RELIGION

ARTICLE 44

1. The State acknowledges that the homage of public worship is due to Almighty God. It shall hold His Name in reverence, and shall respect and honour religion.

2.
 - 1° Freedom of conscience and the free profession and practice of religion are, subject to public order and morality, guaranteed to every citizen.

 - 2° The State guarantees not to endow any religion.

 - 3° The State shall not impose any disabilities or make any discrimination on the ground of religious profession, belief or status.

 - 4° Legislation providing State aid for schools shall not discriminate between schools under the management of different religious denominations, nor be such as to affect prejudicially the right of any child to attend a school receiving public money without attending religious instruction at that school.

 - 5° Every religious denomination shall have the right to manage its own affairs, own, acquire and administer property, movable and immovable, and maintain institutions for religious or charitable purposes.

 - 6° The property of any religious denomination or any educational institution shall not be diverted save for necessary works of public utility and on payment of compensation.

Appendix D



**International Convention
on the Elimination
of all Forms of
Racial Discrimination**

Distr.
GENERAL

CERD/C/IRL/CO/2
10 March 2005

Original: ENGLISH
UNEDITED VERSION

COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION
OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION
Sixty-sixth session
21 February - 11 March 2005

**CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES
UNDER ARTICLE 9 OF THE CONVENTION**

**Concluding observations of the Committee on the
Elimination of Racial Discrimination**

IRELAND

18. The Committee, noting that almost all primary schools are run by Catholic groups and that non-denominational or multi-denominational schools represent less than 1% of the total number of primary educational facilities, is concerned that existing laws and practice would favour Catholic pupils in the admission to Catholic schools in case of shortage of places, particularly in the light of the limited alternatives available. (article 5(d)(vii) and 5(e)(v))

The Committee, recognising the “intersectionality” of racial and religious discrimination, encourages the State party to promote the establishment of non-denominational or multi-denominational schools and to amend the existing legislative framework so that no discrimination may take place as far as the admission of pupils (of all religions) in schools is concerned.

Appendix E

the Patron's policy on religious education in a Dalkey School Project

School²⁹⁸

1. The fundamental principles of the Dalkey School Project will determine that the ethos of a D.S.P. School reflects the ethos of a society in which there are many social, cultural and religious strands co-existing in harmony and mutual respect; these D.S.P. principles are as follows:

(a) The multi-denominational principle—all children must have equal right of access to the school, and the religious, cultural and social background of each child must be respected.

(b) The co-educational principle—each child must be allowed to develop his or her potential without distinction by sex.

(c) The democratic principle—the D.S.P. must at all times be sensitive and aware of the needs and aspirations of its parents, teachers and children, both individually and collectively, and be responsive to them.

2. The primary responsibility for the religious education of each child lies with its parents; any programme of religious education must therefore take account of parents' wishes with regard to the religious education of their children.

3. Parents have the right to withdraw their children from religious education classes.

4. (a) In accordance with the fundamental principles of the D.S.P., the Board of Management will offer a Religious Education Core Curriculum, designed to help children to understand the religious traditions of life and thought that they will meet in their environment; and to help them to be sensitive to the ultimate questions posed by life and to the dimension of mystery and wonder that underlies all human experience.

(b) The Board of Management shall also facilitate any group of parents that may require it to provide Denominational Instruction as required by them for their children, to take place where numbers, resources and time-tabling permit within school hours. In the case of very

small groups where this is not practical, the Board of Management will facilitate the parents concerned by making the school premises available at some other suitable time. Qualified catechists may be appointed by such a group by agreement between the Board of Management and the parents concerned.

5. The Dalkey School Project will as patron set up a Religious Education Advisory Committee, which will function as a research and curriculum development unit in relation to the D.S.P.'s Religious Education Core Curriculum, and will be available as required by teachers as an advisory body to help with the planning of specific programmes.

Appendix F

educate together

co-ordinating committee for multi-denominational school projects

Educate Together Policy Statement, May 1989.

Religious Education in a multid denominational school.

This document arises from a meeting between *Educate Together* and officials of the Department of Education on 10th February 1989. In the course of that meeting the topic of religious education policy in a multid denominational school was discussed. It was suggested at the time that the Department would appreciate a written clarification of the approach of *Educate Together* to this subject. It is hoped that the following will prove helpful to the Department in dealing with the question of religious education in multi-denominational schools.

The Department of Education

Under the Rules for National Schools issued by the Department, all National Schools must provide religious instruction for their pupils. Indeed "Religious Instruction is a fundamental part of the school course" and "a religious spirit should inform and vivify the whole work of the school" (Rule 68). The Patron is responsible for the overall development, ethos and policy of a National school. Responsibility for the form and content of religious instruction provided in a National school is entirely a matter for the Patron of that school and the Department has no role "in prescribing the subject matter of religious instruction, the examination of it (or) the supervision of its teaching". Rule 69 states that "no child shall receive, or be present at, any religious instruction of which his parents or guardian disapprove".

The Patron's role in developing the ethos of a National School is clear in the case of a denominational school. The ethos of the school will reflect the religious denomination of the Patron. What is the ethos of a multid denominational school and what can parents expect in sending a child to such a school? *Educate Together* is glad of the opportunity of reiterating the established policy in the sector and of expanding upon the practical implementation of that policy in our schools.

The term "Multidenominational".

The term "multidenominational" is widely used to describe the distinctive ethos of our schools. Accordingly, it is important to define the term clearly. The Constitutions of all Patron bodies in the *Educate Together* sector define the term "multidenominational" in the same way:

All children have equal rights of access (to the school) and the social, cultural and religious background of each child is equally respected"

The principle of equal rights of access is reflected in the enrolment policy of each school. Priority of enrolment is based on the date of entering a child's name on a Pre-enrolment List maintained by each school, and is independent of the child's denominational background or lack of it.

The principle of equal respect for each child is reflected in the Religious Education policy of each school.

(non-theistic philosophy group) → (Religious Ed. Policy)

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Sample: Patron's Policy on Religious Education

1. The fundamental principles of the Project will determine that the ethos of a school under its patronage reflects the ethos of a society in which there are many social, cultural and religious strands coexisting in harmony and mutual respect; the principles of the Project are as follows:

- (a) the multi-denominational principle - all children must have equal right of access to the school and the religious, cultural, and social background of each child must be respected.
- (b) the co-educational principle - each child must be allowed to develop his or her potential without distinction by sex.
- (c) the democratic principle - the Project should be sensitive to and aware of the needs and aspirations of its parents, teachers and children, both individually and collectively, and be responsive to them.

2. The primary responsibility for the religious education of each child lies with its parents; any programme for religious education must therefore take account of parents' wishes with regard to the religious education of their children. The implementation of the multi-denominational religious education policy within the school is the work of the qualified professional teachers.

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from religious education classes.

3. (a) In accordance with the fundamental principles of the Project, the Board of Management will offer a Religious Education Core Curriculum, designed to help children to understand the religious traditions of life and thought, and to help them to be sensitive to the ultimate questions posed by life and to the dimension of mystery and wonder that underlies all human experience.

(b) The Board of Management shall also facilitate any group of parents that may require it to provide Denominational Instruction for their children. Qualified instructors may be appointed by such a group by agreement between the Board of Management and the parents concerned.

4. The ... Project will, as Patron, set up a Religious Education Advisory Committee if and when appropriate.

Religious Education Policy

Before obtaining recognition from the Department, the Patron of each multid denominational school was required by the Department to submit for approval a document indicating its policy on religious education.

All schools recognised to date operate a similar policy based on the following principles:

1. The ethos of each school should reflect the ethos of a society in which there are many social, cultural and religious strands co-existing in harmony and mutual respect.
2. The primary responsibility for the religious education of each child lies with its parents; any programme for religious education must therefore take account of parents' wishes in regard to the religious education of their children.
3. Parents have the right to withdraw their children from religious education classes.
- 4(a). The Board of Management of each school offers a Religious Education Core Curriculum, designed to help children to understand the different traditions of life and thought that they will meet in their environment and to help them to be sensitive to the ultimate questions posed by life and to the dimension of mystery and wonder that underlies all human experience. The implementation of the multid denominational religious education policy as embodied in the Religious Education Core Curriculum is the work of the qualified professional teachers.
- 4(b) The Board of Management of each school also facilitates any group of parents that may wish to provide denominational instruction for their children. Qualified instructors may be appointed by such a group by agreement between the Board of Management and the parents concerned.

The Policy in Practice.

The above policy has been implemented in all schools in the sector for over 10 years, with the active support of parents, teachers and children. The same all-embracing approach is reflected in many aspects of school life. Pupils, teachers, parents and all those involved with the schools are expected to uphold the principle of respect for the beliefs and sensitivities of others. School Patron Bodies and Boards of Management, as a matter of policy, avoid being directly identified with specific religious, political or other belief systems. In applying the Religious Education policy, a clear distinction is drawn between religious education and denominational instruction.

Religious education covers a wide range of religious, social, moral and ethical issues. All schools offer a Religious Education Core Curriculum which addresses these issues in a sensitive manner designed to be equally appropriate to children of all religions and none. Avoiding the presumption of any one viewpoint, it encourages the individual development of each child in an atmosphere of tolerance and respect for the beliefs of others. This Religious Education programme is the cornerstone of the ethos of a multid denominational school.

Whilst the schools as such have no direct responsibility for the provision of denominational instruction, they do facilitate parents who wish to organise such classes, often during the school day.

This fundamental approach provides a far more cohesive philosophical basis for the identity of the multid denominational sector than a purely numerical (and arguable divisive) headcount of the different denominational groupings in each school. In assessing applications for membership of *Educate Together*, this area of policy is examined very closely. A numerical breakdown of children into different denominational groupings does not of itself create a multid denominational school as described above. A clear commitment to the principles shared by the existing schools in the sector is an essential prerequisite for membership.

This ethos of sharing, of unity in diversity, of tolerance and mutual respect is the core of a multid denominational school and is the ultimate guarantee of the fundamental aim of all schools in the sector, that "no child shall be an outsider".

Appendix G

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Sample - Draft Guidelines for Denominational Instruction

1. The organisation of denominational instruction must be carried out by committees. There will be a separate committee for each denominational group who require instruction for their children.
2. These committees are independent of teaching staff at the school.
3. The committees will be set up at the beginning of each year by parents or guardians who require denominational instruction for their children.
4. Each committee shall appoint a chairperson, secretary and treasurer.
5. Each committee will be responsible for organising and employing a teacher for denominational instruction for its particular denomination, subject to the approval of the Principal.
6. Each committee will be responsible for the collection of all monies from children and for the payment of the teacher.
7. The timetabling of denominational instruction will be decided in consultation with the Principal and the Board of Management.
7. All arrangements necessary for sacraments etc. will be the responsibility of the committee.
8. Specific religious rites may only take place in the school in exceptional circumstances and with the express permission of the Principal and the Board of Management.
9. Disruption to other classes and children should be kept to a minimum.
10. Gatherings for feastdays, celebrations etc. will be facilitated at the discretion of the Principal and the Board of Management.

Appendix H

TO ALL PARENTS AND GUARDIANS of children in 1st class and above:

The Religious Education Core Curriculum is the Dalkey School Project's religious education programme. It has been implemented in the school since 1978, and has been continuously developed since then. This programme is offered to all the children in the school. The R.E. Core Curriculum in its present form has been endorsed by the staff of the school, the Board of Management and the Executive Committee of our Patron, the Dalkey School Project. Copies of the curriculum are available in the school library.

In addition to the R.E. Core Curriculum the Board, in accordance with the Patron's Policy on Religious Education, will facilitate any group of parents who request separate denominational instruction for their children. To a limited degree this can be offered within school hours, but where space and timetabling do not make this possible, accommodation can be provided in the school outside normal school hours.

Parents who want separate denominational instruction for their children are asked to complete the form below, and to return it to the school by June 23rd 1989. As the arrangements which have to be made may involve children being removed from their normal classes it is necessary to ask parents this question each year. So if you do want denominational instruction for your child in the coming year please complete the form - whether your child was, or was not, attending such classes during the past year. The information on your form will be passed to the appropriate Denominational Instruction Committee by the Board of Management.

Pat Johnston
Hon. Secretary,
Board of Management

To: The Principal, Dalkey School Project N.S., Glenageary Lodge.

From: (Names):..... Date: / / 1989

Address:.....Tel:.....

We/I wish to have denominational instruction in the coming school year for our/my child(ren) named below:

<u>Names of Children:</u>	<u>Rel. Denomination</u>	<u>Class in School 1988/89:</u>
.....
.....
.....
.....

Signed:
Parent/Guardian

Signed:
Parent/Guardian

Appendix I

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Extracts from a Speech given by Mary O'Rourke, T.D., Minister for Education at the opening of the Bray School Project N.S. 25/1/91

The extracts below are taken from a tape of the speech given by Mary O'Rourke, T.D., Minister for Education at the opening of the Bray School Project N.S. on 25 January 1991. These extracts have been transcribed in good faith by Aine Hyland, Chairperson, *Educate Together*, and are intended as an indication of the positive approach taken by the Minister in her dealings with schools in the *Educate Together* sector.

It would be my wish that more groups throughout the country would come forward with an idea for a multidenominational school....The fact that so many people have done so proves that the idea is in line with what is laid out in the Constitution - that it is parents (who have) primary responsibility for the education of their children. In keeping with that, across party divides, governments have seen fit to give encouragement to it. The time has come now to look at various ways of doing it.....

There are other areas where parents would like to come forward it would seem to officialdom that there are enough schools; so now we must look at it in a different way - look at it as we looked at the North Bay project and whilst I was most interested to read Bill Hyland's submission or paper yesterday in the Irish Times, it seems to me that we are already at that. Last summer came and the group in the North Bay Project - a very lively and vibrant group - decided that they wanted a school and yet it seemed how could you justify the building of another school when already numbers were falling in the area. They looked around and George Rowley looked around and we all put our collective minds together and we came up with a primary school which was no longer in use - an excellent building, a perfect building - but where the numbers had declined and it was no longer in use as a primary school. I got a hold of the file and we thought well this is what we can do and that was quite a step forward; now that had been knocking around in my head for many a day - that we could in fact use buildings that were no longer in use. For after all, the people that had set up that school were for the education of young people - the theme of education was still what was going to be within the walls - albeit in an altered philosophy - so it seemed very correct and proper and in line with what money had gone into it and what people had contributed that it would continue to be a house of education and that it would continue to be a building of education and we managed that very well and there wasn't too much too-ing and fro-ing about it..

Eventually it came about as a lot of ideas will be if they are not announced starkly and if they are not announced in a method or in a mode or in a mood of confrontation - there can be of course a gradual bringing along of many people to ideas which would have seemed outrageous or would

seem far too radical had you put it down starkly in print and said this is what we will do. And I see this as a way forward. There will be quite a lot of ironing out to be done. There will be I am sure quite a lot of sectional interests to be addressed and to be met and to be ironed out along the way. But quite properly, I think that buildings which were erected by the public purse at the wish of the public for the purpose of education could remain and can remain in education as I said, albeit in an altered form. Now the North Bay Project can be a model for what can be done in other areas and I think it is the way for us to proceed.

The school transport arrangement and the arrangement and what we were able to do with the North Bay Project are a signpost for the way we will go about this sector of education in the future. The country is small - there is no need for division - there is room for everyone - for their religious tenets to be encompassed within the educational system. It is correct that those who wish denominational education receive it and get it and receive public funding for it. It is also correct that those who wish for multidenominational education should receive public funding and should have their wishes agreed to. It is how we can accommodate all of that within what is now a declining pupil population - that requires thought and that requires careful scrutiny but ... in terms of equity, in terms of equality of access, it must be addressed.

I certainly am very strongly inclined and wish to give reaffirmation here today to that - and to give confirmation (the walls are here to show it) but to tell you that whatever project or whatever people come to me with ideas, I will certainly look at them and I will certainly propel them forward within the Department of Education

I have visited all the (*Educate Together*) schoolsexcept Cork (**which she subsequently visited a week later**) and I have found right across all of the schools I have been in - I have found that faith (faith in the correct meaning of the term) - faith and optimism and hope and a very joyful spirit that permeates the running of the schools. I put it down to the co-operation very strongly between the parents and the teachers, the management and the pupils who are open and free to express themselves and do so.

Appendix J

the Educate Together Charter²⁹⁹

Recalling Article 26.3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights:

"Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children"

and Article 42.4 of the Constitution of Ireland:

"The state shall provide for free primary education and shall endeavour to supplement and give reasonable aid to private and corporate educational initiative, and, when the public good requires it, provide other educational facilities or institutions with due regard, however, for the rights of parents, especially in the matter of religious and moral formation",

and recognising:

1.1 That many parents have a valid preference for schools in which boys and girls of all social, cultural and religious backgrounds can be educated together in an atmosphere of mutual understanding and respect,

1.2 That the multi denominational schools established under the banner of Educate Together are a distinctive response to the growing demand for such an option within the Irish educational system,

Educate Together affirms that:

2.1 Children of all social, cultural and religious backgrounds have a right to an education that respects their individual identity whilst exploring the different values and traditions of the world in which they live,

2.2 Parents are entitled to participate actively in decisions that affect the education of their children. In particular, they have the right to decide what kind of school reflects their conscience and lawful preference,

2.3 Multi denominational schools have the right to be treated no less favourably than other schools within the Irish educational system, in accordance with their needs and their identity,

2.4 The state has a duty to take the identity of the multi denominational sector fully into account when deciding on policy that affects the establishment and development of schools,

and Commits itself to:

3.1 Support the establishment of schools which are,

Multi-denominational i.e. all children having equal rights of access to the school, and children of all social, cultural and religious backgrounds being equally respected,

Co-educational and committed to encouraging all children to explore their full range of abilities and opportunities,

Child centred in their approach to education,

Democratically run with active participation by parents in the daily life of the school, whilst positively affirming professional role of the teachers,

in any area where the demand for such a school exists,

3.2 Promote fuller awareness and recognition of the identity of the multi denominational sector at all levels in Irish society and abroad,

3.3 Participate in appropriate structures and activities concerned with the future development of education in Ireland and abroad,

3.4 Promote a future where multi denominational education will be as freely available to parents as any other educational option they may choose.

Appendix K

Educate Together School Sector

School	Opened	Accommodation	Building Type		
Dalkey School Project	1978	239	Permanent	New purpose-built school	9
Bray School Project	1981	239	Permanent	New purpose-built school	9
North Dublin National School Project	1984	219	Permanent	New purpose-built school	9
Cork School Project	1987	220	Permanent	Reused school building	9
Sligo School Project	1987	116	Permanent	Reused school building	6
Kilkenny School Project	1987	233	Permanent	New purpose-built school	9
Limerick School Project	1989	213	Permanent	Reused school building	9
North Bay Educate Together N.S.	1990	238	Permanent	Reused school building	10
Ranelagh Multi-Denominational School	1990	244	Permanent	New purpose-built school	9
Rathfarnham Educate Together N.S.	1990	225	Permanent	Reused school building	9
Gaelscoil an Ghoirt Alainn	1993	274	Temporary	Prefabs	11
Galway Educate Together N.S.	1994	235	Permanent	New purpose-built school	10
North Kildare Educate Together School	1994	252	Permanent	New purpose-built school	9
Griffith Barracks Multi-Denominational S	1994	217	Temporary	Reused alternative building & prefabs	9
Monkstown Educate Together N.S.	1997	230	Temporary	Prefabs	9
Lucan Educate Together N.S.	1997	453	Permanent	New purpose-built school	19
Ennis Educate Together N.S.	1998	155	Temporary	Prefabs	7
Castleknock Educate Together N.S.	1999	336	Temporary	Prefabs - Building Project in Train	13

Dublin 7 Educate Together N.S.	2000	204	Temporary	Reused alternative building	9
Le Cheile Educate Together N.S.	2001	247	Temporary	Prefabs	10
Swords Educate Together N.S.	2001	221	Temporary	Prefabs	10
Waterford Educate Together N.S.	2002	103	Temporary	Newly renovated alternative building	4
Navan Educate Together N.S.	2002	53	Temporary	Newly renovated alternative building	3
Tralee Educate Together N.S.	2002	100	Temporary	Reused alternative building	5
Donabate Portrane Educate Together N.S.	2002	195	Temporary	Prefabs	8
Glasnevin Educate Together N.S.	2002	124	Temporary	Prefabs	6
Griffeen Valley Educate Together N.S.	2002	273	Permanent	New purpose-built school	11
Ardee Educate Together N.S.	2002	52	Temporary	Reused school building & prefabs	2
Rush and Lusk Educate Together N.S.	2003	65	Temporary	Reused alternative buildings 2 sites	3
Newbridge Educate Together N.S.	2003	89	Temporary	Prefabs	4
Wicklow Educate Together N.S.	2003	87	Temporary	Reused alternative building	4
Castaheany Educate Together N.S.	2004	170	Temporary	Prefabs	7
Limerick City East Educate Together N.S.	2004	24	Temporary	Rugby Club	2
Mullingar Educate Together N.S.	2004	60	Temporary	Prefabs	3
Tullamore Educate Together N.S.	2004	27	Temporary	Prefabs	2
Gorey ETNS	2005	26	Temporary	Reused alternative building	2
Tyrellstown ETNS	2005	91	Temporary	Prefabs	4
Balbriggan ETNS	2005	53	Temporary	Reused alternative building	3
Galway North ETNS	2005	29	Temporary	Reused alternative building	2
	39		#REF!		

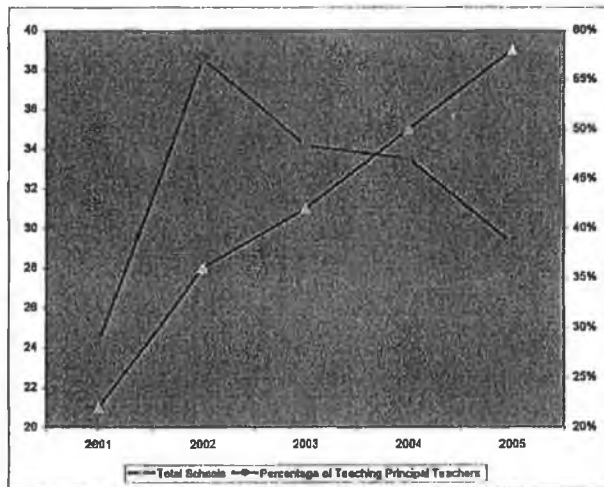
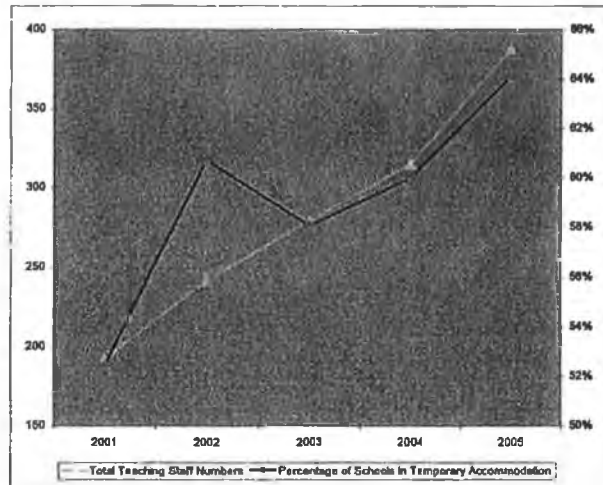
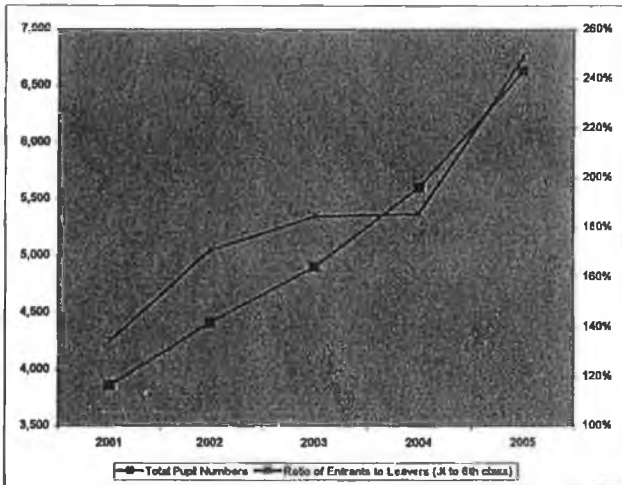
	2001	2002	Change FAW	%	2003	2004	Change FAW	%	2005	Change FAW	%		
Total Pupil Numbers	3,863	4,414	551	12.5%	4,901	487	9.5%	5,600	699	12.5%	6,631	1,031	15.5%
Total Teaching Staff Numbers	192	242	50	20.5%	279	37.4	13.4%	315	36	11.4%	388	73	18.7%
Total Schools	21	28	7	25.0%	31	3	9.7%	35	4	11.4%	39	4	10.3%
Ratio of Entrants to Leavers (J1 to 6th class)	1.34	1.71	0.36	21.4%	1.84	0.14	7.4%	1.85	0.01	0.5%	2.49	0.69	25.4%
Percentage of Schools in Temporary Accommodation	52%	61%	8%	13.7%	58%	-3%	-4.6%	60%	2%	3.2%	64%	4%	6.4%
Percentage of Teaching Principal Teachers	29%	57%	29%	50.0%	48%	-9%	-18.1%	47%	-1%	-2.8%	38%	-9%	-22.4%

Educate Together School Sector 2001 - 2005 At A Glance

Total Change over 5 Years

	Period 2001-2005	%
Total Pupil Numbers	2,768	172%
Total Mainstream Staff Numbers	196	202%
Total Schools	18	186%
Percentage of Schools in Temporary Accommodation	0.12	122%
Percentage of Teaching Principal Teachers	0.10	135%
Ratio of Entrants to Leavers (J1 to 6th class)	1.14	185%

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Total Pupil Numbers	3,863	4,414	4,901	5,600	6,631
Ratio of Entrants to Leavers (J1 to 6th class)	1.34%	1.71%	1.84%	1.85%	2.49%
Total Teaching Staff Numbers	192	242	279	315	388
Total Schools	21	28	31	35	39
Percentage of Schools in Temporary Accommodation	52%	61%	58%	60%	64%
Percentage of Teaching Principal Teachers	29%	57%	48%	47%	38%



Appendix L

Educate Together

The Religious Education
Core Curriculum in a
Multi-Denominational School

Notes for Teachers

Report on an In-Service Course held under the joint auspices of
Educate Together and the Blackrock Teachers' Centre in the D.S.P.
National School, 3rd - 7th July 1989.

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These Notes for Teachers on The Religious Education Core Curriculum in a Multi-Denominational School were prepared by the teachers who attended the summer courses organised by *Educate Together* and the Blackrock Teachers' Centre in July 1988 and 1989. The Notes were co-ordinated and edited by Aine Hyland.

The Notes may be copied in whole or in part by teachers interested in using them.

Further copies of the Notes are available, at a cost of £4, from

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Preface

A one-week course on the topic "Religious Education in a Multi-denominational school" was held in July 1989. The course was organised under the joint auspices of *Educate Together* and the Blackrock Teachers' Centre and was held in the D.S.P. National School, Glenageary. It was a follow-up to the course held in July 1988.

The aims of the course were as follows:

- To provide an opportunity for teachers in multi-denominational schools which are affiliated to *EDUCATE TOGETHER*

- (a) to share experiences to date in the implementation of the Religious Education Core Curriculum as outlined in the the various patrons' policies on religious education
- (b) to discuss, evaluate, adjust and expand the outline syllabus produced as a result of the 1988 Summer Course
- (c) to pool resources and to discuss the relative merits and demerits of various materials.
- (e) to provide an opportunity for participating teachers to learn more about some different belief systems.
- (f) to evaluate and improve the course outline prepared at the 1988 course and to introduce teachers who had not attended the 1988 course to the curricular materials and the course outline prepared in 1988.

At the suggestion of some teachers who applied for places on the 1989 course, it was agreed that some time be spent on researching minority religions and belief systems in Ireland. It was felt that much had been learned about Christian Churches in Ireland during the 1988 course - particularly through the material produced by the Irish Commission for Justice and Peace and the Irish Council of Churches - "Churches and Worship in Ireland". Therefore, the emphasis during the 1989 course was on non-Christian beliefs and two days of the course were spent investigating the Jewish religion, Moslems, Bahais and Jehovah Witnesses in Ireland. Reports on these investigations are included as an appendix.

This report is a revised and edited version of last years' report. Some sections were felt to be incomplete and these have been expanded and improved. Other sections are more or less unchanged. Some of the Resource lists have been expanded and updated and in one or two cases, the list of aims has been amended and hopefully improved. The report also includes a suggested approach to a project on Winter Festivals. This project was carried out with First Class pupils during the 1988/89 school year by one of the teachers in the Daleky School Project N.S. - Paul Finucane - and it was found to work very well. Since teachers have occasionally experienced some difficulty in handling Christmas celebrations, it was felt that this approach might be found helpful - it could be adjusted for other age-groups if required.

Since the dissemination of the 1988 report, two of the projects affiliated to Educate Together have produced booklets on the Religious Education Core Curriculum. The first of these was the report on the R.E. Core Curriculum produced by the Bray School Project in May 1988. The second was *The Religious Education Core Curriculum - an Information booklet for Parents and Members* produced by the Dalkey School Project in May 1989. Both of these reports were found helpful by course participants and are available on request from the respective projects.

I would like again to emphasise that this course was intended to help and support teachers and that it does not in any way supplant the authority and responsibility of individual Projects or schools in the area of Religious Education. From the start of the course, it was made clear that material which might be produced at the end of the course would simply be an example of a possible approach to an R.E. programme. It would be tentative and preliminary and should not be seen as either comprehensive or prescriptive.

I would like to pay tribute to the exceptional input and dedication of all the course participants. It was a very pleasant and interesting week for all of us and we hope that this report will be helpful both to teachers who attended the course and to those who did not.

Aine Hyland.
September 1989.

4
**Religious Education Core Curriculum
Junior and Senior Infants**

Aims:

- To develop the children's knowledge and awareness of themselves;
of their place in society;
of their relationships with others.
- To help the children to develop respect for others
- To foster an appreciation of and a caring attitude for the environment
- To make the children aware of significant cultural and religious festivals in society.
- To facilitate the children's moral development and to promote an understanding of moral issues and situations appropriate to their stage of development.
- To facilitate the child's moral development and to promote an understanding of moral issues/situations appropriate to their stage of development.

Themes:

The following themes are suggested. These themes are not necessarily discrete, nor are all themes appropriate for a formal programme. Some themes might be covered in an incidental way or as part of the "hidden curriculum".

MYSELF
MY FAMILY
MY SCHOOL
MY FRIENDS
THE COMMUNITY
MORAL DEVELOPMENT
ENVIRONMENT
CELEBRATION
A HEALTHY ME
TIMES OF DIFFICULTY.

Resources:

(Many of the resources listed in the section on First and Second Class might also be appropriate at this level).

The Children of God Series, Part 1. (Dublin: Veritas.)

A Curriculum for Religious Education in Primary Schools. (C. of I. Board of Education, Dublin. 1977.)

Religious Education Programme Book 1. (Devon.)

Benjamin Book Series.

There Must be Magic - First Poems for Children

The Magic of Growing Up

The Two Sons

The Precious Pearl

The Lost Sheep

Story Time One

Story Time Three (Bible Stories).

Miracles and Me (Poems)

Topsy and Tim Go to Hospital

Going into Hospital (Althea Series)
 Round the Christmas Tree (A Young Puffin)
 My Babysitter (Althea)
 Moonlight (Picture Puffins)
 Sunshine (Picture Puffins)
 Are we nearly there?, Louis Baum (The Bodley Head)
 Grandmother, Jeannie Baker (Andre Deutsch)
 Sweet Dreams for Sally (Care Bear Books)
 A New Sister for Sam (Care Bear Books)

THEME - MYSELF.

Topic: Physical;

Skills: Oral; gross co-ordination.

Activities: Description of self and others (using Mirror and phone)
 What can I do? (P.E.)
 Hand and footprints.
 A Book about me.

Resources: The Child
 The Good Book Guide to Children's Books (Penguin)

Follow-up: P.E., Art, Music, Gaelge.

Topic: Similar / different

Skills: Observation; oral.

Activities: Pairing, followed by discussion.
 Eye-colour, hair etc.

Resources: Bright Ideas - Assemblies.

Follow-up: Maths.- pictogram; English - colours; Environmental
 Studies - autumn colours.

Topic: The Senses

Skills: Visual and auditory skills

Activities: Pre-reading games
 Role-play
 Tasting
 Feeling

Resources: Tasting Plate
 Feely Box
 Sandpaper
 Althea Books
 Rainbow pre-reading activity tape.
 Bright Ideas - Assemblies

Follow-up: English; P.E.

Topic: I am special / Unique

Skills: Social (Respect for property); Oral.

Activities: Show and tell about personal treasures
Finger printing
Display own photographs
Decorate own name for display.
Names.

Resources: Bright Ideas.
Children of God Series
B.B.C. Something to think about.
Tinder Box Assembly Book
Benjamin Book Series.

Follow-up: Art; English.

THEME: MY FAMILY

Topics: Who lives with me? Happy / Unhappy situations.

Skills: Social - caring, coping, self-protection.

Activities: Draw family picture
Discussion
Role-playing

Resources: Tinder-Box Assembly Book
Penguin Book of Stories for Under 5 (Sarah & Stephen Corrin)
Gather Round, I.T.V.
Lady Bird Talk About
The Willow Street Kids
I Can Say No.
I have Two Homes (Althea)
Are We Nearly There?
Even Granny was Young Once.

Topics: New Baby etc.; Grandparents; Pets.

Skills: Social - Caring (e.g. for pets); choosing

Activities: Visit from Pets
Visit from Vet.

Resources: Poster - Folens, Environmental library.

Topic: My Home

Skills: Housekeeping skills

Activities: Looking at all types of homes
Animal houses
My favourite place in my home

Resources: Wall charts.
Infant Projects.
Wendy House / Home Corner.

Tinderbox - water pollution
 Where are you, Duck?
 Bonnie and Clyde
 Environmental poster - Environmental Awareness Bureau (Irish version)
 Althea - Endangered species

Follow Up: Art; Music (Extinction song on B.B.C. Watch); Gaeilge.

THEME - FEELINGS

Topics: Fear; Anger; Joy; Sadness; Shyness; Jealousy;
 Happiness; Excitement; Hate; Courage;
 Dreams/nightmares/phobias.

Skills: Language development;
 Using feelings/emotions constructively;
 Developing coping strategies.

Activities: Art work - hot/cold pictures.
 Drama / Role play / facial expressions.
 Discussion of easy / difficult feeling.

Resources: This Makes Me Furious - Mother Teresa of Jesus.
 The Pain and the Great One - Judy Blume
 It's So Unfair
 Friends Again (Picture Lions)
 The Owl who was Afraid of the Dark
 The Gorilla who Wanted to Grow Up
 It's Too Frightening for Me - Shirley Hughes
 Feelings - Alike (Penguin).
 David and Goliath
 Angry Arthur
 Jesus in the Temple (angry)
 The Bad-tempered Ladybird - Eric Carle
 The Persistent Mouse - Joan Cass
 Where the Wild Things Are - Sedak.
 The Great Smile Robbery - Tony Blundell
 What are you Scared of? - Hanne Larsen
 The Lonely, Only Mouse - Wendy Smith
 The Otter Who Wanted to Know - Jill Tomlinson
 Be Brave Billy - Jan Ormerod
 Terrible, terrible Tiger - C. & J. Hawkins.

Follow Up: English; Creative Writing; Art; Music; P.E.

THEME - SYMBOLS AND SIGNS

Topics: Signs in the locality; road signs; danger signs;
 Symbols used - e.g. wheelchair; peace dove;
 rainbow; olive branch; cubs and brownies;
 Flags and emblems; Religious signs and symbols.

Skills: Introduction to sign language
 Familiarity with some national flags
 Introduction to Morse Code.

Activities: Design some new signs and symbols.
 Role play.

Resources: Video - sign language
 Stories of World Religions
 Stories of North American Indians
 Archaeology / pre-Christian Ireland.

THEME - OURSELVES

Topics: **Body - different shapes and sizes;**
Self-portraits; likes and dislikes;
Things different people regard as important;
Character traits; family resemblances;

Skills: Measuring
 Co-ordination
 Appreciation of differences between people.

Activities: Art - fingerprints and footprints.
 Tracing shape around the body.
 Measuring and recording of measurements.

Resources: Ourselves - McDonald series.
 Me and You - Britannica
 The Body Book - Clare Rayner
 The Ugly Duckling (Story and Song)

Follow Up: Maths. (bar-charts; number value charts; coding)
 Music - breathing practice
 Biology - feeling pulse etc.

THEME - FAMILIES; PEOPLE WE LIVE WITH.

Topics: **How others help us - parents and carers.**
Extended families - needing others.
Co-operation within families.
Travelling families.
Robinson Crusoe (life without a family)
Animal families.

Skills: Social - co-operation; participation; tolerance.

Activities: Research on family - dates of birth; photographs; family tree.
 Make a book about your family.
 Art work.

Resources: Even Granny was Young Once - Eva Janovkovsky
 My Dad - Ralph Steidman
 My Naughty Little Sister - Dorothy Edwards
 Families - Penguin Primary Project
 Round the World Families (Save the Children).
 Infant Projects on Families - Scholastic Publications -Spring 1989.

THEME - CELEBRATIONS AND EVENTS; Winter Festivals. (see Appendix 1 for a suggested approach to this theme).

Topics: Birthdays, family celebrations, parties.
 End of term parties.
 Mother's Day; Father's Day; Children's Day.

10
**Religious Education Core Curriculum
First and Second Classes.**

Aims:

- to encourage in children a recognition of their own value and importance as individuals
- to foster an appreciation of the ways in which significant experiences of life are expressed through celebration, ritual and symbol
- to encourage the children to develop the gift of sharing and to appreciate the value of co-operation and working together
- to help the children to recognise and cope with the various difficult emotions that they feel and to develop a positive attitude to emotions and a greater openness in talking about their feelings
- to help them to develop a more sympathetic and caring attitude to other people, animals and surroundings.

Themes:

**FEELINGS
SHARING AND CO-OPERATION
FESTIVALS AND CELEBRATIONS
FOOD
BEGINNINGS AND ENDINGS
SEPARATION AND DISAPPOINTMENT
SYMBOLS AND SIGNS
LIGHT
GOOD/COURAGEOUS/HOLY PEOPLE
WINTER FESTIVALS**

Resources:

BOOKS:

Even Granny was Young Once - Eva Janikovsky
That's My Dad - Ralph Steadman
How the Whale Became - Ted Hughes
The Owl who couldn't give a Hoot - Don Conroy.
Terrible Terrible Tiger - Colin & Jacqui Hawkins
The Pain and the Great One - Judy Blume
What are you Scared of? - Hanne Larsen
The Persistent Mouse - Joan Cass
The Otter Who Wanted to Know - Jill Tomlinson
Angry Arthur - Hiawyn Oram
Be Brave Billy - Jan Ormerod
The Lonely Only Mouse - Wendy Smith
Where the Wild Things Are - Maurice Sendak
The Bad-Tempered Ladybird - Eric Carle
Let's Be Friends Again - Hans Wilhelm
It's Too Frightening for me - Shirley Hughes
The Owl Who was Afraid of the Dark - Jill Tomlinson
Peace at Last - Jill Murphy
Feelings - Alik
The New Baby - Doreen Coates (Ginn)
The Gorilla who Wanted to Grow Up - Jill Tomlinson
Benjamin Books on various themes
Celebrations - Ginn (Gill and Macmillan)
Let's Celebrate - Ginn
The Lion Christmas Book

The World of Christmas - McDonald
 Merry Christmas (Children at Christmastime around the world) - Heinemann
 It's Not Fair
 A Dark, Dark Tale
 One Night at a Time (Hamish Hamilton)
 The Picnic (Methuen Books)

MAGAZINES:

Hands Together (no longer in print but back issues available)
 R.E. Today
 Junior Education } available from Easons or on subscription or order from
 Child Education } Scholastic Publications Ltd.,
 Westfield Rd.,
 Southam,
 Lemington Spa,
 Warwks. CV33 OJH

TAPES:

Something to Think About - B.B.C. (and Teachers' Notes)

OTHER:

Bright Ideas for Assemblies - available from TDC publications, Nth Frederick St., Dublin 1.

Tinderbox Assembly Book and Song Book.

Picture Lion Series (Christian stories).

Arch Books - Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Missouri. (Christian stories in verse form).

UNICEF - Tales from the Dreams of Children.

Children of God Series.

A Curriculum for Religious Education in Primary Schools - C. of I. Board of Education, Dublin, 1977.

Bright Ideas - Festivals

Seeing and Doing - A New Anthology of Songs and Poems - Thames T.V.

Festivals - B.B.C. T.V. Watch Programme.

THEME: BEGINNINGS***Topics:***

**Creation stories (including evolution)
 New Year; new class;
 Life cycles - plants; flowers; animals; humans.
 Naming - Baptism.**

Skills:

**Social skills - adjustment; coping with change; coping with emotions such as jealousy.
 Language development.**

Activities:

**Plant a seed - care - dark/light
 Act out the trauma of the first day of a life cycle
 Read and discuss creation stories
 Art work - what comes from Light?**

Resources:

**Tinderbox Assembly and Song Book.
 Something to Think About (tapes)**

The Book of Origins - a Way of Seeing (Benn)
 American Indians Tales and Legends (Hamlyn).
 Gather Round - Festivals. (Grampian T.V.)
 How the Whale Became - Ted Hughes.
 Being Born - Shelia Kitzinger (Waterstones).

Follow Up: Gaeilge - "Ag Fás". Nature; Art; P.E.; Music; Language.

THEME - CARING

Topics: **Animals and their young;
 People and animals; responsibility; unwanted pets;
 Minibeasts - spiders, slugs; fears and phobias.
 People for each other - families, community;
 How and why we can care;
 Teddy Bears for comfort.**

Skills: Social - friendliness; coping; rejection; caring; responsibility;
 Recognising needs;
 Skills of doctors and nurses; hygiene; safety.

Follow Up: Bring in pets;
 Visit from vet/keeper/nurse; prepare for visit.
 Care for school environment;
 Role-play; caring for animals; baby etc.
 Winter - care for birds etc.

Resources: Good Samaritan
 Something to Think About - Tinderbox
 Androcles and the Lion
 Buddha and the Swan
 St. Francis
 Noah's Ark
 Irish Wildlife Conservancy - posters and leaflets
 Charlotte's Web
 Let's Be Friends Again - Hans Wilhelm

Follow Up: Creative Writing; Gaeilge; Music (Mr. Noah had an Ark -
 to the Tune of Old Mc Donald had a Farm).

THEME - OUR WORLD

Topics: **Positive - Conservation; plants, trees; buildings;
 protected areas and animals; nature's balance -
 ladybirds / aphids; dung / compost heap.**

**Negative - Vandalism; litter; pollution; pesticides; wastage;
 endangered/extinct animals & plants.**

Skills: Overcome prejudice;
 Environmental pride and responsibility;
 Awe and wonder at harmony of nature.

Activities: Make anti-litter / save the animals, posters and badges.
 Join an anti-litter group / organise a local "clean-up"
 Visit to Glencree; zoo; Natural History Museum;
 Kimmage Manor Farm.

Resources: B.B.C. Watch programmes

Tinderbox - water pollution
 Where are you, Duck?
 Bonnie and Clyde
 Environmental poster - Environmental Awareness Bureau (Irish version)
 Althea - Endangered species

Follow Up: Art; Music (Extinction song on B.B.C. Watch); Gaeilge.

THEME - FEELINGS

Topics: Fear; Anger; Joy; Sadness; Shyness; Jealousy;
 Happiness;. Excitement; Hate; Courage;
 Dreams/nightmares/phobias.

Skills: Language development;
 Using feelings/emotions constructively;
 Developing coping strategies.

Activities: Art work - hot/cold pictures.
 Drama / Role play / facial expressions.
 Discussion of easy / difficult feeling.

Resources: This Makes Me Furious - Mother Teresa of Jesus.
 The Pain and the Great One - Judy Blume
 It's So Unfair
 Friends Again (Picture Lions)
 The Owl who was Afraid of the Dark
 The Gorilla who Wanted to Grow Up
 It's Too Frightening for Me - Shirley Hughes
 Feelings - Alike (Penguin).
 David and Goliath
 Angry Arthur
 Jesus in the Temple (angry)
 The Bad-tempered Ladybird - Eric Carle
 The Persistent Mouse - Joan Cass
 Where the Wild Things Are - Sedak.
 The Great Smile Robbery _ Tony Blundell
 What are you Scared of? - Hanne Larsen
 The Lonely, Only Mouse - Wendy Smith
 The Otter Who Wanted to Know - Jill Tomlinson
 Be Brave Billy - Jan Ormerod
 Terrible, terrible Tiger - C. & J. Hawkins.

Follow Up: English; Creative Writing; Art; Music; P.E.

THEME - SYMBOLS AND SIGNS

Topics: Signs in the locality; road signs; danger signs;
 Symbols used - e.g. wheelchair; peace dove;
 rainbow; olive branch; cubs and brownies;
 Flags and emblems; Religious signs and symbols.

Skills: Introduction to sign language
 Familiarity with some national flags
 Introduction to Morse Code.

Activities: Design some new signs and symbols.
 Role play.

Resources: Video - sign language
 Stories of World Religions
 Stories of North American Indians
 Archaeology / pre-Christian Ireland.

THEME - OURSELVES

Topics: **Body - different shapes and sizes;
 Self-portraits; likes and dislikes;
 Things different people regard as important;
 Character traits; family resemblances;**

Skills: Measuring
 Co-ordination
 Appreciation of differences between people.

Activities: Art - fingerprints and footprints.
 Tracing shape around the body.
 Measuring and recording of measurements.

Resources: Ourselves - McDonald series.
 Me and You - Britannica
 The Body Book - Clare Rayner
 The Ugly Duckling (Story and Song)

Follow Up: Maths. (bar-charts; number value charts; coding)
 Music - breathing practice
 Biology - feeling pulse etc.

THEME - FAMILIES; PEOPLE WE LIVE WITH.

Topics: **How others help us - parents and carers.
 Extended families - needing others.
 Co-operation within families.
 Travelling families.
 Robinson Crusoe (life without a family)
 Animal families.**

Skills: Social - co-operation; participation; tolerance.

Activities: Research on family - dates of birth; photographs; family tree.
 Make a book about your family.
 Art work.

Resources: Even Granny was Young Once - Eva Janovkovsky
 My Dad - Ralph Steidman
 My Naughty Little Sister - Dorothy Edwards
 Families - Penguin Primary Project
 Round the World Families (Save the Children).
 Infant Projects on Families - Scholastic Publications -Spring 1989.

THEME - CELEBRATIONS AND EVENTS; Winter Festivals. (see Appendix 1 for a suggested approach to this theme).

Topics: Birthdays, family celebrations, parties.
 End of term parties.
 Mother's Day; Father's Day; Children's Day.

Feasts and Festivals such as Hallowe'en, Christmas, Mayday etc.
 Religious events such as First Communion and christenings;
 Food and religion; Ritual and ceremony.

- Skills:** Planning skills; Cooking skills; Expression in rhythm and dance.
- Activities:** Miming and acting out cultural celebrations and dance.
 Making things for celebrations, e.g. cards, bunting, banners, decorations, masks, costumes.
 Drawing up a menu and cooking some simple items.
- Resources:** Hands Together
 Festivals and Celebrations - Cathleen Elliott (Yong library)
 Gather Round Video - Grampian
 Something to think about - Audio tape
 Tinderbox
 Tales from the Dreams of Children - UNICEF
 Advent Calendar - stories about Christmas.
 Bright Ideas about Assemblies.
 Round the Christmas Tree.
- Follow Up:** Art and Craft; Cookery; Drama; Music
-

THEME - HOMES

- Topics:** **Animal homes - nests, burrows, setts, hives etc.**
Human homes - different cultures - flats, houses, igloos, huts, tents, castles, monasteries, lighthouses etc.
Nomadic tribes - Masai ; travellers;
Materials - types of homes according to environment
Places of worship
Homelessness.
- Skills:** Language development
 Sense of security
 Awareness of diversity.
 Recognition of how homes suit the environment and use different environmental materials.
- Activities:** Build different types of homes with plasticine or lego or building bricks or wire and cardboard.
 Make a tepee with paper.
 Make a crannóg with matchsticks and twigs.
 Make nests and pyramids.
 Visit from carpenter / builder / architect.
- Resources:** Danny the Champion of the World - Roald Dahl
 Peace at Last - Jill Murphy.
- Follow Up:** Maths. (sets; shapes - pyramid; rectangles; curves; strong shapes; squares; hexagons; circles; pentagon).
 Art
 Music - "A House is a house for me".
 Gaeilge - An Teach.
-

THEME - WATER

- Topics:** **Positive aspects of water - washing; drinking; source of life -growth of plants;**

Negative aspects of water - shortage, drought, danger, floods; pollution.
 Ritual, purification, Baptism,
 Religious symbolism - Holy Rivers - Ganges and Jordan; Holy Wells. Baptismal fonts.
 Mythical characters - Poseidon; Manannan; Neptune.
 Water for fun and sports.

Activities: Science experiments - evaporation, condensation, freezing, melting, steam.
 Water bending the light - rainbow.
 Weighing raisins or bran before and after absorbing water.
 Measuring the capacity of various containers

Resources: Hands Together, no. 17.
 Watch programmes.
 Something to Think About - Autumn 1987.
 Noah's Ark.
 Gen. 37;45.
 Child Education - special edition on Rain.
 Handel's Water Music.

Follow Up: Maths. Science. Music.

THEME - FIRE

Topics: Discovery of Fire; preservation of fire.
 Warmth, cooking, energy, light.
 Danger, precautions, fire drill, firefighting.
 Mythology - Prometheus, Vulcan. St. Patrick's fire, Tara.
 Religious symbolism - Pentecost; candles; incense.
 Olympic flame; Dublin Millennium candle; dragons; volcanoes.

Skills: Fire drill.

Activities: Visit to Fire Station or from fireman.
 Combustible / non-combustible materials.
 Fire extinguishers and smoke alarms - how they work.
 Science - fire needs oxygen - experiments.
 Joss sticks.
 Identify location of some volcanoes on a world map.

Resources: The Firebird - Ladybird.

Follow Up: Science; Geography.

THEME - EARTH and AIR.

Topics : Types of soil; fuels; bog.
 Yields of the Earth - Harvest etc.
 Wind - good and bad effects; gales, hurricanes and typhoons.
 Flight - balloon; hot air / helium.
 Mythology - Daedalus.
 Wind as a force - religious beliefs.

Activities: Dig for underground creatures - worms, slugs etc.
 Collect and identify different types of soil - sand, clay etc.
 Experiment with weight of different soils.
 Make kites and "flutters" from sycamore seeds.
 Make some clay models.

Observe different wind direction - Beaufort Wind Scale.
Experiment with hot air - use a hairdryer.

Resources:

The Oak and the Reed
The Wizard of Oz.
The Magic Finger - Roald Dahl.

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**Religious Education Core Curriculum
Third and Fourth Classes**

Aims:

- To enable the children to reflect on themselves and to appreciate their own uniqueness
- To encourage the children to reflect on their relationships and so to develop attitudes such as thoughtfulness and caring
- To encourage the children to be aware of their place in the world and their responsibilities to it
- To understand how and why people from different cultures and backgrounds enjoy festivals and celebrations
- To stimulate in the children a respect for the beliefs and views of others and a desire for justice and peace
- To show children how courage can help them to overcome their difficulties and to show them how courage can be a force for good in the world.

Themes:

RULES
TOLERANCE
MY FAMILY
HOUSES AND HOMES
CELEBRATIONS
COMMUNICATION
DISAPPOINTMENT
COURAGE
PERSEVERANCE

Resources:

Free to Be - Pack includes Teachers' Handbook and booklets for pupils; available from Irish Council of Churches / Irish Commission for Justice and Peace, 169 Booterstown Ave., Blackrock, Co. Dublin.

Churches and Worship in Ireland - Pack as above available from Irish Council of Churches / Irish Commission for Justice and Peace.

So Everybody Fights? A Teaching Programme on Development Education for 9-13 year olds. Irish Commission for Justice and Peace, 1988.

Faith in Action Series available from Aids for Bible Education, Charleville, Harbour Rd., Dalkey. Co. Dublin. Examples are books on Elizabeth Fry, Helen Keller etc.

Amach faoin aer - E. de Buitléir.

Assemblies Round the Year - Ward Lock Educational.

Life and Faith Series - Our World (Hulton)

- Places of Worship
- Sacred Books
- Nature Religions
- Hinduism
- Life and Death
- Jesus

Celebrations (Series of 6 books) - Ginn

Good News from Jesus - Aids for Bible Education (Dalkey)

Life and Faith Series - Our World, i.e. Places of Worship; Sacred Books; Nature (Hulton).

Material available from Trócaire includes -

- It's Not Fair

- Sharing One World
- The Three Worlds
- Health and Disease
- The Problem of Hunger
- Central America
- Land and People
- Cities and People
- World Studies 8 -13.

Material available from D.E.S.C. (St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra or Mary Immaculate College, Limerick) includes-

- The Languages Book
- Values, Cultures and Kids

Comhlámh Publications.

Wide Range Reader Series (World Religions).

Development Education in the Primary School, Bk. 1.

Themes in Religious Education - R.E. Council of the Church of Ireland.

Religious Education in Devon - the Middle Years.

Themes from the Bible retold for Children - Veritas.

The State of the World' Children, Chapters 1 - 5. - UNICEF, Dublin.

Breakaway Series published by Hulton

- Vanishing World
- People with Problems
- World of Adventure.

Children of God Series

A Curriculum for R.E. in Primary Schools - C. of I.

THEME - MYSELF

- Activities:**
- Children introduce themselves
 - Bring in a photo and write about it
 - Evaluate themselves - likes and dislikes; abilities and disabilities; at home/at school; strong opinions; hopes for future, ambitions.
 - Yoga exercises
 - Children create something through their talents
- Resources:**
- Free to Be
 - Dinosaur series
 - Tinderbox Assembly Book
- Follow-up:**
- Art work - photography - charcoal portraits
 - Language development
 - Gaeilge
 - Creative Writing
 - P.E. and Music

THEME - MYSELF AND OTHER PEOPLE

- Topics:** Member of Family
Member of school community
Member of local community
Member of national community
- Activities:** Discussion of child's place in family
Privileges and responsibilities
Role play
Exploring family situations
Secrets
Extended families
Comparing roles and responsibilities
Write about someone in the family
Need for school rules
Friendliness
What does it mean to be Irish? Different cultural backgrounds within a national community. Irish people we are proud of.
Concentric circle with the child in the middle - what happens when there is a ripple?
- Resources:** Free to Be
The Young Citizen, May and June 1988.
World Studies, 8 - 13. - Simon Fisher and David Hicks.
UNICEF catalogue, 4 St. Andrew St., Dublin 2.
-

THEME - FAMILY OF HUMANKIND

- Topics:** Individuals
Cultural / National differences
Different religions and thought systems
Helping children to look at differences positively
Basic Human Needs
- Activities:** Study of the evolution of humankind
Different views of creation
Different types of physical appearances - adaptation to environment
Projects on children from other countries
Using children's backgrounds to examine these
Exploration of situations to enable children to cope with negative feelings when confronted with differences
Study of U.N. Rights of Child
- Resources:** Free To Be
UNICEF Rights of Child
- Follow-up:** Geography; History; Social Studies; Creative Writing.
-

THEME - OUR WORLD

- Topics:** Birds and animals
Local Environment
World Resources
People of the World
- Activities:** Care of animal needs; protection of endangered species.
Looking for evidence of vandalism abuse pollution

Resources in the past and future
 Use and abuse of forests, fossil fuels etc.
 The Third World - famine, disasters; interdependence
 The Food Game; The World Feast Game.

Resources: Film Strips - Amach Faoin Aer - E. de Buitleur.
 Why? Because
 MacDonald debates - World Conservation
 Use and Abuse of Animals
 Rich World / Poor World
 Worlds of Difference
 Film - Five Minutes to Midnight
 Tradecraft - a map
 Materials from Christian Aid and Concern.

Follow-up: Nature; Geography.

THEME - CELEBRATIONS AND FESTIVALS

Topics: Birthdays, Naming, Coming of Age, Marriages
 New Year; Harvest; Seasonal Festivals
 Ancient Irish Festivals
 Religious Feastdays - Christmas, Easter, Passover, Feast of
 Baha'Ullah, Ramadan, Diwali.

Activities: Who celebrates and why?
 Activities associated with the celebration or festival

Resources: Festivals - McMullan
 Festivals - B.B.C.
 Festivals Series - Wayland
 The Year in Ireland - Kevin Danaher

Follow-up: Art and Craft; Music; Creative Writing.

THEME - FOOD IN RELIGIOUS CELEBRATION

Topics: Harvest Celebrations Around the World
 Symbolic Food (Bread, water, wine).
 Religious ways of Cooking
 Fasting
 Diwali (in India)
 Hannuka (Israel)
 Chinese New Year
 Christmas

Resources Celebrations (Ginn)
 Hands Together
 Child Education Special (Food)
 Child Education (Cooking)
 Bright Ideas - Assemblies - You are what you eat.

Activities India - Diwali - Special Diwali Food
 e.g. Pakoras - deep fried vegetable fritters;
 Parathas - savoury wheat pancakes
 Sweetmeats
 Special sweets made from thickened milk, almonds, coconut, sugar
 (Remembering the god Lakshmi who was created from a churning sea of
 milk).

Hanukka (Israel) - Latkes (potato pancakes).

Chinese New Year - Lucky food - a whole roast pig - fish -- oranges -
spring onions.

Follow-Up ;

Cooking; Geography.

Religious Education Core Curriculum Fifth and Sixth Classes

Aims:

- To help the children to understand themselves at this time of change in their lives and to promote a sense of their own individuality and worth.
- To prepare the children to become good citizens and to take on the responsibilities to others and to their environment which adolescence and adulthood will bring.
- To help the children to develop an appreciation of man's natural inclination to make sense of the experience of life and living; to gain knowledge of the different interpretations of life and death made by various peoples in the past and at present; and to learn about the customs, ritual and celebration of different peoples.
- To understand different approaches to peacemaking in society and to develop an understanding of the concept of justice.
- To introduce the children to some formal religious thought and belief systems.

Themes:

FAMINE THROUGHOUT THE AGES
 RACISM
 PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS
 PEOPLE OF PEACE
 POVERTY / WEALTH
 CARING AND SHARING
 WORLD BELIEFS
 PLACES OF PILGRIMAGE
 GREAT BOOKS
 LOOKING AT CHURCHES IN IRELAND

Resources:

Free to Be (Dublin: Irish Commission for Justice and Peace and Irish Council of Churches)

Churches and Worship in Ireland (Dublin; I.C.J.P. and I.C.C.)

So Everybody Fights? A Teaching Programme on Development Education for 9 - 13 Year Olds. (Dublin: I.C.J.P., 1988).

Magazines:

Weekly Time or Newsweek . . .

National Geographic

Hands Together

Religious periodicals such as The Word, The Plain Truth etc.

New Internationalist - a monthly magazine available from Trócaire.

Young Citizen - I.P.A., Dublin.

Books:

Inside the Third World - Harrison (Penguin)

Contrasts in Development - I, II, III (Geography) - Oxford Uni. Press.

How the Other Half Dies - S. George S (Penguin)

Rich World / Poor World - G. Lean (London; Allen and Unwin)

A Book of Beliefs - Allen, Butterworth and Lengley (A Lion Publication)

Christian Living To-Day (Geoffrey Chapman, London).

Faith in Action series

- Devil's Island - Three fighters for Freedom - Friends of Drug Addict

THEME - PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Topics:** Development of a positive self-image
 Exploration of negative feelings e.g. anger, prejudice, etc.
 Understanding ourselves as pre-adolescents
 Making choices - the moral dimension
 Times of difficulty
- Activities:** A personal coat of arms - 4 sections
 (1) the most important day of my life
 (2) something I'm good at
 (3) My happiest moment in the past year
 (4) something I'd like to be good at.
 Silhouettes - other children to write positive comments
 Collage of self, to include things I like; people I admire; places I would like to visit; hobbies etc.
 Role play
 Short stories; extracts from literature which reflect tensions experienced by the author.
 Providing situations which enable the children to reflect on their feelings, relationships and behaviour.
- Resources:** He hit Me Back First - Eva Fugitt
 Girl Talk, Boy Talk.
 Middle English - I.T.V. (Good bibliography in each set of notes)
 The Quarreling Book - Charlotte Zolotow (Harper and Row)
 The Hating Book - Charlotte Zolotow (Harper and Row)
 Grandpa and Me: We Learn about Death. - Alex, Marlee and Ben (Minneapolis, Bethany House)
 How It Feels When A Parent Dies - Jill Krementz (New York; Alfred Knopf)
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THEME - OUR WORLD

- Topics:** Self and Society - issues such as loneliness, poverty, social discrimination, injustice against minorities; relating to the Third World.
 Media Studies
 Peace Studies - peaceful protest, violent protest, Arms Race, People who work for peace.
 Exceptional People and Organisations - e.g. Bob Geldof, Christopher Nolan, Mother Teresa, UNICEF.
 Looking at the Environment

- Activities:** Discussion and debates.
 Song - Streets of London
 Games etc. (see Resources)
 Project Work - based on people who work for peace
 Study of the effect of the Media - advertising, depicting violence etc. Help to develop critical thinking.
 Project work on issues such as pollution and conservation; local issues; our dependence on the environment.

- Resources:** Free to Be
 World Studies 8 - 13.
 Irish Bilateral Aid Programme

Trócaire - booklets; Three Worlds etc.
 Gorta Information pack
 D.E.S.C. materials
 Ways of Living - World Wildlife Fund
 Environment Pack - " " "
 Film - Gandhi
 Footprints 4 - History
 Middle English - B.B.C. T.V. on making a film.

THEME - MAN AS A SPIRITUAL BEING

Topics: **Creation/evolution**
 The Cycle of the Seasons as a Metaphor for life
 The Cycle of Life, birth, death, marriage etc. -
 celebrations of key life events in different cultures.
 Festivals and Feasts.

Activities: Poetry
 Music
 Art
 Man Stretching his Boundaries.

THEME - STUDY OF FORMAL THOUGHT SYSTEMS; THEISTIC AND NON-THEISTIC.

Topics: **Beliefs**
 Customs
 Ritual

Activities:
 Studies of places of worship
 " " " pilgrimage
 " " religious leader
 " religious writers
 " arts in religion
 " cultural influence on religious practices
 Visits to places of Worship
 Write about similarities and difference

Resources: Churches and Worship in Ireland

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Appendix 1.

WINTER FESTIVALS PROJECT - suitable for First Class.

(This project was developed and co-ordinated by Paul Finucane with the children in First Class in the D.S.P. National School in winter 1988/89).

Developing a Theme:

The project covered a wide variety of religious and secular festivals from around the world. Its principal objectives were

1. to give the children an introduction to the culture (music, food, dance, story etc) of various countries.
2. to help them appreciate the variety of cultural (religious/secular) practices.
3. to develop an empathy for and a tolerance towards different forms of society through an exploration of a child's experience in each culture.
4. to help them to an understanding of "light" from the scientific, cultural, aesthetic etc. point of view.

The theme which linked all of the festivals was "light" which is the central focus of each celebration.

Festivals included:

- Diwali (Hindu)
- Hanukkah (Jewish)
- Advent and Christmas (Christian)
- New Year (various)
- St. Nicholas (Holland)
- St. Lucia (Sweden)
- Chinese New Year.

Other topics common to these festivals:

- Light
- New Beginnings / endings
- Food

We took each festival in turn over the period of the project (8 weeks), beginning with Diwali. Work in each festival was cross-curricular and involved Mathematics, English, Irish, Art and Craft, Music, Drama, P.E. and Dance, Social and Environmental Studies.

In covering Diwali, we began with the story of Rama and Sita and based our work on the BBC Watch programme for Sep. - Oct. 1988 which had 5 x 15 minute programmes on the story and the staging of a Ramayana festival in London. Work centred on the theme of "light" (the Divine Lamp) and covered modern customs, food, dance and song. Listening to Indian music in the mornings as the children came in, served to create a suitable atmosphere. Diwali greeting cards were made and Rangoli patterns in painting. Using self-hardening clay, we made little clay Diwas.

As well as the BBC material, we used the book on Diwali in the Ginn "Celebrations" series.

The Jewish festival "Hanukkah" was next. The story of the "everlasting lamp", the menorah, is central to the festival. Modern customs were explored, receiving presents, lighting the menorah, special foods, songs, games etc. We made cardboard menorahs, painted descriptive pictures and sang the Hanukkah song.

Again, Ginn have a useful book on Hanukkah in the Celebration series. Also Child Education, Nov. 1988, is devoted to the theme of Light and Light festivals. Luckily, we had a parent of Jewish extraction who was able to provide real artefacts such as menorah, candles etc.

Christian festivals began with Advent which furthered the theme of Light, beginnings and preparation. Christian practices were shared and talked about. "Stained glass" candles were made from coloured tissue paper.

During Advent we encountered a number of other festivals such as St. Lucia (Sweden, Dec. 13)

and St. Nicholas (Holland). The story of how St. Lucia rescued and helped Christians, carrying food and drink to them using a crown of candles to light her way, was presented and discussed. Again the Light theme was very prominent. Modern customs, recipes, candles in religion, were themes encountered. A child in the class whose mother is originally from Scandinavia was able to give us recipes, material, some expressions in the language and photos of St. Lucia celebrations in Dublin which the Scandinavian community presents every year. We made some cardboard crowns, made Lucia paintings and sang a Lucia song.

This parental involvement was also true of our work on the Dutch festival of St. Nicholas. We had one Dutch Dad who was able to give us some information and experience through his daughter who taught us some Dutch expressions associated with the festival - Sinter Klaas, Swarze Pieter etc.

Christmas itself was approached from religious and secular points of view. The Solstice, shortest day, festivals of light etc. provided the basis of the secular view. There was a plentiful supply of material from songs (carols) to stories, recipes etc. available.

Christmas as a topic was divided between Christmas in Ireland and Christmas in other countries - Australia, Germany, Russia, France, Italy. Discussion about Xmas in Australia led to a simple Geography lesson - work on the sun and the seasons etc. The German experience included stories about the origin of the Christmas tree. Christmas in Russia included the story of Baboushka, and Christmas in Italy included the story of Befama etc.

We learned many different ways of wishing each other "Happy Christmas":- Glad Jul; Joyeux Noel; Nollaig Shona; Feliz Navidad etc. Once again parental input was important - we had a German and a French mother.

Following Christmas, we worked on the theme of the New Year / new beginnings and the Chinese New Year. This kept us occupied throughout January. Again the theme of light was prominent. We discussed the theme of beginnings - new babies, resolutions, lengthening days, spring, rebirth, etc. Chinese New Year presented an excellent series of stories and proverbs together with exciting things to make, exotic customs and tasty recipes.

The focal point of the whole project was a play which the class teacher put together with a parent who had experience of drama teaching and who had acted professionally. The play was loosely based on the Raymond Briggs cartoon and book "The Snowman". Our play "The Snowman" had the snowman bringing the children on a magical tour of all our festivals from Australia to Russia and from the North Pole to India and Israel all in one night. The class was presented with a list of possible characters in the play and each child chose his/her part (with a little guidance!). The play had many, many characters so most children had a variety of parts to play at different times. For example, the same child played Baboushka in one scene, a sunglassed sunbather in Australia in another scene and a candle in the "human" menorah lamp in Israel in a third scene. Modern customs relating to children were also included in the play but emphasis was placed on the original stories such as the story of Jesus' birth, of Maccabeus or of Baboushka or Rama. The teacher narrated the story with dialogue, dance, song and acting from the children. A tape of suitable music was made up and costumes were put together at home. Rehearsals were slow at first and groups needed to be rehearsed before the whole lot could be run as one piece. When it was reasonably presentable, parents were sent invitations which the children coloured and we performed the play shortly before Christmas - once for parents, grandparents etc. and a second performance for the children in the school.

Worksheets were a feature of our work on this project. They were prepared as homework sheets to carry the theme and topics home for discussion and parental involvement, and as school work sheets.

Finally, all written work, art work, work sheets etc. were gathered together and pasted into scrap books which contained the tangible results of our two months work.

Resources:

There is a wide variety of resources available on the theme of Light and Winter Festivals. Some have already been mentioned. These are a few general books / magazines etc. which proved useful.

- The Lion Christmas Book (Mary Batchelor).

(R.E)

Diwali (India)
Hanukkah (Jewish)
Advent
Christmas - customs around world.
New Year
St. Lucia
Chinese New Year.
beginnings / new life.

Maths

Home work based on
Kernis.
Maths stories based on
Kernis.

Irish

An Nollai's
Sneachta.

poems & songs (y) 'Stacai beaga beaga'

English

Stories (eg).
little match girl
Christmas stories
Night before Xmas
With snow surprise
Snowman.
Rama & Sita
Hannuka story
Christmas stories
Dragon stories

Language development

drama (play).

Creative writing

Stories based on festival

Science

light / fire / candles.
oil fuels.
burning fabrics
Candle wax
oil / water

Winter festivals
(Some work covered)

Music

Songs
(include) Diwali
Christmas cards
Hannuka song
little match girl
songs for play
hannuka music
Jewish music

Recorder: Jingle bells.
Hannuka

PE

Drama / movement
based on Kernis
stories of Rama
and Sita.

VV. Studies

Signs of winter } nature
hibernation }
keeping warm }
dragons } fuel
fire }
light / heating
seasons / night / day.

Art / craft

Stained glass (Jatayn)
Diwali cards
Christmas cards / decorations
Hannuka pictures
Candle paintings
Wax resist paintings
Chinese script / characters
Kernis class Diwas

30 The Bahá'í Faith

The Bahá'í Faith is an independent world religion. The Bahá'í world Community - often known as the Bahá'í International Community - is a cross-section of humanity, including almost all nationalities, classes, trades and professions; it includes rich and poor, literate and illiterate. It comprises members of the Bahá'í Faith living in more than 115,000 localities, in 363 countries and territories - 173 of these independent nations - and unites men and women of various religious and ethnic origins. More than 1,600 ethnic groups and tribes are represented.

Many *Educate Together* schools now have children of Bahá'ís attending. In view of this it was particularly informative to visit the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the Republic of Ireland at 24 Burlington Rd., Dublin 4, where Leslie Taherzadeh outlined the background to the Bahá'í faith and gave an overview of (a) Teachings (b) Characteristics (c) Laws (d) Administrative Order and (e) Religious Festivals of the Bahá'í Faith.

Outline of the Faith

The Bahá'í Faith is an independent world religion which originated in Persia in the middle of the 19th century. It upholds the unity of God and of His Prophets and stands identified with the principle of the oneness and wholeness of the human race.

The founder of the Bahá'í Faith was Baha'ullah, whose name is Arabic for "Glory of God". A follower of Baha'ullah is a Bahá'í. Bahá'ís are people who, after investigation, have accepted Baha'ullah as the Manifestation or Messenger of God for this day. The writings of Baha'ullah form the major part of Bahá'í Scripture and include teachings, prayers and meditations.

The Bahá'í Faith in Ireland

The history of the Bahá'í Faith in Ireland began in 1918 when George Townshend, sometime Canon of St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin and Archdeacon of Clonfert, became a member of the Bahá'í community. In 1948 the first local Spiritual Assembly in Ireland was formed in Dublin. Today there are 20 such Assemblies located throughout the country and Bahá'ís now reside in over 40 localities.

Among the various activities in which the Irish Bahá'í Community is involved are an international summer school for the study of the Bahá'í Faith which people from all continents attend; youth programmes; educating children and organising events for them; sponsoring youth to participate in activities relating to social and economic development within the Bahá'í community in Africa.

Bahá'í Teachings

The central teachings of the Bahá'í Faith are the oneness of God, the oneness of religion, and the oneness of mankind. The fundamental principles proclaimed by Baha'ullah are

- That religious truth is not absolute but relative
- That Divine Revelation is a continuous and progressive process
- That their missions represent successive stages in the spiritual evolution of human society.

Bahá'ís believe that God sends his messengers to reveal to mankind specific messages appropriate to their stage of spiritual development and necessary for their future evolution. The Prophet Founder of the Bahá'í Faith, Baha'ullah, is seen as the most recent of these, having been preceded by prophets such as Moses, Buddha, Jesus, and Mohammed. Bahá'ís also expect that further prophets will be sent in the future to enable the continuing spiritual evolution of mankind.

Since the Bahá'í Faith teaches that the purpose of religion is the promotion of concord and unity, the Bahá'í writings provide the outline of institutions necessary for the establishment of peace and world order, such as a world federation or commonwealth, with its executive, legislative and judicial arms, an international auxiliary language, a world economy, a mechanism of world intercommunication and a universal system of currency, weights and measures.

Characteristics of the Bahá'í Community

To achieve their goal of bringing about the unity of mankind, world peace, and world order, the Bahá'í world community encourages the fulfilment of certain essential requirements such as:

1. the fostering of good character
2. the eradication of prejudices
3. the elimination of all forms of superstition
4. the development of the unique talents and abilities of every individual
5. the full participation of both sexes in all aspects of community life
6. the fostering of the principle of universal compulsory education.

Bahá'i Laws

Besides spiritual laws requiring daily prayer and an annual period of fasting, the Bahá'io Faith has social laws. It requires monogamy, for instance and makes marriage conditional on the consent of both parties and their parents. Bahá'i law also prohibits the use of alcoholic drinks.

Bahá'i Administrative Order

The Bahá'i Faith relies on a pattern of local, national and international administration, created by Baha'ullah, elaborated by Abdu'l-Bahá, and implemented by Shoghi Effendi. Each locality having nine or more adult Bahá'is, elect a council each year - a local Spiritual Assembly. At present there are over 30,000 assemblies throughout the world. National Spiritual Assemblies are also elected annually, by previously elected delegates who come together in a national convention. There are today 147 National Spiritual Assemblies. Once every five years, at an international convention, these assemblies gather to elect the Universal House of Justice, the supreme institution of the Bahá'i Faith.

Useful Resources:

1. World Religions - "A Handbook for Teachers" by W. Owen Cole.
2. The Promise of World Peace - A Statement by the Universal House of Justice.
3. The Bahá'i Faith - an Introduction by Gloria Faizi.
4. The Promise of World Peace - adapted from the original text by the Universal House of Justice.
5. The Promise of World Peace - Children's Version.
6. Human Rights - A Bahá'i View.
7. Equality of Men and Women - A Bahá'i View.
8. Building a United Community - A Bahá'i View.
9. The Bahá'i Faith (booklet on various aspects of the faith).
10. The Environment and Human Values.

[Nos. 2,4,5,6,7,8,9 and 10 are available from the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'is of the Republic of Ireland, 24 Burlington Rd., Dublin 4].

32
Jehovah's Witnesses

During the summer course, we contacted the Jehovah's Witnesses and they offered to send one of their members to talk to us. The man who came to talk to us was Mr. Daly, who has children in the D.S.P. National School and who was in a good position to share his experiences with us.

1. Basic Beliefs

Jehovahs are convinced that God is a real being and consider it vital to maintain a close personal relationship with him as their father. This involves knowing Him by His name 'Jehovah'. Their way of worshipping God involves their entire outlook and manner of life.

2. Festivals

To a Jehovah's Witness, many of the festivals, celebrations, holidays and customs are associated with a non-Christian religious background and are therefore objectionable. Jehovah's Witness parents would require that their children do not participate in celebrations such as birthdays, Halloween, Christmas, Easter, New Year's Day, Mother's Day, St. Patrick's Day etc.

3. Myths and Legends

Jehovah's Witnesses would prefer that children would hear only stories based on reality. Therefore many children's stories such as Cinderella, Hansel and Gretel etc. are not considered appropriate. Similarly, while they do not object to acting per se, the play must be in harmony with Biblical principles. Jehovah's Witness would not participate in a play that condoned moral standards that the Bible condemns.

4. Competitions

Jehovah's Witnesses consider bodily training and sport very important but they object to the ideology of competition, as they see it as having harmful effects. Competition in other areas such as Art, Music, Craft etc. are viewed in the same light. However, events such as a Spellathon organised within the school may be acceptable.

5. Elections

Jehovah's Witnesses do not participate in school politics either by accepting an elective office or by voting others into office. However, an appointment by the teacher is seen as acceptable. A mock election within the classroom as an educational exercise may be acceptable. Voting in the classroom to express one's preference for certain activities is acceptable.

6. Accidents and Injuries

In the event of an accident, it should be known that Jehovah's Witnesses do not donate or accept blood. Therefore parents should be consulted before medical help is given.

7. Parents of Jehovah's Witnesses

Jehovah's Witnesses see it as important that parents become acquainted with their children's teachers and would appreciate if the teacher would arrange a meeting to talk with them. The aim of the meeting would be to see how parents and teachers could co-operate to help in the child's development.

Resources:

School and Jehovah's Witnesses (A booklet available from local Jehovah's Witnesses).

(The above statement was prepared by a group of teachers on the basis of their understanding of the issues raised during the course of the interview with Mr. Daly. The statement should not be regarded as definitive and teachers are advised to discuss specific issues which might affect children of Jehovah's Witnesses with the parents of the children).

33
Visit to the Dublin Mosque.

The word "Islam" literally means "peace" and "submission", while a Muslim, who is a follower of Islam, is one who submits to God's will. The basic Islamic creed is that "There is no deity except God; Muhammad is the Messenger of God".

Through the ages, Muslims believe that God has spoken through many prophets - e.g. Abraham, Moses, Jesus - but God's last prophet, Muhammad, an Arab descended from Abraham, holds the final and complete statement from God to humankind. He is "the seal of the prophets", that is, the final Messenger from God. (Incidentally, persecution of Bahá'is in the Muslim world is justified on the basis that Baha'is believe that Muhammad has been succeeded by a further prophet, Bahá'u'llah).

The two sources of Islamic teaching are the Qura'n (Koran), written by Muhammad as mediated to him through the Angel Gabriel, and The Sunnah, the recorded sayings of Muhammad.

The five basic beliefs of Islam are :

1. Belief in God
2. Belief in life after death and in heaven and hell.
3. Belief in angels, as messengers from God and as recorders.
4. Belief in sacred books, containing the words of previous prophets, such as the Torah and the Bible.
5. Belief in prophets who lived before Muhammad, notably Adam, Noah, Moses, and Jesus.

A. The Five Pillars of Wisdom

1. Declaration of Faith: There is only one God and his prophet is Muhammad (*Shahadah*).
2. Prayer: five times daily (*Salah*).
3. Welfare Tax: for the needy (*Zakah*).
4. Fasting during Ramadan To raise the Muslim above his appetites and to promote spirituality (*Sawm*).
5. Pilgrimage: The places of pilgrimage are Mecca, Medina and Jerusalem. Every Muslim must attempt to visit Mecca once in his lifetime.

B. Moral Teachings

1. Positive Moral Directives - Sincerity, Integrity, Honesty etc.
2. Negative Moral Directives - Anger, Slander, Cruelty etc.

C. Transactions in Daily Life

1. Usury is forbidden - no loans or mortgages with interest
2. Penal Code
3. Family Law
4. Prohibition of certain food and drink
5. Prohibition of gambling / fraud.

D. Food and Drink

Prohibitions -

- All forms of Pork and Carnivorous animals are specifically forbidden - fat and bones included.
- Any animal that is not slaughtered according to Islamic Law (Halal)
- All forms of alcoholic drink are forbidden - no exception (e.g. sherry trifle, or any form of cooking with alcohol is forbidden).

E. Prayer

Islam is distinguished from other religions in that it prescribes ritual prayers five times daily in addition to the weekly congregation on Friday noon. All Muslim males over 12 years of age are obliged to attend the Mosque for Friday prayer.

Some Personal impressions following the visit to the Mosque

The Mosque is a converted Presbyterian Church with no adornment because nothing should get in the way of the worship of Allah. The Mosque is spotlessly clean with a plain green carpeted floor. All visitors to the Mosque are requested to remove their shoes.

We were very courteously received at the Mosque by the Iman, who is the leader of the Islam community in Ireland. He explained the beliefs and customs of Islam with the aid of well produced visual material on an overhead projector. He was helpful and positive - the Islam community in Ireland is anxious to build up a good relationship with the Irish people and the Iman was pleased that teachers in *Educate Together* schools took the trouble to visit the Mosque to find out at first-hand about the Muslim community in Ireland. After the formal presentation of information, he invited questions and replied to these with further clarificatory information. We were hospitably invited to have tea and cakes afterwards in the small restaurant attached to the Islamic Centre. This restaurant is open to the public and offers some interesting dishes.

It is estimated that there are about 5,000 Muslims in Ireland. The community has grown rapidly in recent years and seems to be thriving both financially and numerically. Up to 40 people worship in the Dublin Mosque daily with up to 500 on Fridays. There are also Moslems in other parts of the country and there are one or two other Mosques in Ireland. Senior members of the Muslim community in Ireland are currently negotiating with the Department of Education for sanction to open a Moslem National School.

Resources:

- *The Koran*, trans. by Arthur G. Arberry (Oxford University Press).
- *What Everyone Should Know About Islam and Muslims*, Suzanne Haneef (Kazi Publications).
- *The Muslim Guide for Teachers etc.*, Mustafa Yusuf McDermott (The Islamic Foundation).
- *Jesus in the Qura'n* (NWH Publsihers)
- Muslim Children's Library Series Titles include the following:

Love Your Brother, Love Your Neighbour
Love Your God
The First Man on Earth
Stories of the Caliphs

(All of the above books, plus an interesting and inexpensive range of spices and pulses, are available at the shop at the Islamic Centre, Dublin Mosque, 134 Sth Circular Rd., Dublin 8).

A Visit to the Jewish Museum

The museum is situated at 3-4 Walworth Rd., Portobello, Dublin 6. The ground floor contains one large room of Jewish memorabilia - photographs, documents, history, artefacts and books on the theme of the Jews in Ireland. There is small annexe which is used to give a picture of domestic life in a Jewish home. The table is laid for a Sabbath meal. Some typical food and drink was on display on the day of our visit - kosher wine, kosher bread etc. Also on display in this kitchen is the Jewish prayer book and a menorah lamp lit during the Chanukka festival.

Upstairs is a synagogue which is no longer used for this purpose. On display are costumes, photographs, memorabilia, documents in glass cases. The synagogue remains intact though not in use. Everything is as it was when the Jewish community were using it. Because of the decline in the numbers of Jews in Dublin, various Jewish congregations are centralised in the Adelaide Rd. synagogue and in Terenure. Greenville Rd. synagogue has also recently closed.

The visit began by signing the Visitors' Book. We were then given an informal guided tour of the museum. There are information charts just inside the entrance to the room which give a rough summary of the Jewish community in Ireland from the 11th century. Around the walls there are glass cases containing records in document and photograph form of the various Rabbis; industrial patents taken out by Jewish engineers and inventors; school records and photographs; cultural events; various community and social groups; political life; records of anti-semitism and persecution etc.

Our guides - two Jewish women who have an intimate knowledge of the Jewish community in Ireland, having lived all their lives within this community - were very lively and helpful. The overall impression was one of a vibrant and energetic community, though unfortunately, one in decline. Our guides were proud of the impact that Jews have made in the economic, social and cultural life of the city. However, we felt that their pride and enthusiasm was tinged with sadness at the awareness that the community is in decline as a result of the combined effects of falling births and emigration, mostly to Israel, England and the U.S. (Our guide's daughter had gone to Israel). There was a strong sense of a once energetic community in decline.

The Irish Jewish community has been in decline for some years. It was at its height in the 1920s when there were roughly 5,000 Jews in Ireland. The number now stands at 1,500. Our guide's own grandfather was a Russian emigré who arrived in Ireland when the community was at its strongest numerically. She told us stories and anecdotes from her own life as a Jew in Dublin which gave us an immediate and empathetic feeling for and insight into Jewish life in Dublin which mere photos or documents could not. The sense of an interlinked and interdependent group, in which everyone knows everyone else, was very strong.

Upstairs in the synagogue, we were shown some of the important artefacts of Jewish religious practice. On display are beautifully embroidered cloth, and a Torah (scroll which contains the Jewish Law written in Hebrew). All Jewish children learn Hebrew, though they would not necessarily be very fluent in it.

Other display pieces included documents, some menorah lamps, a miniature hut which is constructed in Jewish gardens during the Succoth (grape harvest) festival. On display also are some implements used in circumcision, Barmitzrah materials (which boys experience at 13) - cap, prayerbook, etc., wedding documents and other artefacts. The wedding ceremony was colourfully described to us. The couple stand under a cloth canopy with the cantor, the Rabbi and relations. The couple exchange vows. There is singing, led by the cantor to the accompaniment of the harmonium.

We noticed that each seat in the synagogue had a number. Each member of the congregation pays for a numbered seat on which that man will sit for the rest of his life during services. Women sit separately at the back of the room. The cantor leads the singing. He has a large pew in the middle of the congregation from which he directs the singing. He wears a tall black top hat which the museum have left resting on the cantor's 'Bimah' (his pew/box). Directly in front of the Bimah is the Ark, a large cupboard containing the Torah scrolls. The Rabbi takes the scrolls from the Ark to read to the congregation. The Rabbi is not a priest but a 'legal expert' educated in the Jewish Law.

On display also is a large Menora lamp, Hebraic script, symbols etc.

At this point the visit had come to an end. We had been given memorable insights into the Jewish way of life, customs and religious practices together with a real feeling for what it was and is like for a Jew in Dublin as a member of a warm, closely-knit and energetic group. One image which remains strongest is of a large cloth star of David on and around which the Dublin "Daughters of Zion" had embroidered their names - a touching record of a close friendly community.

Opening Hours: 11a.m. - 3 p.m. Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays during the summer.

11a.m. - 3 p.m. Sundays only during the winter.

Resources and Addresses:

Authorised Daily Prayer Book (ed.) J.H. Hertz (Shapiro Vallentine 1949).

A Short History of the Jewish People, Cecil Roth, (East and West Library 1953).

Guide to Jewish Festivals, Various authors, 6 vols. Jewish Chronicle Publications.

Child Education - Light. November 1988.

Bright Ideas - Festivals. by Jill Bennett 7 Archie Millar (Scholastic).

Our World. Life and Faith. Places of Worship. (Hulton Ed. Publ. Ltd.)

Celebrations: Hanukkah by Leila Berg. (Ginn & Co. Ltd.)

World Religions - A Handbook for Teachers (ed.) W. Owen Cole (Commission for Racial Equality).

Hands Together - Food. (Scholastic Publications).

Jewish National Fund Publications, Rex House, 4/12 Regent St., London SW1.

Jewish Education Bureau, 8 Westcombe Ave., Leeds, LS8 2BS.

Jewish Community Offices (Ireland), Office of the Chief Rabbi, Dublin 6. Tel. 967351.

Books on Judaism for Children

The Diary, Letters, Poems and Mission of Hanna Senesh (Valentine Mitchell 1971).

Great Jewish Short Stories (ed.) Saul Bellow (Valentine Mitchell, 1971).

The Diary of Anne Frank, Anne Frank (Valentine Mitchell, 1958; Pan 1968).

JEWISH FESTIVALS;

Passover - deliverance of the people from bondage in Egypt. Home ceremonies predominate.

Feast of Tabernacle - Palm waving in the synagogue; family meals.

New Year (Rosh Hashanah) - A festival of rejoicing - ten days of self-examination before God.

Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur).

Hanukkah - very suitable theme for children - games, food and customs abound.

Purim - story of Esther. After a fast on the day of Esther, a festive spirit ensues.

Appendix M

**Core Curriculum
Design and Delivery**

1. When was your school established?

2. Does your school have a written Core Curriculum?

Yes

No

3. What is the key aim of the Core Curriculum as identified by your school community?

4. Does the Core Curriculum have a designated time allocated to it during the school day?

Yes

No

5. Who has responsibility for the delivery of the Core Curriculum in your school?

Class Teacher

A designated teacher

Other(Please specify)

6. Are parents informed of the content of the Core Curriculum?

Yes

No

If yes can you elaborate?

7. Are parents involved in the delivery of the Core Curriculum?

Yes

No

If yes can you please elaborate?

8. Does your school have a Core Curriculum booklet?

Yes

No

If you answered yes to the last question, please answer the next three questions. If you answered no, please proceed to Question 12.

9. Is the booklet distributed to parents?

Yes

No

10. In what year was the booklet produced?

11. Has the booklet been revised and updated in the lifetime of the school?

Yes

No

12. Who was responsible for drafting the Core Curriculum?

Staff

Staff in consultation with parents

Staff in consultation with Executive

Staff in consultation with Board of Management

Other

(Please specify)

13. In your opinion, which of the groups listed in the previous question has ultimate responsibility for the content of the Core Curriculum?

14. How relevant is the Core Curriculum to the ethos and culture of the school?

15. Do you think that the Core Curriculum in your school accurately represents the values that your school espouses?

Yes

No

16. Which key values does your school share as a community?

17. Does the term "Core Curriculum" adequately capture the essence of what the programme seeks to represent?

Yes

No

18. If you have answered no to the previous question, can you suggest an alternative phrase or title?

19. Is your Core Curriculum suitable for addressing an awareness and respect for multiculturalism?

Yes

No

20. Are the topics for Core Curriculum decided at the beginning of the school year?

Yes

No

21. Is the Core Curriculum flexible enough to allow for change during the school year?

Yes

No

22. List 5 key themes that were addressed by your Core Curriculum in the last academic year. (These topics may be taken across a range of classes)

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

23. Is there provision in your school for training new teachers in the delivery of Core Curriculum?

Yes

No

24. Should ET provide training in the delivery of Core Curriculum?

Yes

No

25. What are the principal methodologies employed by your staff in the delivery of the Core Curriculum?

26. Where does your school source material for the delivery of Core Curriculum?

27. Is there a case to be made for devising a common Core Curriculum for all ET schools?

28.

Yes

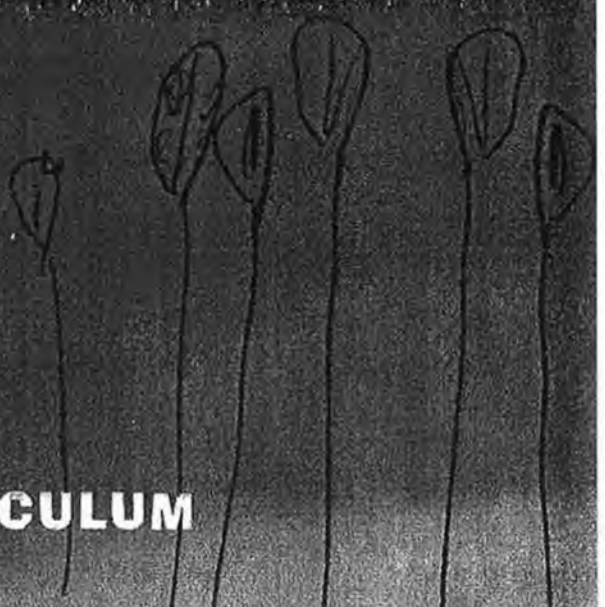
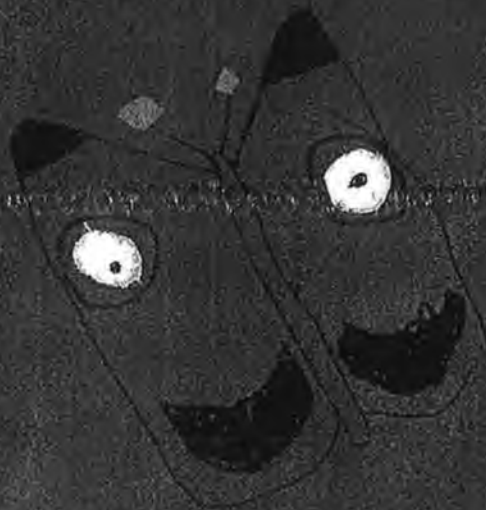
No

29. In your opinion, what are the problems, if any, associated with the design and delivery of the Core Curriculum?

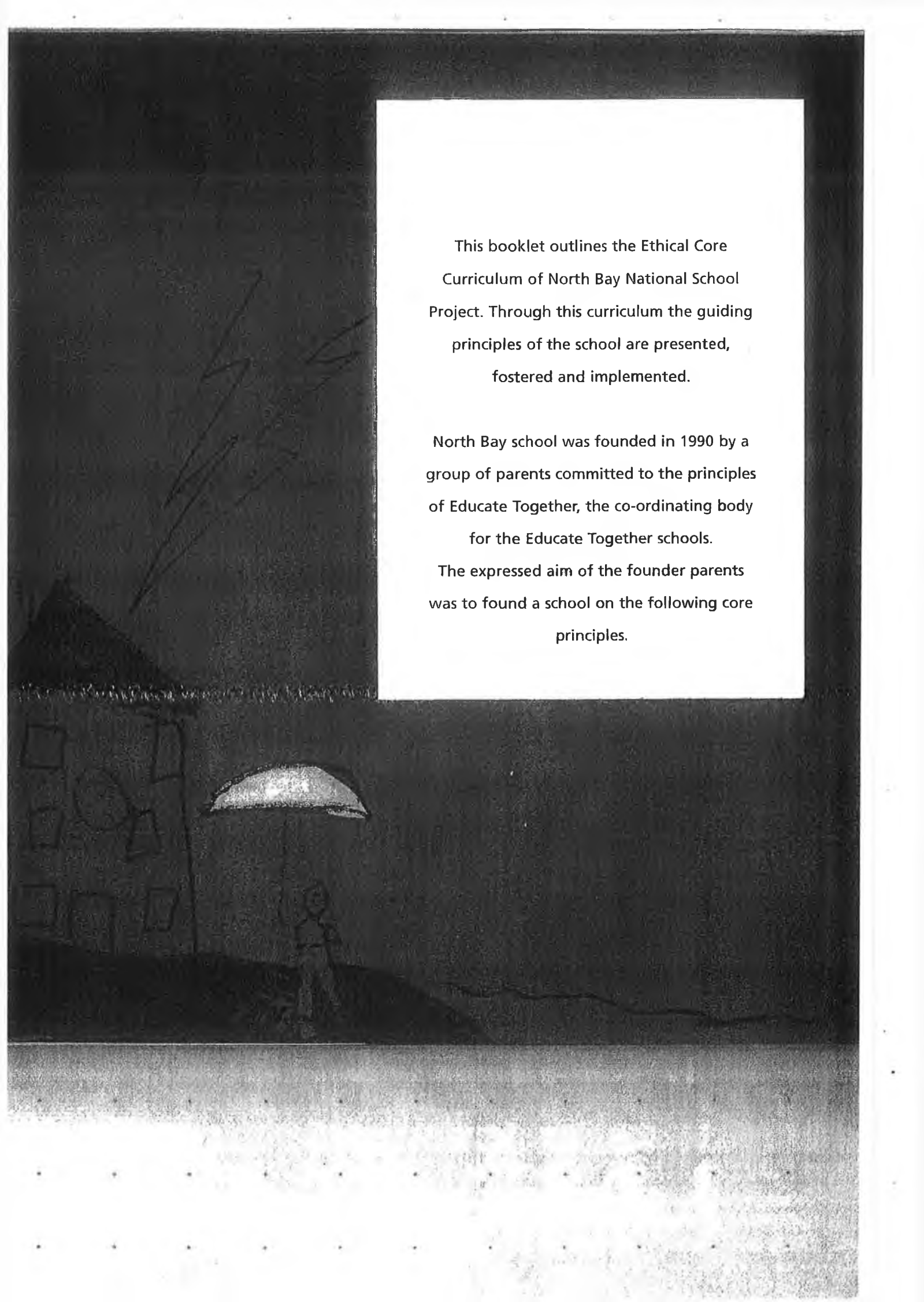
Appendix N

north bay

NATIONAL SCHOOL PROJECT



ETHICAL CORE CURRICULUM



This booklet outlines the Ethical Core Curriculum of North Bay National School Project. Through this curriculum the guiding principles of the school are presented, fostered and implemented.

North Bay school was founded in 1990 by a group of parents committed to the principles of Educate Together, the co-ordinating body for the Educate Together schools.

The expressed aim of the founder parents was to found a school on the following core principles.

THE MULTI-DENOMINATIONAL PRINCIPLE

All children have equal access to the school. Children of all social and cultural groups, and of all religions and non-religious backgrounds, are equally respected.

All children are encouraged to fulfil their potential in a school setting that is committed to equal opportunities for girls and boys.

The school offers a child-centred curriculum in which the teacher guides and facilitates the child's learning through both formal and informal methods while encouraging the child to be an active participant in his/her learning. Each child's individual needs are considered and he/she is encouraged to learn at an appropriate pace. There is a constant striving for excellence in all areas of school life.

The School is managed by two committees, the Board of Management and the Executive Committee. These are democratic in character. There is also a Parent/Teacher Association. Parents and teachers play an active part in these committees.



THE COMMITMENT TO THESE PRINCIPLES PERMEATES THE LIFE OF THE SCHOOL AND IS MEDIATED THROUGH

The ethos of the school as expressed for example through the code of behaviour. This is built around the positive principles of respect for oneself, for others, for the school, and for the outside world.

The formal curriculum of the school as laid down by the Department of Education. This curriculum is delivered through permeating and integrating the core values of the school through the prescribed programme.

The Ethical Core Curriculum.

Through the Ethical Core curriculum the core values of the school are taught to the children at specific times as well as being integrated into other areas of the curriculum. One of the stated aims of multi-denominational schools is to give children a basic sense of social, ethical and moral standards in the areas of honesty, respect, justice, integrity, trust and responsibility. There is a strong commitment to the principle that the curriculum should foster in the children a knowledge and understanding of different value and belief systems in an atmosphere of inquiry and mutual respect. In all our interactions as a school community, we try to create a happy, comfortable environment where everyone is treated with respect and where individual differences are celebrated. We hope that the school can build on and develop the core values which the children encounter at home. Together we can prepare our children to become caring members of society with a heightened awareness of environmental, social and political issues.

Values that are encouraged and developed within the Core Curriculum and built on in all

interactions throughout the school fall into categories such as personal, moral, political, educational and environmental. Such values contribute to our growth as human beings. They are explored through the use of stories, music and play from many cultures. Through discussion, children are given an opportunity to examine alternative approaches to problems and issues and to assess the consequences of the alternatives.

The curriculum encompasses programmes through which children understand and critically reflect on issues relating to gender, racism, poverty, threats to our environment, peaceful resolution of conflict and the major religious and non-theistic belief systems.

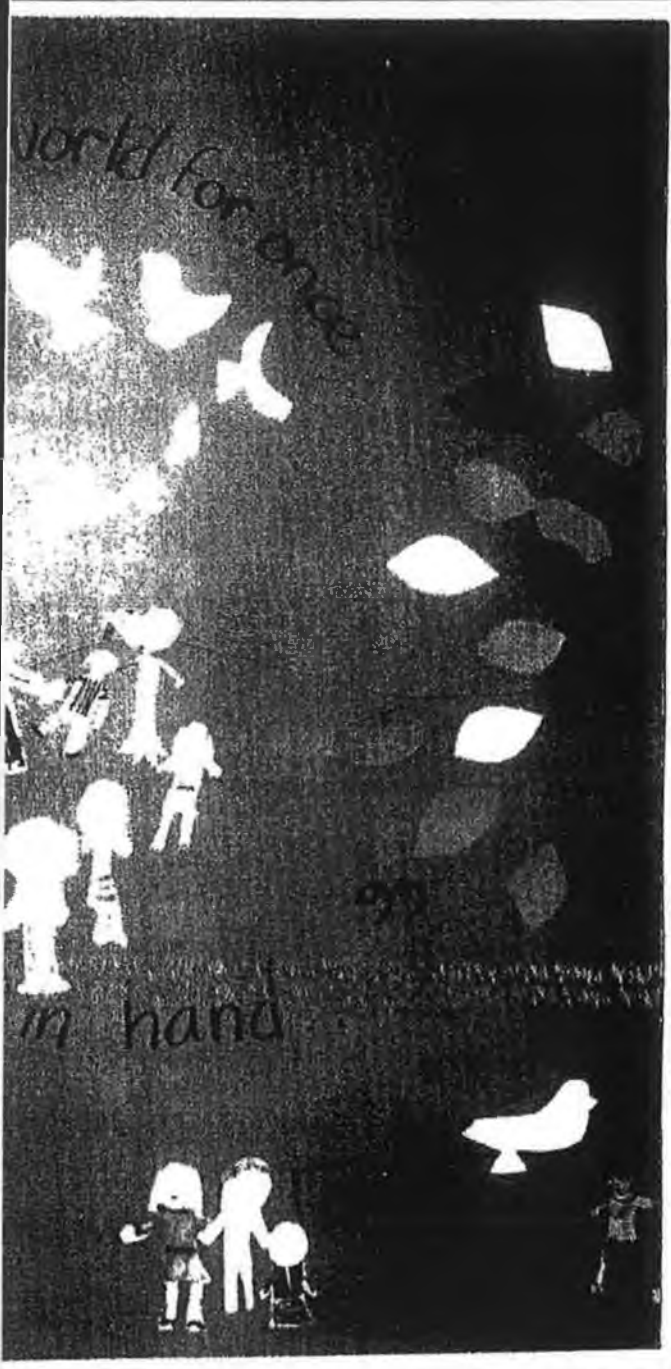
The cultural background of the children, including their religious or non-religious philosophies and beliefs, are drawn on and are used as a resource to illuminate the principles of the school and to affirm and build up the self-esteem of all our children.

THE ETHICAL CORE CURRICULUM IS STRUCTURED UNDER THE FOLLOWING HEADINGS

- * Moral development.
- * An understanding of issues of equality and fairness.
- * A knowledge of and an understanding of the major World religions and non-theistic belief systems e.g. Humanism.
- * Celebrations.
- * Ethical Aspects of Environmental Issues.



Me
As long as I live
I shall always be
My self and no other
Just me.



**OTHER CORE VALUES
EXAMINED WITHIN THE
CORE CURRICULUM INCLUDE**

* Respect for personal beliefs

* An awareness of responsibility towards the environment

* Ability to listen and communicate

* Ability to acknowledge difference

* The right to learn in a safe, happy environment

* Awareness of belonging to a community both on a local level and as part of the wider global community

* Gender equity

* Equality

* Respect for individuality

EQUALITY

Throughout the core curriculum the children are made aware of equality issues.

This starts in the classroom, where they are encouraged to take personal responsibility and learn to treat each other with respect.

This happens in many ways for example in Circle Time, children have the opportunity to talk and learn to listen to one another. At infant level there are Sharing Days, when children can bring and share their toys and other special objects.

A sense of inter-dependence is fostered through playing co-operative games, where children learn the value of working as part of a group in a non-competitive way. This follows through to the school community as a whole. At school assembly they have the opportunity to share their achievements, whether by displaying their work or performing shows etc.

All these activities help form the awareness necessary for understanding equality issues in a wider sense.

Topics such as homelessness, human rights, rich and poor, sexism and racism are explored and critically reflected upon by the children at a level appropriate to their development .

Children are empowered to do something about injustice in the world through annual events.

There is a Christmas collection for Focus Point (a charity for homeless families), the sale of friendship bracelets, made by the street children of Brazil and a Harvest Fair, the proceeds of which are donated to a charity working in the developing countries. These are examples of ways in which

the children learn about very serious issues and at the same time have the opportunity to make a contribution and do something about them.



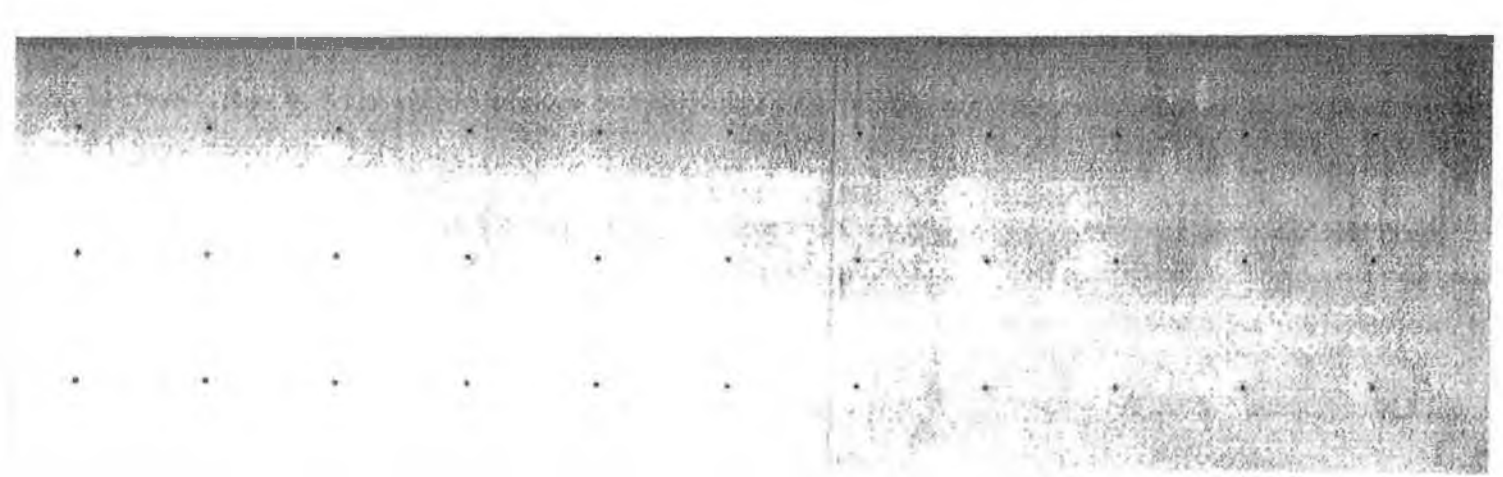
-his is Adam He has Freckles

RELIGIOUS AND NON-THEISTIC BELIEF SYSTEMS

Through the Ethical Core curriculum the children gain a knowledge and an understanding of the religious and other thought systems that they will encounter in school and in the wider community. Ultimately, the aim is that the children will have a respect for, knowledge of and critical understanding of diversity in the pluralist society in which they live.

In the Junior classes, religious themes are explored through stories, e.g. creation stories from all the different thought systems, the Christmas story, the story of Rama and Sita etc. Religious themes are also explored, through acknowledging and learning about the festivals of the different faith groups in the class. Earth based festivals, e.g. Midwinter, Halloween, and Mid summer are also explored and celebrated. The annual Midsummer Festival has become a firm favourite with all the children.

In the senior classes the children further explore religious based festivals and gain an understanding of the similarities between religions, e.g. through a study of Festivals of Light and Festivals of Darkness. They also learn about the lives of Religious Leaders, e.g. Jesus, Gandhi, The Dalai Lama etc. Such major world Religions as Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism are taught in 5th and 6th Class as the children gain in intellectual and emotional maturity which enables them to better understand the more abstract beliefs of these different faiths. During these studies the children visit places of Worship, e.g. A Roman Catholic church, A Church of Ireland church, The Mosque, The Synagogue etc. The children also reflect on non-theistic thought systems such as humanism. Speakers of these Faiths visit the school and talk to the children about their own belief systems.



CELEBRATION

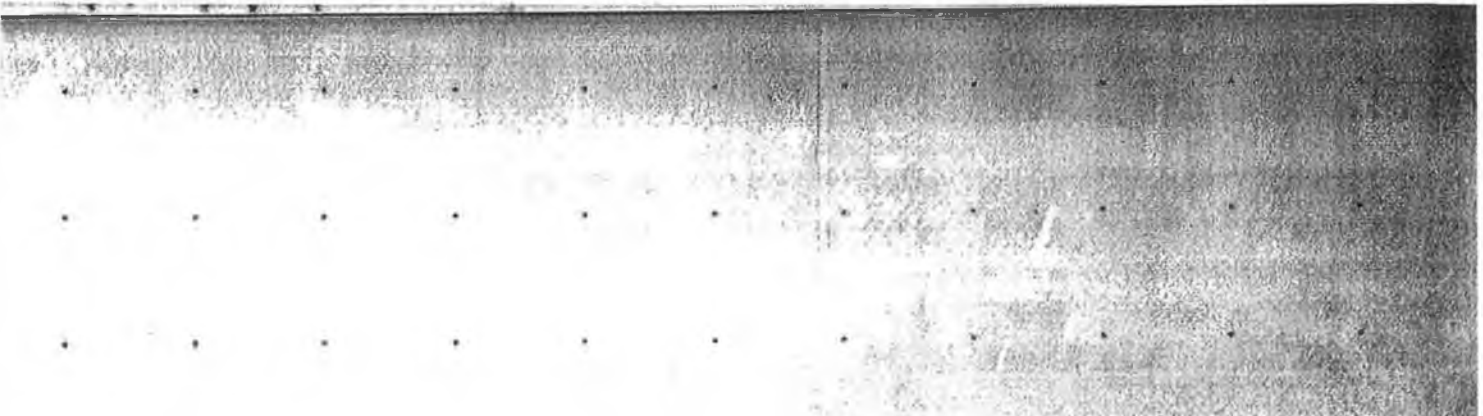
The Ethical core curriculum has many celebratory themes, which enable pupils to recognise themselves as individuals with special qualities and unique characteristics. Children celebrate diversity among their friends with respect to appearance, background, ability and belief.

The children develop a sense of awareness of the beauty of nature and its seasonal changes. The arrival of spring, summer, Harvest and winter are marked in a special way with school festivities incorporating art, music, story and fun. These celebrations nurture a sense of awe of the world they share and inculcate a sense of responsibility for its preservation and protection.

The children also examine the nature of prejudice and social inequality which still permeate society. Children recognize and celebrate the lives of men and women who overcame injustice, broke down barriers, found peaceful resolutions to conflict and opened people's minds to fairness and equality.

The Ethical Core curriculum enables the children to experience other cultures and further understand other beliefs in an active and recreational way. Each year a selection of different cultural and religious feasts from around the world are recognised and celebrated at school assemblies through the medium of drama and mime.

Children are given the opportunity to share their friends' "special days" by partaking in some of the traditions of the day from costume wearing, to hand painting to food tasting.



ENVIRONMENT

Through nurturing an appreciation of the beauty of nature and evoking feelings of awe, love and wonder for the world in which the children live, the ethical Core Curriculum encourages children to play an active and responsible role in caring for their environment from the home/classroom to the wider community and the world.

A sense of responsibility is fostered in our children by encouraging them to keep their immediate environment within the school clean, tidy and beautiful and through understanding and reflecting on environmental global issues appropriate to their age and stage of development. This is achieved through:

Encouraging neatness and tidiness.

Sowing seeds, plants, bulbs and observing them grow and change.

Reflecting on life cycles of the Frog, the Butterfly etc.

Bird and other animal watching.

Anti-litter Policy.

Raising awareness of our interdependence with our natural and social environment.

Modules on Air Pollution, Water Pollution, Depletion of the Rain Forests etc.


AIMS OF THE ETHICAL CORE CURRICULUM

THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (THE PATRON BODY WHICH IS MADE UP OF PARENTS AND OTHERS COMMITTED TO THE PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATE TOGETHER) SET OUT THE ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL THROUGH A WRITTEN STATEMENT OF AIMS.

THESE AIMS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- * To give the children a basic sense of personal, social, ethical and moral standards.
- * To provide the children with peaceful strategies for conflict resolution.
- * To implement the multi-denominational principle of the school through a critical appreciation of all cultures and religious beliefs, in a spirit of enquiry and mutual respect.
- * To foster an awareness of each person's responsibilities, with due regard to the rights and needs of others, within small groups such as the family, the school, the local community and within the wider Irish, European and global contexts.
- * To promote equality amongst people regardless of gender, class, ethnicity, ability or lifestyle.
- * To provide a critical understanding of social and political structures and group influences.
- * To encourage the development of the individual through the promotion of a healthy sense of self and an ability to express emotions.
- * To promote a critical awareness of the mass media through explorations of images, bias and consumerism. Particular attention should be focused on stereotypical images of gender, race and class and of developing countries.
- * To create an understanding of the human mind and body. This includes appropriate sex education.
- * To instil a sense of respect for, and appreciation of, the environment which we all share, and to take an active role in conservation.
- * To encourage initiative, independence, critical thinking and creativity.
- * To help children face up to adversity in life.

THE PATRON IS RESPONSIBLE FOR OVERSEEING THE IMPLEMENTATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THIS PROGRAMME



What a beautiful chorus
We would make,
Singing around the earth
If all the humans in the world
Wanted to dance
Holding hands!



north bay
national school project

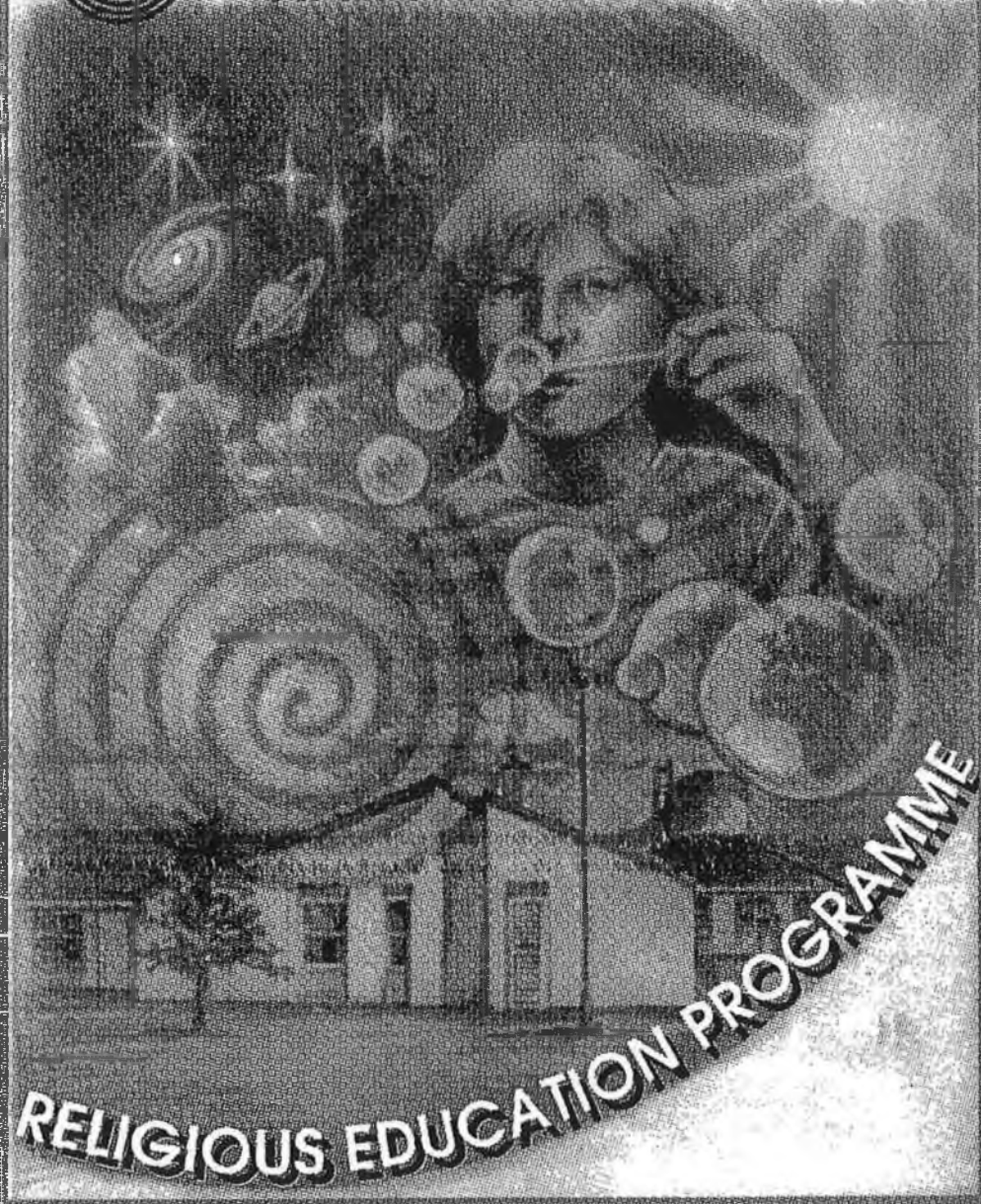
GREENDALE AVENUE KILBARRACK DUBLIN 5 IRELAND

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Appendix O



**BRAY SCHOOL PROJECT
NATIONAL SCHOOL**



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAMME



**MULTIDENOMINATIONAL
RELIGIOUS
EDUCATION
PROGRAMME**

*“You have the right to choose your religion freely,
to change it, to practice it as you wish,
on your own or with other people.”*

Source: Article 18, U.N. Declaration of Human Rights.



CONTENTS

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Page 10	AIMS
Page 12	THEMES FOR EACH CLASS
Page 21	PATRON'S POLICY
Page 23	EDUCATE TOGETHER CHARTER

Published in 1998

Cover design by Shane Harrison

With illustrations from the children of Bray School Project

Printed by The Central Press, Bray

Introduction

On opening in 1978 the Dalkey School Project N.S. became the first multid denominational national school in the state. In the same year a group of people founded the Bray School Project Association with the aim of providing a similar school in Bray. The expressed aim of the Association was to found a multid denominational, co-educational and democratically managed national school. The determination and dedication of the founder members met with success and the Bray School Project National School was opened in 1981 under the patronage of the Bray School Project Association and recognised by the Department of Education as a national school.

One of the conditions required for recognition by the Department of Education was the submission of a statement on religious education. The Association's policy on religious education (which is reproduced on pages twenty-one and twenty-two of this booklet) was submitted and accepted.

The Religious Education Programme has been developed in line with this policy and approved by the Association. Membership is open to all persons who support the aims of the Association whose members annually elect an executive to administer its affairs and act as the Patron Body of the school.



Questions and Answers

What is the Religious Education Programme in Multi-Denominational schools?

The Multi-Denominational Religious Education Programme is central to all the work of the school and the multi-denominational ethos of the school is reflected in the programme.

Who decides the Religious Education Policy of a school?

When any school is founded the Patron determines the ethos of Religious Education Policy of that school. Therefore the Patron is responsible for overseeing the programme.

Who is the Patron of the BSP?

In most schools the Patron is the local Bishop. At the BSP the Patron is a lay association, membership of which is open to parents and friends of the school. Every year an AGM is held and an executive committee (sometimes just called The Executive) is elected to carry out the duties of the Patron.

So the executive is responsible for the Religious Education Programme?

Yes, they oversee the implementation of the Religious Education Programme (REP). However, they have many other duties to fulfil so they appoint another group to advise on REP. This group is called the REAC (Religious Education Advisory Committee) and is made up of appointed teachers and parents.

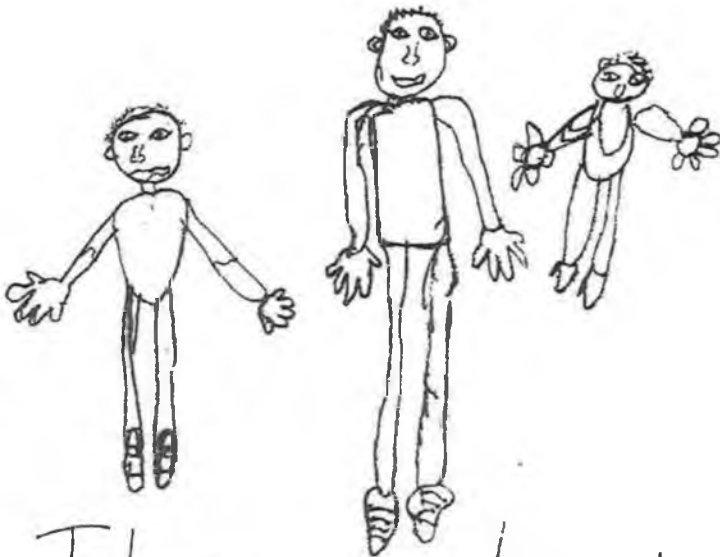
Questions and Answers

Continued

What does the Religious Education Advisory Committee do?

The main functions of the group are:

- a) To advise the Patron (Executive Committee) on the development of the REP.
- b) To support the teachers in implementing the REP in the classroom (by making suggestions and collecting resources).
- c) To ensure that, through continued development, the REP remains vibrant and relevant for the children.



These people live
in My house

Aims

THE AIMS OF THE MULTI-DENOMINATIONAL RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAMME

Through the Religious Education Programme the school aims to develop in children those aspects of personal, social, moral and spiritual development which facilitate the growth of self-understanding and knowledge and understanding of life within the pluralist society in which they live.

The Religious Education Programme seeks to enable the child to contribute positively to the school community, the wider community in which he/she lives, and to society in general, in a manner commensurate with his/her stage of development and to equip the child with the potential to so contribute as an adult.

The Religious Education Programme will particularly aim to acquaint the child with the religious and other thought systems which he/she will encounter in school and in the wider community and to develop understanding of the basis of these beliefs and the practical consequences for those who hold such beliefs.

The Religious Education Programme shall be concerned with the duties, responsibilities and benefits of the life of the individual as a social being and shall seek to develop in the child an understanding of and concern for others.

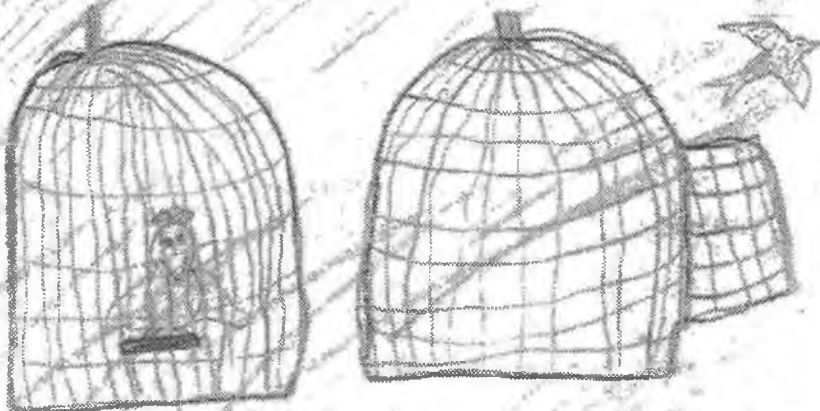
Aims

Continued

It aims to engender truthfulness and integrity in the child.

It seeks to instil independence, a sense of self worth and an ability to think for oneself.

It also aims to promote in the child adaptability, skill and courage to tackle unfamiliar fields and to cope with heartbreak and disappointment.



When children are born they are free and should always be treated in the same way.

PEOPLE WHO	Parents
CARE FOR US/	Relations
HELP US	Friends/Neighbours
	Teachers
	Police
	Doctor/Nurse /Dentist /Lollipop Lady

CELEBRATIONS	FESTIVALS:
	Festivals of Faith Groups in class
	Christmas/Easter
	OTHER CELEBRATIONS:
	Births/Birthdays/Achievements . . .

TIMES OF	Separation
DIFFICULTY	Disappointment
	Illness
	Death



I'm happy at my birthday party. Edin

T H E M E S

FIRST AND SECOND CLASS

MYSELF

Reflection on self

Likes/Dislikes

Strengths /Weaknesses

Feelings

MY

Class/School

COMMUNITY

Neighbourhood

Religious Community

Interdependence

Rights /Responsibilities

RELATIONSHIPS

Family

Friends

Special People

Pets

RELIGIOUS
TOPICS

Stories from World Religions, especially
Creation Stories

FESTIVALS:

Christmas/Easter/St. Patrick's Day

Hallowe'en

Light/Dark

Journeys /Pilgrimages

Food/Fasting

STAGES OF
OUR LIVES

Beginnings

Endings

Change

Loss/Death

Times of Difficulty

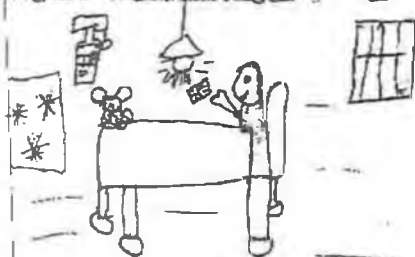
I like the dark because

I can light a candle



I like the light because

I can read in bed



T H E M E S

THIRD AND FOURTH CLASS

SELF

Exploration and Affirmation of Self

Feelings

Emotions

Rights

Responsibilities

Talents

Skills

Potentials

**MYSELF AND
OTHERS**

Sense of Belonging:

Family/School/Community

Loss

Education

Difference/Sameness

Interdependence

Co-operation

Involvement

**NATIONAL/
GLOBAL
COMMUNITY**

Exploring Diversity

Richness of Traditions

Cultures

Customs

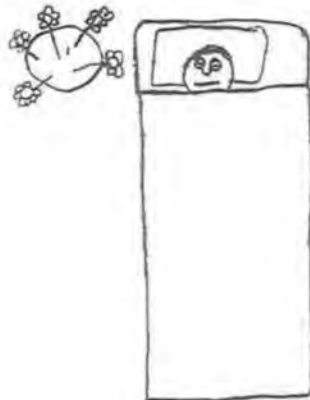
OURSELVES AND
COMMUNITY:
PRIVILEGE/
RESPONSIBILITY

Acknowledging our
Responsibility Towards
Natural Environment

RELIGIOUS
TOPICS

Exploring Religions
Beliefs/Thought Systems
Festival Celebrations
Religious Leaders
Symbols: Exploring Meaning and Usage
Early Religious Worship
Evolution
Early Civilisations

I felt very sad when my granddad
died. He was in the Hospice.
I miss him.



T H E M E S

FIFTH AND SIXTH CLASS

MYSELF

Positive Self Image
Relationships:
Family/Friends/Others
Responsibilities within these relationships

MYSELF AND MY COMMUNITY

Rights/Responsibilities
Human Rights
Poverty:
Hunger / Homelessness

PEACE STUDIES

Conflict Resolution
People who work/have worked for Peace,
e.g. Martin Luther King,
Nelson Mandela, F.W. de Klerk ...

**RELIGIOUS
TOPICS**

Religious/Non Theistic
Thought Systems, e.g.

Buddhism

Christianity

Hinduism

Humanism

Islam

Judaism

Religious Observance

Places of Worship

Places of Pilgrimage

Religious Leaders

Religious Writings

The Arts in Religion

Celebrations /Festivals

HE HAD A DREAM



Patron's Policy

THE PATRON'S POLICY ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN THE BRAY SCHOOL PROJECT

1. The fundamental principles of the Bray School Project will determine that the ethos of the BSP school reflects the ethos of a society in which there are many social, cultural and religious strands co-existing in harmony and mutual respect. These BSP principles are as follows:
 - a) The Multidenominational Principle - all children must have equal right of access to the school, and the religious, cultural and social background of each child must be respected.
 - b) The Co-Educational Principle - each child must be allowed to develop his or her potential without distinction by sex.
 - c) The Democratic Principle - the BSP must at all times be sensitive and aware of the needs and aspirations of its parents, teachers and children, both individually and collectively, and be responsive to them.
2. The primary responsibility for the religious education of each child lies with its parents. Any programme for religious education must, therefore, take account of parents' wishes with regard to the religious education of their children.
3. Parents have the right to withdraw their children from religious education classes.
4. (a) In accordance with the fundamental principles of the BSP, the Board of Management (BOM) will offer a Religious Education Programme, designed to help children to understand the religious traditions of life and thought that they will meet in their

Patron's Policy

Continued

environment; and to help them to be sensitive to the ultimate questions posed by life and to the dimension of mystery and wonder that underlies all human experience.

- (b) The BOM shall also facilitate any group of parents that may require it to provide denominational instruction as required by them for their children, to take place where numbers, resources and time-tabling permit within school hours. In the case of very small groups where this is not practical, the BOM will facilitate the parents concerned by making the school premises available at some other time. Qualified catechists may be appointed by such a group by agreement between the BOM and the parents concerned.
5. The Bray School Project will, as patron, set up a Religious Education Advisory Committee which will function on an ongoing basis as a research and curriculum development unit in relation to the BSP's Religious Education Programme and will be available as required by teachers as an advisory body to help with the planning of specific programmes.

Educate Together Charter

FORMALLY
LAUNCHED ON
12th MAY 1990 AT
THE AULA
MAXIMA,
UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE
GALWAY

Recalling Article 26.3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights:

“Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.”

and Article 42.4 of the Constitution of Ireland:

“The State shall provide for free primary education and shall endeavour to supplement and give reasonable aid to private and corporate initiative, and when the public good requires it, provide other educational facilities or institutions with due regard, however, for the rights of parents, especially in the matter of religious and moral formation.”

and Recognising

- 1.1 That many parents have a valid preference for schools in which boys and girls of all social, cultural and religious backgrounds can be educated together in an atmosphere of mutual understanding and respect.
- 1.2. That the multi-denominational schools established under the banner of EDUCATE TOGETHER are a distinctive response to the growing demand for such an option within the Irish educational system.

EDUCATE TOGETHER AFFIRMS THAT:

- 2.1. Children of all social, cultural and religious backgrounds have a right to an education that respects their individual identity whilst exploring the different values and traditions of the world in which they live.
- 2.2. Parents are entitled to participate actively in decisions that affect the education of their children. In particular, they have the right to decide what kind of school reflects their conscience and lawful preference

Educate Together Charter

Continued

- 2.3. Multidenominational schools have the right to be treated no less favourably than other schools within the Irish educational system, in accordance with their needs and their identity.
- 2.4. The State has a duty to take the identity of the multidenominational sector fully into account when deciding on policy that affects the establishment and development of schools.

AND COMMITS ITSELF TO:

- 3.1. Support the establishment of schools which are:
MULTIDENOMINATIONAL, i.e. all children have equal rights of access to the school and children of all social, cultural and religious backgrounds being equally respected.
CO-EDUCATIONAL and committed to encouraging all children to explore their full range of abilities and opportunities.
CHILD CENTRED in their approach to education.
DEMOCRATICALLY RUN with active participation by parents in the daily life of the school, with due regard, however, for the professional role of the teachers.
In any area where the demand for such a school exists.
- 3.2. Promote fuller awareness and recognition of the identity of the multidenominational sector at all levels of Irish society and abroad.
- 3.3. Participate in appropriate structures and activities concerned with the future development of education in Ireland and abroad.
- 3.4. Promote a future where multidenominational education will be as freely available to parents as any other educational option they may choose.

Appendix P

The Ethical Core Curriculum

A Blueprint for multicultural
education

Multi-D and Multi-C

- New challenge for the organisation
- Are we equipped to meet the challenge?
- Should we be giving the lead in this field?
- Can we serve as a role model?

The evolution of Multiculturalism

- Assimilation of culturally diverse children into mainstream education
- Enhancement of human relations by teaching children from different cultures to understand one another
- Promotion of respect for diversity through the portrayal of cultural diversity as a desirable social goal

Current Status

- The promotion of respect for the cultural and religious beliefs of pupils from minority groups
- The preparation of all children for life in a pluralist society, seeing cultural and religious as a source of enrichment and being open to different ways of looking at the world

Where are we on the continuum?

- Organisation level
- Individual school level
- Teacher level
- Student level
- Policy?
- Culture and ethos
- Examination of prejudices, biases and assumptions.
- student centered pedagogy. Fostering of critical thinkers

Key Aims of Core Curriculum

- Promote equality, social justice, social inclusiveness in relation to the school community, the local community and the global community through the moral, personal and emotional, holistic development of the children in our schools
- Provide knowledge of and encourage respect and tolerance for. beliefs of others.

The Ethical Core Curriculum

- Report of research into formulation, design, delivery, assessment and evaluation
- Key issues raised by respondents
- Proposed changes
- Recommendations

Initial Findings

- 16 respondents
- written core curriculum: 13
- Designated time slot: 8
- Delivery by class teacher: 15
- Posts of responsibility: 2
- Parental communication: 15
- Involvement in delivery: 11

Level of parental involvement

- design, delivery, core curriculum development groups, guest speakers, celebratory days, support for multicultural activities.
- Booklets, where published, are in most cases distributed to parents
- Informed of course content at beginning of school year

Design of Curriculum

- Mostly a mix of parents, staff, executive and board of management
- Pupils only mentioned by one school
- responsibility for content: 5 respondents do not mention the role of the Executive
- Core curriculum booklet: 14 schools

Link to Ethos and Culture

- practical, pedagogical embodiment of school ethos
- “ It is through the E.C.C. that the ethos is explored, mediated and delivered. The ultimate aim is that the ECC will inform the daily lived ethos of the school at both formal and informal level.”

Core Values

- Representative: 100%
- key values identified: respect for self others, the community,
- celebration of diversity
- equality
- inclusion
- development of self-worth

A Core by any other name....

- 80% feel name doesn't reflect content
- Alternatives include:
- R.E., Values Education, Values Curriculum, Ethical Programme, Multidenominational Education Programme, Social, Personal and Multidenominational Core Curriculum

Training

- No induction training in 11 schools
- Ad hoc in other schools
- Training by ET: 14 in favour
- Schools would welcome sharing of ideas and resources
- Could involve interschool themes

A Common Curriculum?

- 75% support
- Current situation viewed as time consuming
- Problems of inconsistency in design
- No central resource bank
- No methodology training
- Issues around sensitivity in delivery

Other Issues

- Programme may be diluted
- Difficult to evaluate
- May be overlap with other areas
- Can exclude non theistic or personal belief systems
- Why should we have non people?
- Difficult to adapt material
- Lack of training in design and delivery
- Difficult to assess
- Recreating the wheel

On a positive note

- Ownership
- flexible
- cross curricular
- visible
- parental involvement
- school autonomy

Recommendations

- Handbook of Teacher Guidelines
- Workshops for teachers and parents
- Further exploration of methodologies
- Outline programme that can be adapted
- ET position on who is responsible for content
- In service day for teachers to discuss issues raised by questionnaire

Is it a blueprint?

- “I feel the the RECC is a vital instrument in educating our children about the ever increasing pluralist nature of our society and the consequential responsibilities this places on us as a nation.”

Appendix Q

Some Reflections From Bunratty Workshop

Benefits of Common Core Curriculum

- Designated time slot for Core Curriculum
- Opportunity to pool our resources
- Our opportunity to highlight the specific identity of ET. What makes us different? The evidence of the Dunboyne Gaelscoil highlighted the confusion around the perception of what we stand for.
- A common core curriculum would give us the opportunity as a sector to enhance our image, our identity and our consistency to our core principles.
- For new schools, it would give a concrete, specific content which could be adapted and built on.
- The speed at which new schools must get up and running is the cause of much distress for teachers. It could only benefit such schools to have a bank of material in place from which to draw---at very least the bones of a curriculum. Materials might be available on the web and downloadable.
- The current situation has led to a lot of overlap, not just between schools, but also within schools where the Core Curriculum becomes entangled in other curricula such as Walk Tall, SPHE, etc.
- A common Core Curriculum could protect the sector from maverick growth. As it currently stands there is no real assessment or evaluation of the school based core curricula. There is no evidence either of its long lasting effects.
- Are we grasping the ethical, moral issues. Are we questioning moral issues or should we? This review might steer us onto this track. (See email)
- Morals, values and respect should form part of the core curriculum.
- A common core curriculum could lead to a common induction for new teachers, something also requested in the research questionnaires.
- There is an opportunity to design for openness and flexibility.
- Let us design a skeleton core which can be fleshed out but has a clear philosophical rationale.
- Let us seek for harmony through clear guidelines.

Negative side

- Loss of autonomy
- Loss of flexibility
- Guidelines might be too vague
- The process approach could be lost
- Is our current core playing lip service to established religions?
- Do we cater for humanists?
- Is there a danger that our programmes are too superficial/

Assessment

- How do we measure the growth in tolerance?
- How do we measure affective learning?
- Are we talking about a longitudinal study of past students?

Name

Overwhelming support for the notion that core curriculum doesn't adequately capture the essence of concept. It is also very confusing in the broader educational world as it is equated with core subjects.

Other Issues

Racism, Multiculturalism, Interculturalism, the concept of developing higher order thinking skills, the need for proper staff training, the need to give more credence to curriculum through allocating a post of responsibility to run it.

Is it the soft option or are we in the business of grasping thorny ethical and moral issues and developing the moral aspect of our students?

Appendix R

Hopes, Expectations and Experiences Survey

Over the next couple of months, we hope to survey groups of our students throughout the sector. It is envisaged that we would seek the views of students on a wide range of issues. These would include their experiences of their time school, their perceptions on discipline, decision making, parental involvement, values, ethos, culture and approaches to learning. We would hope to distribute the questionnaire to the current sixth class and also to those students who graduated from our schools in 1999 and 2000. The results of the survey would be used to record the voices of our students and to compare their experiences in an Educate Together school and their chosen secondary schools. This research could be used to further the case for second level Educate Together schools and to match the vision of our school with the students' realities.

We would like you to complete this short questionnaire to help us in designing the survey.

Please circle yes or no. Y/N

1. Are you in favour of conducting a survey with our students? Y N
2. Would you support such a survey? Y N
3. Should we ask students about school discipline? Y N
4. Should we ask students about the democratic nature of our schools? Y N
5. Should the survey be anonymous? Y N
6. Can we ask students if they were happy at school? Y N
7. Can we ask students if they were valued at school? Y N
8. Can we ask about their expectations/experience of secondary school? Y N
9. Should the survey be conducted in school? Y N
10. Should parents be surveyed also? Y N
11. If you are a teacher, would you support this survey? Y N
12. If you are a parent, would you support this survey? Y N

13. Are there other areas you would like to see mentioned in the survey. Y N

14. Please indicate the areas you like to see included in the survey.

Are there any other comments you would like to make? Please do so in the space below.

Thank you for your time and valuable input.

Paul Rowe
Carmel Mulcahy

Appendix S

7. These are 4 main areas covered by the Core Curriculum. Can you put them in order of importance from 1-4?

- Personal, Social, Moral and Spiritual Development
- Knowledge, Understanding and Awareness of Equality
- Respect and Care for the Environment
- Knowledge of and Respect for all religions and non theistic belief systems

8 Can you tell me in your own words what Personal, Social, Moral and Spiritual Development mean?

9. What do you think Knowledge, Understanding and Awareness of Equality means?

10 What do we learn in the Core Curriculum about respect and care for the environment?

11. Do you know what non- theistic belief system means? Please explain.

12. What other religious /belief systems have you learned about?

13. Does the Core Curriculum let you explore issues of justice and fair play?

Please circle yes or no.

14. In what way does justice and fair play work in your school? For example how do the school rules work? What happens if you break a rule?

15. We have a responsibility to take care of our environment for future generations?

Do you agree with the above statement? How has your school made you more aware of the environment?

A value is something that we respect and hold dear. For example honesty is a value, respect is a value, so is love, so is fair play.

16. Could you name three things that your school values most?

17. Could you name three things that you value in life?

18. What are the things that you value most about your school?

19. You will leave school shortly. In school you learned to value certain things and certain ways of making decisions. What values will you take away with you into secondary school?

20. Please add any further comments that you would like to make here.

Appendix T

Thank you for answering this questionnaire. I hope that your ideas will help us to support new Educate Together schools. There are no right or wrong answers in this questionnaire so just answer as best you can.

Thank You

1. **What age are you?** ----- years
2. **Please circle whether you are male or female.** M. F.
3. **Did you attend any other Primary school?** Yes No
4. **Your school is an Educate Together School. If a stranger, who knew nothing about Educate Together, came into your school, what things would they notice that make it different from other schools?**

5. **Your school is multid denominational. Can you tell me what this means?**

6. **In your school you study the Ethical Core Curriculum. Can you tell me what happens in this class?**

7. These are 4 main areas covered by the Core Curriculum. Can you put them in order of importance from 1-4?

- Personal, Social, Moral and Spiritual Development
- Knowledge, Understanding and Awareness of Equality
- Respect and Care for the Environment
- Knowledge of and Respect for all religions and non theistic belief systems

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18. What are the things that you value most about your school?

19. You will leave school shortly. In school you learned to value certain things and certain ways of making decisions. What values will you take away with you into secondary school?

20. Please add any further comments that you would like to make here.

9. I care about my family.



10. I listen carefully to others.



11. I act in caring ways.



12. I follow school rules.



13. I take turns in games.



14. I respect others.



Appendix U

Questerview: 5th Class: North Bay

Notes

Warm welcome to the school from the Principal. School is housed in a 1960's school

building which originally belonged to the local parish and was the last single sex Girls' School to be built in the Dublin Diocese. The school operates out of half of the building while the remainder houses a Gaelscoil and a Special Needs Unit for St. Michael's House and also a local crèche. The classrooms are bright and large if a little dated. Each classroom has a suite of toilets attached and while the rooms are large there are no designated Arts and Crafts areas. The colours of the walls in the classrooms are purple, green and whites and the building is spotlessly clean. The school when I visited was seeking Green Flag status, which it has since achieved. All the gardens are well kept and there are flowers everywhere. There is also a Willow Maze and a hedge of wild trees and bushes that has been planted by the children. There is a mosaic in the grass, which was designed and made by the children.

Class Size: 30

Question 1: Average Age: 12

Question 2: Male 11

Female: 19

Question 3: Number who attended other Primary School: 7

Question 4: Key Differences to other schools

Most comprehensive set of answers from any of the 4 schools surveyed. 100% of the students made reference to the multid denominational nature of the school, the absence of a uniform and the tradition of calling teachers by their first names.

Students also made reference to the fact that all members of the school community including the school secretary, the caretaker and visiting speakers were all addressed by their first names.

Over 60% of the students referred to the co-educational aspect of the school. A total of 18 students referred to the fact that the school was different because all cultures and backgrounds were treated equally. I was also struck by the importance placed by the students on the concept of individuality and been allowed to have a voice in the school. This was evident from many of the replies.

Quotes

- *In our school there are boys and girls. We do not wear a uniform so we are individuals. We learn not to judge people by what they wear or the colour of their skin. Everyone has a chance to be heard and people are respected no matter where they come from or what they look like. (Age 10)*
- *We talk about religions and beliefs. Our school is all- inclusive and we have a students council which allows us to have a say. (Age 11)*
- *Anyone can come here because we are not hung up on one religion and we don't care how you look (Age 11)*

- *We don't learn any religion as a base subject. We study all religious beliefs and some others that don't have a God such as Nature and Humanism.*
- *In our school you can be yourself and dress as an individual and believe in your own religion and still be part of the school and feel welcome. (Male: 11)*
- *We can express our individuality by not wearing a uniform*

Comment: I was impressed by the level of understanding on such topics as individuality and personal space. Here the children have a very good understanding of the child-centred nature of the Educate Together School system. The use of terms like all-inclusive and individuality shows a sophisticated level of understanding from the students and suggests that these topics have been discussed in detail in class. The final point that emerged from this group was the fact that they had probed more deeply than seemed apparent in the other schools into the rationale behind not wearing a uniform.

Question 5: Meaning of multid denominational

Eleven students equated the term solely with religious difference. A further 2 referred only to nationality and culture. Three students referred to the co-educational nature of the schools. The remaining 16 students equated the term multid denominational with a mixture of religion, culture, gender and social background.

Quotes

- *It means a mixture of colour, religion and different homes. It doesn't matter you*

are welcome.

- *It doesn't matter. Our school welcomes everybody.*

Comment: First reference to a network of schools. (*Our school is linked to other multid denominational schools in Ireland and they are all the same.*)

Predominance of students referred only to religion.

Question 6: Key components of the Ethical Curriculum (Their own original one)

- Religion 13
- A replacement for Religion Class
- Equality of all religions
- The Environment 11
- Human Rights 7
- Anti-racism 6
- [Redacted]
- Love 6
- Family 6
- Celebration of different cultures/Festivals 6
- [Redacted]
- Respect 5
- Equality 4
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]

Comment: While the majority of the students equated the Core Curriculum with a study of religion and learning about the environment, there were some interesting differences in this set of findings. In particular the students referred to anti-racism and the study of Human Rights Education. The reference to the Walk Tall programme and the SPHE programme highlighted the crossover between their own programme and other programmes provided by the DES. Another feature of the replies was the willingness of the students to elaborate on their replies.

Quotes:

- *It is about all different things like all different types of religions, the environment and famous people who supported Human Rights. We learn about decision making and being independent and being respectful to others.*
- *Where everyone's religion is respected. In other schools they do religion instead of Core Curriculum. We talk and learn about lots of religions instead of one. We learn about the environment too and how to protect it. We also learn to be ourselves all the time and respect the individuality of others.*

Question 7: Ordering of Key Strands

Seven students opted to give equal status to each strand. A further 2 students who opted to put the strands in order of importance commented that they were uncomfortable with this as they felt they were all important.

- *We think these are really important so it was hard to decide.*
- *Didn't like ordering them, as they are all important.*

Of the remaining 23 students, 7 students selected the Belief System Strand, 5 students opted for the Equality Strand, 4 opted for the Environment Strand, 4 for Personal and Moral Development Strand and Three students left this section blank.

Questions. 8-11

Students were given an opportunity to discuss in small groups their understanding of the 4 strands. They were then asked to respond individually.

Personal and Social Strand

Most of the children surveyed opted to break this strand into its constituent parts and then explain each part. In general they appeared to have no real problem with the concept and focussed on the Personal as individual, the Social as relationships with others, the Moral as understanding right from wrong and showing respect for others and the Spiritual as what is within you such as respecting yourself and your inner feelings and emotions and being at peace with yourself. The only area of difficulty seemed to be around spiritual development with a lot of the students glossing over it or ignoring it completely while answering fairly comprehensively on the other sections.

Quotes

- *Know about yourself, how you get on with others, know right from wrong and know about your inner self.*
- *Knowing how you change and how your body changes and being able to talk to people and get on with all types of people. Also knowing right from wrong, what's good and bad and making sure you're at peace with yourself at all times.*

Equality

There was a strong awareness of the importance of this strand and the children highlighted the importance of treating everybody equally and the rights of the individual to a good quality of life. The replies showed not just knowledge of the concept but also the need to be active in this field as well.

- *This is about making sure that you know what is going on in the world and understanding that you can and can't change what's happening at times. Being aware of countries that have bad rulers and leaders and the problems that this can cause.*
- *To know, understand and be aware of human rights and equal rights for everybody, every race, every religion and every nationality.*
- *Equality needs knowledge and communication between all people so that we understand what is happening in the world.*
- *Understanding and more importantly being aware and acting on inequality.*
- *Equality is so important and should be recognised everywhere, especially by young children so they grow up thinking that equality is good.*
- *Knowing your rights and other people's rights and treating everyone fairly and being fairly treated yourself.*

Comment: These children exhibited a very high level of understanding of the concept of equality both from a Rights perspective but also from the perspective of responsibility. They showed a heightened awareness of their own need for equality while ensuring that they treated others equally and remained informed of inequality in the world. Strongest replies so far!

The Environment

The replies indicated that the children understood the concept of care for the environment and respect for their surroundings. Several mentions were made of recycling and composting and the need to keep surroundings litter free. A number of students did refer to the stewardship aspect and the need to protect the environment for future generations. There were also a limited number of references to sustainable development and the need to keep the balance right in the environment in order to protect it.

Quotes

- *It's our job to take care of the environment because everyone has to live here.*
- *We should respect the environment so that the next generation can enjoy it too.*
- *Don't waste our world through pollution.*
- *We need to care so that in years to come the world will still be here*
- *If we don't care for the environment, we will upset the balance in nature and destroy it.*

Comment: Overall, while the children viewed this topic as important it did not generate the same level of excitement as the Equality Strand.

Belief Systems + non-theistic

- The key responses here were in relation to respect for other religions and having knowledge of your own religion and those of others. Roughly a third of the respondents made reference to the term non-theistic which they variously described as 'people who don't have a religion', 'non-religious beliefs' and 'people who believe in other things.' Two students made

reference to the fact that they did not belong to a recognised religion but that they understood what religion was about and they respected it.

I don't have a religion but I do know about lots of religions and I respect people who have a religion. We are all individual.

Respect peoples no matter what their religion is and I should also be respected as someone with no religion. Respect is what is important.

Comment: the children were very comfortable in discussing religion and the need to respect a person regardless of their religious belief. They didn't really refer to the study of Belief Systems with the exception of mentioning the Projects that they had completed. Once again the emphasis was on outcomes as opposed to processes.

Question 12: Issues of Justice explored in the Core Curriculum

With the exception of one student, there was agreement that the Core Curriculum does allow for the study of issues of justice.

Q13 How issues of justice and fair play are dealt with in school.

There was general agreement that if a rule was broken the student was given an opportunity to explain the events to the teacher and the class. Phrases like ' an opportunity to defend ourselves', 'being treated fairly,' and 'having a chance to explain', were used frequently. There was also an emphasis on reaching an understanding of why the particular misdemeanour was wrong and the need to respect others.

- *If I break a rule I must see what I did wrong and learn why I should not do it again. I get a fair hearing but I must understand what I did and respect others.*
- *We don't make the rules but they are fair and we do get a chance to have our say in what we want and in what happened in the incident.*
- *The school rules work by not excluding people and giving you a say in what happens.*
- *In every class room there is a set of rules. In the school there is a Students' Council and we meet with the Principal and discuss our ideas about the rules and other things to make the school a better place. So we do have a say and this makes the school a great place for us.*
- *Justice and Fair Play is important in our school because we don't allow bullying and people being unfair. Our school rules are that if you bully someone your parents will be called in if it continues.*

There were some less positive comments such as:

- *The Rules are fair sometimes but other times we don't get time to explain.*
- *I think the rules are fair enough but if you behaved all of the time you would be bored out of your head and the teachers understand this most of the time!*

Q.14: Care of the Environment

The responses indicate a heightened awareness of environmental issues and the children make reference to a wild life garden, poster campaigns, projects related to the environment, an active Green Committee and issues such as pollution, global warming and respect for the Earth and Nature.

Quotes

- *We have made compost towers for each class and the compost towers are bins and after a few weeks they produce liquid for plants in the garden.*
- *We made a song called Global Warming and got it taped and made a video.*
- *We are seeking Green Flag status and we have studied how pollution can affect everything and how global warming can be fatal for the Earth.*

Question 15: Students' perceptions of school values.

• *Treating others with respect: 11*

• *Self Belief: 8*

• *Independence: 8*

• *Courage to be different: 7*

• *Individuality: 7*

• *Hard Work: 6*

• *Equality: 4*

• *A good education: 4*

• *Safety: 4*

- *Knowing how to behave: 3*
- *Intelligence: 3*
- *Kindness: 3*
- *Honesty: 3*
- *Understanding: 3*
- *Fair Play: 2*
- *Respect the environment*
- *Respect for all religions*
- *Non-Racist*
- *Politeness*
- *Happiness*

Comment: This was an interesting set of results from a number of perspectives.

The key school value from the student perspective is on respect for others and in this case it does not differ radically from the other schools surveyed. What is quite interesting is that there is a far greater emphasis it would appear placed on personal life skills and values such as individuality, respect for difference, the courage to be different, self- belief and independence. It is also interesting to see the work ethic scoring as an important value in the school, coupled with a good education, knowing how to behave and politeness. In this school the emphasis would appear to be firmly placed on respect for others and respect for the individual and unique self. In addition these key values are supported by a set of personal values such as honesty, fair play, kindness and understanding in the context of a school which has a strong work ethic. The low rating given to the environment is a little surprising given the responses to Question 14 but there were indicators that the children took the whole

approach to the environment as part of their everyday life thus suggesting that this particular value was institutionalised and taken as the norm.

Question 16: Student Values

- *Family: 23*
- *Friends: 18*
- *Education: 11*
- *Pets: 8*
- *Health: 6*
- *Individuality: 3*
- *Happiness: 3*
- *Home: 3*
- *Future: 3*
- *Food: 2*
- *Peace: 2*
- *Music: 2*
- *Having a Voice: 2*
- *Life*
- *Difference*
- *Respect*
- *Understanding*
- *Quietness*
- *Sport*

Comment: No major differences to the other schools surveyed. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs evident in the responses. There are some general values that would indicate an awareness of the relevance of life values. These values are highlighted in green and bear out the values as perceived by the students in relation to the school.

(Question 15)

Question 17: Children's Values of their school

- *Friendly atmosphere. A nice place to be: 10*
- *Individuality respected: 8*
- *All races and religions respected: 8*
- *Teachers treating me with respect: 7*
- *Friends: 7*
- *Equality: 6*
- *A good education: 6*
- *No uniforms: 5*
- *Having a Voice: 3*
- *Caring for the environment: 3*
- *Good management*
- *Fun*

Quote:

- *You can be heard, you are respected, your talents are recognised and everyone is welcome. (Female: 11)*
- *This is a nice place to be and to spend the day. Thanks! (Male: 12)*
- *Hard to put into words. It is the people and the attitude. (Female: 12)*

Comment: Fascinating insight into a student perception of what we term school culture. The predominant school value is a sense of a good place to be and where the children are treated with respect and where respect is underpinning the school ethos. Interestingly there is also a good rating for work ethic and a good education, which mirrors the children's perceptions of what the school itself, values in its students. Once again there is a relatively low score afforded to the environment, though it does feature in the replies.

Question 18: Lasting Values

- Friendship: 9
- Respect for everyone: 9
- [REDACTED]
- Equal Rights for All: 6
- Respecting Different Religions: 5

• Independence: 5

• [REDACTED]

• No Racism: 4

• Being yourself: 4

• Problem Solving Skills: 2

• [REDACTED]

• Encouragement 2 (Memory of being encouraged in school)

• Knowledge of Different Religions

• Experience of a Multidenominational Education

• Social Skills

• Sport

Quotes:

- *One of my values that I will take away is knowing about beliefs that I would not have learned about if I were in a different school.*
- *When I leave this school I will miss lots of things but the school has taught me lots of things that I will keep with me all my life like letting others have their say, respect everyone and always be myself and to treat everyone equally.*

Comment: High level of maturity in terms of the choice of lasting values. In common with the other schools, friendship is a key value for this group. 21 out of a possible 28 replies to this question cite the values of respect for others, for difference, for all religions and for equal rights for all. This is a high return of 75%. There is a

lot of respect for knowledge and education and these values combined are cited by over half of the students.

World Rules

The class was presented with a scenario. They imagined that they had been given the opportunity to draw up a set of World Rules for a World Community to ensure a fair and just world. The class was divided into 6 groups and provided with markers and Flip Chat Paper. The results are presented as each group put them forward. One member of each group volunteered to feed back their findings. The data is presented in its original format.

Group 1

1. The community will want freedom, respect, equality, justice, honesty and a right to live in a nice environment
2. The community needs food, shelter, clean water, warmth, co-operation, something to do, friends and love.
3. The community has a right to live, to have a say, to work, to be accepted and to be treated equally and to an education.
4. They have a responsibility to look after their children, to look after themselves and others in need.

Group 2

1. Everyone must have access to clean drinking water
2. The amount of alcohol must be limited
3. If you discriminate you must be punished
4. The government should ensure cheaper homes for young people

5. Food, shelter, clothes for everyone
6. 24 hour homeless shelters
7. Everyone must be heard
8. Hospitals for every county
9. George Bush should never come to power again.

Group 3

1. Voting rights for all over 16's
2. Clean drinking water and food
3. A neutral world where all are equal
4. Security for all
5. Shelter for all
6. Equal Wealth
7. Education for all
8. Equality for all races
9. Clothes for all.

Group 4

1. Equality and Rights
2. Clean water and food
3. Shelter and security for the poor
4. Democratic parties for every government
5. Currency and money spread equally
6. No nuclear arms or generating plants
7. Solar powered cars

Group 5 (Accompanied by a large drawing depicting Peace and the peace symbol.)

1. Equality, respect and security
2. Shelter, fresh food, clean drinking water, land, friends, health
3. Voting Rights for all, to take part, to have their say, to defend themselves, to be heard.
4. Look after the environment
5. Use environmentally friendly clothing

6th Class

Question 1: Average Age 12

Question 2:

Male: 17

Female: 12

Question 3: Other Schools Attended: 1

Question 4: Key Differences noted

- *No Uniform*
- *Co-ed*
- *All Religions Welcome*
- *Different nationalities*
- *First names used*
- *Multidenominational*
- *Individuality encouraged*
- *Inclusive*
- *Having a Voice*
- *Single Classes*
- *No days off for religious feast days*
- *Not a Catholic school*
- *Children with special needs are helped*

Comment: There was 100% agreement on the absence of a uniform and the multidenominational nature of the schools. Here students referred to the fact that their school was not a Catholic school. There were many references to the fact that the

school encouraged individuality and this was again connected to the absence of a uniform as well as being encouraged to have a voice. Children were happy to elaborate on their answers.

Quotes:

- *We all work together and learn to get on with people from all different backgrounds and religions*
- *We celebrate difference and we don't leave anybody out*
- *We respect difference and we are encouraged to have our own identity*
- *We are able to be heard about our thoughts and we can be ourselves. I think it is good that we get to express our feelings*
- *You can be different and that's Ok*
- *No-one is left out and we have our own identity*
- *We don't have uniforms so we can be different and unique from each other. It doesn't matter where you come from or what you believe in.*
- *If people want to be themselves then other people don't bother them and so we don't wear a uniform.*

Question 5: Meaning of multid denominational

Twenty- four students attempted this question. Of those, 13 students equated the term, solely with religious diversity within the school. A further 2 students made reference to religion and also to different cultures. Of the remaining children, 3 referred to the co-educational aspect of the school and 6 children referred to the word in terms of a school that welcomes everybody regardless of difference.

Quotes:

- *I think there are lots of different religions but I am only guessing. And I love that this school accepts all religions. I think it is a fair way to go about things. (Female: 12)*
- *I think it means that everyone can be different (Female: 11)*
- *I think it means a school with boys and girls and being different is good (Male: 12)*
- *Multid means that it does not matter what gender or religion you are or where you come from. It sort of means all different and all equal.*
- *Everyone is different and unique.*

Question 6: Understanding of the School's Ethical Curriculum.

Study of:

Different Religions: 15

Celebrations: 9

Care for the Environment: 9

Respect for difference: 8

[REDACTED]

Different Cultures: 5

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

People who make a difference 2

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Celebrating Difference

Stay Safe

Life

Manners

How to make school better

Comment: In common with the 5th Class in this school the students made reference to Human Rights and Equality as key to their understanding of the Ethical Curriculum. Another important finding in this section was the number of references to activation of learning through independent thinking and decision making and having the ability and courage to speak out. Care for the environment merited a high response from the students and also respect for and celebration of difference.

Quotes

- *It's about people having an equal share or say and learning about the right thing to do. It's about treating people with respect and learning things from different points of view. (Male: 12)*
- *It's about respecting people and knowing their rights and yours. (Female: 12)*
- *It's about respect and treating people fairly (Male: 11)*
- *I think it's about respect and courage to speak out. (Male: 12)*
- *It's about people's lives and important things like learning to make decisions. (Male: 13)*
- *It's about learning to work with others. (Female: 11)*

Question 7: Ordering of Key Strands

Five of the students opted to give an equal rating to all four strands. They went on to explain their choices.

- They are all equal because they all have an effect on your life. If you took one away this school would not exist, as we know it.
- They are evenly important in life. Without them society would be destroyed.
- They are equally important for to live a good life.
- Because if any of them are taken away, all of them mean nothing. They are like a set of rules for a good life.

A further 7 students selected Moral and Spiritual Development as their first choice in terms of importance but did not comment on their choice.

Seven students also opted for the Equality strand, 5 for the Environment strand and 5 for the Religions Strand. One of these students commented that ‘ it was kind of hard because all were important.’

Questions 8-11: Understanding of Strands.

8: Personal, Social, Moral and Spiritual Development

The focus on the replies was around growth in self-knowledge, being yourself and being able to stand up for yourself. Children talked of being themselves, being an individual and not following the gang. Some captured the essence of moral development in their references to being able to tell right from wrong and being able to take the right path. The word *growth* featured in a large number of the responses.

As with 5th class, there was no real effort to explain the concept of Spiritual Development.

Quotes

- *Discover yourself and stick to your principles and be able to tell if you think something is wrong.*
- *This is about how you see the world and how you treat people.*
- *Be yourself and don't follow the gang.*
- *Be yourself and develop in your own way and make good choices in life.*
- *I think spiritual is like your fear and stuff you think.*
- *I think this is about developing your inner self.*
- *This Strand helps us to shape our lives and make good decisions in the future*
- *Be yourself and be independent. You can't live with your Ma for 40 years!*
- *The development of your personality and being able to tell right from wrong.*
- *Stand up for yourself and don't be afraid to be yourself.*

9: Equality Strand

The children did not show evidence of having any problems with this particular concept. The emphasis was on understanding difference, treating people fairly and accepting difference as part of life. Some saw it as the opposite of racism and at least one student spoke of the importance of responding to inequality when you observed it in action.

Quotes

- *This is the opposite of racism. Treat everyone equally.*
- *Don't make fun of people just because they are different.*

10: Environment Strand

The replies in this section emphasised respect and care for the environment, avoidance of damaging the earth and the need to ensure that we do not pollute and litter our own surroundings. There was a heightened awareness of the need to protect the environment for future generations and the fact that not only humans inhabit the Earth, but that we are the ones who destroy it. There were no practical examples given of how this worked in their own lives.

Quotes

- *The environment is important because we need to care for the habitats of animals and this is true even in big cities like Dublin.*
- *I think that we should look after the Earth because when our kids grow up they will have to use gas masks like in Japan.*
- *Keep the Earth clean. It is your Earth too.*
- *Look after the Earth and respect it in the same way as we respect everything else in life.*
- *There are more than just humans on the planet. We are the one's who do the damage though.*

11: Belief Systems Strand

The interesting aspect to this section was the number of children who equated this strand with the Equality strand. They argued that it was not necessary to divide the strands because if we believed in equality for all then we also believed in the right of people to have different beliefs, be they god based or otherwise. Surprisingly, this argument was not posed in the other schools but it did form a major part of the

discussions on the part of the Curriculum group that drafted the Learn Together Programme.

Quotes

- *To respect other religions we need to have knowledge of them and understand them*
- *It is not about belief in any one God. People have many beliefs. We need to know about them but we hold our own beliefs also.*
- *Everyone's religion is equal*
- *You learn to accept that there are many different religions and you learn to respect that.*
- *This is about equality, not difference.*
- *People are different and religions are different. Our school teaches us about these differences so that we learn to treat people with respect and equality.*

Question 12: Issues of Justice.

With just one exception the students agreed that the Core Curriculum did allow them to explore issues of justice. The student who disagreed argued that it told you about issues of justice but did not let you explore them.

Question 13: Examples of Justice at work in the school.

There was general agreement that school rules were fair, that children were given a chance to explain when they got into trouble and that they did have a chance to have a voice within the school. However, this was by no means unanimous. Ten students questioned the concept of fairness and focussed on the consequences of breaking a rule.

Quotes

- *You mostly get a chance to explain what and why you did something.*
- *Fair play works in our school because you always get a chance to talk about the issue.*
- *If you break a rule it is important that you learn what you did is wrong and stand up instead of letting everybody take the blame. That's fair in our school.*
- *The rules are fair because they are the same for everybody and it doesn't matter who you are, you are treated fairly by the school.*
- *I think the rules are fair because they are about treating everybody fairly and keeping us all safe.*
- *This school is very just. We can have a say in the rules and if we feel one is unfair we can talk about it and maybe get it changed.*
- *You can have a say and have your thoughts heard always.*

Not all comments were in the positive vein. Some examples of less positive comments included:

- *The Core Curriculum tells you about justice, it doesn't explore it. You are usually not given a chance to explain because people are too busy. It depends on the situation*
- *It depends on the size of the rule. If you break a rule you must expect the consequences*
- *It depends on the number of times you break the same rule. I think you can't defend yourself because they are adults.*

- *Our rules are fair but sometimes the penalties are a bit unfair and we don't get a say in what happens if we break one.*

Comment: not as much unanimity in the replies as those of 5th Class. Possible causes may be the older age group and the personality of the teacher. On the whole the replies do reflect fair play at work in the school.

Question 14: Awareness of the Environment

Based on the previous replies relating to the environment I did not expect any dramatic results from this question. There appeared to be an attitude that caring for the environment was a normal part of life and that there was no need to go into detail when commenting on it. Children's replies also reflected the fact that environmental awareness was part of their lives at home. The school may have supported the home in this but did not instigate the level of awareness that the children felt towards stewardship of the environment.

Quotes

- *I have always been aware of the environment no thanks to the school but yes they are trying to help*
- *No, not really. Home did that for me*
- *I already had an awareness of the environment but school makes this stronger*
- *Yes, we do need to look after the environment. We do have a responsibility for getting rid of say plastic bags. This won't do the whole job and we need to do more. My school has helped me because I see all the issues more clearly now.*

- *In school we have discussions on the environment and we have a wild life garden and we are also a Green School*
- *We do practical things here like recycling paper and batteries, cutting down on photocopying and developing a wild life garden and a wild hedge around the school.*
- *I have known about caring for the environment from an early age but in school we also learn that nature is beautiful and that some people actually could destroy it through building car parks and houses. Without nature we wouldn't be living right now so we need to care for it for the future. It is our responsibility.*
- *We plant vegetables, we recycle, we learn how and what our role is in taking care of the environment and this is an important lesson. Nature is special and we need it.*

Comment: I was impressed by the level of maturity shown in the responses to this question. There was an awareness of the need to protect the beauty in nature and an acceptance of the role of nature in the world. Here again the replies suggested that this question was deemed almost irrelevant in their approach to nature and the environment, as it appeared to be a flawless piece of their lives.

Question 15: Student perception of school values

- *Respect for Difference* 12
- *Free thinker* 8
- *Individuality* 7
- *Hard Work* 7
- *Being happy* 6
- *Working Together* 4
- *A voice* 4
- *Fair Play* 4
- *Kindness* 4
- *Being Responsible* 4
- *Religious identity* 3
- *Equality* 3
- *Good behaviour* 2
- *Honesty* 2
- *Loyalty* 2
- *Well educated* 2
- *Trust* 2
- *Manners* 2
- *Know the inner self*

Comment: this proved to be a very interesting set of values. It was clear from the replies that the students perceived that the school valued their individuality, their ability to think independently and to speak for themselves. It was also evident that the school valued their ability to accept difference and to respect individual identity both on an individual level and also on a religious level. As with 5th class results, it was clear that the school also valued hard work good behaviour and good manners. A list of personal values such as trust, honesty, loyalty, kindness and fair play also highlighted the school's desire to produce well-rounded individuals with a set of common core values. (See De Witt Parker)

Quote:

- *The school values that we are independent, that we speak our minds, that we can work well together and that we show respect for difference. (Male: 12)*

- *The school values that we are independent people and that we are all different and we can work well together. It values our individuality. (Female: 11)*
- *I think it values most that I am an individual and that I can think for myself and stand up for others.*

Question: 16: Personal Values

- *Family 22*
- *Friends 18*
- *Health: 15*
- *Pets 4*
- *Education: 4*
- *Sport: 4*
- *Religion 3*
- *Fun: 3*
- *Home: 3*
- *Food: 3*
- *Love: 3*
- *Happiness: 2*
- *My Bed*

Comment: The list of values was predictable on the whole and quite similar to the other class in the school. It was interesting to note that 3 students valued their religion and stated this in their replies. The more unusual responses, though individual ones, are highlighted in red.

Question: 17: Student Values of their school

- *Friendship 10*
- *Allowed to be myself: 9 (religious freedom, freedom to dress as they wished, individuality)*
- *Learning 4*
- *Equality 3*
- *Multidenominational: 3*
- *Chance to learn about difference and to experience it 3*
- *A Voice: 3*
- *Trusting my teachers: 3*
- *Ethos 2*
- *Surroundings*
- *Responsibility*
- *The Respect I get*
- *Sport'*
- *That our school is different to most and that it stands out (Male: 10)*

Comment: There was evidence in the children's replies of a deep level of understanding of the ethos of their school. Two students mentioned the word 'ethos' in their replies and several others captured the concept. The students valued the fact that they were allowed to be themselves through the absence of a uniform, the respect accorded to their different religions within the school, the chance to work with children from different social and religious backgrounds and the respect accorded to them by their teachers.

I have included three quotes, which I feel capture the essence of this higher order level of understanding of school values.

Quotes

- *When I leave I will value that I was allowed to wear what I wanted, to be an individual, to be me. (Female 12)*
- *My school teaches me things that no teacher ever could like getting to understand and respect difference. (Male 12)*
- *That our school is different to most and that it stands out (Male: 10)*

Question: 18: Lasting Values

- *Friendship 11*
- *Individuality accepted and encouraged: 6*
- *Independence 5*
- *Education 4*
- *I was allowed to express myself: 3*
- *Respect for the Environment 3*
- *Responsibility 2*
- *Teachers 2*
- *Mixed school: 2*
- *Bravery*
- *Equality*
- *Sense of morality*
- *I was respected*
- *I was happy here*
- *This school was my second home*
- *Honesty*

Quotes:

- *I was allowed to be different (Female: 11 and male 11)*
- *I was allowed to be independent and it was a great place to go to school (Male: 11)*
- *In this school I was allowed to have my say and allowed to be different. I was treated with respect and I always remember that. (Male: 12)*
- *This school taught me to value to be brave, to be responsible, to speak out and to care. I am happy that I went to this school. (Male: 12)*

Comment:

The comments made in this final section were honest and forthright and in particular I was struck by the number of boys who openly expressed their feelings on values. The lasting values as identified by the Sixth Class students in North Bay identified a group of students who did not lack the courage to be different and to articulate their pride in this.

World Rules: 6th Class

The class was presented with a scenario. They imagined that they had been given the opportunity to draw up a set of World Rules for a World Community to ensure a fair and just world. The class was divided into 6 groups and provided with markers and Flip Chat Paper. The results are presented, as put forward by each group. One member of each group volunteered to feed back their findings. The data is presented in an original format

Group 1

1. Every person to have a home
2. Every person to have food
3. Every person has a right to be respected and cared for
4. People to be fined if they litter
5. People to be fined if they hunt for sport
6. Everyone has a right to be heard
7. Everybody's tap to have clean water
8. Anybody who is armed with a gun or a knife to be fined or jailed

Group 2

1. Penalise Racism
2. Clean air for all
3. Everyone has a chance to be heard and say what they feel
4. Everyone has a right to clean water and clean food
5. Animals and the environment to be protected
6. Everyone to have a home or at least a place to sleep
7. Everyone over 16 to have a vote
8. Everyone is treated equally but as an individual

Group 3

1. **Community Wants:** The wants of the community will include entertainment, equality, justice, friendship
2. **Community Needs:** Access to clean water, food, education, clothes
3. **Community Rights:** A right to be free, have a job, be respected, be looked after, be heard and not be afraid
4. **Community Responsibilities:** Look after young people or people with special needs, take care of their country and not pollute.

Group 4

1. Everyone to have access to food, education and clean water
2. Everyone should always have the same rights
3. Everyone should have human rights
4. Everyone should have an equal amount of freedom
5. The community has the responsibility to look after those that can't look after themselves
6. Everyone should have equal responsibilities
7. Everyone should have their own say and their own choices.

Appendix V

Children from Rathfarnham

The school is located in a building that formerly housed a school run by a religious order of nuns. The school has quite a dated look about it and is reminiscent of public buildings from the 1960's. As in all of the schools visited, the children were lively and communicative and were anxious to become involved in the research process.

After a brief period of introduction by the Principal and the class teacher, the teacher left me alone with the group. We talked about the Core Curriculum in the school and they were aware that a new curriculum was being worked on. Their Principal was one of the authors of the new curriculum and some of the material had been used with them in order to get their reactions to it. Due to a series of misunderstandings and timetabling issues, it was only possible to work with the 6th Class group.

Ques.1: Average Age: 12

Ques.2: Males: 17

Females: 8

Question 3: Number of pupils who attended other primary schools: 6

Ques.4: Key Differences Identified:

The key difference in the replies given by the children of this school was the repeated use of the word 'inclusive'. There was 100% agreement on 3 key differences as far as the children were concerned:

- No Uniforms
- Boys and Girls
- Call teachers by their first names.

While the non-wearing of uniform was mentioned by all of the students, no student gave a reason for this as had happened in the NB responses. The fact that the school is open to children of all religions and none was mentioned by 23 students or over 90%. Reference was also made to the fact that all different religions were studied and that students could have a say in the running of the school through their School Council. Over half of the children noted that their school was multid denominational.

Quotes

- *In most schools people just learn about the Catholic religion but here we learn about all religions. It is a mixed school and we accept everybody. We are all on first name terms here and we have our say in the running of the school through the School Council. (Female: 12)*
- *Here you can be of any or no religion. (Female: 11)*
- *Our school is different because it focuses on being more inclusive. (Male: 13)*
- *We let anyone into this school, regardless of religion or background. (Male: 11)*
- *We are very much involved in the Ethical Education Programme and we discuss lots of issues. (Female: 11)*
- *This is a co-ed school, with no uniform, accepting all beliefs and culture, where there is just one class in each year and we all use first names. (Male: 12)*

Comment: Very solid understanding of the differences in the school. Very sophisticated level of understanding and use of language.

Question 5: Understanding of term 'Multidenominational'.

The children exhibited a very good understanding of the term 'multidenominational'. 8 students equated it with the concept of all religions being accepted into the school. A further 1 student understood it purely from a cultural perspective. The remaining 16 students made reference in their answers to cultural, religious, racial and social difference with the vast majority of these mentioning religion. Some of the more interesting replies equated the term with how children are nourished and how individuality is nurtured in the school.

Quote:

- *It means you can be yourself, free to say what you wan, dress as you like as long as you respect other people's opinions. (Female: 11)*
- *Anyone can come to our school. It doesn't matter if you are from a different country or what religion you have. (Male: 12)*
- *It means we take any child, despite religion, race or gender. (Male: 11)*
- *Multid. Means that we are not to be racist or sexist. Let everyone come along and enjoy coming to school. Then it is a good place for us all. (Male: 13)*

Comment: I was struck by the use of the term inclusive from such a young group of students. Another feature that I noted was the language used to describe the entry of children from different cultures and backgrounds. They were 'accepted', 'let in', 'not excluded'. There was no use of the term 'welcome,' but one student did say that the school was open to all. (Reality of limited entry needs to be probed.)

Question 6: Understanding of Core Curriculum

Learning about:

- *Understanding all religions: 8*
- *Family: 8*
- *Life: 7*
- *Environment: 6*
- *Love: 5*
- *Respect: 5*
- *Equality 4*
- *Walk Tall Programme: 2*
- *Personal Safety: 2*
- *Racism: 2*
- *Moral decision making: 2*
- *Ethical Issues: 2*
- *Decision Making: 2*
- *Human Rights*
- *Relationships*
- *Knowledge of Word Affairs*

(Number of children who responded to each heading included)

There was no real difference in the first of the headings identified, the understanding of other religions. However, the number of children who mentioned religion was quite low in comparison to some of the other schools. The other topics mentioned by the children seemed to indicate that some of the Core Curriculum time was given over to a study of SPHE and RSE. This is evident from the number of responses that related to family, love and safety. The Walk Tall programme was also specifically referred to by name by 2 children. Learning about the environment featured strongly in the replies also. It was interesting to see the children make reference to Moral Decision making, (2) Ethical Issues (2) and deciding on dilemmas. (2) Respect and Equality did also feature on the list of replies.

Quotes

- *The Ethical Core Curriculum is there to make sure that you don't go into the world naïve to the ways of the different cultures, the environment or the world in general. (Male: 11)*
- *You learn about lots of religions, not one. Lots about equality, Human Rights and Racism. We learn about the Environment and the things that are happening to it, like pollution and littering and the ways we can help. (Female: 11)*
- *I think it is about learning and celebrating all the different religions and learning how to make the right decision and to respect, not to label people on what they wear, look like or believe. We learn about the environment and how it is our responsibility to look after it and not litter and pollute it. (Female: 12)*

Question 7: Ordering of Key Strands

Seven students gave an equal rating to all four strands. A further 6 opted for the Belief System Strand. Five students selected the Equality Strand, 4 students selected the Environment Strand and the remaining 3 students opted for the Moral and Spiritual Strand. Students did not comment on their choices.

Questions 8-11: Understanding of Key Strands

Students were given an opportunity to discuss in small groups their understanding of the 4 strands. They were then asked to respond individually.

Personal, Social, Moral and Spiritual Strand

All students attempted this question. Most of the replies avoided the moral and spiritual dimension but concentrated on the area of personal growth and how we relate to others in a social setting. They equated the strand with growth and development and getting to know the self on an interpersonal level. There was little reference to the intrapersonal but some students did make reference to the growth of the inner self and being able to make moral decisions.

Quotes

- *This is about conscience and doing the right thing (Male:12)*
- *It means learning and developing respect for personal, social, moral and spiritual development. Male: 12)*
- *I think it means learning about all aspects of yourself(Female: 12)*
- *It means to grow and to learn to make decisions and to be happy with who you are. (Male: 11)*
- *It means understanding the difference between other people and you. (Female: 11)*
- *Developing yourself, how we behave around others, making moral decisions and deciding what things are valuable to you. (Male; 11)*
- *I think it about your inner being, your spiritual self. (Female: 12)*
- *Treating others well and the importance of being yourself (Male: 13)*

Comment: The area of spiritual development seems to be one that the children found difficult to articulate though it was implied in some of the responses.

Equality Strand

This strand presented no real difficulties for the group. In common with the other schools, the responses made reference to equality from the perspective of social difference, cultural difference, religion and colour. The replies also suggested that activation of the Equality Strand was important to the children in their daily lives. Implied in the replies was an awareness of the need for knowledge and understanding of the many facets of equality. Interestingly, there was no mention of gender equality. It would appear that there is a tacit understanding of this strand and maybe the children did not see a need to mention it. There was one mention of equality for Travellers.

Quotes

- *It means to understand and take awareness of all forms of equality and make sure everyone is equal (Male: 11)*
- *That you know that people are different, that you know why and that you acknowledge they are just as important as you (Female: 11)*
- *I think it means to realize the way people are being treated because of their religion and their nationality and to do something about it (Male 12)*
- *It's for you to understand that no matter what the nationality, colour of skin or religion you should treat everyone equally. Everyone is different and everyone is equal. (Female: 11)*
- *It means being aware that a Traveller is equal to someone who isn't, an oriental person is as equal as an American (Male: 11)*
- *Treating all cultures equally, to try to understand their customs and beliefs, to be aware of their beliefs and why they believe what they do. Understanding*

their views are equally important. The way they do things may be different but that doesn't mean they should be treated unfairly. (Male: 12)

Comment: impressive range of responses that exhibited quite a detailed understanding of equality.

Environment Strand

The replies to this question ranged from the basic concept of not littering, to caring for the environment, respecting the environment, ensuring that it looked after for future generations and an understanding that humans are not the only inhabitants of the planet. The responses were quite sophisticated in relation to the concept of Stewardship and Care of the planet for future generations.

- *Learning about respecting and caring for the environment by learning not to litter and helping to keep the Earth clean (Female: 12)*
- *Care for the trees and flowers and all things that grow and don't unnecessarily pollute the Earth. (Female: 11)*
- *Don't damage the environment, mind the Ozone Layer and try to fix it. (Male: 12)*
- *For everyone and everything, we should look after our world. We are the ones who have inhabited and changed the planet so it is up to us to keep it safe for future generations by keeping it clean and green. (Female: 11)*

Comment: Evidence of higher order thinking in place around this issue. Replies exhibit awareness, understanding and a responsible attitude.

Belief Systems

The key thrust of the replies to this question centred on respect for religious difference. The children equated this Strand also with anti-racism, which would indicate an awareness of religious bigotry. There was also evidence that the children had grasped the concept that all beliefs are treated equally and are just as relevant as their own. Terms such as respect and understanding featured prominently in the replies. There was no reference to non-theistic beliefs.

Quotes

- *Understanding all religions, not saying that other beliefs are wrong. It may not be what you believe but it's some one else's belief and it is important to them. You can understand other beliefs better if you know about them.*

(Male: 12)

- *It is important to know about other religions because you won't find it strange or something to be afraid of if you understand it (Male: 11)*
- *If we understand other religions we won't offend or be offended. (Female: 12)*
- *Have respect even if you don't believe. (Male: 11)*

Comment: Very open and frank replies to this section. The children exhibited a strong understanding of respect for different beliefs and were happy to elaborate on their replies.

Question 12: Issues of Justice.

7 students out of 25 disagreed that the Core Curriculum allowed them to explore issues of justice and fair play. This was quite high in relation to the other schools surveyed.

Question 13: How justice works in school

Given the high negative vote recorded in question 12, it was not surprising that a number of the students indicated that they were not given an opportunity to reason with the teacher if they had broken a school rule. The replies from this group of students focussed on the punishments given out in the event of a rule being broken. These included being sent to the Principal, getting extra homework or having a note sent to parents. For those who agreed that the Core Curriculum did allow for the exploration of issues of justice and fair play, there was still an emphasis on the consequences of rule breaking from quite a number of the students. Just over a quarter of the students in the class talked about justice from the perspective of being given an opportunity to speak about the incident and maybe reach a compromise agreement. There was also an emphasis on the rationale underpinning school rules, including the ensuring of a safe environment for all students and the need to show respect to everybody within the school community.

Quotes

- *If a rule is broken you have a chance to explain. If you see a rule being broken, you tell the adult in charge. That way we don't develop bad habits. (Female: 12)*
- *We don't really get a chance to defend ourselves, even though there is a Students' Council. We don't get any say in what way we are punished or what the school rules are. (Male: 12)*
- *We would get punished and warned not to do it again or we might get a note sent home. (Male: 12)*
- *The school rules try to ensure your safety. (Female: 11)*
- *Justice and fair play work in our school by enforcing rules and regulations. The rules are mostly put down for safety. If somebody breaks a rule they get punished. (Male: 11)*
- *I think when you break a rule you are given the chance to defend yourself and explain what happened. So it's fair because if they hear your side of the story you might not be punished. You have to think about the consequences of your actions. (Male: 12)*
- *Justice in my school works as if you hurt somebody's feelings you get extra work. (Male: 12)*
- *If you think a school rule is unjust you are able to speak your mind or if you are accused in the wrong you are allowed to defend yourself. (Male: 11)*

Comment: The students, while not all positively disposed to how the school how the school handles issue around school rules do make two interesting observations.

They highlight an understanding of the need for rules from the perspective of keeping everybody safe and their replies also indicate an understanding of the need to treat people with respect and to ensure that feelings are not hurt.

Question 14: Awareness of the Environment

With the exception of 2 students, there was agreement that the school had raised awareness of the need to take care of the environment. Replies to this question were fairly limited with just a few students expanding on their replies. Most of the replies referred to littering, recycling, keeping the school clean and tidy and aiming for Green Flag status.

Quotes

- *The school has raised my awareness of this and we have Green Schools Council and we are aiming to get a Green Flag. (Male: 12)*
- *We have a responsibility that we should let future generations enjoy nature. I think we have talked about it a lot and we don't litter. (Female: 11)*
- *Generations before us looked after the Earth and so should we. As you get older it does make you more aware about global warming, polluting the sea and killing animals. When you are young you do a lot about littering but as you get older you learn about bigger problems, e.g. Global warming. (Female: 12)*
- *We have lots of discussions in EEP and in Geography. (Male: 11)*
- *We have assemblies about the environment and we do projects and all these make us more aware. (Male: 12)*

Comment: Not as big an emphasis as demonstrated by North Bay. However there is evidence of a staged approach to the issue as highlighted by the Learn Together Programme.

Question 15: Children's Perceptions of School Values

- *Respect for others: 7*
- *Independent Thinkers: 7*
- *Student Personality: 6*
- *Equality: 5*
- *Student opinions: 5*
- *Honesty: 5*
- *Standing up for yourself: 4*
- *Loyalty to each other: 3*
- *Independent Workers: 3*
- [REDACTED]
- *Open-Mindedness: 2*
- *Being responsible: 2*
- *Fair Play: 2*
- *Respect for all Religions: 2*
- [REDACTED]
- *Friendly*
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- *Standing up for others*
- *Care for the Environment*
- *Awareness of the World*
- *Happy Students*
- *Courage*
- *Kindness*
- *Understanding*

Quotes:

- *My school values open-mindedness and being prepared to defend your way of thinking (Male: 11)*

- *My school values us for being ourselves, for promoting and encouraging equality, for honesty, for not being afraid to voice our views and speaking out. (Male: 12)*

Comment: The students had a well- developed understanding of the school values and in particular focussed on the values that the school placed on happy, well-adjusted students with an awareness of the need to respect others and to be able to think for themselves. The results also indicate that the school places a high value on student personality and student opinions. The activation of positive values would also appeared to be encouraged as evidenced by the selected quotes. (Yellow highlight.)

Question 16: Personal Values

- *Family: 20*
- *Friends 16*
- *Health: 6*
- *Pets 5*
- *Home4*
- *Sport 3*
- *Personal Possessions 2*
- *Food*
- *Nature*
- *Teachers*
- *Happiness*
- *Fair Play*
- *Money*
- *School*
- *Love*
- *Education*

Comment: In line with all the other schools

Question 17: Student Values re School

- *Individuality respected and encouraged: 9*
- *Friendship 7*
- *Equality: 6*
- *A Multidenominational Curriculum: 6*
- *Small size: 6*
- *A Voice: 5*
- *Education 4*
- *Respect: 3*
- *Inclusiveness: 2*
- *Safety*
- *Encouragement*
- *Sport*
- *Being listened to*
- *Friendly ethos*
- *Teachers*

Quotes

- *This school encourages me to think for myself and I value that. It values respect and so do I. It is a small school and I value that it is multidenominational and I can learn about all cultures and learn to respect difference. (Female: 12)*

Comment: The quote captures the essence of the values that the students have for their school. It is clear that there is a great value placed on the multidenominational

aspect of the school and the fact that this school has a single stream per year group. This concept has now changed and there is a fear that the schools will get bigger than the current 2 streams per class. This change is part of the greater control held by the DES.

Question 18: Lasting Values

- *Friendship: 9*
- *My individuality: 7*
- *Respect for Difference 5*
- *My education: 5*
- *Equality: 4*
- *Social Skills: 3*
- *Having an inclusive education: 3*
- *Fairness: 3*
- *Open- mindedness*
- *Good Memories*
- *Knowledge of Racism*
- *Love of the Environment*

Quotes

- *I will take away the value that I was allowed to be myself. This school gave me an inclusive education and I learned to respect everybody, whether a person is Black or White, Christian or Muslim. (Male: 11)*
- *I learned never to bully anyone and to respect all races. (Female: 12)*

World Rules

The class was presented with a scenario. They imagined that they had been given the opportunity to draw up a set of World Rules for a World Community to ensure a fair and just world. The class was divided into 6 groups and provided with markers and Flip Chat Paper. The results are presented, as put forward by each group. One member of each group volunteered to feed back their findings. The data is presented in an original format

Group 1

Everyone has a right to:

1. Everyone should be free
2. People should be treated equally
3. To be educated properly
4. To be able to live without war and injustice
5. To have enough food and clean water
6. To be judged by their hearts and not by their looks

Group 2

1. No hurting somebody on purpose
2. Responsibility of all to protect the environment
3. Food, shelter for everyone
4. Wealth to be shared equally
5. No theft and lots of honesty
6. A drug free society
7. No breaking rules
8. Education for all
9. Everybody has a duty to support the whole community

Group 3

1. Enough food for everybody
2. Clean Water for everybody
3. Equal Rights
4. Education for everybody
5. Responsibility to take care of each other
6. Employment for all
7. Justice
8. Clothes
9. To be heard
10. Fair sharing of money
11. Friends

Appendix W

Children's Voices Limerick

5th Class

10 Girls

18 Boys

Type of School

Bright, airy, lovely classroom, chatty children.

Opening: Talked them through the questionnaire. Told them what we were doing. Got their consent. Predominantly Irish. One Chinese student. One child with a Learning Disability.

Average Age: 11

Attended only MD: 21

Other: 7

Question 4: Key difference

- Religion

12 students specifically mentioned religion in answering this question. They referred to the number of different religions that were represented in the school or made reference to the fact that it didn't really matter what religion you had if you wanted to attend the school.

Sample comments

I think it is different by having lots of different religions and nationalities

No particular religion taught

We learn about other religions

We learn nearly every religion

It doesn't matter what religion you are you can still come

All different religions come to our school

You don't pray before you eat or before you go home.

Interestingly only two students referred specifically to the multicultural nature of the schools.

Ten students referred specifically to the fact that the school was multid denominational. This may have been influenced by the next question but as the questionnaire was administered orally, only students who read ahead would have accessed this question in advance.

The greatest level of agreement on key differences related to the absence of uniform and the fact that teachers were addressed by their first names. Some of the more unlikely answers referred to the lack of strictness, the absence of male teachers, the absence of sport other than hockey and the fact that Irish was not spoken in the school. Interestingly these comments came from students who had transferred from other schools.

Question 5

The question on the meaning of multid denominational was answered very clearly by most of these 5th class students. The most interesting aspect of the responses was the inclusion of cultural difference as well as religious difference in over 60% of the replies. The inclusion of

different cultures and backgrounds mirrors the Educate Together concept of multidomination. (Quote from What is an Educate Together School? Here)

Sample quotes

- It means that anybody is welcome and we do not focus on one religion
- This, to me means, that anybody is welcome and we do not focus on one religion.
- It means we don't discriminate other religions and cultures
- Lots of different cultures and religions are welcome. Basically it doesn't matter where you come from or what you think.
- I think that multicultural means that we are a mixed school. We can have all different religions and cultures and we learn about other religions.

Religion only

Ten students made reference to different religions attending the school as their understanding of what multidominational meant to them. For one student she literally translated multidominational as: "*multi meaning loads and denominational meaning religions so loads of different religions attend our school*"

Two students did not understand the word and referred to multidominational as meaning co-educational and that it meant that the school was very religious. No student referred to the concept of children of no religious affiliation attending the school.

Comments: Sophisticated understanding of the First Principle of Educate Together schools.

Question 6

Rationale

To tease out whether they had an awareness of the Religious Education Curriculum in their school

Results.

In replying to the question, just under half of the students (13) mentioned the study of different religions as their key understanding of what the Religious Education Core Curriculum meant to them.

A further 11 students made specific reference to religion in their replies to this question.

Other topics mentioned included:

Life

Bullying

Fairness

Helping others

The Special Olympics

Equality

Safety

Maturity

Health

Friendship

Feelings

This would indicate a cross curricular approach to the teaching of the RECC and shows evidence of the inclusion of topics from the RSE Programme, The Walk Tall Programme and the SPHE Programme.

Question 7

Rationale

To test out the proposed Strands for the new Ethical Curriculum.

To get students to rate the strands in order of importance.

Students were asked to individually rate the strands in order of importance.

This question generated much discussion around whether it was possible to rate these strands as there was a strong feeling among the group that all of these areas were important in their own right. It was agreed that students could adopt their own rating system as they saw fit. As a result 9 students decided to rate all four strands as having equal importance. They were quite vociferous in their reasoning and declared both orally and in writing that they were all equally important. (Similar response from participants at 3rd Ethical Conference: Citywest)

Of the remaining 19 students a further two students rated three of the strands as equally important but chose to put Respect and Care for the Environment in second place behind the other 3 strands.

Of those who opted to rate the strands from 1-4,

10 students gave a top rating to the Equality Strand

A further 3 rated the Belief System strand as their number one, while the remaining 4 students equally rated Personal, Social, Moral and Spiritual Development and Knowledge and Awareness of Equality as their choice of most important.

Outcome: Students rated all 4 strands as equally important. Where they did make a choice, they opted mostly for the Equality Strand.

Key Finding: Did not rate the Environment Strand as being of major relevance. Would have expected to see Belief System Strand in higher position.

Questions. 8-11

Students were given an opportunity to discuss in small groups their understanding of the 4 strands. They were then asked to respond individually.

Personal, Social, Moral and Spiritual Development

Not surprisingly, given the age of the students, they did experience some difficulty in articulating this concept. However, there were some interesting results.

Many of the students responded to the Personal aspect of this strand and equated it with belief in the self, how to use your life in order to improve the lives of others, the development of your own principles and beliefs, maturing mentally as well as physically and learning to believe in yourself. Overall, students made reference to communicating with others, respecting others, understanding yourself and through this understanding, moving towards an understanding of others. There was no specific mention made of spiritual development with the exception of one girl who explained it as “ *what goes on inside you.*” Other students did refer to having one’s own thoughts and using your life for the good of others, through self respect and respect for others.

Equality

Students were more comfortable with this concept and focussed on knowledge and awareness that we are all equal. One quite sophisticated response quoted the maxim: *Do unto others as you would like them to do to you.* (humanum) There was evidence also of an understanding that equality encompassed religion, social class, cultural background, race and individuality. In particular, there was evidence that some students understood that equality meant ensuring that everybody got equal treatment and equal rights. Predominantly equality was equated with knowledge of individual rights, awareness of the rights of others and the beginnings of awareness that with rights around equality there was also a responsibility to make it happen.

Quotes

It doesn't matter what religion you are. To understand that it doesn't matter what you look like. It's what's inside that counts.

I think this one means that you have to notice everyone is equal and gets the same treatment and rights.

It means that everyone should be treated equally and understanding why.

Comment: Sophisticated understanding of rights and responsibilities. Students in Senior Classes can be challenged in this area to move to a more critical thinking approach.

Respect and Care for the Environment.

This topic did not prove as difficult for students to comprehend. However there were two levels of understanding evident. Just over half of the class made reference to litter and the need to keep our surroundings clean. The remainder of the class showed evidence of the concept of stewardship and sustainable development. They referred to caring for the environment and the need to protect it for future generations. Some students also make reference to the care of animal and plant life and "treating the Earth right." There are several references to taking care of the World and not just the local environment through recycling, conserving electricity and respecting the natural world.

Quote

It means you care for animals, trees and other plants and Mother Nature's creations and respect the world you live in.

Knowledge of and Respect for all religions and non theistic belief systems.

An interesting outcome from this section was the number of students who referred to the notion that people are free to believe in what they want to believe in, for examples angels or monsters and that this belief should be respected.

"Anyone can believe in anything they like."

“People believe in angels and some in monsters. That is OK.”

(Christian’s comment on the fear that belief systems could lead to a problem if no parameters were applied.) Students referred repeatedly to the notion of not ridiculing people because of their beliefs. Respect was mentioned by a majority of students and there were a number of references to the increasing multicultural nature of society. “*You have to respect foreign religions.*”

Don’t bully them because they’re Muslim.

Comment: No questions on non-theistic beliefs. Highlights some of the concerns expressed by other respondents around parameters and teacher guidelines in the area of non-theistic belief systems.

Question 12

Does the Core Curriculum let you explore issues of justice?

24: Yes

2: No

1: Yes, but not enough

Question 13

How does justice and fair play work in your school? Example school rules. What happens if you break a rule?

Surprisingly students were unhappy with the way things were handled in the school.

Sample responses

- We don’t get a chance to explain
- We can tell things through the school council but usually *nothing* is done about it. (student stress)
- You just get grounded
- The teachers don’t give you a chance to explain and sometimes we are not allowed to play sport because of it
- It doesn’t really work. P. hears the story from the person who is usually good in the class. Then she doesn’t really listen to the other point of view.
- You stand by the wall for 2 break times and you get given out to.

Only 2 students made reference to the Student Council as a means of seeking redress for issues that arise in the school and a further 2 students believed that justice was demonstrated in the way problems were dealt with.

Question 14

Does the school raise awareness of environmental issues?

The majority of the students (24) agreed that the school did raise awareness of caring for the environment and that there was a strong emphasis on recycling and avoiding litter. However, some students did express the view that their greatest learning about the environment occurred at home with their families where they saw recycling in action on a daily basis and where they got an opportunity to plant things in their own gardens.

The teachers think we are learning lots about the environment but if I didn't have a big garden at home and know about taking care of the environment from my family, I wouldn't have a clue.

Some students also referred to the fact that while they did not litter in school, they continued to litter outside of the school environment, demonstrating a level of surface learning in this area and showing no real evidence of the concept of stewardship.

Values

Questions 15-18 were concerned with the area of values, both the values that the children perceived were important to the school and their own values, both at school and in their lives. The final question asked the children to list the values that they would take away with them from their school. These questions were prefaced by a discussion on values, what they understood by values and why they felt values were important to them. The key definition of values that we agreed on was:

Values are things that are important to me and how I live my life.

What the school values

The good name of the school: 2

Helping weak children to learn

A good school

Sport: 4

Having fun

Religion

Subject Knowledge: 4

Equality: 2

Money: 2

Truthfulness: 2

Good work: 2

Doing your best

Respect: 8

Honesty: 4

Citizenship

Friendship

Intelligence: 6

Co-operation: 2

Fairness: 4

Responsibility: 2

Having your own opinions: 2
Helping others: 4
Good behaviour: 3
The school spirit: 2
The student's future
Manners: 3
Hard Work
Integrity
Responsibility

Question 16

What child values in life

Family: 23
Friends: 19
Sport: 9
Pets: 8
Music: 1
Food: 2
Shelter
Games: 3
Fairness
Trust: 2
Education: 2
Life Itself
Money: 2
Health
Clean Air :2
Clean Home
Television
Sweets
Citizenship
Fun
Learning: 2
Being Happy
Love

Question 17 : What you value about your school

Building/Environment: 6
No Uniform: 5
Playtime: 3
Nice People
Learning: 4
Fun

Friends: 18
The way teachers care: 4
Teachers: 5
All different types of religion and cultures: 2
Days Off
Staying true to who you are: 4
Able to be yourself: 5
Sport: 7
Trust: 1
Art: 1
Fairness

Question 18

Values you will take away with you from this school

Independence: 2
Belief in Different Religions: 2
Respect for difference: 7
Equality 2
Friends 12
Integrity
Belief in Fairness
Education
Memories
Love of Art: 2
Trust
Honesty
Knowledge
Going to a multidenominational school
The value of caring for others

Rules for a Good World

Treat others as they treat you
Love one another
Respect for others: 5
Care for others
No Rules: 3 4
Once Race: Mankind
Respect for the Environment
No Racism: 5
Everyone is treated equally and with respect
No Killing: 5
World Peace: 6
Trust others
Share

Be Fair

Views of 6th Class

Average Age: 12

Boys: 15

Girls: 11

Attended other Schools: 7

Question 4; Key Differences to other schools.

- No Uniform: 21
- Mention of Religion: 10
- Reference to Multidenominational: 17
- Calling Teachers by First Name: 19 (Three students commented on the fact that this led to a better relationship with teachers and they got to know them better.

Other interesting Points: Wide catchment area of students: 3 We come from all over the city
Different Nationalities: 3

Some Interesting Comments

We don't do religion here. We do The RECC Programme and we learn lots about other religions.

All people aren't the same colour and don't have the same religion and this is normal life.

It is different because it respects all religions and cultures and doesn't force you into believing in one religion

Instead of learning about one religion we learn about all religions and this is why I like this school so much. (Attended at least one other school)

Here we have freedom to express what we think and you are accepted no matter what your religion or culture is. That is why we are different.

Question 5

Understanding of the term multidenominational

All students referred to the religious aspect of the term multidenominational. Here, as with 5th class, the inclusion of cultural difference was present in just under half of the replies.

Students emphasised that multidenominational meant that religious affiliation was not a feature of admission into the school but also that the school gave an opportunity to learn about different religions. Again there was no reference to non- theistic beliefs.

Quotes

- We don't have to be a particular religion but we learn about them
- Anybody from any religion or any race can join as one in this school
- Multidenominational means to care for people and to accept any religion
- It means there is no right religion or no wrong religion
- No specific religion and a certain freedom to speak your views

Question 6

Understanding of the RECC

Religion

Most of the students with the exception of 3 related the RECC to the study of religions. However, there was a noticeable difference between the 2 classes in terms of elaboration on the question. Several of the group referred to the anti-racist approach adopted to the study of different religions.

- It's about accepting all religions and being anti-racist and not judging people by their skin colour and letting everyone learn together as human beings learning about other people's religions. It's about seeing things from different viewpoints
- It's about learning about other religions but religion is not the most important thing in life. It's life itself. It teaches us that life is sacred and you must live it well.
- It's about getting to know religions and other people's lives and how they live them according to their beliefs.
- It's about learning that people can choose different religions and not become victims of racism

Some of the other topics mentioned included:

Health Education

Learning about cultures and customs

The Stay Safe Programme

Other people's lives

Social issues

Bullying

Only one student expressed the view that the programme did not address any new material and he felt that it was all covered in other programmes.

Question 7: Rating the 4 Strands

Unlike the 5th Class, only 3 students opted not to rate the Strands. These 3 students commented that they felt all 4 strands were equally important and gave them each a number 1. Of the remainder who rated the strands the results were:

Moral and Spiritual:	4 First Preferences
Equality:	12
The Environment:	3
Religion:	9

The discrepancy in the totals can be explained by the fact that 5 students gave an equal rating to the religion strand and the Equality Strand.

Comment: Again note the apparent disinterest in the Environment Strand.

Questions 8-11

I had hoped for a more sophisticated response to the meaning of these strands from the older class group. This did not happen and the responses in general were quite similar to those of 5th Class. The more interesting responses I have included under the 4 relevant headings below.

Moral and Spiritual

Most of the students equated the study of this strand as getting to know the inner self and learning to appreciate other people. There were several references to learning how to differentiate between right and wrong to making the right decisions in life. Students used terminology like “the inner self, the private self, getting to know the self.

Some of the most interesting responses elaborated on these points and made reference to the need to use the knowledge of the self to improve lives.

- Learn more and help others
- Improve the lives of others
- Know yourself so that you can understand others

Learning about yourself and others so that you can make ethical decisions

- How we develop ourselves to make us better people, to respect and get along with others, to tell right from wrong and even if it's hard to develop our own beliefs in life and stick to them
- Growing from child to adult and understanding yourself
- Finding the real you and being happy with what you find

Comment: The beginnings of a deeper understanding of the concept.

Equality

Most of the respondents equated this strand with racism, sexism and capitalism. They placed emphasis on not judging people by their colour or their race or religion. They referred to the need to understand sexism and sexist behaviour and they showed an appreciation that knowledge and awareness of this topic was not of itself sufficient but that it was necessary to “know what to do and to make the right choices,” when confronted with these issues. Students interestingly referred to the socio-economic aspects of equality and learning about unfair distribution of wealth. It was interesting to note the references to capitalism in their responses and this may indicate a particular approach adopted by the teacher of this class.

I think it is important to know, understand and be equal in our dealings with all different types of people. I think knowing and understanding about equality means that you don't make decisions and you get to know the real people behind the colour or the nationality.

Environment

Here students referred to the Earth, the ozone layer, littering, pollution, recycling and care for animals and trees and plants. There was an understanding of the concept of stewardship and students talked of respect for the world, respect for the environment, ensuring that the planet was preserved for future generations and letting their views on the environment be heard by others. Some pithy slogans used by the students included:

Respect the world

Respect the earth and its functions

Wreck the world and its you who has to live with the consequences

Respect the environment and Nature's boundary.

Generally the responses showed higher level of understanding than the younger group.

Religions

Here the responses emphasised knowledge of other religions, respecting other belief systems and not judging people on their religious beliefs. Four students referred to the fact that they did not belong to a religious group but appreciated other belief systems. One student made an interesting comment that it was not necessary to believe in a God to be religious and the curriculum made him “comfortable” with this notion. Another student said that he had learned that if you were an atheist it did not mean that you were evil.

Comment: First references to non- theistic belief system.

Question 13: Issues of Justice

Explored in the Ethical Curriculum: 18

Not Explored: 4

Sometimes: 4

Question 13: How Justice operates in School

The response to this question was more balanced than the response from the younger group. However only a third of the students believed that they were given a fair chance to discuss the issue with the teacher and to ensure that both sides of the story were heard.

If you break a rule you are given a chance to argue for yourself. If your argument is not totally unreasonable or silly you are listened to. The School Council does not get involved in these issues.

The majority of the students responded negatively to this question and talked of detention, notes home, being sent to the Principal, being grounded and not been given a chance to explain.

If you stand up for yourself and they consider that you are wrong, they accuse you of being a bit cheeky.

Comment: See Masters and comments from Ciaran on the concept of “ the telling school.”

Question 14: The Environment

There was a mixed response to this question. The majority of the students agreed that the school did help to raise awareness of the need to care for the environment. Examples that were given included the recycling of batteries, the school rule on bringing home rubbish that cannot be recycled and the placing of anti-litter posters around the school buildings. A small number of students stated that there was a strong emphasis on talking about the environment but there was not enough action and only two students mentioned the need to care for the environment for future generations. So it is questionable whether the programmes on the environment would have any lasting impact on attitudinal change.

- Ideas come up but they are not put to much use.
- Yes, taking care of the environment helps because it will be your kids and grandchildren that will suffer the consequences of global warming and the like.

Question 15: Student perception of what the school values in its students.

- Talents
- Opinions
- **Respect :19**
- Happiness
- **Intelligence 3**
- Health
- **Responsibility 7**
- **Self Discipline 4**
- **Honesty 12**
- **Fair Play: 10**
- Money
- Education
- Self Knowledge
- Democracy
- Integrity
- Manners
- Doing your best 2
- Discipline
- Good Morals
- A Good Listener
- Trustworthy
- Citizenship

Comment: See Parallels with other group. Social and Personal emphasis.

Question 16: Student Values in Life

- **Family: 24**
- **Friends: 22**
- **Health; 7**
- **Happiness 3**
- **Intelligence**
- **Sport 4**
- **Nature**
- **Talent**
- **Home 2**
- **Life 3**
- **Freedom 4**
- **Peace**
- **Equality 2**
- **School**
- **Fun 2**
- **Food**
- **Shelter**
- **Games**
- **Freedom of Speech**

Question 17: Things you value about your school

- **The building 5**
- [Redacted]
- **Friends 5**
- **Teachers 2**
- [Redacted]
- **Facilities**
- [Redacted]
- **Litter Free 2**
- [Redacted]
- **Sport 2**
- [Redacted]
- **Library: 2**
- [Redacted]
- **Clean School**
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted] (had attended a different school)
- [Redacted]

Key: Yellow: The Built Environment
Red: Climate and Culture
Blue: Other

Question 18: What you will take away from the school

- Value difference
- History
- Respect for others:6
- Compassion
- Respect the Environment: 7
- Friends: 6
- A good education
- Fairness
- Honesty
- Equality 2 3 4
- Love of Learning
- Happiness
- The freedom to speak my mind: 3 (we were always allowed to have our say)
- Harmony
- Being part of a multid school
- Maturity

Rules for a Good World

- Treat others as you would like to be treated
- Peace 13
- No Weapons
- Respect for others: 8
- Respect for the Young
- Respect for the old
- Respect for the environment: 7
- Respect for the beliefs of others: 2
- No Violence: 2
- Do not judge people by their skin colour: 2
- Equality: 2
- No Racism 4
- No Cruelty to man or animal

Key: Yellow: Peace in the World
Green: Respect
Purple: Motto

Appendix X

Children's Voices Kilkenny

Time: Morning

First Class Visited: 6th

Teacher: Female

- Allowed to work on my own with the group

Very bright school. Lots of light. New building. Structure and layout of classroom more formal than others. Teachers addressed by Miss. Children very friendly and animated but polite.

Size of Class: 27

- One Chinese student
- One Learning Support: Did not respond to Questionnaire with the exception of the last question.
- Two further children exhibited signs of Learning Difficulties and despite help could not write very well on the questionnaire. Their views were taken orally and discreetly.

Variation on Questionnaire: Heartwood Institute: Ethics Survey for Primary Schools. Children are presented with a number of statements and then ask to colour in one of 4 frogs. Each frog represents the level of agreement about the statement.

Example: I play fair

Always Usually Sometimes I'm not sure.

Rationale: To attempt to capture the extent of ethical development among pupils in this school.

Further Variation: Question 11.

Inclusion of question on non-theistic belief system. Children did not include this in their answering on the previous questionnaire so I was anxious to tease out their understanding of this concept.

Question 12: This additional question was designed to measure the range of different religions that had been studied by the class during their time in school.

Question 16-19

These questions on values are prefaced by a definition of values as agreed at the first school with the students there.

A value is something that we respect and hold dear to us. For example honesty is a value, so is love, so is fair play.

Question 1: Age Profile: 11-14 Average Age: 12

Question 2: Male/Female:

Male: 14

Female: 13

Question 3: Number who attended other Primary School: 7

Question 4: Perceived Differences

- Mixed School 7
- No Uniforms 3
- Learn Spanish: 2
- Individuals treated as individuals: 2
- No stereotyping
- Multidenominational: 2
- Different Religions: 7
- Different Cultures: 5
- Different Colours: 3
- Parents involved in teaching and helping out
- Everyone treated equally: 4
- Everyone helps everyone else: 2
- Projects displayed on the walls show an anti-racist approach in the school
- May Day Celebration
- Student Council

Quotes

Here boys and girls learn together and work equally together and are treated equally.

In our school we have people of different religions and different cultures working together. No one is left out because they are different.

Comment: Emphasis on Religious and cultural Difference. References to open and supportive school culture. Most evident from those students who had attended other schools.

Question 6: Understanding of the term multidenominational:

Six students either left this question blank or stated that they did not understand the term. A further 4 students referred only to children of different nationalities, while a further 2 students equated the term with male and female. Four students literally translated mulidenominational as meaning different religions and the remaining 11 students included religion, race, colour, gender and socio-economic background in their replies.

- ***Quotes: You can be black or white, Catholic or Jew, rich or poor and you are welcome in our school.***
- ***It means that we treat everybody equally no matter what race they are or what religion they follow. This is what happens in our school and what should happen in life.***

Question 6: Understanding of the Ethical Core Curriculum.

Five students did not answer this question. Of the remaining 22 students, 9 of them equated the Ethical Core Curriculum in their school with a study of Nature and the Environment. A further 6 students believed that the ECC was about the study of the

Relationship and Sexuality Programme that is studied in all Primary Schools. Only 2 student made any specific reference to the study of religions and a further 2 students made reference to the study of other cultures, such as the study of the Chinese New Year and to racism. The remaining students referred to elements of the RSE and Stay Safe programmes through mentioning the study of issues such as bullying, drug abuse and drink abuse.

Comment: Further clarification for the need to re-focus on the core issues that form the new EEC (Learn Together) Focus lost and yet this school has a detailed curriculum that it devised itself.

Question 7 Rating of the Proposed Strands for the Learn Together Programme

Three students left this question blank. A total of 12 students rated all 4 strands as being equally relevant and important. A further 2 students gave equal rating to 3 of the 4 strands but choose to give a lesser rating to the Environmental Strand. Of the remaining 10 students, 6 gave a highest rating to the Belief System Strand, 2 to Personal, Social, Moral and Spiritual Development and 2 to the Environment.

Question 8

Understanding of Moral and Spiritual Strand

The replies in this section focussed primarily on the growth of the child to maturity and adulthood and how a study of this Strand would help that process. Several of the replies referred to understanding the difference between right and wrong and making moral decisions and choices. Several of the students made reference to developing skills in these areas which would allow them to know themselves better and be better

able to interact with other people. They equated spiritual development with religion, beliefs, the inner self and respect for others.

- *Quotes:*
- **This means how you develop as a child into an adult and everything changes. You may also change your spiritual beliefs.**
- **It means how you develop as a person, how you interact with others, how you make moral choices and decisions and how you look at your beliefs and those of others and make choices.**

Question 9: Equality Strand

Students had no difficulty with this concept. All aspects of equality were mentioned in their replies including colour, race, religion, identity, disability, level of intelligence, money and gender. Students also made reference to the global nature of equality and the need for an Equal World. Some students cited the slogan “ All Different, All Equal.

Question 10 : Environment Strand

I expected a high standard of interpretation of this question as so many students had made reference to it in Question 6 and the school had also been awarded the Green Flag for raising environmental awareness and exhibiting this through action in the school. There was an emphasis on caring for the Earth and realising the importance of this responsibility for future generations. The students also exhibited an understanding of Nature and its role in the life cycle. There was evidence of a sense of wonder and awe of Nature in some of the responses.

Quote: All plants are living things. If we destroy them then we destroy the beauty around us. Specific reference was made to the Ozone Layer, pollution, littering, recycling, the use of compost bins and saving energy. Many of the students used the term Respect when speaking of nature and the natural world.

Comment: Heightened awareness

Question 11 Understanding on non-theistic beliefs

As this aspect had been ignored in the first school, I chose to ask a specific question to test the students' understanding of this phrase. During the briefing with the group, I had been asked to explain the term but explained to the group why this was not possible and that there was no reason to worry if they did not understand the term. There were some frank replies such as "I haven't got a clue." Others equated it with respect for religions other than your own. Eight students grasped the concept that it meant a belief system that did not have a God at its core "a non-god believing religion". This was quite a sophisticated level of understanding from a young group of children in the 12-13 age bracket.

Question 12

Other Religions studied.

- **Judaism 10**
- **Islam 14**
- **Hinduism: 2**
- **Baha'i**
- **Buddhism: 14**

- **Catholic: 3**
- **Protestant: 5**
- **Muslim: 7**
- **Quaker 2**
- **Humanists**

Comment: Very little emphasis on local or traditional religions (Catholic, Church of Ireland, Protestant) Are we going too far in one direction? Kevin Williams criticism of the Learn Together Programme.

Question 13

Issues of Justice and Fairness

Yes: 22

No: 4

Blank: 1

Comment: Much higher level of agreement than previous school

Question 14: How does justice and fair play work?

Children made reference to how the school handled bullying by allowing all of the class to have a say through Circle Time. There was a strong emphasis on the fact that they were allowed to voice their concerns and make their case to the staff.

“If we break a rule from our school we might have to write it out but only when everyone is happy that they have determined what happened.”

If there is a problem we talk about it and work through it.

If there is a problem teachers find out both sides and then make a decision.

There was constant reference to listening to both sides of the story and being treated fairly by teachers. Students emphasised that they apologised to whoever was involved if they were in breach of school rules and that this apology was usually public.

Comment: Very different to responses in School A. May indicate a very different ethos. Here fair play and democracy seems to be lived out.

Question 15

Awareness of the environment

The previous responses would indicate that the level of awareness was quite high and this proved to be the case. Students appeared very proud of their Green Flag status and there was an active Green School Committee. Caring for the environment and protecting it for future generations were mentioned by most of the class. Other aspects mentioned included recycling, energy saving, anti-litter competitions, compost bins in the school and, being aware of the selection materials that were recyclable. Most strongly, the class sense of pride in winning the Green Flag status for the school came through all of the responses.

Question 16

Student Perception of School Values

- Good Behaviour 2
- Timekeeping
- Tidy, Clean School Environment 7
- Students 4
- Teachers 3
- The School Itself and what it represents
- Respect 6
- Respect for different cultures and religions 3
- Love
- Honesty 8
- Fair Play/ Justice 8
- The Green Flag 6
- Anti Bullying
- Fun
- Happiness
- Personal Vision
- Initiative
- Helping others 2
- Equality 5

Comment: Quite a different emphasis on school environment, the school community and justice and fair play. This is borne out by the previous comments of the students on the environment and on how the school handles issues of discipline.

Question 17

Students' Personal Values

- Family 19
- **Music**
- Intelligence 2
- Love 2
- Honesty 3
- Friendship 16
- Happiness 3
- Peace
- Pets 4
- Respect 4
- Having a say in own life
- Money
- **Environment**
- Fair Play
- Sport
- Emotions
- Food
- Television

Comment; Greater emphasis on the environment and on external values.

QUESTION 18

What the students value about school

- Sport 2
- Education 2
- Teachers: helpful, kind
- Friends: 1
- Being treated with respect 4
- Having a say 11 (a voice in life, School Council)
- Being listened to 4
- Being treated responsibly 2
- Green Flag 4
- Clean Building 3
- Assembly
- Honesty 4
- Fair Play 4
- Equality: 6
- Intelligence 4

Question 19

Values you will take away with you

- **Having a voice 7** We have learned how to make up our own minds
- Friendship 11
- Intelligence
- Respect for difference
- Respect for other religions 6 (There is no bad religion just one's that are different)
- Respect for Equality 2
- Racism is wrong : 4
- Memories of a good school
- Respect 5
- Fair Play 4
- Honesty 3
- Independence
- Responsibility
- Using Initiative
- Life
- Being part of a new system of education and acknowledging that fact
- Loyalty
- Justice

██████████ A sophisticated level of understanding of values. Importance of having a voice. Key aspects of child centered education at work. Some very interesting comments on being part of a new system and acknowledging that fact.

Question 20

Additional Comments

This question gave the students an opportunity to add on any additional information that they felt was relevant to them.

Mention of celebrations such as Mayday and Dwali were the key additions that the class made in this section. They described the importance of these celebrations and the sense of excitement that accompanied them.

Others mentioned the importance given to Project work in the school and showed me examples of projects that had been completed on food customs in different religions and on religious leaders.

The Student Council, Student Council Day and the Green Flag Committee were also featured in this section.

Additional Section on Student Survey of Key Values (Heartwood Institute)

Transferability of Values

Statement	Always	Usually	Sometimes	I'm not sure
I play Fair	√√√√√√√√ √√√√	√√√√√√√√ √√	√	
I try new things	√√√√√√√√ √√	√√√√√√√√ √√√	√√√	
I share with others	√√√√√√√√ √	√√√√√√√√ √√√	√√	
I take part in activities	√√√√√√√√ √√	√√√√√√√√ √√	√√	√
I show trust in others	√√√√√√√√ √√√√√√√√	√√√√√√√√	√	
I plan new things	√ √√√√√√√√ √	√√√√√√√√	√√√	√√√
I tell the truth	√√√√√√√√	√√√√√√√√ √√√√√√√√	√√	
I do my best work	√√√√√√√√ √√√√√√	√√√√√√√√	√	
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]			
I listen carefully to others	√√√√√√√√ √√	√√√√√√√√ √√√		
I act in caring ways	√√√√√√√√ √√	√√√√√√√√ √√√√	√√	
I follow school rules	√√√√√√√√ √√	√√√√√√√√ √√	√√	
I take turns in games	√√√√√√√√ √√√√√√√√	√√√√√√√√	√	
I respect others	√√√√√√√√ √√√√√√√√	√√√√	√	

Green denotes personal and societal values. These values were also evident in the lists that the children devised.

5th Class: Kilkenny

Time: 9.30 am

Class Teacher: Not present during meeting. Introduced me to the class. I explained how the process would work and assured the group that they did not have to worry about spellings, writing, etc. We discussed how the research would help to develop an Ethical Curriculum that would be used in all of the Educate Together schools. They were assured that their input would be used to support the development of the curriculum. The questionnaire used was identical to that used by 6th Class.

Observation: Range of projects on Hinduism, Muslim and Judaism displayed on classroom walls

No. of Children: 20

Question 1: Average Age: 11

Question 2: Male: 8 Female 12

Question 3: Attended other school: 1

Question 4: Key differences identified by students

- *No uniform*
- *Different cultures in school*
- *Different religions represented*
- *Different races: Tanned children*
- *Boys and girls*
- *Projects on different religions displayed on the walls*

Quotes:

- *We are all educated together. We are mixed male and female and because we are all different religions we understand about other religions and we all co-operate together.*
- *We can be black or white or brown but we are all equal and we all respect each other.*

Question 5: Meaning of multidenominational

Nine students equated the term with *co-education* of boys and girls only. A further 5 students referred to *mixed religions* in the school in addition to the **co-educational** aspect. Five students referred to *different cultures and different religions*.

Quote: *There are no restrictions to what religions you follow, to whether you are male or female or to what country you come from.*

All religions are welcome.

This school welcomes everybody.

Comment: *use of the word welcome was interesting from such a young group of students. Some work still to be done on the concept of multidenominational if an identity is to be truly forged for the sector and if it wants to be fully understood from an inclusive perspective.*

Question 6: What is studied in the Core Curriculum.

*Religion
Environment
Racism
Feelings
Family
RSE
World News
Festivals
Bullying
Nature.*

Comment: *Almost 100% of students made reference to the study of other religions. There were also several references to study of Nature, the environment and topics such as bullying. RSE specifically mentioned. Highlights need for greater focus on a specific identifiable curriculum.*

Question 7: Ordering of Key Strands

Twelve students opted to give an equal rating to all four strands after having discussed it among themselves in small groups. Of those who did make a choice, 3 selected the Strand on the Environment, a further 2 selected the Equality strand while the remaining 3 opted for the Religion strand. No student opted for the Moral and Spiritual strand but this may be explained by the young age of the students.

Comment: *No unusual finding here.*

Question 8: Understanding of terminology related to the Moral Strand.

Replies on this question were wide ranging. Children referred to health, relationships, growing up, behaviour, bullying, kindness, knowing right from wrong and developing self-confidence. A small number of students did not attempt this section but at the other end of the scale there were a few answers, which displayed a high degree of sophisticated understanding of the concepts implied by the strand.

Quotes:

- *This is about developing into a good person, knowing right from wrong and getting on with others.*
- *Personal means knowing yourself and how you are going to grow up. Social means learning to get on with others. Moral means learning to live by the rules and spiritual means getting to know your inner self.*

Question 9: Equality Strand

In general there was a good level of understanding of this strand. Children made reference to gender equality, cultural equality, religious equality and social equality. What was most striking in the responses was the language of equality that was used by the children, which suggested more than a surface level of understanding and care for equality.

Quotes

- *It's knowing you are equal but it's also understanding other cultures and having knowledge about other cultures and religions.*
- *It's knowing that on the inside we are all the same.*
- *Everybody is equal. It doesn't matter what's on the outside. It's what is on the inside that counts.*
- *Knowing that we're equal whether we are male or female, have a different religion or different skin colour.*

Question 10: Environment Strand

Here, as with the 6th Class group, the greatest emphasis was on the *Green Flag* status of the school and the *Green School Committee*. There were several mentions of *litter* and *pollution* and *protecting the environment*. There was no mention of stewardship of the environment, sustainable development or the long term impact of pollution. This might suggest a surface level of understanding.

Question 11: Meaning on non-theistic belief systems

Children demonstrated a high level of understanding of this concept with several references to the fact that while people may not believe in a specific god, that they do have other beliefs. This is quite a positive result with such a young group.

Quote:

- ***There are people who don't believe in God but they do believe in human nature.***
- ***You may not have a religion but you can still have a spiritual belief in life.***
- ***Not having a religion based on a god but on human nature.***

Question 12: Other religions studied

- ***Buddhism 4***
- ***Hinduism 4***
- ***Muslim 11***
- ***Islam 1***
- ***Protestant 5***
- ***Catholic 7***
- ***Christianity 3***
- ***Judaism 4***
- ***Baha'i***

Festivals mentioned

- ***Festival of Light***
- ***Diwali***
- ***Chinese New Year 2***
- ***Ramadam***

Comment: High level of familiarity with a wide range of religions and associated festivals.

Question 13: Issues of Justice and Fair Play

100% of students agreed that the Core Curriculum allowed them to explore issues of justice and fair play.

Question 14: How does justice and fair play work in your school: Example given is breaking a school rule.

The children responded positively to this question by highlighting that they were given a chance to explain their actions and to talk through the issue with either the class teacher or the Principal. The replies also noted that issues were discussed in class to ensure everyone understood what was happening and to let everyone see justice in action. If someone was blamed the wrong, the procedure would include an apology to the wronged person. It seemed to be very important to children that they were listened to as evidenced by the replies and the reference to bullying is also important in the context of seeking out the truth.

- ***Nobody shouts at you. You get a chance to explain what happened.***
- ***You can explain and if you have been blamed in the wrong, you get an apology. This stops bullying.***

Question 15 : Awareness of the Environment.

I expected a positive response to this question based on the fact that the children had shown a good knowledge of the environment in question 10. The replies made reference to littering, recycling, pollution, nature and the keeping the school environment clean and tidy in order to retain the Green Flag. While the children were very proud of the Green Flag and being a Green School, there was almost no evidence of a deeper level of awareness and understanding of stewardship of the environment and the importance of sustainable development. The school does recycle batteries, ink cartridges, glass and paper and also has a wormery and a compost section and the children were very aware of these measures.

Question 16: Children's Perceptions of School Values

Love of the Environment 12

Respect : General: 5 Cultural: 1 Religious: 5

No Racism

Fair Play 8

Anti Bullying 2

Kindness and Caring 4

Honesty

Equality 2

Multidenominational

Sport

Comment: The language used by the children in their responses was heavily focussed on respect and caring. There was no reference to discipline, good behaviour or attention to work which might have been expected in this question. It would appear to support the notion that values are not just espoused but lived.

Question 17: Student Values

- [redacted]
- Honesty 4
- [redacted]
- Caring for others 3
- Trust
- Love
- Sport
- [redacted]
- Education
- Religion
- Television
- A good life
- Respect for the Environment
- Freedom of Expression and Action
- Toys

Comment: Quite aesthetic values for such a young group. Level 1 Maslow also in evidence as in all of the schools to date. Family, Friends, Home , Pets.

Television, Play Station, Computer games, music, all conspicuous by their absence.

Question 18: What students value about their school

- Friends 12
- Friendly atmosphere 4
- Great Building 3
- [redacted]
- Teachers 3
- [redacted]
- Respect for the Environment 2
- Fair Play 2
- [redacted]
- Sharing
- Love and Understanding

Comment: Appreciated nice building. Recognised a friendly open atmosphere.

Question 19: Lasting Values that they will take with them from school

Friends/Friendship 10

Happy Memories 8

Good Teachers 3

Good Times 3

Belief in myself

Pride in myself

Respect for others

Happiness

The Willow Maze

Understanding of Others

Caring for others

Love of Sport

Knowledge

Question 20: Any other Comments

Most of the children who answered this section wanted to talk about the May Day festival that is celebrated in the school every year. They were also anxious to stress that they worked with voluntary groups in the city such as children with Special Needs and that this was a highlight of their time in school.

- *Our May Day celebration is based on the Core Curriculum and we make projects to suit the theme. This year our theme was "Communities in Action." We present our projects to the school. This year we joined with a Special School and we all enjoyed that.*
- *We put a lot of effort into May Day and we have a lot of fun every year. We have indoor and outdoor ceremonies to celebrate the start of summer and Worker's Day.*
- *I love my school. I used to get bullied in another school but not anymore.*
- *My school is the best in the world and everyone is welcome!*

Comment: Happy, contented children with a balanced view of values.

Additional Section on Student Survey of Key Values (Heartwood Institute)

Transferability of Values

Statement	Always	Usually	Sometimes	I'm not sure
I play fair	√√√√√√√√	√√√√√ √√√√	√√	
I try new things	√√√√	√√√ √√√√√√	√√√	
I share with others	√√√√	√√√√ √√√√√√√√	√√√	
I take part in activities	√√√√√√√√	√√√√√√	√	√√
I show trust in others	√√√√√√√√	√√√√√√√√	√	
I plan new things	√√√√	√√√√√√	√√√√√	√√√
I tell the truth	√√√√√√√√	√√√√√√√√	√√	
I do my best work	√√√√√√√√	√√√√ √√√√√		√√
I listen carefully to others	√√√√	√√√√ √√√√√√	√√	
I act in caring ways	√√√√√√√√	√√√√√√√√	√√√	
I follow school rules	√√√√√√√√	√√√√√√√√	√√	
I take turns in games	√√√√√ √√√√√	√√√√√√	√	
I respect others	√√√√√√√√√√	√√√√	√	

Green denotes personal and societal values. These values were also evident in the lists that the children devised.

Appendix Y

CHRISTIAN

Q One of the questions we looked at earlier Christian was the reason for choosing the Kilkenny project for...your own children.

A Yeah well one of the reasons was the geographical one, that it was actually the nearest school and when we came into the school we didn't know an awful lot about the school and what it stood for but we did realise that this was broader than a national school, in a very broad way that it was multi denominational and that that was different. The fact that we came from England and we came to live in Ireland...maybe coming into the country and we would have been quite conscious of the Protestant and Catholic divide and of the need for some form of education and so much of what happens in divides between people of different beliefs is due to misunderstandings and mistrust and lack of awareness of where another person is coming from, so we decided to send our children to the school because of its multidenominational nature. .

Q Had you remained in England, I know it's a difficult question, do you think you would have sent your children to denominational schools there.

A To be honest I'm not sure exactly how that system works but I know it is very strongly governed by geography, also that a lot of the schools that are non church of England schools would be quite a lot broader...even though they have a very basic ethos, I think the general day to day teaching would be quite broad and not so different from what we're doing. My understanding of getting into schools is that its getting increasingly difficult to get into any school and sometimes people just have to get their kids into any school, so I find that quite hard to answer...because I think it would depend very much on where we were. If it were a matter of choice I would want children either to go to a multi denominational school which had some understanding of religion...that allowed them (children) to have our beliefs reinforced, that was one thing that did come over from the Kilkenny school...or to go to a Christian school that would reinforce what we believe...

Q And in terms of the approach to religion in Kilkenny School Project....Do you think it offers more or less than a traditional school?.

A It does yeah, all the religion instruction...

Q You yourself became quite involved in the sector, why, I know most people say because they're cajoled into it but did you make a conscious decision?

A The first thing I got involved in was the core curriculum group, not really understanding what core curriculum was...

Q You're still not sure?

A Yeah in that you meet a lot of people who have different views ...I wanted to be able to explain...but I joined that because I was interested in the whole spiritual dimension of education and just wanted to be able to contribute something to that... There was also a liaison committee set up just to help communication between the different belief groups and some of that was practical about times and rooms and that sort of thing and this whole issue of classes outside school hours was a big contention and something had to be done, so that was short term involvement. Then later on I got involved in the...committee looking at policy in this area. So its fairly infrequent that that meets, that was just something again that I would have an interest in.

Q One of the things we found when we were reviewing the extra Ethical Core Curriculum is there was a certain overlap between it and the RSE curriculum in schools, did you find that as a member of both groups?

A Yeah there seems to be a lot of the areas that we're talking about in the Core Curriculum that would be covered in the RSE, I think they are similar but different... ..whether its something that just could be done in some kind of a combined way, I think your right, I think in the way that materials that are produced inside in the schools there is overlapping and perhaps the RSE the way that's done as a national curriculum there's maybe some of the work done on the Core Curriculum could naturally fall in the core curriculum but that we have included it and re-enforced it in the RSE Programme.

Q There were 4 key principles that underpin Educate Together schools. What's your understanding of those principles and do you feel they're sufficient those 4 key principles to market that e sector as truly inclusive and providing truly inclusive schools.

A I think they are very good... They have existed for quite a long period of time. It is good to understand...how they do make a difference because in a sense when you first hear them you think oh yeah they're all good things and you kind of imagine that any reasonably well run school is going to be run along

those lines but you do realise that a lot of schools aren't and I do think that there is a distinctive difference in the way that the schools are run.

Q The democratically run principle obviously as a parent would be relevant to you.

A Yeah I think that was very significant, that parents would have a huge contribution to what happens...be encouraged to speak...problems as well, you talk about involvement, its fairly well know that we did have some parents who struggled here in Kilkenny...anxious to see those things sorted out, there was a review group...to see what could be learned... to look at the communication side... Yeah its I think one of the strengths and also one of the most sensitive areas, the democratic involvement and I think if the balance is got right you've a very good school. And if you have good parental involvement, parents understand what they're doing and the teachers understand as well what that means and you know where the line is drawn, that the professional staff have a job to do and that there's a point at which parents should not be involved.

Q One of the issues that was raised by the research was whether the term multi denominational fully describes what they're at, what the schools are about? Would you agree with that?

A I think that its been rightly emphasised that there is a difference between non denominational and multi denominational in that there is I think a move, particularly in UK schools towards more secular education which is non denominational and the solution to having a lot of people of different faith backgrounds is to take it out of school and have the religious education not as part of the school at all...that kind of education. I think multi denominational carries with it that understanding that there are people with all sorts of different beliefs and ... a valuable part of a child's education is learning from other people and what they believe and where they come from, whether the actual words multi denominational convey that well enough I don't know, they do to me now but its probably taken me at least 10 years to realise it.

Q And when I asked the children what their impression of the word multi denominational they also involved things like colour, they involve things like culture, background, social background or whatever, do you think that that should be part of the tag of multi denominational?

A Yeah I think it should, you have to make a distinction between belief and race and cultural background, yeah I do think it's an important part of it.

Q One of the alternative terms I suppose that we came up with in relation to multi denominational was the term inclusive, do you think that would describe the schools better or would it take away something from it? I mean inclusive in education terms normally refers to including children with learning difficulties, that's my understanding of it.

A Yeah inclusive on its own wouldn't, it would miss out too much, multi denominational I think conveys the concept of different beliefs coming together, whereas inclusive has a different slant and unfortunately its one of those things, if you want to describe something absolutely you often need quite a number of words...

Q Multi denominationally inclusive, I suppose the term *educate together* if we want to think about it actually encapsulates it very well.

A Yes that's a fair point, it conveys and it's to try and do it as simply as possible. I think things like diversity, multi culturalism, they weren't issues in the past , not in educational terms but they are now being bandied around by lots of different organisations, so I think...holding on to our identity is important.

Q: What is your programme called in Kilkenny?

A It's usually just called core curriculum, that's the usual term.

Q Just as an aside one of the arguments we're having as to whether it should be called the ethical core curriculum, do you have any ideas on a title for the proposed programme?

I didn't know what the core curriculum was when I first came, I had the idea that it had something to do with spirituality but that was about it. Ethical I think helps convey something a little bit more about what it was about, if you talk to some outside core curriculum conveys absolutely nothing about what it is about, it just conveys that there's nothing at the heart of what your doing in this topic, whereas ethical brings out a bit more. But I think even that isn't quite sufficient in that it conveys an idea of some kind of morality but I think it goes beyond that as well to this whole area of morality and religion. It is also about the heart of the school, its ethos. Maybe the programme and the ethos are distinct entities. What does core mean?

Q It's a very difficult one, I'm not sure. In education terms core curriculum normally refers to maths, English, Irish in the case of Ireland, it's the core subjects so I think it is quite interesting from that perspective, but we have several ideas. As you know I've been working on the core curriculum with 2 of the principals and with a member of the national executive and a parent from one of the other schools and we have come up with 4 key strands and those 4 key strands will be the moral, spiritual, emotional development, respect for the environment, respect for equality and an understanding of belief systems. Now one of the questions that you asked at the last conference was did people feel this was sufficient, do you feel those 4 strands and they're huge in their own right, capture the essence of the ethical core curriculum?

A I haven't been able to come up with anything better but I probably wouldn't have come up with anything as good I'd have to say. I think it's a very difficult thing to come up with...but I think they cover it fairly well, I'd be interested to know if anybody else has come up with other things.

Q In fact they've taken 1 or 2 out, the opposite has happened, people have actually removed, environment for example a lot of people suggested that environment shouldn't be there.

A It's a question whether that is adequately covered in the general national curriculum I suppose is what we're looking at, as well as if you take something out is it going to be missing or is it covered somewhere else. I think those headings all are very important to include, whether its done in the current national curriculum or if it's something we have to add in.

Q It could come under geography probably, an area like that.

A Yeah, its interesting, forgive me if I just refer to...my kids...there was one headings, one of the phrases that came up, was mentioned a few times was...in creation and...and I think it's a lot more than recycling cans and planting trees, there is something deeper than that and its an understanding that we have a relationship with our environment on some kind of a spiritual level if you like...the idea that we have an inter dependence created relationship with the world that we live in. And for me I'd love to see that included, just wonder...that there is a relationship between things, that if you lose a particular species that it has an effect on every other species, that there are laws of physics, we call them laws but there are certain things designed in

the universe that make it continue...and without them it wouldn't. That these things aren't accidents if you like, that there's something bigger.

Q And that would be our understanding I think, our understanding as a group.

A Yeah I think so...just things that came to mind that I suppose really identifies and I think it's a lot more than you're likely to get out of some government designed curriculum...

Q Our concept was I suppose developing a sense of awe and wonder in relation to all of these...

A Yes and I think then the mechanics of it, all to do with responsible stewardship and the concept that we're dealing with this world that we have and that if you act irresponsibly to the world that you live in then it has consequences, so yeah it's the bigger picture.

Q In terms of the other 3, would you prioritise 1 of those 3.

A The equality one is very important, the 2 that really get me going are the belief systems and the moral and spiritual side and I wouldn't like to separate either as being more or less important. If I may make a quick comment on the equality one, just the whole concept that we talked about, all humans being special and unique and the fact that we're different is not a bad thing and there's a big difference between...and sometimes you almost get the idea and forgive me if I offend somebody but there...somehow women and men are the same and I think there is a misunderstanding that we're built differently physically, emotionally and within that then apart from the male and female everybody has their own gift, some are academic, some are not academic and it's all part of the whole ethos but I do think that's very important that we understand the term equal... and what we mean by it.

Q I suppose the term equality maybe should be replaced with something like equity, creating an equitable playing field in all senses of the word.

A Yeah that's another of these things to compliment and supplement, they don't quite mean the same thing...probably with me you'd end up with a big long title.

Q It's just semantics, I have the same difficulties myself around it, I feel equity may be more appropriate.

A The word that came to my mind...the body, that each part needs the other part and I felt it was a great...of what we're talking about in terms of equality, the

eye can't say to the ear I don't need you as well as the ear can't say to the eye we don't need you...and there are some parts maybe of the community that we need to take special care of if you like and maybe to the worlds eyes would be the kind of people that you...tend to shut out but they need special care and I think that's the kind of image that maybe comes up...

Q It's a lovely image...

A There's a few things I've jotted down here and I know I've mentioned some of these things, yeah to be truly multi denominational I think we have to try and avoid conveying a particular belief either actively or passively and I say passively because I think one can do that, you can end up conveying a particular believe passively... For example the...teaching all religions and none...then it doesn't matter what you believe, that was one thing that I felt that sometimes passively comes across. When we're saying that we want to learn and understand about a lot of different systems that it almost suggests that they're all of a level...its almost like going into a sweet shop and choosing one or none and I do believe that there is an importance for speaking truth and I love to see children coming out of school not only having an understanding about what makes other people tick and understanding around the different cultures but that they would have some desire in their hearts to really have an understanding, a truth and desire to understand... Then I think we also need to have our eyes open to understand that there are actually evil beliefs, that there are people in the world who are I believe held captive by evil and sometimes those evil beliefs have a nice public face, for example witchcraft actually can come across in all sorts of different guises and behind it I'm convinced that there is a real sense...of evil to it and different names appear... for example Druids is one that I've heard and as far as I can understand that has its roots in witchcraft, there are other things we can talk about, we know historically...but I don't think that...I do think that there are actually people living in Ireland today who are actually evil...that are actually destroying and capable of destroying others. You could argue that they are part of a belief system but do we feel the need to learn about them?

Q The concept of white witches for example...a benign approach to witchcraft.

A Yeah and I think often people who...don't understand themselves because I've actually heard of people who have been white witches and things...who would

say that its something that sucks you in and that you don't actually believe that your doing anything wrong, it sucks you in...because I think there is a little bit of a temptation in the whole ethos and the desire to be inclusive that whenever somebody comes up with a different belief to tend to say: "oh goodie lets have a class and lets encourage some thoughts and reactions"...but I think we need somebody...I'm not quite sure how we do it but I think there needs to be some guidelines...

Q A monitor of sorts.....

A I think definitely there needs to be some sort of guidelines drawn up and I think its implicit...in terms of respect for other people, the way we treat other people, recognising that there are certain absolute values of right and wrong but different people believe there are certain absolute values and there's the need for some sort of a framework and I think how we do it, we need to have some sort of framework of what would allow a belief group to be set up because I do think its possible, if it hasn't happened already... that belief groups could actually be very harmful.

Q Do you feel that what we're proposing here, the concept of a blueprint should include those kind of guidelines...

A Yeah I think it should, I think that's important that they meet some criteria, I suppose what we're saying is there's almost like a little set of criteria, not too detailed...obviously, but that you need to be able to weed out things that we can identify as harmful.

Q Our thinking would be to build it like a traditional curriculum in terms of English, maths, Irish, whatever, where we would have aims, objectives.

A Yeah

Q ...but obviously overriding all of that would be the ethos...respect and self esteem...one of the things that Paul Rowe raised on Monday in his interview was the notion that we are in the business if you like of producing moral thinkers, that we're giving the children if you like the wherewithal to make choices and you've mentioned this yourself there in relation to that ...they will be able to accept as truths or speak in truths perhaps and I feel that it's a very sophisticated level for children to reach, do you think that...we are

allowing children, giving them if you like the tools to make moral judgements?

A I find it slightly hard to know how well its working in that the best feedback I get for myself is from my children and I know that they are getting teaching from home and teaching from the school...and I believe that they're getting those tools and I'm not sure how well that is working with all children, I would need to do what your doing a little bit and talk to them more to understand how well its actually coming through to the children. I suspect from the kind of feedback you were giving at the last conference, it would suggest that its definitely working in some schools but how widely its working throughout all...and all schools is very hard to.

Q It's one of those things that's going to take much longer probably.

A Yeah I'm jumping ahead slightly but just one of the things about dangers and I think there is, I fear I have is that ET could preach itself a new system and that the new system could be driven by a philosophy of secular humanism or a new age kind of philosophy, getting all the beliefs and putting them in a mixing bowl and trying to create its own kind of religion, I do think that's a danger and I think that even though there may be an understanding among a lot of people that that is not what its about, but a lot of teachers don't appreciate that I suspect. Just to give an example for that I know there was an incidence where I was just doing up a little booklet for the school...and there was just a poem the kids had been doing and the last verse happened to have the word god in it and I did talk to the teacher as she had issues around the inclusion of the poem for this reason...and I thought there's something odd there, this isn't a non denominational school, this is a multi denominational school and if the poet felt moved to write something that poets believe was an important part of why he wrote what he wrote and I think there's an important distinction between allowing those things to be mentioned and actually preaching to people, I think the children who are being given the tools to understand what's going on, that there are people who are different and that I would be afraid that the teachers are bringing in, if you like their own particular belief or perceptions of what ET is about which is not my perception of what ET is about.

Q Do you think there's a danger of that becoming more prevalent as the sector grows larger.

A I do think there's a danger because I think that as our society as a whole is going, certainly in the UK there is a prevailing philosophy...humanism and I do think that effects the way things are done and its totally wrong...I find it almost an impossible thing to get it right because your'e talking about trying to have a neutral environment that would include this...without putting any one particular world view or world aspect and there's always going to be things that teachers bring in themselves, actively or passively, wittingly or unwittingly and its totally hard to get that communication and I think the communication, that part of this work is communicating to teaching staff, its going to be a really important part of it as well as communicating obviously to parents and to children the actual working through...

Q As it currently stands there's no formal training of any kind for the teachers...including the training colleges.

A Yeah

Q Because they're coming specifically from denominational backgrounds. From a philosophical perspective there are 2 approaches to moral development. There are several, but 2 from a philosophical stance in the notion that we aim towards justice, this is the right thing to do, this is the just thing to do but there is another approach that says its all about caring, there are 2 philosophers Kolberg and Gilligan who researched these 2 different approaches. Do you think that Kilkenny and I know you can only speak for Kilkenny and perhaps maybe what you know of the sector that we lean more heavily towards that concept of justice or the concept of caring.

A I do think justice comes across, I've a feeling that's the first one that comes across but I think caring certainly would come across in certain things, you notice every now and again particular projects that the kids do and things going up on walls and on...so I think they're definitely both there but I think possibly the justice one overtakes, I'd consider it strongest, somebody else might say something quite different, a particular project their child has done or particular classes...

Q I think maybe there are more examples of justice, figures that we can look to towards justice, it's also a very male way of thinking, the justice concept. The

other thing is that there is a very philosophy out there which says, trying to capture what we are trying to capture, that we're going towards what Hans Kung...put forward, doing unto others as we would have done on to us, that if we try to break down all the religions, all the denominations but somewhere in the core of all of them you will find that belief or Golden Rule....

A Yes that's right and I think actually...that quotation from different religions is a very good way to go in capturing the philosophy of the sector. .

Q Is it sufficient?

A Its negative in some religions almost, for example...you wouldn't like them to do it to you and I think the positive...I think that's far more challenging and I think its important when we think about that quotation is that we have to have a core value or belief in good and understanding ...

Q Is it a good starting point?

A I think it is yeah.

Q That is the basis that I will be basing most of my work on. The belief system is one, I know you feel very strongly about that particular one.

A Yes I do, one of the things that we talked about earlier is the difference between just teaching about religion and learning...how it makes a person feel and getting somebody if possible to be a living example of a faith, so that there's the reality, the opportunity to get an understanding of the basics or the history and the important figures in history and some of the key philosophies but then just to have somebody who will come and tell you what a difference it makes to me today during my life in the 21st century Ireland, I think that's terribly important. We talked a bit about maybe having some guidelines for people coming in that that could be informed in terms of what a person might say, that they understand the contest of the situation they're coming into and what's reasonable to say and not to say.

Q It's a difficult situation for a head teacher choosing the people to come in because there's that fear that the children will be upset, or that it will go outside of the bounds of what we consider it is acceptable for the school to offer, so again would you see what we're trying to propose, the blueprint as a map...a model for bringing guidelines into place or should those guidelines come in maybe in a schools as part of school planning or something?

A I think that there are things that I think should be able to be agreed on at a national level...and I think then in terms of choosing people...literature and that kind of thing decided on a national level, there might be certain people that could be identified on a national level but I think too there's always going to be the situation where there might be somebody who is very suitable and maybe the Executive could take that role on of having somebody who can not be just brought in off the street to do it, that there is some kind of forum for approving anybody who is coming in.

Q There is a tradition in a lot of the schools to celebrate all religions that are present in the school and bring in clergy from that particular religion so that normally works very well. You voiced a concern I suppose earlier about the notion that as we become more multi cultural maybe to some extent our own belief systems are becoming watered down a bit or it could happen....

A I think that there's a danger, there's a couple of things I wanted to say, one is I think both for people coming into the country and people here too, I think there's an important need for better understanding of Christian denominations, I think a lot of denominations don't really understand other Christian denominations and why there's differences and its certainly very confusing to people coming in, its interesting that there has been some difficulties with most schools and in relation to new intercultural groups in schools...the perception that these are people who are all basically Christian and understand what its about. This can lead to problems. 1 illustration came home to me with regard to what an influx from particular culture can do in a community, my brother is living in Oldham and their little girl was getting to a stage where they were looking for a school for her and the local church of England school, it's a situation where English is the second language, there's so many Asians that English isn't really spoken, certainly in the play grounds and the general talk in class. So integration is a 2 way stream and that it has to work both ways and that people coming into a culture they do need to understand our culture, we shouldn't be shy about it, I think we're a little bit quick to welcome other people in and give a lot of time to minorities because they're interesting to us and I think its good to give time but keeping some balance so that we do give time to some of the majorities and things which have shaped our own society, because our society in its laws and its justice system, in

education and health systems, all those things, obviously they have very important places in our own culture. So if you think about it, if we were going into another culture we would not expect that culture to suddenly cave in and adopt our own, we would expect to learn a language, we would expect to understand the culture, we would hope that they would come and learn our own and so that's the way integration should properly work, is that we're not shy of our own and we learn from others and they learn from us too.

Q I think a lot of what your describing is probably going to be covered by things like citizenship, CSPE, social and political education to an extent and that's coming from the context of identity but obviously religious identity, denominational identity as well as...and that its important for children. The belief system is the one that I've been given to write up and I must say it has generated a huge amount of discussion, simply because we have no parameters, like in other areas there are very distinct parameters there but there are no parameters in this, do you have any guidelines to offer, most schools can say our culture is, our ethos is, they can cite and quote from their founding fathers, for us those parameters or barriers or whatever you want to call them are missing, is there anything we can create which gives us that structure or do we need it?.

A You're really hitting at the heart of the problem here because I think we don't want to have what I was talking about earlier, creating our own kind of ET religion, that's not what we're about, we're not creating a belief system...what I think we're trying to do is create a...somewhere where kids are taught things and taught to see that life has a greater dimension than what we see and perceive by...and that there is fostered within them the desire to understand more about that greater dimension in their lives. I could probably mouth on for ages but...I would find it hard to distil what I'm trying to say.

Q I suppose within the belief system I don't have a difficulty, my difficulty really lies in the fact that we talk about all religions and none, we celebrate all religions and none.

A Yes, is the none, what you're going to focus on there? ...

Q Probably yeah because it brings in that concept of how long is a piece of string, if we're going to be really faithful to that concept of all religions and none, where do we stop.

A I suppose you'd have to say that when your talking about none, everybody believes something, even if their belief is that this life is all that there is, that there isn't anything else...and in some way even a belief that the best we can do is to look after ourselves. I think that you can get...that people can convey that that is their belief, I think a lot of that may come from an individual school and particular parent groups who will want to convey a particular approach to life...and you probably have to treat that like any other belief system.

Q Because if we have that concept for differences coming through.

A Yes and I think its good to respect those things, I just come from a very strong personal conviction that there is a much bigger dimension to our lives and that its terribly important and whilst I would love to see a platform to convey the things that I absolutely believe to be true and would love other people to be able to see...I know that's not a reasonable thing to expect and absolutely respect other people's beliefs...

Q Should we be more obvious in stating in our literature and whatever form that we can that we are multi denominational because I think there is a belief among some people that it's the opposite, its non denominational.

A Yeah it is, I think there's a big misunderstanding, I think a lot of people...took quite a long time before they realised that there's a difference, that is the...system in the UK...and I think its quite different.

Q I suppose one of the ideas of building this curriculum was to make it open to scrutiny, that we could...be looked at by any of the other schools or any organisation, be it an equality organisation or whatever within the country, do you think it's a positive move, that we are opening ourselves to scrutiny in terms of exactly what we do stand for?

A Yes I do, I think its important that we scrutinise ourselves to try and get our heads clear, then when we're scrutinised we have something clear to say. I think there is a bit of wooliness definitely in people's understanding of what this...is all about and I think its there and its coming together and there's a lot of things that are coming out, I'm sure you're finding talking to different people that there is a message coming into focus and I think its kind of a bit blurred and we need to get it into focus.

A ...and I think its just...the issue of all religions and none, what I think is a lot of parents and families that come to meet in the school, probably compared to the balance nationally, there's a very high proportion of people who probably do come from the *none* sector, simply because they come from a system where there is single denominational school in their village and that's the only other alternative that they have available to them and so they come to us...because it doesn't force something down their throat that they don't want. And I've noticed that whenever we've had discussions the most vocal thing that comes up very often is religion...and I think its good to take note of that but I think its actually a slightly distorted picture of the national scene and I think when the government is looking at that I think we'll have to take on board that our schools are not just about those who don't have or want religion but those who want all children educated together in an atmosphere that recognises different religions, beliefs... I think there's a lot of disaffected people that have come to the school and feel quite strongly, they've got an anti single denominational view... that schools aren't just a refuge for the disaffected but can get across the message that our schools ...and I actually think if its done right we can get across the message that our school are about more than that. They are about those who are truly affected and engaged.

Q And there maybe be a need for another kind of school again.

A Yeah, just going back to that point I do actually think that single denominational schools can work and they can benefit society, its important they do have an inclusive outlook but I think that they do compliment the education system in dimension and I think that there's a little bit of fear in many people in the sector and they think denominational school is evil and bad and should be stamped out and I don't think that way.

Q Is the overriding ethos in denominational schools either Catholic or Church of Ireland or whatever? I think around ethos issues perhaps people have a problem. That really leads us on very nicely to the next question, in terms of the Irish education system, do you think our schools answer the need for a pluralist approach to education, bearing in mind the controversies in Dunboyne and various things that have arisen over the last couple of years.

A Firstly I thought that the whole issue in Dunboyne was handled very badly but that is for another conversation. ... The ET philosophy is a great philosophy

and I do think that's embodied well in what we're trying to do and that has certainly been the solution to many problems...like minority groups in Dunboyne. Our inclusive philosophy, I think that does go a long way. The other side of it is what we've talked about before, the whole welcoming other cultures without losing our own identity, those really are the 2 things that came to my mind, so I think a lot done and more to do, I think we're getting there.

Q One of the questions I've been asking students as I've gone around is what are their values, what do they think the values of the school are, what would school value in them and what are the values that they take away from the school. If you were asked at this moment in time to design a poster or whatever which reflected the values of Kilkenny school project as you saw it, what would those values be?

A I do think there's a strong consciousness of the 4 pillars and they are constantly referred to and mentioned, I think with the 4 pillars somebody got that fairly right. I think that there is definitely that prevailing morality if you like of mutual respect, I do think that's...and I think yeah if your designing a graphic image it probably would be different coloured hands holding each other or something like that...of different people who are from different cultures and backgrounds, I do think that comes across well. Things for example like the involvement of asylum seekers in the school, they can come in and talk about what they're doing and teach a bit of soccer, its that living out thing that I was talking about, getting people in to explain what its like to be a Syrian or a Nigerian or a Muslim or whatever.

Q My own research has shown that respect, respecting the broader sense ...a respect for self, respect for others is the key value.

A Yeah and it is coming across, I think that was one of the phrases I wrote down...mutual respect.

Q And I suppose we can break it down into moral values and democratic values but that spans both.

A Yeah

Q Finally can we have some of these values...good question for you because you've had some experience of National Executive or Ethos Conferences or whatever.

A Yeah I do think its time to articulate, certainly the noises that I'm hearing and the things that people are saying, that there's certainly the value of inclusivity and mutual respect and so on do seem to be coming through, what I'm saying there about a lot done more to do, there's definitely a lot done, some of the *more to do's* that I would like to see maybe other people won't want to see, I'm not sure, I do think that go quite far enough and I think there is an important area where particularly when you start talking about moral and spiritual values that, I have difficulty articulating this, I think its something to do with our concept of what child centred is. I think we can think that child centred means that children can work out their own morality, I personally believe that's not a correct view, I've never met a child that you had to stop because they were being too good, I don't know if anybody else has. Morality and the concept of right and wrong I think are the things that need to be taught, something happens when you try and create a common morality drawing from different belief systems where you hit a kind of lowest common denominator in a sense and it becomes fear of taking a little step too far because somebody is going to be offended and the way I feel about it is that...the other way that if something is not put...you really feel should be put there as a base card, teaching of something that is right or something that is wrong, that there's an offence which is a passive one, that by not saying something you're communicating a message that well maybe actually this is ok. One example that certainly would be controversial would be the whole issue of sex and marriage, most of the major religions as far as I'm aware would teach that the place for sex is within marriage but it certainly isn't the prevailing view of Western society and what comes across every day on the TV and in magazines and so on for our children. And for me I would like to see...in terms of whatever common value is put there that the home value is also stressed. If the home has slightly different values and school says as far as we're concerned you can do X, Y or Z, they are certain to do it the other way because if they're being taught that more or less anything goes in a particular area, its very much harder then to impress no actually there are higher standards, there are things that are more important that you need to take cognisance of at home.

Q How does that equate with the fact that a lot of the children in the schools are coming from single parent families, relationships are quite tenuous...

A I notice that certainly in our discussions in Kilkenny that has been a prevailing component, we're rightly sensitive to people who come from different backgrounds and we talk about the family coming in all sorts of different shapes and sizes and the family for some is not the parents and sometimes it's the granny and there's a lot of different situations. But I think children are not stupid either and certainly parents are not stupid, I'll take an example of a very good friend of mine who is a single parent who really would want their children to understand that there is a rightness about having male and female influence on a child's life and that that is something that is desirable to be...and that where that commitment is life long commitment of one person to other, that that has a rightness about that they would want their child to be taught and they'd want everybody's children to be taught and from their point of view there's absolutely no offence. Now maybe some people would find offence, I suspect less than we image.

Q Probably a great fear on our part.

A It is something that I feel quite strongly about, I think there's an over sensitivity in a sense to people who would have a much lower moral sensitivity, to give that description, I don't mean any offence by that, but there is an offence to feel that there is some very important values not being taught and they're actually being passively undermined and I do think that children can see that there are social effects where those values are not upheld and I think it would be a good thing if...that there was a bit of cause and effect, like we were talking about the environment, it's the same kind of thing and that there is something very good about a stable relationship and...a lifelong commitment and that those things are very desirable. The fact that a lot of the major religions in the world teach those things, they probably haven't got it all wrong.

A It's a balance, I think very often... it was different in the past...and I think we just need to step back and just not throw out the baby with the bath water.

Q I suppose we're coming back again to change

A Yeah, my wife is an illustrator and she illustrates a lot of children's books for the classroom and its quite interesting, back to this equality thing, this almost

strange over emphasis that she always has to make sure that there's coloured ones to be seen and that the women are the bosses and these kind of things, that you're getting pictures that are actually rather distorted the other way.

Q That's coming full circle because I remember being part of a discussion at one point where mammy was always in the kitchen and daddy was at work and I remember it in Irish text books...

A ...daddy doing the ironing and mammy running international corporations.

Q Yeah so finally we're finding that balance! is there any other area you want to comment on?

A One of the things that we can be a little bit afraid about somebody having a conviction about truth and we did talk about this before, I think that its important that that person is allowed to have a conviction that truth has found them, even when you say that you found truth it sounds pompous but that this...that they have a conviction about something and that we don't need to be afraid of that but when we have that particular conviction that its important that we show...to people who disagree with it, I think that is an overriding thing that can be put about that Truth cannot be found, that it is elusive...just there would be a fear that I'd have that nobody is allowed to have real conviction about something...and if you put the shoe on the other foot how would you like this person to behave towards you and I think my own view is that if any belief is worth having it should be worth professing...and a person's life should be illustrative of their belief or sense of Truth...and I think that the message comes across very strongly... If this is seen as being coercive or aggressive for the way they live this is not a good thing...I think that will come across for children as much as it would to adults. People need the freedom to express their belief and not feel intimidated by that while still understanding that others have other beliefs.

Q I think we've covered that fairly well, listening to what students have to say, that notion of a person being entitled to their own personal beliefs and being able to voice them came across very strongly from the older students, its very, very strong in their thinking...its good to hear, is there anything else?

A Just one last thing I jotted down here, when you separate morality from belief you have something which becomes...I think, that the way you behave is driven by what we believe about the world, who we are and why we're here.

For example if you take the view that human beings are...DNA codes and it's an evolutionary process...and there's nothing behind it, then you wonder why should you behave well towards another person, what's the point, so I think that's important that morality...motive without belief and its getting to the kernel of the problem that we have and defining...if on the one hand we're trying to avoid pushing any particular beliefs but we want to teach morality, so some...(end of tape).

We were just talking about the connection between morality and beliefs. While we do not put an emphasis on any particular belief system, it's important that when we are teaching about morality and the difference between right and wrong, that the children understand the connection between having particular belief system and that we are not just teaching about what but also looking at why.

Q Would you feel then and we talked about this earlier in relation to the environmental aspect that should encompass all four strands through the inclusion of an ethical statement at the beginning of the Blueprint

A It definitely needs something like that. It definitely would ...an overriding statement about what we are not doing.

Q The genesis for this was the discovery that a lot of the areas that we traditionally covered are now being taken on board by CSPE, by Walk Tall, and we felt as a result that while we were flattered that the DSE had taken on board a lot of the ideas, what the EEC was all about, was actually getting lost in the middle of it all. There was an identified need to examine the values underpinning our Ethical programmes.

A There are a lot of areas that have become part of the national curriculum. There are a lot of very important areas that haven't been included yet. It is important that our unique identity doesn't get lost. While I have no great understanding of what is

happening in other countries, with the exception of the UK, I suspect that what we are doing is unusual and I think we have done something which is valued not only nationally but internationally.

Q Most other such curricula are coming from a secular background.

A A lot of what is happening in other countries is a sort of reactionism. If you go back a 100 years, most countries had a prevailing religion. A national belief system and it was exceptional when one had a different belief. That had an impact on all aspects of the country, how it was run, education systems, etc.

Q But traditionally we emerged from a system which was non-denominational that is the Irish Primary school system. A system where religious beliefs were dealt with outside of the school day. The reason why we have an Ethical Core Curriculum is that satisfies the DES need for a Religious Education Curriculum in schools.

Q Do you want to ask me any questions at this point?

A I would like to share with you something I read the other day. Freedom is not the right to do what I want but the power to do what I ought.

Q Could you envisage ET Education and in particular the EEC, giving children that power?

A That is a very important question. It is certainly what I would be hoping I would like to see, an environment, where children were asking questions, getting a broad

understanding of a spiritual range if you like, and to be able to see their life in a bigger context and not just me. I think we are providing children with the fuel to make the right decision.

Q How important is the role of the parents in all of this?

A Are we talking in particular about the EEC or are we talking in general?

Q I suppose I am talking about the outcome of the EEC- the moral judgements, the ability to make decisions.

A We are talking about communicating the philosophy and it is essential that all three groups should be included, the teachers, the parents, the children. It is important that each one has a clear understanding of what is involved. It would certainly be of great value that all are made aware of this even as early as first enrolment. If they are getting involved in the sector, that they get comprehensive information, something fairly detailed that they know what it is all about and understand the ethos.

Q Do you want to add anything further?

A No, not really. I do think there are values that have to be taught. There is a bit of a feeling I get from some of the schools that everything is coming from the child. To me child-centered means that is absolutely what is best for the child and I think what is best for the child is getting these key values. Seeing these values lived out in the school day and in all school interactions.

Q My research would agree with this and I think one of the problems identified with the living out of these key values in school interactions is the time consuming nature of this. OK, thanks a million for that Christian.

Interview with North Bay Students

Interview with 3 students from 6th Class in North Bay as a follow up to Class Interview.

Date: May 2004

I= Interview

A = Speaker 1

B = Speaker 2

C= Speaker 3

The tape begins with a discussion on the 4 key Principals of multidenominational schools: multidenominational, child-centered, co-educational and democratically run.

I: Can you tell me what you understand by the word multidenominational?

A: We are all equal. It doesn't matter what religion we have.

B : We don't have to have any religion, or our parents. That doesn't matter in our school.

C: We are all treated as equal, no matter who we are or where we come from.

B: That is true, but the word means all religions or lots of different religions.

A: But it is also OK not to have any religion. We are all treated the same and religion isn't an issue for us in this school.

C: We understand all different religions and we respect each other.

I: Are you ever asked about religion?

C: No not really, unless it comes up when somebody is celebrating a festival day.

B: Or when people in the class make their Confirmation or Communion. Then we celebrate and they all come in and we have a party.

A: I think it is about understanding that people have all different beliefs and we have to respect this. It is a good thing to be able to ask questions when you have people from different religions all together.

C: Yeah, that's about it. That's what it means.

I: There is another word or term and it is child-centered. Do you know what that means?

A: Yes, It means that we all work very hard to sort out any problems that we are having in class or in school.

C: Yeah. We are always given a chance to have our say and to give our side of things.

I: Does that mean a lot of work for your teachers to make sure you are all heard, all your opinions?

B: No, we're all different, or I mean we are all the same, all equal. So we are all treated the same. We are all listened to. In a way we are all the same. That's what we mean by child-centered.

I: OK. There are other aspects to multid denominational schools and in your answers you told me that everybody calls everybody else by a first name and there is no uniform and there are boys and girls.....

C: Yes, things are much more friendly and this is a friendly school and we all treat each other equally.

B: You can be open.....

I: Are you encouraged to express your views.

(Here there was a chorus of "yeahs" and nodding of the heads)

B: Everyone is listened to and we can give our views.

I: The school is co-educational. How do you feel about this?

A: I think it is brilliant. We are all mixed together. We can mix friendships and that is good.

B: It also means that when you leave school, you are better with boys.

C: Yeah more relaxed.

B: A lot of people who go to all girls' schools can't cope and say: "Oh my God, there's a boy over there" and they can't cope.

A: I think it will be kind of different when you go on to secondary school. You will be used to girls and you will just mix with them and it will be no big deal.

C: I am going on to an all girls' school in September. I'm wondering what it's going to be like?

I: Why are you going to an all girls' school?

C: Because it is my religion and it is my local school. My Mum went there and she taught there and all my family went there.

I: So you have strong connections.....

C: Yeah.

I: What about the two of you?

A: I am going to Mount Temple (Protestant Comprehensive and a popular choice with many of North Bay students). It is a Protestant school and I am Protestant and it is near my home and all my friends from here are going.

B: I am going to Mount Temple as well because it is where my Dad went. For a short time but I think he got thrown out. No, maybe he stayed! All my friends are going and that is where I want to go and it is like North Bay and there is no uniform.

A: And it is mixed and lots of older students from our school are there.

C: I will find the biggest change as there is a uniform and it is all girls but I will still meet my friends from here.

I: Last week when I met your class, I told you about the Ethical Curriculum and Frieda (School Principal) and I and two other people will be talking about the curriculum at a conference at the week-end. I want to be able to tell people, this is what the students think of the Ethical Curriculum. In your own words, can you describe for me what you think the Ethical Core Curriculum is about?

B: It imagines all people, all colours, like all countries to be together. We are not expected to be one religion or another or to believe in one religion or another. So we are not expected to learn about one type of religion or one type of person.

I: OK. So as part of your Core Curriculum do you learn about other religions?

C: Yeah, we do projects on Muslims, the Jews

B: Islam. And Judaism.

A: Excuse me I m going to do a fast.

B: And pass out

A: Because last time we did a project on famine in Africa I was disgusted with what children had to suffer and I think we need to understand how they feel in order to stop it happening. I'm not going to eat tomorrow but I have choice. They can't an I think, " Oh, this shouldn't be happening." And my mum can make me eat but they in a lot of cases have no Mums because they have died of Aids.

B: When I am older I am going to work in Africa. Not forever but for a while to give something back. I think that is the right thing to do.

A: Doing our work on the Core Curriculum makes us more aware of other people and how they live and what they believe.

I: Do you think that the work you do on the Ethical Core Curriculum raises your awareness.....?

B: Yeah because we know what's happening and we need to be aware of what we can do as well.

A: We sell friendship bracelets and we know where the money is going and what it can do.

C: We are part of the outside world maybe in way that other schools aren't and we get a chance to look at things from a lot of different sides and take part and do things.

B: Other schools study subjects from their religion but we have an open mind because we can look at it from all different angles.

A: And we are allowed to express an opinion even though everyone may not agree with it.

I: You talk about freedom. Now what would happen if whoever was teaching about religions, talked about religions that were very restrictive? Say where women didn't have a voice.

A: Or men! We have done that.....

I: And how do you react to something like that?

B: Very well. We can't exactly criticize...

A: A lot of religions are like that. I think it goes back to the rules that were there when these religions were first set up. I'm not exactly sure but I would say that back in the time that those religions were written that is how things were run.

B: They didn't ask questions back then.

C: Right and we think now when we look at thesesay Islam....we think what a strict religion but that is how it is. And for Christians it is also strict but lots of people don't keep all the rules. They just go for Christmas and Communion and Confirmation and think it isn't strict but some of the rules are. Like, for example, priests can't marry.

B: A lot of people only learn about what other religions can't do... the strict side of it and they don't know some of the traditions and some of the nice things about these religions.

A: Yeah, we need to learn more and to understand and we can do this when we have people from other religions in our class and we can see what they do and what they are like.

C: We're learning not just a bit of the picture, the strict bit. We are learning from the inside.

I: Can you explain that?

C: We are learning from the people of these religions and how they live and not just what is in the news or the papers.

I: The bigger picture

A: The real picture and we have to understand that we are all different.

I: When we started to look at what exactly happens in your Core Curriculum we had a very hard job because lots of things happen in your CSPE programmes and in your Walk Tall Programmes, History, whatever that might also happen in the Core Curriculum. And as you say it kind of happens throughout the whole school day. But there is a curriculum that we need to spend 30 minutes per day on just looking at the issues that you describe. When we were looking at this we picked out four topics. These four topics we think capture what the Ethical Core Curriculum is all about. These topics are on the sheet I am giving out to you. You saw them on the questionnaire last week....

(Students start to list the topics out loud)

I: OK. They were the four we came up with. There was a fifth, which had to do with Grief and Bereavement.

C: That's a good one as well.

I: We are still learning about these topics and the one we are looking at now is Personal, Social, Moral and Spiritual Development. I asked you in the questionnaire what you thought that meant and I am going to ask you again. There are no right or wrong answers and we are still trying to figure out exactly what it means ourselves.

A: I think it means if you are going to grow up in school you should trust in yourself and what you believe in and not change because someone says something different.

B: I think it means to be yourself and to understand others.

C: I think a lot of it is about being true to yourself and avoiding peer pressure and being able to make your own decisions...

A: It's about learning about you and what is important morally. Peer pressure is social but this is about being true to yourself.

I: I think I can understand the personal very well. The bits Frieda and I are having problems with are the Moral and the Spiritual. We keep asking what exactly does Moral and Spiritual Development mean?

B: I'd say it means what we think is right and what we think is wrong.

C: There is no wrong answer because it is about what we think is right and what we think is wrong. (Emphasis from student)

I: Do you think this is the moral side of things?

A: Yeah. It's about believing in your own religion and about what you do.....

B: and you don't (giggles all round)

A: Based on your religion.

I: When we are teaching any subject we give people the knowledge about that subject, the skills say like practical ones. But we also talk about attitudes.

B: I know about teaching skills, say how to recognize different car badges and how to take an engine apart.

(Sighs from the girls and comments on how long it took B to move on to the topic of cars. Comments like "there is a limit." This led to an aside on how people needed freedom to be able to express themselves. Took a little time to get back to the topic of attitudes)

I: Now girls, we have been talking about freedom and one of those freedoms is the freedom of expression. We were talking about attitudes. Is there anything in the Core Curriculum that might in some way influence your attitudes and feelings in years to come? Say you (A) talked about fasting in order to understand how people feel.

Is there anything in the Core Curriculum that would influence you in years to come?

A: Oh definitely...

B: We learn that everybody is human and that we should respect people and we know about differences in religion and in background and we understand difference so our attitude will be different...

A: Yeah, more open and understanding.

I: How about you C, do you think

C: I get very mad because everybody should be treated the same. We are all people and it doesn't matter about their colour or culture. Maybe people are judged by their colour or their religion but that is not right.

B: What we learned in the Core Curriculum and in school made us think about these things. If I saw somebody being badly treated because of their religion I could speak up because I would know what their religion was like. I'd have more sympathy.

I: The second one there we have knowledge of and awareness of equality.....

A: One of our heroes of the school is Martin Luther King. Every class we have something about him comes up every year around his birthday. We have lovely songs about him.

B: She loves the songs....

A: I actually got Eithne to give me a copy of the songs.

B: Tell her about the poem you found.

A: This is true my nanna was getting new wallpaper. This is really weird. There was something over in the corner when they took down the wallpaper. It said.

*When you are born you are pink
When you are sick you are green
When you are hot you are red
When you are cold you are blue
When you die you are white.*

*When I am born I am black
When I am sick I am black
When I am hot I am black
When I am cold I am black
When I die I am black.*

And you think you've the right to call me coloured.

I showed it to my nanna and granddad and they didn't write it and I don't know who wrote it. It's so right. I was so happy to find it and it made me excited because it says what I feel.

C: You should avoid categorizing people because of the colour of their skin at all costs and I think people are afraid. They avoid calling you coloured or black or brown and this is stupid. They are just people and if you do ever categorise people because of the colour of their skin you should not call them coloured or black or brown just dark skinned because people are people and they don't need labels.

I: Are there other aspects of equality outside of colour?

C: Yeah, religion.

B: People are judged on your religion, your faith, and your beliefs.

A: God people are judged on the colour of their socks.

(Giggles all round)

C: That's how stupid it is. People judge you by the clothes you wear, or the way you act or where you come from. Why is it wrong? People come from different countries

and is it a big deal if they want to live in Ireland? We don't own it and there is room for everybody.

A: I get discriminated sometimes around where I live because I am half Spanish and my skin is tanned.

B: That's how stupid it is.

C: When I was small, it was very difficult but not in this school. I don't want that to happen to other people.

A: In the National Youth Parliament, we were having a bit of feedback on racism and equality. (A is a member of this Parliament.) We were having a discussion and this.....I have no idea who he was. This boy got up and said that obviously we must protect our culture and what are we going to do if they take over our jobs. And what about the homeless.....our homeless people and people who are taking our money. That was what made me go rather than holding my breath so I put my hand up for the microphone. I said, "Because they are people too. I am sure a lot of people in this country are not Irish. They have been thrown out of their country because of war, or famine or something. When we were suffering from famine, America and Australia and England let us in. We have to return the favour.

I: But in terms of equality, did he have a point? When we think about equality, are we supposed to think of Irish people as well?

(Chorus of yeahs, of course)

B: Irish people are people too

A: I'm not saying don't but Irish people aren't the only ones with a right to live here. We are talking about human rights.

B: An awful lot of us...if you trace us back....come from all over the world. It should be our country but it is a big enough country for everyone.

I: Exactly.

A: We can still hold on to our own identity. People come over to Ireland and are thrown back out. People love this country and they want to live here. Others have a problem with this and won't let them. Look at Spain and the number of Irish who have bought houses there. You don't have people saying: "get out. You can't live here. You're Irish".

B: Maybe it's because we are an island and we are used to being on our own.

C: We did have problems ourselves. There used to be signs in America saying: "No Blacks, No Irish"....

A: And no dogs.

I: Our third section is Respect and Care for the Environment.

B: Very important. I'm on the Green Committee. We haven't met for a while because we have everything under control. But I think that is probably one of the most important ones on that list.

I: What about the Green Committee?

A: We are trying to get the Green Flag for the school. The one that shows we are environmentally aware.

B: We recycle paper, magazines, and batteries. We do loads of recycling.

A: We do *papier mache* in Art and any that we have left over we put into the recycle bins. Our class made something out of plastic bottles. We put out the bottles and we turned them into a kind of liquid food for plants. Plastic pollutes the atmosphere but it can be turned into food for plants.

B: We haven't made a new one yet because we are still using the old one and it helps make the plants grow.

A: We planted flowers and trees and we used this food and it really helped them to grow.

I: And at home do you recycle?

C: We have a paper bin and I have my own bin and we have a compost bin where we compost everything. And we have all sorts of things.

A: So do we.

I: So you feel this one is really important...

C: Yeah, it is very important to learn how to save the environment because we must look after it for the future.

I: The last one..knowledge and respect for all religions and none....we have touched on this already.

C: Non-theistic belief systems.

I: Do you understand that term.

A: Someone who doesn't believe in God.

I: Does it mean that they believe in something?

B: Yeah.

A: They are humanists. They believe in human nature.

I: Does it mean they believe in a power of any kind. Theo means God. It is the Greek word for God.

C: I don't think so. Non-theistic means that don't believe in a God but they believe in life.

I: Is there an opportunity to celebrate non-theistic beliefs if that is who you are?

A: Yeah. We had Christmas before it was celebrated as Christ's birthday. It was a celebration of Winter. So we can still celebrate Life in this way and nature even if we don't believe in God.

B: We still have a big celebration on the 21st of June for Midsummer. That is a celebration of Life and everyone joins in. That's Humanist Day and it is a Fun day in the school and it is a big event.

I: The last thing I want to ask about is the Core Curriculum. A curriculum is like any curriculum. Like English or Irish. Some of the things you are describing to me happen throughout the whole school day and is part of the culture of the school. Is there a time during the day when you specifically study the things we have been discussing.

A: We study it two times a week at least. Yesterday we had the Walk Tall programme and we were talking about decision making and it was very like the Core Curriculum.

B: We were doing a role play about drink and we were saying: "I dare you to take a drink."

I: In our questionnaire about writing up Rules for The World, you had a very interesting one.

B: Oh, the one about no clothes. I think that is a good one but I think you could only do that if you lived in a warm climate. It would mean that everybody was equal.

I: If you had the freedom to decide what you should put into the Core Curriculum, if Frieda sat down and said "we are going to let you decide what to put into the Core Curriculum, do you think there is anything missing?"

B: No, I don't think so....

I: Well think about it for a minute. We did sit down here in this school and take your ideas on board when we were writing a curriculum 4 years ago.

A: This one here (producing a copy of the school's Ethical Core Curriculum.)

C: I think the most important things are highlighted in this one.

I: If I went home this evening to your parents and I asked them what was happening

in the Ethical Core Curriculum, would they know what I was talking about?

A: Yes they would. I tell them all that is going on.

B: It's good to tell them what is going on in class and to discuss it with them and they are interested in what I know about other religions and things.

C: My Mum and Dad they really like what they are teaching us, about what we learn and so are my friends who are in other schools.

A: That is exactly the same for me. They are surprised (my friends) that it doesn't matter what religion you are and what you believe in, that we all go to school together and learn from each other.

B: Lots of my friends wanted to come to North Bay because of the mixture of different religions and beliefs and some of them did change school to here. My parents talked to me about North Bay and they thought a lot about it before they chose the school because it is a bit of a distance from home.

I: If you had a choice would you have gone to a different school?

B: No, I think it is a beautiful school and I never get up in the morning and don't want to come to school.

C: I agree with you. I am so glad my parents chose North Bay for me. It is a school where people listen and everybody is respected and we all try to get along well. If there is a problem, people listen to you.

A: I find because the school is not big it is easy to be friendly with everyone. It's small so you know everyone. My Mum was surprised when we met people in the shops and they were much younger and we knew each other and said hello and had a chat.

I: There's one last question there. On the questionnaire it asks: Does the Core Curriculum let you explore issues of Justice?

C: Mmm. Yes it does. We have talked about Martin Luther King and Racism and Justice and giving everyone a voice and Human Rights so we have covered a lot of this.

B: And if we don't think something is right we can talk about it and explain our feelings in a fair way.

A: We have a suggestion box where we can put in things that we think are unfair like if we see bullying or rough play. We then get a chance to discuss it in Circle Time as part of the Core Curriculum.

C: I think the word is democracy. We all get a say. Like what topic will be discussed and who will speak about it.

A: And we have a Student Council if we don't like something or we want something changed. Even for the school repairs and the colours that we use in the school.

I: Just a few final things. I was talking to your class last week on what are the things we value in life. Also how does North Bay help us along with those values. What do you think North Bay values?

A: That we are happy and that we are all unique and that we have our own opinions and our own values.

I: Amy?

B: I think that North Bay I think maybe the friendly type of relationship we have with the teachers. It is not about power. We all work together. I find it much more comfortable to know that we can talk to them and if we wore uniform then they wouldn't really see us. You can tell a lot about people from how they look and dress. We are individuals and we can dress as we please to show how unique we are. I'd find it very confusing to call teachers Ms or Mrs. or Sir. You forget the important bit of who they are.

I: But bringing us back to the question. What do you think it values? If I put up a banner over the door and I said North Bay values..... Fill in the values for me.

C: North Bay values us to have our education. It values us as individuals and it values us doing the best we can. I think they do it good. I have learned a lot.

A: We have also learned a lot from our friends about difference. I think North Bay values difference and what makes us unique. In lots of schools you learn by the rules but here we learn from what we do and how we behave and how things are handled in class. We learn how to treat people. We learn at our own pace and once we cover something we move on. We don't keep doing the same thing.

I: When I was looking at values in all Educate Together schools, the value that came out highest was respect. Where would you rate that?

A: Very important like. Yeah even in drama. We just be ourselves and we make up scenes and dances and people are respected even if they do crazy dances. It is being yourself and that is respected.

C: Ciaran takes PE and drama and he lets us go with the flow. He asks us do we have any ideas to improve things and he listens to our ideas.

At this point the interview was terminated as the room was required for class.

Appendix A2

Mark's Interview

Me: Your age?

M: 12

Me: And you are in First Year in Mount Temple

M: Yes

Me: Did you attend any other Primary school before North Bay?

M: Yeah, Belgrove

Me: What age were you went to North Bay?

M: Nine

Me: Did you notice a difference?

M: A lot of a difference. The real change was that in the last school it was all boys. That was the biggest difference. Also the size, Belgrove was much, much bigger.

Me: How did you feel about the change?

M: I was much, much happier. There was a lot of bullying in my old school. Because of the mix of girls and boys it was much different. I wasn't afraid to go out to the yard.

Me: We will come back to the bullying later in the interview, but for the moment I would like your views on how North Bay was different in your opinion to other schools?
Besides it being mixed

M: Well we didn't do religion because it was multi-denominational. It didn't matter what race you are or what religion you had. We were taught that we are all equal and we all need to be respected. We found out a lot more about each other.

Me: So religion was one big difference? Were there other things? As a stranger, going into the school what might I notice?

M: Not a lot really. Just that everybody is really, really equal and it doesn't matter who that person is in the school. We also use first names for everybody.

Me: Did you find that strange?

M: Yes very.

Me: What about how people looked?

M: Oh yeah, there was no uniform. You could wear what you liked

Me: Did this put any pressure on you as to how you dressed?

M: No, not really. We weren't into brand or labels and because everybody is equal it didn't matter how you dressed. We were ourselves.

Me: So the key differences would be boys and girls, no uniforms and first names.

M: Yes

Me: One of the terms we use about schools like NB is that they are multi-denominational. In your own words, can you tell me what multi-denominational means?

M: It means that that all religions and none can be educated together. It didn't matter who or what you were or what colour you were, or what religion you were, you could join the school.

Me: In more traditional schools there is a time for religion, half an hour per day. In schools like North Bay, you have the Ethical Core Curriculum. In a few sentences, can you tell me what the ECC was about?

M: Well basically, we had Circle Time twice a week. Everybody got a chance to talk. You had a thing in your hand and when you had this thing you could talk.

Me: What kinds of things came up in Circle Time?

M: Basically, anything that was going on, we talked about it. Anything we saw happening that we were unhappy about, could be spoken about. We weren't allowed to name names but we could talk about it.

Me: So you set the agenda?

M: Yeah

Me: I remember talking to Ciaran (teacher) and he described North Bay as the telling school.

M: Yeah, there was no shame in telling. It was very different to the idea of snitching that goes on in other schools. This was to make sure that everybody had a chance to say how they felt. There was no bullying and we each knew exactly what it meant to respect people who were different. We are all different and we are entitled to respect.

Me: One of the things the founders of the school wanted to make sure was that it would be democratic. Do you think it was democratic?

M: Oh yeah, we had voting and all. The School had a School-Council and 2 people from each class represent the class. And a representative from the 6th class went around to the junior classes to find out if they had anything to bring to the Council and if there was anything wrong in the school. The report of the Council went all the way to the Board.

Me: Can you remember anything in your time in the school that the School Council brought to the Board?

M: The whole thing about the school becoming a Green School and how that would happen and what help we needed from the Board.

Me: So the Green School idea came originally from the School Council?

M: Yeah.

Me: There were 4 areas that came up as important to include in the Ethical Core Curriculum when we were working on it. The four areas you have there in front of you on the list. Do you think these four areas are important?

M: Yeah, all 4 areas came up in North Bay and they were all seen as important.

Me: In terms of your own personal development, what impact did going to school in North Bay have on you?

M: A huge impact. Like in my other school I was really unhappy and I was bullied. In North Bay I got really happy and had a lot more friends. You got to know people really well and what they were really like. It was small and people acted themselves. Everybody knew everybody else and things were all out in the open and there were no problems that weren't dealt with and discussed.

Me: Did it help you think about things?

M: Yeah in Circle Time we got to look at all sides of things.

Me: In terms of your own development did the school help?

M: Yeah, I learned a lot of things about myself and I also got to mix with girls instead of just boys only.

Me: Two areas in our new programme that caused us some difficulties were Moral and Spiritual Development. What do you think the word moral means?

M: What everybody feels, what they think should happen. What I could do....

Me: What you think should happen.....Can you give me an example of a moral issue? For example you hear people saying "I have a moral dilemma". What does this mean?

M: Not sure.

Me: If I said to you should America have gone to war with Iraq would that be a moral dilemma?

M: It would, but not for my own conscience. It's about your conscience and what is right to do and wrong to do. We did that very well in North Bay. It was all about what you

might do in a situation but also to think about why you were doing and why somebody else might do it differently. It is about your conscience.

Me: Great. Now Spiritual Development. What is this about?

M: People's belief, what kind of God they believe in if they believe in any God.

Me: Could you be spiritual without believing in any God at all?

M: I don't know. I suppose you could. What did you think when you were designing the curriculum?

Me: Good question. I think we decided that spiritual is about your inner self and how that is nurtured and developed.

M: Could we believe in Mother Nature as some people do and is that spiritual?

Me: Of course it could be. The second issue we looked at was knowledge and understanding of equality. Was that a big issue in your school?

M: A really big issue. (laughs)

Me: What aspects of equality did you look at?

M: About how everyone was allowed to talk, to say how they were feeling about things. In Fifth Class we had a box and if anything was going on and you didn't want to say it you wrote it down on a piece of paper.

Me: Equality can be about other things, say equality between rich and poor. Did you look at these kinds of issues?

M: Not really, not that much.

Me: Did you discuss issues like Travellers.

M: No, not really. When I was there this wasn't such a big issue. There were no Travellers in the school.

Me: If somebody had a disability, how was this dealt with?

M: They have special teachers and special helpers and they take them out of the class sometimes.

Me: Equality between boys and girls. Was that an issue?

M: A really big issue. You could play whatever sport you wanted. It didn't matter if you were a boy or a girl. It was the same at P.E. We were all equal. We had boys and girls on the same team.

Me: One of the girls, when I was interviewing her she said that Martin Luther King was a big hero in the school.

- M: We celebrated Martin Luther King Day and we listened to his speech and there was a copy for every class and it's really celebrated.
- Me: Why is he such a big hero in the school?
- M: Because he showed that there is equality between Black and White. We also had loads of songs about equality.
- Me: Respect for the environment we have already touched on. You mentioned the Green Council and the Green School.
- M: Yeah, and there is also the garden that we planted and every class was involved in it and the water garden as well.
- Me: Out in the front there is a wild garden, am I right?
- M: Oh yeah, the wild hedge out the front.
- Me: Knowledge and respect for other religions and belief systems. Did you study other religions?
- M: We did study some religions. Not much though really. It depended on the teacher. It depended on who was in the class.
- Me: Did you study Hinduism?
- M: Not much. I know we studied a religion from Israel. It was Bah'ai and we saw the pictures that his mum brought in. (A boy in the class from Israel)
- Me: Did other parents come in?
- M: Yeah, we had a great Chinese New Year. We brought in Chinese Recipes and Chinese food and we had a great meal out there. And we built a big Chinese Dragon. And tonight they are celebrating International Food Day. It isn't all about religion but about respecting different cultures.
- Me: Another phrase we came up with when we were working on the EEC was the term "non-theistic belief systems." Do you know what that means?
- M: People who don't believe in a God as such but they do believe in leading a good life.
- Me: Can you remember celebrating these non-theistic beliefs?
- M: Not really. But in class it didn't really matter what you believed in. Everybody was fine about it. It was just the way it was and no big deal. It wasn't dealt with in class. If you wanted to study your religion like me and First Communion or Confirmation, you came in on a Sunday.
- Me: Did you mind going in on Sunday?

M: It was kind of hard getting up in the morning. But we had a different teacher so things were different. It was still school though so we were relaxed and it was nice to be there when nobody else was. It was a bit special.

Me: And now that you are in Mount Temple?

M: There isn't much religion. We don't study any one religion there. So it isn't that much different.

Me: You have now gone through the 4 themes. If you were asked which is the most important, which would you select?

M: I think at school the respect for equality and respect for all religions were the two that were most important.

Me: It is suggested that the new programme will take place every day in school just like other subjects. Is this a good idea?

M: Maybe it is but for us it happened anyway at different times and for different reasons, like problems in Circle Time.

Me: If you had a person from a particular religion in your class, what happened?

M: We'd celebrate it.

Me: And say when you made your Confirmation, what happened?

M: My class prepared loads and loads of food for it and we really celebrated. They made a big fuss of us and all our friends and families.

Me: Can you remember any other religion being celebrated?

M: Yeah, the Bah'ai's one year.

Me: Is there anything you think we have left out of the Curriculum?

M: Only Circle Time because that is how we did it.

Me: Does the ECC make you explore issues of Justice?

M: Yeah really because we are asked to look at what is wrong in the world. Mount Temple takes it a step further by letting us join Amnesty International. It is a great idea for Primary School because you get to write to prisoners and things like that.

Me: You think this would be a good?

M: An excellent one.

Me: Another issue that arose in one of the schools was when they collected at Christmas they collected for Human Rights Groups.

M: Do you mean the presents?

Me: Yes. And Friendship bracelets...

- M: That is still done to make friends with children who are worse off and collect money for them through the friendship bracelets.
- Me: Could more be done about issues of justice?
- M: Yeah, get people to sign petitions to show that they care about issues.
- Me: In what ways did justice work in the school itself?
- M: I suppose they talked about things and everybody could really, really talk about the problem and give their side of it and they were listened to. We could always look at both sides of the argument and work to a solution. We looked at things from everybody's perspective.
- Me: You talked about bullying earlier. So how was something like bullying handled in North Bay?
- M: It was dealt with immediately. You had to say what happened and why it happened and write an apology.
- Me: And if there was a bully there...was the bully involved in the discussion?
- M: Yeah but there was a lot more people against the bully. He was made to think about why he did it and give his views. But there was very little bullying and it was a big no-no.
- Me: In terms of Mount Temple if you were up against an issue of bullying, do you think it would help you to remember how it was handled in North Bay?
- M: I don't know as it hasn't happened me but there are a lot of people in my class from Educate Together Schools and I think we might all cope with it in the same way.
- Me: How different is Mount Temple?
- M: Much bigger but the same kind of mixture of people and no uniforms.
- Me: The value that comes out strongest when we look at Educate Together schools is respect...
- M: It is really big, respect for oneself and others.
- Me: If you were asked to give the values for Mount Temple what would they be?
- M: I think respect is big there as well. Nobody shouts at you and nobody pushes you around.
- Me: You talked about the environment earlier. Did North Bay encourage you to respect the environment?
- M: Yeah, in lots of ways, the Green School, recycling, bringing in a gardener to work with us to plant the wild garden. And we did a litter attack on the whole area where we went around Kilbarrack and picked up all the rubbish we could see. What was

really, really annoying was people throwing rubbish in through the railings or it blowing in. And there was a special tree there for Brian who died when he was in First Year and that is like a sacred tree. You can't touch it.

Me: If I said to you name 3 things that North Bay valued in its students, what would you name?

M: That everyone should have their say, that nobody should be bullied because of their religion or colour or whatever and that everybody is equal and that nothing should be done to harm them. Some people in my class weren't Irish and some weren't white. But nobody really cared. It was never an issue.

Me: Could you as Mark write down 3 things that you value in life.

M: I suppose friends, having a good life and sport.

Me: Friends come up really strongly. What did you value most in North Bay?

M: No bullying and respect and I loved going in there every day.

Me: You've left North Bay now. What were the important things that you took away with you from North Bay?

M: Friends, respect for difference and respect for equality.

Me: Imagine I am a Martian and I ask you to tell me what an Educate Together School is in a sentence.

M: Everybody is equal and treated the same and it doesn't matter what their religion is or what colour they are or if they are a boy or a girl.

Me: The best day there?

M: When we went to Carlingford, the best few days of our lives.

Me: Is there anything you would change about it?

M: Bigger, with more facilities. More and better PE Facilities and more sports.

Me: I asked the older boys if they had children in years to come would they send them to a multi-denominational school and they all said yes. Would you?

M: Most definitely. You can have a say, it is democratic, everyone is equal and you can be yourself and not wear a uniform and be treated with respect.

Me: OK that's it Mark. Well done.

Appendix B2

Interview with Past Students

Recording
26th February

Ok. Lads the object of the exercise is to talk to you about your experiences in an Educate Together school.. You all went to North Dublin. Did you attend any other school?

B: No

M: I am taking you back what, fourteen years. I may have to refresh your memories of things like the Core Curriculum. What are your strongest memories of the school?

B: That's a hard question

M: How do you think that your school differed?

B: Different religions

I didn't know what most people's religions were

You didn't really know if people were whatever. It wasn't really an issue.

M: Would you have celebrated different feast days, say religions of people who were in the school

B: No, we went to school on feast days, we didn't distinguish any one religion

M: How did you address your teachers

B: Oh, by their first names.

M: Did you all take that for granted?

B: Oh, yeah.,

M: Did it make a difference?

B: Oh yeah, we were people, not just labels and that was right across the board, regardless of who was in the school.

M: The term multi-denominational , if you were asked tomorrow to define it what would you say?

B: All different belief systems.

Me: Non theistic. What does that mean?

B: Not sure, people who have no religion. It doesn't mean atheist anyway.

M: The 4 key things that we worked out there from the Core Curriculum. Do you want to look at them in the questionnaire? Do you think these 4 key things were present in the Core Curriculum?

B: I don't think the environment was part of the CC. Yes, I'd agree with the others. Did we do SMP And Spiritual?

I think the first one covers them all. It's not like a subject. It's like how we lived our lives in the school ----everybody in the school. I think the rest of them are subjects. But the first was a way of life.

M: Just to bring you back a stage, what was on the CC? Can you remember?

B: We studied about other religions

What they believed in and all

We did projects for example

We didn't always do the projects at the CC Was it a subject? Did we have a special time?

No, we did it at different times.

M: The PSMS. Can any of you explain what it means?

B: Personal: Finding yourself, being your own person.

I think the social means how we relate to other people, that we include everybody in what we do.

The moral I think that means right and wrong. The spiritual that's a hard one. It's not really religious.

It's often defined in a religious sort of way. Maybe its how we relate to things on a higher level.

M: You are on the right track

B: Maybe it relates to our inner self, to a deeper self and how we relate to that. It's hard to put into words.

M: Darren, do you think the first of these issues has more to do with the ethos of the school?

I think it's sort of an abstract idea but if you develop it, the other three will follow.

Maybe also if you develop the other three the first one will happen. If you learn how to understand and respect people then you have the social one covered.

A: That happened all the time. Like if you were given out to for breaking a rule or whatever, you talked about respecting other people. You learned the first principle through the day-to-day happenings in the school.

M: when I did research before, respect came up as the strongest value.

M: The second of the strands, equality what does this mean? In one of the school interviews they immediately associated it with Martin Luther King.

B: There is no single definition

Treating everyone as an equal, regardless of sex, age, race, colour, class.

M: Would you have looked at issues like equality for Travellers?

B: No, it was nothing specific. It was a general principle. We just knew that it was a basic human right and it was really approached from that angle.

M: The environment wasn't such a huge issue. What about the last one? The knowledge of different religions etc.

B: For us in our school, that seemed to be the focus of the CC. It is what we did. We learned about other religions.

M: Did the knowledge of the other religions ever bring up issues for you around equality, for example, the way women might be treated, issues that we view from a different perspective.

B: We didn't ever really look at things like that. We went back and learned the story of the different religions, the roots of where it came from, its customs. We didn't really take up any challenging issues. Maybe we were too young.

B: They told us about versions of truth, not The Truth. We then made up our minds.

M: Did you have visitors from various religious groups coming in to visit?

B: No, not really, that I can remember.

M: Did you have any signs of religions on the walls?

B: Only if you were doing a project and then any group of projects could be displayed at any time.

M: Was secondary school a huge change for you in terms of the ethos, how things were done, how things were handled?

B: No, not Mount Temple. There really wasn't that big a difference. No uniforms, a democratic process, a study of different religions.

We were all older and things might have been handled differently because we were older.

M: Do you think the school has a lasting impact on you? Clearly, in terms of friendship that is the case but in other ways....

B: Yeah, we mix freely with all types of people. One of our friends, he's very religious and that isn't an issue for us. We respect his beliefs even though we may not agree with them.

We just accept difference for what it is.

M: Would you feel that the education you got in an Educate Together School would help you to take action if you saw examples of inequality or whatever?

B: I think I would react. I am not sure how much of that would be due to my home life or how much my early education would influence it. I was brought up in a home by people who set up the school, so it is hard to find that distance, where one influence begins and another ends.

(At this point in the interview I discovered that all three students had some level of involvement in setting up North Dublin)

M: I am speaking to the converted.

But the school itself, if you had to write a piece for a newspaper in the morning on the impact of North Dublin on my life, what would stand out? I'm looking for a kind of a lasting impact.

B: One thing for me was going to St. Michael's House down the road, I had no contact with disability and without the school I think that would never have happened. We also had people with disabilities in our class and we grew up thinking that it was OK, that it was part of life.

M: The fact that one of your close friends also went to an ET school, would that ever be discussed or would it ever come up in conversation?

B: No, we knew where he had gone to school, but it was just a coincidence, we got on socially and that came first.

M: The values of ET, I have tried to tease them out. What do you think the school valued.

B: Achieve to the best of your ability, as much as you can.
It wasn't a competitive world. We weren't graded on our work.

M: And you still keep contact.

B: We went back for the opening of the new school.
Fascinating, Sally knew us all by our first names.
There were lots of hugs even though we've changed a lot.

M: In terms of your own values were there any particular values you took away from North Dublin?

B: Not everyone was confident. Unconfident is it?
But most of us knew how to stand on our own two feet, knew how to respect ourselves and others.

M: Do you think there was anything that was different, that you might not have got in a traditional school? Would they have an influence of the area you have chosen in the CAO

B: No, that came from Mount Temple. I have chosen Maths.
For me, a small bit. I want to do BESS. Focus on Social Studies and Economics

I want to do BESS but with a focus on politics. That may have something to do with school as I feel an interest in issues about life and quality of life.

M: If you had a choice all over again, would you go to an ET school?

B: Unanimous yes for the tape.

M: If you have children of your own?

B: There is no doubt, well maybe the wife.

M: Because I want them to understand different religions, about issues of equality, about the things that are important to me. They will feel more at home in an ET school as it will be like the values of the home.

They can make up their own minds about religious convictions as long as they have a good knowledge of all religions.

B: Mixed sex, I think that is vitally important. Otherwise, it just doesn't make sense. The only true way to understand equality is to attend school where equality is lived out every day and that is what I would want for my children. I don't want girls to be a foreign species.

M: What might the ET school offer that a more traditional school couldn't?

B: An understanding of difference.

M: Even if the statistics show that people do much better in single sex schools.

B: Maybe academically. There is a lot more to education and development than academic life and it certainly hasn't harmed me. It's about raising of confidence, about respect, about knowing how others think. These things are important.

Appendix C2

PAUL ROWE

Q Now Paul, you are aware of the rules and the regulations around this and anything that is being discussed today goes back to you for your permission to change or to alter.

A Sure

Q The research is based around the role of educate together schools, in the terms of Irish education specifically, and in relation to the roles that you play. Very briefly, can you give me your perspective on the role of Educate Together in Irish education.

A The role of Educate Together is to provide an alternative, in an environment where there is an overwhelming monopoly of privately owned religious primary education. And there are a number of different strands to that role. Depending on the person's viewpoint. One strand is to exercise choice, and the other strand would be the perception that Educate Together is trying to create, what should be the provision of state education, in the county. And it is trying to recreate the type of all-inclusive nature of the National State System, which was part of the initial concept.

Q You talk about this initial concept, how involved were you or were you involved in the initial stages of Educate Together?

A I was talking about the initial concept of the National School System and my knowledge of that particular separation between the literal and the moral part of the education curriculum ...but how involved was I at the start? My involvement was from 1987 when I was looking around for schools to send my first child to and I would have been involved in about the fourth year of operations of the third Educate Together school. Since that time I have been involved either directly or indirectly in most of the new Educate Together schools that opened.

Q Ok so your involvement has been fairly consistent down through the years

A Increasingly so ...and, for example, I was in the parent teachers association of North Dublin, the Chairperson left to help set up North Bay ...and that would be my first involvement.

Q And that is going right back to 1987

A Yeah

Q Ok there has been a huge increase in the number of Educate Together schools. I know that statistically they are a very small part of Irish education but there has been a significant increase. What do you put increase down to?

A The rapid increase is as a result of a certain lifting of the restrictions, administrative restrictions on the development of school, and at the same time, an organic growth of the sector itself. Also it's ability to attract more people through its profile, and simply the greater number of people who found out about it.

Q Would you put it down in anyway to the fact that the profile of Irish society has changed?

A There is that element, but it is actually difficult to judge that, and there was always a very significant minority of people in Ireland looking for inclusive and multi-denominational education, and the great difficulty about opening a new school, was up till 1999, January, they actually had to buy sites, to buy schools that was a huge undertaking and incredibly daunting to people, there was also quite a hostile administrative and social environment in many cases. You also another change.....the impact of the economics and social planning that the country has had, in general and the evolution of Irish society as a whole. So that is part of it. And it's the whole overall picture and it is very easy just to say that well because Irish society has evolved and we are in a new dawn of prosperity and progress, that this is the reason why more and more looking to Educate Together schools. It is an open question, whether there was always a significant demand for educate inclusive schools, and that amount had been held in check by the incredibly restrictive administrative environment of the past

Q And I suppose society has just changed governments and everything as well in terms of the type of society that is emerging in Ireland and the government are more flexible in their approach. When the schools were first set up they were

incredibly advanced in terms of their thinking, from the educational philosophy perspective, but there is a feeling, in an educational environment that many of the aspects, that form part of the first Dalkey school, in fact the overriding principles, were not really tested in the society of the day, and today's society is a far more pluralist society. Do you think that Educate Together schools answer the needs of our pluralist society?

A I think that the model of school governorship or the governance, has stood the test extremely well, and it is a very appropriate model for the building of a proper inclusive network of primary schools. You have to put this in context, when the Dalkey school project opened and it talks about a school under democratic management? At the time even the concept of the Board of Management was very new. There were very, very few schools that had Boards of Management. And co-educational schools were very few and far between. The philosophical viewpoint and the theoretical concept of child-centred education was also very new ...though it was officially mentioned in the 1971 curriculum. And all those agendas have advanced incredibly since that time. Now we have virtually no school in the entire country without a Board of Management. And the style of the Board of Management is universally accepted. The big difference though is that the Dalkey School Project introduced a system of governance that defined the ethos, or the fundamental policy for the school in a transparent and open and legally enforceable form, which is still distinct and still quite separate from all the other sectors of education. So for example, we are criticised for suggesting that we are child-centred and the implications being that other sectors aren't child-centered. The big issue is that our Boards of Management operate with the legal charge that they must be child-centred in the decision making process. Which does not apply to Boards of Management in other sectors, and similarly there is a legal obligation on the Board to have all their policies grounded on what we call, the multi-denominational principles. I suspect that in future years we will be calling it the inclusive principle and that is a legal charge which any teacher or parent of a child, can ask for a legal review of if they seriously think they are (Board) going against them.

Q So you see it coming really from a legal perspective

A Yeah the unique role of the patron in the Irish system has allowed a specified underlined, value to all the policy decisions of the Board of Management of the school, in a legally enforceable way. And interestingly that legal control from the patrons was put in place in order to try and retain the control of the ethos. And by the denominational bodies, who were no longer able to maintain that control by simply by influence of personnel alone.

Q Do you regard this as a retrospective thing.

A No I do not regard that retrospectively. I think the intention was to try and define, and to provide the power of religious denomination over schools to define their ethos. In the Educate Together model that power has been taken to define a set of rights and principles. Which has been fully vindicated over the last seven years of our operation. You have a model here that defines fundamental policies of the board of management in a language that is easily understood by parents, teachers, children and the wider community. And this gives a huge amount of comfort because they know exactly what the ethical principles of the school is, and it simply does not exist, and it is impossible to find even one document which would define the Catholic ethos or the Church of Ireland ethos.

Q In terms of a child and I am bringing this back to the educational perspective and leaving aside the legal and ethical side. You have schools that may have 27 different nationalities or 28 different nationalities, or whatever, in terms of the child sitting in the classroom, what can a multi-denominational school offer that a traditional denominational school can't, and we talked about the ethos and the denominational schools might argue that their ethos is also inclusive...

A I think that the denominational schools would argue that they do operate very high standards of inclusiveness in the way they operate and the difference that an Educate Together school provides, is that there is a fundamental guarantee, that whenever a child walks into the school, or a family walks into the school, that their identity whether in religious or cultural or social background terms, and I suspect in the future increasingly on ability terms, is guaranteed as a right, without an application, or without request. And that is the starting point of all

activities, of the school whether from the Board, the teaching practice, or involvement of parents, or Parents Teachers Association, or whatever, and that is a unique commitment, given by the Educate Together schools. Which has a number of ramifications, first of all that children from the age of four or five, or whenever they start their experience in school, is that there, fundamental to the educational process, is the fact that people think differently, is specifically recognised, and is cherished. From the educational point of view, we shift the entire function of the school, the function of teaching, from a paradigm in which the school or the teacher is putting forward what is right, or the correct way of thinking, shifted that away into a paradigm that the school is saying there are these different ways of looking at a particular issue. And the emphasis is then placed on the recipient of the education, the child, or the student to be facilitated in evaluating those viewpoints.

Q That is a very mature approach. I mean, how do you put that into action with five year olds I mean there are usually parameters there, there are no parameters

A For a five year old and when I am asked these questions I would always say I am, and I want to qualify my answer that I am not a professional teacher, not an expert in this field. But for a five year old, there is the underlying function that if Johnny sitting next door is a Presbyterian or a Muslim, or a non practising catholic, or a very devout catholic, that view point is equally valued, equally respected, and the word I would emphasise is equally cherished in the school, and there is no assumption in any way or any aspect, of school life, that the school has an obligation to promote a particular view. Now as the child goes through the whole programme, from primary infants level it is a very simple concept. In the sense that people being happy, people being cherished, people not feeling threatened by the fact that people are different colour or background. As that goes through the experience of school, up to the children when they are twelve or thirteen, then you get a situation where those assumptions, percolate into other areas. So for example in the national science field, the emphasis is then more on the child evaluating the ideas that are being presented in school, rather than learning a correct way of thinking. Of what is the right answer.

Q I think that is a very, very sophisticated way of thinking, and in the case that you are describing is in the development of critical thinkers with very young children, and I think that is laudable. But as a growing organisation how can you guarantee this is what is actually happening on the ground, you know is there a fear that as the organisation grows, that the maverick element may develop within the organisation?

A Educate Together is an organisation, of maverick elements. And when you say maverick elements, then creativity often is. You know when you have got, cherishing and welcoming creativity, is actual central to the process. So is there a fear?

Q What I am saying is that you are the ultimate guardian of the ethos at this moment in time.

A No, it does not work that way.

Q No

A For example of the 28 Educate Together schools, only 10 are working with the patronage, of Educate Together nationally. Of the 18 others all of them actually operate under the local patronage or the patronage of another body. So the way in which we envisage ensuring, some core standards in the implementation and delivery, of this, the education philosophy, is very much, a process of promotion of best practice, promoting a system of checks, quality standards, quality assurance, which we will be inviting our members and inviting people outside, who wish to adopt these approaches in education to buy into. The common core curriculum idea that, in a non-prescriptive way, identifies the key elements in the ethical education curriculum, which is delivered throughout the sector, is an attempt to bring the central key elements of that curriculum together. In such a way that does not prevent all kinds of creativity and maverick elements, enriching itself in that process. But we hope that at the end of the next year or so that to have, if something is going, informal ETQ mark, that the success of quality assurance, standards are checked. And we will be inviting members of Educate Together to adopt it. And the approach that we have is the same way is that these are guidelines and are adopting a set of procedures, which a teacher a parent of

the school can say, well, our school does this, this and this. But hang on the Educate Together guidelines say this, this and this. Now a guideline is a guideline and if the school can show a very good reason why they are not adopting these guidelines, they are obviously free to do so. I mean it is not a restrictive or legally binding control.

Q Developing out of this research is also the whole concept of a blue print, for an ethical core curriculum, where the key elements as you said have been identified, what do you feel about that, do you feel that is necessary?

A I have never listened to the idea of a blueprint.

Q We have

A Well my concept of a blueprint is that I have an engineering background and blue prints were copies of fundamental drawings that you ignored at your peril or the machine would not work. The way I would see it, and I suppose as I have explained it, is that there is the process of serious research identifying from this very rich 27 or 28 year old body of experience, is a whole series of curricular objectives, content and teaching practice. Which as proven to be effective in delivering the values of the ethos of Educate Together, in the precise teaching context of an Irish national school. And that in that the experience should be validated and presented, in such a way that people can buy into that, utilise it and enrich it. And so as I say that is not what my concept of what a blue print can do. But that I would see this as, the core, as the distillation of the core experience, in such a way that people can take it away, use it as a starting point, and enrich it and improve it. And this idea that you can copy any thing that you like so long as you make it better.

Q That would be our own thinking as well. Though the term blue print may be somewhat misleading word in terms of what it actually does. Part of the issue around the delivery of the Ethical Core Curriculum, and indeed teaching in a multi non denominational school full stop, would be the absence of training, for teachers. And do you feel there is a need for training for teachers coming into the sector, or is it possible to just come in from the traditional, you know, training college and become part of what is the ethos of an ET school?

A It is possible to do so, because all the teachers that are coming in into our sector have done that and have made fantastic contributions to our school. But the lack of any pre service provision, specifically dealing with the specific form of governance of the educate together sector, and the particular, the philosophical starting point in delivering Educate Together schools, is a major shortcoming, which has been difficult to address up to now and which Educate Together has been seeking to address since 1999, when it was first formally addressed. And they have been managed in a rather patchy way, to deliver in-service courses. And the first time I think is 1987 as a first attempt to co-ordinate the Ethical Curriculum, and there have been a number of further in service programmes. We are actively discussing with St. Pat's the implementation of a module in the 3rd year programme, which would deal particularly with the multi-denominational sector. It is such a big problem, we are coming from a background where it is relatively recent only that teachers did not have to have their Baptisimal Certificate from the Church of Ireland, or the Catholic Church to gain entrance to a teacher training college. So there is quite a lot of work to be done in this area. And one of the things that we are quite concerned about is the rather easy way in which teacher training colleges and teachers unions, just say well, any properly qualified INTO member or person going through the teacher training college can automatically work in different ethical environments. And there has to be specific recognition from the teacher training colleges for teachers who wish to work in our sector.

Q You mentioned earlier the ethos of the teacher training colleges being specifically Catholic or Church of Ireland. In reality in the next 10 years can you see a change like if the training colleges are to remain totally denominational

A Well I would say, I am unaware of the exact legal terms in which ...St. Pat's became part of DCU. But one of things we would have thought, and would certainly have seen is that there is certainly greater openness, now in St. Pat's to give provision of programmes, which do give trainee teachers information about Educate Together schools.

But if we are going to be forced down the road of becoming an alternative institutional framework which is where all the regulations of the Department tend to force us, then we would think that is a very retrograde step and we think that in teacher training and in a number of wide areas that it would be a retrograde step to force Educate Together into a huge national institutional, structure which has its own teacher training colleges, its own schools. We are fundamentally against the private ownership of schools and we think they should be state owned and we think there should be state provision for the training of teachers for all sectors.

Q So they become more like us and we are becoming more like them!

A Well I think the vast amount of state funding going into the running of teacher training colleges has to mean something. I mean you can say on the record that we are very disappointed historically that the State or the teacher training institutions have not picked up the potential of the educate together philosophy of education, and moderate government. And I think it has been quite a negative, and a lost opportunity and there is no academic institution, in this state, which does not endorse or promote this viewpoint, and if it had done, it would have a far more healthy national curriculum. In particular, is the potential for this model of education for the religious formation of children, and would appear to us to offer significant advantages over the denominational model of national schools. And it is regrettable that the institutions such as Marino, or Mary I or whatever, haven't actually looked at this.

Q Yet from the ethical perspective and you look at the philosophical perspective and if you look at the national school curriculum which has been published in the last couple of years, it has far stronger echo of the educate together sector than it does of the denominational sector. It talks about inclusive ethos and it specifically avoids mention of any specific religious instruction. It talks about educating children together and the language resonates very strongly of educate together. Do you agree?

A Educate together would see that as a very positive development, the fact that certain elements of the approach have been taken and articulated in for example

the Education Act, and it is a step in the right direction we don't, we have never claimed exclusivity to these ideas

Q You are happy about the notion that the ethos has been recognised

A Yes, this can be specifically dealt with. Say for example we are working to create a national network of schools, which implement the same kind of guarantees for the minority, and increases the positive support for diversity, as offered by the educate together model. We don't say that they have to be Educate Together schools.

Q You talked earlier about the concept of multi-denominational maybe changing to the concept of inclusivity. Could you see the term multi-denominational maybe disappearing.

A Yes I could I mean I do not know if that is going to happen or not.

Q Why?

A I mean the difficulty with the term multi denominational is that it is inaccurate in a sense. Denomination is a particular body of thinking within a particular frame system and you have denominations in the Christian church, and you have denominations in the Muslim faith, and you have denominations in the Buddhist faith, and whereas the way we use the term in the educate together model, is that the school starts from a fundamental acceptance of the core identity of the child, and it is particularly defined in religious, cultural and social background terms, which is far wider than just simply the sense of denominational as recognised through religious affiliation. And there are other things about the Educate Together model is that commitment is tied into the integral whole of the commitment to counteract gender stereotyping, to oblige the management of the schools to take due regard for the diverse needs of the child, to make this a priority, a first priority in decision making and to operate in a general partnership between the professional role of teachers and the direct involvement of parents. And there is that model which is much wider than just a traditional concept of multi-denominational.

Q That is interesting, because one of the questions that the children were asked what was their understanding of the term of multi denominational and their

understanding is as exactly as you have described it. The cultural background, the social background, and also the religious, but it is very much an also. So maybe the term is redundant?

A You have to be aware of careful of giving up a brand

Q And a successful brand

A And there is some historical validity, and I think you will find 57 varieties of the label, but I think in fairness you don't produce 57 products. There is a difficulty there, but as one leading figure in Educate Together said, we are much more than multi-denominational and I think this is generally recognised in education circles. The name doesn't necessarily capture that but it is the reality.

Q It is recognised as I said even by the children in the school themselves. And before we went on the record we were talking about some of the issues facing the sector at the moment, from your perspective as CEO what do you perceive as the big problems facing the sector in the future and how can the Department of Education, help or hinder the further development of the sector

A The big, the big problem facing the sector is that we have to get to a stage in which new parents see the Educate Together alternative on an equal basis in terms of resource, and facilities, as other types of education. It is completely unacceptable that a parent who wishes to have their children educated in an environment which respects their conscience, when there is no school in existence has to then set about creating a school, in an environment that there is no appropriate mechanisms in state administration to provide these schools. The fundamental problem facing us is that we have to move from a situation where the Department of Education, has no mechanisms what so ever to create a new school. Any where in the country and it is only reacting so we have burgeoning areas of growth around our major centres of population throughout the country, and the state is prepared to reserve sites for schools but it has no mechanism what so ever to create those schools. The local community has to create the schools, and the state only reacts after those schools have been created. This results in an absolutely shameful history in which, pioneering, inclusive schools, of incredible high quality have been forced to open in abysmal facilities, and I can run through

them, and part of your research might to be actually go through them. The Dalkey School Project, two private houses and then on four rented campuses, before a building was provided, and Bray is a similar example and the North Dublin national school opened in a front room of a private house, North Bay is one of the exceptions. Kilkenny opening and operating for many years out of a Scout Den, Limerick operating in the Red Cross building, and in two other locations, before finding and received any state supports, the number of schools that had to move into school buildings condemned by their previous occupants .the three schools which opened last year in Scout Dens or Order of Malta Halls in areas that state has actually reserved sites for schools and have no mechanisms what so ever to utilise those sites, to create a school. And this is the fundamental issue which is not going to go away, and as I say they are going to have to address, and what we would like to see, and we have asked, is the Department of Education, the planning section to sit down with us, and work out a systematic, planned properly funded, system whereby we can create a national network of these schools. And those schools are planned for and funded, before they are needed by the local community and the local community does not have to go through torture for years before there is an appropriate course of action

Q Realistically can you see that happening, over the years have you seen anything to indicate that you are getting closer?

A Well this is the challenge for Educate Together. The fact that educate together is expanding and building its resources despite all this, indicates that we are becoming more powerful. There are significant advances being made, which have been referred to in the legislative environment. In January '99 the Department of Education committed itself to providing sites for Educate Together schools, despite the fact that it has been virtually annulled in the past year in the delays in publishing the details of the Department's ability to honour that commitment. And that legislative step forward was made. Educate Together as an organisation is far more able now to lobby effectively at a national level, than it has been in the past. It is recognised as being a far larger constituency as it is in the past, and for the first time there is a legislative environment, which is opening

the possibility of a serious legal challenge on some of the issues. Now, we are not particularly very gung ho about going down the legal route, and it could be very long and it could be very costly to all concerned and we would be far better to get an appropriate and prudent change of government policy. But it is appearing in the present climate, that we are going to have to go down this legal route. And our legal advice is on the issue of the provision of accommodation for education, which respects the lawful and conscience.... right of families which is enshrined in the Constitution, and it is very strong.

Q And would you envisage that legal challenge being taken by parents?

A It would have to be first of all.

Q It would not be the organisation

A No, the only organisation which has been allowed to be “ in locus”, in position is the Right to Life movements. No other organisation has been given the right to take a case in Irish law. It has to be a specific parent who can show that the education of their children is being impeded and their rights are being impeded as a result of government policy and we would be of the view that there are thousands of parents in that situation and we would be actively looking for parents to make the case on those grounds at the end of this year.

Q Is there any mechanism, and I am presuming the answer to be no, in place which allows parents in a new area to be surveyed about the type of schools that they want

A Well I mean educate together association has tried to do this. And for example the best case of this would be the Dalkey School survey in 1975, and certainly there is a provision in the report by the Commission on the Criteria for new Schools that there would be proper local consultation before the type is chosen. And the despite the fact that report was published in 1998 it has been extremely slow, in any of its provisions being implemented. And the advisory commission now is simply writing letters to all the patrons and boards of management, principal teachers and parents associations, of local schools, before, and then a public meeting takes place to find out what is required. We would feel that is a complete travesty as it only includes existing parents and existing schools. We

would like to see a situation in any area, where there is a need for a new school, that there is a proper survey undertaken, with school information provided to the parents concerned.... And all options highlighted and explained.

Q Taken by the Department of Education?

A Yes and it would have to be an informed choice, so you can't have situation where you have for example 150 parents surveyed and the continuation of the old system that Educate Together wanted to open a school, the Department has considered the impact on the school, we would take that as being perfectly valid in terms of opening a school of a certain type and whereas if you are opening a school that offers choice, where there is no choice and offers rights where there is no rights, for minority, ...and we find it inappropriate to consider the impact on existing schools, in that context.

Q But realistically with the problems that the Department is having at the moment do you think that would happen? I mean the department is looking at schools, in effect that should be closed because they are not viable.

A The department has another problem and that is in relation to structure of the school system. And it is privately owned. And even in the current increase of funding in the capital programme they are pumping more and more finance into a privately owned system. And historically ...they are incapable of flexibility in the face of changing public demand. And there are major issues that we would think the Public Accounts Committee should look at, the legal safeguards for the huge public funds being invested in privately owned school. And in particular for the Department to be able to reallocate unused educational spaces. And currently I would say,...I am unable to get detailed information about it, but the figures being talked about are 20,000 secondary level empty spaces and 60,000 first level empty spaces. We need to find a creative way to use the underused education space in the light of public demand. But historically except in a very small number of cases, that has proved to be impossible. And in that small number of cases the procedure was long and detailed and this whole area is proving very difficult to move through and reach solutions.

Q It is next to impossible unless you throw the whole system up in the air and let it fall where it will.

A Denominational Patrons have the control of this issue.

Q It is not unheard of to secure these premises from denominational Boards.

A Yes, an example would be Ranelagh, Ardee, Rathfarnham Educate Together National School., North Bay.

Q Other areas to come?

A We know there are a significant amount of spaces in school in the Marino district, 7,000 in the greater Griffith Avenue area, and Educate Together have clearly defined a need for another school in the area. The new Glasnevin school had hoped to set up in Clontarf as had North Bay originally and the need for an Educate Together school in this general area has long been identified. The argument that there are empty spaces in schools in the area is of no benefit to those parents who want to avail of an Educate Together school so now once again the school has moved to Glasnevin and is significantly away from its base. This is an example of the type of problem that emerges for the sector and the problem of accessing existing spaces or buildings. There can be no winners...yes there is possibly 1,000 empty spaces in that area.

Q That is the accommodation side of it and in the teachers side of it we talked about the lack of training From the ethos perspective, and in choosing teachers for these sector what are the qualities that you look for?

A Well

Q I know it is difficult.

A The Department of Education lays down a very strict set of criteria in terms of the selection boards for principals and the type of criteria thrown up by those selection boards is very much in line with that of all other school types. Each selection Board is responsible for its own set of criteria and this must be carefully agreed by them. From the Educate Together and the patron point of view, there are two critical criteria that we would adopt. And first of all people who are fundamentally committed to the child-centred approach towards children and the delivery of our ethical view point. And the other question apart from this and

their overall ability and other standards and requirements would be a openness and ability to work in a partnership environment, with the Board of Management, and parental involvement. And those would be the two critical criteria for the selection of Principals. In terms of mainstream teachers the criteria that we would adopt would again concentrate on those two areas, and obviously needs of a particular school from a curricular perspective, and they would change from school to school.

Q And depending on the principal obviously.

A The particular mix of the team as a whole.

Q Has it ever gone disastrously wrong?

A Sure yeah

Q What happens in a situation like that if ...

A When I say yes to disastrously wrong, a disaster usually means something that is terminal. And I would have to say it has not, it has never gone terminally wrong but we have had major difficulties in our schools. And one of things that we are aware of is that the school governors which has been severely tested. But it has been severely tested even more by pressure of the administrative environment that has been placed on them and they have on occasions been placed under enormous financial pressures in terms of facilities and accommodation. And this has often created tremendous pressures and stressful situations, for Boards of Management, voluntary groups and parents and in particular the interface between parents and Boards in the school. And the times when it has gone seriously wrong with the selection of the principal teacher, in the early stages of a project, Crumlin multi denominational school and also the whole issue of getting the school tuned in and adopting employment practices, and management practices which were not deemed appropriate to the professional role, of the principal teacher And this has been a major learning area of the sector, from the very beginning. And now one of the strengths, the fact is that you don't go to a doctor who only looks after healthy children.....is the fact that educate together have studied in detail each of these situations, that have arisen and we have been proactive in resolving, mediating and facilitating and resolving these issues, as

they have emerged. And we have turned all that experience into guidelines, and best practice. And one of the amendments of the Educate Together charter, since 1990 is to significantly strengthen the way that we recognised the professional nature of our teachers and balancing this with the democratic involvement of parents in the school.

Q In my previous research I remember one of the teachers referring to the first days in one of the multi denominational schools having come from the denominational schools as being like a gold fish bowl. ...he said every where you looked there were parents

A Well the principle has to be managed, and where can this be an issue for teachers,... is the boundaries and barriers and the rights and privileges, in that relationship are not clearly defined by the board of management of the school. And there are two issues here, that many teachers will have come from an environment in which parental involvement was not seen as either a desirable, necessarily, or normal in schools. I think it is only since 1996 that the Department published a circular, recognising parents in the educational process.

Q In that they were seen as a threat in education circles for a long, long time

A So there is that historical background, if the teacher is not happy with the parental involvement and using them as a resource and a support, then they are unlikely to be happy working in an educate together environment. But if they do see parental involvement as a resource and something to be valued in the educational process, then the critical issue as I have stipulated before, is that the Board of Management must clearly define the parameters, in which that involvement can operate for the best interests of the children. And what we found, and where the difficulties emerged, is where the Board of Management are not articulating the parameters in which a proper partnership approach, a genuine partnership, between the professional role and the involvement of the parents is nurtured and can flourish.

Q I know you are conscious of the time and just very, very quickly for the future and expansion I know one of those things you are faced with is the prospect of expanding into the second level sector.

A Expanding into the second level is a much wider question, and that is to do with the nature of the second level, in Irish education itself. And also the crisis that is developing in that sector, quite independent of any involvement that educate together may have. There is a major question on the entire validity of the concept of a second level in education, the separation between primary and secondary is clearly as a result of the historical primary school system and secondary system was where you paid or you accessed the system through scholarship and this has not been dealt, with the historic baggage of that difference since the second level system became a free one. The biggest difficulty with the second level is that there is no integrated philosophical approach to education, which educate or determine the education process from start to finish. And whilst we do have in the primary level the chartered curriculum at secondary level, we simply have a system of subject teaching and academic testing, ...and the entire parameters and the entire philosophical basis of the entire approach is being questioned. There is a crying need for reform and in anticipation of that motivation for reform and in the establishment of a educate together secondary level school, any legal charges on the board of management on second level schools would be around ethos.....so it would be quite easy to see the extension of the inclusive charge on the board of management, to operate in a second level school very successfully, and all the basic teaching and management and operating of policy in existence in an Educate Together primary school could operate in the secondary. The big challenge coming is in terms of the democratic management of such schools and in particular the legal obligations that the education programme of the schools must be based on the needs of the student and that raises huge issues, from the entire pedagogical evaluation and assessment system of second level which I think is going to be the hardest part of it.

Q Can you see it happening?

A Maybe, into the future.

Q One bug bear of my own and I am going to finish on this. We talk about being inclusive and we have not even touched on special schools, or special needs or children with higher IQ's and all these section that are covered, and not just

cultural or religious or whatever, and one of things that has always been an issue for me is the first come first served. How inclusive can that be and I understand the thinking and philosophy of it but how inclusive can that be?

A It can be extremely exclusive and restrictive. There is the fundamental issue of exclusivity specifically in the operation of the school, is having places to meet the demand. And our objective is that any parent wishing to send their child to an educate together school should have a realistic expectation that they can approach that school, in the May of the year before their child is due to start, and should gain access to the school. And the difficulty with the first come first served principle, is, caused by the lack of schools and the lack of space. So we can either can start tampering with the way in which the way we choose to get in to a school ...or else we can address that there are more people and more children going to our schools and we need to provide more and more spaces to accommodate demand

Q I suppose I was speaking more in terms of refugee or asylum seekers who cannot determine that they will be in this country in two years time.

A That is a very interesting example, in many schools refugee and asylum seekers can walk into the school, and there are some places reserved in some schools not under direct ET Patronage. There is generally no problem at all for access for traveller or refugees or asylum seekers, or people moving around the country getting into these schools. It is only when it become established and are unable to meet the demand, and our approach is rather than developing a system whereby you exclude certain categories of applicants to schools, you simply increase the numbers that are available.

Q And do you have any tracking system in place to back that up in terms of number of children who might be refused entrance, or lack of availability or examples of traveller or refugees or asylum seekers not being able to access those places

A We do not have any tracking system as such, and we would have for example in the Lucan area we have over 70 children already refused places in the local Catholic school, and in our own sector we have 200 or over 200 children who have been refused access and already 100 children on a list for a second school

and that means anyone moving into that area has no change whatsoever, and a travelling family or a travelling community or someone moving for job reasons or immigrants would not be able to access a place in that area. So it is about places not restrictive practices.

Q Thanks Paul

Appendix D2

JOHN CARR

Q Ok John starting with the first question there, how familiar are you with the Educate Together school movement.

A I would be fairly familiar with the movement, not necessarily probably the ethos and drive of people within it but I would be fairly familiar with the overall aims and objectives of the movement.

Q And do you think Educate Together is necessary in Irish education, does it have a role to play in Irish education.

A Well the sector grew out of a need and the need is based on the fact that we have a denominational system and the denominational system doesn't seem to be able to cater for difference, they'll tolerate difference but within the existing program they're not capable of reaching out and accommodating and giving I suppose equal rights to the children of different faiths and belief systems and as a result of that parents feel a need to create a different type of school. I question the concept of multi denomination, whether such schools are in fact multi denominational or whether they are multi faith schools because denominational would mean that all the children would have equal rights within that denomination and who guarantees the equal rights etc. I would question completely inter denominational schools because I think inter denominational suggests that its between faiths of similar nature but with very different beliefs and whether or not then you can give equal rights to children in an inter denominational context. So to answer your question I regret that it is necessary because the existing system should have been able to accommodate difference in a way that would nullify the demand for alternative type of schooling.

Q Under denominational ethos do you think that's possible.

A Well I would hope that eventually the churches would see the necessity rather than possible, it has to be possible, but I presume that coming at it from a particular faith system you would be ensuring that your faith was accommodated within that, not necessarily just learning about faith but that there would be some effort at formation or at least appealing to the children, not appealing but forming the minds of the children of that faith and I think that's where their difficulty lies, that they will give that away. But in light of

the fact that many parents are indifferent to religion nowadays, in light of the fact that priests are less supporting and indeed many young teachers are non practising, then the question arises as to what we mean now by a particular ethos and whether or not the church would recognise that there are differences and that the churches should be reaching out to accommodate those differences, they can do it for instance in Church of Ireland schools that accommodate Presbyterian tradition, the Methodist tradition and indeed the Roman Catholic tradition but they'll be all Christian Judeah type but would they be able to accommodate then people who come from a Muslim faith or Jewish...faith or whatever. So again a short answer to your question I think it would be difficult, not impossible but a lot of work has to be done before the mind set of the church leaders change to accommodate differences.

Q And is it a little late in the day perhaps, if you take the Education Act which enshrined the ethos into law, would it mean a legal challenge.

A I don't think it is late in the day, I think that what is developing now is in fact, could take away choice if we'll say a school is established in a green field area and the school becomes a multi denominational school, you effectively take away the choice of the Catholic parent to have his or her child educated through a Catholic faith or a Catholic tradition or ethos which poses the question for me then is multi denominational the way to go or should we be talking about a community school concept like you have at post primary level where the state then would support the access or whatever you like to call it to the various beliefs and faiths. Because if a person is coming from a Muslim tradition and he or she is in a multi denominational school or indeed a Catholic and his child is in a multi denominational school, they may very well want their children brought up as Catholics but they may say well the school is not necessary where it should be done, it should be done in the home and the churches should and I think that has to be the way forward for the church as well. The only thing in my view that's preventing the churches doing that in a major way at the lower classes in particular is the Sacraments...and their need to rely on the school system to provide the introduction and the formation which raises a strong ethical question that you are as a teacher responsible to the curriculum for the formation of a child in a particular faith. A faith that you yourself do not believe necessarily nor don't practice and you are

inculcating a view that you do not believe yourself and how fair are you as a professional with professional responsibilities and professional integrity, how fair are you to yourself and to the child if you're in that position and you're forced, that may be the wrong word but you're obliged by the system to be responsible for the religious formation. And I think that's a big question that has to be addressed by the Catholic church because in the past Bishop O'Connell and the late Bishop Duffy made it absolutely clear that it was not about religious education, it was about religious formation and in the context of a changing society I don't think that is possible. But having said that and I come back then to the community school concept and maybe perhaps we should be trying to accommodate various beliefs and perhaps the way forward is to have a community school concept. Now whether Educate Together fits into a community school concept is a political issue I suppose, what need does the church have to be involved in education if it isn't interested in ensuring that it has a particular ethos? At that stage would the church say well look lets have an ethical program and religious education program and at that stage then I think the church's role would probably diminish because why would you need to control schools after that.

Q This is an aside John, but except when the community school system was set up at second level the churches did become patrons of those schools.

A Yeah and then the question you ask if you don't have a named patron, be it an individual group or society or church, who would become patron and is the concept perhaps that educate together espouse that the school body become the patron rather than a particular interest group, be it religion, be it Irish, be it whatever. But then eventually educate together will become and probably has become, has become a company which embraces all of the schools and it would become eventually as bureaucratic and as removed from the local parent as indeed the church is today, maybe not as remote but the possibility is there that it may become the same monolith.

Q You've answered the next question already John in that in light of recent research by the INTO into the teaching of religion do you think there's a need for the educate together model which is the ethical curriculum model to be more widespread in denominational schools.

A Well we've supported the notion of religious education, now whether an ethical program incorporates religious education, we don't have a difficult in introducing children to the beliefs and viewpoints of other religions, many of the concepts, the characteristics of religious education are contained in all of the religious belief systems.

Q Absolutely.

A Of dignity and love and compassion and caring and forgiveness, the list is endless, so that all of these would be common to all and then whether or not then you relate those attributes or those characteristics to a particular faith system or a base is the question and we probably haven't gone further than saying there should be a religious education program therefore that would assume a God...and would assume that there would be a reasonable amount of time given to the articles or whatever you call it of the particular faith as opposed to ignoring them and saying well we're not going to tell the kids about what the Catholics believe or what the Church of Ireland believe or what's the difference between them and that. I think that that would have to be in a program but then when you come to Muslim faith, the Islamic faith, the other faith and how they fit into the Irish context, I just feel that children should be aware of them. We have grown up as a society insulated from other faiths, other than the Christian Judeah faith and as a result we don't know about the Islamic faith or the Muslim faith and to me it's a minus in our religious education formation. We're familiar with the journeys of St. Paul and that's about the extent of it.

Q We talked there about ethos in our off the cuff conversation earlier, after this if you want to can a denominational ethos be truly inclusive if it simply tolerates difference.

A I don't think it can be inclusive if it simply tolerates difference. I'm trying to come to terms with how in a denominational context how you would, I'm sure that the faith of the denomination is taught and learned and then how you would try to ensure that the other faiths were covered as well, I think it would be difficult but I think it is the future and the only future but that would mean the churches having to take on the whole area of religious formation and that they themselves should be responsible for that aspect with the family and that the school then should be responsible for teaching about religion and belief

system and the areas I talked about, dignity, care, concern, love, all of the other.

Q They all break down I think into the common of do on to others, the golden rule isn't it, ultimately its what its about. Just to change ever so slightly from that and just to look at the training colleges for a moment, do the training colleges have a role to play in preparing the teachers to teach in a more pluralist setting, Irish society as we said has changed fairly dramatically.

A Well you see the difficulty with the colleges of education is that they haven't, the disjunction between church and state and that church is responsible for the secular program in the school and it still defers to the churches in relation to the religious education and for example there is a curriculum which NCCA has developed for all of the subject areas in the primary sector other than religion, now we have argued and written to the NCCA requesting that they set up a committee the same as any other curriculum committee to explore the possibility of having a religious education program but we got no response other than a verbal acknowledgement that we'll have a meeting after Easter to discuss this particular issue. And because of that disjunction as it were between the 2 the colleges concentrate on producing teachers for the secular end of instruction and the kids then have to do...religious certificate or whatever it is in religious education. So unfortunately the colleges don't appear to have a role and the way forward is the devising of a religious education program of which the colleges then would have a role in training teachers and in the context of

Q In the same way as they would for any other.

A For any other area yes.

Q Its really on the same point but the denominational structure of the training colleges, they were traditionally set up as Catholic and Church of Ireland, is there a need to change that.

A Well again I have to come back to the fundamental issue, are the denominational schools going to give an opportunity to young children to explore the beliefs and practices of other faiths, is the churches position going to continue to be, are they going to continue with an attitude of tolerant indifference or even hostile and contempt for other religions which is where they've come from. Now they've got to come from that type of indifference

and contempt and the Catholic church is the only true avenue to salvation is through a Catholic ethos, they've got to move from that to an understanding that there are a variety of ways through to ones salvation depending on what one believes by salvation in terms of whether there is a god and whether there is a life hereafter and whether we go back to a god. And if they can resolve that fundamental issue then I think the idea of denominational training colleges of education should go and this idea of having a church of Ireland training college for the sake of church of Ireland or having the other 2 which would now not be regarded as Catholic in the traditional sense even though they have a lot of remnants of the Catholic but having gone into DCU and UL they certainly are now surely, should be moving away from that tradition but that tradition is still alive and well. And you've probably studied the articles the linking of the colleges and everything to university and holding on to the governing body and a separate body with control, church involvement and participation and all of that. There's no doubt but that the personnel working within in the colleges would still see themselves as offering... a particular ethos without necessarily seeing them as being controlled by that ethos, but they're certainly subscribing to it and they're not openly looking at alternatives. But that said I think the fundamental issue and the more I think of it the fundamental issue is whether or not the existing denominational school can, and the question you had earlier on whether or not within their existing denominational ethos, thinking or understanding, can they open up and be more inclusive and make sure that the community, not necessarily talking about Swahili or whatever you'd have in South Africa or whatever.

Q Whatever happens to be the community.

A Whatever happens to be the community that all the children within that community are inclusive because the reality is that in most, not all catholic schools, a lot of the attributes of multi denominational schools and practices are taking place because teachers will do it from a professional point of view, they will be inclusive, they will celebrate the Muslim child and the Islamic, their celebrations as well as, so what's happening is that within the professional integrity of the teacher there is a multi denominational yes tolerance developing and I would even go so far as to say accommodation that teachers do not want to exclude a child, Dunboyne was an example of that

where they didn't want the Church of Ireland children to be removed, they had equal rights to be in an inter denominational context, I don't think there is such thing as an inter denominational context and I've argued off the record that I don't think there is such a thing as a multi denominational either, I think its just, because the constitution doesn't allow for non denominational school we call the movement multi denominational but in fact they are.

Q We're skirting around the issue you think.

A We are yeah.

Q You've answered the next question really John in relation to should the training colleges provide more for the support of the teachers in the educate together sector.

A Yeah again it's a fundamental issue, are they capable of doing it within their existing programs and the answer is no, but the reality is that in every other area you take, particularly social and personal health education there is a strong emphasis in the college on terms like accommodation, inclusion, celebration of cultures and interculturalism etc, so that is happening within the colleges and should be, if it isn't happening that young people are prepared coming out within the secular program to be accommodating inclusive, celebrating and including travellers and other cultures. A lot of the ground work has been done, the fact that the colleges then are not involved in the religious education program per say, that is the domain of the churches.

Q They have a pilot program running out of the training college in Rathmines which is run by an organisation called...Intercultural Education but it is a pilot and I think its being funded by the Department of Foreign Affairs..

A I just feel and I've said this to the churches, I feel that the movement towards inclusiveness and tolerance and celebrating differences, that that movement will grow up from underneath and what is happening at the moment is that the multi denominational school movement tends to be, its about multi denominational but its about more than that, its about parental involvement and control and very often you have to ask the question is the new school movement...being driven more by the perception and some of it reality that parents have more control, that the school is more, it's a smaller context because you rarely have a school greater than 8, that it's a family context, that there are smaller classes, that the children get transport to there that they

wouldn't get maybe to their local school and that there is a child centred program. I think all of those issues influence parents, particularly the naïve parent at local level where there isn't a school and now somebody comes in to persuade them to go a particular route, they like what they hear and I think that that has as much to do with the establishment of multi denominational schools as indeed has the whole denominational, I don't think that's an issue at all. There are certain parents who like the idea of their children being brought up with openness to different faiths etc but for the vast majority of parents I don't think that's the reason.

A The Irish movement is something similar, that we run these schools, we're more in control of the schools and the Irish and your child will grow up with Irish etc and you again benefit, your child will benefit, this is good for the children to learn Irish and I would love my children to have Irish, I didn't have it myself and it has nothing at all to do with the actual ethos or the denomination, they wouldn't give a damn if it was Swahili denomination, it doesn't matter as long as what they're seeking.

Q There is research done in the education sector on that.

A Yeah and I think we make too much of the movement, I think the movement is driven now on a full time basis by people who are committed to providing alternatives but in fairness to those people they will say to you that they should self destruct if the system were to change.

Q In a way you've answered the next question as well, your views on the growth of the educate together movement and the Gael Scoil movement out stripping the denominational sector over the last couple of years.

A In terms of growth they are but.

Q If you look at the educate together movement it began very, very slowly and the growth has been dramatic over the last number of years.

A And it tends to emerge through a small group of, I suppose well educated or sorry educated, reasonably well off people who may either be dissatisfied with the local school or who feel in many cases there's a boys school and a girls school and we'd love a co educational school and while we're at it lets go with the multi denominational co-educational school and there are a lot of factors working in a local area, like when I look at Ballina now is the latest one and say well west of Ireland, fairly conservative, what is so wrong in the system in

Ballina that you need an alternative and is it because the church is dominating, is it because the whole view point of the church today, is it because there's an openness and a tolerance developing among the new Ireland middle class people and that they want that openness for their children because they felt themselves that what they got was very, very tight and prescriptive. But the reality is that may not be what's happening within the schools today and I think myself a lot, even with the Alive O program, a lot has changed and if you look at the program up to say First Communion who will have very little changes to do to change it into any program.

Q Tweak it.

A Yeah.

Q I suppose just in relation to the Ballina scenario that you mentioned there, I think the influence of people from outside, non nationals as well has had a huge impact on the growth in that particular one you mentioned.

A Yeah...was down there and they reached an accommodation with...I can't remember the exact details now and then the question I asked then as I have, its running through everything I say, is the church prepared to now open up its thinking in relation to the ethos and see that there's a way of accommodating other belief systems without necessarily abandoning completely their own ethos. Because there's a lot of good things in that ethos and there's a lot of our traditions and what we are is tied up in the whole, St. Patrick's day is an example, take away religion out of it and what do we need St. Patrick's day for, what are we celebrating then, Easter and Christmas.

I think France have got it right, they've been able to accommodate their culture within their religious education curriculum then, they've put culture first and part of the culture is religion...(interruption)...

Q Current structures, the opening of schools in Ireland, dates back as you said earlier to the Stanley letter and a very convoluted system. Do they need to be changed in order to facilitate the opening of schools like educate together schools.

A Well you see I've a strong view that we cannot continue as a society to accommodate all the differences in the way we have traditionally done, in other words if a group of Muslim people want to establish a school and a particular ethos they can do it, Jewish and any other religion or group. I don't

think this society can sustain that and I'm not so sure the state should be sustaining it so I ask myself the question then of whether or not we should go back to the Stanley Letter of 1831, remove what happened particularly in Thurles in 1850 and when the churches moved in, I think we have to start, not dismantling it in an anti church way but getting back to where we were and in that context then having your school and having then tolerance and difference and the culture and all of that celebrated within the school and I think we're moving in that direction because the state now is responsible for building a school and its going to lease the school out. Now the question then arises, back to my community school concept, should it be building the complex like Liffey Valley and saying right we'll give you an 8 teacher Catholic school, an 8 teacher educate together and a 4 teacher all Irish school, or 8 teacher whatever, there mightn't be enough in it because the state now is doing the building...and its leasing out, that's the way it appears to be going. I haven't given it enough thought yet, I'm just not sure that we'll end up in 20 or 30 years time in as bad a position as we are now because it will depend then on who is in first and it appears in an area like Liffey Valley and I understand somewhere up around Sandyford and a few others, that the educate together, because they are organised now, whereas the church was organised 20 years ago, they're in first with a particular message, which is attractive to people who as yet are not sending their children to school or some may well be and that we're just replacing one particular structure with another. And that in 100 years time the educate together might be equally as strong as the patrons of catholic churches today, I can't see that happening now, but I do see the day coming when the church will hand.... any new school that's being built now the state is paying for it and therefore its vested in the state rather than vested in the local church and therefore the state then will be able to have its say, not in maybe perhaps my time working here but certainly in 20, 30, 40 years.

Q We're coming to that.

A Yeah

Q The INTO, obviously all the members of educate together, all the teaching staff are members of the INTO, does the union have any reservations about the educate together sector and can I preface that by saying I have fought very hard as a former teacher myself and as a director of educate together to ensure

that premises are up to scratch when a school opens, that the premises should be such, that teachers are respected.

A In an area like in Dublin there has been little or no difficulty from an INTO point of view with the establishment of an alternative school, be it multi denominational or Gael Scoil or a multi denominational Gael Scoil or what do you call them now, the...the new company, because the opening of that school didn't significantly impinge upon the existing teaching staff. But when you move out of Dublin and when the schools are being established, irrespective of, its not about religion, its not about...in fact I suppose those teachers who would have been up in those area, take Ballina and put a great emphasis on Irish and having a high standard of Irish, they're the ones that are hurt most when somebody comes in and says well look your not doing enough, we don't want our kids to go into your Irish standards, we want them to go elsewhere, so there is a certain amount of, in the Irish context of their professionalism being called into question and that that school is not good enough in terms of Irish and therefore taking away the good support they had for Irish and then leaving parents who would be indifferent. Now when it comes then to multi denominational I don't think there'll be any professional insult or their integrity taken into consideration, they wouldn't feel that in relation to multi denominational schools but they would feel it in terms of the school effectively taking children that would come to them and that some of their members would be in effect losing their jobs and going on a panel. So in that context we do have difficulties at local level but they're insignificant in the sense that from a national point of view no difficulty whatsoever, these are local issues and they effect people at local level. Now from an overall control point of view and an INTO point of view our view is that we do not intend to interfere in the control of schools. We have always said that that's a matter for the patrons, whoever the patrons may be, yes we insist in being involved in management of school, yes we insist on having equal say and partnership and equal status and partnership at local level but we will not interfere in the establishment of the school and with the right under the constitution of the parents to establish schools. So in that context we have no difficulty whatsoever with educate together or any other grouping, but that isn't to say that problems don't arise at local level.

Q Minimum standards in terms of accommodation...a school opening in a scout hall or whatever.

A In terms of accommodation as your aware I made a strong statement to the congress in relation to that and the question that I ask all the time, that a state that is prepared to establish a school should also insist that the school is established in a premises which is suitable for a school and the state has a responsibility in that and it hasn't fulfilled its responsibility, either with Gael Scoil or multi denomination, in my view. To have children in a factory in Wexford, in a Gael Scoil in Wexford with no windows is not a suitable accommodation to be sanctioning a school and therefore I had a letter from Paul Rowe yesterday to that effect... the stance I took, I could have taken a stance, unless there's a premises don't sanction, but I took the opposite, if your'e going to sanction a school and the parents have the right to have a school sanctioned then you've an obligation to provide for those children the same as any other child.

Q Which is not the way it works of course.

A Unfortunately.

Q Its something I feel very, very strongly about, Paul knows. Could you envisage a time when there will be no further need for educate together schools, I know Paul Rowe has worded this before.

A I would hope to see the day when we could have a program in schools which would accommodate the beliefs and value systems of all the children within the classroom and I believe and I've said it to the church, I believe that the church will have to consider going down that route or else retrench as it were, make sure it holds on to sufficient number of its own and sticks to its own ethos and insist upon it and releases then other premises, other schools so that the other schools then can be used for alternative provision. But if I were in the church why would I do that and my view to them and I've spoken to them about it is you'd have to consider changing and if you consider changing and if you can accommodate the beliefs and value systems of the school community for a start up then I believe that the need for a multi denominational school would cease and yes I cannot see it in the immediate future but I hope that the debate has been initiated within the church, certainly it has been initiated within the church here in Dublin. And hopefully with the

new archbishop, that he too would be prepared to open that debate but it's a debate that would go on for a long time before the church can even attempt to accommodate and my view at the moment is let sleeping dogs lie and that the church is following that particular motto. And I adopted a motto here when I took over as general secretary, a vision led rather than a problem driven and I think that the church at the moment is being problem driven rather than vision led and what we attempted to do in our publication on religious education was to open that debate and let us all devise a new vision which will accommodate different beliefs and value systems and which will be rather than accommodating, to your way what they should be doing is accommodating on equal footing in respecting the integrity of each individual.

Q And we welcome obviously that difference, ok John that's all I need, is there anything you want to add before we finish.

A No I don't think so, other than I'd stress the difficulty that denominational schools are having today, parents who are happy for their children to participate, parents who are indifferent to whether they participate or not, some parents who are against any participation even though they might have been brought up Catholics themselves and then of course you have the parent who wishes their children, so that its becoming more and more difficult within the existing denominational structure to accommodate the variety of views that teachers are experiencing, particularly as a result of the significant...and I made the point before that teachers stand alone and are isolated in relation to this ethos thing and the question of ethos. And in future we have to ask ourselves the question is the teacher going to be the only person responsible for maintaining the ethos when the teacher is indifferent or has stopped practising, whether they're not being taught and where the church is indifferent. So there's a whole mish mash developing there, which I think is fitting into one of your questions, will set the church and the whole system thinking.

Q A whole change of culture and climate within.

A Yeah it came up from our survey that a large percentage of our teachers now are saying that there should be religious education as opposed to religious instruction and the traditional support service that teachers would have in school are not there, 6 out 10 still teach religion willing and that is a

significant percentage, interestingly though if you break down younger ones and older ones, the older ones would have been probably the ones that addressed our survey in the first place and certainly as I said 80% are looking at teaching of religion which wouldn't be based on their own faith or communities. The key question for me then is whether or not the education system has to decide whether diversity...religion through providing a choice of different types of schools or by ensuring that all schools reflect the diversity within their own community, I think that's your question at the end and I've a strong view that we can't indefinitely continue to build different types of schools to accommodate diversity in every part of Ireland. If choice is limited in a particular area you're denying those people, denying their right and I believe the education system has to work out a model approach to deal with circumstances where children have no option but to go to their local school whatever their local school may be and that's what I believe that the debate must examine. And you have to examine where is that demand for multi denominational coming from and is it more than multi denominational, is the religious issue the main issue or for all or for some or for whatever. Is it because the denominational sector is unwilling or incapable of accommodating diversity and I think with the demographics trends downwards premises will become available and the question arises for us as an INTO, in an INTO context where lets say in a place like Lark Hill which is under consideration I believe at the moment, that you have 3 schools there and if all 3 schools came together they would free up a large premises which obviously a multi denominational or an educate together would be looking for.

Q As happened by the way in Kilbarrack, (North Bay) that's a perfect example of that.

A Yeah

Q The only one though ironically.

A Right, the education act identifies pluralism, it fosters respect for diversity and promotes the importance of tolerance, we face the reality that in catholic knowledge or understanding of the churches relationship with other, even Christian religious not alone other religions, not affording them the opportunity to explore the beliefs and practices of others and they have an attitude of tolerant, passive indifference, whatever way you like to put it or

indeed in some cases as I said earlier on a hostile contempt for different world faiths. So I suppose at the end of the day I think we have to be careful about what is the authentic position of the church, it may not be what is practised in Ireland, I think we've to look at language and what multi denominational is in itself describing what is actually happening and to move beyond the stereotypes of what the church is and we have to recognise the various shades of attachment. And the question at the end of the day can you have a value free system.

Q System of education.

A Yeah

Q Ultimately I think you would favour.

A Well you see the question I would have at the end of the day, even in a multi denominational school, does neutrality exist at all or do we have the value stances of the group, whatever that group may be, you've been involved in the program yourself so you would know.

Q I would argue very strongly that every school should have a value statement which is clearly identified and known to everybody who comes in and is agreed by all but I'm fighting a losing battle on the old value statement I'm afraid.

A So other than that I'm fairly content.

Q Thank you.

Appendix E2

RAY DOOLEY

Q Could you outline very briefly for me the role of the Children's Rights Alliance.

A Well the Children's Rights Alliance exist to promote the full implementation in Ireland of the principles and provisions of the UN convention on the Rights of the Child. So it's a very broad remit that we have but everything that we do really has to be grounded in advancing the principles and the provisions of the convention.

Q And how successful has Ireland been.

A Well there's no really short answer to that, Ireland ratified the convention 10 years ago, there is a reporting process and there's a specific role provided to NGO's to participate in that monitoring process which actually is part of the reason for the alliances existence, it came together in part around the fact that it could participate in the monitoring of Ireland's performance. In 1998 a hearing was held in Geneva which examined Ireland's national report filed by the government and the report filed by the alliance as the representative of NGO's in Ireland. The findings and recommendations which came out of that hearing mirrored for the most part the findings and recommendations of the alliance. Since then the government has adopted at least at the level of policy an awful lot of what was in the findings and recommendations in the document called the concluding observations. There are still some items that have not been adopted that are central to the convention, even in terms of policy, I think that takes us mostly into the area of the social and economic rights, of which education is one, but health care and inadequate standards of living are others. But even at that level there's been an adoption, at the policy level of a commitment to ensure that for instance all children have the material resources necessary to enable them to live a full and active life. Following through on that implementing is another story and I think there's quite a gap between promise and performance, we're about the begin the process of evaluating performance for the next hearing, we're going to start doing that this year.

Q And the next hearing is.

A Well the next hearing probably won't take place until the end of 2004 at the earliest and I would say early 2005 at the latest, there's a backlog of...I think we're looking at the end of 2004, beginning of 2005.

Q So bridging the gap at the moment between policy and practice would be the key issue.

A Yeah, an example would be the establishment of an office of Ombudsman for Children recommended by the alliance, recommended by the committee, embraced by the government in the wake of those recommendations, finally passed into law last year but still no action has taken place to actually make it operational and recent indications would suggest that they may be putting the project off until next year, the legal deadline for making it operational would be April 2004 but we're concerned that for financial reasons it will be put off. Its an important structural reform, we try to focus on structural changes and on changes that are likely to leverage other changes, for example calling for a national children's strategy, the central element to be able to advance the entire agenda you need to have an implementation plan if you like that implements the convention, so having the strategy is a very important development, getting it implemented is a 10 year plan is another matter entirely.

Q So it's a delicate balance.

A Yeah so we try to look at the structural changes as best we can.

Q From your knowledge of ET, educate together we would put forward the concept of all children are equal, we pride ourselves on recognising children's rights, I suppose this sector would have been in place long before a lot of the legislation came into being. What do you know of educate together.

A What do I know of them, its kind of a mixed bag of information, I've read through the various reports and had conversations with people and met with officials from educate together, so I've got a sense of the history of it, I think I've got a fairly good sense of what its about. I didn't live in Ireland in the last 20 years but I do have some knowledge of the history and I certainly am aware of the fact that education was some what uniquely from my experience run on a denominational basis, that is to say public education was run on a denominational basis, my own personal experience was to go to catholic schools in America but they were known as parochial schools, they were not

public schools I understand the practice here has been to have turned over much of the education to the various catholic orders, with a small amount of education being provided by Protestant churches. And I understand that the impetus to a large degree for educate together was to provide a non denominational educational setting, that's my understanding at least. However much of the focus of educate together goes well beyond that, I see it in terms of its link to the convention, in terms of the basic principles of the convention of which there are 4, 1 of them is the participation of children, making sure the children have a voice, another is the principle of non discrimination, all children have all of the rights in the convention and all of those rights have to be respected equally. Third would be the requirement that in matters affecting children that the best interest of the child be a primary consideration and the fourth is the principle that all children have the right to the full development of their entire potential. Educate together in its practice not only upholds but seems to me makes real those principles, acts on those principles in ways that are quite admirable and quite exemplary I think for other institutions. To some degree educate together as an educational institution is in a uniquely good position to do some of that, obviously the development side is going to...providing education. But the commitment to non discrimination, now these principles are not just underlying principles of the convention, they're also, a couple of them are safeguarding measures, the principle of non discrimination is a way of ensuring in fact that their rights should be realised. The principle of participation is also a way of safeguarding the rights because its based on the more universal understanding that those then maybe children are adults who are affected by decisions of public bodies, national public bodies are, if they are to be treated equally and with respect by those bodies their voices have to be heard, that one can't really imagine a scenario in which others are accurately deciding who their interest should best be met, without some consultation and some participation by the people who are effected. So it's a matter of extending that principle to children, which a lot of people find very puzzling and don't quite know what to make of this and are unsure as to whether this means that power has to be turned over in all matters and which decisions are to be made by children and which by, in fact its really no more complicated than requiring that the views of children to

taken into consideration, that the specific article in the convention makes clear that due weight is to be placed on those views based on age and maturity. But the important principle there is to make sure that there is an awareness of what the perspective of children is.

Q And a mechanism obviously for...

A There has to be a mechanism for doing that.

Q Speaking to teachers one of the problems they have found in ensuring that the voices of the children are heard is the time it takes, so it is an issue for schools out there but obviously they have an awareness of it. Children's rights alliance, does it have, and probably the answer is no, does it have a set of guidelines for ensuring children's rights are adhered to in schools outside of the 4 principles that you have just mentioned.

A Not specific guidelines, we haven't done for instance a charter of rights or laid out a set of guidelines that schools should adhere to, we've left that to one of the member organisations, the national parents council, both primary and post primary are members of the alliance and particularly the primary level they have been very engaged and they've had a long standing children's rights focus. The alliance has not made education one of its priority issues frankly over the course of its existence except to the degree to which it has tried to support initiatives mounted by others that advance children's rights, fundamentally the right to education being the most key, the actual fact of receiving an education. For instance children with disabilities, the denial of education or the proper education that certainly probably in the last 2 years focused more on than any other educational issue I would say. So we try to again devote our organisation as an advocacy organisation, trying to devote our attention to areas where there is need and also the opportunity to make some change and...which might make a difference, supporting each of our member organisations.

Q In terms of models of good practice...

A Well we have in some areas, not in the area of education...children in care for instance we have done that and we're in the process now of developing a charter of rights for children in care, we're doing that in association with a group called the Irish association of young people in care. We have called for the, where standards have not been there we've called for their development,

when they've been...we've called for them to be put on a statutory basis, that would be for instance the case with the guidelines for the protection of the rights of children who are in residential care. There has in the last year and a half been guidelines...made statutory so its been achieved. We have focused on models of good practice in certain areas, in the area of children in hospitals we have supported the development of charters of health care in terms of provision. Children in hospital Ireland is one of our member organisations, they're on the executive and we work together with them to make sure that hospitals and those who provide medical care to children understand that they have obligations which go beyond simply treating the illness, that there are obligations and there are rights that the children have to be in paediatric units and not to be put in with adults, to have their play and recreation needs and rights addressed while they're in hospital etc, and there are...practice that we've been advocating in relation to that.

Q One of the key values that would be identified in educate together would be the concept of dignity...would you see a time where there might be a model of best practice put forward for education because it does seem central to rights.....

A I don't know that the alliance would take a lead role in developing that, its certainly possible, its not something that we've been discussing, we would support such a model being developed and would participate in making sure that the children's rights component of it be addressed and when I say component I mean that it be a responsive to children's rights as it should be. The whole issue of rights is another story, one could say obligations as well as rights when discussing the subject matter, particularly with respect to children because every article of the UN convention establishes that a right carries with it a set of obligations that the state has and that public bodies generally have to make sure that those rights are secure, particularly in terms of children, that's generally true for human rights The convention on rights of the child is certainly a good model to begin practice...

Q How can this be achieved?

A The model of best practice is a way of implementing the obligation, when we call the implementation of convention, what we mean by that is...the child has the right to the highest attainable standard of health care in society, that's what

the article says, to determine whether or not that right is being upheld one has to look at the outcomes, then stepping back from there, moving closer to the apparatus one has to look at the delivery mechanisms that are in place, but I would say that its true for education as well actually and probably our focus has probably been more, our focus on education has been on the disparity in educational provision that's available to children with special needs, children in social exclusion, children in poverty, children on the margins and those who are more in the main stream and those who are better positioned to avail of what is out there. So we've disproportionately probably focused on those who are most at risk and most vulnerable, that would be as true in education as it would be in most other areas as well.

Q One of the issues that arises for us in educate together is while we would consider ourselves to be inclusive in terms of enrolment, where a child with special needs is coming in we also need backup in terms of care assistance or whatever. We have another issue as well in terms of enrolment where we operate as transparently and as democratically as we possible can using a first come first served policy, that's open to debate at the moment, that concept of first come first served, would you see that as infringing on a child's rights.

A No, the short and only answer on that, and I can't imagine the alliance ever taking a position on how individual schools or groups of schools should handle enrolment issues. If we felt that the on balance the cumulative impact of the enrolment procedures in place throughout the school system, in schools as it stands where such that some children were being discriminated against then that would be a proper matter for us to address but I can't see us ever getting into the question of what individual schools should do, I mean there are many procedures, maybe they're not all equally valid but there are certainly many that are reasonable and if we see that there are reasonable efforts being taken and best efforts being made then I don't see us having any organisational...to be critical or to insist that a same model be adhered to, I think its really outside of

Q Of your remit.

A Not just outside of our area of expertise, its also not, even if we had developed a greater expertise in the area, I don't think we'd want to do that, I don't think its an appropriate role.

Q It's a very difficult process, I've been through it and no matter which system you come up with there's somebody being discriminated against. In terms of children with special needs my memory of an enrolment form would state...for parents or guardians to identify if their child who is enrolling has any special needs and secondary that there was a proviso that the child would be offered a place on condition that the school was in a position to offer whatever requirements that child needed, does that...from a practical position if you have 4 children with special needs in a class of 29 and very often if you don't ask in advance these children aren't necessarily identified by parents or guardians.

A It seems like a very reasonable approach to take, I would have to pass on this one though in terms of we really haven't developed any position on how to, not that I'm aware of, I could check with others in the alliance to see whether we've actually taken a stance on a question like that. I know we have recently addressed the issue of making sure that adequate levels of special supports, teaching personnel be developed and maintained across the system. Last December you may recall there was a story in the paper about the Minister of Education being concerned that Ireland's ratio of special needs teachers to pupils was out of line with European standards. The data he was citing seemed to us to be highly suspect because it was completely on a line with North American experiences which Ireland's data is currently pretty much in line with, we've called on the department to not act on...data but to start a rights based approach to make sure that there's an adequate number of teachers in place to deal with and not presume that they're somehow enabling of the system taking place when measuring Ireland's performance versus that of other EU countries. Which I suspect must use a different model because the 12% which was being cited in Ireland, that's the standard level you would find in the United States and in cities you'd find it would be as high as 17 to 20%. We try to address the issue of special needs and teaching at that level, we'd never address the question of how specific schools should handle its enrolment procedures.

Q In terms of, you've mentioned special needs and I am trained myself in the path of remedial teaching so I've a fairly strong familiarity with what your talking about, but there's another issue facing a lot of schools at the moment

and that's the changing face if you like of Ireland from a multicultural perspective so you've language issues and things like that coming into play as well. Would it be part of the role of the children's rights alliance to look at for example ensuring that teachers are adequately trained in dealing with children from cultures outside Irish cultures.

A Absolutely yes, I think that follows automatically from the very specific provisions that are in the UN convention covering the rights of either indigenous peoples or newcomers to a society, refugees, asylum seekers. The convention is very explicit specifically in, generally in strictly discrimination principle but specifically with respect to the rights of refugees or those who are seeking asylum and making sure that they be provided the same level of education that is otherwise available to society is something that we would insist upon. Not only is it stipulated in the UN convention, it's a constitutional right here in Ireland.

Q So have you pursued for example the training colleges in terms of providing training, pre service or in service training.

A We have not gone to the training colleges, we have in our pre budget submissions made illusion to this and called for funds to be set aside in order to make sure that the teachers are adequately trained, we have no involvement.

Q I think they're working on it anyway of their own accord. We talked about the small number of educate together group, something I think in the region of 1% at the moment and the long waiting list, do you think that a child has a right to chose the type of education they want.

A It depends on what you mean.

Q Like for example in Ireland you've a choice of the Gael Scoil, a denominational school, 98% of schools are, or Muslim schools, interdenominational schools after that an educate together school.

A In general we would take the position that is outlined in the convention and that is that the parents or guardians of the child have responsibilities that they have to adhere to and live up to for the protection and development of the child which I would think in most cases, certainly in the case of younger children would certainly apply to their choice of schools. But there aren't any great lines separating or demarking the point by which the views of the child have to be given greater weight than they were given at an earlier age other

than to say that the views of the child should be taken into consideration and weight has to be placed on them in relation to the...security of the child, the child being anyone up to the age of 18. We would not as an organisation set forth guidelines for parents as to how they should handle such decisions, we haven't and we won't. These are matters that really have to be handled by the parents and guardians and there isn't in our opinion any clear right or wrong way, other than to say that in such matters the views of the child should be given weight, should be heard by parental authority... The UN convention on the rights of the child as you might imagine, in as much as it was developed by all the countries of the world and ratified by every country in the world with the exception of the United States and Somalia, goes out of its way to make it clear it does not erode parental authority. Some may believe that it does, that they really have to familiarise themselves with the convention, decisions about where a child should go to school, any number of issues that are handled within the family are not to be taken from the family, if it can be established that the child is being abused or is in danger in some fashion or lets say...medical consent the key area. Recently in Ireland there's been a pretty regressive decision on that front which we would take issue with or we would hope to see it revisited, it did not appear to be a decision that placed much weight on the status of the child as an independent subject, treated the child as an appendage of the parents, so you can see from the way I'm describing this there's a balance that needs to be struck and medical consent being a particularly crucial area where education would be.

Q Education would be I suppose it goes back to the concept of our constitution, which describes the parent as the primary educator, so obviously the Irish constitution would be in line with your thinking. I suppose really I was thinking more in terms of for example if a child goes to a denominational school, catholic school and when it comes to religion instruction that child is asked to leave the room, sit outside, sit at the back of the room or whatever, do you see that as infringing any rights of the child, in a rural area there may not be an alternative, in fact there won't be an alternative to that type of school.

A Here again and I'm not trying to duck the issue but I don't think we have any, I know we don't have any hard and fast rule that we apply.

Q Could a child come forward and say they were being discriminated against in that instance, it's a regular occurrence.

A I think a child could certainly come forward and say that and have grounds for making such a statement, what needs to be done in the wake of that is another matter. Specifying what the outcome of a decision making process should be is not what we're really about, we would insist that there be, for the best interest of the children in question, say we're talking about a school where there's this phenomena that those who are charged with the responsibility for designing protocols for how education is being provided and how the issue of separation and all the appending issues involved...stigmatisation that would take place, in everything, these things don't happen in a vacuum or abstractly, they happen potentially with serious emotional impacts on the people involved. We would insist that those who are empowered with making the decisions put the best interest of the child, put a primary consideration on that. Now is there a scoring mechanism that we would use, no, but you can tell, there is a difference between decision making processes that put weight on, take the child's best interest into consideration and don't. And we would insist that in a situation where the outcome of those decisions have been challenged that the decision makers and policy makers explain how they arrived at their decision after taking the little child's rights into consideration, that's the model that we would call for, that we think would actually, it makes the process transparent but it also forces everybody to realise that in the final analysis what they're doing is about children, not about other things entirely, it is about other things but particularly when it comes to education its so obviously ultimately about the child, that's an approach we tend to take with regard to a number of kinds of public policy questions over the past year with respect to the issues around the deportation of non national parents of Irish citizen children and all of that because Irish born children seem to suggest that they are second class, they're Irish citizens like everybody else. What we've done in that area is to say, not that there's a clear result that comes from the decision making process but what we say to the state is that if your going to deport the parents, you can't do that until you take into consideration the impact on the children, what's their best interest and how are you going to address them and what are the consequences, face up to the consequences of

your actions and don't do it after the fact, do it before you make your decision and evaluate whether your systems are adequately addressing their rights.

And that's what we'd say in this situation, it's not a duck, it's a recognition that we're not in a position to, at least I'm not aware of a position that we would embrace that would cover every situation because the reality of the situation where you have a small number of pupils and there's no school around, how do you handle that.

Q Then your looking I suppose for the best way of handling a difficult situation.

A Yeah and it isn't necessarily consensus either, it may be that there has to be an approach taken that is not, that the majority does not agree with but maybe is consistent with protecting the rights of the children involved and that can run counter to what the parents maybe are interested in seeing happen in terms of the numerical majorities. Then I would think the application of or the ability of the children where those who are attempting to protect the rights of children to go to another... becomes very important, that's true for the realisation of any set of rights, there has to be some mechanism for appealing a violation. My sense is that the educational system is not in very good shape with respect to that and I say that somewhat hesitantly because I don't want to suggest that the solution is to simply decentralise decision making or take everything up stairs, there's an awful lot to be said for the decentralised powers that currently exist. But if rights are being violated routinely, not intentionally necessarily but routinely then there has to be a mechanism that goes beyond the majority vote of a management council to protect those right.

Q It is a huge issue...

A ...Yes, the Dunboyne situation was a good example of that. The question for our organisation is whether we should probably get more involved in that type of area or not.

Q The Dunboyne issue raises a difficult question, just very simply how closely aligned to equality legislation are issues like the Dunboyne one? Should children be isolated and asked to leave classes because of a particular guarded ethos?,

A Well specifically Irish equality legislation, age is one of the 9 grounds, children are actually excluded categorically which we think is a mistake and we are calling on the equality authority to take another look at that and to

establish an advisory committee to examine changes in legislation. There clearly needs to be a set of exemptions but there should be exemptions as opposed to a categorical exclusion, because the categorical exclusion seems to suggest that children, those under the age of 18 are never discriminated against simply on the grounds that they're under the age of 18, when in fact that is the case and often is the case. It is not legitimate to chase kids away because they're hanging out in a specific area and to establish the principle that no young people can congregate in a spot, that could be the type of discrimination for instance that right now is permissible under the legislation. In appearing about things like access to pubs and stuff like that, some of which is a real diversion, we're certainly very strongly supportive to eliminate alcohol and substance abuse as much as possible from the culture because of its negative impact and its violation of children's rights...but we've filed a submission just 6 months ago with the equality authority on that subject...

Q I wasn't aware that they were outside of it.

A Yeah, there is a, the approach taken in the North is different, the way the law was written, I'm not sure that any real thought was given to this...to tell the truth, I think it was probably deemed to be the easiest rather than listing all of the acts that would not be covered because there are so many special statutes that for instance when you're entitled to get a driving licence and able to vote, etc, etc, its kind of a general exclusion but it is very much a matter of equality and the efforts to achieve equality, even with that problem in the legislation that's actually a minor issue in comparison to the potential impact that equality legislation can have on children because children are affected not just as children, they're affected in connection with other aspects of their life. So efforts to end discrimination against Travellers has a disproportionate impact on children potentially if they're successful because the number of travellers who are under the age of 18 is actually considerable higher than that in the general population so you're not dealing with 29, 30%, your dealing with something approaching 50%. Similarly any other anti discrimination measures successfully implemented were down to the benefit of children and protect their rights and promote their rights, so we've very much, promoting equality is what we're about.

Q And just finally Ray in terms of, I know your not into the practice, your into the policy and ensuring the policy is developed and whatever, but in terms of practice from an educate together perspective are there things that we could be doing to ensure that what I believe is a good system can be put out into the public eye more.

A I think that what's done in the classroom is ultimately most important and I think the emphasis on a curriculum that is supportive of human rights generally is what children's rights are about, children literally have, one of their rights it the right to, not just not be discriminated against but to grow up in a culture which respects human rights generally, there is specific provision around the environment which recognises the educational aspects of it and that's true generally with respect to the rights, the importance of making children, this is not one of the principles of the convention but it's a standing recommendation, a very strong recommendation of the special committee on the rights of the child and that is to ensure that everyone is aware of children's rights, that's a big obligation and responsibility of the schools, that's where kids learn. To not learn that you have rights and that other people have basic rights would be a terrible disservice to children and a violation of their rights and conversely the extent to which that is incorporated into the curriculum is part of making their rights real because if people are not aware, if children are not aware of their rights, people generally not aware of their rights, you can be sure they're not getting realised...

Q I am finishing on this but I'm thinking of our ethical core curriculum, which covers all of those issues, but do you not think it's a greater issue of ethos, the actual ethos in the school in terms of the culture.

A Well I guess that's true in the sense that its not terribly useful to provide a kind of...curriculum that acknowledges and provides 12 ½ minutes to the discussion of rights in a context in which there doesn't appear to be any real regard for those rights or any real respect for the values that need to be in place to ensure that their rights are realised, so yeah unless the general environment seems to be supportive then I think the kids will simply discount what they hear on that front and just accord it the status it deserves which is information that doesn't appear to have any reality and that's maybe in fact useless. So it can't just be on chapter 12 of the lesson book.

Q On a Wednesday morning.

A Right but it has to be that as well...it has to be in practice as rights taking place...

Q Thank you.

Appendix F2

Belief Systems

- **What does it mean?**
- Religious and Non Religious
- Personal
- Values/Creeds
- Belief Systems V Religion. Be Careful
- Humanism and Other Creeds
- Deciding what to cover
- Relationship to school community and Local Community
- Issues: Respect and Equality in the process
- Personal beliefs and values V formal values of religion
- Religion/Belief systems _ Change over time

How?

Parents Workshop on Beliefs

Parents:: World Religions

Limitations of time –required some presentation

Need to use living resource within classroom but without singling out children-

Positive affirmation

Visits, resources, use of external supports

Blueprint: EEC as suggestion for schools rather than a proposal or policy

Issue of training for teachers: Beliefs: Approaches Training

Issue of parents' views/objections.

Opportunity to use/involve parents in school-but need protocol or visitors approach agreement and respect for the ethos

Blueprint

Clarify the ground rules

Raise the questions for schools

EEC within school

Religious Instruction outside

Should RI be in school building or outside

Problem of Balance: Predominant beliefs and minority beliefs-How to deal with

Christmas and other religious Holy Days

FAQ and useful answers within ET Ethos

Principles

Teaching children what people believe to be the truth, not the truth

Guard against promoting/affirming a single belief but also against neutrality

Very difficult to do this

Need to be careful not to try to do too much

Learn together to live together

Avoid value judgements or beliefs

Second Group

Belief Systems

What do we want to include?

Useful to divide religious systems and non-theistic beliefs

Can we define the relationship between faith and evidence?

How do people come to believe in things?

Does evidence have to be a part of a belief system?

What is the role of cultural conditioning?

Where do we place religion from the perspective of a world-view?

How do we come up with a definition of a religion that everybody is happy with.

Example of a Protestant member of the group unhappy with one of the posters

People who are teaching belief systems don't always understand what they are about.

From a non-theistic system do we include cultural beliefs, personal beliefs and how they change over time.

We need to:

Give an accurate and concise view of what each religion is about

We need to decide how far to delve

Satisfy the curiosity of the students

Provide a data base to get more information

Highlight differences and similarities of each religion

Do we tackle things from a relativist viewpoint?

Do we present a coherent, positivist position?

Knowledge

Whatever people believe is OK?

Should we be critical?

Look at the core concepts of tolerance and reach a consensus of what to accept

Relate back to the ET Ethos

Maintaining a neutral analysis is difficult

Give the students building blocks and let them decide from there

Data base of different religions in the school

Responsibility of each group to examine its own explicit beliefs

The strand could be tackled at whole school level with differing levels of difficulty

Training

Ask parents what religions they would like to see explored

Invite experts in the field into the schools

Celebrate festivals

Older students: More sophisticated discussion on issues arising

Do we count non-belief systems and if so how do we tackle an area such as

Humanism? .

This is a blueprint and as such schools may vary in the belief systems they explore

Appendix G2

QUESTIONNAIRE

*Please fill this out at the end of the conference
and place in box at Registration Desk*

These are the 4 major strands of the Ethical Core Curriculum:

Please prioritise in order of importance (1 – 4):

- | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------|
| Moral and Spiritual Development | <input type="text"/> |
| Equality and Justice Issues | <input type="text"/> |
| Belief Systems | <input type="text"/> |
| Ethics and the Environment | <input type="text"/> |

Is there a key area not included?

**Ethical Core Curriculum is a working title for this curriculum.
Here are other suggested titles:**

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| R.E. | <input type="text"/> |
| Values Education | <input type="text" value="1"/> |
| Ethical Core Curriculum | <input type="text"/> |
| Ethical Programme | <input type="text"/> |
| Multi-denominational Education Programme | <input type="text"/> |
| Social Personal and Multi-denominational Core Curriculum | <input type="text"/> |
| Ethical Educational Programme | <input type="text" value="2"/> |

Can you prioritise these (1-7) and add any other suggestions in the space below?

Appendix H2

Blueprint Ethical Core Curriculum

Draft 1- 5th October 2003

Equality and Justice Strand

The general aim of this strand is to give children a critical knowledge, understanding and awareness of issues relating to human rights, equality, culture and diversity, social justice and social inclusiveness and to empower them to make a difference.

Strand Units:

1. Exploring Human Rights.
2. Exploring inequalities
3. Exploring the Democratic Process
4. Activating Equality through Positive action.

All of these strand units overlap and are strongly interlinked.

Exploring Human Rights Strand

Junior and Senior Infants

- Develop the concept of rights through building the self esteem of children through an exploration of their uniqueness and differences.
- Explore the concept of the universality of rights through recognition of the importance of each individual in the class, that is each child's right to be happy, safe, grow and learn in school.
- Develop the concept of justice and empathy through a discussion of issues such as "Why Share?", "Why be sorry?"

First and Second Class

- Explore rights in relation to each other in school, in their families and in the wider community and the contribution they can make to ensure these rights.
- To make the children aware of the universality of rights through an awareness of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Explore the children's rights at an age appropriate level, for example the right to food, water, shelter, play, not to be hurt etc.

Third and Fourth Class

- In addition to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, make the children aware of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UN 1948)
- Facilitate the children in creating their own school Human Rights Charter through consultation in their own class and other classes.
- To make the children aware that not all children have their rights respected through an exploration of some of the basic rights (survival rights) such as food /water/homes, health etc.

Fifth and Sixth Class

- To make the children aware that in addition to basic rights there are also developmental rights, (education, play and leisure, cultural activities, access to information); participation rights (freedom to express an opinion, freedom to join an association and to gather together peacefully; protection rights to guard children against abuse, neglect and exploitation
- In depth exploration of human rights in an Irish context, for example, the right to a home, the right to asylum, the right not to be discriminated against.
- In depth exploration of a human right in a global context, for example, the right to education, the right to an adequate standard of living, including food, shelter and clothing.

* There are strong integration possibilities and linkages in this strand with English, Social , Personal and Health Education, Geography and History and programmes such as the Walk Tall Programme and the Stay Safe Programme.

Exploring Inequalities Strand

Junior /Senior Infants

- Develop the concept of sharing, fairness, respect and empathy.
- Develop an awareness that in order to ensure that everyone is treated equally, sometimes we have to treat people differently, for example in relation to people with disabilities
- Explore stories about people who have made a difference and brought about change, for example Martin Luther King, Rosa Parks etc.

First/ Second Class

- Create an awareness and appreciation of diversity in the school and the wider community, for example culture, religion, different families, lifestyles etc
- Explore how people are interconnected and depend upon each other –the ¹concept of interdependence.
- Develop the skills of the children to make fair decisions and to enable them to resolve conflict.

Third/ Fourth Class

- Explore the concept of discrimination and prejudice
- Explore the concept of discrimination in relation to a specific area , for example, gender, race, class and disability.
- Critical reflect on stories/poems about people who have countered discrimination, e.g. Christy Nolan, the Suffragettes, Nelson Mandela.

Fifth/Sixth Class

- Make children aware of Equality legislation –the Equal Status Bill and the nine grounds on which discrimination is prohibited.
- Explore an equality issue in relation to minorities in Ireland, for example the travelling community, refugees, the Jewish/ Muslim/Vietnamese population etc.
- Explore an issue in-depth such as homelessness, poverty etc. comparing issues at a community/ local level/ national level and globally

¹ Nine grounds are : gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religious belief, age, disability, race and membership of the travelling community

Exploring the Democratic Process

Junior Classes

Junior Infants – Second Class

- Develop a class culture of listening/speaking / negotiating.
- Discuss issues such as rules for class, playground etc and develop democratically with the children class and yard charters.
- Provide opportunities for children to articulate their own attitudes, experiences and values.
- Develop the children's, thinking , listening, speaking and co-operative and negotiation skills
- Participate in the Students Council through their representatives in the senior classes

Senior Classes

Third Class –Sixth Class

- Explore the concept of democracy within the school with the children – Executive Committee, the Board of Management, the Parent /Teacher Association, the Students Council , the Green Committee etc
- Explore the democratic process in Ireland at a National/ Local. Community/school level.
- Visit the Dail/Senate
- Invite a local representative in re an issue such as “No safe playgrounds for the children locally” etc
- Involve children in democratic process through elections – Schools Council, Green Committee
- Provide opportunities for the children to become involved democratically in the local community – for example, Comhairle na nOg – the children's Dail.

Activating Equality through Positive Action

Junior Classes

Junior Infants-Sixth Class

- **Sharing –share a book -share a toy**
- **Doing – for example , bake a cake for the Harvest fair –proceeds go to a developing country or bring in a present for a homeless child at Christmas**
- **Extend the hand of friendship world wide –buying a friendship bracelet on Friendship Day –proceeds to the street children in Brazil**
- **Assemblies on “Human Rights Day”, Anti-Racism Day, International Womens Day etc.**
- **Participate in Campaigns, for example the “Imagine Campaign”**
- **Providing opportunities for discussion/dialogue/ critical reflection on controversial issues that may arise**

Senior Class

Third/Fifth Class

(I need to do more work on this strand unit)

- **As above**
- **Debating issues**
- **Writing letters**
- **Campaigning**
- **Peaceful Protest – Dunne’s Stores Protest, Ghandi, CND**

Methodologies which support this strand

(I am going to include some guidance on methodologies which support this strand)

Resources which support this strand

(I am going to include here some resources which support this strand)

Blueprint Ethical Core Curriculum.

2nd Draft 9th Dec.'03

Moral and Spiritual Strand

The general aim of the strand is to give children a critical knowledge, understanding and awareness of right and wrong, and a heightened awareness of social ethical and moral standards through reflecting on the meaning and purpose of life. The strand should encourage and develop the individual on the journey to inner discovery and empower them to make informed moral decisions.

Strand Units

1. Exploring Moral development.
2. Exploring the concept of right and wrong.
3. Exploring the codes and conduct agreed by society
4. Providing guiding principles and tools for the development of the whole person.

- 1 Exploring spiritual development
- 2 Reflecting on the meaning and purpose of life.
- 3 Exploring the journey to inner discovery.
- 4 To inspire the individual to choose their personal, social, moral, and spiritual values.

Providing individuals with a philosophy of living, facilitating their overall growth, helping them integrate themselves into the community with respect confidence and purpose.

Exploring Moral Development

Encourage and develop moral reasoning of right and wrong and decision making.

Junior and Senior Infants

- Explore the uniqueness of the individual through projects providing guiding principles and tools for the development of the whole person.
- Explore moral development through discussion and stories, highlighting important values in the family. Develop and create an awareness of core values. cooperation, freedom, happiness, honesty, love, peace, respect, responsibility, kindness, caring, safety security.
- Children of this age develop values-based behaviours in a values and peaceful atmosphere. Foster the development of peaceful cooperative social skills, through stories, songs, games, movement.

First and second classes:

- Explore values and codes of behaviour in a school community through discussion, playing together, learning together, classroom charter. Explore the relevance of the values in the previous Junior and senior cycle.
- Develop the concept of responsibility towards each other.
- Provide a space for the exploration of feelings exploring active feelings – anger, disappointment isolation and frustration.

Third and Fourth classes:

- Explore the concept of conscience. what is it? How does it develop? Is everyone's conscience the same? Provide opportunities to explore and engage in the process of decision making.
- Provide opportunities for children to deepen their understanding in relation to making personal and social choices. Discussion of right and wrong, appropriate behaviour, perception of what is acceptable. Collective responsibility.
- Application of moral principles insights and reasoning to decision making.
- Provide a safe climate for children to take responsibility and consequences for own actions and provide them with a dignified re-entry. Construct ways for children to pick themselves up again.

Fifth and Sixth classes

- Benefits of values in the wider community. Lived values in their lives.
Values in the wider world. Interpretations and shades of right and wrong.
.Identify and create a values charter. Relate values charter to current political social and environmental issues. Develop ability to question and reason.
- Explore the values of collective responsibility from a values perspective.
Acting on conviction not fear of getting into trouble
- . Interpretation of rules, allowances for some people who break rules but not for others.
Controversial issues. Children with special needs.

Exploring Spiritual Development

Junior and Senior Infants

- Develop a sense of wonder in the child's world through stories poems and art.
- Begin the process of self-reflection on their own feelings and experiences.

First and Second class

Develop awareness of their own personal experiences.
Support children on reflecting on the importance of these experiences.

Third and Fourth class

- To support children in their search for understanding their different life experiences. e.g. death of Grandparent.
- To develop an ability to question and reflect on different experiences.
- To understand and be sensitive to how different experiences impact on individuals..

Fifth and Sixth class

- To support children in searching out and developing their own personal views and insights.
- To support children in gaining an understanding of the growth and development of personal development.
- To provide opportunities for the children to apply these insights in their own personal lives.

Blueprint Ethical Core Curriculum

Draft 4- 30th November 2003

Equality and Justice Strand

The general aim of this strand is to give children a critical knowledge, understanding and awareness of issues relating to human rights, equality, culture and diversity, social justice and social inclusiveness and to empower them to make a difference.

Strand Units:

1. Exploring Human Rights.
2. Exploring inequalities
3. Exploring the Democratic Process
4. Activating Equality through Positive action.

All of these strand units overlap and are strongly interlinked.

Exploring Human Rights Strand

Junior and Senior Infants

- Develop the concept of rights through building the self esteem of children through an exploration and celebration of the children's uniqueness and differences, for example, their name, their family, their nationality etc.
- Explore the concept of the reciprocity of rights through recognition of the importance of each individual in the class, that is, each child's right to be happy, safe, grow and learn in school.
- Develop the concept of justice, responsibility and empathy through a discussion of issues such as "Why Share?", "Why be sorry?" "Why not to hurt others".

First and Second Class

- Recognise the difference between wants and needs
- Foster an awareness the concept of basic rights for example the right to food, water, shelter, health, play, not to be hurt etc.
- Explore the concept of rights and responsibilities in relation to each other in school and in their families and the contribution they can make to ensure these rights are upheld.

Third and Fourth Class

- Make the children aware of the universality of rights through an awareness of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Create awareness that not all children in the world have their rights respected.
- Make the children aware and recognise that sometimes rights can be in conflict and help them to develop the skills to resolve the conflict in these situations.

Fifth and Sixth Class

- Make the children aware that in addition to basic rights there are also developmental rights, (education, play and leisure, cultural activities, access to information); participation rights (freedom to express an opinion, freedom to join an association and to gather together peacefully; protection rights to guard children against abuse, neglect and exploitation).
- Conduct an in depth exploration of human rights, in an Irish context, for example, the right to a home, the right to asylum, the right not to be discriminated against.
- Conduct depth exploration of a human right in a global context, for example, the right to education, the right to an adequate standard of living, including food, shelter and clothing.

* There are strong integration possibilities and linkages in this strand with English, Social, Personal and Health Education, Geography and History and programmes such as the Walk Tall Programme and the Stay Safe Programme.

Exploring Inequalities Strand

Junior /Senior Infants

- Develop the concept of sharing, fairness, respect and empathy.
- Develop awareness that in order to ensure that everyone is treated equally, sometimes we have to treat people differently.
- Help the children to recognise the unique needs of children with disabilities.
- Explore stories about people who have made a difference and brought about change

First/ Second Class

- Create an awareness and appreciation of diversity in the school , for example culture, religion, different families, lifestyles etc
- Explore how people are interconnected and depend upon each other –the concept of interdependence, for example the post person, the school nurse,the doctor, the dentist. the garda, the fireperson, the traffic warden etc
- Develop the skills of the children to make fair decisions and to enable them to resolve conflict.

Third/ Fourth Class

- Explore the concept of discrimination and prejudice
- Explore the concept of discrimination in relation to a specific area, for example, gender, race, class and disability.
- Critical reflect on stories/poems about people who have encountered discrimination and overcome it. e.g. Christopher Nolan, Sadie Patterson, the Suffragettes, Nelson Mandela.

Fifth/Sixth Class

- Create a knowledge and awareness of Equality legislation –the Equal Status Bill and the nine grounds on which discrimination is prohibited¹.
- Explore an equality issue in relation to minorities in Ireland, for example the travelling community, refugees, the Jewish/ Muslim/Vietnamese population etc.
- Explore an issue in-depth such as homelessness, poverty etc. comparing issues at a community/ local level/ national level and globally

¹ Nine grounds are: gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religious belief, age, disability, race and membership of the travelling community

Exploring the Democratic Process

Junior Classes

Junior Infants – Second Class

- Develop a class culture of listening/speaking / negotiating.
- Discuss issues such as rules for class, playground etc and develop democratically with the children class and yard charters.
- Provide opportunities for children to articulate their own attitudes, experiences and values.
- Develop the children's critical thinking , listening, speaking, decision making and co-operative and negotiation skills
- Enable the children to participate in the life of the school , for example in the Students Council and the Green school committee through their representatives in the senior classes

Senior Classes

Third Class –Sixth Class

- Explore the concept of democracy within the school with the children – Executive Committee, the Board of Management, the Parent /Teacher Association, the Students Council , the Green Committee etc
- Explore the democratic process in Ireland at a National/ Local. Community/school level.
- Visit democratic forums, for example, the Dail/Senate
- Invite a local representative in re a local controversial issue such as “No safe playgrounds for the children locally” etc
- Involve children in democratic process through elections –Schools Council, Green Committee etc.
- Provide opportunities for the children to become involved democratically in the local community – for example, in Comhairle na nOg – the children's Dail.

Exploring the Democratic Process

Junior Classes

Junior Infants – Second Class

The child shall be enabled

- to participate in a class culture of listening/speaking / negotiating.
- to discuss issues such as rules for class, playground etc
- to participate in the development of class and yard charters.
- to have opportunities to articulate his/her own attitudes, experiences and values.
- to develop critical thinking , listening, speaking, decision making and co-operative and negotiation skills
- to participate in the life of the school , for example in the Students Council and the Green school committee.

Senior Classes

Third Class –Sixth Class

The child shall be enabled:

- to understand how democracy works within the school through the Executive Committee, the Board of Management, the Parent /Teacher Association, the Students Council , the Green Committee etc
- to begin to understand how the democratic process in Ireland works at a National/ Local. Community/school level.
- to visit democratic forums, for example, the Dail/Senate
- to engage with local controversial issue such as “No safe playgrounds for the children locally” etc
- to participate in a democratic process, for example through elections to the Schools Council, the Green Committee etc.
- to avail of opportunities to become involved democratically in the local community – for example, in Comhairle na nOg – the children’s Dail.

Activating Equality through Positive Action

Junior Classes

Junior Infants-Second Class

The child shall be enabled :

- to share, for example , share a book day -share a toy day etc
- to extend care and friendship world wide –e.g., by swelling friendship bracelet on Friendship Day in support of a Human Rights organisation such as Amnesty International or by twinning with another school.
- to actively participate in whole school assemblies on various topics, such as “Peace”, “Co-operation”, “Human Rights”.
- to begin to become aware of equality issues through celebrations, for example “Anti-Racism Day”, “International Women’s Day”, etc.
- to begin to discuss and critical reflection on controversial issues that may arise

Senior Class

Third/Fifth Class/ Sixth Class

The child shall be enabled:

- to have opportunities for discussing, analysing and debating controversial issues
- to participate in a Human Right’s Climate in the classroom/school.
- to express his/her views by writing letters to local representatives etc
- to campaign on an equality issue .
- to learn about people who have made a difference through peaceful protest, for example the Dunne’s Stores Protest, Ghandi, Campaign for nuclear disarmament etc

Resources which support this strand

UNICEF "For Every Child – the rights of the child in words and pictures"
UNICEF, "Time for Rights" (a resource for 9-13 year olds).

Amnesty International, 2003 "Imagine Campaign –video and notes).
Cross Border Primary Human Rights Education Initiative , 2003– "Lift Off" a
resource for 3rd and 4th c lass.

CROSSCARE, "Celebrating Difference" An Intercultural Programme for Senior
Primary Classes.

Headstart, 1997, "Challenging Racism-valuing Difference" a resource for 8-12 year
olds

Human Rights for Children Committee, Virginia Hatch...et al , " Human Rights for
Children" - a curriculum for teaching Human Rights to Children, Ages 3-12., Hunter
House Publishers, USA, 1992

Save the Children "Partners in Rights" –creative activities exploring rights and
citizenship for 7-11 year olds, Save the Children Education Unit, 17 Grove Lane
London, SE5 8RD

Ethical Core Curriculum

Ethics and the Environment Strand

The aim of this strand is to give children a knowledge, appreciation and respect for their environment and to empower them to take an active role in its stewardship.

Strand Units

1. Knowledge and awareness of environmental issues.
2. Activating responsibility and stewardship.

Knowledge and Awareness of Environmental issues:

Junior and Senior Infants

- Explore and investigate the cycle of life through the seasons using examples from the school garden and enable children to grow in awareness of being part of the web of life.
- Explore the environment of the school both natural and manmade.
- Nurture the children's sense of awe and wonder in nature.

First and Second

- Create and develop a responsible understanding of ownership of the classroom and school environment.
- Enable children to become aware of different habitats.
- Develop an understanding of recycling in the school and home.

Third and fourth

- Create an awareness of the impact of the actions of people on the environment through the generations.
- Explore how we can enhance our environment for future generations.

Fifth and Sixth

- Explore the impact of pollution on natural and manmade environments
- Create an awareness of the power of natural disasters on our environment. e.g. earthquakes and floods.
- Develop an understanding of energy conservation

Activating responsibility and stewardship.

Junior classes

- Develop nature trails in the local park seashore or farm and facilitate the children in an understanding of interdependence in the natural world.
- Plant bulbs and seeds and enable children to develop a sense of awe and wonder in new life.
- Encourage children to develop a class compost bin and to draw up an environmental code for recycling.
- Enable children to make birdfeeders for use in the school or at home.

Senior classes

- Do an environmental project e.g. Green School project or Environmental audit of the school.
- Develop a school environmental charter.
- Discover ways to move towards an environmentally friendly lifestyle.
- Become involved in local community clean up days.
- Create a wildlife garden or wild flower patch.
- Engage in seed collection projects and tree planting days.
- Establish a system of school litter wardens.

Ethical Core Curriculum

Ethics and the Environment Strand

The aim of this strand is to give children a knowledge, appreciation and respect for their environment and to empower them to take an active role in its stewardship.

Strand Units

1. Knowledge and awareness of environmental issues
2. Taking responsibility.
3. Activating Stewardship.

Knowledge and Awareness of Environmental issues.

Junior and Senior Infants

- Teach children about what the environment is by examining the school both indoors and outdoors. Describe the difference between natural and manmade environment.
- Discuss the circle of life through the seasons using examples in the school garden.

First and Second

- Introduce the concept of urban and rural environmental traditions
- The temporary ownership of your surroundings
- Concept of recycling in the school and home. Why recycle?

Third and fourth

- Intergenerational continuity
- Explore old local buildings.
- Locate maps of school area – what was the area used for in the past?

Fifth and Sixth

- Look at the third world environment and compare it to their own environment
- Look at concepts of pollution, industrialisation etc.
- Look at natural disasters. How do these occur?
- Examine the use of energy in their lives – what types and are there knock on effects?

Taking Responsibility:

Junior and Senior

- Why keep the classroom and yard tidy? What would happen if rubbish built up?
- Discuss respect for both natural and manmade surroundings. Why? What can happen if no respect?

First and Second

- Explain actions and consequences in the environment.
- Discuss the interconnection of the natural world – balance and imbalance extinction.

Third and fourth

- De-forestation – What are the effects.
- Pollution effects.
- Historical use and reuse of environment e.g. American Indians had very close relationship with their environment.

Fifth and Sixth

- Personal and social responsibility - What do these mean?
- Throw away society – what effects does this have on the environment?

Activating Stewardship:

Junior and Senior

- Recycling – what can you use again?
- Is there waste in the classroom? Waste, food paper etc

First and Second

- Look and an Environmental audit of the school (or home)
- Follow up the Millennium tree project.

Third and fourth

- Research Green schools / wormery/soil project. How could your school take part?

Fifth and Sixth

- Develop a school environmental charter. Involve the whole school
- Is your school urban or rural? How would the environmental priorities change depending on where your school is?

Resources to be added for all sections

Blueprint Ethical Curriculum

Belief Systems Strand

The general aim of this strand is to give children a critical knowledge, understanding and awareness of the teachings of religious and non religious belief systems and how these systems relate to our shared human experience. The emphasis will be placed on an exploration of the infinite variety and richness of humankind through nurturing a respect for individual belief systems and through creating spaces where values can be articulated and critically examined in a spirit of awe and wonder..

Children will be encouraged to develop an understanding of the rights to hold differing belief systems and what it means to live in a world of diverse beliefs.

Strand Units

- Exploring key figures in the major belief systems
- Exploring the rites and ceremonies associated with the major belief systems
- Exploring the important celebrations associated with the major belief systems
- Encountering the beliefs and values of the major belief systems through a range of methodologies.

Junior and Senior Infants

Key Figures

1. Be familiar with stories associated with religious leaders such as Abraham, Moses, Jesus Christ, Buddha, Mohammed, Krishna, Allah, Guru Nanak, etc
2. Explore these stories through play

Rites and Ceremonies

1. Identify and recognise the symbols associated with the major belief systems
2. Examine the foods associated with some belief systems

Celebrations

1. Understand the nature of celebration
2. Explore special celebrations that we share with others.... birthdays
3. Examine a special festival such as Divali, World Earth Day, May Day, World Children's Day.

Beliefs and Values

1. Understand how caring and sharing are important in our lives
2. Talk about rules and why they are important
3. Share stories about feelings such as love, kindness, forgiveness.

First and Second Classes

Key Figures

1. Know that there are religious leaders who wear particular styles of dress and are known by particular titles
2. Be aware that belief systems have special books which are important to them
3. Find out how these leaders are chosen

Rites and Cermonies

1. Look at naming cermonies across a range of world religions and Humanism
2. Choose a range of naming cermonies and look at the customs attached to them

Celebrations

1. Look at how different festivals are celebrated
2. Look at the foods associated with these celebratrions
3. Identify any common features between festivals

Beliefs and Values

1. Be familiar with examples of religious observances which reflect rules for living
2. Examine the similarities between these rules. An example might be fasting from food,
3. Share experiences of special occassions in their own lives and how they felt about these occassions.

Third and Fourth Classes

Key Figures

1. Be familiar with the sacred writings associated with key religious figures
2. Understand the relevance of these writings in their various traditions

Rites and Cermonies

1. Look at marriage and/or funeral rites across all traditions
2. Examine the links between religious rites and cermonies and their beginnings in older traditions such as Bealtaine, Harvest, Winter Solstice, etc
3. Look at the costumes associated with these traditions

Celebrations

1. Examine the cultural diversity associated with festivals
2. Explore any links between these traditions

Beliefs and Values.

1. Explore the common links in any of a range of religious codes of conduct
2. Through class discussion examine how these codes of conduct may or may not help to make the world a better place.

Fifth and Sixth Classes

Key Figures

1. Explore the concept of authority as exercised by religious leaders
2. Discuss the role of these leaders in their own communities
3. Examine why divisions can arise between these traditions

Rites and Ceremonies

1. Examine rites of passage across societies
2. Look for common links between these rites
3. Discuss the similarities and differences across the major belief systems

Celebrations

1. Identify the common themes associated with festivals across belief systems
2. Undertake class projects which bring together these common themes
3. Present work in the form of an Assembly or debate

Beliefs and Values

1. Identify the key values associated with the major belief systems
2. Attempt to locate common values across the traditions
3. Explore at class level how these values can benefit society.

Note: There are strong integration possibilities with this strand and a range of other curricula such as English, History, Geography and Art.

It is not envisaged that this strand be studied in isolation from the other three identified strands. Each strand should inform the study of the other three and this is particularly relevant to this strand.

Appendix I2

**See Learn Together: An Ethical Education Curriculum for Educate
Together Schools**

This publication is included as a separate document.

Appendix J2

**Address for the Launch of the 'Learn Together' Curriculum by
*Educate Together, Ag Foghlaim Le Chéile, The Ark, Children's
Cultural Centre***

Dublin October 6th 2004

Professor Kathleen Lynch, Equality Studies Centre, UCD

I am delighted to launch this new curriculum for *Ethical Education*. It is an innovative and imaginative set of resources that will enable children, teachers and parents from different social backgrounds and holding different beliefs, to learn to live with a deep understanding and respect for each other.

It is a great achievement, not just because of the practical guidance and back-up resources for teachers that it provides, but also because **it demonstrates that spiritual and ethical education does not have to involve separate education**. We can educate children together - spiritually, morally, politically and socially- who hold very different beliefs and come from different cultures and religious backgrounds.

It also dispels some myths about education in the multi-denominational sector, particularly the myth that these are some type of 'godless' or what I might call 'good-less' places. It identifies multiple ways in which we can come to pursue our God or our sense of what is Good and Ethical together. It demonstrates, through practical exercises, shared ways of coming to know our own sense of what is of value in life. **It identifies the common values that we share in our humanity and offers a pathway for educating our children to live in a pluralist Ireland.**

What are also admirable in the programme are the **action dimensions**; it integrates theory and action in spiritual and ethical education. It has sharing exercises, co-operative projects, celebrations of religious events, and practical initiatives, such as a proposal for 3rd – 6th

class students to develop an anti-racist charter in their school. In the section on 'Cultivating Spiritual Growth', there is a programme of work built around meditation that is truly innovative and imaginative. It is a most welcome development in a society where so much of the time, children are not educated to reflect on the meaning and purpose of life itself.

What is important about the curriculum also is its **truly holistic approach to ethical education**. Children will not just be educated about spiritual values or ethical principles emanating from their own belief or religious tradition. They will learn about the values, cultures and lifestyles of those who are different to them. **They will learn to name difference with a language of respect**. I particularly welcome the move in the programme to mainstream learning about Travellers' culture and life style.

One of the major limitations of our education system at present is that there is often no safe space to learn about difference. When children lack a language of respect for those who are different to them, they tend to use the language that is available colloquially; this is often a derogatory language, a language of disdain, denial and trivialisation. **If there is no legitimated language to challenge the language of disrespect, then children are left powerless. This programme will enable children to speak, to have a voice, to name their own world in respectful terms, and to come to know and name the world of others who are different from themselves in equally respectful terms.**

Of course, the language of inclusion that is endemic to this curriculum will be of much lesser value, if **all the differences** in our own society are not addressed. Differences arising from the social divisions of class, gender, sexuality and Traveller status are 'old divisions' in Ireland, as indeed are divisions and segregations relating to disabilities. It is

important that these differences are named and analysed in any programme concerned with equality and justice. **There is a danger that we may overlook the familiar differences and divisions because of our depth of concern for newer and more visible divisions.**

To promote inclusion, we must practice it. There is a challenge here not just to practice it in the classroom, but at organisational levels. **Our teaching body needs to be more diverse, in terms of ethnicity, religion, dis/ability etc. We need teacher role models from different ethnic and other social backgrounds.** Within schools we must ensure that our selection criteria for entry do not operate as discrete selection mechanisms for excluding particular groups of children, including those who are from working class backgrounds, those who are nomadic or those who are the children of migrant workers. For example, the first come, first served principle, may be a very fair and equitable in a society that is stable, where there is equality of information to all potential parents, etc., It may not be fair or equitable in highly mobile societies with deep class divisions. In the latter case, it is the most informed and the most resourced who will benefit most from the first come, first served, principle. We must keep our eyes on the practice of inclusion. **Our staff and student body need to be diverse if we are to develop school climates that enshrine the ethical principles we espouse in the 'Learn Together' programme.**

While Educate Together are rightly proud of their achievement and of the value of this new curriculum for their own schools, I think the proposed curriculum will be helpful to teachers outside the Educate Together sector as well. It provides a valuable set of tools, guidelines and resources for learning core ethical principles shared by the great majority of people in Ireland, regardless of their religious or personal beliefs. I look forward to having a similar programme for second-level education.

Appendix K2

Educate Together

Humanist modules

Draft

Introduction

A Humanist education throughout the primary curriculum could very easily be the basis for most civic teaching, discussion about values, society, human rights and justice, equality and so on. A developmental approach is taken here which complements the existing spiral framework of the Educate Together curriculum.

These notes are suggestions for a teaching programme with ideas for activities and materials.

It would be helpful too for teachers to read the Humanist Course outline for junior certificate up to leaving certificate. That document could also provide suggestions for further study for more able or motivated pupils.

Junior and senior infants

Key words and concepts: Humanist/ism, altruism, secular, naming ceremony

Moral and spiritual

At this stage it would be practical to introduce the terms Humanist and Humanism, and simply let the children know there are people who celebrate being human, and mark occasions such as birth, marriage and death with ceremonies but in a secular way.

A naming ceremony would be a good and straightforward example with little detail. People have celebrated these things going way back into history and we deduce that they did pre-history; it is a human thing to do, and when people have religion they link these ceremonies to their beliefs. Humanists believe it is people's way of making order in the world.

Belief systems

A good way to introduce Humanism at this age is with the Happy Humanist symbol.

This reflects the Humanist belief that only humans can make the world better, and that they should try to make it good for everyone.

Humanism has values and principles which guide it but it does not have a divine element; no god or gods. Humanists would call these universal values because they don't belong to any creed.

Humanists highlight caring and sharing/altruism as fundamental to the human experience. Humanists see altruism as part of being human, the struggle for one's own and closest people's own benefit also exists.

Teaching materials:

Picture of Humanist logo

Activities:

Draw own logo

Discuss what makes a 'happy human'.

Second and third classes

Key words and concepts: responsibility, natural world, dogma, creed, compassion, personal responsibility, philosophy, ancient Greeks, dignity.

Moral and spiritual

People can be, and mostly are, moral, again because it seems the 'right' way to be to create a functioning society where we can live together in peace. Humanists try to work out for themselves what a good society is, in a utilitarian way; this good for others provides a mutually good society.

To grow as human being there are responsibilities.

The term spiritual in Humanist terms is a contentious one as it is so closely bound with religion in most people's minds. Some Humanists use the term, others would find alternatives to describe the awe, wonder and pleasure from the natural world.

In the ET curriculum, where spiritual growth is described through meditation, wonder and self-reflection, a term such as personal growth/development could be used.

Belief Systems

It would be useful at this stage to include an understanding that not all important writings are sacred; for example the philosophers of the classical era drew on their own experience and thinking, rationality was valued. Aristotle could be given as an

example of a Greek philosopher. Humanists also value rationality and thinking for oneself as truly important.

Introduce the core values of Humanism; including justice, equality, compassion, personal responsibility, altruism. As this will be revisited more can be introduced at later stages. The maturity of each class being taught will lead this area.

The children will notice or be directed to the fact that, like the values common to most religions, Humanism's values centre on being good to others. Introduce the Golden Rule-Do unto others as you would have them do to you.

It may be appropriate to give more information, or give research tasks to look up classical philosophers such as Cicero and Epicurus.

Rites of passage

Most appropriate at this age would be to look in more detail at a naming ceremony if it didn't come up at infant level. People generally want to welcome the new child into the world and the family with a party to name the baby 'officially' to family and friends; Humanists often make vows to the child about how the family will raise its new member.

It could be useful as far as civic teaching goes to explain the difference between the rules about registering the baby and celebrating her/his arrival.

Teaching materials:

The Water Babies

Picture of Aristotle

Poster of naming ceremony-BHA

Sample naming ceremonies from The Humanist Philosophy-HAI

Activities:

The children might like to discuss their own names and why names are important

Third and fourth class

Key words/concepts: vows, Renaissance, scientific method, ethical life-stance

Moral and spiritual

The children should by now be familiar with the core values of Humanism. These can be developed to look more deeply at the importance for Humanists of the concept of personal responsibility and making life choices; that having fewer moral rules (as opposed to guidelines) is hard on the individual as they are responsible for their own actions and decisions.

The Golden Rule can be developed from the previous year.

Belief systems

Rites of passage

Humanists celebrate meaningful occasions in their lives. Marriage is one of these. It can be highlighted that for Humanists the occasion is based on choice for individuals, and the ceremony reflects that choice in making vows personal to the couple. It can also be a traditional occasion in clothing, vows and so on. People are formally agreeing to a commitment which they hope will last but are able to make a decision, if they develop in different ways to dissolve the relationship. This is as difficult for Humanists as others but they do not believe there has been a divine element to it and it is up to the people involved to decide..

Development of Humanism itself; Renaissance thinkers. Although this occurred in an age of religious authority, the development of science (an important aspect of Humanist thinking) meant people were able to question some of the ignorance about

their own bodies and the world around them. Also to develop a scientific questioning approach to important questions of life.

Humanists like to take an ethical stance to life; it is known as an ethical life stance rather than religion. At this stage the difference between a 'life-stance' and religion could be explained

That is, there is no book of rules or word of god for Humanists to refer to, no catechism to inform actions.

Teaching materials

Video clip of Humanist wedding ceremony-BHA

Use written information sheets with open-ended questions to work in a more structured way of learning about the beliefs and development of Humanism.

The philosophies of Humanist groups internationally could be available, and comparisons made by the class.[These materials will be available] They may see for themselves how these philosophies and principles are common to each other, also to most religious beliefs. It should be highlighted that Humanists believe that these are good intrinsically and are human values not from a divinity.

Picture of Michelangelo and Galileo

The Humanist Philosophy-HAI

Activities:

A Humanist coming in to talk would be valuable at this stage. By now the children would have heard quite a lot about Humanists, but probably not met one to their knowledge. They could each (or in a group) have a question prepared.

Classes 5 and 6

Key words/concepts

Secular Humanism, atheist, agnostic, consciousness, Enlightenment.

Moral and spiritual

This section could look at why people become Humanists.

What's the difference between secular Humanists, atheists and agnostics. And the fundamental difference between following a religion and being a Humanist.

More in-depth discussion of the values of Humanism. If not covered at all previously or look at views in more depth on 'the one life we have' view of Humanism. How does the Humanists' belief that there are no second chances affect their attitude to life and how it should be lived for the best.

Humanism and reflection

There is a famous quotation about the examined life?? [Bertand Russell-Greek??!!]

Humanists do not pray to a divinity or divinities but believe that reflection and using conscious thinking are among the attributes that give being human a special quality.

Activities like meditation and time for thought, along with debating issues with others are close to Humanist values.

Belief system

Humanist groups internationally would support the United Nations as the best way at present of protecting people globally. There are representatives from the International Humanist and Ethical Union attending sessions at the UN (I can find more detail about this).

A fundamental belief of Humanism is in the equality of people, as countries and individuals, regardless of gender, nationality and so on.

Humanism is an international system, many countries have their own organisations. It is easier in some countries to be non-religious or a Humanist than others. How easy is it in Ireland to be a Humanist.

The Humanist Association of Ireland is a growing organisation, it may be represented on the Government group which is being set up to meet with religious and ethical groups to discuss issues.

Famous people related to Humanist beliefs;

Enlightenment

A more modern age, marking the development of understanding the world using reason, using the evidence discovered by scientific method. It is also described as a naturalistic way of thinking.

Emergence of ethical societies

Nineteenth century Humanism saw the growth of 'free-thinking', without superstition or religion. The National Secular Society was formed in London in 1866, then the South Place Ethical Society in 1869. Both exist today.

In the USA, similar groups formed .

In the twentieth century the BES renamed itself as the British Humanist Association.

An umbrella organisation formed in 1952; the International Humanist and Ethical Society. (I will give figures of membership etc on return from Paris!)

Charles Darwin is the best known name in the world of evolution.

Modern Humanism- detail will be filled in later

Rites of passage

The class can be reminded of the other Humanist ceremonies (discuss difference in ceremony and ritual?). Humanists also have ways of ‘celebrating’ a life as well as grieving for people they loved and been important in their lives who have died. The theme of Humanist ceremonies is that they look at the positive of the life lived and, in common with religion, look at what the person who has died meant to those who knew her/him. There is obviously no talk of the life to come/afterlife as with a Christian funeral (I’m not well versed enough in Judaism or Islam to know how funerals are conducted in this regard) or the idea of being judged by God.

Teaching materials:

Video of funeral-BHA (and possibly Death of a Miner)

The Humanist Philosophy-HAI

Activities:

A Humanist visitor would be good at this stage, if not before.

Follow-up written work; either questionnaire or short essay such as ‘What It’s Like to be a Humanist’..

Ann James

Humanist Association of Ireland

Appendix L2

Subject: Correction required ref article on 13 October

Date: Thu, 14 Oct 2004 18:39:47 +0100

From: Paul Rowe <paul.rowe@educatetogether.ie>

To: Editor <editor@irish-times.ie>

CC: <lettersed@irish-times.ie>

Madam,

On Wednesday you published a report under the headline "No Traveller children enrolled in Educate Together Schools". This headline and article are simply incorrect and I would like you to issue an immediate correction.

The article also insinuated that the commitments to inclusion and equality made by Educate Together schools were insincere and asserted that Educate Together schools are "started by parents who are unhappy with the education provided by mainstream schools".

The headline alleging the absence of traveller children in any Educate Together school is untrue. It seriously misinforms the public and undermines the reputation of an educational charity committed to promoting the benefits of educating children in an atmosphere of equality and inclusion. Your office was fully aware of the existence of active programmes of Traveller education in the Educate Together sector before Wednesday's edition was published and had even been offered an interview with either a specialist teacher or school Principal involved in this work. The fact that this headline appeared in the full knowledge that it was false is a significant lapse in the normally high standards of editorship and reporting in your paper.

Traveller children are welcome in Educate Together schools. There are and have been for many years Traveller children in Educate Together schools. Their rights of access are guaranteed by our legal charter and the Equal Status Act. Educate Together is fully bound by all the nine grounds of this Act and does not claim the exemptions provided in this Act for educational institutions to discriminate on religious grounds. This welcome does not stop at access. Equality of esteem is a core commitment made by our schools and exploring positive images of the Travelling Community is part of our Ethical Curriculum.

The article fails to point out that the Department's statistics are based on returns from schools seeking additional capitation or teaching resources for children of Travellers and depend on the identification of children as travellers in a school. As all parts of our society, the Travelling Community is multi-faceted and diverse and it is unscientific to assume that all members of a community are represented in such schemes. Your correspondent was in error to leap from these statistics to make such blanket statements with pejorative overtones. Similar problems exist with figures for children of immigrant families, they only appear in Department statistics if they come under the scheme for teaching English as an additional language. If they have a command of English they are not counted. Children originating from overseas traveller communities do not appear in these figures either and do not qualify for additional resources.

Educate Together schools are part of mainstream primary education in Ireland, they are National Schools, bound by the same regulations, curriculum and under-funded on an exactly equal basis as all other National Schools.

The parents setting up new Educate Together schools are new parents who see the educational advantages of schooling in an atmosphere of inclusion and equality. Our system requires that they make extraordinary voluntary efforts in order to exercise this option. They are opting in to this model of primary education not opting out. To underline this point, new schools only gain State recognition if they can ensure that there are at least 17 junior infant children joining each year, this means by definition, children who have never been in another school and one can safely assume that most members of the parent body have no experience as parents in other schools.

It is unfortunate that this article masks what is the real story about our schools in the Dublin region. We do have a problem providing access in many areas and this militates against us offering places to many different communities. Last year alone, more than a thousand children were unable to access an Educate Together school and many of our established schools in the region have long waiting lists. This inevitably creates problems for any family that moves whether they move for work, family or cultural reasons. The answer is to address this shortage of supply. The capital and the country urgently needs more schools operating on the same guarantees of inclusion and equality as are provided in the Educate Together model. This is essential to the future balance of our education system and our ability to meet our Constitutional and human rights obligations. We are anxious to work with government and other partners to create this infrastructure. It remains quite remarkable that the entire burden of this work is left on the shoulders of one small charity operating on a total State grant of €39,800 per year.

Yours,

Paul Rowe

--
Paul Rowe
Chief Exec.
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Learn Together to Live Together
No Child is an Outsider

Appendix M2

Meeting with Representatives of Traveller Training Sector

Present: Helen Campbell Director of Exchange House. Hugh McDermott: Director of Exchange House, William McDonagh, Staff member of Exchange House. Paul Rowe: CEO of Educate Together. Carmel Mulcahy.

Background: The first come first served enrolment policy of Educate Together schools might not be seen as inclusive in sectors such as the Traveller sector.

Paul Rowe highlighted recent inaccuracies in the Dail statement (John Curran Fianna Fail, February 2005) that Educate Together schools did not include Traveller children in their intake. There were Traveller children enrolled in many of the schools including Ennis, Limerick, Castheany, Castleknock and Rush and Lusk Educate Together schools. The organisation was bound by the 9 grounds of the Equality Act and sought to be inclusive in every possible manner. The problem was that there were too few schools to accommodate the demand. In the previous year (2004) there were 1200 children who applied and did not get into the schools because of the demands of space and the relatively small number of schools. The 'first come, first served' policy militated against people who are not in the know and the National Body is aware of that but the alternatives are equally divisive. There are schools who reserve a minimum number of places for Traveller children and Refugees but these schools have independent patronage.

Helen asked if the schools have an ethnic identifier. The answer is no in the same way as they do not have a religious identifier. All schools accept all children. That is the ethos.

The feeling of the members of Exchange House was that the sector is not aware of the existence of Educate Together schools and that they pro-actively cater for difference.

There is also a legal commitment on the Boards of Management of Educate Together schools to support the identity of each child in its care. This is copper-fastened in the ethos and this needs to be brought to the attention of Traveller parents.

Section 29 Appeals have questioned the enrolment policy and overridden it in at least one case so the time is ripe to look again at the policy.

Educate Together teachers are ideally placed to support individual identity in classrooms but this is not explained to Traveller parents.

Helen Campbell: Barriers to children attending Educate Together schools include:

- Dissemination of information about the sector
- Lack of a pro-active policy on the part of Educate Together
- A perception that the sector is middle class
- A perception that Traveller parents want to send their children to Catholic schools only. (This was soundly refuted by William McDonagh who stated that Traveller parents are interested in the best form of education for their children.
- Parental literacy problems. Could information be simplified?
- Information on the schools can be left at places such as Exchange House for dissemination
- Highlight the fact that the sector can be linked in with the Visiting Teacher scheme for Traveller children

Educate Together response:

- Schools actively support difference.

- We now cater for 40 nationalities and up to 50 languages. We have begun translating information on the schools into different languages.
- We will work with the Traveller Liaison Officers.
- We will raise this issue at the National Forum

Carmel Mulcahy:

- The Learn Together Curriculum is open to creative input. Maybe the time is right to start developing a partnership in particular in developing exemplars in the Justice and Human Rights strand

Hugh McDermott :

- Let people know you are out there
- Look at the literacy levels of the information leaflets with groups such as NALA
- Make contact with the Irish Traveller Movement
- Invite a speaker from the Irish Traveller movement to address the National Forum
- Invite schools who have children from the Traveller movement as pupils to speak of their experiences
- Get funding to support the inclusion of Traveller children in the sector
- Liaise with members of the Irish Traveller movement to write a module for the Learn Together curriculum
- Meet with the Education Officers of the Irish Traveller Movement

Resolution

- To bring the outcome of the meeting to the attention of the Board of Directors
- To seek funding to produce user friendly documentation

- To provide a Web link form the Educate Together site to the Irish Traveller Movement site
- To progress the link with Exchange House

Appendix N2

Some Questions to Be Considered Re:
Implementation of School Ethos.

- 1. A member of the teaching staff wants to teach religion to the Catholic children in the school after school hours..is there a difficulty with this?**
- 2. A parent of a Muslim child informs the principal that he does not want his 9 year old daughter to take part in mixed swimming classes..how should the principal respond?**
- 3. On the Monday after First Communion is made by some of the school's Catholic children, the parish priest asks if he can accompany the first communicants on a tour of the classes..would this compromise our ethos?**
- 4. Whole-school singing takes place in school every Monday morning. The mother of one of the school's Muslim girls requests that her child be exempted from these classes on the grounds that participation infringes their religious beliefs..is it ok for the school to facilitate such an opt-out?**
- 5. Prior to a Christmas Concert 2 parents from different religious backgrounds inform the class teacher that their children are to have no part in the modern dance element of the concert..the teacher insists that all the children should take part. Is s/he within her rights to take this position or is s/he being insensitive to the school's inclusive ethos?**

Appendix O2

Notes of Meetings with St. Patrick's College Drumcondra

First Meeting with St. Pat's Intercultural and Development Education Committee: December 04

Present: Elizabeth Murphy Le Jeune, Maurice O'Reilly, Mark Morgan, Paul Rowe and Carmel Mulcahy

Key Points Discussed

- First point raised was the religious nature of the Ethical Curriculum. Under the U.N. Declaration of Human Rights should people be forced to attend schools which were contrary to their religious beliefs. Background to the Ethical Curriculum discussed and explained in the context of Irish law.
- How do we provide information to student teachers?
- Should this information come from ET or from the Colleges of Education?
- There may be some difficulties with ET interfacing with the Colleges of Education.
- Great openness in terms of staff of St. Patrick's to interfacing with ET. Might there be difficulties from the perspective of the college ethos?
- Time is now ripe as ET has a defined document 'The Learn Together' curriculum.
- It was agreed that it was educationally desirable for trainee teachers to be aware of ET as it is a major employer in the field. 90 new posts each year.
- Students deserve a level playing field. It is their right to understand the ET ethos and curriculum
- One way was to increase the number of students doing their teaching practice in ET schools

- Can we forge a link between Intercultural Education and the Learn Together Curriculum?
- The CEO of ET needs to work more closely with the Presidents of the Teacher Training Colleges and the DOE to change the policy in relation to the provision of pre-service training in the area of ET ethos and philosophy. A link with Intercultural Education may be one way to proceed.
- ET to be invited to address students at Careers Seminars
- Use the Education Programme Channel and the Careers Channel and also the Teacher Training channel in order to forge links with ET and St. Pats.
- Is The Learn Together curriculum an example of best practice in Intercultural Education?
- Practical issues in relation to working in an intercultural environment include interacting with fundamentalist belief systems, tackling language difficulties and looking at Human Rights issues.
- Maybe both groups could link with Amnesty International.
- Can we embed Human Rights through a Curriculum?
- CERD Report discussed at length.
- Recommendations: Contact College President, speak to Teaching Practice co-ordinator, link in with Careers Guidance, Contact Irish Aid, introduce a module based on the Learn Together programme, plan an Intercultural Forum, provide an input into course work with B.A and B.Ed students
- Invite Minister for Education on board to view these moves from an Equality perspective.
-

Notes on Meeting in St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra: Friday 11th February 2005

Present: Dr. Pdraig Travers: College President, Dr. Mark Morgan: Head of Research, Paul Rowe, CEO of Educate Together and Carmel Mulcahy.

Reason for Meeting: Response to letter from Paul Rowe to all Heads of Colleges of Education to request a meeting to discuss the possibility of introducing a module on Educate Together into the pre-service programmes of Teacher Training in the colleges.

Key Points: Pdraig Travers agreed that this was an opportune meeting as the College was undertaking a Strategic Review. The College was committed to serve all schools in the National education sector and viewed itself as having an interdenominational perspective. It saw its role as covering a range of areas. These included:

Induction of new teachers

Continuing in-service for existing teachers

Continuing Professional Development through the provision of Masters and Doctoral programmes.

Paul Rowe outlined the growth of the Educate Together sector and referred to the recruitment of a large number of teachers on a yearly basis. As the key area of growth in Irish Primary education, it was important that trainee teachers had an awareness of the sector. Currently only a small minority of teachers have an awareness of the nature of Educate Together schools. There was an opportunity to raise the awareness of the sector within colleges such as St. Patrick's.

Pdraig Travers promised to allow access to Educate Together to begin the process of having a input into the formal curriculum in the college. It was appropriate that within all the courses there should be an awareness of the Educate Together sector.

The format that this input might take needed to be discussed further.

There was a possibility for a specific module on the Learn Together curriculum and this would raise the issue of how this module might be accredited and by whom.

However, he also believed that the core curricula in the college should prepare all students to understand the concept and the ethos of the Educate Together sector. This would necessitate the updating of existing curricula to support this concept.

Mark Morgan agreed with these ideas in principle but felt that in already crowded curriculum, care should be taken not to increase the number of hours.

The Philosophy of Education programmes were seen as key to the inclusion of Educate Together in the core curricula.

In order to do this in a meaningful way it might be feasible to examine the notion of introducing an Elective on Educate Together that could link closely with the schools in the sector. This approach might be seen as exclusive and limited.

Padraig Travers said that the college prepares teachers to teach in Catholic schools but that this should not exclude the preparation of teachers to teach in Educate Together schools.

Plan: The meeting would be discussed at the next full meeting of the Education Department.

A small number of people would be identified who could work with Educate Together to progress this further.

It was agreed that part of the remit of the group would be to raise awareness of Educate Together in the college. A new national system of mentoring of new teachers was being piloted in schools. This system could be used to support new teachers in Educate Together schools. In the research field this area could prove very interesting

at both National and International level. The College and Educate Together should work on putting in a bid for funding to support this research.

The possibility of an on-line module to support existing teachers in the sector was mooted as part of Continuing Professional Development.

3rd Meeting with St. Patrick's College: Monday 14th March.

Present :Rosemary Warren, Ray Torpey, Jones Irwin, Paul Rowe, Carmel Mulcahy.

This initial meeting looked at the possibility of introducing a module on Educate Together as an elective into the 3rd Year programme of Teacher Training in the college. The merit of this approach would be the design and delivery of a dedicated module that would link back into the schools where theory could be matched to practical application.

On the negative side it would mean that the input was marginalised and would only attract a limited number of students.

The alternatives proposed were to link Educate Together, its ethos, philosophy and the Learn Together programme back to existing modules on the Philosophy of Education and Religious Education. This would involve a revamp of the existing curricula in this area and would necessitate a meeting with the lecturers involved. This was scheduled for the following month.

Meeting in St. Patrick's College of Education: April 2005

Present: Jones Irwin, Fionnuala Waldron, Mark Morgan, Ray Torpey, Anne McGough

Discussion on the inclusion of Educate Together in the teaching of trainee teachers within the College.

Possible areas.

- Philosophy of Education
- Interculturalism and Philosophy of Education : An elective at 3rd Year
- Core module on Philosophy of Education at 3rd Year
- Religious Education: 1st and 2nd Year Core Modules
- Graduate Programme: Philosophy of Education
- Educate Together to outline what their requirements are
- Philosophy of Education may be the preferred option as it is not tied to a Catholic lens
- Irish bishops have set up an independent body to look at Religious Studies. This may give some leeway to introduce a study of the Learn Together programme
- The Certificate in Religious Studies is a denominational construct and this may prove a barrier. Could a similar construct be designed by Educate Together?

Final Meeting with St. Pat's December 2005

Present: Jones Irwin, Rosemary Warren, Joe Dunne:Philosophy Department, Paul Rowe, Carmel Mulcahy

Outcomes

- Extended discussion on where the Learn Together could be introduced
- Ethics could be an area to pursue study of two of the strands in the curriculum: Moral and Spiritual Development and Ethics and the Environment.
- A notion that there is currently a systematic lacuna in where to fit the study of Educate Together.
- On its own this area is too big for the Philosophy of Education. There are whole areas of study that can be isolated such as Ethos, Rights of Parents, Rights of the State, etc.
- Is this an area for the History of Education?
- There are also strong political overtones.
- The Intercultural dimension in Ireland does form part of the Philosophy of Education course. This could be one area to examine more closely
- Trainee teachers need a greater awareness of what is happening from a personal but also from a pedagogical perspective
- There is an area of interest on authority and freedom: where they derive from, the working out of relationships between all of the groups within a school and the tensions around democracy
- There is also the bigger area of Pluralism in Education

- The child centered approach is yet a further area to be explored
- It may be best to identify a small number of themes and work on these.
- These themes could be incorporated into a study of civic morality without a religious structure

Final Resolution

Incorporate some identified themes into the Philosophy of Education

There are other themes that will sit more comfortably in the Sociology of Education

Belief system strand could be incorporated into Religious Education modules.

The academic year 2006/2007 to be used as a pilot phase to interface with the new material.

Agreement on themes can best be achieved through a Workshop with all interested groups to find a compromise solution

This could be a real opportunity for cross- collegial co-operation between the Colleges of Education.

This is also an opportunity to undertake research on the fascinating areas emerging from this collaborative process.

- As it currently stands the approach adopted to Religious Education and Diversity is an ideologically Catholic response to diversity so this is not the road to go
- Is there a question of the autonomy of Educate Together being diluted if the study of the Learn Together curriculum is delivered by St. Pat's.

Key Points:

- System must address issue that child has a right to an education of the type offered by Educate Together.
- This is a legal obligation
- We must serve all the children equally
- Teachers must have the same rights to training as denominational teachers. State pays for the provision of teaching denominational approaches in the Teacher Training Colleges.
- This same right must be available to all prospective teachers from all religions and none
- The iconography is Catholic. The ethos is Catholic

Appendix P2

Meeting in Mary Immaculate College Limerick. 4th April 2005

Present: Carmel Mulcahy, Paul Rowe (Educate Together)

Theresa Doherty: Head of School of Education : Mary Immaculate College Limerick

Patricia Kieran: Lecturer in Religious Studies: Mary Immaculate College, Limerick

Jim Deegan: Sociology Department : Mary Immaculate College, Limerick

Key Issues Discussed

- How can Educate Together input into the Religious Education Curriculum in Mary Immaculate College in Limerick?
- 3rd Years: As part of the series of seminars on Contemporary Issues in Religion
- Inclusive Education is a specialism offered as an elective in 2nd Year. Educate Together could input here in the area of methodologies
- Speakers could be provided by Educate Together and the students in return would have access to Educate Together Schools to see inclusive practices in action in a multidenominational setting
- There is currently an Episcopal Commission on the teaching of Religion. Maybe Educate Together issues could be raised at this Commission.
- Within the Sociology of Education there is a move towards the study of diversity from a religious perspective. This could provide a forum for the study of the ethos of Educate Together schools

- There is a need to look at methodologies in the teaching of religion in the classroom. Perhaps this is an area where practising teachers in Educate Together schools could come and give an input.
- In 2nd Year, there is an opportunity to provide an in-service on the Learn Together curriculum over a week in the Spring Semester.
- The staff of Mary Immaculate would be happy to be involved in supporting Educate Together to design an in-service programme for teachers in the delivery of the Learn Together programme
- Review of Proposals
 1. 3rd Year: Lecture from Educate Together as part of the Contemporary Issues in Religion series
 2. 3rd Year Elective: Inclusive Education. Input from Educate Together around methodologies and access by students to the schools
 3. 2nd Year: Religious Studies: Input from Educate Together on methodologies
 4. Spring Series in 2nd Year: Week long input by Educate Together on Learn Together Curriculum
 5. Continuing Professional Development: input from College staff on the design and delivery of an in-service on the delivery of the Learn Together programme.
 6. Elective on Intercultural Studies: Focus on methodologies and how interculturalism is supported in Educate Together schools

Appendix Q2

Cora O'Farrell

Cora O'Farrell: Marino College of Education: April 22nd 2005

Notes: Cora O'Farrell is a lecturer in religion in Marino College of Education. She had made contact with Educate Together to compliment the Learn Together Curriculum and to state that she was using it in her classes.

Cora's brief is to explore methodologies in the teaching of religion in schools. The Learn Together programme was welcome because up to that point there was a lack of choice in terms of how to look at other Belief Systems outside of the mainstream denominations. Her interest was in developing a module on line that could be used with the students on the undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. There was space to have an input from Educate Together in the Elective on World Religions. This is currently taken by 25 students. Within this module there was a menu of options and Educate Together could through the Learn Together curriculum be included in this menu.

Educate Together could also input into the main curricula in the college at undergraduate and postgraduate level. It would a useful means of generating discussion and creating some energy around the debate on the teaching of religion.

The Colleges of Education need to be aware that the religion of the child isn't always Catholic or Church of Ireland.

Possible Inputs: Cora to attend AGM.

Possible input into the design and delivery of in-service programme for teachers in the sector.

Pre-service: Support the design of an online programme for the Learn Together curriculum. 'Working in an Educate Together School' could form part of the Certificate in Religious Education.

The Learn Together Curriculum in Cora's view is in need of being fleshed out and this could be done through co-operation with the Colleges of Education.

Appendix R2

Needs Analysis Questionnaire

As part of the planning for our first series of in-service on the new Learn Together Curriculum, we would like to gather as much information as we can on the needs of staff in each school. These needs refer to information, support, materials, in-service and further training. We hope to use the feedback from the questionnaires to inform the design and layout of the proposed in-services. We need you to send back the completed forms by _____ (Insert Date) in order to process them in time for the November in – services.

Thank You.

Frieda McGovern
Chris Lennon
Carmel Mulcahy

1. **Name of School:**
2. **Number of Teaching Staff (Including Principal)**
3. **Are you: (Please tick)**
 - ❖ A Teaching Principal
 - ❖ An Administrative Principal

Please circle Y or N

4. Are you familiar with the “Learn Together Ethical Curriculum”? Y/N
5. Does each member of staff have a copy of the curriculum? Y/N

6. Are there copies of the curriculum available for parents to access? Y/N

7. Is the curriculum being used in your school? Y/N

If you have answered yes to Question 7 please answer the following. If you have answered No please proceed to Question 9.

8. Please indicate which class groups are using the new curriculum.

9. What are the main challenges your school has faced in implementing/trying to implement the Learn Together curriculum?

10. How can ET support your school in the delivery of the Learn Together curriculum?

11. Has time been allocated to staff to work on planning for the delivery of the Learn Together curriculum? Y/N

12. Please indicate the strand with which you require assistance in its delivery.

- ❖ Ethics and the Environment
- ❖ Belief Systems
- ❖ Moral and Spiritual Development
- ❖ Justice and Equality
- ❖ All of the above

13. Has your school developed any support materials for the delivery of Learn Together? Y/N

14. If you have answered yes to the previous question can you give some indication of the nature of these materials?

15. Has your school brought in any outside groups (eg Amnesty) to support the delivery of Learn Together. Y/N

16. If you have answered yes to the previous question, please indicate the names of the group/groups.

17. From the list below, please indicate which form on on-going support is most appropriate to your school to help you in the delivery of the Learn Together Curriculum. You may select more than one from the list.

- ❖ On-line forum
- ❖ On -line materials
- ❖ Visit from training team
- ❖ Localised in -service
- ❖ Work Book
- ❖ Local Support Groups
- ❖ Other (Give Example)

18. Has the Learn Together Curriculum been formally launched in your school?
Y/N

19. It is proposed to offer in-service for all Principals to support the delivery of the Learn Together curriculum and that this initial in-service will act as a catalyst for further work with teachers. Please select the centre most suited to you.

Drumcondra Teachers' Centre: November 7th.

Blackrock Teachers' Training Centre: November

Limerick Teachers' Training Centre: November

Appendix S2

Interview with Tomas O Dualaing Principal of Grifeen Valley, Educate Together

I denotes interviewer

T denotes Tomas.

I: How long did it take to set up Grifeen Valley School?

T: We think we set up the school in record time. One of these days we will look at the Guinness Book of Records and realize we broke the record. Just over three years ago a group of parents got together and decided as there was no room in the Lucan Educate Together School there was a need to establish another one. So they got together and set up a committee. The following September provisional recognition was achieved. We opened in Lucan Scout Den with 24 students. Very grateful to the Scouts but we worked in poor conditions. Twelve months there and then twelve months in the prefabs vacated by Lucan Educate Together and then 12 months after that into the school. So two and a half years after the initial meeting of that group of parents we walked into this beautiful building. So we're thrilled.

I: In terms of numbers?

T: We started with 24 and went to 95. We now have 215. The target for the 30th of September is 285.

I: And final capacity?

T: It's about 450. I'm not a 100% sure as we are only going up to 3rd Class at the moment. We will have 2 classes for the 8 levels within the school. So it will be about 450.

I: So you are building slowly?

T: Yeah..more or less.

I: In terms of the number of nationalities?

T: I think 32 was the last count on nations and 28 languages spoken.

I: Does this involve a lot of language support within the school?

T: It does. Actually there are at least 50% of our kids from international backgrounds. We have 3 language support teachers. That makes a huge difference.

I: Is that enough?

T: No certainly not. The Department's initial figure is one for every 14. If we had one for every 14 we would have an awful lot of teachers in here. We would have as many language teachers as mainstream teachers. But we have as much as any other school in the country.

I: So you are not being disadvantaged?

T: Only in the same ratio as every other school in the country.

I: I know it's not a question asked but do you have any indication of the number of religious groupings involved in the school?

T: I don't really. We don't ask but we have quite a different representation. But because we don't ask we really don't know for sure.

I: Religious Instruction does happen after school hours. IS the premises used?

T: It is yes, by Catholic parents this year for the first time.

I: Just Catholic parents?

T: Yes. Two of our girls will be making First Communion. As one of them gave me an update on the way in when she said nine days time. She gives me a daily report. We look forward to celebrating that. Those two kids will have a special place at our official opening later this month.

I: Being Principal of a new school is a difficult position. Why did you opt for it?

T: Ah, I suppose I would have to go back to some of the events in Dunboyne. I spent the first 15 years of my teaching life in the North Inner City. I then went in as Principal of a school for children with severe behavioural problems for 3 years. I went there for somebody who wanted a break. I thought it was going to last one year. It lasted 3. When the Principal decided she wanted to come back, I was looking around. Irish was a big interest of mine. Issues of religion and different religions was also huge for me. This interdenominational Gaeilscoil came up in Dunboyne. I got the job there and I was delighted.

I: First Principal?

T: Yes, first principal. I worked there for 5 years. Maybe 3 of them very happy. The issue of religion as the world knows at this stage became a huge one. All of us there ate, slept and drank ethos. Trying to find a resolution to a difficult situation. When it became clear to me that the type of situation that was going to be enforced in the school was not going to be possible to live with, I knew I was on a sticky wicket. I needed to get out one way or the other and ET was the only area I was interested in.

I: Why?

T: Because these issues had been resolved and I didn't want to battle them again. But also because I do believe that it is wrong to separate and it is wrong to segregate on

the basis of colour, creed, class or anything else. The ET sector is the only sector of Irish education that has addressed that meaningfully.

I: So you feel it is better to go down the road of Multidenominational as opposed to Interdenominational?

T: Absolutely. I think the term interdenominational is an anachronism and I think it will fall apart at some stage.

I: What about Northern Ireland with the Integrated Schools?

T: I think yes it may work there because of a different set of circumstances. As society becomes more secularized and you know even the definition of interdenominational. It was the 2 Catholic and the 5 Reformed Protestant Churches. Quakerism for example. A Religion within the Protestant tradition. You know children who came from that religion didn't have the same right as a Church of Ireland child. And those types of things will find an expression at some stage in the future. I think Dunboyne shook the foundations of interdenominational education. It showed that there was a positive motivation behind it of trying to embrace the 2 religious traditions that have been the dominant force in Irish society down through the centuries. But society has moved on and the Christian tradition, the values that are there, are some similar that catering for just sections of the Christian tradition is a very limited way of addressing the changes that have taken place in Irish society.

I: OK. One of the terms that you have mentioned there is ethos and the concept of developing an ethos. And to an extent while you mentioned that you ate, drank and slept ethos, the ethos is pre-determined to a certain extent...

T: Yes, definitely...

I: In an ET school, how difficult is it to embed an ethos as a new principal?

T: There are certainly difficulties and I think there are always going to be difficulties around the issue of religion. In a MultiD school, where the battles around Dalkey and Sligo and all the original schools, contributed towards a clarity around ethos. Nevertheless, there are people coming to these schools still and they are wondering if religion is taught and other similar type questions. I think a BOM and a Principal has to be so straight and direct from the very word go. When a child is offered a place in our school, parents get a letter, which states this is a multidenominational school, and there are two paragraphs on what that means and they are asked to sign it at the end. There is an initial meeting of incoming parents and the issue of Multidenominational what it means and does not mean is spelt out in the most black and white terms. There's obviously work to be done with the teaching staff, people who come out of college and even those working in the sector for 20 years. It is constantly a live issue and it needs to be discussed and debated at teacher meetings. It is constantly a work in progress if you like and I don't think that you ever can ignore it. It would be a huge mistake for a BOM and a new Principal to believe this is sorted. We inherit something from our Patron body but that does not mean that we don't have to think about this. You have to constantly keep it on the table and there are constantly challenges to your ethos in a school like this. It can come from a Catholic

background; it can come from a Muslim background. They are probably the two main areas. Elements within those traditions find multid denominationalism hard to deal with. They constantly challenge and try to push the boat out so clarity is essential and a constant debate and discussion. And a redefinition and a refining of what exactly you mean by multid denominational.

I: I know that you are at an early stage at the moment but is the ethos actually written down anywhere?

T: How do you mean?

I: I know from other schools that they have ethos statements.

T: Certainly we have a policy on what we call the Core Curriculum and there was extensive discussions around that. The arrival of the new Learn Together Curriculum has generated another round of discussions. I'm sure other issues will come up and there will be constant need to go to the Board, to go to the teachers and to go to the parent body and raise discussions around issues. But in terms of discussion and in terms of what is written down as a result of those discussions, there is constant work to be done around this issue.

I: Who do you think is responsible for ethos? In a school like Griffeen Valley, the Patron is Educate Together and traditionally the patron was responsible for ethos.

T: I think the Patron is one step removed to some extent. What happens in the school...it is a great support for a Principal and for a Board to know that here is a Patron who is very clear about ethos matters. It is a great social support and a resource for us particularly when things get difficult. It is crucial that the BOM and in particular the Chairperson of the BOM has a particularly strong view in this area. That is absolutely crucial. Not just in terms of how the Principal...how the Chair..and then the Principal deal with staff, parents and board. That clarity and that commitment should be reflected there. That is absolutely crucial.

I: In terms of staffing and I am going to go back to the Learn Together Curriculum. You have mentioned it and you have also mentioned lack of training for new teachers in the sector. What was the reaction of staff to the Learn Together programme? Was it a help?

T: Reaction was positive. There is certainly a need to provoke discussion in this area. It is not enough to say: The BOM has bought this lovely document and we can all have a read of it. We have a session solely on the Learn Together document and I think it is something that we should do on an annual basis. It is not like The Alive O Programme. (Catholic) The lessons aren't broken down on a daily basis.

I: Deliberately.

T: There is still work to be done but it was very well received and useful. But it needs to be taken down off the shelf and consciously dusted off and some of the issues...some of the contentious issues as well as issues around the development of

that. Translating it from the model to something that is used in the classroom. That is something that is constantly in need of vigilance.

I: In terms of the curriculum itself, one of the ideas is that there will be in-service offered in the same way as it is for all the other curricula. What do you think of this?

T: I think that is absolutely essential, Carmel. Ultimately if that doesn't happen, that document will gather dust. There is a lot of pressure on teachers to cover so many subject areas now. If there is a problem in society, somebody will say let's run a programme in schools. Some of the areas that you want to touch upon in schools, a little bit of pressure is important. In an Educate Together school where our defining feature is our ethos I think it is essential that there is pre-service training and in-service training for those of us that are in the sector.

I: The pre-service is being look at and the first tentative steps have been taken. In terms of in-service, there are a number of models proposed. Some of the ones that have been suggested are Regional Meetings of ET teachers. Another one was that all ET teachers would meet and set up Working Groups. The Cascade Method you know. Would you have a preference for a model of in-service?

T: I think any of the ones mentioned would be useful. I think to get maximum benefit you have to have a situation where people can get together in relatively small groups and thrash out the issues and deal with the difficult issues. Our ethos, even though to some extent many of the battles have been fought in the past, is a constant source of controversy in our schools. It is manageable controversy because of what has happened in the past and because of the clarity that our Patron Body brings to bear. But there are constant issues around it. Like my generation and teachers even younger than me have been schooled in a completely different time. It is one thing to read a document, to even have discussion around it. But to actually put flesh on it is different. As you say it is only a skeleton that requires much work. More than occasional discussion or dealing with the odd controversy as it arises.

I: Two areas I would like to ask you about. Would you recommend bringing outside bodies in for example the Humanists to work on devising modules?

T: I think that would be very useful. I think say in this area here a number of ET schools, have a day and bring in somebody from the Humanist Society, somebody representing the Muslim Religion, say the Catholic Faith, but not just that they would stand and present an outline of what they believe in. That they would discuss the difficult issues to give it real meaning. And I think teachers would be riveted. These bodies with all the expertise and knowledge that they have would take up these issues. They could give us a view of how they would like to see them addressed.

I: So it is identifying areas of critical importance and seeing how the various groups respond to them?

T: Yes, we can all look at the document and agree how wonderful it is but that is not enough Carmel. This is a live issue that faces constant challenges. I think you could have a wonderful session if you could throw out these difficult scenarios and give two

or three of them. Hear what the various bodies would have to say then teachers get into groups and work out how they might deal with these issues.

I: That is certainly the direction that we would hope to take. The second issue is that if a school is committed to the Learn Together Programme, would you envisage a Post of Responsibility in this area?

T: In our situation one of the main roles of our Deputy Principal is promoting multidenominationalism and multiculturalism in the school. I think this is essential. I remember talking to Sally Sheils (Principal of NDNISP) a long time ago and she saying to me it's not enough to embrace the ethos. The Management Body has to resource that, spend some money and have somebody there with particular responsibility. Somebody who is constantly saying: we need this, we could do with this, what about a day on this. All of that kind of stuff. This is essential otherwise you are back to the gathering dust scenario that we talked about at the beginning.

I: The model of in-service suggested is that people within the sector be trained to deliver the training. Do you think this is a good idea?

T: I think that is the way to go. Everything that happens within our school there is partnership involved. But ultimately the delivery of this programme is primarily about the teachers. They know the difficult issues of taking a group or whatever. They know the colours and flavours inside a class. I think teachers have a very central role in delivering the training to others. You are taking it from where it is and translating it into something that can be used in a classroom.

I: I agree. As somebody who initiated the whole Ethical Curriculum, one of my concerns would be parental support. I feel that parents are equal partners in the whole area of Ethical Development. I think that the professional of the teacher and the key role of the parent needs to be handled well in the delivery of the curriculum. Could you envisage a way of making the parents more involved and how the information might be got across to them?

T: Yes, I talked already about parents first contact with this school and the need there for something to go the parents in terms of what our ethos is and what's going to impact on their child; the parent meetings before the child starts school; I think this document is very important there. When this document was launched we had a fabulous meeting of parents. We took a lot of the difficult thorny issues; a lot of the questions that children are going to be coming home asking and say for example some child goes home after another child makes Holy Communion and says it wasn't the bread and wine but the Body and Blood of Christ. And asks, "is that correct Mammy?" Or say a child who traditionally comes in, dressed in secular clothing suddenly appears in school in a headscarf or a Burka. The other children go home and ask their parents: "Is this right or is this wrong"? Parents may have very strong views on this. The female parents in the school have come to me and said: "I find it extremely uncomfortable seeing another Mother come in dressed in a Burka." So a lot those things are extremely important. The questions that children ask in school promote critical inquiry and these questions are going home to parents for comment. Religion is going to be one of the big areas. You've got a Muslim father, a Hindu

mother, and a Catholic parent, whatever. This is reality. This will be part and parcel of school life as the big celebrations take place in school. There are going to be so many questions. If the school and its Board does not do its homework with the parents, we are asking for trouble. There are always going to be contentious issues and there are always going to be difficulties. So we have to prepare people and constantly work with them. So dialogue with parents is essential. It doesn't matter how well the Board know the Learn Together programme, or how well the teachers know it, if the parents don't know this programme which is sensitive and potentially controversial and will raise questions that their little darlings are inevitably going to ask. Many of these questions we don't have answers to. We don't even have the questions not to mind the answers at times. If we are not psyched up to thinking and preparing for these issues, we are asking for trouble in the future.

I: Very thought provoking answer. Trying to get the key themes of the new curriculum and get them separated from other important themes and issues say in SPHE and other such programmes was a difficult task. But the programme is also very much a living part of the ethos. How do you embed something like the Learn Together Curriculum and make it part of the ethos of the school?

T: is the tape long enough for the answer.

I: Say for example as I came in here this morning the first thing I saw was a sign for the Learn Together Programme. Parents were invited to borrow a copy and take it home. Obviously that is one practical way. But in day-to-day interaction?

T: I suppose what you're trying to do is to create a culture, an awareness within the school, where this is something, maybe a kind of invisible hand. To let people know what is going on. But for it to be there and in one level if this is to become part of the school, it needs constantly to be fed and to be nourished. I mean one of the things that we do that works very well in promoting multid denominationalism in our school is to have an Assembly on Friday. All of these issues are raised. In terms of promoting an awareness and prompting them to take some of the questions and some of the comments home to their parents and promoting discussion. We find that very useful. So all the major religious festivals, all the major events within the school, all the things we would cover in terms of the Learn Together Curriculum: the Pope's death for instance. All of these things, we would use our Assembly to raise awareness within the school to get our children to think about what is going on and to get them to take it home and discuss it as well. It's one example Carmel but I really do you believe you've got to create a culture within the school. Sometimes it's spoken, sometimes it's not spoken but it's constantly there. It's that invisible guiding hand that all of us fell to a greater or lesser level.

I: Sometimes we get hung up on the Belief Systems Strand. There are three other strands and you mentioned the Human Rights one earlier. Does that generate a lot of interest.

T: It does and I think it is going to be wonderful in terms of promoting critical thinking. It's one of the things about the document that I think is most progressive.

It's not just there to give information about all of the Belief Systems, or any of the other issues or even Human Rights. There's an impetus there to be active in terms of what is happening in the school but also what is happening in the community at large. I think that is the most progressive aspect of the whole thing. But in terms of the impact that can have on the more senior pupils in the school particularly, I know its only 2nd and 3rd Classes but they are almost at the stage where they would like to run the school at this stage. It's unbelievable but there's a licence there, there's an openness there, there's an impetus there that we can look at issues that traditionally might have been viewed as political. Like you know or whatever. Any major issues going on say in Ireland or in our community, you have got permission to get in and have a discussion. The pros and cons and all the rest of it and I think that is wonderful.

I: The Strand on Ethics and the Environment is one I have an interest in particular. Some of the schools have tackled this one by going for the Green Flag or whatever. Is there a move in Griffeen Valley school to point out or highlight the stewardship aspect of the environment.

T: Yeah I think it was one of the factors. We were looking at poets recently and that was one of the aspects we looked at, our role as stewards of nature and I think we were prompted in this by the issues we had looked at in the document. So yes it is important but not one we have as yet addressed in great detail.

I: For us as authors of the programme, one of the most contentious areas had to be the Strand on Moral and Spiritual Development. Is this going to lead us to engage and take some level of responsibility for the Moral and Spiritual Development of our students?

T: Ah..hh, in a way this is a huge, huge issue and is going to take some very delicate handling. But it's an area we've got to get into, to delve into and deal with. We, I suppose, at the stage we are at, at the moment, we haven't run up against too much of that. But the warning signs are there. Like for example some of the issues we talked about, related to some of the Muslim girls in the school. We have a great population of Muslim kids. Some of the issues that arise are around, singing, dancing, swimming, music. Before long the clothes issues and the wearing of headscarves will become an issue. These are huge issues that we don't have answers to. I don't have answers to questions I am going to be asked in relation to these issues. As a staff we are aware and have warned the BOM that these are issues we need to be actively involved in and actively involve the parent body and the Patron in. We have to be clear on what kind of school this is. Because of this and because of some of the issues that may arise, the Chairperson of the Board and my own contribution to the meeting with incoming parents has changed. I mean we will be talking to some of our Muslim parents and we will be saying: In this school children sing, dance, have drama. Children of 10 years of age or less will become involved in swimming and it will be mixed swimming. We need to be very clear with people from the start. We need to say that these are the types of issues that may arise.

I: At one of the National Fora, there was a contributor speaking of children being excluded from the Learn Together Curriculum classes. Would you feel that is becoming an issue?

T: Yes. I have had a number of parents coming to me and saying I don't want my child involved in whole-school singing. Now we've managed to resolve these issues but the children are 8 or 9 at the moment. When they reach 10 this issue is going to re-emerge.

I: Do we need a level of expertise to support us in these issues? We don't necessarily have the answers.

T: When you talked about in-service and inviting people from various religions in to work with teachers, I think we need to hear what those people have to say. Again I suppose you could say they have an expertise. They do to an extent but they are not homogenous groupings either. Within the Muslim community here there are very different views about what is appropriate and what is inappropriate. Ultimately we can talk about expertise, but I think it comes back to ourselves as teachers and as a movement to decide what is most appropriate and where we are in relation to this in Griffeen Valley is: "From the start we are a singing, dancing, drama, swimming school and this is the way it is going to be here." We don't want to force anything on anybody but this is the kind of school we are. If these are areas that parents are very uncomfortable with or feel threatened by then maybe they need to rethink their choice of school. We do not want to get into a situation where we have whole school singing and we have 3 kids in Burkas sitting outside.

I: Do you think..you know that you mentioned Dunboyne at an earlier stage, do you think that something like the Learn Together Curriculum might have worked in the Dunboyne situation?

T: I do, yes. I think interdenominational schools are crying out for something like that. It may be different that it would be more Christian orientated and reflecting the different traditions in an equitable way. Ah..hh., it was not up for discussion, unfortunately. I think it will find itself, our own document, creeping in the back door into interdenominational schools. I think teachers would be afraid to raise it in any meaningful sense even in Multidenominational schools under the auspices of an Foras Patrúnachta. I mean in some ways people have said to me the issue of Dunboyne is a bit like 1916. "Which side were you on in Dunboyne?" Which is scary really when I think about it. Of course they (interdenominational schools) would really have to look at their own ethos and what it means in terms of First Communion, Confession, Confirmation, equal partnership with parent, etc. I think our own document would be extremely useful they decide to have a more open look and be a little more progressive.

I: I know I have interviewed John Carr of the INTO (President) and I know that the INTO feeling is that religious instruction should happen outside of the classroom.

T: There's an element of trying to look both ways with the INTO. Because on the one hand they are saying: "Let's take some of this out." But what they are talking about leaving there is really not quite..... is something far closer to the status quo than

the document that has been put together for our own schools. There's a little bit of duplicity there. But nevertheless, the INTO will now talk about these things. This dialogue is very useful. I suppose for some of us who got our knuckles very seriously rapped in Dunboyne, it is nice to see that maybe there is a ripple effect and that some of the ideas that 80% of the community in Dunboyne felt were appropriate, for non single denominational schools, that it is still filtering out there and that it has generated discussion and getting people to move their position.

I: Just....I don't know if you have the answer to this but one of the Gaelscoileanna is also involved in Educate Together, Gort Alainn in Cork. Do they deliver the Ethical Curriculum?

T: My information now is that they do a lot of it. There are 2 multidemoninational schools under the patronage of An Foras. One a former...I'd better be careful how I put this now. A former director of An Foras described that school in Clonakilty as more Catholic than the average Catholic school. Gort Alainn is a completely different proposition.

I: Gort Alainn is with Educate Together.

T: Yes, it is. I think it is a very different relationship.

I: is there...I suppose to put a wrap on this...is ET keeping pace with the changes in Irish society? I mean it is trying to support schools and to act as Patron. Are there things happening out there that are passing ET out?

T: That is a very good question. I think for so long ET has been forward looking and other constituents have been trying to catch up with the ideals and the vision that ET has. I suppose there is a tendency to constantly focus on that type of thing. I think that perhaps the issue, the fact that a school is multidemoninational will in many situations be multicultural as well and that maybe we need to expand a little bit on that aspect of things. And I would also maybe feel that while we talk about all faiths and none that predominantly it has been about all of the faiths. We haven't done so much on the "none." I don't know how many of our schools would on June 21st, International Humanist Day and mark it in the same way as we would mark Ramadam or First Communion. I think we should be doing things like that. Perhaps we need to do a piece of work in relation to that aspect of things in the schools. But in general I feel that Et has been an extremely progressive force. It has been forward looking and is trying to drag an education system to some extent which has been very slow to emerge from the kind of stranglehold that existed in the 1950's and the 1960's and to get that system to reflect more an extremely different Ireland that is the one which we are living in today.

G: I think what we need to do is preserve what we have. We need to improve and develop it and ensure the quality is what it always was, of the highest standard.

I: Can Educate Together as a body survive with limited funding?

G: I think physically, constitutionally and emotionally people are very stressed out at the minute.

I: If Educate Together as we know it over the last 3 years, with a Head Office, etc, if that were to go could the schools still exist?

G: I think the confederation of schools would disband and become little islands scattered all over the place. I think that is happening already. Donabate, Swords and Drogheda have our own rapport going. We meet regularly. I like those meetings. If Educate Together went as an office and I thought I was out here on a little limb you know I don't know if I would be interested anymore really.

I: That is how things were in the first instance....

G: If I didn't think we were part of something....we're one of what number?

I: 39

G: It's good to be part of that. I love the National Forums and the conferences. I loved the interaction and I think that is what it is all about. I think that number could also work if it were 49 but 49 healthy schools.

I: Is there anything you want to go back to Gerard.

G: Yeah, there was one question you mentioned earlier. I think it was would I choose the job again and I want to answer it honestly. Did you ask me that?

I: You precipitated it!

G: The straight answer to the question is that in hindsight I would not have applied for the job. I have decided that is exactly how I feel. If you ask me do I regret the decision, emphatically I do not. It's been absolutely a fantastic journey, very painful at times but 5 years down the road if you ask me would I repeat the journey, no. And the reason would be accommodation, accommodation, accommodation. I just can't get that out of my mind. It deflected from so many other things that I would like to have done. I have spent more time on temporary accommodation than on the entire curriculum or the staff body or the parent body. If that isn't a testament to the way my time is going, then nothing is. It's funny, it's just that it is the death knell for a lot of schools. We're having these conversations in ones and twos. We're not voicing it at Forums or at Principal's Meetings. And that is all around personal and pride and a perception that someone might say: " Oh, Gerard out in Swords in not coping very well. Nothing could be further from the truth, I can tell you straight off. But that's where it's coming from. And I do actually worry about someone who isn't able to say when they are in a bad place. "This is a hard place to be. I wouldn't choose to be

where I am.”. Now how can I make the transition to a better place? Educate Together Head Office needs to support their Principals along this road. The message needs to go out loud and clear that Educate Together needs to look after their Principals.

I: Is accommodation key to this problem with the Principals in the sector?

G: Absolutely. I'll give you an example. A Principal made it known at a meeting recently with the DES that she would not be available for July and August for accommodation. The official took her name first. Then, he said: “ Wouldn't you do it if you were getting an extension done to your house”? I rest my case.

I: Thank you Gerard.

I:

Appendix T2

Interview with Gerard Kelly Principal of Swords Educate Together

I: Represents Interviewer

G: Represents Gerard Kelly.

Place of Interview: Principal's Office.

I: Gerard, the move from a denominational school to a multidenominational school...how did it come about?

G: Like a lot of Principals in the sector, I would have accepted a principalship in a Catholic school but one didn't happen. I had worked overseas in a very multicultural environment in a very monocultural environment, i.e. Saudi Arabia and I would have worked with teachers from a whole spectrum of countries. And I really found my niche and that is where I am coming from.

As an individual teacher back home in a denominational school, a lot of the initiatives that I have introduced here would have been done there as well. But it was an island within a much bigger constellation of teachers. It's a different position to be saying the first teacher into the school. You have a much more influential role. In developing that ethos.

I: You can mould it?

G: Absolutely.

I: Prior to joining Educate Together, did you have any pre-conceptions about the sector?

G: About Educate Together? The only pre-conceived ideas I had was that it was very, very small, very, very smug, very, very middle class and very, very exclusive.

I: OK. That's an interesting one! So was that due to the location of the schools?

G: Nothing to do with the locations. It's a perception that the wider education community would have of Educate Together. Which I now understand was coming from not knowing people in the sector. I don't think the sector is very good at reaching out to other circles. The different partners, the different constituents in Irish Primary education were allowing that to happen. They allowed the threat to happen. I didn't know that many people in Educate Together, I did know some but they actually wouldn't have broadened my horizons very much with regard to the sector.

I: You found your own feet?

G: I found my own feet. In answer to your question I found my feet as soon as I walked into this school.

I: And the school has grown under your leadership. How much has it grown over the years.

G: You mean numbers of children?

I: Yes

G: From 17 children in September 2001 to 221 children in September 2005.

I: And teacher numbers

G: From 1 teacher in September 2001 to now 12 teachers, 4 Special Needs Assistants, 1 School Secretary, One school cleaner and one Caretaker. So 19 staff in 4 years.

I: A lot of growth.

G: Phenomenal in that space of time.

I: Projections into the future number wise?

G: We have a commitment to staying a dual stream, two classes per stream and that's where we're headed. Junior Infants, Senior Infants and First at the minute, one second and one mixed Third and Fourth. That's our new comfort zone at the minute because when we opened initially we were single stream. But negotiations with other partners, the DE and the Buildings Section have led us down the road to a dual class approach.

I: So if you were asked to move to a 24-class school?

G: The straight answer to that question is if we were asked to move our ideas to a 24-class school, I would be updating my CV and I would be moving. I have no interest whatsoever in having hand, act or part in working or being Principal teacher in such a school. That I am crystal clear about.

I: Why?

G: Because I think it would take the bottom out of the ethos. I know it sounds really basic but I do not have to work very hard at knowing every child's name and I know all the connections to the siblings, the cousins. I know the Mammies, I know the Daddies and I know the grandparents. That is, they are the parameters and the relationships happen because of that. Where there are good relationships everything is possible and everything is manageable. People can communicate and find a solution when there are issues. The absence of that type of relationship, the anonymity would create problems.

I: The DES may favor larger schools?

G: The DES doesn't give a commitment to any ethos. At the end of the day it is about numbers. I am aware that the children who are now in our school will be the first generation of children from a spectrum of countries who will be able to network across all cultures with respect. The parents don't do it in the schoolyard. They still stand in their colonies and their countries of origin. But I have been able to actually identify the indigenous Irish parents. I have said it is our responsibility to take the first step. We need to be friendly. We need to walk to. Putting in the benches around for people to sit on. They're sitting. They're talking. I would know the people well enough to approach say you tomorrow and say: "Carmel, there's an issue here. Our Board is exclusively Irish. Our PTA until recently was exclusively Irish. We now have a multicultural school here and a 50/50 gender balance". I know that I have the comfort and the confidence to approach people and to know that people will hear what I say and hear me positively and I will get a positive result.

I: So if you model interculturalism at all levels of the school?

G: Exactly. Where the environment facilitates good relationships, it is easier to do this.

I: I know the challenges you have had as a Principal of a new school but just to recap? What do you think are the 3 biggest challenges facing a new Principal of a new Educate Together School?

G: Accommodation, accommodation, accommodation. Every other challenge was minor in comparison.

I: All right. Can you recap the accommodation issues you faced?

G: A soccer club for two years, a one roomed unit in a factory for two months, a five day turn around period to moving into this pre-fabricated school which has subsequently been expanded into 4 units which I would describe as lack of vision and management from the DES. So we now have a situation where we have 4 buildings for an 8 mainstream school.

I: You mean 4 areas?

G: 4 separate stand alone units. 5 classrooms heated by gas, 3 by electricity. The cost in getting services like fire alarms, security, is astronomical. The DES paid for everything. It's just the greatest bane of my life. It starts at 7 in the mornings sometimes and it goes on all day, every day.

I: And in terms of negotiations, do you personally have to a lot of this with the DES?

G: The truth of the matter is that I would. I am the person here all day, every day and a lot of the business is done during working hours. Phone calls are made by day. To date I have done it all. Now that has changed. The Board has written a letter across a whole spectrum of people. My name is not on it. I am directed by my board

not to be available from July 1st to 31st August with regard to accommodation. But that isn't always that easy. If accommodation isn't in place we lose children. If we lose children, we lose staff. This is always the Catch 22. That is where we are at with the DES.

I would call it the single most stressful and only stressful part of the job for me.

I: It is clearly obvious that there is a need for an ET school in Swords and possibly maybe even a second one. But, do you think it is right to open a school where you don't have facilities in place?

G: I actually don't think...I mean I don't and I would have said this openly. None of us have a full view of where we are going when we take a significant step like taking a job in an Educate Together school. I don't think it's right. I really don't. It is such a fundamental flaw and it is such a huge contradiction between what we feel are the guiding principles of our sector and what we actually create. The environments we create for people to work in and for children to learn in. I think this is really, really poor.

I: And what kind of impression do you think this gives in the wider educational field?

G: There are 2 impressions out there. On the one hand they see the lovely buildings say like Lucan and Grifeen Valley and Glasnevin and then there's the other. It's an awful thing but it's what I call the developing world scenario. They are miles apart. We bear no relation to NDNSP and say Lucan. And we are here 5 years in this and this is a very good situation for a developing school and that says it all. So I think there are 2 conceptions. One is the real good school like those I have mentioned and Celbridge but they also see it as a very middle class school, a very exclusive school and they aren't almost seen as watertight in terms of those who want to access them. And then you have the likes of this and people think we are mad to work in them as a matter of fact. I've been told by so many people. My own family think I am absolutely nuts. People feel within my circle that I could be very successful if I dedicated the same energy to something else. And I thought it was very interesting.

I: The question then is what might improve the lot of an ET Principal?

G: I think nobody has ever articulated directly to me that a very high percentage of responsibility for building falls on the Principal. Every single Principal teacher I talk to that is the reality. Let's come clean about that. Let's just name it. Provide us with a decent environment to work in. Stop making us put a roof over our heads. I just can't reconcile that side of things.

I: It is obviously not part of your brief.

G: I am not attending to real important aspects of my brief because of the situation with accommodation and buildings.

I: And if the Principal isn't doing it and I know from my experience on a Board of a new school that to some extent the Board is not doing it, who should be responsible for the provision of buildings?

G: I mean that is the million-dollar question as to the question of who is responsible. That is the bind we are in. The DES will tell us that it is part of recognition that for up to a period of 8 years the Board must make provision for accommodation. I have it laminated there in case it gets destroyed. The Board of Management from the point of recognition is responsible for accommodation.

I: So the DES doesn't have to make any provision...

G: That is it. No. That letter is dated November 2002. I laminated it because I wanted to keep it forever.

I: Yeah. Do you think that the DES has this as a policy or was it created for a particular situation?

G: I do. I experienced it this summer where the DES spent approximately €500,000 that they need not have spent. When they withdrew the provision of integrated accommodation and did this without consultation of the Board and myself and then introduced 3 stand alone units. That demonstrates just a complete lack of insight. And planning. They're making it up as they go along.

I: This is a green field area for the DES as well.

G: Oh, absolutely and I fully understand this.

I: OK to come back to ethos. Everything about this school shouts of ethos.

G: Does it? I am in the fish bowl here. How do you see this?

I: I am observing relationships between the people here and in some of the other schools. I know a lot of this is down to you as a Principal and a very creative one. But how do you go about creating an ethos?

G: It is a really hard question to answer. I could do it in my sleep but ask me to verbalise it and I have a very different approach. It is really hard to articulate.

I: Is it coming from you as an individual or is there any relationship between the ethos and the principles of ET?

G: Well I learned a whole lot from the ET principals in other schools. I mean apart from Paddie Murphy (Principal in Rathfarnham) who interviewed me and whether I got the job or not I knew when I left that room that I wanted to talk to Paddie afterwards about ethos. She walked the talk. So in many ways, some of it was that I wanted to learn more and some of it was that I just felt very affirmed by it. And I think I know when we have that when we interview people as well. Ethos mightn't be on the table but I think we can ensure that it is part of the process. I mean it really is..how do you build up ethos? It's not just a visual thing. I mean it really is much more complex than that. It's in the room. You are working with 30 children and it is there in front of you. How do you pick up a guitar and make music with the strings? How do you work with 30 children and make ethos come to life? I can do that as second nature and lots of the teachers in the school can. I do lots of assemblies and I

do them in my own whacky way and it is quite whacky but there are lots of other teachers whom I see working in the same whacky way and producing the desired effect. There is a lot of lovely stuff going on. Not necessarily scripted in a formula or in a lesson but it's happening. Take for example work on Human Rights at the moment. It's down to the anthem that children say every morning after the roll call reflection and they sing it as the anthem. Lyrics by a teacher, music by a teacher. That is where it is coming from. Those children know that Alice made the words and Bronagh wrote the music. And it represents every aspect of our Golden Rule. I find the question on ethos very difficult. I could talk about it forever but don't ask me to logically to reveal it to you.

I: It takes a lot of work.....

G: Oh, it takes a lot of work and a lot of honesty and a lot of humility.

I: How?

G: I was walking down the corridor today and 2 children were coming towards me. The door opened the other way and I decided that I would just step back and say "After you." And lo and behold one of them comes along not long later and says "After you." These were Junior Infants. There was no door to pass through this time but the idea had remained. It's caught and taught together. We get loads of things wrong Carmel. I mean every school does.

I: I know that some schools are reviewing ethos at the moment...schools that have been in existence quite a while. Does it ever come up on the Agenda at meetings?

G: At every single staff meeting the Ethical Curriculum is on the agenda. Every teacher has the Learn Together Programme at the Staff Meetings. And from an accountability position every teacher is given a sheet to fill out to remind them of what they are covering this week. And at Assembly I remind the children. I say: "And this week on the Learn Together Programme you are talking about Poverty." And I write up the word poverty and I do a big piece on it and it will feature as the key theme for the School Assembly. And this assembly is a Whole School one. Every teacher knows as well that I am doing it and if there is a question asked about accountability then we are getting bigger, there are more teachers and we need to be wholly committed to the ethos and that takes plenty of work.

I: You are talking about keeping track....

G: I am and they all know about it. And the parent body know as well because they get a newsletter home to tell them what is happening.

I: So it is a whole school approach?

G: Absolutely. When we were looking at Poverty for example one of teachers asked how she could provide an opportunity for the children to respond to Poverty. And I suggested why not call it "Share a little happiness." I said call it Christmas: Sharing Little Happiness. It is Christmas so call it that. We contacted Vincent de Paul and the

children contributed to their appeal through sharing a little happiness and tackling the issue of poverty. It's a concrete, tangible, simple thing.

I: Are there particular values that underpin the school ethos?

G: The one word and the one value that underpins ethos for me is the word kindness. And kindness is key. Every other work we come up with whether it's respect, or you know, regard, acceptance, kindness is at the bottom of it. Because if there is kindness and I know it sounds really childish but you even ask the Junior Infants here and they will tell you the word kindness is what it is all about. Where there is kindness, everything else falls into place. Kindness and empathy, I mean if they are there, I mean my goodness, anything is possible. And it is difficult sometimes for people who are distinctly different to feel part of a place. And it may remain that way for them. All we can do at the end of the day is to affirm them and make them feel that the door is always open for them.

I: And as well affirming them you are giving skills to others....

G: Yes, it's a two-way thing. Giving skills to live in an intercultural world but also affirming people.

I: I have been involved that in selecting your staff, it' in the selection in staff and I know how important it is to you to select people who will blend in and live the ethos of the school. Also that they relate and become a part of the existing class group. Are there any other criteria that you apply?

G: I like people who can take initiative. People who will not just get on with it, though I like people who get on with it. People who can pilot new programmes. We are piloting the Lift Off programme at Junior Cycle. People who get a buzz and a kick out of new ground. That's what I am looking for. And that in itself will inspire and re-energise people who are already in the school.

I: And in terms of people who are either coming in from College or from other schools, do you think there is a need to immerse people in the Educate Together ethos?

G: Very important. I think we take it for granted that people will come in and embrace an ethos. It actually doesn't happen. And yet the most important thing that I have to do is to make it possible for people to say: "I need help here." You know we can do a lot but people are still in their rooms doing 30 minutes a day of a Curriculum around ethos. I mean this is difficult. We can give them the basics but at the end of the day it is about how comfortable they are in doing it. That's what it really comes down to in the end. How committed they are to it.

I: At the moment there is no formal training at either pre-service or in-service in the delivery of the Ethical Curriculum.

G: Well we had a wonderful day. (Principal's in-service)

I: Yes, I am aware of the day. But young teachers coming into schools like this, do we expect a lot from them?

G: Absolutely. Some people just have it. There are people who by virtue of their make-up are walking ethos models. They just can't help it and we have got them in the school. Everybody in the school would know who that person is and it is great to have such a wonderful role model in the school.

I: Boards of Management. They come in untrained and to a great extent they come into a green field site like this one. They become responsible for buildings, employment of staff, whatever. And there is also the imposition of someone who represents the Patron Body. People who set up the school do not necessarily transfer into that first Board of Management. This can lead to tensions. Are there issues that you have had with Boards? Are there issues that you believe are specific to Educate Together schools?

G: I believe that committed, energized people form associations to open schools. But I think that once the school is open, once they have delivered the baby, it doesn't always happen that they stay around to rear it.

I: Do you think they should stay on to rear it?

G: I think that they need a clearer view. I think they need a really clear view before they bring things to creation stage. They should be clear on what is involved. I have been truly fortunate that for the first five years I have consistency of Chair on the Board. There were only 2 people left on the Association when I got the job and they became part of the Board. But what 2 people. They were absolutely exceptional. And their children still couldn't go to the school itself. A decision was taken that each other child would go to Dublin 7 because of the lack of space. So that to me is the issue. If opening a school is one exercise, then when it opens, it is a completely different ball game.

I: And are tensions around Patron representatives?

G: Both of our Patron reps were local. To date all Board members are local.

I: Do you think Boards of Management realize what they are taking on?

G: Absolutely not. And they are absolutely fabulous people. None of us did. I didn't.

I: So people are out there on their own?

G: No, they truly don't know what they are taking on. I mean we have a Board where every single member of the Board works 9-5. In lots of cases they are shift workers. Fabulous though. They don't miss meetings. But it's voluntary.

I: Do we need to question the professionalism of Boards? Should there be more training?

G: I'm not quite sure. I have a concern around that. What kind of training over and above the nuts and bolts of being a Treasurer, Secretary, Chair, etc? I don't know if it's possible, giving the changing nature of schools, legislation and all that to know if it is effectively manage schools through voluntary means. I really do wonder about that. I mean we have been truly fortunate. We have 3 accountants on the Board, completely by accident. We have been truly fortunate. But when the workload becomes an 8-person burden then people get very stressed.

I: You have mentioned the new Learn Together Programme during this interview. How important do you think this is to schools, if at all?

G: At every level it is important. As a sector it is important to be proud and let our other Primary partners see what we are about. It is fabulous, even the title and it is one of the best sharings of good practice because when we look at the people involved, they have tremendous credibility. When you mention Paddie Murpy, Carmel Mulcahy, Frieda, Mary...immediately people are accepting because of the level of credibility they have. I think it is absolutely critical. The challenge now is to translate that into meaningful units. To achieve that, we can do that here once we can get ourselves into a room for whatever is required to get the staff hooked. We need to get across the message to all teachers that this is the cornerstone of your school whether you like it or not. We can all do it but it is different when it comes from another voice. It was very different in Drumcondra that day and everybody reacted very differently when we were in a very different environment. I came away thinking that I need to go back (and I don't feel bad about this) and review how we do it here and I think we do it quite well.

I: One of the suggestions coming forward at the moment is that a cluster of schools get together and begin with Junior Infant teachers and work through all the teachers in a cluster of schools. Is there any other way of doing this?

G: I think that straight off as a sector we need to put some teeth...I hate that metaphor...but we need to put some teeth on this. I mean we are living in the real world here. The idea of people going out of here in twos. I don't like that. We will do this as a staff and as a whole school thing. The relationship of the staff that is the scaffolding. And if we don't have that scaffolding in place you don't build it. I'm not interested in a drip feed approach.

I: Just coming to the end of this interview, the culture of Educate Together is a multidenominational one. If I go down the road to a denominational school they will tell me that they are intercultural. Do you think there is a dichotomy between these two things? Can a denominational school that remains true to its denominational ethos be truly intercultural?

G: I think the reality of interculturalism in a denominational school is impossible. That is not something that the denominational sector will admit to but the reality is that here is an absence of something that is required to make it intercultural. And that is an inclusive ethos. But at the end of the day as an organization, as a school, the ethos of that school is denominational.

I: And in terms of say, preparations for the sacraments? Religious Instruction? Do you think that is something that may change?

G: It will happen, the moving of Religious Instruction to outside school hours. It will happen, maybe not in my lifetime but it will.

I: And do you think if this happens there will be no further need for Educate Together schools?

G: I think they will become more like us. I actually do believe that at all sorts of levels. I think that the reality on the ground will grow and they will become more like our sector. But I still think that Educate Together as a sector has walked the ground first. It will always be the custodian of knowledge and wisdom in this area.

I: OK, the future of the sector is...

G: The future of the sector is very clouded at the moment and in crisis due to financing but long term it is very bright.

I: And projected growth?

G: Yes, there will be growth but growth is not difficult. Growth is not synonymous with development. Growth isn't really that important to be honest with you. I think we really need to be looking at what we're opening and what's happening to what we open. That is what Educate Together should be about. Maybe it is time to consolidate and make sure what we have is right.

I: And the ethos of Educate Together as it is being lived out in schools. Is that being captured?

G: To make it available to a wider audience? Oh, I think that is happening. And the best way of doing that is through the people who have been taught in our schools. We need to have a way to echo this back into the schools they were taught in. A way that is accessible and that people would be interested in reading. We were reflecting in the staff for example that the only fund raising that children do in this school is for others, never for their own school. We want to work for the benefit of other children but not for their own school so it is not about fund-raising but about helping others. A visitor to the school said recently that you need never ask what type of school this is if you look at our photographs on the Web. It is truly representative of all its multifaceted identities. So the message is loud and clear and the ethos should tell you about the ethos of the school and this is very important to us. Some of your work has done this in fact most of the work done in this area of ethos has come from you.

I: Thanks.

G: Attended great workshops of yours in Citywest and Bunratty on this area.

I: The future depends on.....

G: I think what we need to do is preserve what we have. We need to improve and develop it and ensure the quality is what it always was, of the highest standard.

I: Can Educate Together as a body survive with limited funding?

G: I think physically, constitutionally and emotionally people are very stressed out at the minute.

I: If Educate Together as we know it over the last 3 years, with a Head Office, etc, if that were to go could the schools still exist?

G: I think the confederation of schools would disband and become little islands scattered all over the place. I think that is happening already. Donabate, Swords and Drogheda have our own rapport going. We meet regularly. I like those meetings. If Educate Together went as an office and I thought I was out here on a little limb you know I don't know if I would be interested anymore really.

I: That is how things were in the first instance....

G: If I didn't think we were part of something....we're one of what number?

I: 39

G: It's good to be part of that. I love the National Forums and the conferences. I loved the interaction and I think that is what it is all about. I think that number could also work if it were 49 but 49 healthy schools.

I: Is there anything you want to go back to Gerard.

G: Yeah, there was one question you mentioned earlier. I think it was would I choose the job again and I want to answer it honestly. Did you ask me that?

I: You precipitated it!

G: The straight answer to the question is that in hindsight I would not have applied for the job. I have decided that is exactly how I feel. If you ask me do I regret the decision, emphatically I do not. It's been absolutely a fantastic journey, very painful at times but 5 years down the road if you ask me would I repeat the journey, no. And the reason would be accommodation, accommodation, accommodation. I just can't get that out of my mind. It deflected from so many other things that I would like to have done. I have spent more time on temporary accommodation than on the entire curriculum or the staff body or the parent body. If that isn't a testament to the way my time is going, then nothing is. It's funny, it's just that it is the death knell for a lot of schools. We're having these conversations in ones and twos. We're not voicing it at Forums or at Principal's Meetings. And that is all around personal and pride and a perception that someone might say: "Oh, Gerard out in Swords in not coping very well. Nothing could be further from the truth, I can tell you straight off. But that's where it's coming from. And I do actually worry about someone who isn't able to say when they are in a bad place. "This is a hard place to be. I wouldn't choose to be

where I am.”. Now how can I make the transition to a better place? Educate Together Head Office needs to support their Principals along this road. The message needs to go out loud and clear that Educate Together needs to look after their Principals.

I: Is accommodation key to this problem with the Principals in the sector?

G: Absolutely. I'll give you an example. A Principal made it known at a meeting recently with the DES that she would not be available for July and August for accommodation. The official took her name first. Then, he said: “ Wouldn't you do it if you were getting an extension done to your house”? I rest my case.

I: Thank you Gerard.

I:

Appendix U2

Margaret Boucher

C: Cannel Mulcahy - Interviewer

M: Interviewee

C: the first question really is what is your background in ET?

M: My background is teaching in the Dalkey school project for 18 years, but *before* that I would have been interested in the movement from initiation, areas such as Dun Laoghaire, Dalkey, Blackrock with questionnaires sent out to find out what the level of interest was in expanding properly, down there from the word go. All three of my children went to the Dalkey school project when they went there I applied for a job, got it there and worked there for 18 years. So that is basically the background, it goes back a long way.

C: Explain moving from such an established school to somewhere like Waterford?

M: It was very challenging, I was interested in moving to the South of the country anyway at the time, so the move suited me, I hadn't been thinking of a principalship I had been thinking of moving more to another ET school. I sent my curriculum vitae to Cork and they didn't have a post available at the time, it wasn't in response to an add it was on my own initiative. They said there was no post available and that they would keep my file on record. However, Chris Lennon said to me have you not spotted the ad for a Principal in Waterford, I said no forget that and then I said sure why not, it was very interesting. I said I'd apply and see how it goes and I did and I was offered the place. I said to myself why did you apply for it if you didn't want it so I took it. I don't regret it and I think at this stage for anybody involved the amount of work and energy that is required maybe it should be offered to a younger woman or a younger man. But saying all that I have enjoyed it. The amount you have to put into it is very rewarding, and in every situation you have the excitement of working with young and very enthusiastic people, and I think that is something I wouldn't be experiencing.

C: Which is something we forget about working with young people in at the ground level. You obviously have a very supportive group of parents. But, in terms of the biggest single challenge, has been the building, or?

M: I suppose it is premises really. Forgetting teaching challenges and all that it is really the premises. The fact that we find it very difficult to raise our numbers given the kind of building we are in and the situation where we are not attracting the local people, therefore we are attracting people who are travelling in, and it is not the best area in the world to travel into. The question that comes is where will be the next year and the year after and we don't know where we are going to be and that is difficult. The building itself is lacking in things like water.

C: Have you attracted any children from the local area?

M: We have 1 so far and we continue to get a trickle of interest from families around about, we have a family the first of four is coming into junior infants this year. We have had one or *two* more enquiries from the playgroup downstairs, they are a local community playgroup, and we are trying to attract local children. I just feel that it is a

very traditional area, and that they are not looking for a multi-denominational school as such, and the move didn't come from this area. Yes I think it is a grower. I must that we get on very well with the local community, and we have never had any trouble, and the GAA are fantastic, we are expecting a delivery of 24 hurleys, maybe tomorrow or within the next week, and they allow us the use of the field, they love to see us in the field, you know.

C: I think that on a personal note, not to be harsh about the local community, because I know in our own situation in Kilbarrack that that is slow, it became a very steady stream after a couple of years. Again we located somewhere where we didn't intend to look. So we brought our client group with us.

M: It will take a while, but I must say that we have got on very well with the other groups and there been a nice offering of skills. There is a craftsman, they work with young teenagers and they will say you know if you want we will show you how to make clocks you know, and there beginning to work in the garden.

C: A lot of what makes us different I suppose is the ethos. How difficult is it to begin to create an ethos from scratch, or do you create an ethos when something happens?

M: I think you know you're getting into a very tricky area now, an ethos is what exists in any school it is not something we have been working on its just there and there's no question of the fact that it is exclusive to our school it simply is. We wouldn't be here if we didn't want it. The parents have worked on it, the other teacher, she wants it. We have made the point of discussing religious education and ethos at our staff meetings. If there were any breach in terms of the children's behaviour, which there are of course, we would always work around them with them. I don't see at as any great issue I just feel it is so intrinsic to what we are about. I can't even get what the question is about in a sense; do you know what I mean?

C: Trying to live up to the four principles of the educate together setting

M: I know what you mean. I don't think it could be more difficult. These people are selecting to come so particularly you know that they feel aware of it. In effect that they are really going to go all the way with it. I feel that it is something that we have to have on the agenda all the time, because it is so important to the constitution, and the fact that we have gone to so much trouble to set-up these schools in these areas, it must all be kept on the agenda. Religious education as a topic must be on every staff member's agenda, not something to be glossed over.

C: The feedback over the years is that the key method of demonstrating values is through the Religious Core Curriculum. Do you think that this is true?

M: Yes indeed I would. Agree with that. You are sitting down and you are planning programme and you are making sure that. And you are building on your spiral. At the same time once that's in place. No work is more special to schools than religious education. It's going to permeate the rest of the atmosphere in the school. The values you are trying to convey in religious education in your class, or you are going to work on throughout the day. You know it starts in a planned way, it permeates.

c: Which is basically what most principals feel? The fact that your school is one of the schools directly under ET patronage, an understanding has been in the past that the executive committee has taken control of maintaining these values. Now you don't have an executive committee as such. Do you think that could be a difficulty down the road?

M: For years I felt work needed to be done at an educate together level to help teachers to develop a programme that is suitable for our schools, this puts such an onus on individual teachers and schools, To deliver a programme that doesn't exist but that is in the air, we know what we want to convey as a body of teachers, it is important to go back to the staff for feedback. I do feel that the umbrella organisation needs to have a good umbrella up there to cover us and protect us, and to help us, and I think there is too much of a burden of responsibility on the individual school and the teachers. I know that some schools work together for example Dalkey and Monkstown work together and of course they have their own executive and I worked on the religious education review committee there. For quite a few years I have been working with Dalkey and Monkstown on their programme. I must say coming here I felt lifted. I know we're not far off the track because what Monkstown and Dalkey are doing were doing and what they have done over the last few years, their review. We are not in a position, and I can't imagine how difficult it must be for teachers coming in just in the school, walking in the door, this is an educate together school where is the programme, where do you get your knowledge from, where do you get your information from, what kind of a base do you have for what you are trying to do.

C: I guess what I'm trying to tease out is was there issues with taking this information from Monkstown? Were there issues around materials?

M: There would have been issues around, before I walked in the door last summer I got onto Joanne on the board and she was determined we would work on a religious ethos, and I had an idea of the type of materials, and I allowed about 200 euros for this, possibly a little bit more. I think that has to be put into place immediately and I think once again that educate together and their wealth of information could possibly even draw up a list of basic materials providing for the main areas you would want to cover in a programme, therefore new teachers don't go into a new school totally unequipped, I think that would be very reasonable.

C: Is there anything else they should be doing?

M: I think that the kind of material we were shown at the ethos conference, I think if that could be made available from the moment a principal is put in place, so they can read through it and be somewhat prepared and have a little of the material to, I think that would be very helpful. I don't think I felt the need for this as I was coming armed as it were. I wouldn't like to be somebody walking straight in the door and I think people can be very nervous, now I don't but I think for some people there is a body of knowledge that has to be conveyed. Much more than that it is the other areas such as morality, that are so important that they provide the child with a kind of quality that we are hoping they would have by the time they leave school. You know a body of knowledge is just a body of knowledge.

C: I think it is a huge responsibility even to have a part in the spiritual development of a person.

M: it is a huge responsibility and I think that this is too difficult for a two-teacher school to take on board without any backup; it's just too much. We can call ourselves what we like but we are not equipped unless there is some kind of provision there for teachers.

C: As you know we are working on a new print for this. I just found that working as a unit and from the responses of principals and from workshops. Should we be doing more to involve people in the project? Are we taking on a huge responsibility?

M: In the first place I feel that a core group is the main sort of steering group but possibly you could feed in from an awful lot of other groups who are doing a huge amount of work. I know myself from talking to Mary Stewart that we said after a year we were asking ourselves well is this our work or isn't it. It was so similar that it was quite extraordinary, therefore we really know what we want, and we understand Monkstown are coming to the same kind of conclusions as your group. There are other groups out there doing the same kind of thing. They may just be an odd glimmer of difference that may have formed; therefore I think it would be well worth taking on board my group. But the core steering group is essential, you don't want to go too wide due to the type of debate that goes on about wording, if you let go too far it's never going to happen, but feeding in, and picking up on shafts of light and other angles.

C: We would have had access to the booklets that would have been published by the various schools.

M: I have here Rathfarnham, Bray, Dalkey and Monkstown and I would look at those. If we were not handed something by educate together it is important that we have something from other schools. That's not good enough at some point you are going to have to set-up a religious educate together committee. I will look forward to that, we have far too much going on for that, and I think that we need the wisdom of educate together and other schools and then after that sit down and work within the framework provided by educate together.

C: I would say off the record that this whole endeavour is being driven by us and not educate together. They are very supportive now but originally it was a very personal campaign.

M: I don't know how any principal walks in cold on the first day; I can see how important it is.

C: Well I suppose our difficulty around it was unlike you there are a lot of people in Dublin coming in cold. There should be some kind of measure of what is happening. Can we judge modern spiritual development; I have been trying to capture the long lasting effects of what we do through the core curriculum and the religious curriculum. Is there any way we can measure?

M: I feel however vague it is by observation. I don't know how else really, because we are not going to judge by phone and it is by observation that we will judge. And it

is so pleasing as a person working with young people to see, you hope and wish and then you see it happening, and it does happen and as a teacher you can't but let it grow, as a teacher if you see a child behaving heartily and happy you just think fantastic. I think it is *by* observation, and then I know that you have set-up something with past pupils, I know a lot *of* past pupils and *my* own children the youngest being 19 are products are products *of* the *system*, some *of* what was talked about at the ethos conference I sat and talked to *my* children about and their friends. I imagine that on people with some knowledge *of* what is important to other people. Whether one could draw up a way *of* assessing it, there could be two routes but haven't gone beyond observation.

C: I'm getting the feedback from the children themselves.

M: I do think it is rewarding what we do.

C: Oh yeah I would agree with you. I think you feel it in the atmosphere when you walk into the school. One *of* the things we are doing is working on setting up a spiral curriculum to be worked through junior infants. Do' you think that is the way we should be going?

M: I think it is the way for the school to manage it from the bottom up.

C: What we intend to do develop a blueprint, what would you say to that?

M: a spire approach yes; I think it has to touch on the main kind *of* areas. When I say it spiral out, I mean, certain areas spiral out as well as up as you are touching on such young and new areas. Personally I would be interested to know what others think. I think that at infant level you like to think they are getting a feel first *of* all for themselves there family, their friends and school and all that, and a sense that there are loads *of* other people out there too and those they are special too. Especially that they are different things at different times, maybe that they are celebrating Ramadan and that we cheer them on the day etc. at infant level it doesn't go beyond that, we might have an assembly or something like that, and they would get a sense *of* celebrating with millions *of* other people around the world. You wonder really what they are getting out *of* that, maybe a notion *of* others, yes a notion *of* others. It is that that actually develops. In first and second there is more detail more celebrating more making. At third class I have felt it is around there you can bring in there some notion *of* belief. I would very carefully and in a very structured manner bring that up to sixth, and I don't think that they need a huge amount *of* information *by* sixth, just a very broad notion. We have special books, which are for infant level, and you can name these, super special, the students are making a special book with pictures. This can be started off in junior infants and spiral upwards through to sixth. I really feel we shouldn't go to heavily into beliefs that we would dilute the ethos and values.

C: Christian Shaw criticised this and said more depth needs to be sought.

M: It needs to be structured, just because we're multi-d doesn't mean we're throwing information at young people. I don't think that serves them well and I don't believe that they will hold onto it as they get older. How much does an 11 year old know?

They need to know I suppose that people have a belief system that they value and that we should respect that. This is the core of everything.

C: Its is the area that I work on.

M: Its something that can be measured, it used to frighten me a bit seeing younger teachers getting heavily into the teaching of Jesus etc. with very young children I think we have to be careful about it. I really feel that the notion that there are lots of people with there own point of view that's important, respecting has to be put in place long before.

C: What about the attitudes of staff, I mean how important is it? In catholic schools for example there is an importance placed on keeping up a catholic ethos from day one. Do you think teachers may rely to heavily on a particular belief system depending on what background they were coming from?

M: I suppose it could happen, but that questions induction and induction training. At the moment we expect far too much from the teachers coming in, how do they know? It could happen, but the teachers aren't to blame, until we sort that out we aren't doing right by the children and their parents.

C: Do feel strongly about this?

M: I would, very strongly indeed. I think even me; maybe I have an idea but only through experience and training. Definitely I have a very strong idea of what we are meant to be doing. Then teachers come in, it is a huge responsibility for a principal to have to work with these teachers coming in. they may feel they know what there about, but then in staff meetings it comes up, you know, what are meant to be doing or achieving here. The easy thing to do is for a teacher to pick up a book on the religions of the world and teach the children a little bit this isn't serving the children or the ethos well.

C: One of the difficulties I have encountered is in initial teacher training its completely denominational. Do we pick up the slack there as an organisation or is it more important to put pressure on the training schools. Especially now that there is a sector that isn't being catered for at all?

M: Well you are right the whole thing is geared towards denominational training. There is certainly something wrong there and it ought to be looked at. Teacher needs to be looked in a broader way for the benefit of the whole country. For the moment however educate together need to look at how they can help to pick up the slack as it were.

C: As we stand at the moment do we stand up to scrutiny?

M: if you mean the curriculum then it doesn't. I think it is a patchwork, we cant even hand new teachers guidelines of any sort. Unless we can do that and give them the material to back that up I don't think we stand up to scrutiny. I think educate together must take responsibility there, the buck stops with them.

C: who would see leading this research?

M: Nobody has been trained; it has to go back to people with experience and a proven track record and with interest. People who are involved with working with schools on this already. To much pressure is put on principals, they need assistance in conveying the ethos to the new teachers, without this it becomes to easy for the teacher under pressure to revert back to the old handbook of religions of the world.

C: When we started out multi-d was very clear, do you think as time has gone on this has become blurred with multi cultureless?

M: we could be if you are following on any kind of programme or guidelines over a period of tome it avoids that. In my experience it hasn't happened here. The same could have been said with Dalkey.