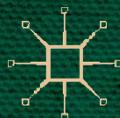


*Essays in
the History
of Irish
Education*

*Edited by
Brendan Walsh*



Essays in the History of Irish Education

Brendan Walsh
Editor

Essays in the History of Irish Education

palgrave
macmillan

Editor

Brendan Walsh
School of Education Studies
Dublin City University
Dublin, Ireland

ISBN 978-1-137-51481-3 ISBN 978-1-137-51482-0 (eBook)
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-51482-0

Library of Congress Control Number: 2016937973

© The Editor(s) (if applicable) and The Author(s) 2016

The author(s) has/have asserted their right(s) to be identified as the author(s) of this work in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

This work is subject to copyright. All rights are solely and exclusively licensed by the Publisher, whether the whole or part of the material is concerned, specifically the rights of translation, reprinting, reuse of illustrations, recitation, broadcasting, reproduction on microfilms or in any other physical way, and transmission or information storage and retrieval, electronic adaptation, computer software, or by similar or dissimilar methodology now known or hereafter developed.

The use of general descriptive names, registered names, trademarks, service marks, etc. in this publication does not imply, even in the absence of a specific statement, that such names are exempt from the relevant protective laws and regulations and therefore free for general use.

The publisher, the authors and the editors are safe to assume that the advice and information in this book are believed to be true and accurate at the date of publication. Neither the publisher nor the authors or the editors give a warranty, express or implied, with respect to the material contained herein or for any errors or omissions that may have been made.

Printed on acid-free paper

This Palgrave Macmillan imprint is published by Springer Nature
The registered company is Macmillan Publishers Ltd. London

To the memory of Sean Griffin, whose work in the fields of special educational needs and history of education did so much to enhance educational studies and provision in Ireland.

Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to acknowledge the kind assistance of the Dublin City University Faculty of Humanities Incorporation Publication Scheme in the preparation of this book.

CONTENTS

1	Introduction Brendan Walsh	1
2	The National System of Education, 1831–2000 Tom Walsh	7
3	‘An Essential Service’: The National Board and Teacher Education, 1831–1870 Susan M. Parkes	45
4	Forged in the Fire of Persecution: Edmund Rice (1762–1844) and the Counter-Reformationary Character of the Irish Christian Brothers Dáire Keogh	83
5	Girls at School in Nineteenth-Century Ireland Jane McDermid	105
6	‘Injurious to the Best Interests of Education’? Teaching and Learning Under the Intermediate Education System, 1878–1922 Brendan Walsh	129

7	Historical Overview of Developments in Special Education in Ireland Michael Shevlin	181
8	Teachers' Experience of School: First-hand Accounts, 1943–1965 Brendan Walsh	203
9	Creating a Modern Educational System? International Influence, Domestic Elites and the Transformation of the Irish Educational Sector, 1950–1975 John Walsh	235
10	The Transformation of Irish Education: The Ministerial Legacy, 1919–1999 Antonia McManus	267
11	The Development of Vocational and Technical Education in Ireland, 1930–2015 Marie Clarke	297
12	Current Developments at Third-Level Institutions in the Light of the Origins of the University Catherine Kavanagh	321
13	Advanced Education for Working People: The Catholic Workers' College, a Case Study David Limond	339
14	Teacher Accountability in Education: The Irish Experiment Martin Brown, Gerry McNamara, and Joe O'Hara	359
	Index	383

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Martin Brown is a research fellow at The Centre for Evaluation, Quality, and Inspection, Dublin City University, and is co-principal investigator for the Irish portion of ‘Polycentric Inspection Network for Schools’ bringing together researchers and the school inspectorates in EU countries. Brown is a specialist in educational evaluation and assessment and has planned and led evaluations in Ireland, Northern Ireland, Europe, and the Middle East; working for, among others, the Department of Education and Skills, the National Learning Network, and the United Arab Emirates government. Research interests include history of accountability and assessment in education, inclusion in education, social network theory, shared education, comparative education, school inspection, school self-evaluation, policy influences in evaluation, programme evaluation, and assessment in education.

Marie Clarke is Dean of Arts at University College Dublin (UCD) and a senior lecturer in the School of Education. She lectures in the areas of curriculum studies, education history and policy, mentoring studies, followership and quantitative research methods. She has published internationally and nationally in these areas and is a reviewer for a number of international journals. She was a visiting scholar to Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, during the academic year 2007. She served as Head of School during the period 2007–2011 and is a member of UCD Governing Authority. She is also a member of the Teaching Council of Ireland and the Student Grant Appeals Board.

Catherine Kavanagh is a senior lecturer in the Department of Philosophy, Mary Immaculate College. In 2014, she was distinguished fellow at the Notre Dame Institute for Advanced Studies. Her interests include medieval philosophy, medieval theology and patristics, and the relation of these to contemporary developments in philosophy and theology. She has held the IRC Postdoctoral Fellowship,

in Early Mediaeval Thought in the School of Classics at UCD (2004–2006), and has also worked at the Società Internazionale per lo Studio del Medioevo Latino, Florence, funded by the Italian Ministero degli Affari Esteri (1997–1998). She was visiting assistant professor of Theology at the University of Notre Dame from 2003 to 2004. She was elected president of the Irish Philosophical Society in 2011, having previously served on the Committee for a number of years. She has also served on the Royal Irish Academy's Committee on Philosophy and Ethics on behalf of the Irish Philosophical Society and on behalf of the Department of Philosophy, Mary Immaculate College, and is External Examiner in Philosophy for All Hallows College, Dublin. She is a member of Société Internationale pour l'Étude de la Philosophie Médiévale (SIEPM) and of the International Association of Patristic Studies (AIEP).

Dáire Keogh is president of St Patrick's College, Drumcondra, and Cregan Professor of Irish History at Dublin City University. He has published widely on the history of religion, education, and radical politics in Ireland. He is Principal Investigator of the Irish Research Council funded Correspondence of Cardinal Paul Cullen project.

David Limond holds a PhD from the University of Glasgow and now teaches history of education in Trinity College, University of Dublin. He is a coordinator for PhD students there. He taught in several schools and colleges in the UK before coming to Ireland and has published work on a range of topics in journals including *History of Education*, *History of Education Review*, *History of Education Researcher*, *Irish Educational Studies*, and *Paedagogica Historica*. He contributed to the book *Degrees of Nonsense* (Brendan Walsh, ed.) and has published essays in other edited collections. His principal interests are the radical milieu of British schooling in the 1960s and 1970s and the commercialisation of higher education in the twenty-first century. He is a founder member of the Centre for Cultures, Academic Values and Education in Trinity College [CAVE] and is involved in various CAVE projects.

Jane McDermid is Emeritus Fellow in History at Southampton University. She has postgraduate degrees from Glasgow University and the Institute of Education, London University. Her main research interests are in British and Russian women's history from the late eighteenth to the early twentieth centuries. She is working on the observations and reflections of British and Irish women who travelled to and across Russia between the 1860s and the 1940s as well as investigating the associational life of Scottish towns between the 1870s and 1930s. She is a member of the editorial board of *History of Education*, is on the international advisory board of the *Scottish Historical Review*, and for her work on the Scottish Women's Hospitals, was made an Honorary Member of the Board of the Annals of 'Ovidius' University of the Faculty of History and Political Sciences, Constanta, Romania.

Antonia McManus is formerly of the School of Education, Trinity College and of Hibernia College, Dublin, and is author of *The Irish Hedge School and Its Books, 1695–1831* and of *Irish Education: The Ministerial Legacy, 1919–1999*. She is currently researching the life and times of Dr. Thomas J. O’Connell (1882–1969), General Secretary of the Irish National Teachers’ Organisation, Senator and author.

Gerry McNamara is Professor of Education at the School of Education Studies, Dublin City University. From 1997 to 2007, he was Head of the School. He is course director of the Doctorate in Education, a taught doctoral programme in the field of educational leadership and evaluation. Professor McNamara is a specialist in educational evaluation and has planned and led many major evaluations at home and abroad, working for, among others, the Department of Education and Science, the National Centre for Guidance in Education, Leargas, the Equality Authority of Ireland, the European Commission, and the United Nations Development Programme. Much of his work in recent years has been concerned with the evaluation of schools and teachers. McNamara was a member of the Teaching Council of Ireland (2001/2002, 2004–2006), a co-founder of the Irish Evaluation Network (2000), and was a member of the Council of the British Educational Leadership, Management, and Administration Society from 2008 to 2012. Recent publications include, Gustafsson, J.-E., Ehren, M.C.M., Conyngham, G., McNamara, G., Altrichter, H., O’Hara, J., 2015 from Inspection to Quality: Ways in which school inspection influences change in schools, *Studies in Educational Evaluation*, 47, 47–57, and O’Brian, S., McNamara, G. and O’Hara, J., 2015. Supporting the consistent implementation of self-evaluation in Irish post-primary schools. *Educational Assessment, Evaluation and Accountability*, 27.

Joe O’Hara is the Inaugural Professor of Education and Head of the School of Education Studies, Dublin City University. He is a member of The Teaching Council of Ireland and Director of EQI—The Centre for Evaluation, Quality, and Inspection. O’Hara is an adjunct faculty member of the Centre for Culturally Responsive Evaluation and Assessment at the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign. He has published widely in the fields of evaluation, inspection, and culturally responsive evaluation and is co-PI on an Erasmus + funded project examining the development of polycentric network inspections across four European countries.

Susan M. Parkes is an Emeritus Fellow of Trinity College, Dublin. She is an authority on the history of Irish education and author of *Guide to Sources for the History of Irish Education, 1780–1922* (2010) and of *Kildare Place, The history of the Church of Ireland College of Education, 1811–2011* (2011). She was editor of *A Danger to the Men? A History of Women in Trinity College, Dublin, 1904–2004* (2004) and of ‘Intellectual Women: Irish Women at Cambridge, 1875–1904’ in

Brendan Walsh (ed.) *Knowing Their Place? The intellectual Life of Women in the 19th Century* (2014).

Michael Shevlin is Professor of Inclusive Education in the School of Education Trinity College, Dublin. Prior to employment in Trinity College, Shevlin worked as a post-primary teacher and initiated link programmes between students in mainstream schools and their counterparts in special schools. Shevlin now teaches on postgraduate programmes of Initial Teacher Education and at masters level in Inclusive Education. He has also participated in national and international research projects and has been published widely in international research journals. He, along with colleagues in the UK, has recently completed a longitudinal study spanning three years examining the experiences of children and young people who have special educational needs in schools in the Republic of Ireland.

Brendan Walsh lectures in the History of Education at Dublin City University where he is a research fellow at The Centre for Evaluation, Quality, and Inspection. His recent books include *Knowing Their Place? The intellectual life of women in the nineteenth-century* and *Boy Republic: Patrick Pearse and Radical Education*. He is currently researching the relationship between Irish schools and the British Armed Forces in the nineteenth and early twentieth century and writing a history of secondary schooling in Ireland. Brendan Walsh is Head of School of Policy and Practice at the Faculty of Education at Dublin City University and a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society.

John Walsh is Usher Lecturer in Higher Education with the School of Education, Trinity College, Dublin. Walsh is the Coordinator of the Trinity MEd Programme and a founder member of the Cultures, Academic Values and Education Research Centre. Walsh is the author of *Patrick Hillery: the official biography* (2008) and *The Politics of Expansion: a study of educational policy in the Republic of Ireland 1957–1972* (2009). Walsh's research interests include higher education policy at a national and international level, the history of Irish education, and the influence of international organisations on social change in post-war Ireland and Europe.

Thomas Walsh has taught in a number of primary schools in Dublin. Between 2002 and 2007, he worked as a Development Officer at the Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education (CECDE) at St. Patrick's College of Education, Dublin. While at the CECDE, he published a number of reports on early childhood education and played a central role in the development of Solta, the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education. His doctoral thesis focused on the development and implementation of successive primary school curricula between 1897 and 1990. He has written a number of articles on the history of education and on early childhood education and has presented at both national and international conferences. His book, *Primary Education in Ireland 1897–1990: Curriculum and Context*, was published in 2012. Walsh was a

Primary District Inspector with the Department of Education and Skills (DES) from 2007 to 2014. In addition to his work in schools, he contributed extensively to policy work within the Curriculum and Assessment Unit of the DES where he had particular responsibility around early childhood education. He now works as a lecturer in the Education Department of Maynooth University, where he is also school partnership coordinator with specific responsibility for building relationships with schools. His research interests include history of education, curriculum development and implementation, school inspection and school self-evaluation, early childhood education and school–university partnerships.

LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES

Fig. 14.1	Analysis of Department of Education Primary Teacher Efficiency Ratings (1940–1947)	370
Table 2.1	Qualifications in Irish of all teachers serving in national schools, 1924–1960	22
Table 11.1	Vocational schools—percentage of teaching hours by type of day course, 1962/1963	310
Table 11.2	Vocational schools—percentage of teaching hours by type of evening course, 1962/1963	310
Table 11.3	IoTs designated under the RTC Act 1992 as amended 1998	314

Introduction

Brendan Walsh

This collection of essays adds to the growing body of work concerning the history of education published in Ireland and internationally. In doing so, it rests upon a long tradition of such research that not only remains integral to the study of education generally but also forms an increasingly important subset within the broader parent discipline of historical studies. History, as a discipline, has always commanded respect in Ireland, despite occasional political moves to weaken its standing in schools. Historians have done much to help Ireland understand not only its distant but also its more recent troubled past, and the history of education is closely linked to events from the mundane to the dramatic; for example, the provision of schooling following the Tudor regime, the rise of the hedge schools during the Penal Period, the relationship between schools and nationalism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and between curricula and revivalist Irish language policy after independence or the reimagining (or unimagining) of schools by successive post-independence administrations. Indeed, it might be argued that we have dug as deep as we can in some of these pits and yet new artefacts continue to emerge.

But while original, thought-provoking contributions are published on a regular basis, one cannot help noticing that, still, important areas remain

B. Walsh (✉)

School of Education Studies, Dublin City University, Glanevin, Dublin, Ireland

neglected. Largely, educational historians in Ireland have been drawn to the wider concerns of church influence, educational policy and, more recently, the role of women in education. Irish educational history has been largely untroubled by intellectual movements such as post-modernism or the challenges posed by Marxist interpretations of history. This has led to little attention being paid, in particular, to working-class history. The burden of teaching the poor was largely carried by religious congregations such as the Christian Brothers, and while they have been the subject of excellent studies by scholars such as Dáire Keogh, the social framework in which they and their pupil cohort operated, in terms of class, remains unexamined. Pioneering individuals are also neglected. We know little of those such as Cannon family who operated Sandymount High School in Dublin from 1947 to 1999, much to the indignation of John Charles McQuaid, Catholic Archbishop of Dublin (1940–1971). ‘Alternative’ provision, pioneering, quasi-dissenting intuitions such as Sandymount High have failed to attract the attention of historians and the narrative and contribution of a small number of such schools remains a regrettable omission. The last two decades have witnessed a seeming reluctance to journey beyond the nineteenth century. In particular, we have to look beyond the community of education historians if we wish to encounter schools, teachers and provision in the period between the sixteenth and late-eighteenth centuries. Antonia McManus’ work on the hedge schools of this period was most welcome, as was Kenneth Milne’s history of the Charter Schools. These works revealed specific types of provision, and we have yet to discover the daily routine, pupil cohort, intellectual content and *modus operandi* of the many schools that operated both privately and by charitable bequest between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries. Again, we know little of those groups that operated outside what we might consider the religio-cultural mainstream. Schools operated in the Quaker tradition such as Newtown in Co. Waterford, the Masonic schools such as the Girls Orphanage Dublin and those of the Jewish community have made little impact on the historical narrative. We know little of the schools operated, usually by the religious, for deaf children. The buildings that once contained these institutions, housing a cohort so long neglected by the state, stand in silent testimony in towns across Ireland, but their history remains largely neglected. Institutional history may lie in the archives of the congregations or organisations that operated these establishments, but we know too little about those who attended or taught in them. Again, we know too little about forms of non-school provision, particularly those

institutions that offered practical and/or intellectual education to those who were drawn to, or drawn back to, education. In this respect, David Limond's contribution in this volume is welcome, presenting as it does a portrait of the Catholic Workers' College—a Jesuit initiative established in Dublin in the late 1940s. The area of practical, scientific and technical provision in Ireland is sadly neglected. Societies operated throughout Ireland in the nineteenth century offering courses and lectures to the intellectually curious and the practically minded, but their study has fallen, properly or not, generally, outside the realm of educational history. The work of Clara Cullen is a notable exception.¹

Most striking is the neglect of teachers. Dina Copleman's splendid *London's Women Teachers 1870–1930* (Routledge, 1996) drew upon a rich array of archive material and presented fascinating accounts of the personal and professional life of teachers in this period. Copleman's work is particularly interesting as it goes beyond policy narrative and interrogates the lives of teachers. This type of work is strikingly absent in Irish educational history, and my essays in this volume attempt to begin excavating this rich seam of possibility. 'Teachers' experience of school: first-hand accounts 1943–1965' is based upon interviews with 29 retired secondary school teachers and, I hope, sheds light on the *personal* experiences and challenges student teachers faced in those years.² It is concerned with personal narratives—a still emerging field of inquiry (and methodology)—in historical studies but one that has the potential to make very significant contributions. In this respect, Tom O'Donoghue and Judith Harford's *Secondary School Education in Ireland History, Memories and Life Stories, 1922–1967* (Palgrave, 2015) is a welcome addition. Finally, the history of schooling is itself much neglected. Institutional histories tend to be laudatory. G.K. White's memoir of teaching at St. Columba's College, Dublin, articulates well the caution with which we should approach such histories admitting that he was 'no more inclined to tell the whole truth about St. Columba's than I am about myself, being much too fond of both of us'.³ But the vast archive of material held at Dublin's National Library and in school collections and libraries presents educational historians with endless possibilities.⁴ In these holdings are found the day-to-day lives of schools and institutions that are generally hidden behind the larger narratives of provision, denominationalism, curricula and so forth. It is here that the 'voices' of schools often reside; those like Clare O'Sullivan, a young graduate caught up in the excitement of Dublin's Irish language revival in the early years of the twentieth century. O'Sullivan attended

a summer Irish language course in Co. Kerry and wrote in the *Loreto Magazine* (published by Loreto College, Dublin) in 1902 that ‘England knew, as did Rome in the days of old, that the surest way to kill the spirit of a nation was to deprive it of its own language....But the spirit of the nation was hard to kill....A holiday in a place like this is an unfailing Irish antidote to counteract the effects of the Anglicisation of centuries.’⁵ Fourteen years later, the *School Chronicle*, magazine of the Vincentian Castleknock College, Dublin, devoted 54 pages to the Great War in its 1916 edition, including extracts from a letter by past pupil Lieutenant Frank Morrogh, who wrote, shortly before his death at Gallipoli in June 1915: ‘the shelling we have had is simply awful...words cannot describe the sight. You cannot tell the wounded or the dead from the living....Dead are everywhere about the parapets and the sun does its work quickly.’⁶ An insight into the teachers’ strike of 1969 is glimpsed in a school magazine. Jane Monahan, a pupil at Muckcross Park Girls’ School, Dublin, noted: ‘I didn’t know enough about the teachers to decide whether they were right or wrong but hearing my parents and people, I think they were right’.⁷ Glimpses such as these shed light not only on the inner world of schools but also on their relationship with the wider world. Schools reflect that world and their past pupils help to shape it. They are fundamentally important sites of historic inquiry.

Turning to the volume in hand, I am particularly happy to welcome contributions from those not working within the field of history. Brown, McNamara and O’Hara’s essay examines the development of concepts of teacher accountability. The essay illustrates that while, since the 1980s, the issue has increasingly exercised the minds of policy makers and media, the debate can be traced, at least, to the early decades of the nineteenth century. Michael Shevlin’s essay on the evolution of policy and care for children with special educational needs is a most welcome contribution. We previously noted that the evolution of provision and policy for children and institutions traditionally outside the mainstream has been neglected, and Michael’s essay is a unique historical overview of developments in Ireland from the early nineteenth century. Catherine Kavanagh’s essay on the evolution of the universities in Ireland and her observations regarding current controversies adds significantly to the volume by turning our attention not only to higher education and its possibilities but also to what many perceive as contemporary attempts to undermine its potential for both scholarly and social good insert full stop here Tom Walsh’s comprehensive overview of the evolution of the national school system between 1831 and the present day

demonstrates how, over almost two centuries, the system has been shaped by political, social and pedagogical factors and persuasively illustrates how educational policy is frequently influenced by factors the origins of which do not lie in the study of education. Susan Parkes' essay on the operations of the National Board between 1831 and 1870 provides detailed insights into four decades in the life of the Board. The essay demonstrates the complexity of provision and the determination and differences of parties involved in the operation of the national school system during its first 40 years—decades in which there was no guarantee of its success. Dáire Keogh's examination of the relationship between the Congregation of the Christian Brothers and the ideology of the Counter-Reformation is coupled with an analysis of how and why the Congregation became a leading light in the provision of Catholic education outside the realm of state-funded provision in the nineteenth century. Jane McDermid's essay looks at the evolution of schooling for girls in the nineteenth century and persuasively argues that the provision of schooling for girls was informed by more complex issues than inter-denominational rivalry and that, regardless of rhetoric to the contrary, girls' schooling was ultimately informed by notions of service. John Walsh's essay explores a complex period in Irish educational history. In particular, it examines the relationship between emerging human capital theories in Europe and evolving understandings of the interconnectedness of education and economics in 1960s Ireland. The result, Walsh notes, was the emergence of a new relationship between the state and church as the former forged a modernising agenda that, ultimately, led to the creation of a modern education system at all levels. This theme is mirrored and developed in Antonia McManus's essay on the legacy of those who have held the post of Minister for Education. McManus notes that many ministers were well-intentioned and, in difficult circumstances, made significant contributions to the development of post-independence education in Ireland—a view, it seems to me—too rarely taken in Irish educational studies. It remains remarkable that a country that emerged from such inauspicious economic circumstances and suffered from repeated economic downturns should, throughout, insist on the free provision of national and secondary schooling free of charge and, since the 1990s, of university education also. McManus reminds us, for example, that the White Paper on Educational Development (1980) 'referred to no less than eleven specialist committees whose reports had to be shelved' during a difficult economic period. Like John Walsh, McManus highlights the work of 'Patrick Hillery, who allowed the OECD to study our ramshackle education system, and who catered for those he styled 'the

Modern Estate’, and Donogh O’Malley, who removed the ‘dark stain on the national conscience’, and in so doing enhanced the future prospects of generations of Irish children.’ Marie Clarke’s essay on the evolution of vocational and technical education is particularly welcome, highlighting as it does, educational work done away from the mainstream school system so to speak. Training institutes fail, generally, to feature in Irish educational history, and a detailed exposition such as this is both comprehensive and timely. The essay is important for its drawing into the open the failures of the vocational system as well as its successes over the decades. I referred previously to David Limond’s contribution. It might be noted, however, that his and Clarke’s are similar in that they both treat a type of provision that included adults and operated parallel to mainstream offerings. In this sense, they are part of that community of institutions of alternative provision to which I referred at the beginning of this introduction.

My sincere thanks to all contributors to what I hope makes an interesting and useful collection of essays. Of course, as editor, I take responsibility for any errors occurring in the text and apologise to my contributors and readers in advance.

This book received financial support from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Book Publication Scheme at Dublin City University. November 15th, 2015.

NOTES

1. See C. Cullen, ‘The Museum of Irish Industry and Scientific Education in Mid-Victorian Ireland’, in D. Raftery & K. Fischer, Eds., *Educating Ireland: Schooling and Social Change, 1700–2000* (Dublin, 2014); ‘Starry Eyed’: Women and Science in Nineteenth-Century Ireland, in B. Walsh, Ed., *Knowing Their Place? The Intellectual Life of Women in the Nineteenth Century* (Dublin, 2014).
2. The interviews took place between 2009 and 2013.
3. G.K. White, *The Last Word*, (Dublin, 1977), 76.
4. On archive holdings, see S. Parkes’ excellent *Guide to Sources for the History of Irish Education, 1780–1922* (Dublin, 2010).
5. Clare O’Sullivan, ‘A Summer School in Kerry’, *Loreto Magazine*, Christmas 1902, 31; 36. National Library of Ireland.
6. Cited in J. Murphy, *Nos Autem* (Dublin, 1966), 107.
7. Joan Monahan, ‘Me and the Strike’, *School Echoes* (undated). Archives, Muckross Park School, Dublin.

The National System of Education, 1831–2000

Tom Walsh

INTRODUCTION

This chapter critically examines the establishment and development of the national system of education in Ireland between 1831 and 2000. The rationale for the establishment of the system is delineated at the outset. This is followed by an overview of the impact of wider contextual developments, including political, socio-economic, cultural and religious factors. The curricula developed and implemented in national schools during five distinct eras throughout the period are used as the armature around which the wider educational developments at primary level are structured. By focusing on what was taught, why it was taught and how it was taught, the chapter provides an insight into the evolving educational experiences of children in national schools in Ireland during the period. These curriculum eras are largely distinct by virtue of their context, the philosophy underpinning the curriculum, the content and methodologies advocated, the approach to teacher education and the concept of the child inherent in the curriculum. The five distinct periods are:

- The establishment of the national system [1831–1872]
- The era of Payment by Results [1872–1900]
- The *Revised Programme of Instruction* (1900) [1900–1922]

T. Walsh (✉)
National University of Ireland, Maynooth, Ireland

- The curricula developed following Independence [1922–1971]
- The *Primary School Curriculum* (1971) [1971–1999]

The chapter concludes by focusing on the key ideological changes underpinning the national system from its establishment in 1831.

THE ORIGINS OF THE NATIONAL SCHOOL SYSTEM

The decision to establish a national system of education in Ireland in 1831 arose in response to a number of political, social, economic and religious factors unique to the Irish context.¹ It was primarily a political response to the difficulties of the British Empire in controlling its closest colony and was envisaged as a means to socialise the Irish populace and strengthen Ireland's link with the Empire. It was also a social and economic response to the widespread poverty and the quest for education evident in Ireland, with the intention that basic literacy and numeracy would improve the position of Ireland's citizens in future generations. It was also a product of the endeavours of the various religious denominations within Ireland to use schools to imbue the upcoming generations with their particular religious beliefs and ensure the survival of their faith.

The appetite of parents in Ireland for an education for their children continued after the repeal of the Penal Laws in the early 1800s. In the absence of a middle class to act as patrons for schools or of sufficient numbers of religious personnel to educate Catholic children, this demand was satisfied for the most part by establishing and supporting private fee-paying Hedge Schools.² Catholic teaching orders also established schools from the end of the eighteenth century, including the Presentation Sisters (1791), the Irish Christian Brothers (1802) and the Mercy Sisters (1828). As a result, Ireland had an extensive network of primary schools as evidenced by the 1824 census undertaken by the Commissioners of Irish Education, which established that approximately 560,000 children were attending 11,823 schools in that year.³ Only 1727 of the 11,823 schools in the country were under the control of state-funded societies, and the remaining 10,096 schools were largely Hedge Schools.⁴

The education provided in Hedge Schools was variable and the character of the teacher, often perceived to be morally dissolute and politically subversive, was outside the remit of either church or state. Both institutions wished to exercise control, for different reasons, over the teachers and learners. Owing to the colonial relationship with Ireland, the British

authorities wished the education system to act as an agent of civilisation, socialisation, assimilation, politicisation and the reproduction of colonial values with a view to making Ireland more governable.⁵ From a religious point of view, schools and teachers could serve as conduits of the faith and instillers of religious values and loyalty.⁶ Such motivations led to state financing of Charter Schools and other organisations such as the Kildare Place Society (KPS) (1811), sometimes with the overt mission to proselytise and to provide alternatives to the unregulated Hedge Schools.⁷ However, the relationship between the Catholic and Protestant parties involved in the KPS deteriorated, particularly due to the Society's insistence upon the reading of scripture without comment and Catholic fears of proselytism, and the vast majority of Catholic children continued to attend Hedge Schools.⁸ Interestingly, the purpose of education was predominantly for social and moral reasons as opposed to providing a basic education in literacy and numeracy.

The *Fourteenth Report from the Commissioners of the Board of Education in Ireland* (1812) and two reports of the Commissioners of Irish Education Inquiry in 1825 and 1826 were instrumental in framing a system of education in Ireland. The 1812 report made a series of recommendations for the establishment of a National Board to administer a non-denominational system of education, to establish teacher training institutions and to approve textbooks.⁹ The first report of the Commission of Irish Education Inquiry (1824–1827) criticised the KPS for failing to meet its objective of providing education to all children without religious interference and recommended that no further grants be given to the Society. The report concluded with the recommendation that a national system overseen by a board of education be established where Catholic and Protestant children would be educated together.¹⁰

The Stanley Letter (1831)

The framework for the national system of education was outlined in a letter from the Chief Secretary, Lord Stanley, to the Duke of Leinster, Augustus Fitzgerald, in October 1831. The newly established model was, in many ways, similar to the existing system while its objective was

to afford *combined* [original emphasis] literary and moral, and *separate* [original emphasis] religious instruction, to children of all persuasions, as far as possible, in the same school, upon the fundamental principle, that no

attempt shall be made to interfere with the peculiar religious tenets of any description of Christian pupils.¹¹

The core functions of the National Board that presided over the national system, as stated in the Stanley Letter, comprised of men of high moral standing and of different religious denominations, were to ‘exercise a complete control over the various schools which may be erected under its auspices.’¹² This included the management of school buildings, curricula, textbooks, school grants, teacher training and the inspection system. This concern with complete control over the curriculum and teachers by the Board was symptomatic of its desire for cultural, political and social assimilation and to ensure that a central policy prevailed in schools.¹³ At a local level, the multiplicity of agencies, denominational leaders, educational societies and political groups that had been involved in the management of schools prior to 1831 was largely replaced by single denominational school managers. The power of individual managers rested largely in the recruitment and dismissal of teachers and in monitoring the work of the school and in supporting school ethos.

The National Board encouraged joint applications from religious denominations to establish or to bring existing schools under its auspices. State support for education prior to 1831 had been largely for proselytising purposes, and there was a deep mistrust of state intervention and a history of hostility between the various denominations.¹⁴ However, the churches etched away at the mixed denominational principle of the national system, and in reality, most schools were vested in diocesan trustees, had the local Bishop as their patron, were clerically managed and the managers, teachers and pupils were of the same faith. As the majority of the Protestant schools remained outside the national system and within the Church Education Society¹⁵ from 1839 to 1869, this meant that the majority of schools were managed by and vested in the Catholic Church. By 1850, less than 4% of National Schools were under conjoint clerical and lay management.¹⁶ By 1900, the system had become denominational in practice with nearly 65% of schools denominationally homogeneous while 80% had clerical managers.¹⁷ At the Catholic General Synod in Maynooth in 1900, the hierarchy indicated its overall satisfaction with the system being ‘as denominational as we could desire. In most of its schools there is no mixed education whatsoever.’¹⁸

As the system was more for socialisation and assimilation purposes, an equal emphasis was placed on the participation of boys and girls. By 1900,

the system comprised a network of 8684 schools, catering for the education of 770,622 pupils, in every village and townland in Ireland.¹⁹ There was a significant decline in the rates of illiteracy from the inception of the national system in 1831 to the end of the century, reducing from 52.7% of the population over age five who could not read or write in 1841 to 18.4% by 1891.²⁰

It is important to consider the wider social context as it was in this environment that certain decisions and directions were taken by the education system. Religious, political, social, economic and cultural contextual factors from 1831 to 2000 are treated in the next section.

FACTORS IMPACTING UPON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SCHOOL SYSTEM

Religious

The Catholic Church positioned itself as integral to the new national system, strategically acting as a partner to the state in the establishment of schools. This proved to be a symbiotic alliance considering the concerns of both the Catholic Church and the colonial power to focus on the social and moral wellbeing of pupils and the instilling of civility through the school system.²¹ The timing coincided with the gradual rise of the power and prominence of the Catholic Church in Ireland as the leader of a loyal laity, achieving Catholic Emancipation in 1829, and offering ‘a substitute badge of ethnicity to distinguish them [the Irish people] from the colonial establishment’.²² The growth and prominence of the Catholic Church was mirrored by the demise of the Church of Ireland and the relationship between these churches was generally characterised by distrust, suspicion and hostility. Arguably, the increasing influence of the Catholic Church in Ireland in the nineteenth century was largely owing to its central involvement in an extensive network of schools and its overt success in shaping the education system to its desired structure.²³ While represented at a national level on the National Board and other such structures, its real power and influence rested in the managerial system, whereby its clerics controlled the recruitment and management of teachers in the majority of schools in Ireland, and it began to regulate the lives of pupils and their parents through schooling.

The position carved out in the nineteenth century of a ‘parochially organised, denominationally segregated and clerically managed’²⁴ system was strengthened and defended from local and lay involvement in the

early twentieth century.²⁵ The oftentimes uneasy relationship between the Catholic Church and the British authorities prior to Independence in 1921 was replaced by a more symbiotic and natural union of Church and state from the 1920s.²⁶ While playing a central role in education prior to Independence, the Central Association of Catholic Clerical School Managers outlined its expectation for complete control over education in the Free State in 1921:

And, in view of pending changes in Irish education, we wish to assert that the only satisfactory system of education for Catholics is one wherein Catholic children are taught in Catholic schools by Catholic teachers under Catholic control.²⁷

The power of the Catholic Church grew further after Independence in 1921, becoming an omnipresent and triumphant force in Irish society as it celebrated the centenary of Catholic Emancipation in 1929 and hosted the Eucharistic Congress in 1932. The decreasing Protestant population is evident in the reduction in their number enrolled in primary schools, falling from 5% in 1924 to 2.5% in 1965.²⁸ The state acknowledged the pivotal position of the Catholic Church and accepted its authority in matters such as education, describing the system as being semi-state, with power shared between the state and the managers.²⁹ The former's subsidiary role in relation to education was enshrined in the Irish constitution, *Bunreacht na hÉireann* (1937).³⁰ Moreover, both church and state maintained a binary control over education until towards the end of the twentieth century when more democratic structures were introduced to allow for a greater partnership approach to the development of education policy. Growing ecumenism and a greater role for parents and the laity in education introduced by the reforms of Vatican II³¹ coincided with a decrease in vocations in Ireland. Furthermore, parents (through the National Parents' Council Primary established in 1985) and teacher unions began to occupy a more pivotal and powerful role within the education system.³² While Boards of Management were introduced in 1975 to replace largely individual clerical managers, they did not lead to an absolute release of power as the chairperson of boards was generally clerical and were appointed by the patron.³³ While the physical presence of religious teachers in schools had all but disappeared by 2000, the Catholic Church through its ownership, trusteeship and management of schools, and its considerable consultative powers, remained a dominant force in Irish education.³⁴

Political

From a political perspective, the establishment of a national education system by a colonial power placed the focus of education on social reproduction, colonial assimilation and increased allegiance to the British Empire. For the first 90 years of the system, decisions relating to education were determined at Westminster and were greatly influenced by developments in England and the wider Empire. These decisions were not always appropriate for the distinct Irish context and many policy initiatives, including curricula, did not gain traction as a result. Following Independence, the education system became the means of achieving a range of national aspirations, most notably the revival of the Irish language and the building of Irish nationhood. The dominance of this underlying philosophy within the education system for close to 50 years following Independence impacted on the content and methodologies used, on the selection and recruitment of teachers and, consequently, on the learning experiences of and outcomes for pupils. The state, through the Department of Education, drew up the regulations that governed education and retained tight control over the curriculum.

There have been few ideological differences between the main political parties since Independence and most evolved their thinking simultaneously on the role of the state in education.³⁵ Interestingly, international influences on education came to the fore again from the 1960s owing to Ireland's engagement with institutions such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the European Economic Community (EEC). This changed the conceptualisation of education as having solely moral and social purposes to include a more human capital and economic dimension from the 1960s. A process of social partnership and consultation between the government, employers and trade unions underpinned industrial relations and education policy development from the 1980s.³⁶

Social

It is evident that significant value was placed on education in Ireland, particularly when Irish society was at its most oppressed and weakened in the early nineteenth century. Many parents, most of whom had little means, paid for their children to attend Hedge Schools and other private schools prior to 1831. The formative influence of education was also understood

by both the British authorities and the churches, albeit for different purposes, with each assuming a direct involvement in its development and delivery.³⁷ However, the societal circumstances that whetted the appetite for education were also those that prevented many children from participating fully in education, owing to limitations of finance, the necessity for manual labour on subsistence farms and the poor living conditions in towns and cities.³⁸ Doyle asserts that the 1800s ‘led to seismic upheavals in Irish society’³⁹ ranging from Act of Union in 1801 to the destructive effects of the Great Famine of the 1840s and the move towards militant nationalism at the turn of the twentieth century. Following Independence, the people of the Irish Free State were predominantly rurally based, Catholic and socially conservative.⁴⁰ Church and state were increasingly concerned in relation to the alleged decline in moral standards from the 1920s, especially sexual morality, which led to a paternal and protectionist ethos in Ireland. While, internationally, there were moves to improve and widen access to social services after World War II, the same thrust for reform was not as immediate in Ireland.⁴¹ While dramatic social changes in the 1960s served to break the insularity and isolationist stance of Irish society,⁴² Ireland remained a largely conservative and Catholic society towards the end of the twentieth century.⁴³

Economic

From an economic perspective, the rapid growth of the national system placed great strain on the available financial resources from 1831. Throughout the period of rule by England, decisions around the financing of Irish education were made for a variety of reasons, oftentimes political, and were influenced by other developments and issues within the wider Empire. The creation of a national system by the colonial power catalysed a withdrawal of local monetary support for education leading to the necessity for higher funding for education in Ireland than in England due to the absence of local rates and support.⁴⁴ The fledgling Irish Free State had limited resources available to it for decades after its establishment and economic policy did not prioritise high levels of social spending.⁴⁵ The funding of Irish education was often supplemented through voluntary parental support and institutional church support. Competing societal demands and changing economic fortunes seemed always to mean that the resources available for education in Ireland were insufficient to meet the needs of the system. A changing conceptualisation of education

as an economic necessity as opposed to a social expense for ‘moral, intellectual, and religious objectives’⁴⁶ became evident from the 1960s. This was heralded by seminal policy documents such as *Economic Development* in 1958⁴⁷ and the *Investment in Education* report in 1965,⁴⁸ leading to increased economic provision for education. As Minister O’Malley asserted in 1967, Ireland ‘as a small and poor country cannot afford not to spend more on education than a richer one.’⁴⁹ Increased participation at post-primary and tertiary levels from the 1960s placed competing demands on the education budget.

Cultural

The national system actively disregarded any distinct elements of Irish culture within the school system, most notably the Irish language, until the early 1900s. O’Donoghue asserts that this policy also operated in other British colonies, including Scotland, Wales, Cyprus and Malta.⁵⁰ Generally, however, and in particular following the Famine, this neglect of Irish language and culture met with the tacit acceptance and approval of the dominant parties in the education system, including the Catholic Church, political activists and parents.⁵¹ Throughout the nineteenth century, the language became increasingly synonymous with poverty, disaffection, defeat and ignorance, ‘the badge of a scattered minority in a number of restricted, remote and impoverished regions in the western fringes of Ireland.’⁵² It was only towards the end of the nineteenth century that there were moves to revive the Irish language and culture through organisations such as the Society for the Preservation of the Irish Language (1876), the Gaelic Athletic Association (1884) and the Gaelic League (1893).⁵³

The Gaelic League repeatedly highlighted what it characterised as the non-Irish character of education in the national schools and was successful in campaigning for the introduction of the Bilingual Programme in 1904. The cultural revival movement, spearheaded by the aforementioned organisations, peaked around the 1920s and had widespread support from many prominent politicians and professionals in positions of power. When the pendulum swung following 1921 to place an inordinate emphasis on Irish language and culture within the school system, the majority of the population displayed a tacit, positive disposition yet there were few practical manifestations of this support at a popular level outside the school system. Akenson asserts that there was a ‘cultural implosion’⁵⁴

in Ireland from the 1920s as the threat of omnipresent English language and culture threatened the policy ideal of a return to a Gaelic Ireland that was being propagated through the education system. Relaxation of this insularity, coupled with a more balanced appreciation of Irish and international cultures and diversity generally, were more evident from the 1960s.

It was within this broader societal context that the curricula between 1831 and 2000 was developed and implemented. Five distinct eras in the evolution and development of the national system are detailed in this chapter.

The Establishment of the National System, 1831–1872

The curriculum implemented in national schools following 1831 provided for combined moral and literary education and separate religious instruction. A great emphasis was placed on instruction in literary and mathematical subjects (see [Appendix 1](#)). As many of the schools in the national system had their origins in the KPS and Hedge Schools, many pedagogical practices from previous traditions were transported into the new system. For example, many teachers instructed pupils individually rather than as a class, and this practice was gradually replaced by the simultaneous model of instruction from the 1840s. The Commissioners of National Education produced and approved textbooks for use in schools and these were largely factual and moralistic in nature, urging acceptance of the political and social status quo. The five Reading Books sanctioned by the National Board became a core element of the work of the school, yet the majority of pupils failed to proceed beyond level three prior to 1870.⁵⁵ Instruction was through the medium of English and there was little reference to distinct aspects of Irish culture, language or tradition. Attendance rates were very poor. As late as 1870, only 36% of the school-going cohort attended school regularly largely due to the difficult socio-economic circumstances of the country.⁵⁶

Inspection was integral to the national system from 1831 and the cadre of inspectors grew exponentially throughout the nineteenth century.⁵⁷ Inspectors were seen as the key agents in ensuring that the rules and regulations of the National Board were implemented at a local level by managers and schools. Initially, inspectors were men of high educational attainment and social standing and only gradually from the mid-nineteenth century were some recruited from the teaching profession. The role of the inspector was to communicate to the patron/manager as well

as the Commissioners ‘as to the proficiency of the pupils, and the discipline, management, and methods of instruction pursued in the School.’⁵⁸

Teacher Education, 1831–1872

Central to the Stanley Letter was the provision of training facilities for teachers. This was considered important and necessary by both church and state to remove the unevenness of teacher competence and character that previously prevailed. However, the nature and organisation of teacher training remained a contentious issue throughout most of the nineteenth century. The National Board considered teachers to be significant agents of social control and political stability⁵⁹ and were to be ‘trained to good habits; identified in interest with the State, and therefore anxious to promote a spirit of obedience to lawful authority.’⁶⁰ A national training college operated in Marlborough Street, Dublin from 1838. Between 1843 and 1867, a network of 26 interdenominational District Model Schools was established ‘to promote the united education of Protestants and Roman Catholics in Common Schools; to exhibit the best examples of National Schools; and to give preparatory training to young teachers.’⁶¹ The mixed gender and denominational status of the District Model Schools was a major source of concern for the Catholic Church as it exercised no control over their management or activities and an outright ban on attendance for Catholics was instituted by the Catholic hierarchy between 1863 and 1924. The consequence of this stance was that by the 1870s, only 34% of teachers were formally trained, the proportion of Catholic teachers being lower at 27%.⁶² The national system established elaborate structures, procedures and rules to tightly manage the educational and moral conduct of teachers employed, including the managerial system, the inspection system and the 12 practical rules for teachers (see [Appendix 2](#)).⁶³ With the establishment of the Irish National Teachers’ Association (later Organisation) (INTO) in 1868, the rights of teachers, in terms of pay and conditions, became more contested.

The Era of Payment by Results

A *Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education*, the Powis Commission, was established in 1870 to inquire into the education system in Ireland. Among its findings, it reported limited educational progress for many pupils in the education system based on the Reading Book level attained and general educational proficiency as reported by inspectors coupled with poor material and resource conditions in many

schools. Among the 129 recommendations, it proposed the introduction of a system of Payment by Results and denominational teacher training facilities. A similar system of Payment by Results had been introduced in England, and it was seen as a measure to ensure greater efficiency and accountability within the system:

That to secure a better return for the outlay and labour of the National system, each Teacher, besides a fixed class-salary, should receive an addition according to the number of children whom the Inspector, after individual examination, can pass as having made satisfactory progress during that year.⁶⁴

This curriculum revision affected not only the nature of instruction, which became more mechanical and exam-focused, but also the range of subjects studied. It resulted in a major concentration on English reading, writing, and spelling, as well as Arithmetic. While two additional subjects from a list of 21 could be studied, there was little uptake of these in the years following 1870. Precise programmes in each subject were developed and pupils were examined annually by inspectors with a focus on mechanical proficiency. A minimum of 100 attendances was necessary to present for examinations and higher fees were paid for older pupils. This led to greater progression for pupils in schools, reduced illiteracy rates, improved the attendance of pupils to 62 % by 1900⁶⁵ and motivated some teachers to improve the quality of their work. However, it reduced the breadth of the curriculum to a narrow focus on certain subjects and resulted in a more didactic approach to teaching to achieve mechanical accuracy. As stated by Hyland and Milne:

The system of payment by results fostered a narrow approach to the curriculum, both in terms of content and methodology. It encouraged rote-learning and made no allowance for differences between pupils or between schools.⁶⁶

No doubt, this resulted in a greater neglect of younger pupils in schools, as higher results fees were paid for older pupils, and strained relations between inspectors and teachers.

Teacher Education, 1872–1900

The increasing power, authority and coherence of the Catholic Church in the 1800s resulted in its securing denominational training colleges in

1883. The two-year training programme was intensive in nature and prepared teachers to practise a structured and didactic pedagogy in classrooms, largely influenced by Joyce's *A Handbook of School Management and Methods of Teaching*.⁶⁷ By 1900, there were six denominational training colleges receiving state funding in addition to the mixed denominational central training college in Marlborough Street. This was a major strategic victory for the Catholic Church, which now controlled entry to the nature and content of the training and the recruitment and dismissal of teachers in Catholic-managed schools. The number of untrained teachers had reduced to 55.2% by 1896.⁶⁸

The period of the Revised Programme of Instruction (1900) [1900–1922]

The design of the *Revised Programme of Instruction* (1900) was based on a comprehensive national and international review of educational provision at the time by the Commission on Manual and Practical Instruction (1898).⁶⁹ It was influenced by international developments in the conceptualisation of the child informed by the Romantic Movement and the move to introduce subjects of a manual and practical nature in school curricula using more heuristic methodologies.

Dr. Starkie, the Resident Commissioner (1900–1922), played a central role in developing the ambitious *Revised Programme of Instruction* (1900). The *Programme* introduced many new manual and practical subjects (see [Appendix 1](#)), changed the focus on existing subjects, altered the methodologies employed to ensure an emphasis on activity and discovery learning and allowed for local adaptation of content. Particular emphasis was placed on the education of children in the infant classes, where there was to be a focus on enjoyment and hands-on activity. Such a major change in underlying philosophy and content required systematic planning and resourcing for it to become institutionalised at a school level. However, Dr. Starkie neglected to take on board the concerns expressed by inspectors, managers and teachers about the feasibility of implementing such an ambitious programme in the school context of the time and its ambition was to be its greatest weakness in the educational context of the early twentieth century. This undermined an otherwise conceptually and pedagogically well designed programme and despite revisions in 1904, the envisaged programme never achieved traction in Irish schools. As stated by Hyland:

It was a theoretically impressive curriculum but among its weaknesses were a lack of consultation with teachers and inspectors at the drafting stage and failure to take account of the constraints, both physical and human, within the national school system of the period.⁷⁰

Inspector reports following 1900⁷¹ and an evaluation of the system in 1903 by an English inspector, Mr. Dale,⁷² report instances of implementation of the programme and a general improvement in learning atmospheres in schools, a wider variety of subjects being studied and improved methodologies. However, the overall vision, methodologies and content of the *Revised Programme* was realised in few schools.⁷³ Interestingly, Dale noted the greatest innovation in newly introduced subjects and less transformation in the content and methodologies of well-established subjects or those needing additional equipment and resources. The main barriers to its adoption rested with insufficient teacher training, inadequate funding, the poor materials and resources in schools, low rates of pupil attendance and the lack of popular support for the programme. This led to revisions to the programme in 1904.⁷⁴ Attendance rates continued to improve, somewhat assisted by the passing of school attendance legislation in 1892, and rested at 65.7% in 1904.⁷⁵

The Irish language was not used as a medium of instruction or as a subject to be taught following the establishment of the national system in 1831. Despite campaigns for its recognition as a subject, particularly in Gaeltacht (Irish speaking) regions, it was 1878 before it was recognised as an additional subject that could be taught outside school hours for fees. In 1904, a Bilingual Programme was introduced that, under certain conditions and circumstances, allowed for subjects to be taught bilingually using the Irish and English language.⁷⁶ Approximately 3% of schools participated in the Bilingual Programme by 1920 while approximately 20% offered Irish as an additional subject.⁷⁷

Teacher Education, 1900–1922

The programme in teacher training colleges was revised in the late 1890s in line with the *Revised Programme* (1900) and further manual and practical subjects were added. Dr Starkie was critical of the quality of teacher training during the era where teachers had no opportunity ‘of acquiring a liberal culture, and, what is still more important, a wide knowledge of human nature and of life’.⁷⁸ While he did not succeed in introducing a

university-based education for teachers, he removed some of the social restrictions on teachers (such as the right to attend political meetings from 1906 and the need for a quarterly ‘character query’ from the manager from 1911) and extended the range of courses available to them.⁷⁹ A number of Organisers were also appointed in various subjects to support teachers in introducing the new subjects in the 1900 curriculum.⁸⁰ Great strides were made in the period after 1900 to ensure all teachers attended training colleges, so that by 1919, 80% of teachers were formally trained.⁸¹

The Curricula Developed Following Independence, 1922–1971

Following the advent of independence in 1921, the first National Programme Conference (1922)⁸² and Second National Programme Conference (1926)⁸³ established curriculum policy for national schools that largely informed practice until 1971. Criticisms of the pre-Independence curriculum included its broad nature and its lack of reference to Irish language and culture. Developed amid the patriotic fervour of the fledgling Free State, it was inevitable that the programmes became imbued with certain distinctive aspects of Irish language, culture and tradition. A keynote of nationalism in the European context was that a country with its own distinct language and culture should constitute a state.⁸⁴ The revival of the Irish language became synonymous with the task of nation building in a post-colonial context, a view that gained momentum in the 1930s as articulated by Taoiseach de Valera,

we cannot fulfil our destiny as a nation unless we are an Irish nation—and we can only be truly that if we are an Irish-speaking nation.⁸⁵

A consequence of this perspective was to interlink issues of patriotism, nationalism and the Irish language revival within the school system. The extent of this inculcation was accentuated owing to the positions held by key Irish language enthusiasts at a political and societal level in the 1920s.⁸⁶ The Irish and English languages were contrasted against one another, with the former representing an idealised, pure past and the latter a reminder of colonial legacy.⁸⁷ As stated by the government in 1925,

it is the intention of the new government to work with all its might for the strengthening of the national fibre by giving the language, history, music and tradition of Ireland their natural place in the life of Irish schools.⁸⁸

From 1922, the number of compulsory subjects was reduced (see [Appendix 1](#)). The main change was the introduction of Irish as a compulsory subject in schools to be taught for one hour per day, and further advising its integration with other subjects. Moreover, the ‘work in the Infant standard [classes] is to be entirely in Irish.’⁸⁹ This was in a context where English was the vernacular of 90% of the pupils, where only 5% of schools were operating the Bilingual Programme and where the majority of teachers had no certified qualification in the language (see [Table 2.1](#)).⁹⁰ The obligatory subjects remained largely the same after the Second National Programme Conference in 1926 (see [Appendix 1](#)). However, it also allowed for some teaching of English in the infant classes before 10:30 a.m. and after 2:00 p.m. Moreover, a Higher Course and Lower Course were introduced in Irish in 1926 to be undertaken based on the linguistic competence of the teachers and pupils. The programmes introduced in the 1920s allowed for local adaptation by managers and teachers, subject to Inspectorate approval, but this facility was rarely availed of. Moreover, the dominant emphasis placed on the language revival reduced the time afforded to other subjects in the curriculum, most notably English. Indeed, the requirement to use Irish as the medium of instruction in the infant classes remained in place until 1960.⁹¹

Two further revisions of the curriculum were introduced in 1934 and 1948. In 1934, the Minister reduced the requirements in a number of subjects to allow for a greater focus on the Irish language, requiring all schools to adopt the Higher Course in Irish and the Lower Course in

Table 2.1 Qualifications in Irish of all teachers serving in National Schools, 1924–1960

<i>School year</i>	<i>No Certificate in Irish</i>	<i>Ordinary certificate</i>	<i>Bilingual certificate</i>	<i>Ard Teastas</i>
1924	59.2	20.7	17.6	2.5
1930–1931	27.2	33.4	33.4	6
1940–1941	11.1	24.5	57.6	6.8
1949–1950	8.3	16.9	68.6	6.2
1960–1961	4	6.6	85.1	4.3

Source: Deputy McGilligan (1925). *Dáil Debates*, June 2, 1925, Volume 12, Column 2; Department of Education (1931). *Report of the Department of Education 1929–1930*, Dublin: The Stationery Office, p. 139... (1941). *Report of the Department of Education 1939–44*, p. 9... (1951). *Report of the Department of Education 1949–1950*, p. 107 An Roinn Oideachais (1961). *Tuarascáil 1959–1960*. Baile Átha Cliath: Oifig an tSoláthair, p. 89

English.⁹² The *Revised Programme for Infants* (1948)⁹³ and the accompanying *Notes for Teachers* in 1951 returned, in theory at least, to the principles and ideology underpinning the earlier programme in 1900, placing an emphasis on the holistic development of the child and on meeting his/her needs through activity and discovery learning:

The purpose of the infant school is to provide for young children the environment, opportunities and activities most favourable to their full development. Infant teaching, if it is to be successful, must be based on the young child's instinctive urge to play, to talk, to imitate, to manipulate materials, to make and do things.⁹⁴

Despite evidence that the revival of the language was not succeeding and concerns in relation to the wider education of pupils, little reform of the curriculum was attempted until the late 1960s. Progress on the revival of the Irish language through the education system was hampered from the outset by wider public apathy for the language, the lack of parallel strategies outside the school system to promote the language and by the lack of competence or qualifications on behalf of most teachers either to teach the language or use it as a medium of instruction.⁹⁵ Issues with standardisation of the language in terms of grammar, spellings and typeface until the 1940s further impeded its revival prospects, with little guidance for textbook publishers or teachers.

The Primary Certificate Examination was introduced in 1943 on a compulsory basis and was designed to testify to the completion of sixth class standard.⁹⁶ Its focus was on written examinations in Irish, English and Arithmetic only and had the effect of further narrowing the focus of the curriculum taught in schools until its abolition in 1967. Evaluations of the implementation of the curriculum during this period evidence poor progress in relation to the Irish language and an increasingly narrow curriculum experience for pupils.⁹⁷ The *Report of the Council of Education* in 1954 largely reinforced the status quo in primary education.⁹⁸

Teacher Education, 1922–1971

A number of revisions to the training of teachers were undertaken between 1922 and 1971, largely focused on improving their competence in the Irish language. Teacher training courses were also revised and an increasingly Gaelic atmosphere was achieved in these institutions, which

generally remained closed off from wider tertiary education until the 1960s.⁹⁹ A central element of this focus was the establishment of seven preparatory colleges ‘for those clever boys and girls of the Irish-speaking districts who desire to become teachers’.¹⁰⁰ These colleges operated until 1960 (the Protestant college operated until 1995) and provided a post-primary education to students who had committed to become teachers. By 1936, close to 50% of candidates entering the training colleges had come through the preparatory system, with the remainder coming from the pupil-teacher scheme¹⁰¹ (16.6%), the Easter Examinations¹⁰² (21.5%) and university graduates (15%).¹⁰³ The *Report of the Council of Education* estimated that 15% of serving teachers in schools had been educated in the preparatory colleges by 1950.¹⁰⁴ While the preparatory scheme had a positive effect on competency in Irish within the system, it narrowed the potential pool of entrants to the profession during the period. By 1971, approximately 6% of the teaching force remained untrained.¹⁰⁵

As demonstrated in Table 2.1, teacher qualifications in Irish improved from the 1920s. However, the rate of development did not provide for the revolution that was needed in terms of teaching the Irish language or using it as a medium of instruction.

Moreover, teacher competence in the Irish language became a requirement for the payment of increments and for favourable inspector ratings from the 1930s.¹⁰⁶ Linking competence in the Irish language to the payment of increments and teacher ratings did little to enamour teachers to the Irish language. The revival within the schools peaked in the early 1940s, from when there was a continuous decline in the number of schools using Irish as a medium of instruction from 623 (12%) in 1940 to 251 (6%) in 1970.¹⁰⁷ Moreover, despite much endeavour, the number of Irish speakers in Gaeltacht regions declined from 244,904 speakers in 1926 to 164,229 speakers by 1961.¹⁰⁸

The Primary School Curriculum, 1971–1999

There were increasing concerns with the curriculum by the 1960s as Ireland opened up to wider international influences and began to examine the relevance of the education system for economic advancement.¹⁰⁹

The seminal *Investment in Education* report in 1965 provided a wealth of statistical data enumerating many of the challenges in the system and provided evidence of the need for reform. The main concerns related to the dominant position of the Irish language in the curriculum, the narrow range of subjects offered, the inequitable distribution of resources

across schools and the irrelevance of the curriculum for the future lives and occupations of students.¹¹⁰ Reform of the primary school curriculum was also necessary in light of the increased expansion and universal provision of post-primary schooling from the late 1960s, which almost doubled the number of post-primary students between 1960 and 1970. From the 1960s, there was increasing provision for children with special educational needs¹¹¹ and affected by educational disadvantage.¹¹² Despite an increased diversification of Irish society, the vast majority of schools continued to be denominational, with a gradual growth in the number of Gaelscoileanna¹¹³ and multid denominational schools,¹¹⁴ particularly from the 1990s.

Planning for the new curriculum was co-ordinated by the Inspectorate between 1966 and 1971, during which time drafts were circulated for consultation to a limited number of stakeholders and a pilot project was undertaken to trial the new curriculum in approximately 20% of schools.¹¹⁵ However, limited action was taken to address the concerns arising from the consultative or piloting processes. The New Curriculum published in 1971 had two overarching aims which continue to underpin primary education in Ireland in the twenty-first century:

- To enable the child to live a full life as a child;
- To equip him (sic) to avail himself (sic) of further education so that he (sic) may go on to live a full and useful life as an adult in society.¹¹⁶

The bilingual handbooks outlined the aim, objectives, syllabus content and opportunities for integration for each of the compulsory subjects, namely Irish, English, Mathematics, Art and Craft, Social and Environmental Studies (History, Geography, Nature Studies, Civics), Music and Physical Education. Religious Education was also compulsory, but no curriculum was laid out by the Department for this subject. Not only did the content of the curriculum change but the nature of its delivery was also altered by the implicit principles of the curriculum, including a focus on individualised instruction, the full and harmonious development of the child, the use of activity and discovery methods, the integrated nature of the curriculum and the basing of instruction on the child's environment. This provided for a radical shift in ideology, content and methods from its predecessor, reverting to a child-centred philosophy and a broad programme of instruction. In Irish, a graded programme using audiovisual aids (*Buntús Gaeilge*) was introduced to deliver the curriculum from the late 1960s.¹¹⁷ The leadership role of the principal in

schools was emphasised and the role of teachers was to facilitate pupils' learning.

Once again, the philosophy, content and methodologies proposed by the 1971 curriculum differed greatly from its predecessors in the 1920s. Despite the overwhelming endorsement of the aims and principles of the New Curriculum, it is clear that many of its provisions were not realised in practice between 1971 and 1999. As Sugrue stated, while teachers endorsed progressive ideology, 'when data on actual practice are isolated from these studies teachers seem to endorse a child-centred rhetoric while practising a more formal pedagogical style.'¹¹⁸ Evidence on curriculum implementation strongly suggests that many pupils continued to be educated in a narrow range of subjects in a formal way which did not embrace the curriculum principles or approaches.¹¹⁹ Some of this related to teacher competence and confidence in the new subjects, lack of resources, the predominance of large class sizes and the pressures of time to implement a wider curriculum. It is also arguable that teacher conservatism and reluctance to change engrained and encultured practices also impacted negatively on enacting the curriculum in practice. As stated by the OECD in 1991

Despite the vision and thoroughness of the 1971 primary schools curriculum proposals and the many practical innovations since carried through by dedicated teachers, the evidence suggests that emphasis is still largely on a didactic approach and often, in later primary years, in a relatively narrow range of subject matter.¹²⁰

Teacher Education, 1971–1999

There were major developments in teacher education in the 1970s and three-year degree courses were instituted in newly constituted Colleges of Education from 1974. The teaching profession continued to attract applicants from the top quartile of entrants to third-level education.¹²¹ Degree status facilitated teachers in undertaking further postgraduate studies and the Educational Studies Association of Ireland (founded in 1976) provided an active forum for educational discussion. However, research on the education system was limited and piecemeal throughout the era and a number of commentators called for increased funding and focus on research.¹²² A network of Teachers' Centres was established to act as a focal point for teachers to meet, to provide lectures and seminars,

to deliver in-service courses and induction programmes and to provide and display resources and materials.¹²³ However, systematic provision for in-service education was not achieved prior to 2000, and this impacted negatively on the ability of teachers to develop professionally or respond to evolving priorities and practices within the system.

Moving Towards the Primary School Curriculum (1999)

Two major reviews of the education system were published in 1990: the *Report of the Primary Education Review Body*¹²⁴ and the *Review Body on the Primary Curriculum*.¹²⁵ These reports, among other factors, catalysed a decade of educational development and reform in the 1990s. Work at a curricular level was also heavily influenced by wider policy developments, such as the drafting of a Green Paper on Education (1992),¹²⁶ the National Education Convention (1993),¹²⁷ the White Paper on Education (1995)¹²⁸ and legislation to establish a Teaching Council in 2001.¹²⁹ Following protracted negotiations, the Education Act 1998¹³⁰ was published, and this provided the first comprehensive legislative framework for the education system. Individually and collectively, the policy developments in the 1990s reformed and articulated many of the structures and principles underpinning Irish education and represented the most intense period of reform since the establishment of the national system in 1831.

From a curricular perspective, the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment was established in 1987 operating a partnership and participatory approach to curriculum development. The revision of the curriculum in the 1990s, culminating in the *Primary School Curriculum (1999)*,¹³¹ was undertaken by a range of committees representative of the education partners. For the first time in curriculum history in Ireland, the 1999 curriculum built on the philosophy and content of its predecessor representing a less dramatic swing of the pendulum for teachers.

CONCLUSION: THE CHANGING PHILOSOPHY AND IDEOLOGY OF THE NATIONAL SYSTEM

In the close to two centuries since the establishment of the national system, it is evident that it has served many purposes and been motivated by many factors that reflected the wider societal context. These

changing purposes have had a direct impact on the concept of the child inherent within the system and on his/her educational experience.¹³² The initial motivation for establishing the national system of education in Ireland was a social and moral impetus by a colonial power that wished to imbue Irish children with colonial values. It also wished to exercise control over what was taught in schools and who had the right to teach, a motivation shared by the Catholic Church. Therefore, while the curriculum introduced in 1831 contained aspects of literacy and numeracy at its core, its central aim was to imbue in children a sense of belonging to the Empire and to instil a sense of loyalty to colonial values and structures. For this reason, many of the school books approved or produced by the National Board contained strong moral overtones and any distinct reference to Irish culture or history was avoided.

In line with a greater focus in England on efficiency and accountability in public services from the 1850s, the era of Payment by Results from 1872 heralded a greater emphasis on educational outcomes by individual children, particularly in relation to literacy and numeracy. This had the effect of catalysing the reduction in illiteracy rates in Ireland between 1870 and 1900 and further regulated the lives of pupils and their parents by insisting on a minimum number of attendances. From 1900, the philosophy underpinning the curriculum changed dramatically and a greater emphasis was placed on the interest, needs, agency and curiosity of the child to inform his/her learning. This approach was influenced by the wider New Education Movement in Europe.¹³³

The changes introduced in the 1920s were radical in terms of philosophy, content and approach. The national objective of reviving the Irish language and of building nationhood became a key priority for the new Free State government, and the school system was seen as a key tool in this endeavour. It is arguable that the pedagogical needs and interests of the child were usurped during this era by nationalistic and linguistic endeavours. Moreover, the dominant position of the Catholic Church in the ownership, management and control of the education system resulted in a strong moralising influence in Irish schools. From 1926,

religion became an integral element and unifying force of the primary school curriculum, reiterated in the *Rules for National Schools* (1965)¹³⁴ and the *Primary School Curriculum* (1971).¹³⁵ This gave explicit recognition to the denominational nature of schools and provided for an integration of religious and secular education, thus preventing pupils from opting out of religious instruction. Children occupied a subordinate position in society, their behaviour was strictly controlled, society emphasised passivity while schools embraced the liberal use of corporal punishment.¹³⁶ Biographies from this era paint a dismal picture of school life in the opening decades of the Free State, highlighting the prevalence of authoritarian teacher-pupil relationships, physical violence and corporal punishment.¹³⁷

From the late 1960s, all facets of Irish life and Irish society were changing dramatically. The child-centred curriculum introduced in 1971 captured much of this fervour for change nationally and distilled learning from international examples. The curriculum introduced placed an emphasis on the value of childhood as a distinct period of life as well as a preparation for future citizenship. Moreover, it placed the needs and interests of children, interacting with their environments, to the fore. The abolition of corporal punishment in 1982¹³⁸ was aligned to the concept of child-centredness espoused in the New Curriculum and to the more enlightened conceptualisation of childhood prevalent in wider society. This child-centred ideology continued to inform the curriculum introduced in 1999 and the aims, vision and principles of the curriculum were expanded to incorporate new understandings of children, childhood and education in the interim. As the curriculum is reviewed into the future, no doubt there will be a gradual evolution in philosophy as understanding of pedagogy deepens and as the diverse needs of society grow.

While the philosophy and ideology underpinning the curriculum may not always have been articulated strongly at a practical level in all schools, they demonstrate the predominant values of the society which developed the curricula and which determined priorities for its children. No doubt, societal priorities and imperatives will continue to change into the future and demands will continue to be placed on schools to respond to those priorities.

APPENDIX I: COMPULSORY AND OPTIONAL SUBJECTS IN THE
PRIMARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM, 1872–1999¹³⁹

<i>Year</i>	<i>Compulsory Subjects</i>	<i>Optional/Additional Subjects</i>	<i>Additional Notes</i>
1831	Lesson Books (Reading), Arithmetic, Writing, Writing from Dictation, Grammar, Geography, Needlework (girls)	Extra branches included: British Poets, Mensuration, Geometry, Algebra, Book-keeping, Trigonometry, Music, Drawing, Physical and Applied Science	Branches for Females: Sewing, Knitting, Netting, Embroidery, Cutting-out
1872	Reading, Writing, Spelling, Grammar, Arithmetic, Geography, Needlework (girls), Agriculture (boys)	Vocal Music, Book-keeping, Kindergarten, Drawing, Instrumental Music, Algebra, Geometry and Mensuration, Trigonometry, Navigation, Mechanics, Hydrostatics and Pneumatics, Light and Sound, Heat and Steam Engine, Physical Geography, Heat and Magnetism, Botany, Animal Physiology and Zoology, Inorganic Chemistry, Geology, Latin, Greek, French, German, Irish, Handicraft, Hygiene, Spinning, Weaving, Netmending, Other Cottage Industries, Type- writing, Shorthand, Bee-keeping, Laundry Work (girls), Dressmaking (girls), Practical Cookery (girls), Dairying (girls), Management of Poultry (girls), Domestic Economy (girls)	There was little uptake of this broad array of optional subjects in Irish primary schools between 1872 and 1900.

1900	English, Arithmetic, Kindergarten methods, Manual Instruction, Drawing, Object Lessons and Elementary Science, Singing, School Discipline and Physical Drill, Cookery (girls), Laundry (girls), Needlework (girls)	French, Latin, Mathematics, Irish, Instrumental Music	English and Arithmetic were the only 'compulsory subjects', with all other subjects to be taught if teachers were proficient and the necessary facilities and resources were available. Geography and History were taught through Geographical and Historical Reading Books. From 1904, Manual Instruction was discontinued in the senior classes, Geography was included as a separate subject and Cookery applied in fifth and sixth classes only.
1922	Religion (extra-curricular), Irish, English, Mathematics (Arithmetic, Algebra and Geometry), History and Geography, Singing, Drill, Needlework (girls)	Drawing, Advanced Algebra, Advanced Geometry and Mensuration, French (or other continental language), Latin, Nature Study, Book-keeping, Elementary Science (where a suitably equipped laboratory and trained teacher was available), Cookery, Rural Science and School Gardening, Manual Instruction (Woodwork) and Domestic Science	All work in the infant classes was to be through the medium of Irish. The work in the infant classes was classified under Language, Drawing, Numbers, Kindergarten Gifts and Occupations, Songs and Games. A veto was allowed to parents regarding the teaching of either the Irish or English language in schools. History and Geography were to be taught as one subject.

(continued)

APPENDIX I (CONTINUED)

<i>Year</i>	<i>Compulsory Subjects</i>	<i>Optional/Additional Subjects</i>	<i>Additional Notes</i>
1926	Religion (extra-curricular), Irish, English, Mathematics, History, Geography, Music, Rural Science/Nature Study, Needlework (girls)	Drawing, Domestic Science, Physical Training, Manual Instruction	All work in the infant classes was to be through the medium of Irish, but allowing English to be used before 10.30 a.m. and after 2.00 p.m. The work in the infant classes was classified under Language, Kindergarten, Songs, Games, Arithmetic and Drawing. Higher and Lower Course were introduced in Irish and English, with the aim that the Higher Course in Irish would become the norm. Algebra and Geometry (as part of Mathematics) became optional in classes taught by women teachers and in one-teacher schools. History and Geography were reconstituted as separate subjects.
1934	Religion (extra-curricular), Irish, English, Arithmetic, History, Geography, Music, Needlework (girls), Algebra or Geometry (large boys' schools only)	English (first class), Rural Science/Nature Study, Domestic Science, Drawing, Physical Training, Manual Instruction, Algebra and Geometry (girls' schools and small schools)	All work in the infant classes was to be through the medium of Irish. No English was allowed in the infant classes, while English became an optional subject in first class. The Higher Course in Irish and the Lower Course in English was to be taught in all schools.

1948	Religion (extra-curricular), Irish, English, Arithmetic, History, Geography, Music, Needlework (girls), Algebra or Geometry (large boys' schools only)	English (first class), Rural Science/Nature Study, Domestic Science, Drawing, Physical Training, Manual Instruction, Algebra and Geometry (girls' schools and small schools)	<i>Revised Programme for Infants</i> allowed for a more child-centred and heuristic approach in the infant classes. Optional 30 minutes of English allowed each day in the infant classes.
1971	Religion (extra-curricular), Language (Irish and English), Mathematics, Art and Craft, Social and Environmental Studies (History, Geography, Civics, Elementary Science), Music, Physical Education	N/A	
1999	Religion (extra-curricular), Irish, English, Mathematics, Social, Environmental and Scientific Education, Arts Education and Physical Education	N/A	

APPENDIX 2. 12 PRACTICAL RULES FOR NATIONAL TEACHERS¹⁴⁰

Practical Rules for the Teachers of National Schools

1. The Teachers of National Schools are required—To keep at least one copy of the GENERAL LESSON suspended conspicuously in the School-room, and to inculcate the principles contained in it on the minds of their pupils.
2. To exclude from the School, except at the hours set apart for Religious Instruction, all Catechisms and Books inculcating peculiar religious opinions.
3. To avoid fairs, markets, and meetings—but above all, POLITICAL meetings of every kind; to abstain from controversy; and to do nothing either in or out of School which might have a tendency to confine it to any one denomination of Children.
4. To keep the Register, Report Book, and Class Rolls accurately, neatly, and according to the precise form prescribed by the Board; and to enter or mark in the two latter, before noon each day, the number of Children in actual attendance.
5. To classify the Children according to the National Schools Books; to study those Books themselves; and to teach according to the improved method, as pointed out in their several prefaces.
6. To observe themselves, and to impress upon the minds of their Pupils, the great rule of regularity and order—A TIME AND PLACE FOR EVERY THING, AND EVERYTHING IN ITS PROPER TIME AND PLACE.
7. To promote, both by precept and example, CLEANLINESS, NEATNESS, and DECENCY. To effect this, the Teachers should set an example of cleanliness and neatness in their own person, and in the state and general appearance of their Schools. They should also satisfy themselves, by personal inspection every morning, that the Children have had their hands and faces washed, their hair combed, and clothes cleaned, and, when necessary, mended. The school apartments, too, should be swept and dusted every evening, and whitewashed at least once a year.
8. To pay the strictest attention to the morals and general conduct of their Pupils and to omit no opportunity of inculcating the principles

- of TRUTH and HONESTY: the duties of respect to superiors and obedience to all persons placed in authority over them.
9. To evince a regard for the improvement and general welfare of their Pupils, to treat them with kindness, combined with firmness, and to aim at governing them by their affections and reason, rather than by harshness and severity.
 10. To cultivate kindly and affectionate feelings among their Pupils; to discountenance quarrelling, cruelty to animals, and every approach to vice.
 11. To record in the Report Book of the School the weekly receipts of School fees, and the amount of all grants made by the Board, as well as the purposes for which they were made, whether in any way of Premiums, Salaries to Teachers, payments to Monitors, or Workmistresses, also School requisites, whether Free Stock or purchased at half-price.
 12. To take strict care of the Free Stock of Books granted by the Board; and to endeavour to keep the School constantly supplied with National School Books and requisites for sale to the Children, at the reduced prices charged by the Commissioners; also to preserve the invoices for the information of the Inspectors; and whenever requisites (whether free stock or purchased) arrive without an invoice, to apply to the manager to whom it is transmitted when the parcel is sent from this office.

NOTES

1. D. Akenson, *The Irish Education Experiment: The National System of Education in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1970); J. Coolahan, *Irish Education—History and Structure*, (Dublin, 1981).
2. Hedge Schools were schools often held outside in out-of-the-way places to evade the laws forbidding Catholic education.
3. *9th Report of the Commissioners of Irish Education Inquiry*, 1827, Appendix 5, 60–61.
4. P. Dowling, *The Hedge Schools of Ireland*, (Dublin, 1935), 43.
5. J. Harford, 'The Emergence of a National Policy on Teacher Education in Ireland', *Journal of Educational Administration and History*, 2009, 41, 1, 45–56; K. Kitching, *The Politics of Compulsive Education—Racism and Learner-Citizenship* (London, 2014).

6. G. O'Brien, 'The 1825–1826 Commissioners of Irish Education Reports: Background and Context' in G. Fitzgerald, *Irish Primary Education in the Early Nineteenth Century: An Analysis of the First and Second Reports of the Commissioners of Irish Education Inquiry, 1825–1826*, (Dublin, 2013), 5.
7. Ibid.
8. H. Hislop, 'The management of the Kildare Place Society System 1811–1831', *Irish Educational Studies*, 1992, 11, 52–71.
9. *Reports from the Commissioners of the Board of Education in Ireland; Fourteenth Report: View of the Chief Foundations, with some General Remarks, and Results of Deliberations*. H.C., 1809–12, 327–34.
10. *1st Report of the Commissioners of Irish Education Inquiry*. H.C., 1825 (400), XII.
11. *58th Report of the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland for 1891*, H.C. 1892, [C.-6788-1], Appendix B, Rules and Regulations of the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland, 2.
12. *Reports of the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland from 1834 to 1845 inclusive*, H.C. 1851, Volume 1, 3.
13. J. Coolahan, 'Imperialism and the Irish National School System' in J. Mangan, (Ed.), *Benefits Bestowed? Education and English Imperialism*. (Manchester, 1998), 77–93, 78.
14. J. Harford, 'The Emergence of a National Policy on Teacher Education in Ireland', *Journal of Educational Administration and History*, 2009, 41, 1, 45–56.
15. The Church Education Society was established by the Established Church in 1839 to support Church of Ireland children in national schools under sole or joint Church of Ireland patronage by making grants available in various ways. The majority of the Church Education Society schools had returned to the national system by the end of the century following the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland in 1869.
16. *17th Report of the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland for 1850*. H.C. 1851, [Cd. 1405], Appendix G, 480.
17. *68th Report of the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland for 1901*, H.C. 1902, [Cd. 1198], 17–18.
18. The Recent Pastoral of the Catholic Hierarchy. *Irish Teachers Journal*, 6th October 1900, 4–5, 4.
19. *68th Report of the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland for 1901*, H.C. 1902, [Cd. 1198], 13.
20. *66th Report of the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland for 1899–1900*, H.C. 1900, [Cd. 287], Section II, Appendix M, 116.
21. T. Inglis, *Moral Monopoly—The Rise and Fall of the Catholic Church in Modern Ireland*, (Dublin, 1998), 122.

22. M. Nic Ghiolla Phádraig, 'The Power of the Catholic Church in the Republic of Ireland' in P. Clancy, S. Drudy, K. Lynch, and L. O'Dowd, (Eds.), *Irish Society—Sociological Perspectives*, (Dublin, 1995), 593–619, 596.
23. B. Titley, *Church, State and the Control of Schooling in Ireland 1900–1944*, (Dublin, 1983), 161.
24. S. Ó Buachalla, *Education Policy in Twentieth Century Ireland*, (Dublin, 1988), 28.
25. P. Wall, 'The Catholic Hierarchy and Education, 1898–1908', *Oideas*, Autumn 1981, 24, 18–30, 25.
26. J. Mescal, *Religion in the Irish System of Education*, (Dublin, 1957), 143; N. Atkinson, *Irish Education—A History of Educational Institutions*, (Dublin, 1969), 194; J. Whyte, *Church and State in Modern Ireland 1923–1979—Second Edition*, (Dublin, 1990), 21.
27. Record of Irish Ecclesiastical Events for the Year 1921. *Irish Catholic Directory*, 20th October 1921, 577–8.
28. Department of Education, *Report of the Department of Education for the School Years 1925-26-27 and the Financial and Administrative Year 1926–1927*, (Dublin, 1928), 106; Department of Education, *Tuarascáil 1965–1966* (The Stationery Office, Dublin, 1968), 23.
29. Department of Education, *Report of the Department of Education for the School Year 1924–1925 and the Financial and Administrative Years 1924–25-26*, (Dublin, 1926), 7.
30. D. Glendenning, *Education and the Law*, (Dublin, 1999), 52.
31. W. Abbott (Ed.), *The Documents of Vatican II*, (London, 1966).
32. L. O'Flaherty, 'Religious Control of Schooling in Ireland: Some Policy Issues in Review', *Irish Educational Studies*, Spring 1994, 13, 62–70; P. Clancy, 'Education Policy' in S. Quinn, P. Kennedy, A. O'Donnell and G. Kiely (Eds.), *Contemporary Irish Social Policy*, (Dublin, 1999), 72–107.
33. Department of Education, *White Paper on Educational Development*, (Dublin, 1980), 34.
34. S. Drudy and K. Lynch, *Schools and Society in Ireland*, (Dublin, 1993), 79.
35. J. Harris, 'The Policy-making Role of the Department of Education' in D. Mulcahy and D O'Sullivan (Eds.) *Irish Educational Policy—Process and Substance* (Dublin, 1989), 7–25.
36. J. Walshe, *A New Partnership in Education—From Consultation to Legislation in the Nineties* (Dublin, 1999).
37. D. Akenson, *The Irish Education Experiment: The National System of Education in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1970), 50.
38. D. McCartney, 'From Parnell to Pearse 1891–1921' in T. Moody and T. Martin (Eds.) *The Course of Irish History* (Cork, 1967), 294–312.

39. A. Doyle, *A History of the Irish Language from the Norman Invasion to Independence* (Oxford, 2015), 107.
40. T. Brown, *Ireland: A Social and Cultural History 1922–1979* (Glasgow, 1981).
41. D. McCartney, ‘Education and the Language, 1938–1951’ in K. Nowlan and T. Williams (Eds.), *Ireland in the War Years and After 1939–51* (Dublin, 1969), 80–94, 91.
42. J. Whyte, ‘Ireland 1966–1982’ in T. Moody and F. Martin (Eds.), *The Course of Irish History* (Cork, 1984), 342–362; S. Farren, *The Politics of Irish Education 1920–1965* (Belfast, 1995), 225.
43. D. Ferriter, *The Transformation of Ireland 1900–2000* (London, 2004).
44. A. Hyland, ‘The Treasury and Irish Education 1850–1922: The Myth and the Reality’, *Irish Educational Studies*, 1983, 3, 2, 57–82, 70.
45. J. Meenan, *The Irish Economy since 1922*, (Liverpool, 1970); J. Murphy, *Ireland in the Twentieth Century*, (Dublin, 1975).
46. D. Tussing, *Irish Educational Expenditures—Past, Present and Future*, (Dublin, 1978), 164.
47. Department of Finance, *Economic Development*, (Dublin, 1958).
48. Department of Education, *Investment in Education—Report of the Survey Team appointed by the Minister for Education in October 1962*, (Dublin, 1965).
49. D. O’Malley, ‘University Education in Dublin—Statement of Minister for Education’, 18th April 1967. *Studies*, Summer 1967, LVI, 222, 113–21, 115.
50. T. O’Donoghue, *Bilingual Education In Ireland 1904–1922—The Case of the Bilingual Programme of Instruction*, (Perth, 2000).
51. M. Wall, ‘The Decline of the Irish Language’ in B. Ó Cuív (Ed.), *A View of the Irish Language*, (Dublin, 1969), 81–90, 82; A. Doyle, *A History of the Irish Language from the Norman Invasion to Independence*, (Oxford, 2015).
52. P. Ó Loinsigh, ‘The Irish Language in the Nineteenth Century’, *Oideas*, Spring 1975, 14, 5–21, 5.
53. The Society for the Preservation of the Irish Language was established in 1876 to encourage the use of the Irish language by establishing classes for its instruction and to promote a modern literature in Irish. The Gaelic Athletic Association was founded in 1884 to support the preservation and cultivation of native Irish pastimes, most notably hurling and football. The Gaelic League (Conradh na Gaeilge) was established in 1893 to revive the Irish language and to preserve Irish literature, music and traditional culture.
54. D. Akenson, *A Mirror to Kathleen’s Face—Education in Independent Ireland 1922–1960*, (London, 1975), 39.

55. Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education (Ireland), H.C. 1870, [C.-6], Volume 1.
56. *37th Report of the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland for 1870*, H.C. 1871, [C.360-I], 7.
57. J. Coolahan with P. O'Donovan, *A History of Ireland's School Inspectorate 1831–2008*, (Dublin, 2009), 19–21.
58. *37th Report of the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland for 1870*, H.C. 1871, [C.360-I], Appendix A, 61.
59. B. Walsh, 'Asking the Right Questions; Teacher Education in the Republic of Ireland', *Education Research and Perspectives*, (UWA, 2006), 33, 2, 37–59.
60. *2nd Report of the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland for 1835*, 18.
61. Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education (Ireland), H.C. 1870, [C.-6] *Conclusions and Recommendations Contained in the General Report*, Volume 1, Part V, 427.
62. W. Walsh, *Statement of the Chief Grievances of Irish Catholics in the matter of Education, Primary, Intermediate and University*, (Dublin, 1890), 99.
63. *14th Report of the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland for 1847*. H.C. 1848, [981], Appendix XXVII, 132–133.
64. *Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education* (Ireland), H.C. 1870, [C.-6] *Conclusions and Recommendations Contained in the General Report*, Volume 1, Part X, Recommendation No. 2, 522.
65. *68th Report of the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland for 1901*, H.C. 1902, [Cd. 1198], 13.
66. A. Hyland and K. Milne, *Irish Educational Documents—Volume 1. Selection of Extracts from Documents relating to the History of Irish Education from the Earliest Times to 1922*, (Dublin, 1987), 128.
67. J. Coolahan, 'Education' in *the Training Colleges—Carysfort 1877–1977: Two Centenary Lectures*. (Dublin, 1981), 20–52, 23.
68. Commission on Manual and Practical Instruction in Primary Schools under the Board of National Education in Ireland, *Final Report of the Commissioners*, (Dublin, 1898), [C.-8923], 56.
69. *Ibid.*
70. A. Hyland, 'The Process of Curriculum Change in the Irish National School System', *Irish Educational Studies*, 1987, 6, 2, 17–38, 21.
71. For a summary see T. Walsh, *Primary Education in Ireland 1897–1990: Curriculum and Context*, (Bern, 2012), 59–84; A. Hyland, *Educational Innovation—A Case Study. An Analysis of the Revised Programme of 1900 for National Schools in Ireland*, (1973, M.Ed. Thesis, Dublin: Trinity College Dublin).

72. F.H. Dale, *Report of Mr. F.H. Dale, His Majesty's Inspector of Schools, Board of Education, on Primary Education in Ireland*, [Cd. 1981], (Dublin, 1904).
73. See: T. Walsh, *Primary Education in Ireland 1897–1990: Curriculum and Context*, (Bern, 2012), 59–84.
74. *72nd Report of the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland for 1905–1906*, H.C. 1906, [Cd. 3254], Appendix, Section II (K), 191–212.
75. *71st Report of the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland for 1904*, H.C., 1905, [Cd. 2567], 28.
76. See T. O'Donoghue, *Bilingual Education In Ireland 1904–1922—The Case of the Bilingual Programme of Instruction*, (Perth, 2000).
77. *86th Report of the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland for 1919–1920*, [Cmd. 1476], 9.
78. W.J.M. Starkie, *Recent Reforms in Irish Education*. An Address read before the British Association Belfast, 11th September 1902, (Dublin, 1902), 33.
79. T. O'Doherty, 'William Starkie: The Teacher's Adversary', *Irish Educational Studies*, 1999, 18, 248–60; J. Coolahan, 'Education' in the *Training Colleges—Carysfort 1877–1977: Two Centenary Lectures*, (Dublin, 1981), 20–52, 31.
80. *71st Report of the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland for 1904*, H.C., 1905, [Cd. 2567], 1–2.
81. *86th Report of the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland for 1919–1920*, [Cmd. 1476], 28.
82. National Programme Conference, *National Programme of Primary Instruction*, (Dublin, 1922).
83. National Programme Conference, *Report and Programme presented by the National Programme Conference to the Minister for Education*, (Dublin, 1926).
84. E. Keroude, *Nationalism*, (London, 1961), 62–91, 67.
85. E. De Valera (1937) 'The Constitution of Ireland, Radio Broadcast 29th December 1938' in M. Moynihan, (Ed.), *Speeches and Statements by Eamonn de Valera 1917–1973*, (Dublin, 1980), 365.
86. See: T. Walsh, *Primary Education in Ireland 1897–1990: Curriculum and Context*, (Bern, 2012), 130.
87. D. Akenson, *A Mirror to Kathleen's Face—Education in Independent Ireland 1922–1960*, (London, 1975), 37.
88. Department of Education, *Statistics relating to National Education in Saorstát for the Year 1922–1923*, (Dublin, 1925), 6.
89. National Programme Conference, *National Programme of Primary Instruction*, (Dublin, 1922), 15.

90. B. Ó Cuív, 'Education and Language' in D. Williams (Ed.), *The Irish Struggle 1916–1926*, (London, 1969), 153–66.
91. Circular 11/60; *Teaching of Irish*.
92. Department of Education, *Revised Programme of Primary Instruction*, (Dublin, 1934).
93. Department of Education, *Revised Programme for Infants*, (Dublin, 1948).
94. Department of Education, *The Infant School—Notes for Teachers*, (Dublin, 1951), 3.
95. A. Kelly, *Compulsory Irish: Language and Education in Ireland 1870s–1970s*, (Dublin, 2002).
96. Circular 7/43; *Circular to Managers and Principal Teachers of National Schools—Revised Regulations for the Primary School Certificate Examination*.
97. See: T. Walsh, *Primary Education in Ireland 1897–1990: Curriculum and Context*, (Bern, 2012), 171–204.
98. Department of Education, *Report of the Council of Education*, (Dublin, 1954).
99. J. Coolahan, 'Education' in *the Training Colleges—Carysfort 1877–1977: Two Centenary Lectures*, (Dublin, 1981), 20–52.
100. Department of Education, *Report of the Department of Education for the School Year 1924–1925 and the Financial and Administrative Years 1924–25–26*, (Dublin, 1926), 41.
101. The pupil-teacher scheme operated for students who had passed the Intermediate Certificate (lower secondary education) with honours. They were selected in order of merit to attend upper secondary education, usually through the medium of Irish, where they practised teaching each week as part of their studies. Once they passed the Leaving Certificate and an oral examination in Irish, they were eligible for entry to the training colleges.
102. The Easter Examinations were held at Easter each year in a wide range of written and oral tasks to select students, in conjunction with their Leaving Certificate results, for entry to the training colleges.
103. Department of Education, *Report of the Department of Education 1935–1936*, (Dublin, 1937), 9.
104. Department of Education, *Report of the Council of Education*, (Dublin, 1954), para. 97.
105. An Roinn Oideachais, *Tuarascáil—Táblaí Staitistic 1968/1969–1971/1972*, (Baile Átha Cliath, 1974), 17.
106. Department of Education, *Report of the Department of Education 1928–1929*, (Dublin, 1930), 21. Circular 12/31; *Circular to Inspectors on the Award of Highly Efficient and Efficient Ratings*, 2.

107. Comhairle na Gaelige, *Irish in Education*, (Dublin, 1974), 17.
108. Central Statistics Office, *Statistical Abstract of Ireland 1967*, (Dublin, 1967), 55.
109. A. Loxley, A. Seery and J. Walsh, 'Investment in Education and the Tests of Time', *Irish Educational Studies*, 2014, 33, 2, 173–191.
110. Department of Education, *Investment in Education—Report of the Survey Team appointed by the Minister for Education in October 1962*, (Dublin, 1965).
111. P. McGee, 'Country Briefing: Special Education in Ireland', *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 1990, 5, 1, 48–63.
112. S. Boldt, B. Devine, D. Mac Devitt and M. Morgan, *Educational Disadvantage and Early School Leaving - Discussion Papers*, (Dublin, 1998).
113. Gaelscoileanna are Irish-medium schools where the Irish language is the language of instruction. The Irish language is also the language of communication between the staff, pupils and school management.
114. A. Hyland, 'The Multi-denominational Experience in the National School System in Ireland', *Irish Educational Studies*, 1989, 8, 1, 89–114, 98.
115. Circular 20/71; *New Curriculum—Pilot Schools*.
116. Department of Education, *Primary School Curriculum: Teacher's Handbook—Part 1*, (Dublin, 1971), 12.
117. T. Ó Domhnailláin, 'Buntús Gaeilge—Cúlra, Cur le Chéile, Cur i Bhfeidhm' *Teangeolas*, 1981, 13, 24–32, 29.
118. C. Sugrue, *Complexities of Teaching: Child-centred Perspectives*, (London, 1997), 25.
119. See T. Walsh, *Primary Education in Ireland 1897–1990: Curriculum and Context*, (Bern, 2012), 283–342.
120. Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, *Reviews of National Policies for Education—Ireland*, (Paris, 1991), 67.
121. V. Greaney, A. Burke and J. McCann, J., 'Entrants to Primary Teacher Education in Ireland', *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 10, 2 (1987), 127–40, 127.
122. D. Tussing, *Irish Educational Expenditures—Past, Present and Future*, (Dublin, 1978); T. Kellaghan, 'The Interface of Research, Evaluation, and Policy in Irish Education' in D. Mulcahy and D. O'Sullivan (Eds.), *Irish Educational Policy—Process and Substance*, (Dublin, 1989), 191–218.
123. S. Ó Suilleabháin, 'Teachers' Centres: Theory and Practice', *Oideas*, Summer 1973, 10, 13–17, 13.
124. Department of Education, *Report of the Primary Education Review Body*, (Dublin, 1990).

125. Review Body on the Primary Curriculum, *Report of the Review Body on the Primary Curriculum*, (Dublin, 1990).
126. Department of Education (1992) *Education for a Changing World—Green Paper on Education*, (Dublin, 1992).
127. J. Coolahan, ‘Report of the National Education Convention’, (Dublin, 1994).
128. Department of Education, *Charting our Education Future—White Paper on Education*, (Dublin, 1995).
129. Government of Ireland, *Teaching Council Act*, (Dublin, 2001).
130. Government of Ireland, *Education Act*, (Dublin, 1998).
131. Department of Education and Science, *Primary School Curriculum*, (Dublin, 1999).
132. T. Walsh, ‘Constructions of Childhood in Ireland in the Twentieth Century—A View from the Primary School Curriculum 1900–1999’, *Childcare in Practice*, 2005, 11, 2, 253–69.
133. R. Selleck, *The New Education—The English Background 1870–1914*, (Melbourne, 1968).
134. Department of Education, *Rules for National Schools under the Department of Education*, (Dublin, 1965), 8.
135. Department of Education, *Primary School Curriculum: Teacher’s Handbook—Part I*, (Dublin, 1971).
136. D. Devine, ‘Children: Rights and Status in Education—A Socio-historical Analysis’, *Irish Educational Studies*, Spring 1999, 18, 14–28.
137. D. Ferriter, ‘Suffer Little Children? The Historical Validity of Memoirs of Irish Childhood’ in J. Dunne and J. Kelly (Eds.), *Childhood and its Discontents—The First Seamus Heaney Lectures*, (Dublin, 2003), 69–106. See also: P. Crosbie, *Your Dinner’s Poured Out!* (Dublin, 1981), 172–90, 179; P. Touher, *Fear of the Collar: Artane Industrial School*, (Dublin, 2007); S. McMahon and J. O’Donoghue (Eds.), *Tales out of School*, (Dublin, 1993).
138. Circular 9/82; *The Abolition of Corporal Punishment in National Schools*.
139. Adapted from T. Walsh, *Primary Education in Ireland 1897–1990: Curriculum and Context*, (Bern, 2012), 451–453.
140. *14th Report of the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland for 1847*. H.C. 1848, [1981], Appendix XXVII, 132–133.

‘An Essential Service’: The National Board and Teacher Education, 1831–1870

Susan M. Parkes

A more essential service could not be rendered to the State than by carrying into effect a practical mode of supplying a succession of well-qualified instructors for the children of the lower classes (Fourteenth report of the Commissioners of the Board of Education, 1812, HC 1812–1813 [21.] v.).

The education of teachers was one of the main objects of the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland (CNEI) from their establishment in 1831. Both of the previous parliamentary reports on the state of education in Ireland, that of the Commissioners of the Board of Education in 1812 and that of the Commissioners of Irish Education Inquiry in 1825, had emphasised the urgent need for a supply of trained schoolteachers to lead a system of national education. Both these reports had recommended the setting up of a government board of education, which would aid the building of schools, supervise the content of the curriculum and provide the training of ‘well-qualified’ teachers.¹ Therefore, the Stanley Letter of 1831, which established the national school system, listed teacher training as one of its chief objects and stated that the National Board would be

S.M. Parkes (✉)
Trinity College, University of Dublin, Dublin, Ireland

responsible for ‘establishing and maintaining a model school in Dublin, and the training of teachers for country schools’.² The appointment of teachers was to be the responsibility of the local school manager subject to the following ‘restrictions and regulations’: (1) 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, (2) He shall have received previous instruction in a model school in Dublin, sanctioned by the Board. (It was recognised that there were ‘many teachers already working in schools and that the Board would only be able to train a limited number of teachers in its early years, so a proviso was added to the effect that ‘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 by the Commissioners), and (3) He shall have received testimonials of good conduct, and general fitness for the situation, from the Board.’³

Teacher training in the early nineteenth century was based on the monitorial system and the culture of the model schools. With the growth of demand for universal literacy, schools had to be able to manage large numbers of children in the classroom. The monitorial system, accredited to two English educators, Joseph Lancaster and Rev. Andrew Bell,⁴ enabled large numbers of children to be taught the three R’s, reading, writing and arithmetic, despite a scarcity of teachers. The teacher first taught senior pupils (known as ‘monitors’) the lesson and then each monitor taught the lesson to a group of younger pupils. The system was formal and required strict order and discipline, and teacher training, therefore, consisted of learning the basic skills of school organisation and the limited content of the curriculum. Model schools were used to demonstrate best practice and the apprentice trainee teachers attended short courses there. There was little emphasis on broader education because teachers were required to know little beyond that which they would teach.

The National Board therefore attempted, in the nineteenth century, to provide a system of teacher training, which consisted of three main strands. The first was the establishment of a central training institution and model school in Marlborough Street, Dublin to which national school teachers throughout the country would be selected and ‘called’ to attend. The second was the establishment of a network of district model schools, one for each school district, which were to be examples of the Board’s official policy of nondenominational ‘mixed education’ of Protestant and Catholic children and to provide preliminary training of young pupil

teachers in the best practice of teaching. The third strand was the provision of an in-service graded programme of examinations for teachers by which they could improve their classification grade and hence their salary.

However, by 1870, when the Royal Commission of Inquiry (Powis) submitted its report into the national system, the first two of these teacher education strands were regarded as a failure and only the monitorial system and the in-service professional training had proved a success and had supplied the largest group of national teachers. Both the Marlborough Street Institution, which had been considered as an advanced educational institution in the 1830s and 1840s, and the expensive national network of district model schools were to be victims of the struggle between church and state for the control of Irish primary education. The nondenominational nature of these residential establishments was to prove unacceptable to the Catholic Church in particular, which campaigned vigorously for a system of denominational education for Catholic children and for religious controlled teacher education institutions. As national school teaching developed as a lay profession, the formation of young teachers was a crucial factor in the provision of denominational education. The Powis Report, recognising that by 1870 the national school system had *de facto* if not *de jure* become a denominational one, recommended that the district model schools should be closed as they were too expensive to maintain and had proved unacceptable to the majority of the population. In addition the report recommended that the Marlborough Street Institution should be completely reformed, extend and improve its facilities and lengthen its six-month course to a year. It advised that a number of denominational boarding houses should be set up to offer student teachers a suitable religious residential environment while attending the training college. Although at first the National Board refused to implement these policies, and the number of untrained teachers continued to increase, the Board eventually had to agree in the 1880s to grant funding to denominational colleges, which would offer a two-year pre-service course. The Board's model schools ceased to be centres for teacher training and became ordinary national schools albeit, from then on, largely supported by the Protestant community.

From the outset, the control of national schoolteachers was divided between the local and central authorities. The wording of the Stanley Letter allowed the National Board to recognise and pay untrained teachers in schools throughout the century, and the local managerial bodies retained the right to select and employ their own teachers. Therefore,

the urgency of an extensive programme of teacher education was reduced and allowed the National Board to continue using untrained teachers and to commit only limited resources to its central training institution. On the other hand, the ‘informal wording’ of the Stanley Letter allowed the national system to develop and adapt itself to the reality of educational provision in a poverty stricken country.⁵

However, by mid-century, the training of teachers was becoming an area of conflict between the church and state, and the National Board found itself having to defend its nondenominational teacher training institutions against an increasing campaign to obtain denominational rights in education.

NATIONAL BOARD TRAINING INSTITUTION, 1838

Once established, the National Board began an ambitious plan of teacher training. In 1838 it opened its Training Institution in the new headquarters of the Board in Marlborough Street in the centre of Dublin and built alongside three large, central model schools, one each for boys, girls and infants. In addition, the Board drew up a plan to develop a network of twenty-six district model schools, located around the country, which were designed to provide initial training for pupil teachers and monitors. Also, as the majority of currently employed teachers were ‘untrained’ and could not attend a central institution, an ‘in-service’ option was introduced by the Board whereby teachers could improve their classification through a series of examinations and earn an increase in salary. This in-service model proved popular among teachers until the 1880s, after which the concept of compulsory pre-service training for teachers with attendance at a residential college became the accepted norm.⁶

For the first twenty years, the Board’s scheme of teacher education had much success. It aimed at the ‘education’ of teachers rather than mere ‘training’. It pioneered innovative teaching methods and published a series of popular graded lesson books, which became the core curriculum of the national schools. However, growing opposition to the non-denominational structure of the national system and of its model schools began to undermine its effectiveness. The official policy informing the national school system from the outset was one of ‘mixed’ education of Catholics and Protestants, who attended the same school, which offered combined secular instruction with separate religious instruction. The churches, particularly the Catholic Church, which considered that religion

was fundamental to all education, did not readily accept the separation of religious instruction. In the early nineteenth century, the Catholic Church was regaining political and religious power in Ireland after a period of suppression under the eighteenth century Penal Laws, and from the 1850s, it began to demand state support for denominational education.⁷ One of the key political issues of this campaign was control of primary teacher training. The National Board’s nondenominational institutions, both the Marlborough Street Training Institution and the District Model Schools, were condemned as being ‘godless’ and from 1863 Catholic students were forbidden to attend either. By 1870 when the Royal Commission on Primary Education in Ireland (Powis) published its report, the denominational structure of the national school system was accepted *de facto*, if not *de jure*, and it was only a matter of time before teacher training also was to become denominational. The Commission recommended the reform of the Board’s Training Institution into a residential pre-service college along with the closure of the District Model Schools, which were considered as being too costly and no longer suitable ‘models’ for local national schools. In the 1880s, denominational teacher training colleges for national school teachers, both Catholic and Anglican, were recognised for the purpose of receiving aid from the National Board while the Presbyterian Church only continued to support Marlborough Street College, and therefore, the majority of its students came from the North of Ireland. In 1922, following the political partition of Ireland into two jurisdictions—the Irish Free State and Northern Ireland—the Marlborough Street College was closed. The high hopes and vision of the early days of the National Board’s nondenominational teacher education scheme had failed.⁸

NATIONAL BOARD MODEL SCHOOLS, MERRION STREET, 1832

Once the National Board was established in 1831, it began to issue annual reports to Parliament to account for its policies and expenditure. These reports show that the development of teacher education was considered central to the success of the new national school scheme. In its second report for 1835, the Board stressed the urgent matter of teacher training for the new national schools:

If we are furnished with adequate means by the State, not only for training Schoolmasters but for inducing competent persons to become candidates for

teacherships, through a fair prospect of remuneration and advancement, we have no doubt whatever that a new class of Schoolmasters may be trained, whose conduct and influence must be highly beneficial in promoting morality, harmony and good order, in the country parts of Ireland.⁹

The good influence of teachers therefore was not only important within the schoolroom but also in society as a whole:

(The teachers) living in friendly habits with the people, not greatly elevated above them, but so provided for as to be able to maintain a respectable station; trained in good habits; identified in interest in the State, and therefore anxious to promote a spirit of obedience to lawful authority, we are confident that they would prove a body of the utmost value and importance in promoting civilization.¹⁰

In addition to being role models of social and political behaviour, teachers needed to have an adequate knowledge of the curriculum they were to teach and, in particular, of the new series of lesson books the Board was publishing:

It is absolutely necessary that the teacher not only be able to read and write, and spell, and be a good practical arithmetician, but that he must be a person of general intelligence, having an extensive and accurate knowledge of the subjects treated of in the reading lessons. He must know much more than is expressed in the lessons themselves, or he will be totally unable to explain them familiarly, to correct the mistakes into which his pupils fall, and answer innumerable questions that will be put to him as soon as the understanding of his pupils begins to be exercised on any subject.¹¹

To meet these requirements, the Board planned to establish a training institution that would not only offer the methods of practical teaching but also provide further education for the students to extend their general knowledge. It was proposed to establish five professorships in the Board's new Training Institution, namely:

1. Of the Art of teaching and conducting schools.
2. Of composition, English literature, history, geography and political economy.
3. Of natural history in all branches.
4. Of mathematics and mathematical science.

5. Of mental philosophy, including the elements of logic and rhetoric.¹²

The professor of the art of teaching was to be appointed head of the institution. This ambitious plan envisaged the training institution as an academic college as well a professional training school. It was proposed that there would be an entrance examination and that a student would study for ‘at least two years before he be declared fit to undertake the charge of a school; that during that time he shall receive instruction in the different branches of knowledge already specified, and be practised in teaching in the model school, under the direction of the professor of teaching’.¹³ In reality, the Board was unable to implement this plan in full. The number of professors at the Training Institution remained limited to two until 1870 and the training course ran for six months only with half-yearly intake, and it was regarded as an in-service course for teachers already working in schools.

Also in 1835, in addition to the central Training Institution, the Board proposed to establish 32 District Model schools, one for each county. It stated ‘that these Model Schools should be under the direction of teachers chosen for superior attainments, and receiving superior remuneration to those charged with general or Primary schools; and that hereafter, each candidate for admission to the training establishments should undergo a preparatory training in one of them’.¹⁴ However, this network of preparatory model schools would prove to be an expensive venture within a limited budget and the Board had to wait ten years before it was able to implement, in 1846, the model school plan, and the first four district model schools were not opened until 1849.¹⁵

Although the model school plan had to wait, the Board did move as quickly as possible to establish its central Training Institution in Dublin. Details of this early period are provided not only by the annual reports of the National Board but also by two parliamentary reports set up in the 1830s to examine the progress of the new national system—one by a Select Committee of the House of Commons, the other by a Select Committee of the House of Lords.¹⁶ In 1832, the Board was allotted a house in Merrion Street as temporary headquarters, and it was decided to convert some offices to the rear into two model schools. These schools, one male and the other female, opened in 1833. The training course was limited to three months so that as many teachers as possible could be

trained in the available space and time. Dr. Arthur Alexander M'Arthur, a Scots Calvinist, was appointed as the first Head. He had been teaching in Edinburgh but had come to Dublin in 1830 at the invitation of the Reverend James Carlile, the Presbyterian minister to Mary's Abbey congregation in Dublin. Carlile had just been appointed as the first resident commissioner of national education, the new fulltime official of the National Board. M'Arthur had taught in Carlile's school in Lower Ormond Quay, Dublin, and it was through him that M'Arthur obtained the appointment under the Board. Both men were interviewed by the Select Commons Committee on the New Plan for Education in 1837, and Carlile stated that 'finding him (M'Arthur) was one of the most efficient teachers I had ever met with, I recommended him to the Board and he was elected on my recommendation'.¹⁷

The first class of about 50–60 masters entered in February 1834 for the three months training course. It was decided to select young but experienced teachers from various parts of the country so that the effects of training would be more widely spread. The theory of teacher training in the early nineteenth century was based on the concept of the model school where the trainee teacher observed the best practice and learnt to emulate it. The Kildare Place Society pioneered this method in Dublin from 1811, and the National Board was influenced by its success.¹⁸ The course at Merrion Street, therefore, consisted of teaching practice in the methodology of the monitorial system (as shown in the model schools) along with English grammar, the elements of mathematics and study of the new national school *Lesson Books*. These graded readers, five in number, were compiled jointly by Carlile, the resident commissioner, and by M'Arthur himself, while the *Third Book* had been compiled by a literary assistant, William Mc Dermott, of the National Board. The books contained a series of passages so that 'a complete graduation of instruction in the most useful branches of school literature and science' was secured.¹⁹ While the *First Book* was confined to words of one syllable and simple ideas, the *Fifth Book* for senior classes contained advanced scientific knowledge of the natural world. The books were designed to be not just school readers but also textbooks of literary and scientific knowledge and intended to become the standard curriculum of national schools. Thus, a free set of *Lesson Books* was given *gratis* to each new national school when it entered the system, renewable each four years.²⁰

M'Arthur's course at Merrion Street was based on a study of these five *Lessons Books*:

We take them through the Books published by the Board and see that they fully understand them, and that they understand all the words, and can point out on the Map the different Places mentioned; and that they understand the different Productions, and where they come from; and they go as far as they can in Mathematics and English Grammar, and they go through with myself all the English books including the Five Reading books and the Extracts.²¹

This concept of teacher training whereby the students learned to conduct schools and had a short course of study restricted to what was to be taught in school resulted in a training course that lacked a broader vision of education and neglected the importance of the self-development of the teacher.

There was no residential accommodation at Merrion Street, so there was little overall supervision. The students were encouraged to find group lodgings for the period in Dublin, and they were given a maintenance allowance of 12 shillings per week. When queried about this, M^rArthur said that although lodgings were expensive in Dublin, none of his students ‘had been reduced to living in the cellars’.²² Female students were not admitted to Merrion Street, even though there was a female model school operating there. The reason given for this was that there was insufficient accommodation available, and it was thought better to train men who would be able to teach both boys and girls. The model schools were nondenominational and the arrangements for religious instruction depended on the local visiting clergy. At Merrion Street, the clergy visited on Saturdays only, and the trainee teachers were encouraged, but not obliged, to attend the religion classes in the Model School for their religious instruction. Overall, between 1834 and 1838, a total of 297 students were trained at Merrion Street of whom 255 were Catholic and 41 were Protestants. The Select Lords Committee of 1837 found the arrangement for religion classes unsatisfactory and considered that that the religious instruction was not being given sufficient emphasis.²³

MARLBOROUGH STREET TRAINING INSTITUTION AND CENTRAL MODEL SCHOOLS, 1838–1855

In view of the lack of suitable accommodation at Merrion Street, the National Board purchased Tyrone House and grounds in Marlborough Street in 1835 and developed the site to locate their central offices, model

schools and training institution. The house belonged to the Beresford family, the marquis of Waterford and was designed by Richard Castle, the distinguished eighteenth century architect. A replica building was built alongside Tyrone House to house the training department and three model schools (designed by Jacob Owen, architect to the National Board) were erected behind the main house. The female department opened in 1842 in a house along Talbot Street, which was called Drummond House, following a grant given by the widow in memory of Thomas Drummond, the distinguished under-secretary at Dublin Castle who died in 1840.²⁴ A purpose built Infant Model School with a clock tower, designed by Owen, was erected at the east end of the site. Beyond that, additional central model school classrooms, designed by the architect Frederick Darley, were built in 1858 with an entrance on to Gardiner Street.

The development of the large Marlborough Street site gave the National Board increased status and confidence as it seemed to be no longer just ‘an experiment in education’. The presence of the training Institution and the model schools were central to the whole system. It was fortunate that, in the 1830s, the national system had the support and backing of the Whig government administration in Dublin, which consisted of the Earl of Mulgrave, the Lord Lieutenant, Lord Morpeth, the Chief Secretary,²⁵ and Thomas Drummond, the under-secretary. Sympathetic to the needs of Ireland, the three had introduced measures of social reform including the Poor Law Act of 1838.²⁶ Lord Morpeth himself served on the National Board as a Commissioner and on his departure in 1841 donated £1000 to the National Board for premiums to be paid annually to the most deserving national schoolteachers. When Morpeth was elevated to become the Earl of Carlisle in 1848, the fund became known as the Carlisle and Blake awards, which are still coveted to this day by national teachers.²⁷ (The other half of the fund was donated by A. R. Blake, one of the first commissioners of the National Board, on his death in 1849.)

By 1838, the National Board had received sufficient funding to develop the Marlborough Street site and open the central model schools and the training establishment. It was proposed that there would be two departments in the institution, one for elementary teaching and the other for scientific instruction. In addition, a centre for agricultural instruction, with a farm attached, would be opened near Dublin at Glasnevin. As a further indication of the growing confidence of the Board, the plan was put forward in 1837 to establish a district model school in each of the school districts that would provide teacher training at local level.²⁸

The so-called Normal Establishment for training teachers opened in the new building in 1838 and began to admit male students. The selection of students was regarded as important because the influence of well-educated teachers would benefit society as a whole. Although the appointment of teachers lay with the local patrons, the Commissioners looked for the satisfactory fitness of each candidate who would be an exemplary figure. It was stated that:

(a teacher) should be a person of Christian sentiment, of calm temper, and discretion; he should be imbued with a spirit of peace, of obedience to the law, and loyalty to his Sovereign; he should not only possess the art of communicating knowledge, but be capable of moulding the mind of youth, and of giving the power which education confers a useful direction. These are qualities for which patrons, on making choice of teachers, should anxiously look. They are those which the Commissioners are anxious to find, to encourage, and to reward.²⁹

The entry requirements of the Normal Establishment were rigorous. (This title was used for teacher training colleges in the early nineteenth century following the example of the *Ecole Normal* in Paris). Each applicant was asked to produce a certificate from an official of good character of the communion to which they belonged and take the oath, or make a solemn declaration of allegiance, before a magistrate and in the presence of the Commissioners. Thus, both church and state had some degree of control over the recruitment of teachers. The candidates also had to pass an examination in grammar, in the content of the third, fourth and fifth lesson books published by the Commissioners, as well as in arithmetic, geometry, and in mensuration. The Establishment was nondenominational following the principles of the national system, and so students were to receive religious instruction from their respective pastors.

On entry, the students were boarded and lodged at a house, which the Commissioners had purchased at the suburb of Glasnevin, beside where the Commissioners had opened an agricultural department and farm. They attended lectures and the model schools in Marlborough Street five days a week, and on Saturdays they spent time at the farm in Glasnevin. On successful completion of the five-month course, each student received a certificate ‘according to his deserts’.³⁰ No central residence was built, so a boarding house was purchased in North Great Georges’ Street and another later in Marlborough Street, but there was little collegiate life

provided. The students' day was divided between classes in general knowledge, theory of education and the practice of education in the model schools during the five-month course.

TEACHING STAFF AT MARLBOROUGH STREET

In 1838, the staff of the Training Institution consisted of Professor M^rArthur, who had come from Merrion Street Model School and had responsibility for practical teacher training and for the three central model schools. Another professor was appointed, Rev. James Carlile, the Resident Commissioner for education along with three lecturers, Messrs. Rintoul, Delaspie and Wilderspin. The last was the well-known English educator who pioneered the specialism of infant education. He was invited to Dublin to oversee the founding of the infant model school in Marlborough Street.³¹ However, within a year the staff had changed—Carlile resigned as resident commissioner and returned to his Presbyterian ministry, M^rArthur retired owing to ill-health, Delaspie resigned and Wilderspin returned to England, disappointed by the difficulties he had encountered in Dublin. Only Rintoul remained employed, as an assistant to the professors, and in 1868 he became a professor himself and dedicated his professional lifetime to the institution.

Two new professors appointed in 1838, one for arts and one for the sciences, were to develop the Normal Institution in Marlborough Street during its early days. The new professor of arts, Robert Sullivan (1800–1868), was born in Hollywood, Co Down; a Protestant and educated at the Royal Academical Institution in Belfast. He graduated from Trinity College with a BA in 1829, followed by a MA in 1832 and a LLD in 1850. In 1832, he was appointed a national school inspector for Ulster and became one of the pioneer school inspectors encouraging the growth of the national system.³² In 1838, he was appointed professor at Marlborough Street, where he lectured in English language and literature, logic, political economy, history, geography, astronomy and education.

Sullivan's course of arts lectures to the students was ambitious given that it was of only five months duration. He taught education both in the methodology of teaching English grammar, spelling, reading and writing along with some topics in the history of popular education, including the monitorial system of Lancaster and Bell and the child-centred ideas of Pestalozzi, the Swiss child educator.³³ In addition, he lectured on the five Lesson Books of the National Board, the duties of schoolmasters and the

maintenance of schoolhouses. The geography course covered mathematical, physical and political topics while the history course was the outlines of general history and English Literature. In political economy, Archbishop Richard Whately’s book *Easy Letters on Money Matters* was used as a basis, touching only on those topics that are ‘plain, practical, and corrective of popular prejudices’.³⁴

Sullivan also gained a reputation as an author of popular school texts designed to cater for use in national schools. He wrote articles for the *Schoolmasters’ Magazine*, which was published in Armagh. These articles were published collectively in a book entitled *Lectures and Letters in Popular Education* (1842). This was followed by his *Spelling Book Superseded, A Dictionary of the English Language for use in School* (1862), *A Dictionary of the Derivations* (1870) and *Geography Generalised* (1859). His best-selling book was the *Spelling Book*, which had sold over two million copies by 1868.³⁵ In his privileged position as professor, Sullivan was able to recommend his books to student teachers, but in 1857, he was warned by the National Board not to advertise his books among the students.

In 1854, Sullivan was called as a witness to the Select Committee of the House of Lords appointed to inquire into the Practical Working of the system of National Education in Ireland and gave an account of his work, in particular, the supervision of the Central Model schools.³⁶ It was queried as to whether the professor who had not taught in a school since 1838 was a suitable person to oversee the model schools and the training for teachers when he himself was not in touch with the realities of the national schools.³⁷

This 1854 inquiry followed the resignation of the Church of Ireland Archbishop Whately of Dublin, one of the first commissioners of national education, who had been strong supporter of the ‘mixed education’ principles of the national system. The issue was with regard to religious instruction in national schools and the use of the National Board’s approved book of *Scripture Lessons*, which was supposed to be used in all national schools. When Whately visited the Clonmel Model school in 1852, he found that it was not being used and raised an objection. A long discussion followed, and in the end, Whately resigned and the national system lost one of its staunch supporters.

The science professor appointed in 1838 was the Rev. James William McGauley, a Catholic priest who had attended St Patrick’s College, Maynooth, and was ordained for the Dublin diocese in 1830. He was a well-known scientist and had studied under Rev. Nicholas Callan (1799–

1864), professor of natural philosophy at Maynooth College.³⁸ McGauley attempted to raise the standard of science education to a high level. His courses aimed to introduce the students to the bases of modern science, both pure and applied. He lectured in Mechanical Philosophy and Chemical Philosophy for a total of four hours a week. The mechanical course included higher mathematics, mechanics, hydrostatics, pneumatics, sound and optics, while the chemical course included electricity, galvanism, magnetism, electro-magnetism, heat, the steam engine as well as inorganic and organic chemistry. In this extensive course McGauley was attempting to cover most of the information in the National Board Lesson Books, in particular that contained in the *Fifth Book*. He became a dedicated teacher educator and a leading figure in the teaching of science.³⁹

The two professors, in addition to their responsibilities in the training establishment, were in charge of the conduct of the central model schools, which were growing in size. As the model schools were used for teaching practice by the trainee teachers, it was essential that they were kept in good order and served as good models, but this supervision took up much of the professors' time. The students' timetable was divided between the theory and practice of teaching. Four days a week they attended lectures from 10 to 2 o'clock with a half hour break to 'relax in the playground' and spent an hour in the model school teaching. In addition, singing was taught according to the Hullah method.⁴⁰ Vocal music was considered to have an orderly effect and was a popular, cheap form of music education. One day a week was devoted to religious instruction under their respective professors, while on Saturdays the students attended the National Board's agricultural centre (later Albert College) at Glasnevin for practical instruction in agriculture.⁴¹ Sunday was a rest day, but they were expected to attend a place of worship of their own choice. Thus, there was a full timetable, but the lack of a college campus with facilities for residence and collegiate dining or recreation curtailed the educational experience of the students.

In 1842, female students were admitted for the first time to Marlborough Street and undertook teaching practice at the Female and Infant Model schools. Mrs. Julia Campbell who had been Mistress of the Kildare Place Female Model School was appointed to Marlborough Street, and under her experienced leadership the Female Training department gained a high reputation.⁴² Living in Talbot House the women's timetable was much the same as the men's, but on four days they attended separate lectures with the professors from 9:30 to 12:30 with two breaks of 'relaxation in

the playground’. From 10 until 3 o’clock they had practical teaching in the female and infant model school followed by a class in the Hullah singing system. On one day they attended religious instruction, drawing and singing classes and one hour’s teaching practice. On Saturdays the groups rotated in undertaking household work, cleaning, washing and mending of clothes, plus outdoor exercise; training in these domestic skills was considered essential for women teachers.⁴³

A significant achievement of the Central Model Schools was the development of the Infant Model School under the leadership of Samuel Wilderspin (1791–1866), the pioneer English infant educator who was invited by the National Board in 1838 to advise on the building and setting up of the infant school. Wilderspin had opened his own school in Spitalfields, London, in 1820 where he had developed a curriculum based on the young children’s interests and activities. The playground, which was enhanced with flowers and trees and play apparatus, was considered as important as the classroom and singing games and physical activities were foremost. His work became well known and admired, and his books such as *The Importance of Educating the Infant Poor* (1824) sold widely.⁴⁴ However Wilderspin only stayed one year in Dublin. He was a strong advocate of religious and moral education but was anti-Catholic. He disagreed with the concept of ‘mixed education’ so did not get on well with the National Board and was determined to have his own way in organising the infant school. His daughter Sarah and his son-in-law Thomas Urry Young came with him to teach in the school and they remained in Dublin after Wilderspin returned to England. Young wrote a handbook for infant teachers entitled *The Teacher’s Manual for Infant Schools and preparatory classes* (1852), which proved popular.⁴⁵ The influence of the Central Model Infant School was extensive, and the subsequent network of district model schools launched in the 1840s was designed to include separate infant schools.

PRESTIGE OF THE MARLBOROUGH STREET IN THE 1840S

In its early years, the Marlborough Street site was seen as a most progressive and innovative development in teacher training. The Central Model Schools were fine buildings, and the concept of the education of teachers rather than just a skills training was attempted. Distinguished visitors came to the model schools including Queen Victoria in 1849 when she visited Ireland. W. Cooke Taylor, a graduate, of Trinity College Dublin, who

had travelled on the Continent observing the growth of popular education, published a report on his visit in which he praised the Infant Model School as 'free from the rigid exactness of France' because the children were allowed to run and walk in the playground but stopped instantly at a signal from the master. He was particularly pleased with the domestic education given in the girls' model school, as many of the pupils would become maidservants.⁴⁶

In 1855, after nearly 20 years in Marlborough Street, McGauley wrote a report on the work of the college and on the training of teachers, which was an insightful and honest assessment. He was aware of the shortcomings of the course and made a series of suggestions for improvement.⁴⁷ The main problem was the shortness of the course, which was still only five months with a twice-yearly intake. A Special Class of students had developed who were encouraged to stay for a year, and this group showed what could be achieved in a longer period. However, it had been decided to continue the policy of training as many teachers as possible each year rather than having a smaller number undergoing a full year course. It was argued that for the teachers to be absent from their schools for too long would result in them becoming 'too superior' and leaving the profession. Also, the managers of the school preferred a short leave of absence for the teachers, and if this were extended, they might not allow their teachers to come for training. McGauley suggested that these problems would be reduced if the teachers were required to give a commitment to return to their original schools prior to training and that an efficient system of substitutes could be employed.⁴⁸

It is sad to read the confident and farsighted report of McGauley in 1855 because the following year he was forced to resign owing to the sexual scandal of living with a lady student.⁴⁹ He was suspended as a priest and the National Board asked him to answer for his behaviour. McGauley initially denied the charge, but he eventually had to resign and leave the institution. His assistant, Edward Sheehy, replaced him as head and later, Professor Edward Butler, who had been a head inspector and a lecturer at the Catholic University, was appointed.⁵⁰ However, the standard of science education declined, and inertia seemed to settle over the institution. Professor Robert Sullivan, still in charge, became less inclined to innovate or develop. Also, the National Board had begun to establish a network of district model schools to provide preparatory training to a greater number of pupil teachers. This scheme proved costly, and it took valuable resources away from the Central Training Institution.⁵¹

DISTRICT AND MINOR MODEL SCHOOLS, 1840–1860

The plan for a network of district model schools was proposed as early as 1835. The current apprenticeship model of teacher training emphasised the role of model schools, where by a pupil teacher learnt to teach by working under the guidance of an experienced teacher. The model school was to be an example of best practice and was crucial to the success of the scheme. The plan was to establish 32 model schools, one for each county with resident pupil teachers, who learnt to teach in the school with further instruction from the head master.⁵² The teachers in a model school were to be paid at a higher rate than an ordinary national school to attract the best teachers.

However, by 1837, the plan had to be postponed due to lack of funds. The very future of the national system itself was uncertain. It had begun ‘as an experiment’ in 1831 with the support of the Whig administration, but the principle of ‘mixed education’ had been challenged by the churches; the Anglican church had opted out and created the Church Education Society in 1839 to support their parish schools; the Presbyterian Church gained an alteration in the rules that increased denominational control, and the Catholic Church referred the case of the system to the Vatican in Rome.⁵³ The Board also lost the strong support of the under-secretary, Drummond, who died in 1840 and that of Lord Morpeth, the Lord Lieutenant, who resigned in 1841.⁵⁴

Therefore, it was not until 1844 that the model school plan was revived. The lack of legal status had hindered the work of the Board, so in 1845 it was granted a charter of incorporation, which allowed it to hold land. Immediately the district inspectors were asked to look for suitable sites where the district model schools could be built. This required the support of the local community and depended upon the availability of a site. Unlike ordinary national schools, where one third of the costs had to be found locally, the building cost of a model school was carried by the Board. The patronage and management of the schools was vested in the Board, as was the appointment of teachers. The concept of ‘pupil teachers’ was first introduced in England in 1846 by Dr. Kay-Shuttleworth, new Secretary of the Select Committee of the Privy Council, whereby older pupils served a paid apprenticeship under the guidance of an experienced teacher. The difference with the English scheme was that pupil teachers could be appointed to any approved school and the scheme was not confined to model schools. At the end of their apprenticeships, pupil teachers

sat for the Queen's Scholarship examination for entrance to a training college.⁵⁵

The Irish model schools were designed to be models of the Board's policy of 'mixed education' (Protestant and Catholic children together), and there were to be three large schools for boys, girls and infants on the site. There had to be sufficient land, at least half an acre, for a playground and surrounding wall. A residence house was attached for the headmaster with dormitory accommodation for the male pupil teachers. The head mistress' residence was to have accommodation for one female pupil teacher (later known as a 'monitress'), but the rest of the girls were to live out. The pupil teachers were to be selected by the district inspector and were to stay for six to twelve months at the model school before teaching for two years in an ordinary national school and then being called to the Marlborough Street Training Institution. Thus it was hoped to create a ladder of promotion for able young people from national school pupil to teacher and inspector. In the absence of free secondary education, the national system had to recruit its own teachers and educate them within the system. The model schools were designed to play an important role in this ladder of opportunity.

However, there were inherent weaknesses within the scheme from the outset. Firstly, there was little logical preplanning as to where the schools would be placed. This depended on local initiative and demand—hence four of six schools were in Ulster in Newry, Ballymena, Coleraine and Bailieborough; the other two were in Clonmel and Dunmanway in Munster. Because the full costs were carried by the Board, the buildings were allowed to be larger and more elaborate than the normal 'cottage style' national schools. Thus the architect-designed model schools were often one of the finest buildings in the town.⁵⁶ In addition, staffs were paid more than ordinary teachers, and this led to a sense of 'superiority' and of envy among teachers. To some extent, the scale and size of these schools made them unrealistic models for teacher training as most all-age national schools did not have a separate infant classroom and the sexes often were taught together. Yet the model schools reflected the increasing confidence of the national system and of its leadership in education, and the extension out to the provincial towns was a witness of the growing demand for education. As one inspector wrote in 1849 after the opening of Newry Model School;

The importance of such institutions can hardly, indeed, be over-rated; for the advantages that they are calculated to confer on the localities where they

are placed are, it must be evident to every one, of the utmost value, and the influence which they are destined, in no very long time, to exercise over the whole educational system of the country, will certainly be very great.⁵⁷

By 1857, there were eight further model schools built—three in Leinster, Trim (1850) Athy (1852) and Kilkenny (1854); two in Munster, Limerick (1855) and Waterford (1855); one in Connaught, Galway (1852); and two in Ulster, Ballymoney (1856) and Belfast (1857).⁵⁸ The opening of these schools was a public occasion with dignitaries of church and state present, and the inspectorate presented annual detailed reports.⁵⁹ The male pupil teachers were recruited from the local inspectorial district and were boarded for one year in the headmaster’s residence. The female students, known as ‘monitresses’, were non-residential. They all worked daily in the model schools as well as studying under the headmaster. The routine and diet were strict, and formal examinations were set. The majority of pupil teachers proceeded to become national teachers, although some used the education to move to other occupations. For example, of the 20 pupil teachers who attended Ballymena Model School from 1849 to 1851, six had become national teachers, two had become clerks in Dublin, one had emigrated to the USA, one had been dismissed for insubordination, one had died of fever, one was unable to work due to ill-health and the remainder were still in training.⁶⁰ The largest model school was on Falls Road, Belfast, which opened in 1857. Patrick Keenan, the inspector, addressed the assembly on the role and value of model schools, which he claimed were not only to demonstrate best practice of instruction but also to be a model of school design and organisation.⁶¹

A district model school...is to be a school established on such principles, organized on such plans, regulated by such a course of discipline, and conducted on such a method of instruction, as to be a model or pattern for teachers, or School managers, or School Committees to copy and imitate. This model, or pattern, may refer to various and different phases of a school; sometimes to the architecture or construction of the building; sometimes to the arrangement of the furniture; sometimes to method, to order, to system, to the course of education. etc.

In Belfast Model School there were three large schoolrooms with a gallery in the infant schoolroom where the pupils would sit for singing and mutual instruction. The course of instruction was broader than that of an ordinary national school and included geography, natural history, mechan-

ics and mathematics. However, even by 1857, this large and expensive Belfast school was beginning to be 'out of date'.⁶² As the number of teachers increased, the monitorial system of large schoolrooms was changing slowly to the use of smaller classrooms where an individual teacher taught the pupils. There were some transitional features shown in Belfast plan, such as the use of dual desks rather than benches in the girls' schoolroom and the provision of several adjoining classrooms with galleries for small class teaching. However, the use of model schools for teacher training was beginning to wane and was to be replaced gradually by a full-time course of pre-service training. Despite the limited success of the model school network, the Board continued with the plan, and between 1857 and 1863, five more were built at Londonderry (1862), Newtownards (1862), Enniscorthy (1862), Sligo (1863), Cork (1865) and Enniskillen (1867). In addition, the Board decided to build another seven 'Minor Model Schools', which were smaller and did not provide residence for pupil teachers. They were nonetheless handsome, spacious structures, which would be built in 'poorer areas' where the local people had insufficient resources to build their own school. However, the majority were built in small towns in Ulster where there was support for the national school system, Omagh (1860), Carrickfergus (1861), Newtownstewart (1861), Monaghan (1861) and Lurgan (1861). The only other one was Parsonstown (Birr) in Co Offaly (1862).⁶³ By 1870, these model schools were the object of much criticism as being too big for realistic training, too expensive to maintain, providing insufficient recruits for teacher training, a waste of public money and lacked local or clerical control.

PAID MONITORS AND CLASSIFICATION OF NATIONAL TEACHERS

The National Board's third, and in many ways most successful, attempt at teacher training was the introduction of an in-service scheme of professional development for national teachers through a series of classification and graded examinations. These were organised through the inspectorate and required neither residence nor model school. The purpose was to encourage teachers to educate themselves and thus to gain promotion to a higher grade and increased salary.

In 1844, a system of paid monitors was introduced whereby older pupils could remain at school, learn to teach and receive tuition from

the head teacher. With little access to secondary education, the national system had to provide its own supply of teachers. The monitors received a small salary and could enter for the graded examinations for junior and senior monitors. Candidates were selected and examined by the inspectorate, and a programme of study was laid down for each year. On completion, a monitor could become an assistant teacher in a national school. By 1860, there were a total of 2111 paid monitors in the system.⁶⁴ The system had come 'to form the best nursery for teachers' but was criticised for using the young as cheap labour while neglecting their further education. The Powis Commission in 1870 recommended the abolition of junior monitors but the retention of senior monitors who should be over thirteen and should receive regular instruction while learning to teach.⁶⁵

The in-service training of teachers was progressed in the 1840s. From 1839, there had been three salary grades of teachers—First, Second and Third Class, and after 1840, a probationary grade was added in which all new teachers were placed. The classification of teachers was undertaken by the inspectorate, which had to be much expanded to cope with the work. The country was divided into 25 school districts, each with a superintendent who was responsible for the classification and promotion of teachers.⁶⁶ However, there was no national overall standard, and so in 1848, a new system of classification by standard examination was introduced. These exams were held annually, and a programme of examination was drawn up for each of the three classes, which included general knowledge, penmanship, arithmetic, geography, teaching methodology and knowledge of the Board's Lesson Books. At first there was a general examination for all teachers, but this proved too heavy a burden on the inspectorate, and so a special examination only was held annually for those teachers who were seeking promotion to a higher grade. As the examinations had to be held in different places on different days, three sets of examination questions were set for each of the classes, and there were separate exams for male and female teachers.⁶⁷

The task of promotion for teachers by examination was a major undertaking for the inspectorate, but on the whole, the results proved satisfactory. The scheme encouraged teachers to self-education and provided financial reward for those promoted. The system lasted until 1872 when a new system of 'payment by results' was introduced where by teachers were judged and rewarded by the performance of their pupils in an annual examination. It was argued that, under the old system, teachers had become too interested in their own study for promotion and that efficient

practice was being neglected and unrewarded.⁶⁸ Also, as the concept of pre-service education for all teachers gained ground, the important role of in-service education decreased.

GROWING OPPOSITION OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH, 1850–1865

By the 1850s, in addition to its internal difficulties, the National Board found itself under increasing attack as a nondenominational system. At the outset in the 1830s, the Catholic hierarchy had given its support to the national school system, and Dr. Daniel Murray, Catholic Archbishop of Dublin, had served as a member of the National Board. However, after the Synod of Thurles in 1850, the Catholic Church, under the able leadership of the new Catholic Archbishop of Dublin, Dr. Paul Cullen, began to demand denominational education for Catholic children. Cullen was appointed Archbishop of Armagh in 1850 and was transferred to Dublin in 1852 following the death of his predecessor, Archbishop Murray. Cullen did not sit on the National Board and was a strong critic of ‘mixed education’. However, he was aware that the Catholic Church needed state support for education and that the Church could not afford to opt out and establish its own separate school system.⁶⁹

The Synod of Thurles in 1850 condemned both the Marlborough Street Institution and the district model schools as being unsuitable training places for Catholic teachers as they were under exclusive state management and were non-denominational. These institutions also became linked closely to the Catholic Church’s campaign against the ‘godless’ university Queen’s Colleges, established in 1845.⁷⁰ From 1851, the bishops began to protest at the opening of a model school in their dioceses, for instance at Waterford, Sligo and Galway and to invite the religious orders such as the Christian Brothers and the Sisters of Mercy to open an alternative school.⁷¹ From 1863, the Church forbade attendance at the model schools and at Marlborough Street. The number of untrained teachers continued to rise, and the government came under increased pressure to grant support to denominational training colleges. The Powis Commission in 1870 recommended the closure of the model schools and the provision of denominational residences for Marlborough Street and finally in the 1880s denominational training colleges were to be awarded grants.⁷²

A major controversy between the National Board and the Catholic Church arose in 1852 regarding the use of the Board's publication entitled *Scripture Lessons* in the model schools. Its use was not compulsory but strongly recommended. The Church of Ireland Archbishop Whately eventually resigned from the National Board in 1853 because he found that the book was not being used in Clonmel Model School; however, the Board decided that it could not enforce its reading. Cullen issued a pastoral letter stating that Catholic parents could refuse to allow their children to read the book. As that time the majority of pupils in model schools were still Catholic, for example at Clonmel 212 pupils out of a total of 310 were Catholic, so the Board decided that compromise was the wisest policy.⁷³

The following year, the Catholic Church's campaign gained support through the publication of James Kavanagh's book *Mixed Education—the Catholic Case stated* (1859), which was a strong polemic attack on the national school system, declaring it to be anti-Catholic, mismanaged and inefficient. Kavanagh had resigned his post as Head Inspector of National Schools in 1858 following a sharp disagreement with the National Board regarding his inspectorial rights and duties. The book was dedicated to the Catholic hierarchy and was to provide much useful information for the campaign against 'mixed education' and the dangers inherent to Catholic children in the system.⁷⁴

Thus encouraged, the Catholic hierarchy wrote a letter in August 1859 to Chief Secretary, Edward Cardwell, requesting that the church be granted more control over the education of Catholic children and the training of Catholic teachers. While the letter was respectful and polite, the Bishops shortly issued a strong pastoral letter that argued for the right of the Church to control and supervise education and to have control over teacher training institutions and the appointment of teachers as well as sanction over the books used in class. The Chief Secretary replied refusing to compromise or alter the national system. In 1860, the bishops presented a lengthy memorial stating their case for denominational control and condemning both the model schools and the Marlborough Street College. The absence of Catholic management and staff meant that the institutions would not provide a suitable atmosphere for the training of Catholic teachers.⁷⁵

Meanwhile, the campaign against the model schools had intensified. In 1859, the bishop of Ferns objected strongly to the opening of a model school in Enniscorthy and few Catholic children attended. Similarly, in Galway and in Limerick the bishops denounced the new models

schools and Catholic pupils were directed to withdraw. Finally, in 1863, the Church placed a 'ban' on attendance at all the model schools and at the Marlborough Street College and any teacher trained there would not be appointed to a Catholic managed school. The use of untrained teachers would, therefore, inevitably increase and further embarrass the government.

Therefore, Chief Secretary Cardwell, under increasing pressure to recognise the Catholic Church's demands, agreed to various changes of policy. In 1860, it was agreed that the composition of the National Board itself would change—there were now to be equal numbers of Protestant and Catholic members appointed and hence increase the Catholic Church's influence in policy making. The following year he announced that, owing to strong local opposition, the Board would not build any more model schools and would only complete those already under construction. In addition, in an effort to try to find some alternative route for teacher education, it was agreed to introduce a new type of pupil teacher who could be trained in any 'large and highly efficient' national school. In 1862, as a test case, the Convent of Mercy in Baggot Street, Dublin, applied successfully to the Board to appoint a number of pupil teachers who would be called 'first class monitors' and paid a salary. Up to this point, pupil teachers had been exclusive to model schools, and so this decision by the Board was seen as further undermining the nondenominational structure of teacher education.⁷⁶

A furore of protest followed. The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, in particular, protested strongly at what seemed to be the recognition of convent schools as training institutions and, to make matters worse, the Board introduced at the same time a reduction in the number of pupil teachers in the model schools. The Elementary Education Committee of the General Assembly lodged a protest with the Lord Lieutenant, Lord Carlisle, defending the role and importance of the model schools in teacher training.⁷⁷ The Ulster National Education Association also sent a further memorial restating the fundamental nondenominational principles of the national system. The National Board was requested by the Lord Lieutenant to explain its decision and in February 1864 the Board issued a pamphlet, entitled 'A Explanatory Paper', defending the change in policy as increasing the opportunities for young teachers. The Prime Minister, (Sir) Robert Peel, was drawn in to the controversy by reminding the Board that it could not change a fundamental rule without the permission of the Lord Lieutenant and the matter was raised in Parliament. A

further pamphlet was published entitled ‘Convent versus Model Schools’ which criticised the Board’s ‘Explanatory Paper’ and protested about the surrender to the demands of the Catholic Church for denominational teacher education.⁷⁸

REPORT OF THE POWIS COMMISSION ON PRIMARY EDUCATION IN IRELAND, 1870

The momentum of change in teacher education increased in the second half of the 1860s. The government moved towards a policy of appeasement and acceptance of the power and influence of the Catholic Church in education. This culminated in the establishment of a royal commission in 1868 to examine the working of the national school system since its inception in 1831. Gladstone’s Liberal government successfully passed the Disestablishment Act of the Church of Ireland in 1869 and the first Land Act in 1870 while the Powis Commission on primary education was another strand of this reforming policy.

The Catholic Church’s demand for denominational teacher education had become a political issue, and as the numbers attending the Marlborough Street College and the model schools declined following the Church’s ban on attendance, the urgent reality of the situation, where the number of trained teachers was steadily decreasing, was finally acknowledged by the government. The Catholic hierarchy continued its campaign and in 1866 presented another authoritative memorial, which was addressed to the Sir George Grey, Home Secretary. It demanded the recognition of denominational training institutions and called for the closure of the model schools and that state resources be ‘applied to a far better purpose, in supporting training establishments for Catholic teachers, male and female—a thing of the very first importance’.⁷⁹

Thus faced with a critical *impasse*, Chief Secretary, C.S. Fortescue, wrote to the National Board expressing the concern of the government and suggesting a series of compromise measures and plans for future development. Fortescue noted that neither the model schools nor Marlborough Street College had produced enough teachers for the national system. He stated that, out of 7472 national teachers currently employed, 4309 were still untrained. Therefore, he suggested that private denominational training institutions should be recognised and receive grants from the Board. The model schools, with their extensive facilities, should be placed under local

management. In addition, he recommended that grants should be given for private denominational lodging houses for the students attending the Marlborough Street College and that religious chaplains should be appointed.⁸⁰

The Board, still determinedly defending the principles of the national system, refused to accept these recommendations. The Protestant members of the Board were staunch in their opposition, but it was clear that the government now intended to accede to the demand for denominational rights. The Presbyterians again came to the defence of the model schools, which were strongly supported in Ulster, and Patrick Keenan, the Chief Inspector, wrote an explanation of the Board's position in which he noted the serious fall off of Catholic student teachers. In 1866, the number of Catholic pupils in model schools had fallen to 24%, and the numbers of Catholics attending the Training Institution had fallen from 214 in 1850 to 137 by 1866.⁸¹ Therefore, as a compromise measure, the government decided to establish a royal commission to investigate the workings of the national school system since its inception in 1831. There had been two previous royal commissions in the 1860s—the Newcastle Commission on popular education in England in 1861 and the Argyll Commission on schools in Scotland in 1865–1867—and these had proved an effective means of reform.⁸²

The Royal Commission on primary education in Ireland was established in 1868 and marked a victory for the Catholic bishops' campaign for denominational education.⁸³ It was chaired by Lord Powis and had seven Protestant members (5 Anglicans and 2 Presbyterians) and seven Catholic members. Two English school inspectors, Scott Nasmyth Stokes, a Catholic, and Rev. Benjamin Morgan Cowie, an Anglican, were appointed to examine the specific field of teacher training. They were to have considerable influence on the recommendations of the final report and were responsible along with Lord Powis for writing the historical overview of the national system. Seventy-three witnesses were called to give evidence, including Cardinal Cullen, who presented a strong case for Catholic education for Catholic children. The English inspectors presented special reports on the district model schools and on the Central Training Institution that were very critical of the workings of system.⁸⁴ Both men supported denominational teacher education as was the norm in England and they regarded the model schools as a failed scheme because it had proved to be too large, expensive to maintain and unsuitable for practical teacher training. Similarly the Marlborough Street Central Institution was inadequate, poorly equipped, could offer only a short five-month

course and lacked a proper residential or religious life. Four staff members of the training college were called to give evidence—the two elderly professors in joint charge of the college, Professor Robert Sullivan and Professor Edward Butler and their two assistants, John Rintoul, a Scot, who had been on the staff since 1834, and Daniel O’Sullivan who had been appointed in 1858. The college sadly had stagnated since the 1850s and the English commissioners were critical of its work. The commissioners interviewed a number of the students, and their accounts show the regimented and rigorous work routine that was still in use in the college. One female student described the routine:

Every morning we are obliged to rise at 7 o’clock, and are allowed from that hour until a quarter to 8, to dress. A bell is then rung, and we go from our bedrooms to the study for roll call, after which we separate for prayers, each religion going to a different apartment. These are generally over by quarter past 8 o’clock when we are summoned by the bell to breakfast, which occupies us until a quarter to 9 o’clock when we all proceed to the cloakroom to prepare for going to the school-room, where in a gallery from 9 o’c until 10, we receive instruction from Miss Byrne, generally on the method of teaching; the only exception is that on every Friday morning we are arranged in classes around the school-room, to work arithmetic in the quickest manner possible. On every day except Tuesday, we separate for religious instruction from 10 until half-past, but on Tuesday it lasts from 10 until 12 o’clock, when a clergyman of each denomination attends and instructs both teachers and children, for the other days we have each to take the class. Whenever we have any change in these arrangements up to half-past 10 o’clock, from that hour until half past eleven, the first half of the division, of which I am a member, attends lectures, delivered either by Professor Butler, Rintoul, or O’Sullivan, while the second part of the division is employed in the school-rooms, either listening to or taking part in the teaching.⁸⁵

With such a structured timetable, the students had little time for recreation. They were allowed some exercise in the school playground and received ‘any letters which Miss Byrne may have received’ for them as this was ‘the only spare time’ they had during the day for reading them. On Saturdays the students were allowed out to go for a walk in the afternoon, and since the college was in the centre of the city, they would have had some freedom to enjoy the surroundings.

The central problem was that, while the commissioners considered that the training course should be a pre-service for young candidate teachers,

the staff at Marlborough Street still viewed their course as a short in-service for practicing teachers, who were released from their schools for a short period of time. In addition, too much of the professors' time had been taken up with the supervision of the Central Model Schools, which, by 1868, had been expanded to include ten schools with over 1000 pupils. The head of the male No 1 School was Patrick W. Joyce, whose manual *A Handbook of School Management* (1863) had become a key text in teacher education and he lectured to the students in the training college. He received high praise from the commissioners as being a 'zealous and efficient headmaster'. The historic close link between the theory and practice of teaching had been maintained but the burden of supervising the large model schools had proved too heavy and had hindered the development of the training institution.⁸⁶

Therefore, the recommendations of the Powis report included radical reform of the college—the training course should be extended to 12 months and should become pre-service, the terminal examiners should include the inspectorate with a period of probationary teaching, the curriculum should be broadened, and the facilities improved:

the classrooms or lecture halls should be cleaner and more cheerful—their aspect is depressing and repulsive; a good library and museum of educational appliances as well as collections of objects of natural history and natural philosophy should be maintained, and the use of the library should be encouraged and promoted; less meager fare for the mind than the 'Books of the Board' should be put before students. This perpetual feeding on husks, stunts and dwarfs the minds of these people.⁸⁷

The report, recognising the strength of the demand for denominational education, recommended that the Board should provide denominational boarding houses near to Marlborough Street and that the National Board also should provide grants to denominational voluntary training schools, which would provide a residential religious life and an increased number of qualified teachers for national schools. In addition, the district model schools should be closed or placed under local committees.⁸⁸

CONCLUSION

The Powis report, therefore, marked the acceptance by the government that the national school system was de facto though not de jure denominational. In the area of teacher education, however, the Board still con-

tinued to uphold the non-denominational principle for another 12 years. It was not prepared to close the model schools, which soldiered on and eventually became local national schools, albeit supported largely by the Protestant community. The reform of the training institution moved slowly. In 1872, (Sir) Patrick Keenan was appointed as the resident commissioner with overall responsibility for the national system; he was an able and experienced administrator, who had risen up through the system as a teacher and inspector. As a Catholic he had a closer relationship with the hierarchy and was a confident and trusted negotiator. The introduction of the policy of 'payment by results' to increase teachers' salaries along with a revised school curriculum, as recommended by the Powis report, occupied much of his time in the 1870s. The teacher education issue remained unresolved, and meanwhile, the number of untrained teachers continued to rise, and by 1873 only just over one third of 9802 teachers were trained.⁸⁹

In 1874, the Chief Secretary, Sir Michael E. Hicks-Beach, wrote to the Board on various matters including the lack of training facilities available. In England there were now 39 training colleges and in Scotland seven. He invited the Board to present a solution—there were two possible options—one was to provide denominational boarding houses at Marlborough Street, the other to fund voluntary denominational colleges as recommended by the Powis report. The Board was now ready to consider both of these options, but as the payment of grants to voluntary institutions was contrary to its fundamental principles, it needed the official permission of the Chief Secretary to change the rules. No answer was forthcoming so the next move did not occur until the 1880s, but Keenan continued to prepare the ground for change.⁹⁰

It was perhaps ironic that it was the minority Church of Ireland that raised the issue again when in 1883 it requested to have a boarding house for their students attending Marlborough Street. The Church of Ireland College at Kildare Place had belonged first to the Kildare Place Society and had been taken over by the Anglican Church Education Society in 1855. However, the Anglican Church now found that it could no longer support a separate training college. The Board sought the advice of the Chief Secretary, George Trevelyan, who agreed that immediate action should be taken and that, whereas the boarding house scheme could be granted, a much more comprehensive scheme would receive sanction from the government. Under this new 1883 scheme, the voluntary colleges could apply to the Board for recognition as national teacher training

colleges and would receive capitation grants. The new two-year course was to be pre-service and entrance to the colleges would be by way of a competitive Queen's Scholarship examination.⁹¹

Irish teacher education therefore entered a new phase, and the high hopes of the 1830s for nondenominational training had ended. Two large voluntary Catholic colleges, St Patrick's, Drumcondra, for men and Our Lady of Mercy, Baggot Street, for women, became recognised national teacher training colleges in 1883, and the following year the Church of Ireland Training College, Kildare Place followed suit. By 1900, three further Catholic colleges came into connection with the Board—Mary Immaculate College, Limerick, (1898) St Mary's College, Belfast (1900) for women and De La Salle College, Waterford (1891) for men. Marlborough Street College remained nondenominational and continued to be supported by the Presbyterian community of Northern Ireland.⁹² Finally, but too late, this college was provided with a modern male residence, Marlborough Hall, in Glasnevin, which was opened in 1908. This spacious building was taken over by the military as a convalescent hospital in 1917 and in 1926 became Coláiste Caoimhín, one of the all-Irish preparatory colleges for candidate teachers.⁹³ Marlborough Street College was closed in 1922 following political partition and the nondenominational Stranmillis Training College in Belfast was opened.⁹⁴ The Church of Ireland Training College attempted in vain to continue to train Anglican teachers from the northern counties, but as each political jurisdiction sought to have control over its own teacher colleges, this proved impossible. Irish teacher education therefore became divided not only by religion but also by politics.⁹⁵

The National Board was in the forefront of teacher education in the first half of the nineteenth century and earned a reputation for innovation and enterprise. Building on the experience of the Kildare Place Society in the 1820s, the Board had established a central teacher training institution with its own model schools and embarked on an ambitious scheme of district model schools for the training of pupil teachers. In addition, it had organised, through its inspectorate, a scheme of continuing professional education whereby practicing teachers would be rewarded for further study by promotion and increase in salary.

However, with the ever-growing demand for mass literacy, the national school system struggled to provide sufficient teachers, and throughout the nineteenth century the system had to work with a large body of untrained teachers. The central Training Institution failed to expand and to extend

its courses beyond a short in-service model of six months. The limited number of staff and the extra burden of the management of the large central model schools resulted in inefficiency and 'out of date' short courses. By 1870, teacher education had moved towards a pre-service model of full-time courses in both the theory and practice of education and the apprenticeship-style training based on model schools was being replaced. The National Board had failed to invest in the Marlborough Street College and did not develop an open residential campus site. Moreover, the diverting of the limited financial resources into the ambitious district model schools scheme, despite increasing clerical opposition, reduced the effectiveness of the whole system.

The national system of teacher training, therefore, was in a weak position to resist the Catholic Church's campaign from the 1850s for denominational control of education and for the closure of the 'mixed education' model schools system. Teacher education became an important platform for the Church's demand for denominational rights, and it was linked with the opposition to the secular Queen's Colleges and the campaign for a Catholic University, founded 1854. By the 1860s, government policy had moved towards appeasement and recognition of denominational rights in education, and it became a political issue between Catholics and Protestant members of the National Board. Despite the recommendations of the Powis commission in 1870, the National Board held on for another 12 years to the principle of nondenominational teacher education, but the Marlborough Street College became the sole survivor of the National Board's grand plan for a nondenominational system of teacher education that had commenced with high expectations 50 years before. Nevertheless, the high standard and increasing prestige of the professional training of national school teachers later achieved by the new denominational training colleges owed much to the foundation and experience of the early ventures of the National Board.

NOTES

1. *Reports from the Commissioners of the Board of Education, in Ireland, pursuant to Act 43, Geo 3, c. 122*; HC 1809 (142.) vii; 1810 (174.) x; 1810–11 (107) vi; 1812 (218.); *Fourteen Reports from 1809–1813–14* reprinted, HC 1813–14 (47.) v.; *Reports of the Commissioners of Irish Education Inquiry*; HC 1825 (400.) xii; 1826–27 (12.) xii; 1826–27 (13.) xiii.

2. *Letter from the Secretary for Ireland to His Grace the Duke of Leinster, on the formation of a Board of Commissioners of Education in Ireland, October 1831*; HC 1831–2 (196.) xxix. D.H. Akenson, *The Irish Education experiment—The National System of Education in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1970).
3. Stanley Letter, 1831.
4. David Salmon (Ed.), *The practical parts of Lancaster's 'Improvements' and Bell's 'Experiments'* (Cambridge, 1932); P.W. Joyce, *A Handbook of School Management* (Dublin, 1863); R.R. Rich, *The Training of Teachers in England and Wales in the nineteenth century* (Cambridge, 1993).
5. It can be argued that the flexibility of the Stanley Letter of 1831 as opposed to a formal education act allowed the Commissioners to develop a system that could adapt itself to educational needs on the ground. Also the local managerial structure gave the denominational churches the opportunity to establish separate schools. See Akenson, *The Irish Education Experiment*, 157–224.
6. S. Farren, 'Irish Model Schools, 1833–1870' in *History of Education*, Vol. 24, No 1, (1995), 45–60; S. M. Parkes, 'Teacher-Training in Ireland, 1811–1870', unpublished M.Litt. thesis, Trinity College, Dublin, 1970.
7. J. Coolahan, *Irish Education: History and Structure* (Dublin, 1981).
8. The non-denominational Stranmillis Training College was opened in 1922 in Belfast. S. Farren, *The Politics of Irish Education, 1920–65* (Belfast, 1995); R. Marshall, *Stranmillis College, Belfast 1922–72* (Belfast, 1972).
9. *2nd Report of the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland (CNEI) for the year ending March, 1835*, HC 1835 (300.) xxxv.
10. *2nd Report of CNEI, 1835*.
11. *2nd Report of CNEI, 1835*.
12. *2nd Report of CNEI, 1835*.
13. *2nd Report of CNEI, 1835*.
14. *2nd Report of CNEI, 1835*. The salary proposed for the head teacher of a Model School was 100 pounds per year with two assistants each paid 50 pounds per year. The salary for a teacher in a primary school was to be 25 pounds per year with a possible bonus of not more than 5 pounds dependent on an inspector's report.
15. The first seven model schools opened in 1849 were Ballymena, Newry, Coleraine, Trim, Clonmel, Bailiboro and Dunmanway. The expenditure on these schools exceeded the proposed budget—the *16th report of the CNEI for 1849* stated: 'The cost of erecting and furnishing of the District Model Schools has larger than we had at first anticipated. Including every expense the sum will be nearly £5000 for each....Taking into account therefore, all the difficulties incident to a new undertaking of great extent, and considering that our District Model Schools are institutions of great

national importance, we are of opinion that a large expenditure, in their erection upon a suitable scale, was necessary, in order to render them in all respects complete.’ The overall expenditure of the National Board in 1849 was nearly £140. In addition, the West Dublin Model School was opened in 1849 in School Street in the inner city.

16. *Report from the Select Committee appointed to inquire into the Progress and Operation of the New Plan of Education*; HC 1837 (485.), ix; *Report from Select Committee of the House of Lords on the Plan of Education in Ireland, with minutes of evidence*; HC 1837 (543,II) viii, part i, ii. Select Committees were composed of members of parliament only. These two reports in the 1830s were mainly concerned with the nondenominational ‘mixed education’ structure of the national system and, in particular, with reported incidents of proselytism.
17. *Report of the Select Commons Committee, 1837*, 68.
18. S. M. Parkes, *Kildare Place—the history of the Church of Ireland Training College and College of Education, 1811–1969* (Dublin, 1984), 17–36. The Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in Ireland (Kildare Place Society) was founded in 1811 and it supported schools, established model schools in Dublin, trained teachers, published textbooks and introduced an inspectorate. It lost its parliamentary grant in 1831 but many of its practices had a long-term influence on the new national system.
19. *Analysis of the Schoolbooks published by the authority of the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland*, (Dublin, 1853).
20. *Analysis of Schoolbooks*, 6–7.
21. *Select Lords’ Committee, 1837*, 310.
22. *Select Lords Committee, 1837*, 304.
23. *Select Lords Committee, 1837*, 299.
24. G.O’ Tuathaigh (1978) *Thomas Drummond and the Government of Ireland, 1835–41*, (Dublin: National University of Ireland).
25. C. Ridgeway (Ed.), *The Morpeth Roll—Ireland Identified in 1841* (Dublin, 2005).
26. O’ Tuathaigh, *Thomas Drummond*, 4–6.
27. *8th report of the CNEI for the year 1841*, HC 1842 (398) xxiii.
28. *4th report of the CNEI for the year 1837*, HC 1837–38 (110) xxviii.
29. *5th Report of the CNEI for the year 1838*, 5–6; HC 1839 (160) xvi.
30. *5th Report of CNEI, 1838*, 6.
31. M. O’Connor, *The Development of Infant Education in Ireland, 1838–1948* (Oxford, 2010), 51–74; W.P. McCann & F. Young, *Samuel Wilderspin and the Infant School Movement* (London, 1982), 237–53.
32. E. O Heideáin, OP, *National School Inspection in Ireland: the beginnings* (Dublin, 1967).
33. K. Silber, *Pestalozzi: the man and his work* (London, 1973).

34. *7th Report of the CNEI for the year 1840*, HC 1842 (353), 104. Richard Whately was Anglican archbishop of Dublin and a member of the National Board. He endowed the Whately chair of political economy at Trinity College, Dublin. D. H. Akenson, *A Protestant in Purgatory; Richard Whately, Archbishop of Dublin* (Hampden, CT, 1981).
35. Royal Irish Academy, *Dictionary of Irish Biography* (Cambridge, 2009).
36. *Report of the Select Committee of the House of Lords appointed to inquire into the Practical Working of the system of National Education in Ireland*, HC 1854 (525) xv.
37. *Select Committee report*, 1854, Sullivan's evidence, 377–394.
38. M. Mulvihill, *Ingenious Ireland- a county-by-county exploration of Irish mysteries and marvels* (Dublin, 2002), 290–1; Patrick Corish, *Maynooth College, 1795–1995* (Dublin, 1995), 113–4. Callan experimented with electricity and invented an induction coil and a dynamo.
39. *7th report of the CNEI for the year 1842*, Appendix, 105.
40. The method of John Hullah (1812–1884) for teaching singing was popular in English schools—it was based on the method of Wilhelm, a French music teacher, using a 'fixed doh'. J. Hullah, *Wilhelm's Method of Teaching Singing*, (1842, reprinted Kilkenny, 1983). It later was replaced by the tonic-solfa method of John Curwen, *The Teacher's Manual of the Tonic-Solfa* (1875, reprinted Kilkenny, 1986) that used a 'moveable doh' and became very popular for school choirs.
41. The National Board founded Albert College, Glasnevin, in 1838 as a model farm to encourage national schoolteachers to teach agriculture. In addition, the Board built 20 model agricultural schools around the country.
42. Parkes, *Kildare Place*, 35–36.
43. *22nd report of CNEI for 1855*; HC 1856 (2142–1) xxvii, pt ii, Appendix G.
44. P. McCann & F. A. Young, *Samuel Wilderspin and the Infant School Movement*, (London/Sydney, 1982), 237–254. M. O'Connor, *The development of Infant Education in Ireland, 1838–1948*, 51–77. The infant school building with its clock tower is still in use in Marlborough Street.
45. T. Urry Young, *The Teacher's Manual for Infant Schools* (Dublin, 1852).
46. W. Cooke Taylor, *Notes on a visit to the Model schools in Dublin*. (Dublin, 1847).
47. *22nd Report of the CNEI for the year 1855, Vol. II, Appendix G*, 153. By 1855, 4275 teachers had been trained, but one third of these had been lost to the teaching profession, either by promotion to other professions, or emigration or death. Of the 5042 teachers employed, only 2006 had been trained.
48. McGauley's report was published in the *22nd report of the CNEI for the year 1855*, Vol II, Appendix G.

49. *Minutes of the proceedings of the Board of National Education with reference to the resignation of the Rev, J.W. McGauley, and correspondence*; HC 1857 (297. Sess 2.), xlii. McGauley later married the lady student, Miss Cahill, and emigrated to Canada, (RIA, *Dictionary of Irish Biography*, 2009).
50. Butler was an able mathematician, and by 1870 he had become joint head of the Institution.
51. The cost of building of the first four model schools was £16,000 out of an annual budget of £145,000. *16th Report of CNEI for the year 1849*; HC 1850 (1231–11) xxv.
52. *2nd Report of the CNEI*, 1835, 6.
53. D. Akenson, *The Irish Education Experiment*, 157–224.
54. Morpeth had approved the model schools plan in January 1837 but regretted that funding was not yet available. Akenson, *Irish Education Experiment*, 147.
55. S.J. Curtis, *History of Education in Great Britain* (London, 1961), 23–44.
56. Frederick Darley was architect of the first phase of model schools and followed by James H. Owen, Office of Public Works. Darley’s style was ‘Jacobean Revival’ while Owen’s was a mix of ‘Romanesque and free style Early English’. See R. Wylie, *Ulster Model Schools* (Belfast, 1997).
57. *16th Report of CNEI for the year 1849, Appendix xxxiv*, 235.
58. Two other model schools were opened in Dublin—the West Dublin Model School, School Street (1849) and the Inchicore Model Railway School (1852) for employees of the Great Southern Railway.
59. *24th Report of the CNEI for the year 1857*, Appendix, report on the Belfast Model School, 48–96, HC 1859 (2456) vii. For details of the opening of the first model schools see *16th Report of CNEI for the year 1849, Appendix*, 184–302.
60. *18th Report of CNEI for the 1851, Appendix*; HC 1852–1853 (1582.) xliii.
61. *24th Report of CNEI for 1857*, 28–96, HC 1859 (2456–1) vii. Keenan (1826–94) had been headmaster of the Central Model Schools and later an inspector. From 1871–1894, he served as the Resident Commissioner of National Education and was rewarded by a knighthood. See F. S. O’Dubhtaigh, ‘A Review of the contribution of Sir Patrick Keenan to Irish and British colonial education (1826–1894),’ unpublished MEd thesis, Trinity College, Dublin, 1974.
62. N. McNeilly, *Belfast Model Schools, 1857–1957* (Belfast, 1957). The cost of the Belfast building was £ 11,756—it was the most expensive model school built by the National Board.
63. Details of the correspondence relating to the opening of each of the model schools is contained in the *Report of the Royal (Powis) Commission on*

- Primary Education* (1870) Vol. VII, *Returns of the National Board*, HC 1870 (C.6vi.) xxviii, part v.
64. *27th report of CNEI for the year 1860*, HC 1861 (2873) xx, 16. Annual salaries paid to senior monitors were for £5–10 for males and £2–4 for females.
 65. Powis Commission, 1870, Vol. 1, *General Report*, 401–5; *Report of the Commissioners' appointed to inquire into the nature and extent of the Institutions in Ireland for the purpose of Elementary or Primary education; also the practical working of the system of National Education in Ireland*, etc-VII; HC 1870 (C.6–6VII) Vol.1–VIII. xxvii–xxviii.
 66. *5th Report of CNEI for the year 1838*, 7.
 67. *15th Report of CNEI for the year 1848*, 96, HC 1849 (1066) xxiii. Teachers had to remain for two years in a specific class before seeking promotion—this also gave teachers time to study the syllabus for the next senior examination. There were qualifications for probationary, 3rd, 2nd and 1st classes and each class had sub-divisions. Salaries of male teachers ranged from £30–15 for from 1st–3rd class and £24–13 for females.
 68. *Report of the Powis Commission, 1870, Vol. I, General Report*, 406–20. The payment-by-results system had been introduced in England in 1862 but in Ireland it was modified to allow teachers to continue to be paid a basic class salary with the addition of a bonus dependent on the pupils' results. See J. Coolahan and P. F. O'Donovan, *A History of Ireland's School Inspectorate, 1831–2008* (Dublin, 2009).
 69. In England the Catholic Poor School Committee had been set up in 1847 and was in receipt of state grants.
 70. E.R. Norman, *The Catholic Church and Ireland in the Age of Rebellion, 1859–73* (London, 1965); P.J. Corish, *A History of Irish Catholicism*, 5 vols. (Dublin, 1971); D. Bowen, *Cardinal Cullen and the shaping of Irish Catholicism* (Dublin, 1983); E. Larkin, *The consolidation of the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland, 1860–70* (Dublin, 1987); J. Doyle, 'Cardinal Cullen and the system of national education' in D. Keogh & A. McDonnell, *Cardinal Paul Cullen and his World* (Dublin, 2010), 190–205.
 71. Powis Commission 1870, (C.6VI), Vol. VII, *Returns furnished by the National Board*, 164–165.
 72. In 1883, the first two Catholic denominational national teacher training colleges were St Patrick's College, Drumcondra, and Our Lady of Mercy, Baggot Street (later Carysfort College). In 1884, the Church of Ireland Training College, Kildare Place, entered the scheme. The Marlborough Street College continued until 1922. See J. Kelly (Ed.), *St Patrick's College, Drumcondra—A History* (Dublin, 2006). E. Bolster and J. Coolahan, *Our Lady of Mercy College, Blackrock, Carysfort College, 1877–1977—Two Centenary Lectures* (Dublin, 1981); S. Parkes, *Kildare Place*, 57–85.

73. *A report from the Select Committee of the House of Lords appointed to inquire into the practical workings of the system of National Education in Ireland*, 2 parts; HC 1854, (525) xv.
74. J. Kavanagh, *Mixed Education—the Catholic Case Stated* (London & Dublin, 1859). Kavanagh had been an active national school inspector and had supported setting up the first model schools. *Report of the National Board of Education appointed to inquire into the conduct of J.W. Kavanagh, head inspector of national schools; with proceedings of the Board*; HC 1857–8 (386.) xlvi. 461; *Correspondence between the Commissioners and Mr. Kavanagh; names appointed of members appointed on Special Committees*; HC 1859 (254. Sess.1.) xxi. pt. II. 131.
75. *Memorial of Roman Catholics prelates relative to national education in Ireland and reply of Chief Secretary for Ireland*; HC 1860 (26.) liii. 659.
76. *Report of the Board of National Education on the subject of Convent Schools in Ireland by Inspector Sheridan; and letter from Baggot Street Convent School, Dublin, applying for payment for training of teachers, and answers*; HC 1864 (179.) xlvi. i.
77. *Correspondence between the Chief Secretary and the Chief Commissioner of National Education, relative to the recent alternation in the rules of the Board*; HC 1864 (181.) xlvi. 379; *Resolutions of the Education Committee of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Ireland, relative to the changes introduced into the National system of education*; HC 1864 (285.) xlvi. 411.
78. *Convent versus Model Schools*, (Belfast, 1864).
79. *Memorials by the Roman Catholic prelates in Ireland, on the subject of university and national education in Ireland, and correspondence relating thereto*; HC 1866 (84.) lv, 243.
80. *Correspondence between the Government and the Commissioners of National Education on the subject of the organisation and government of training and model schools*; HC 1866 (456.) lv. 213.
81. *Statement issued by the Elementary Education Committee of the General Assembly, relative to the organization and government of model schools*; HC 1867 (226.) lv. 741; *Copy of a memorandum presented by P.J. Keenan, Esq., Chief of Inspection, on a statement issued by the Elementary Education Committee of the General Assembly*; HC 1867 (225) lv. 750.
82. *Report of Royal Commission appointed to inquire into the state of popular education in England (Newcastle)*; HC 1861 (2794-1-VI), Parts 1-VI; *Report of Royal Commission appointed to inquire into Schools in Scotland (Argyll)*; HC 1865 (3483) xvii, 1867 (3858) xxv, 1867 (3845-1-IV) xxv, 1867 (3845-V) xxvi, 1867–1868 (4011-1) xxix.
83. *Report of the Powis Commissioners appointed to inquire into the nature and extent of the instruction afforded by the several institutions in Ireland for the purpose of Elementary or Primary education; also into the practical working*

- of the system of national education in Ireland*; Pts 1–5, 8 Volumes, HC 1870 (C.6 – 6VII) xxvii–viii.
84. *Special Reports on Model Schools (district and minor), and the Central Training Institution Dublin*, etc; HC 1870 (C.6A) xxviii, Vol. 1, Part ii.
 85. Powis Commission, 1870, Vol. I, part ii, *Special report on the Central Training Institution*, 217.
 86. P.W. Joyce (1827–1914) was an Irish scholar and author of well-known books including *The Origins and History of Irish Place Names* (1897) and *A Child's History of Ireland* (1869).
 87. Powis Commission, *Special Report on the Training Institution*, Vol. 1, pt. ii, 219.
 88. Powis Commission, *Report of the Commissioners*, Vol. 1, pt. i, Recommendations, 522–34. The Irish National Teachers' Organisation was founded in 1868 as the professional union to demand increased salaries and improved working conditions for teachers. T. J. O'Connell, *History of the Irish National Teachers' Organisation, 1868–1968* (Dublin, 1968).
 89. *40th report of CNEI for the year 1873*, HC 1874 (c.965) xix.
 90. *Copy of a letter of November 1874, of the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant to the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland, and their reply to the same*; HC 1875, (70.) lix. 489.
 91. *Correspondence between the Irish Government and CNEI on the subject of Training Schools*; HC 1883 (144.) liii, 471. The Presbyterian Church once again protested about the 'surrender' to denominational demands. *Copy of Memorial from the Elementary Education Committee of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland on Training Schools*; HC 1883, (181) liii. 471.
 92. J. A. McIvor, *Popular Education in the Presbyterian Church* (Dublin, 1969), 149–57. In the years 1905–1906, the numbers attending the Marlborough Street College were 135 Presbyterians, 62 Church of Ireland, 52 Catholics.
 93. J.A. Foley, *Coláiste Caoimhín, 1908–1988* (Dublin, 1988). In 1938 the building in Glasnevin became the Finance Branch of the Department of Defence.
 94. R. Marshall, *Stranmillis College, Belfast, 1922–72*; J. Kelly (Ed.), *St Patrick's College, Drumcondra, a History*.
 95. S. Parkes, *Kildare Place*, 140–5.

Forged in the Fire of Persecution: Edmund Rice (1762–1844) and the Counter-Reformationary Character of the Irish Christian Brothers

Dáire Keogh

From the dawn of Catholic Emancipation to the eve of the Great Famine, the life of Edmund Ignatius Rice (1762–1844) spanned a critical age in the emergence of Catholic Irish consciousness.¹ In the history of schooling, it was a particularly significant period in which Catholic education emerged from the constraints of the Penal Laws and embraced the confident attributes associated with the Council of Trent (1545–1563) and subsequent reformers. Transported to Ireland, however, such uncompromising reforms assumed a political and sectarian character as an explicitly Catholic pedagogy emerged in the context of a nationalist advance and the bitter controversies of the ‘Bible Wars’ which established the tenor of the age.

I

Eighteenth century Ireland was a curious combination of a colony and an *ancien régime* type society. Its colonial standing derived from the fact that, while it had an ancient parliament and constitutional status as a separate

D. Keogh (✉)
St. Patrick’s College, Dublin, Ireland

kingdom, the Dublin parliament was subordinate to Westminster. It was also an example of an *ancien régime* type society, but one in which religion rather than noble birth was the critical determinant of status. Within this context, the monopoly of power and privilege was enjoyed by a minority Anglican (Church of Ireland) community, while dissenters (8%), and the Roman Catholic majority of the population (80%) endured the consequences of punitive legislation, enacted piecemeal in the centuries since the Reformation. Edmund Burke (1729–1797) famously condemned the penal regime as a ‘machine of wise and elaborate contrivance well-fitted for the oppression, impoverishment and degradation of a people’.² Nineteenth century nationalist historians focussed on the religious elements of the laws, but the more recent historiography has emphasised the importance of the legislation in the defence of the Protestant state. Within this reading, they were rooted not in a desire to eliminate the Catholic religion, but rather in an attempt to destroy ‘popery’, the political and military threat of the majority. For this reason the inheritance of land, the political system and the legal profession were closed to Catholics, while, in the light of their prominence in the rebellion of 1641, the regular clergy, bishops and those exercising ecclesiastical jurisdiction were banished from the kingdom.³

Within this context, the control of education was of vital importance. Indeed, amongst Henry VIII’s earliest reforming legislation was an act of the Irish Parliament (1537) which planned a network of parochial schools intended to teach ‘Christ’s religion, ... English Order, habit and language’.⁴ This significant initiative, marked not just the first intervention of the state in the realm of Irish education but also the king’s determination to advance royal supremacy in Church and State through the medium of instruction. In 1570, in the reign of Elizabeth, too, further legislation sought to establish state-funded diocesan grammar schools, conducted by ‘Englishmen, or of the English birth of this realm’, while a number of Royal Schools were erected across the northern counties in the context of the Ulster Plantation (1608–1630). In reality, however, as with the Reformation enterprise itself, these schools were under-resourced and achieved little success beyond the Anglophone Protestant community.

In part, too, the educational designs of the Reformation were undermined by the survival of a parallel network of illegal Catholic schools, which demonstrated, in Colm Lennon’s expression, the ‘polarized nature of politico-religious identity’ in Ireland.⁵ These schools were critical to the survival of a native Gaelic culture, characterised by legislators as ‘savage and

wild', but also of the cosmopolitan urban schools, Anglo-Norman (Old English) foundations whose connection with the university of Oxford was transferred to Europe following the establishment of a network of Irish continental colleges in the reign of Philip II of Spain.⁶ These institutions were vital to the transmission of the Catholic Reformation to Ireland. And while legislation frustrated the implementation of Tridentine reforms, the Counter-Reformationary zeal of their graduates infused Irish Catholicism with a militant spirit for which the state church was no match. On this account, the historian Aidan Clarke has observed, it was 'not so much that the Protestant Reformation failed in Ireland but that the Counter-Reformation succeeded'.⁷

II

Both communities in Ireland were acutely aware of the power of education in shaping the polity, but the tumult of the seventeenth century made this of paramount importance to the state. In the aftermath of the bloody rebellion of 1641–1649, Oliver Cromwell determined to escalate the process of Anglicization and outlined a radical plan for Irish education that envisaged the removal of poor children from their parents and placing them as 'bound Apprentices to religious and honest people in England or Ireland'. This initiative, in 1657, came too late in the Protector's life to be put into effect, but the subsequent rebellion (1690–1691) prompted the introduction of a swathe of penal legislation, which included measures designed to secure Protestant control over education by curbing the subversive influence of Catholic schoolmasters. As early as 1695, it was enacted that 'no person of the popish religion may publicly teach school or instruct youth', but politically the most important provision was an act to restrain foreign education, which aimed to stem the flow of Catholic students to the continental colleges.

There is good evidence to suggest that this legislation was enforced, at least in the first half of the eighteenth century. Writing in the 1930s, P.J. Dowling compared eighteenth century education to a kind of guerilla war where the teacher, like the priest was frequently on the run. It was perhaps easier for schoolmasters to avoid prosecution than priests, but there are numerous instances of masters being punished. Corcoran in his study of the penal era lists 19 indictments against popish schoolmasters brought before the grand jury in the county of Limerick alone between 1711 and 1722, a decade that witnessed a significant rise in the

Jacobite threat to the kingdom.⁸ The effect of this and similar legislation was to drive Catholic schooling underground, producing in the process the celebrated ‘hedge schools’. Much has been written about these schools, which have become the subject of great lore. Many accounts are excessively laudatory, containing stylized depictions of masters imparting ‘the best Latin poets...and the orations of Cicero’. Others dismiss them as places of squalor where the children read from notorious chapbooks and objectionable texts such as *Frenzy the Robber* and *Irish Rogues and Rapparees*, which hawkers pedalled through the country.⁹ In reality the truth lies somewhere in between and a recent commentator has described them as ‘private schools established on teacher initiative and existing as long as they proved financially profitable’.¹⁰

In reality, therefore, the educational restrictions, like other provisions of the penal laws, were relaxed outside of times of international crisis and political threat. Catholic teachers were operating outside the law, but after 1730 they were largely left undisturbed. In fact, in 1731, a House of Lords committee reported the existence of some 550 popish schools across Ireland. This report is particularly informative, not simply for the statistics it provides, but for the insight it affords into the mentality of the period. Some areas were better served for schools than others. There were no Catholic schools in the Plantation diocese of Derry, and while an occasional ‘straggling schoolmaster’ came to the mountainous parishes, such was the Protestant vigilance that ‘*upon being threatened* [with a Warrant], *as they constantly are...*they generally think proper to withdraw’.¹¹ In the western diocese of Tuam, however, there was a well-developed Catholic educational infrastructure:

In the town of Galway there are ten Nunnerys (which the Papists commonly call boarding schools)...I have an account of 32 schools taught by papists: divers of them teach Latin and Philosophy and some of them Divinity in order to qualify young men for their Priesthood. Many Papists keep tutors in their house, who privately teach not only the youth of the family, but others of the neighbourhood who report to them: there being scarce a papist who will send their children to a Protestant School, even to learn his Grammar or so much as to read.¹²

The prevalence of such illegal schooling demonstrated the failure of state education policy and prompted the establishment of a network of ‘Charter Schools’ in 1733 on the initiative of the primate, Englishman

Hugh Boulter. Financed by a combination of individual benefactors and a royal bounty of £1000 per year, the schools extended the scope of government education measures. They had an explicitly evangelical character and aimed to instruct ‘the children of the popish and other poor natives... in the English tongue and in the principles of true religion and loyalty’.¹³ This represented an intensification of the original Tudor legislation and it enshrined, too, controversial elements of Oliver Cromwell’s 1657 plan, including the practice of ‘transplantation’, which made it difficult for parents to reclaim their children.¹⁴

Charter Schools were hated by the Catholic community and one later commentator described them as an attempt to carry the nation by a ‘*coup de main*’.¹⁵ Ironically, the panic they created spurred the clergy to systematise their schooling, lest children were enticed to such state funded proselytising schools. Moreover, reports to Propaganda Fide from *zelanti* in Ireland about the non-residence of Catholic bishops and the dangers the Charter Schools posed to the faith of the nation prompted a wave of Tridentine renewal, including a prioritisation of education. As a consequence, an effective parish school system was in place over much of the country by the second half of the century.¹⁶ In many cases chapels served as school houses, and this strengthened the renewed parish structures. A priority was given to education in Episcopal visitations and reports from the 1750s illustrate the importance of schoolmasters as catechists in parish communities. By the turn of the century, there were over 7000 hedge schools accommodating as many as 400,000 pupils. The essential point, in this instance, is that these were pay schools that excluded those who could not afford the master’s fee. In these circumstances, Catholic priests established confraternities, especially the Confraternity of the Christian Doctrine—the equivalent of the Sunday School movement—as an auxiliary to the work of the schools. Moreover, in the wealthier regions of the southeast, the century’s end brought the foundation of a number of free Catholic Schools established by the mercantile philanthropists.

This Tridentine Surge was intensified in the Age of Revolutions (1775–1815), as a consequence of both political circumstances and the evangelical zeal of a new generation of Catholic prelates, typified by John Thomas Troy (1739–1823), the Dominican archbishop of Dublin. In the context of the American Revolutionary War, the British government sponsored a series of relief acts, beginning in 1778, which lifted some of the penal laws restricting the practice of religion and the delivery of Catholic education. This offered unprecedented opportunities, and the subsequent

Catholic revival is reflected in the wave of chapel building that characterised the age. The period also witnessed a flowering of religious life and, in the context of education, the foundation of the Presentation Sisters by Nano Nagle (1775) and the Irish Christian Brothers by Edmund Rice (1802) were to transform the landscape, especially in urban areas where their large free schools were particularly effective in applying the pedagogy of the European Counter-Reformation in an Irish context.¹⁷ These indigenous orders, especially the Christian Brothers, established the archetype for a system of Catholic Nationalist education that became dominant in the century following the Great Famine. At the outset, however, their priority was not, as the traditional historiography suggests, the provision of schooling where none existed. Rather it was to offer an explicitly Catholic education as an alternative to the education provided by free schools, which they accused of proselytism.

III

Nano Nagle's choice of vocation reflected the anxiety of the Catholic elites at the alienation of the poor from the institutional church. Moreover, her Episcopal biographer's description of 'the bleak ignorance' that confronted her at every turn echoed the contemporary preoccupation with the need for the moral reformation of the lower orders.¹⁸ Such sentiments intensified in the course of the French Revolution, which illustrated both the alarming susceptibility of Irish Catholics to the 'French Disease', as conservatives described radical politics, and the tenuous nature of the Church's call on the loyalty of the people, who had ignored the threat of excommunication and embraced the rebel cause in the summer of 1798. From a Protestant perspective, too, the 1798 Rebellion demonstrated the volatility of the island and highlighted the necessity of extending popular elementary education, not merely as a safeguard against future political calamity but also as an engine of social and economic reform in a period where a burgeoning population threatened a Malthusian correction. In this sense, both creeds were enthusiasts of a modernizing agenda that emphasized the bourgeois values of the age: literacy (in English), industry and sobriety.

Edmund Rice (1762–1844) embraced the modernizing ideal and the 'Protestant ethic', but he sought to achieve a distinctly 'Catholic Reformation' through the provision of 'useful education' that would benefit not only the poor but also the Church and State.¹⁹ In Rice's expres-

sion, his Brothers laboured ‘to train up...children in early habits of solid virtue, and to instil in their young minds principles of integrity, veracity and social order’.²⁰ Rice, of course, was not an educationalist, but a successful merchant. His own education was limited, but the routine in his schools reflected a careful borrowing from the innovation of contemporary reformers, including those of Edgeworth, Lancaster and Bell.²¹ Fortunately, too, between 1806 and 1812, a Royal Commission, styled the ‘Board of Education’, produced 14 reports and recommendations on Irish schooling.²² Rice reflected on their conclusions, and on the merits of the schools conducted by the Kildare Place Society and the subsequent National Board, to produce a system visitors to Mount Sion believed contained all that was ‘most practical and useful in recent improvements’.²³ He also drew from memories of his own schooling at the ‘Academy’ in Callan, County Kilkenny, but he radically improved the traditional methods of the ‘hedge schools’ to satisfy the demands of the large numbers his urban schools attracted.²⁴ The influence of the Presentation Sisters was central to his project, too, not simply because of his observations of their ‘little schools’ in Cork and Waterford, but because the Sisters, like his own Brothers, were religious, vowed to the education of the poor.

The Presentation Rule, which Rice’s Brothers adopted in 1802, reflected the influence of Jean-Baptiste de La Salle (1651–1719) who had systematised the pedagogy of the Catholic Reformation that subsequent founders applied across Europe. In the large urban schools of France, his Brothers prepared the children to be good Christians and subjects in an increasingly industrialised society. As Sarah Curtis has observed:

The structure of their school lives, even more than the content of their lessons, emphasised the kind of method and order that employers and notables hoped would result in a well disciplined society and polity.... To them, social order and religious order were fundamentally connected.²⁵

The Catholic elites of nineteenth century Ireland were no different in their expectations, and it was the Christian Brothers’ ability to satisfy these aspirations that won them enthusiastic approval.

The Irish Brothers applied the essence of De La Salle’s teaching manual, *The Conduct of Christian Schools*, but they diverged radically in their use of the ‘mutual’ or monitorial system that had been developed by Lancaster and Bell. Critics argued that children could learn little from a ‘monitor’, but they were taught discipline and the system was inexpensive.²⁶ This

was an important consideration for philanthropists and the providers of large-scale education; Bishop Moylan's Charitable Committee in Cork, for example, was particularly attracted by what its minutes refer to as 'Mr Lancaster's cheap mode of instruction'.²⁷ The Presentation Sisters used it in their schools, but the French Brothers considered this English novelty a Protestant anathema, which would undermine the critical influence of the master in the traditional 'simultaneous' system.²⁸ Rice's clever mixing of the two methods of teaching, however, resulted in a hybrid system that contemporaries described as an improvement on Lancaster's methods.²⁹

In time, these innovations were institutionalised in the Brothers' *Manual of School Government*.³⁰ Published in 1845, it was both a compendium of best practice and a distillation of the lessons learned since the Order's foundation.³¹ It outlined in the 'minutest detail' the essentials Brothers required in order to 'discharge systematically and efficiently the important duty of instruction'.³² Such compendia were vital to the maintenance of an efficient system that prized 'perfect uniformity' above 'capricious novelty'.³³ Standardisation, moreover, facilitated the frequent transfer of brothers from one school to another and enabled the congregation's schools to function as a unit. Significantly, too, uniformity reduced competition and conflict amongst Brothers and it made it easier for the weaker teachers, with little formal training, to function within a highly regulated system.³⁴ The *Manual*, in turn, provided the inspiration for the teaching guides of the Sisters of Charity and other orders, while in England, the first Inspector of Catholic Schools reported that the Brothers' system was the model for most of the 105 schools he inspected in 1849.³⁵

IV

Every minute of the school day, from nine to three o'clock, was prearranged and energies were directed towards the 'salvation of...children' and their formation as 'good practical Catholics'.³⁶ A striking clock was consciously placed in each class as a vital preparation for the time-discipline of the industrial age.³⁷ There was no opportunity for idleness and the constant activity of the children was regulated with military precision, assisted by the efficient use of a wooden clicker, or 'signal', which contributed to the robotic obedience of the exercise.³⁸ Teachers 'spoke little and in a whispering or low tone', while the 'signal' facilitated the maintenance of silence and order, which was considered the hallmark of effective teaching.³⁹ The boys were taught in variations of the 'two room system', depending on the size of the school. In the lower room they

learned ‘spelling, reading and writing on slates’, while the upper room was reserved for the more advanced scholars.⁴⁰ Normally, there was more than one Brother in each room, and the spatial arrangements of the classrooms were carefully prescribed to accommodate large numbers and to maximise his moral influence. From a raised platform, the Brother exercised a Foucauldian surveillance that characterised early-modern schooling and prepared children for the discipline of employment.⁴¹ Moreover, within this choreographed context, the Brother himself became ‘a silent by-stander and inspector’, and the obedience of the children was not to him personally but to the rules, thus the children were provided with a transferable respect for authority that they carried through life.⁴²

In a radical departure from traditional practice, Edmund Rice hoped to educate through a ‘spirit of love rather than fear’.⁴³ This was an ambitious aspiration in an age where Irish schools was frequently harsh and brutal, as recorded in the *First Report of the Commissioners of Irish Education Inquiry* (1825), which describes instances of savage brutality, including the use of horse whips by masters.⁴⁴ By contrast, the Brothers aspired to remove ‘as much as possible, everything like corporal punishment’ from their schools, and relied instead on intuitive and emotional means of securing order that had been pioneered by contemporary reformers.⁴⁵ Rice banned the use of ‘whipping’ and allowed only for ‘slight punishments’ for ‘very serious faults’.⁴⁶ Successive visitors and Government reports noted that the Brothers seldom resorted to physical punishment but relied instead on a system of rewards, premiums, ‘humiliations’ and other chastisements.⁴⁷ However, corporal punishment was never entirely banished from the schools. In his memoir, for instance, Edward O’Flynn, who had been a student in Cork’s ‘North Mon’ in the late 1840s, recalled Br John Wiseman, a former civil engineer and author of several of the Brothers’ celebrated textbooks, punishing a liar by chasing ‘the victim round the school, caning him at the same time’.⁴⁸ Moreover, successive revisions of the Brothers’ Rule and teaching manuals brought a dilution of Rice’s original prohibition, which suggests both a philosophical shift and perhaps an increase in the incidence of corporal punishment within the schools.

V

This regimented system nurtured the dispositions employers expected in their workers. ‘Good habits’ had been a constant theme of educational discourse of the eighteenth century, but in the reforming agenda, the contemporary ‘ideology of the schools’ religious training assumed para-

mount importance. The Brothers sought to shape the behavioural traits of students, but especially to develop character, to infuse internalised moral regulation and self-discipline.⁴⁹ The English tourists, Mr and Mrs Hall on their visit to Waterford's Mount Sion in 1840, noted that the masters' greatest concern was the 'training of the affections the manners and the habits' of the boys.⁵⁰ Indeed, the *Manual* asserted that this formation 'may prove of much greater advantage to them than their literary or scientific attainments', but that without it boys would remain 'unfit for the commonest duties of society'.⁵¹

The Brothers' formation extended to the physical appearance of the boys and each day began with a cleanliness inspection. This preparation for employment included training in diction, posture and deportment. Above all, the system sought to engender self-control—the quality most admired by the middle classes—in children who might otherwise have been running wild through the streets. In the Brothers' schools children were socialised to behave with 'modesty and decorum... Rude and disorderly conduct' was forbidden and teachers were to correct the boys' 'awkward and clownish habits'. They were taught to 'sit, stand, move, and address a person with the modesty, gracefulness, and propriety', which polite society expected.⁵²

The school curriculum reflected a similar modernizing tendency in its orientation towards the demands of an increasingly commercialised society that required a literate workforce. Exaggerated claims have been made for the scope of the education offered by the first Brothers, as instanced by Normoyle's assertion that 'Edmund Rice gave a graded teaching from the lowest primary level to a complete secondary education'.⁵³ At one level this is correct, but it requires qualification. The vast majority of students remained only a short time at Rice's schools, and even then, attendance was frustrated by the cycles of the agricultural year and the counter attractions of the city.⁵⁴ The 1837 returns for Hanover Street School in Dublin, for instance, cite the enrolment as 550, yet 'counting those who are obliged to be frequently absent', the average daily attendance at the school was 480.⁵⁵

There were bitter critics like James Bicheno who claimed that the chief instruction given by the Brothers was 'bad writing, bad reading and tolerable arithmetic' (1830).⁵⁶ Yet in his evidence before a Select Committee of the House of Lords (1837), Rev. George Dwyer, rector of Ardrahan, hailed the schools in Mill Street, Dublin, and Cork as the 'most perfect

schools' he had ever been in. There he witnessed 'the most extraordinary progress...made by children', but he was especially struck by the Brothers' flexible delivery of what might be now be called child-centred curriculum.⁵⁷ The Rector's evidence was corroborated by Edward O'Flynn, a student at the North Monastery in the late 1840s, who recalled an equally pragmatic approach:

the master would always find out what a new boy's parents would want him to be, so as to get a suitable education, so as not to be wasting time on things he could do without, for it was uncertain when they would be taken away to business.⁵⁸

Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Hall, who toured Ireland in 1840, noted that the Brothers offered boys 'an education suited exactly to their condition in life'.⁵⁹ Such practicality was entirely consistent with the Brothers' original aim, which was, in Br Austin Grace's expression, the provision of 'a suitable education, to qualify [boys] for business and the various departments of commercial life'.⁶⁰ Practicality was the hallmark of the system. Indeed Rice's retention of a tailor at Mount Sion reflects a desire to not just to clothe the poor, but to dress them for their employment by the shopkeepers, merchants and tradesmen of the city.⁶¹ An additional feature of their schools was the maintenance of a lending library of improving books, which the boys were encouraged to read to their parents at night. By 1822, for instance, the lending library at Hanover Street contained over 1000 books, including practical manuals, such as Michael Donovan's *Domestic Economy* (1830), which contained chapters on brewing and distilling—vital occupations in Dublin's inner-city.⁶² This was the vocational preparation required by the children of the poor; basic numeracy, literacy in English and the necessary social skills to function in an increasingly bourgeois society.

Methodism has been described as 'the midwife of social and political progress', on account of the self-discipline, order and organisational skills it brought to the working classes in England and Wales.⁶³ Similarly in Ireland, the Brothers instilled in their pupils the virtues of discipline, hard-work and sobriety. These values were at the core of their programme and were celebrated by contemporary commentators. Richard Ryland, in spite of his hostility to the 'unhappy' Catholic ethos of the schools, expressed satisfaction for the work of the Christian Brothers.

They have already impressed upon the lower classes a character which hitherto was unknown to them: and in the number of intelligent and respectable tradesmen, clerks and servants which they have sent forth, bear the most unquestionable testimony to the public services of Edmund Rice.⁶⁴

However, Ryland's identification of the 'unhappy' ethos touched on the heart of Rice's ambition, which was not the provision of education where none existed, but rather the establishment of an explicitly Catholic education. Indeed, in many cases, Rice opened schools with the specific intention of replacing existing schools that, if not overtly proselytising, were neutral on the business of salvation. In the view of one contemporary, Rice's mission was not simply the material improvement of his scholars but rather his desire to see them 'godly'.⁶⁵ Such sentiments were clearly articulated in his correspondence, while the Rule and teaching *Manual* were unambiguous in their definition of the Brothers' purpose.⁶⁶ Essentially, the system was an attempt to adapt European Catholic pedagogy to the particular needs of the Irish Church. And just as the secular instruction in the Brothers' schools sought to foster internalised self-discipline, so too, the catechesis was directed towards the formation of religious dispositions and a commitment to the Catholic way of life.

To this end, each school day began with an elaborate morning offering and, in keeping with the tradition of the continental orders, the entire day was punctuated with the recitation of the Hail Mary on the strike of every hour, A half hour was set aside each day for a formal catechesis, which Rice believed was 'the most salutary part of the system'.⁶⁷ Yet while this lesson was isolated for formal instruction, the entire day was run through with a Catholic ethos. Indeed, Rice's concern for the whole man gave the system its 'mixed character', where religion and the secular subjects were integrated, and taught side-by-side, in contrast to the 'separate' instruction of the technically non-denominational national schools. It was this fundamental difference, in fact, which set the Brothers on a collision course with the national schools and led Rice to withdraw his schools after a short flirtation with the system.

It was not enough to teach the children Christian Doctrine; the Brothers sought to inspire devotion to the church. This was no mean task because, contrary to the popular notion that Catholicism embraced the Irish of all classes, the poor were often alienated from the institutional Church. If, as Magray argues, 'Catholicism had to be taught aggressively to the majority of the population', the Brother's system was designed to meet that challenge.⁶⁸

The Presentation Rule laid down that the Brothers should accustom the children to ‘think and speak reverently of God and holy things’; they were not to be over-curious in their questioning, but rather to ‘captivate their understanding in obedience to faith’.⁶⁹ The schools sought to foster an internalised obedience to the Church. Children learned ‘to honour and respect their parents and superiors’, but emphasis on the special reverence due to priests brought criticism that the system cultivated ‘ready instruments for the priests’ domination’.⁷⁰ They were also taught to examine their conscience in preparation for Confession, and Rice’s system provided for the regular reception of the sacraments.⁷¹ The *Manual*, for instance, contained a pro forma school register that included columns in which the boys’ monthly Confession and Communion were to be recorded.⁷² As the century progressed, preparation for First Communion and Confirmation assumed increasing importance, and often the sacraments marked the end of primary school and the beginning of pupils’ working lives.⁷³ Yet, while religion appears to dominate the day, the focus was less intense than in many Protestant Bible schools where frequently the only reading allowed was from the Bible.⁷⁴ Neither did the Brothers’ regime include the de La Salle and Presentation Sisters’ practice of daily Mass for the children.

Inevitably, given these emphases, Edmund Rice’s system was not without its critics. Few challenged his pedagogical method, but most rounded on the religious ethos of the schools and the perpetuation of ‘popish superstition’. The traveller, Henry Inglis’ observations were typical of many:

The most important institution I visited [in Waterford] was a Catholic school at which upwards of 700 children were instructed...although I am far from questioning the motives of the founder Mr Rice or the young men who thus made a sacrifice of themselves, yet I cannot regard favourably an institution under such tuition. I know too much of Catholicism in other countries to doubt that intellectual training will be made very secondary to theological instruction...I would rather not see a system of education extensively pursued in which the inculcation of popish tenets forms so chief a part’.⁷⁵

Writing in 1825, one observer condemned the Brothers’ schools as ‘the most intolerant and mischievous which any individual or society has attempted to mask under the disguise of Christian instruction’.⁷⁶ Bicheno, too, held up the Brothers’ schools to demonstrate ‘how little likelihood there was of Protestants and Catholics joining cordially in the cause of education’.⁷⁷

VI

It is ironic that the Christian Brothers brought the pedagogy of the Counter Reformation to Ireland in the context of what has been called the ‘Second Reformation’ there.⁷⁸ The religious revival that characterised the early years of the nineteenth century was not confined to the Catholic Church, nor was it simply an Irish phenomenon. This was part of a wider renewal that had swept Great Britain and Ireland, dramatically transforming the religious landscape in the process. In Britain one consequence of the revival was a renewed interest in missionary activity and the Catholics of Ireland were as attractive a target for evangelisation as the ‘heathens’ of Africa or India.⁷⁹ With this task in mind a plethora of missionary societies were formed in Ireland, the more important of which included the Hibernian Bible Society (1806), the Irish Society for Promoting the Education of the Native Irish through the Medium of their own Language (Irish Society) (1818) and the Scripture Readers’ Society (1822).

The Methodists were among the first to enter the great crusade. John Wesley made his first of 21 visits to Ireland in 1747. By 1809, there were 12 Methodist missionaries working in 6 areas, while ten years later 21 missionaries worked in 14 stations dotted around the country. Like many of the other missionaries, Methodists believed their task in Ireland was not simply one of conversion. This was an opportunity to civilise Ireland, to bring the gospel to the deluded Irish peasantry and in so doing, the problems of the island could be solved. More than this, the Methodists looked upon Ireland as the centre of a worldwide conflict between heretical Catholicism and biblical Protestantism.⁸⁰ In this environment, religious rivalry and conflict increasingly became the norm as resurgent Catholicism clashed headlong with evangelical Protestantism and, more often than not, that antagonism was centred on the education question. Since their first arrival, the provision of schools had formed a vital part of the evangelical crusade. The Bible societies established schools in which free education was offered to all those who were prepared to accept religious instruction. With financial assistance from the Treasury, these bodies set up free schools in places that had previously lacked educational facilities and often they attracted pupils away from nearby pay schools. The Societies were most active in poorer areas, urban centres such as the teeming Liberties of Dublin, or counties such as Cavan or Mayo, where the Catholic revival was less advanced.⁸¹ This trend was particularly evident in Co. Clare where the London Hibernian Society had over 80 schools with 1000 Catholic children on their rolls.⁸²

The Catholic bishops enlisted the support of the Brothers in these 'Bible Wars'. There were structural issues, however, which limited the flexibility of their response. From the outset, they had been a diocesan congregation. Each community of the Institute, though united by a common founder and vision, was an independent foundation subject only to the bishop of the diocese. In time the weakness of this system became apparent, since the evangelicals were particularly active outside the areas of the Brothers' traditional influence. In the crisis, the Archbishop of Dublin proposed an amalgamation of the various communities and urged Rice to seek papal approval for a new Rule and constitutions that would enable the transfer of men from diocese to diocese. An application followed and, in 1820, Pope Pius established the Brothers as a Pontifical Congregation under the authority of a Superior General.

This reform increased the flexibility of the Brothers in their opposition to militant Protestantism. They proved particularly effective in the cities where their innovative system was applied with satisfactory results. In terms of enrolment, these big schools, run by the Brothers, were equivalent to 10 or 12 smaller schools. In Archbishop Murray's Dublin parish there were no fewer than 36 Protestant free schools attended by upwards of 1000 Catholic children. To counteract these, Rice opened a school in Jervis Street in 1828.⁸³ A similar role, of course, was performed by the teaching sisters in their inner-city schools, and there is evidence of practical collaboration between the male and female religious orders. By the 1820s the Brothers had 'perfected' their system of education, but in Dublin the Sisters of Charity faced a daunting task at their new school in Gardiner Street, where the 'children were first subdued before they were taught'.⁸⁴ Towards that end, Mary Aikenhead, foundress of the Irish Sisters of Charity, sought assistance from Br Bernard Duggan, principal of the Jervis Street school. The convent annals record his efforts and present a vivid account of the Brother's frantic activity in the classroom, which was a far cry from the impressions formed from a reading of the Christian Brothers' *Manual* (1845) he had written, with its emphasis upon the robotic silence of the master. The convent annalist remarked how Duggan, a small and frail brother, 'had to whistle and shout to secure' silence in the classroom, but that he soon took charge'.⁸⁵

During the Great Famine (1845–1850), decades later, the 'Biblical' threat was keenly felt. In that context, the Brothers were particularly active in the urban ghettos which became the refuge of the hungry poor, and there they opposed what became known as 'souperism', or the phenomenon

of Catholics abandoning their faith in return for the ‘soup’ offered by certain Protestant charities.⁸⁶ Indeed, the Brothers’ decision to establish a foundation at Francis Street, Dublin (1846), was a direct response to the intrigues of ‘perverters’ who ‘with meal and money bags...tempt[ed] the poor to forfeit their glorious birthright in Heaven’.⁸⁷ Similar motives brought the Christian Brothers to Dingle (1848), where, according to Father Philip Dowley CM, the ‘demon of heresy’ had induced ‘hundreds of the ignorant poor’ to sell their souls ‘to the devil by outwardly renouncing the faith of their Fathers’.⁸⁸ In Kerry, the Brothers worked not just in the school, but they also accompanied the Vincentian ‘missioners’ to the remote parts of the county, translating, catechizing and seeking out apostates.⁸⁹

VII

The Christian Brothers were characterised by one Protestant critic as a ‘fraternity...as exclusive and mischievous as it is well possible to conceive’.⁹⁰ This assessment was not without foundation, and amongst certain Catholic commentators, too, there was a sense that the Brothers were at the extreme of opinion. The experience of the ‘Bible Wars’ had placed them in a Counter Reformationary role, but it might be argued that this was not merely accidental, but in their essence. Certainly, Edmund Rice took his inspiration from the saints of the Catholic Reformation. He was particularly influenced by his patron Ignatius of Loyola, and in practical ways his fledgling congregation mediated the Counter-Reformationary pedagogy of De La Salle and his contemporaries to Ireland. In many regards, the Brothers were in advance of Catholic Ireland in this regard. Certainly, the confidence of the Christian Brothers was at odds of the mildness of Archbishop Murray and the liberal bishops of the early nineteenth century. So it was, for instance, that the Brother’s ideological rejection of the mixed-approach National Schools brought stern criticism and rejection from Episcopal quarters, effectively halting the expansion of the congregation. Neither were the bishops enamoured by the papal status extended to the congregation by Pope Pius VII, and issues of authority would impede their relationships with the episcopate.

The consecration of Paul Cullen as Archbishop of Armagh in 1850, however, brought a radical change in the character of the Irish Church, creating an environment more receptive to the Brothers’ zeal.⁹¹ From his first tentative steps at Mount Sion, Edmund Rice had promoted the peda-

gogy of the European Counter Reformation as a radical voice within the Irish church. However, in the context of the ‘Devotional Revolution’, and the subsequent Catholic Ascendancy that endured for a century and more, the uncompromising confidence of the Brothers set the standard for Catholic Education that nurtured and was synonymous with the Catholic-Nationalist character of the age.⁹²

NOTES

1. D. Keogh, *Edmund Rice and the First Christian Brothers* (Dublin, 2009).
2. Edmund Burke, Letter to Sir Hercules Langrishe, (1792), in P.J. Stanlis [Ed.], *Edmund Burke; selected writings and speeches* (New York, 1963), 319.
3. See the excellent survey of the Penal Laws by I. McBride in his *Eighteenth Century Ireland* (Dublin, 2009), 194–214.
4. 28 Henry VIII, c. 15.
5. C. Lennon, ‘Education: 1500–1600’, in J. S. Donnelly et al [Eds.], *Encyclopaedia of Irish History and Culture*, I, (New York, 2004), 186; ‘Education and religious identity in early-modern Ireland’, *Pedagogica Historica: international journal of the history of education, Supplementary series* 5 (1999), 57–75.
6. L.W.B. Brockliss, ‘The Irish Colleges on the continent and the creation of an educated clergy’, in T. O’Connor and M. A. Lyons [Eds.], *The Ulster Earls and Baroque Europe* (Dublin, 2010), 142–65.
7. A. Clarke, ‘“Varieties of uniformity”: the first century of the Church of Ireland’, *Studies in Church History*, 24 (1989), 105.
8. T. Corcoran, *Education Systems in Ireland from the close of the Middle Ages* (Dublin, 1928), xv–xx.
9. N. Ó Ciosain, *Print and Popular Culture in Ireland, 1750–1850* (London, 1997), 96–97.
10. M. E. Daly, ‘The development of the national school system, 1831–40’, in A. Cosgrove and D. Mc Cartney (Eds), *Studies in Irish History presented to R. Dudley Edwards*, (Dublin, 1979), 150–63.
11. S. J. Connolly, *Religion, Law, and Power: The Making of Protestant Ireland 1660–1760* (Oxford, 1992), 288.
12. ‘Report on the State of Popery in Ireland, 1731: Diocese of Tuam’, *Archivium Hibernicum*, Vol. 3 (1914), 127.
13. Quoted in the Third Report of the Commissioners for enquiring into the State of all Schools on Public or Charitable Foundations, in Ireland, in *Reports (Ireland) from Commissioners, Session 4 November—30 July, 1813–1814*, 15.

14. H. K. Kahn, 'Objects of Raging Detestation: the Charter Schools', *History Ireland*, March/April (2011), 27–7.
15. *Speech of Thomas Wyse...on moving leave to bring in a bill for establishing a board of National Education* (Dublin, 1835), 15.
16. H. Fenning, 'John Kent's Report on the State of the Irish Mission 1742', *Archivium Hibernicum*, Vol. 28, (1966), 59–102
17. M. P. Magray *The Transforming Power of the Nuns: Women, Religion, and Cultural Change in Ireland, 1750–1900* (Oxford, 1998); D. Keogh, *Edmund Rice and the First Christian Brothers* (Dublin, 2008).
18. Bishop Coppinger of Cloyne, cited in T.J. Walsh, *Nano Nagle and the Presentation Sisters* (Dublin, 1959), 42.
19. Edmund Rice to the Holy See, n.d. [Autumn 1819], APF, SORCG, Vol. 926, F., 146–48.
20. Edmund Rice, North Richmond Street Appeal, n.d. [1829?], APF, S.C., Irlanda, 1828–34, vol. 25, f., 748.
21. Maria Edgeworth (1768–1849) author of *Practical Education* (1796). Joseph Lancaster (1778–1838) and Andrew Bell (1753–1832) founders of the Monitorial System of instruction.
22. H. Hislop, 'The 1806–12 Board of Education and non-denominational education in Ireland', *Oideas, Journal of the Department of Education*, vol. 40 (Spring 1993), 48–61.
23. Mr and Mrs S. C. Hall, *Ireland: its scenery and character*, 3 vols, (London, 1841), I, 305. Mount Sion, Waterford, site of Rice's first school founded 1802.
24. T. Corcoran, *Education Systems of Ireland*, xxi.
25. S. A. Curtis, *Educating the Faithful: Religion, Schooling and Society in Nineteenth Century France* (Illinois, 2000), 84.
26. M. Sturt, *The Education of the People: A History of Primary Education in England and Wales in the Nineteenth century* (London, 1967), 24–35.
27. Cork Poor Schools Committee, 10 Jan. 1806, PBGA, Charitable Soc. Minute Book, E 32.
28. J.E. Kent, "The Educational Ideas of Edmund Rice Founder of the Presentation and Christian Brothers" (Masters' thesis, National University of Ireland, Cork, 1988), 87–90; S.A. Curtis, *Educating the Faithful*, 97.
29. Cork Poor Schools Committee, 18 July 1815, Presentation Brothers General Archive, Cork, Cork Charitable Soc. Minute Book, 85B.
30. M. P. Riordan, T. J. Hearn, J. B. Duggan, *A Manual of School Government; being a complete analysis of the system of education pursued in the Christian Schools. Designed chiefly for the junior members of the society*, (Dublin, 1845). Hereafter *Manual*.
31. W. Gillespie, *The Christian Brothers in England 1825–1880* (Bath, 1975), 26.

32. *Manual*, 3.
33. *Ibid.*, 4.
34. S.A. Curtis, *Educating the Faithful*, 96.
35. *Ibid*, 189; *The Catholic School*, vol. II, 1, (Aug. 1850), 48 cited in Gillespie, *The Christian Brothers in England*, 29.
36. *Manual*, 7. J. D. Fitzpatrick, 'Edmund Rice: religious instructor of the poor', in *Christian Brothers Education Record* (1958), 58.
37. Edmund Rice to Thomas Bray, 9 May 1810, Cashel Diocesan Archive, Bray Papers, 1810/21; E. P. Thompson, 'Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism', *Past and Present*, No. 38. (Dec. 1967), 56–97.
38. John F. Murray, cited in *Testimonies to the Efficiency and Excellence of Roman Catholic Schools conducted by religious teachers...*(London, 1849), 46.
39. Br P.J. Leonard to Frère Guillaume, 29 Oct. 1829, DLPGA, EN 411/2/2/3; *Manual*, 13.
40. Edmund Rice to Thomas Bray, 8 May 1810, CDA, Bray Papers 1810/21.
41. *Manual*, 9; Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, (New York, 1977).
42. D. Hogan, 'The Market Revolution and Disciplinary Power: Joseph Lancaster and the Psychology of the Early Classroom System', in *History of Education Quarterly*, vol. 29, No. 3, (1989), 408.
43. Br Thomas Grosvenor to Fr Joseph Dunn, 24 June 1814, CBGA, 07/0064.
44. *First Report of the Commissioners of Irish Education Inquiry*, H. C., 1825 (400), XII. I, 16–20.
45. Br Thomas Grosvenor to Fr Joseph Dunn, 24 June 1814, CBGA, 07/0064
46. Br Thomas Grosvenor to Fr Joseph Dunn, 24 June 1814, CBGA, 07/0064; Edmund Rice to Thomas Bray, 9 May 1810, Cashel Diocesan Archive, Bray Papers 1800/10.
47. B. Coldrey, 'A Most Unenviable Reputation': the Christian Brothers and School Discipline over two centuries', *Oideas*, no. 38 (1992), 114–33.
48. Edward O'Flynn, cited in W. A. O'Hanlon, 'Brother Thomas John Wiseman and his contemporaries', *Christian Brothers Education Record* (1980), 147. 'North Mon' is a colloquialism for North Monastery Secondary School, Cork, founded 1811.
49. D. Hogan, 'The Market Revolution and Disciplinary Power: Joseph Lancaster and the Psychology of the Early Classroom System', in *History of Education Quarterly*, vol. 29, No. 3, (1989), 408.
50. Hall, *Ireland its Scenery and Character*, I, 306.
51. *Manual*, 15.
52. *Manual*, 16–17; 206–207.
53. M.C. Normoyle, *A Tree is Planted*, (1976), 55.

54. J.E. Kent, 'The Educational Ideas', 50
55. Hanover Street Returns (1837), DDA, 33/5/55.
56. *Report on the State of the Poor*; 385, H.C., 1830 (667) VII.I.
57. *Report of the Select Committee of the House of Lords on the Plan of Education in Ireland; with minutes of evidence*; H. L. 1837 (543—I), VIII, 1245.
58. Cited in J.E. Kent, 'The Educational Ideas', 51.
59. Hall, *Ireland its Scenery and Character*, I, 306.
60. John Grace, 1828, Preston Scrap Book, Jesuit Archives English Province, cited in Donal Blake, 'John Austin Grace (1800–1886) educator', (PhD, University of Hull, 1986), 107.
61. Hall, *Ireland its Scenery and Character*, I, 306; Cork Poor Schools Committee, 26 Jan. 1812, PBGA, Charitable Soc. Minute Book, 69A.
62. List of Books purchased for Hanover Street School Library, 1832–1837, DDA, 33/5/5.
63. David Hempton, *The Religion of the People; Methodism and Popular Religion c. 1750–1900* (London, 1996).
64. Ryland, *The History, Topography and Antiquities of the County and City of Waterford*, 187–188.
65. Stephen Curtis, *Waterford Freeman*, 10 Sept. 1845.
66. *Manual*, 7.
67. Edmund Rice to Thomas Bray, 9 May 1810, CDA, Bray Papers 1810/21.
68. M.P. Magray, *The Transforming power of the Nuns*, 3.
69. Hickey [Ed.], 'Presentation Rule', Christian Brothers Education Record (1981), 162.
70. *Ibid.*; J. C. Colouhoun, *The System of National Education in Ireland* (Cheltenham, 1838), 64.
71. Edmund Rice to Thomas Bray, 9 May 1810, CDA, Bray Papers, 1810/21.
72. *Manual*, 181.
73. S.A. Curtis, *Educating the Faithful*, 92.
74. Donal Blake, 'John Austin Grace', 46.
75. H. D. Inglis, *Ireland in 1834: a journey through Ireland, in the spring, summer and autumn of 1834*, ii (London, 1834), 65–66.
76. W. Phelan and M. O'Sullivan, *Practical Observations on the First Report of the Commissioners on Irish Education* (London, 1826), 33.
77. J.E. Bicheno, *Ireland and its Economy*, (1830), 280.
78. I. Whelan, *The Bible War in Ireland: the "Second Reformation" and the Polarization of Protestant-Catholic Relations, 1800–1840* (Madison, 2005), *passim*.
79. See J. Liechty, 'The popular reformation comes to Ireland: the case of John Walker and the foundation of the Church of God 1804' in R.V. Comerford [Ed.], *Religion, Conflict and Co-existence in Ireland* (Dublin, 1990), 159–87.

80. D. Hempton, 'The Methodist Crusade in Ireland, 1795–1845', *IHS* (1980), 36.
81. M.E. Daly, 'The development of the national school system, 1831–1840', 154.
82. *D.E.P.*, 27 April 1824 in I. Murphy, 'Some attitudes to religious freedom and ecumenism in pre-emancipation Ireland' in *Irish Ecclesiastical Record* (1966), 101.
83. D.V. Kelleher, 'A timely restorer of faith and hope in Ireland', in Carroll (Ed.), *A Man Raised Up*, 108.
84. M.P. Magray, *Transforming Power*, 97.
85. Annals of the Congregation, 1828–1830, SOC/M, cited in M.P. Magray, *Transforming Power*, 97; [A member of the Congregation], *The Life and works of Mary Aikenhead* (Dublin, 1924), 106.
86. See M. Moffatt, *Soupers & Jumpers; The Protestant Missions in Connemara, 1848–1937*, (Dublin, 2008).
87. *The Tablet*, 14 Sept. 1854; *Synge Street Annual, 1946–7* (Dublin, 1947), 4.
88. P. Dowley CM, 30 Nov. 1846, cited in E. Larkin, 'The Parish Mission Movement, 1850–1880', in B. Bradshaw and D. Keogh (Eds), *Christianity in Ireland* (Dublin, 2000), 197.
89. 'Proselytism in Dingle—Measures to counteract it', Undated Broadsheet (1849?), CBGA, 035/0406; Br. P.J. Murphy to T. Kirby, Irish College Archive, Rome, Kirby Papers/721
90. J.E. Gordon cited in Normoyle, *A Tree is Planted*, 62
91. D. Keogh and A. McDonnell (Eds.), *Cardinal Paul Cullen and His World* (Dublin, 2011).
92. E. Larkin, 'The Devotional Revolution in Ireland, 1850–75', *The American Historical Review*. Vol. 77, No. 3 (Jun., 1972), 625–652; B. M. Coldrey, *Faith and Fatherland: the Christian Brothers and the Development of Irish Nationalism, 1838–1921* (Dublin, 1988).

Girls at School in Nineteenth-Century Ireland

Jane McDermid

This chapter focuses on the formal education of girls in Ireland, both working and middle class, in the century between the 1801 Act of Union and the death of Queen Victoria in 1901. Historians such as Mary Cullen, Susan Parkes and Deirdre Raftery have established that gender—as a social and cultural determinant of what, where, why and how girls were educated—was a key influence on female education in Ireland.¹ Their work has also revealed that, while gender was not the only, or always the primary, factor affecting girls' education, it was almost always in the mix with religion, politics, social class, and family values and needs.

While Ireland had been incorporated into the British state after the brutal suppression of the 1798 Rebellion, religion remained a fundamental factor in the way Ireland was governed. Outside of the Presbyterian-dominated north, Ireland was predominantly Catholic but the country was subject to a Protestant Anglo-Irish Ascendancy even after disestablishment of the Church by an Act of 1869. Concern for social and political stability after the Union of 1801 prompted interest in educational reform for all social classes and for girls as well as boys. Another major impetus for reform was philanthropy, which was often closely tied to religion, and for a significant number of mostly middle-class female reformers this reflected a desire to improve the position of women in society.² Not all the

J. McDermid (✉)
Southampton University, Southampton, UK

reformers saw themselves as feminists, but the majority of known campaigners belonged to Protestant faiths. This indirectly raises the crucial role of female religious in the education of Catholic girls, which in turn highlights the limited public role available to middle-class Catholic lay women in the period.³

It also highlights the centrality of gender expectations of girls and women that, regardless of religion, lay at the basis of debates on female education in this period. My earlier work on female education in nineteenth-century Scotland examined the relationship between gender, class and nationality and concluded that, while the myth of the 'democratic intellect' was thoroughly masculine and Presbyterian, nationality was a key determinant for girls as well as boys.⁴ A subsequent comparative study, however, revealed that, while still mediated by social class and religion, gender expectations were fundamental to girls' schooling across the constituent parts of the UK.⁵ Whatever the differences between, and within, Ireland, Wales, Scotland and England, the similarities in female educational experiences were just as striking.

Underpinning the belief in the ideal that woman's place was in the home was the role of education in preparing girls for that domestic future. Yet although the ideology of domesticity was meant to apply to women in general, it was assumed that female virtue was also firmly rooted in the social hierarchy and educationalists saw it as a middle-class duty to inculcate their values among their social inferiors. There was always an aspect of social control: a large part of the thinking behind the imperative to provide a significant component of domestic skills in the elementary education for the daughters of the poor was that they would raise the standards of discipline as well as comfort in their homes, which would contribute to harmony in wider society. This emphasis on domesticity in the schooling of girls showed the role, circumscribed but deemed essential, which it was hoped they would play in achieving this, but there were other influences on the curriculum. By mid-century economic and demographic changes, notably with the impact (both immediate and long-term) of the Great Famine, meant that basic literacy and numeracy were increasingly relevant skills in securing paid employment for working-class girls as well as boys. The Famine saw decreased employment rates of girls and women in agriculture and an increased rate of female emigration so that schools offered skills that would make them attractive workers, notably in domestic service, which was the biggest employer of women.⁶

Whereas a girl's future was deemed to be domestic, serving home and family, daughters of the poor were expected to work, at least before marriage. If the financial necessity of this was reluctantly acknowledged, it was also felt that close contact with employers from further up the social scale would be beneficial for poor girls. In contrast, the expectation persisted that ladies should not have to work for a living so that the growing numbers of middle-class women who sought employment in the later Victorian period faced a very limited range of low-paid occupations, which some reformers argued was even more restricted than that afforded the poor. Even for those ladies who worked for a living, adherence in some way to the domestic ideal was necessary to maintain respectability, while advances in their education did not immediately lead to improved job opportunities.⁷

Thus, the ideology of domesticity was to be applied in different ways according to social status. Those who advocated the centrality of domestic subjects in the schooling of lower class girls rejected such a narrowly vocational curriculum in the education of women of their own social standing. School would provide poor girls with grounding in domestic skills that would, at least indirectly, fit them for domestic service where the training by the mistress would in turn reinforce the domestic ideal (and crucially the associated skills) in preparation for married life in a humbler household. In larger urban centres, as Oonagh Walsh has shown for Dublin, there were also establishments that concentrated on instruction in domestic subjects aimed, in particular, at rural girls.⁸

In contrast, for the middle-class girl, education was a means of preparing her first to be an amiable companion to her husband and then for a public, specifically philanthropic, role based on the domestic virtues that the unmarried as well as the married could usefully fulfil. Victorian feminists insisted that only a serious academic education, one as rigorous as that provided in the best schools available to middle-class boys, could ensure ladies were equipped for their particular domestic future. Hence, whereas the domestic sphere for the lower-class woman was the home, her socially (and by implication morally) superior sister was expected to infuse her local community with her moral values. Thus, as will be seen in the next two sections, whereas the starting-point in improving the schooling of the poor remained at the elementary stage, reformers of middle-class girls' education began with secondary and quickly moved on to higher education.

SCHOOLING POOR GIRLS

As histories of education emphasise, state intervention in the formal schooling of working-class children was implemented first in Ireland in 1831, which is related to the efforts to incorporate Ireland formally as a member of the United Kingdom while still regarding it essentially as a colony.⁹ Yet even before the Union, there were concerns about the schooling of the poor. Calls for reform reflected both the particular situation in Ireland as well as anxieties related to gender, religion and social class that were shared with the rest of the United Kingdom. There was also the assumption that English was the language of a superior Protestant culture, one essential for a burgeoning economy. Educational reform was, therefore, to be a means of transforming Ireland, and a long established but small-scale effort had evolved over several decades through various Protestant voluntary actions. One example were the charter schools that, since 1733, had aimed to ‘convert and civilize the native (Popish) Irish’: both masters and mistresses were to instruct the children in English, in the principles of the Protestant (Anglican) religion, in virtue and industry, in husbandry and housewifery and in manual occupations appropriate to their sex, which would enable them to support themselves. In addition, the girls were to be taught domestic skills such as plain sewing, knitting and household tasks. They were expected not only to make and mend their own clothes—the ragged appearance of poor women and their children was taken as evidence of inadequate domestic skills—but also to produce and maintain all the stockings of the charter school pupils.¹⁰ By the end of the century, however, it was regretfully acknowledged that not all girls wanted to learn sewing, particularly in urban schools, with many preferring to buy clothes from a shop.¹¹ While such philanthropic schools for the poor placed particular emphasis on the domestic training of girls, the commissioners who reported on the state of popular education in 1825 noted approvingly that boys in some charter schools were taught to knit stockings and repair their own clothes and shoes; but whereas these were skills that might benefit them as employable adults, they were not intended to prepare them to make good husbands in the way that domestic skills were to prepare the girls for their proper role as wife and mother.¹²

Charter schools, and others provided by a variety of Protestant education societies, however, catered for only a small minority of Catholic children. Much more popular with Catholic parents, especially for their sons, were hedge schools which had been an attempt to subvert the penal

legislation and resist English cultural assimilation.¹³ Yet even in hedge schools, the English language had become central by the early eighteenth century. The schoolmaster was responding to parental concerns: the emerging Catholic middle class saw literacy in English as essential for business and trade, and poor parents believed that English would provide their children with more employment opportunities, at this stage for boys rather than girls.¹⁴

Thus by the time of the Union, there were calls for educational reform from all sections of society, and as early as 1812 a non-denominational system for the poor was recommended.¹⁵ Criticism of charter schools was especially severe but echoed the general judgement of schools for the poor: accommodation, teaching and management were all considered of low quality while attempts to convert the children were deemed misconceived and counter-productive.¹⁶ On the one hand, poor Catholic parents were perceived to be dominated by the clergy and ignorant; on the other, the charter boarding schools generally could not maintain control once the pupils left, even if they were apprenticed.¹⁷ The great fear was for girls who, it was felt, would fall prey to temptation and slip into prostitution without an authority figure looking after them. Thus, by the 1820s the government preference was for day schools for the poor, which not only were cheaper than boarding but also, it was hoped, stimulated parents to meet their responsibilities of disciplining their children. Implicit were hopes that state-provided education would draw pupils away from the heavily criticised but popular hedge schools and that a child educated within a non-denominational state system, but especially a daughter inculcated with the domestic ideal, would have a benign influence upon uneducated parents. Thus, schools run by proselytizing Protestant philanthropists were acknowledged to be unsuited to the 'peculiar situation and circumstances' of Ireland.¹⁸ Yet despite praise for schools run by Catholic female religious orders, which were said to display 'great order and regularity' and to pay 'unwearied assiduity and attention' to their poor charges, the hope of the royal commissioners who reported on the state of popular education in 1825 was that a non-denominational system would help overcome sectarian animosities and integrate the Catholic majority in Ireland into a Protestant dominated state.¹⁹

In fact, the Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in Ireland (usually known as the Kildare Place Society) had been campaigning from 1811 for state-funded non-denominational schooling. It had also encouraged local initiatives, though in practice this meant that the management

of those schools it supported was often religious. Furthermore, whereas a minority of Society members were Catholic and sometimes local managers were priests, both the Society and the schools it supported were dominated by Protestants. Thus, the champion of Catholic Emancipation and member of the Kildare Society, Daniel O'Connell, left it in 1819 and established the Irish National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor to campaign for the allocation of a share of the parliamentary education grant to Catholic schools which would have maintained denominationalism.²⁰ In response to these concerns and lobbying efforts, two royal commissions were established, the first in 1824 and the second four years later. It was recognized that Catholics had grounds for complaint but rather than accede to demands that the state fund Catholic schools, the decision was to cease funding Protestant schools and channel educational funding to non-denominational schools.²¹

From the start, the preference was also for single-sex schools, for older children at least.²² Reformers focused on the social and moral state of the un- or under-educated poor particularly in larger urban centres such as Dublin where deteriorating living conditions were reflected in the ubiquity of 'street children' who had no respect for authority. Both central government and moral reformers believed that the lower orders were in urgent need of civilizing and that, while girls needed saving as much as boys, once rehabilitated they could use their domestic skills and virtues to influence their families. However, the religious question in Ireland meant that whereas schooling in England could be left to the established church and various philanthropic efforts (at least until 1870) state intervention was needed in Ireland to ensure a non-denominational national system of education for the poor. Hence, the 1831 Education Act established a National Board (a government-appointed panel of prominent mixed-denominational men) to oversee a non-denominational system.

It was less centralised in practice than it appears. Although funded by the National Board in Dublin, the schools were managed at local level, which favoured the churches. They resisted non-denominational schooling but in different ways. Some of the Catholic hierarchy and religious orders were suspicious of integrated schooling as another form of proselytizing and the Presbyterians were hostile to the national system due to a perceived dominance by the Established Church, but even the majority of Anglican clergy recoiled from the proposal for a multi-denominational system and set up the Church Education Society in 1839 to run its own schools.²³

Outside of Ulster, the demographic profile meant that few national schools would have a balanced cohort of Catholic and Protestant pupils. Not only were the former in the majority but the much smaller number of poor Anglicans went to the Church Education Society schools. Hence, initially, the majority of Catholic clergy accepted the national system as the schools were effectively denominational, but suspicion of Protestant proselytizing was reinforced by the impact of the Great Famine and also because the Church Education Society schools attracted poor Catholics in considerable numbers.²⁴ Presbyterians tried a different tack, opting to work within the national system but lobbying for decentralisation. Given the weakness of the Established Church across the country, the national system was quickly marked by religious segregation: within a decade the National Board had ceded a great deal of its authority to school managers.²⁵

A similar pattern pertained in the training colleges for national school teachers, the majority of whom remained unqualified. A non-denominational training college was established in Marlborough Street in Dublin in 1833. The Church of Ireland's Education Society, however, established its own training college and model schools where students had practical training. The college had both male and female departments, but women always constituted the majority of students, and in the 1890s, the female department developed significantly, reflecting the feminization of the teaching profession.²⁶ However, after disestablishment and the loss of government subsidy, the Church struggled to finance the training college: indeed, even the Church's own schools could not afford to hire trained teachers.

In addition, only a minority of Catholic teachers trained at the Marlborough Street college, and by the mid-1870s religious orders were establishing training colleges: the Vincentian Fathers opened a training college for males in 1875 in Drumcondra, and two years later, the Sisters of Mercy opened a new training school in Baggot Street, Dublin, which in 1883 was recognised by the government as a teacher-training college for women, Our Lady of Mercy College.²⁷ This amounted to official recognition of the key role female religious played in the schooling of poor Catholic children, both girls and infant boys, which was another reflection of the feminization of elementary school teaching.

However, regardless of the denomination, education of the poor remained basic for the most part, especially for girls whose schooling was dominated by domestic subjects. Such a gendered curriculum was seen as a means of raising the cultural and moral level of the poor. In addition,

single-sex education was preferred; indeed, the Catholic Church insisted on separating the sexes even in areas where enrolments were low, contributing to a situation in which ‘the majority of national schools remained very small, inadequately furnished and poorly equipped’.²⁸ Needlework was compulsory for girls, and by the late nineteenth century, they were also offered cookery and laundry work, but inadequate equipment made it difficult to teach these subjects beyond the most elementary levels. Moreover, in isolated poor rural communities it was not always possible to have separate schools, or even separate departments for girls and boys within the same school, let alone provide facilities to teach cookery.

By the middle of the century, infant and girls’ Catholic schools within the national system were mostly run by female religious orders that tended to establish schools in urban rather than rural areas. In contrast to the school boards established in England by the Elementary Education Act of 1870, which were elected and in which women who met the property requirements could vote and stand, the National Board in Dublin was appointed and was male. Thus, laywomen in Ireland, both Protestant and Catholic, did not have the opportunity to develop a public role in educational management within the national system. In addition, while Catholic middle-class women in Ireland also dedicated themselves to philanthropic work, Luddy has shown that the growth of religious orders pushed lay women out of the key field of education.²⁹

David Fitzpatrick has argued that the decline in agricultural employment in post-Famine Ireland, which hit women particularly hard, changed attitudes to female education.³⁰ This was a regional development: school attendance by girls was poor in areas where there was alternative employment, such as northern Ulster where out-working was still widespread; and generally girls were more irregular attendees than boys, kept from school to help mothers with domestic chores. Nevertheless, in the second half of the century, schooling was increasingly attractive to daughters and their parents where there was no paid work for girls. It provided basic skills that equipped them to find jobs, particularly in domestic service. Indeed, after the Famine those areas of the country that experienced the highest rates of female emigration also demonstrated higher levels of attendance and more years of schooling for girls than for boys.³¹

From the start, female religious orders were more willing than male to work with the national system. They accepted the necessity of combining a literary with an industrial training for poor girls who would have to find paid employment as soon as they were able. Female orders

also often worked with the local Poor Law Union to teach pauper girls such skills as sewing, knitting, embroidery, lace-making, crochet, spinning and netting.³² They recognized that many of the virtues they sought to impart to the children in their schools (regularity and order, cleanliness, neatness, truth and honesty) were also advocated by the National Board.

In contrast, the Christian Brothers worked within the national system for a few years only, until 1836. It is usually held that the Brothers were reluctant participants partly because they believed the philosophy behind the national system was incompatible with their own and partly because they took an overtly nationalist stance, while they encouraged social mobility among the boys, teaching more than the basics.³³ The schools of the female religious, however, were dedicated to elementary education of poor girls and infant boys.³⁴ They concentrated particularly on raising the standards of home life, with the aim of elevating the status and dignity of women which it was believed would improve the image of the Irish as a civilized people.³⁵

Thus, female religious played a very significant role in the growth of elementary education for girls, as well as infant males, in nineteenth century Ireland. They served the Church's popular base, paying particular attention to inculcating an ideal of womanhood, which was also championed by the National Board. Like all the churches, the Board advocated clearly defined gender roles within the family, and the female religious worked hard to impart both the ideology of domesticity and practical household skills to the girls. This was reinforced in the textbooks published by the Board for use in its schools. Besides the explicitly gendered topics of needlework and domestic economy, school books carried assumptions about feminine virtues. Thus, domestic and family themes were to the forefront in the reading books for girls.³⁶

As traditional employment opportunities for women in Ireland were shrinking in the second half of the nineteenth century, elementary education helped them find work in growth areas such as the service sector and white collar occupations. Nevertheless, the female religious continued to include in their curriculum a range of industrial subjects (usually needlework and always related to women's domestic duties), with considerable success in some cases.³⁷ Occasionally, a traditional skill such as lace-making was revived, and a convent developed a small-scale industry employing local lay women as well as apprenticing their pupils, but more generally the trades taught in industrial departments of national

schools confirm how restricted the labour market was for working-class women.³⁸

Indeed, although proportionately domestic service was in decline in Ireland by the end of the century, it remained the biggest employer of women. Urbanization and the growth of the middle class ensured a constant demand for servants: in 1891, 255,000 females were recorded as being in domestic service in Ireland, while that was also the main employment route out of the country.³⁹ Girls who attended the national schools saw education not just as a means to make them attractive emigrant workers but also to enable them to maintain communication with family left behind. Indeed, girls' attendance rates at national schools became higher than boys' even before attendance was made compulsory in 1892, while girls generally attained better results. Only in the more urbanized and industrialized province of Ulster did boys continue to outnumber girls in attendance.⁴⁰ Thus, the schools established by the National Board drew more girls into education: females had made up less than half the number of pupils in schools for the poor and were in a distinct minority in hedge schools before 1831, but within a decade of the Act that gap was narrowing rapidly, a trend reinforced by the impact of the Famine. Moreover, while the National Education Commissioners' scheme for workhouse inmates of assisted emigration to the colonies as domestic servants was open to both boys and girls, the latter consistently outnumbered the former.⁴¹ Indeed, David Fitzpatrick has recorded that by the beginning of the twentieth century, female migrants (mostly single and in their early twenties) outnumbered males by a sixth.⁴²

The high rate of emigration among the youngest and fittest of the population compared to the rest of the UK was believed to be a major factor in Ireland's persistent economic stagnation and widespread impoverishment among its labouring class. At the end of the century, eugenicist arguments about the need to improve the health and fitness of the imperial 'race' reinforced this concern. By then there were also campaigns for improved sanitation and public health that placed increasing demands on the poor housewife. She had always been castigated for inadequate household skills, which were linked to low morals. Yet while the national system of education was meant to correct both, such criticism had not abated by the time of Queen Victoria's death; if anything, emphasis on domestic skills in the schooling of poor girls intensified and the number of, and time spent on, domestic subjects in the curriculum increased.

EDUCATING MIDDLE-CLASS GIRLS

Compared to the labouring classes, there was little in the way of formal and systematic schooling for middle-class girls, at least until the latter part of the century. Wealthy Protestant parents, particularly if based outside Ulster and therefore in a minority within the local population, sent their children, girls as well as boys, to be educated—or at least ‘finished’—at English boarding schools since they were unwilling to have them schooled with the mass of Catholic peasant children.⁴³ Before the educational reforms of the second half of the century, only a minority sought a more liberal curriculum for their daughters, for example, in Quaker or Unitarian schools which taught both classics and science.⁴⁴

In contrast, daughters of the growing Catholic middle class were educated in Ireland in convent schools run by mainly French religious orders. Anne O’Connor has argued that the French influence on female education differed from the English, including the reformers. Besides the French cultural influence, convent schools exuded a religious atmosphere and also ensured strict separation of the girls from the lower classes who attended their day schools.⁴⁵ Yet there were similarities, notably in the curriculum offered in convent schools and unreformed girls’ boarding schools in England with the general exclusion of such masculine subjects (because associated with a university education) as Latin or mathematics, while even progressive establishments included the feminine accomplishments. Female religious agreed that the education of girls, particularly at second level, should be distinct from that of boys because their future roles would be different: the sexes were to complement, not compete with, each other. Still, while operating within a patriarchal church, convents were female domains. The century saw an extraordinary growth in the numbers of female religious communities in contrast to the decline in the Irish population since the Famine and the growth of emigration.⁴⁶ Whereas the growth of female religious orders was usually supported by the male hierarchy, these women were not passive handmaidens to patriarchy. Their training in obedience, humility and self-effacement, however, meant that they had to manoeuvre behind the scenes.

True, society as a whole was profoundly patriarchal but nevertheless a few Protestant men played a significant part in the reform of middle-class girls’ education, notably the former Dean of Westminster, Dr Richard Chenevix Trench (1807–1886), who was from Dublin and had been ordained in the Church of Ireland, returning to the city on appointment as

its archbishop in 1864. He had been involved in the establishment in 1848 of Queen's College, London, which had the goal of raising the educational standards of girls expected to become governesses. This suggests that Protestant reformers in Ireland followed English pioneers, but in practice there was a great deal of mutual interaction and support, notably through the Langham Place circle in London and the associated publication *The English Woman's Journal*. From the late 1850s these feminists campaigned for reform of female education, women's entry into the professions and married women's property laws. Their arguments were both cautious and moderate, reflecting the essential pragmatism of nineteenth century feminism. They identified specific issues which oppressed women, especially middle-class women, and sought achievable reforms to improve their situation. Feminists of the 1850s, 1860s and 1870s advocated specific measures to end injustice, but they did not develop a theory that challenged patriarchy or separate spheres. Even when they considered theoretical arguments about sexual difference, they generally challenged only the anti-feminist conclusion of female inferiority rather than the underlying ideology, as can be seen in the movement for reform of female education.

Three central English reformers whose work influenced developments in Ireland were Frances Buss (1827–1894), Dorothea Beale (1831–1906) and Emily Davies (1830–1921).⁴⁷ Buss had to earn a living as a teacher from the age of 14, which convinced her of the need for a serious education for impoverished middle-class women. She was among the first to attend the evening classes at Queen's College, and in 1850 she set up the North London Collegiate School for Ladies. Her aim was to prepare girls for Queen's College and for jobs as governesses. She also advocated that girls sit external competitive examinations, just as boys did, and in 1863 was successful in persuading the Cambridge local examination syndicate to open its exams to girls. In contrast, Dorothea Beale came from a wealthier background and had a good private education, including mathematics and the classics, but she too was one of the first to attend Queen's College. In 1858, Beale became principal of Cheltenham Ladies' College, but unlike Buss she was wary of girls sitting the same examinations as boys and was opposed to competition for girls in any form, including games. While associating with both women, Emily Davies set her sights from the start on gaining entry for women to the universities: indeed, her first book (1866) was *The Higher Education of Women*. Yet whatever their differences, these reformers opposed domestic training in the education of middle-class girls: that was for the servant-class of females. What they

wanted was parity of education with boys of similar social standing. All three were acutely aware that middle-class women needed an education that would equip them for respectable employment. Not only had census returns revealed that women outnumbered men in the population, but the later Victorian period saw an increasing trend for middle-class men to delay marriage while building their careers.⁴⁸ As the Anglo-Irish writer Frances Power Cobbe (1822–1904), who campaigned for feminist causes with Emily Davies and the Langham Place circle, asked in 1862: ‘What Shall We Do With Our Old Maids?’⁴⁹ Like Davies, Cobbe called for the entry of women into higher education and the professions.⁵⁰

Archbishop Trench encouraged the educational reformer Anne Jellicoe (1823–1880) to follow the example set by Frances Buss through the establishment of Alexandra College in Dublin in 1866 and the employment of sympathetic academics from Trinity College Dublin to lecture and examine the girls and prepare them for public examinations.⁵¹ Like Queen’s College in London, Alexandra College focused on an academic education, with a view to the pupils sitting university examinations; and also, as was the case in London, a school was established (1873) to prepare girls for the college. Another English influence on Jellicoe’s educational work was Maria Grey (1816–1906) who visited Belfast and Dublin at the start of 1872 to promote her ideas about secondary education for girls. Jellicoe was impressed by her National Union for the Education of Girls of all Classes above the Elementary, known as the Women’s Educational Union (1871), and in particular her high schools for girls established the following year under the aegis of the Girls’ Public Day School Company.⁵²

There were similar feminist contacts and educational developments in Belfast, spearheaded by Margaret Byers (1832–1912), with the support of the Presbyterian Church. She established the Ladies’ Collegiate School in 1859, later known as Victoria College.⁵³ It too had separate secondary and university departments. However, the involvement in Dublin of such a prominent individual as Archbishop Trent meant that, whereas Byers was College Principal, Jellicoe did not have the same decision-making power, serving instead as Lady Superintendent of Alexandra College from 1866 to 1880, a role more concerned with administration and the morals of pupils and teachers than with educational policy.

Eight years after Victoria College opened its doors, six women, including Isabella Tod (1836–1896), founded the Belfast Ladies’ Institute with the aim of providing ‘advanced classes for ladies of a higher class than hitherto attempted in the neighbourhood’. Whereas its own examinations

gained only limited public recognition, in 1869 the founders successfully petitioned Queen's College Belfast (one of three constituent colleges of the Queen's University of Ireland) to set examinations for women.⁵⁴ In 1882, Queen's College Belfast admitted women to its arts classes, Queen's College Cork followed suit in 1885 and Queen's College Galway in 1888, though few women attended the colleges until the establishment of the National University of Ireland in 1908.⁵⁵

Margaret Byers, like Frances Buss, aimed to present girls in public examinations; Isabella Tod, like Emily Davies, quickly sought to gain entry for women into the universities. The feminists who were actively involved in reform of middle-class girls' education in Ireland tended to have Protestant and Unionist sympathies, while there were close and overlapping networks among these female reformers. Indeed, such Irish Protestant feminists appeared regularly in the pages of *The English Woman's Journal*.⁵⁶ The impression is that any progressive developments in female education in this century were articulated by English women and championed in Ireland by Protestant women, and that Catholic female religious used their arguments and achievements to persuade the hierarchy to provide similar opportunities for Catholic girls.⁵⁷ A key difference, then, was that the Protestant reformers operated in the public eye, the Catholic female religious behind church walls. Another distinction was that the former deployed feminist arguments for improvements in female education whereas the latter emphasized that education should be firmly based on their religious faith.

As in the case of state intervention in the schooling of the poor, the Catholic Church suspected female reformers of middle-class girls' education of harbouring anti-Catholic *animus* and Protestant proselytizing. Hence, the Church at first resisted calls for the development of secondary education for Catholic girls. At the same time, it had welcomed the French female religious orders who established boarding schools in Ireland to cater for the daughters of the middle class. The Church sought to ensure its control over secondary education for girls as well as boys, keeping lay influence to a minimum and presenting a strong barrier to any state interference, notably in discussions over the Intermediate Education Act for Ireland in the 1870s.⁵⁸ Twenty years earlier, the Church had blocked suggestions from the commissioners of endowed schools for mixed-sex intermediate schools, believing that this system would undermine the faith by spreading English utilitarian ideas about female education.

Nevertheless, state support for secondary education was first introduced into Ireland by the Intermediate Education Act of 1878. The original

Bill had been for boys only, but feminists involved in the campaign to improve Protestant girls' schooling lobbied vigorously and successfully to have them included. Besides Byers, Jellicoe and Tod, these included Anna Haslam (1829–1922), a founder, in 1861, of the Irish Society for the Training and Employment of Educated Women in Dublin, and Alice Oldham (1850–1907) who in 1884 was one of the first female graduates of the Royal University of Ireland. Haslam's Society and another Jellicoe enterprise, the Queen's Institute (1861), confirmed the links with the Langham Place circle in their shared efforts to provide a reasonably priced academic, technical and commercial education for young ladies, especially those in straitened circumstances, to train them for paid employment.

When the Intermediate Education (Ireland) Act was passed in 1878 there were around 30 secondary schools for girls run by female religious orders. Their response was to associate with the Intermediate Board's examinations, which meant that they had to offer a more rigorous and academic curriculum. Yet even though the numbers of convent school girls sitting the examinations gradually grew, that was not at first seen as a strong selling point. Grainne O'Flynn has shown that whereas advertisements for Catholic male secondary schools boasted of their successes in Intermediate, Royal University and Trinity College examinations, convent schools continued to emphasize that they retained the feminine accomplishments and provided the 'home comforts' a young lady would expect.⁵⁹ Not surprisingly, students at both Alexandra and Victoria colleges initially performed significantly better in the Intermediate Examinations than those in convent schools. This led to demands from Catholic middle-class parents that their daughters receive as good an education as their Protestant counterparts. Both the female religious who ran the secondary schools and the Church hierarchy had to respond positively since these parents were prepared to send their daughters to the new colleges.⁶⁰ Hence, before the end of the century the bishops agreed that convent schools, boarding and day, could offer the necessary academic curriculum to prepare girls for public examinations. In turn, the Intermediate Commissioners recognised denominational schools, though the state was still kept at arm's length since the Commissioners examined but did not inspect the convent schools until the end of the century.

The central figures in the campaigns to secure women's entry into higher education and the male professions worked on individual initiatives and also supported each other through such bodies as the Association for the Higher Education of Women (1878). The latter had its origins

in various urban bodies including the Ladies' Educational Associations established in the main towns and cities across the UK, and regional associations such as the Central Association of Irish Schoolmistresses (1882) whose honorary secretary was Alice Oldham and which worked closely with the Ulster Schoolmistresses' Association (set up by Isabella Tod and Margaret Byers) in campaigning to persuade Trinity College to admit women.⁶¹ Religious orders were forbidden to join such bodies, but three in particular, Dominican, Loreto and Ursuline, worked to prepare girls for higher education. In 1893, the Dominicans opened St Mary's College and High School for Girls followed in 1894 by the Loreto College.⁶² Catholic religious worked behind the scenes to persuade a male-dominated Church, which was for the most part opposed to higher education for women, that it had to provide an alternative to the Protestant colleges. Thus, as Judith Harford has suggested, the movement for higher education for women in Ireland was fuelled by denominational rivalry that female religious manipulated in their efforts to extend it to Catholic women.⁶³

Example again came from England. In 1878, London University began to award women degrees on the same basis as men which set a precedent for the inclusion of women in the Irish University Act of 1879. However, London was an examining, not teaching, body and it was only from the early 1890s that women were legally allowed into the universities, though the legislation was permissive rather than binding.⁶⁴ In 1870, Queen's University was replaced by the Royal University of Ireland. Like London, it was an examining institution whose degrees were open to other institutions and to individuals. This afforded women the chance to sit the examinations and encouraged secondary schools and ladies' colleges to prepare their pupils for them. Alexandra College in Dublin and Victoria College in Belfast were quick to take advantage of the opportunity, as indeed were many Catholic women.⁶⁵ The Royal University soon replaced Trinity College Dublin, which had established examinations for women in 1870, partly due to anxiety that Irish Protestant women would simply go elsewhere.⁶⁶ A small minority, as Susan Parkes has shown, attended colleges in Cambridge, though most did not return to teach in Ireland while the numbers declined with the growth of higher education opportunities in Ireland itself.⁶⁷ Yet, whereas the entry of women into higher education was a significant achievement, there were attempts to restrict their access, few female students at universities in the late Victorian period came from the lower classes, and there were fewer Catholics than Protestants, which might reflect the continuing reservations among the Catholic hierarchy over admitting women to higher education.⁶⁸

CONCLUSION

The wider ideological battle over non-denominational education is examined by Tom Walsh elsewhere in this volume whereas the focus here has been the gendered nature of the national system, which both benefited poor girls by drawing more of them into education and limited them by the heavily domestic curriculum. Besides gender, this chapter has also highlighted the Protestantism of the public face of Irish feminist campaigns to reform female education, though that was only one strand of the women's movement in the later Victorian period.⁶⁹ On the surface, the narrative of educational reform seems clear: England led the way, Protestant Ireland swiftly followed and the convent schools reacted to meet their challenge. That significantly underestimates the inter-connectedness between the protagonists and a wide range of women's organizations. It also over-simplifies the part played by female religious whose efforts to improve secondary education cannot just be put down to denominational competition. They were also a considered response to social and economic developments and the widening—though still within limited parameters—life chances for middle-class girls. Indeed, it was believed that single-sex schools run by religious orders would produce the greatest number of religious vocations.⁷⁰ Further, however 'anonymous' most of the female religious were, as Deirdre Raftery has pointed out, joining an order held out possibilities not just of a superior education to that which most Catholic girls in Ireland could otherwise aspire, but also of leadership positions not only in their own communities and, for a minority at least, on a national and even international level.⁷¹ Still, whatever the benefits of entering a religious order, they were taught—and as educators taught their pupils—that religious faith came first: education at all levels was a means to an end of which religion was the foundation.⁷²

Like the female religious, Protestant women reformers and their male supporters sought improvements in the position of women not to escape the confines of their domestic sphere but to strengthen its standing and to spread its virtues. Yet while their concern for poor girls seems genuine, if often patronising, progress in middle-class girls' education was largely built on a far more literal notion of what the domestic sphere meant for the former. Maria Grey expressed the view widely held by Victorian feminists that the ideal future for all girls was matrimony, even where they might have to earn a living when parents could not provide for them.⁷³ Perhaps the fact that daughters of poor parents were highly unlikely to have the possibility of financial independence and would have to enter paid

employment from an early age—or labour as unpaid servants at home with mothers deemed too ignorant to pass on the necessary skills—explains the insistence by government, churches and reformers alike that domestic subjects were integral to their schooling.

Like the majority of their teachers, lay as well as religious, the daughters of the poor remain largely silent in the historical record and most of the written sources that concern them are by outsiders who generally had their own agenda. As Raftery, Parkes and Harford have asserted, historians need to ask more questions, probe more deeply and be more imaginative in their use of evidence if they are to convey the actual experiences of lower-class girls who had a domestic curriculum imposed on them.⁷⁴ Given their expectations of work and family obligations such training, however basic in practice, especially in the smaller schools, might have been helpful to many. Still, even they may not have dutifully accepted so much of their school experience being devoted to an ‘industrial’ training, which was often very basic indeed; and while official records suggest that some at least resented the assumption that their future was ‘down among the pots and pans’, even this did not necessarily indicate a rejection of the ideal of domesticity.⁷⁵

All the religious denominations and the National Board of Education as well as most feminists upheld the ideology of separate spheres for the sexes that education should prepare them to inhabit; but for girls in particular, their domestic virtues, firmly based on their social class and imbued with their religious faith, should have a positive moral influence on society at large. Girls’ schooling in nineteenth century Ireland saw much change and considerable improvement, however the latter is measured, but female education was never intended as an end in itself, for the benefit of the individual girl: she was to be schooled to be at the service of others for the good first of her family and secondly of society.

NOTES

1. See for example M. Cullen [Ed.], *Girls Don't Do Honours: Irish Women in Education in the 19th and 20th centuries* (Dublin, 1987); D. Raftery and S. M. Parkes, *Female Education in Ireland, 1700–1900: Minerva or Madonna?* (Dublin, 2007).
2. See for example O. Walsh, *Anglican Women in Dublin: Philanthropy, Politics and Education in the Early Twentieth Century* (Dublin, 2005).
3. See M. Luddy, *Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth-Century Ireland* (Cambridge, 1995). For a case study see M. M. Kealy, O.P., *Dominican Education in Ireland, 1820–1930* (Dublin, 2007).

4. J. McDermid, *Gender, Education and Identity in Victorian Scotland: The Schooling of Working-Class Girls* (London, 2005).
5. J. McDermid, *The Schooling of Girls in Britain and Ireland 1800–1900* (London, 2012). For Ireland see for example J. Logan, ‘The Dimensions of Gender in Nineteenth-Century Schooling’, 36–49 in M. Kelleher & J. H. Murphy [Eds.], *Gender Perspectives in Nineteenth-Century Ireland* (Dublin, 1997).
6. M. Drake, ‘Aspects of Domestic Service in Great Britain and Ireland, 1841–1911’, *Family and Community History*, 2: 2, (1999), 119–128; M. E. Daly, ‘Women in the Irish Workforce from Pre-industrial to Modern Times’, *Saothar*, 7, (1981), 74–82.
7. See for example S. Delamont and L. Duffin [Eds.], *The Nineteenth-Century Woman: Her Cultural and Physical World* (London, 1978); M. Ó hÓgarthaigh, ‘A Quiet Revolution: Women and Second-Level Education in Ireland, 1878–1930’, *New Hibernia Review*, 13:2, (2009), 36–51.
8. O. Walsh, *Anglican Women in Dublin*, p. 22.
9. See for example D. H. Akenson, *The Irish Education Experiment: The National System of Education in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1970), 17.
10. *Reports of the Commissioners of Board of Education in Ireland. First Report [Free Schools], Second Report [Schools of Private Foundation], Third Report [Protestant Charter Schools]* (1809), Third Report, 16, 43.
11. *Royal Commission on Manual and Practical Instruction in Schools under the Board of National Education in Ireland, First Report* (1897), 63–64.
12. *Report of the Royal Commission on Irish Education* (1825), First Report, Appendix 9, 44.
13. See P.J. Dowling, *The Hedge Schools of Ireland* (Cork, 1931; revised ed. 1968); A. McManus, *The Irish Hedge School and its Books, 1605–1831* (Dublin, 2002). See also Thomas Walsh in this volume.
14. See for example J.R.R. Adams, ‘Swine-Tax and Eat-Him-All-Magee: The Hedge Schools and Popular Education in Ireland’, 97–117 in J. S. Donnelly and K. A. Miller [Eds.], *Irish Popular Culture 1650–1850* (Dublin, 1998).
15. See for example B. M. Coldrey, *Faith and Fatherland: The Christian Brothers and the Development of Irish Nationalism, 1838–1921* (Dublin, 1998), 25.
16. See M. C. Coleman, ‘“The children were used wretchedly”: pupil responses to the Irish charter schools in the nineteenth century’, *History of Education*, 30:4, (2001), 339–357.
17. *Report of the Royal Commission on Irish Education* (1825), First Report, Appendix 9, 23.
18. *Ibid*, Appendix 263, 840.

19. Ibid, 23, 86–89.
20. B. Fleming and J. Harford, ‘Irish education and the legacy of O’Connell’, *History of Education*, DOI: [10.1080/0046760X.2015.1051496](https://doi.org/10.1080/0046760X.2015.1051496), 19, (2015), 3–4. For the Kildare Place Society, see H. Hyslop, ‘The Management of the Kildare Place School System, 1811–1831’, *Irish Educational Studies*, 11, (1992), 52–71.
21. D. Raftery and M. Relihan (2012) ‘Faith and Nationhood: Church, State and the Provision of Schooling in Ireland, 1830–1930’ 71–88 in L. Brockliss and N. Sheldon [Eds.], *Mass Education and the Limits of State Building, c. 1870–1930* (Basingstoke, 2012).
22. *Royal Commission on Irish Education*. First Report, 840. For infant education, see M. O’Connor, *The Development of Infant Education in Ireland, 1838–1948: Epochs and Eras* (Bern, 2010).
23. D. Raftery and M. Relihan, ‘Faith and Nationhood’, 75–76, 86.
24. D. Akenson, *The Irish Educational Experiment*, 199–217.
25. S. Farren, *The Politics of Irish Education, 1920–1965* (Belfast, 1995), 1–14.
26. S. M. Parkes, *Kildare Place: The History of the Church of Ireland Training College, 1811–1969* (Dublin, 1984). There was government support, but grants were limited to 75% of college expenditure and less was given for female trainees. See Akenson, *The Irish Experiment*, 356–357.
27. E. O’Sullivan, ‘The Training of Women Teachers in Ireland 1824–1919, with special reference to Mary Immaculate College and Limerick’, MA Dissertation, University of Limerick, (1998), 113–15.
28. S. Farren, *The Politics of Irish Education*, 10.
29. M. Luddy, ‘Women and Charitable Organisations in Nineteenth Century Ireland’, *Women’s Studies International Forum*, 11: 4, (1998), 301–305: 304.
30. D. Fitzpatrick, ‘“A Share of the Honeycomb”: Education, emigration and Irishwomen’, *Continuity and Change*, 1: 2, (1986), 217–234.
31. J. Nolan, ‘The National Schools and Irish women’s mobility in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries’, *Irish Studies Review*, 5: 18, (1997), 23–28.
32. See for example Catherine M. Keane (Sr. M. Vincent), ‘A History of the Foundation of the Presentation Convents in the Diocese of Kerry and their Contribution to Education during the Nineteenth Century’, MAEd., Trinity College Dublin, (1976), 161.
33. See D. McLaughlin, ‘The Irish Christian Brothers and the National Board of Education: Challenging the Myths’, *History of Education*, 37: 1, (2008), 43–70.
34. See for example J. McCarthy, ‘Contribution of the Sisters of Mercy to West Cork Schooling, 1844–1922’, MAEd dissertation, University College Cork, (1979), 185.

35. D. Raftery and Catherine Nowlan-Roebuck, 'Convent schools and national education in nineteenth-century Ireland: negotiating a place within a non-denominational system', *History of Education*, 36: 3, (2007), 353–365: 361.
36. S. Mac Suibhne, *Oblivious to the Dawn: Gender Themes in Nineteenth-Century National School Reading Books, Ireland 1831–1900* (Sligo, 1996), viii, 42, 78. The Board's textbooks were used in schools throughout Britain and its Empire, reflecting the consensus on gender roles and separate spheres for the sexes.
37. M. Keane, 'A History of the Foundation of the Presentation Convents in the Diocese of Kerry', 162.
38. M. Luddy, "'Possessed of Fine Properties": Power, Authority and the Funding of Convents in Ireland, 1780–1900' 227–246: 241 in M. Van Dijck et al [Eds.], *The Economics of Providence: Management, Finances and Patrimony of Religious Orders and Congregations in Europe, 1773-c.1930* (Leuven, 2012).
39. M. Daly, *Social and Economic History of Ireland since 1800* (Dublin, 1981), 105.
40. D. Fitzpatrick, "'A Share of the Honeycomb'", 223.
41. M. Langan-Egan, *Galway Women in the Nineteenth Century* (Dublin, 1999), 91.
42. D. Fitzpatrick, "'A Share of the Honeycomb'", 223.
43. D. Akenson, *The Irish Education Experiment*, 217.
44. See for example J. Roach, 'Boys and girls at school, 1800–70', *History of Education*, 15: 3, (1986), 147–59: 158.
45. A. V. O'Connor, 'Influences Affecting Girls' Secondary Education in Ireland, 1860–1910', *Archivium Hibernicum*, 41, (1986), 83–98: 85.
46. M. P. Magray, *The Transforming Power of the Nuns: Women, Religion and Cultural Change in Ireland, 1790–1900* (OUP, 1998), 9.
47. See C. Dyhouse, 'Miss Buss and Miss Beale: gender and authority in the history of education', 2–39 in F. Hunt [Ed.], *Lessons for Life: The Schooling of Girls and Women 1850–1950* (Oxford, 1987); for Emily Davies, see 133–165 in M. Forster, *Significant Sisters: the grassroots of active feminism 1839–1939* (London, 1986).
48. David Fitzpatrick has found that 'Ireland deviated from the dominant European pattern in undergoing a fairly consistent increase in marriage age from the early nineteenth century onwards': David Fitzpatrick, 'The modernisation of the Irish female', 162–180: 168 in P. O'Flanagan, P. Ferguson and K. Whelan [Eds.], *Rural Ireland 1600–1900: modernisation and change* (Cork, 1987).
49. Reprinted in A. Broomfield and S. Mitchell [Eds.], *Prose by Victorian Women: an anthology* (New York, 1996), 236–261. The editors assert

- (p.235) that whereas, on publication, Cobbe's article was regarded as 'highly controversial', it became 'a chief catalyst for reforms in women's education, employment and marital status'.
50. This network of English and Irish feminists is reflected in their correspondence: see, for example, D. Raftery and A. B. Murphy [Eds.], *Emily Davies: Collected Letters, 1861–1875* (Charlottesville, 2011).
 51. A. V. O'Connor and S. M. Parkes, *Gladly Learn and Gladly Teach: A History of the Alexandra College and School, 1866–1966* (Dublin, 1984). For Jellicoe see A. V. O'Connor, 134–140, in M. Cullen and M. Luddy [Eds.], *Women, Power and Consciousness in Nineteenth-Century Ireland: Eight Biographical Studies* (Dublin, 1995). This collection also includes other prominent educational reformers noted here, such as Frances Cobbe, Anna Haslam and Isabella Tod.
 52. J. Kamm, *Indicative Past: One Hundred Years of the Girls' Public Day School Trust* (London, 1971). The Company was converted into a Trust in 1906.
 53. Confirming the close association between Protestant Irish women and English reformers, Margaret Byers invited Isabella Tod to speak at the official opening of Victoria College: see D. Raftery, 'The "mission" of nuns in female education in Ireland, c.1850–1950', *Paedagogica Historica*, 48:2, (2012) 299–313: 303.
 54. A. Jordan, "'Opening the gates of learning": the Belfast Ladies' Institute, 1867–97', 33–57 in J. Holmes & D. Urquhart [Eds.], *Coming into the Light: The Work, Politics and Religion of Women in Ulster 1840–1940* (Belfast, 1994), 35–39.
 55. A. Hayes & D. Urquhart [Eds.], *The Irish Women's History Reader* (London, 2001), 46; M. Ó hÓgartaigh, 'Emerging from the educational cloisters: educational influences on the development of professional women', *PaGes*, 3, (1996), 113–123: 118.
 56. M. Ward, 'Gendering the Union: imperial feminism and the Ladies' Land League', *Women's History Review*, 10: 1, (2001), 71–92: 73, 86. Ward points out that these feminists also tended to be imperialists, but Siobhan Kilfeather argues that some of their English counterparts, like Josephine Butler who campaigned with Anna Haslam for the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts, came to see Irish women 'in a continuum with women in other British colonies' during the Land Wars of the late 1870s and early 1880s. S. Kilfeather, 'Irish feminism', 96–116 in J. Cleary and C. Connolly [Eds.], *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Irish Culture* (Cambridge, 2005).
 57. J. Harford, 'Courting Equality: Catholic Women and Agency in the Reconfiguration of University Education in Ireland' 58–78 in T. Fitzgerald and E. M. Smyth [Eds.], *Women Educators, Leaders and Activists: Educational Lives and Networks, 1900–1960* (Basingstoke, 2014).

58. B. Titley, *Church, State and the Control of Schooling in Ireland 1900–1944* (Ontario, 1983), 7, 12.
59. G. O’Flynn, ‘Some Aspects of the Education of Irish Women through the Years’, *Capuchin Annual*, (1971), 164–179: 176.
60. D. Raftery, ‘The Academic Formation of the Fin De Siècle Female-Schooling for Girls in Late Nineteenth Century Ireland’, *Irish Educational Studies*, 20: 1, (2008), 321–34: 329.
61. C.S. Bremner, *Education of Girls and Women in Great Britain* (London, 1897), p.157; D. Raftery, J. Harford & S. M. Parkes, ‘Mapping the terrain of female education in Ireland, 1830–1910’, *History of Education*, 22:5, (2010), 565–578: 572.
62. Hayes & Urquhart [Eds.], *The Irish Women’s History Reader*, 47: headmistresses of all Loreto schools were ordered to send their ‘university girls’ to the College.
63. J. Harford, ‘The movement for the higher education of women in Ireland: gender equality or denominational rivalry?’, *History of Education*, 34: 5, (2005), 497–516. See also her *The Opening of University Education to Women in Ireland* (Dublin, 2008).
64. E. Breathnach, ‘A History of the Movement for Women’s Higher Education in Dublin, 1860–1912’, M.A. Dissertation, University College Dublin, (1981), 56.
65. See D. Raftery, ‘The Higher Education of Women in Ireland, 1860–1904’, 5–18 in S. M. Parkes [Ed.], *A Danger to the Men? A History of Women in Trinity College Dublin, 1904–2004* (Dublin, 2004), 14; R. Bell and M. Tight, *Open Universities: A British Tradition* (Buckingham, 1994), 60.
66. L. Thompson, ‘The Campaign for Admission, 1870–1904’, 19–54 in Parkes [Ed.], *A Danger to the Men?*, 19, 53.
67. S. Parkes, ‘Intellectual Women: Irish Women at Cambridge, 1875–1904’, in B. Walsh [Ed.], *Knowing Their Place? The Intellectual Life of Women in the 19th Century* (Dublin, 2014).
68. Harford noted that in 1902 Alice Oldham sought to bridge the sectarian gap by founding the avowedly non-sectarian Irish Association of Women Graduates, which gave Catholic laywomen a voice: Harford, ‘Courting Equality’, 72.
69. See L. Connolly, *The Irish Women’s Movement: From Revolution to Devolution* (Basingstoke, 2002).
70. B. Titley, *Church, State and the Control of Schooling in Ireland 1900–1944*, 156–57.
71. D. Raftery, ‘Rebels with a cause’: obedience, resistance and convent life, 1800–1940’, *History of Education* 42: 6, (2013), 729–744: 735–736.
72. See Raftery, ‘The “mission” of nuns in female education in Ireland, 308–310.

73. Maria Grey (1871) 'On the Special Requirements for Improving the Education of Girls', 171–185: 184 in D. Spender [Ed.], *The Education Papers: Women's Quest for Equality in Britain 1850–1912* (London, 1987).
74. Raftery, Harford and Parkes, 'Mapping the terrain of female education in Ireland', 576.
75. By the late nineteenth century, some letters from emigrants counselled their sisters to apply themselves to needlework to escape domestic service: *Royal Commission on Manual and Practical Instruction*, p.67. See also B. Walsh (2014), 'Knowing Their Place? Girls' Perceptions of School in Nineteenth-Century Ireland', 170–201 in Walsh, *Knowing Their Place? The Intellectual Life of Women in the 19th Century*.

‘Injurious to the Best Interests
of Education’? Teaching and Learning
Under the Intermediate Education System,
1878–1922

Brendan Walsh

INTRODUCTION

The personal histories of the teaching profession in Ireland have been largely unrecorded. We know very little of the daily lives of teachers and their pupils. School histories tend to be celebratory, and it is often difficult to gain any tangible sense of what day-to-day life was like in the past for teachers and pupils, apart from usually laudatory descriptions of school life in institutional publications. The school *Annual*—usually appearing at the end of the academic year—typically depicts idyllic, happy communities labouring in the cause of a shared ideal or ‘mission’. These official and sanctioned histories seldom reveal the daily, often grinding, routine of school life. The reports of the inspectorate provide statistical data and information pertaining to general standards, but the voices of those they describe are often lost to us. We know a little of the experiences of teachers in Ireland from accounts such as G.K. White’s *The Last Word* (1977), T.J. McElligott’s *This Teaching Life* (1986), Bryan MacMahon’s *The Master* (1992) and Maurice McMahon’s *Mr Mac* (2009), academic

B. Walsh (✉)

School of Education Studies, Dublin City University, Dublin, Ireland

research or by anecdotes broadcast through public media. Hence, the “story” of teaching reaches the public in a sporadic, incomplete and often subjective manner.

Again, the documenting of schooling in Ireland has tended to emphasise policy initiatives, issues of management or ownership, changes in the curriculum or labour relations.¹ The impact of these upon teaching and teachers is less well-known. Teaching life often occurs in the quieter currents beneath these breakers; in study-halls and busy classrooms, parent–teacher meetings, noisy staffrooms and crowded corridors. Similarly, pupils’ lives revolve around friendships, rules, schoolwork, evolving understandings of the self and opportunities for light relief during long and often tedious days. Indeed, as we will see later in this chapter, some of the most common forms of pupil mischief are very old indeed. Pupils’ memoirs can prove extremely useful. They often identify the idiosyncrasies of teachers, as they mature they suffer fools less willingly and, like modern pupils, value teachers who help them to learn; they are sensitive to unfair and hurtful treatment, and their testimony can shed uncomfortable light on the brutalities of school life. We know almost nothing of the experience of boys and girls who went to school in nineteenth-century Ireland. Individual school publications have preserved testimonies, but we do not know to what extent these are typical. The English public schoolboy is a much more familiar figure, and he has been repeatedly reincarnated in British cinema and literature from *Tom Brown’s Schooldays* to the Harry Potter franchise.² Neither Dr. Arnold nor Tom Brown has any equivalent in Irish literature. Despite the age and contribution of many post-primary schools in Ireland, the figure of the master—in all its exaggerated manifestations—never captured the public imagination in the way its English counterpart did. The great, floating, flogging caricature of Pink Floyd’s *The Wall* was but one more in a long line of such repulsive figures.³ These are often caricatures, and educational historians have been slow to locate the real people behind them.⁴ This chapter is concerned, then, with the “other” history of schooling, or, rather, teaching and claims that the seemingly mundane narratives generated by and about teachers and their pupils are an inherently valuable part of the wider historical record.⁵

Because Irish educational scholarship has ignored the narrative of everyday teaching, the account available to researchers and students is incomplete. This omission has the effect of denying the profession access to ancestral antecedents. In particular, it represents a breach between student teachers and the craft knowledge accumulated by professional

forebears leading to a truncated sense of professional and collective identity. From the point of view of pedagogy, the disregarding of the folk memory of the teaching body has resulted, I would argue, in a limited knowledge of the development of teaching and learning as a practice as, for many decades, educational academics, sometimes with little classroom experience, have talked about, rather than to, teachers. The history of teachers and the evolution of their practice reside on the margins of mainstream discourse. Their influence in making and moulding the system from within is unknown, other than as collective members of trade unions or associations. Most importantly, the history of teachers' lives is absent: the private narratives of their profession; their reflections on teaching; their self-perception; the struggle for increased professional recognition; the personal labour, achievements and rewards of the teaching endeavour remain only partially known to researchers. Gardner claims the same absence has existed in British educational history. Through the hands of teachers there, he writes, 'have passed every cohort of the twentieth century's children. And yet we know very little about them'.⁶ The 'ordinary teacher' has, according to Elbaz, too often been denied 'a position as [the] subject of our discourse'.⁷ Because we have placed so little value on the individual testimony of teachers, scholars in Ireland have discussed them as a sociological collective but this is ill-advised. As Gardner points out in relation to Britain, 'we cannot...assume that that attitudes of...teachers have been mirrored in, or can be read off from...accounts of change in dominant educational ideologies and institutional structures'.⁸ Much of the material employed in this chapter came to light in a wider investigation into the history of teaching in Ireland in which I found that teachers have considerable misgivings concerning mixed-ability teaching, expressed significant support for the role of the Religious in schooling, and an almost unanimous belief that the initial teacher education they received was of little value. These represent, in various degrees, 'treasonable texts'; possibilities of alternative stories about teaching and 'counterweights to those deriving from positions of power and policy-making'.⁹

Intermediate [secondary] schooling in late nineteenth-century Ireland was the preserve of an elite and fortunate minority. Schools were unregulated, there was no state involvement with the exception of a small number of endowed schools, and therefore, it is difficult to establish with certainty the number of schools and their enrolment.¹⁰ In 1872, the Committee of Irish Catholics calculated that the number of boys in 47 'Catholic Intermediate schools' (i.e., Diocesan or 'established by Religious

communities') was 4950, of whom 2484 were boarders and 2466 day-boys.¹¹ The 'Catholic semi-public schools', those which 'either enjoy aid from bishops or priests, or are more or less connected with Catholic public institutions', brought the number in exclusively Catholic schools to 5178.¹² There was little incentive to remain at school beyond the stage of acquiring basic numeracy and literacy. When Belvedere College opened in Dublin in 1841, the average 'stay' of its first pupils was ten months because they responded quickly to the 'quality of teaching'.¹³ The earliest manifestation of, what we would now understand as secondary schools, were operated mostly by Religious and were envisaged as seminary-type institutions.¹⁴ The Census of 1871 records 47 such schools designated Roman Catholic; 23 under the control of the local Bishop and 24 in the hands of Religious congregations, educating 0.5% of the eligible cohort, or 24,311 pupils.¹⁵ The Census also records the existence of 587 'superior schools': 265 for boys, 162 for girls and 160 co-educational.¹⁶ It noted that 155 such schools had 'become extinct' between 1861 and 1871, the disappearance involving 'small loss...to intellectual culture' as some of them had been 'a positive mischief' offering 'the merest shadow of superior instruction'.¹⁷

The figures illustrate the difficulty of trying to establish the precise number of schools, where they operated and the numbers receiving a 'superior' education. The issue is further complicated by the numbers enrolled in English schools. The Committee of Irish Catholics estimated this to be about 250 in 1872.¹⁸ But in 1889 the Headmaster of Foyle College Londonderry, Maurice Hime, supposed the numbers to be 'between 1500 and 1600' boys yearly.¹⁹ He also held that there are about 12,300 boys receiving 'some sort of higher education' in Ireland noting that *Thom's Directory* indicated that 11,303 of these were enrolled in 'superior' schools. In short, it is impossible to know with certainty how many pupils were enrolled in superior-type schools prior to 1878. What we can be sure of is that a large number of such schools existed. They employed the nomenclature of 'college', 'school', 'academy' and 'institute'. Their number and distribution coupled with the size of the probable school-going cohort meant that average class sizes were, it seems, even after 1878, not much greater than 12 or 13.²⁰

Again, in this period we cannot confidently separate superior and elementary schools as pupils often ranged in age from 6 to 17.²¹ The division between primary and post-primary age groups was a creation of the nineteenth century, and we have to allow for a different understanding of what

constituted a school in this period. Superior schools existed in early and mid-nineteenth-century Ireland and were mostly informal institutions.

I previously noted that a number of Catholic religious bodies had founded primary and intermediate schools prior to the Emancipation Act of 1829.²² These schools offered a grammar school type education and did not receive public funding.²³ Existing alongside these and catering largely for the Protestant community were a small cohort of endowed schools in receipt of full or partial funding from the State, benefactors or charitable legacies. In 1835, Thomas Wyse—a strong supporter of mixed (i.e. denominationally mixed) education—was appointed chairman of the select committee to inquire into endowed schools in Ireland.²⁴ The committee recommended a review of intermediate schooling generally and the amalgamation of the Board of Education in Ireland, established in 1813 to administer endowed schools and the Commissioners of National Education (established 1831).²⁵ This body would constitute a new authority for education in Ireland.²⁶ However, the strident opposition of Protestant churches to the new National system and the belief that intermediate schooling was the indulgence of the few meant that Wyse's proposals were met with indifference. The endowed schools continued as before; funded (usually by private bequests) denominational, grammar school type institutions while Catholic intermediate schools operated on fees monies and/or funding from the diocese or associated Order. Learning was at the heart of these schools. Catholic schools, in particular, emphasised scholastic subjects concerned as they were with encouraging vocations to religious life. A number of them became aligned with the newly founded Catholic University (1854) as a means of emphasising, and securing accreditation for, their scholarly ambitions. Again, for several decades schools had entered pupils for examinations offered by English institutions, particularly those of the Science and Art Department—the so-called South Kensington Examinations.²⁷ The popularity of this awarding body in Ireland was largely due to the 1858 Royal Commission on Endowed Schools (Kildare Commission) which called upon them to introduce practical and scientific subjects.²⁸ Generally, however, schools of all denominations concentrated upon scholastic disciplines while the rewarding of equal status, in 1902, of science with classics and languages in the Intermediate system meant that the South Kensington Examinations became irrelevant.²⁹ Hence in 1871, for example, there were 21,225 pupils enrolled in 574 'superior' schools. More than 9000 children studied Latin; 6605 Greek and 13,205 French; the latter reflecting the origin

of founding orders such as the Holy Ghost Fathers.³⁰ Boys were catered for in 252 schools; girls 162 and 160 were mixed.³¹ Catholic children formed 50% of the pupil body while 77% of the population was of that denomination in 1871.³² Hence, while the quality of education in these schools is doubtful—described in 1871 as ‘most unsatisfactory’³³—the figures reveal an active interest in intermediate education just seven years prior to the State’s involvement.³⁴

‘THE DISCOURAGEMENT OF SMATTERING’: A VERY BRIEF HISTORY OF THE INTERMEDIATE SYSTEM

Since the inception of the National System in 1831, the Catholic hierarchy and, initially, the Protestant and Presbyterian communities, had sought to secure a funded, denominational system. Officially they failed, although by the end of the century the pupil cohort of national schools throughout Ireland was predominately denominational. This was due to the demographical spread of communities as much as to pressure from religious leaders. At official level, however, denominational schooling remained anathema and deprived of State funding. However, in the 1860s and 1870s, Westminster was faced with the challenge of promoting the expansion of post-primary schooling in Ireland while simultaneously holding the line on non-funding of denominational institutions. The Kildare Commission had stridently rejected the denominational model while the Catholic hierarchy attacked its support for mixed education³⁵, and in 1859, Catholic Liberal MPs warned the government against proceeding with plans for a mixed system.³⁶ The warning was repeated by the Irish Bishops in 1869. The challenge then was to discover a system that would allow the provision of intermediate schooling without directly funding schools that were owned and operated by Religious congregations. The solution was to award the schools monies on the basis of examination results.³⁷ The scheme was proposed by Patrick Keenan, past-pupil of Malachy’s College Belfast and commissioner of National Education, who recommended a system of fixed payments based upon examination results such as that operating in Trinidad. A Dublin intermediate teacher, E. Howley, first suggested the scheme be employed in Ireland, basing his recommendations on the work of Keenan.³⁸

Under the Intermediate Education Act (1878) an Intermediate Board of Commissioners was established to oversee the system, operate examinations and allocate results fees (payment by results) on the basis of pupils’

success in the terminal Intermediate examination—the predecessor of the Leaving Certificate. From an annual allocation of £32,000, £12,000 was allocated to administration and the same amount to teachers' salaries, the remaining £8000 being employed as results fees. Fluctuations in interest rates meant that, generally, government spending was less than £1 per pupil per year.³⁹ The intermediate examinations quickly became popular as they won both remuneration and prestige for competing schools. In 1879 approximately 4000 pupils took the examination. By 1899 this number had risen to 9000, but the Intermediate Education (Ireland) Commission (Palles Commission) complained of the over reliance on memory work due to the excessive emphasis on terminal examinations⁴⁰ and recommended that payment by results be abandoned and replaced with a system of capitation grants.⁴¹

The Report did not immediately result in change, but in 1902 the Intermediate Commissioners announced that, in an attempt to prevent schools concentrating on 'paying' subjects, all core disciplines would be awarded equal marks. But this did little to undermine the very academic nature of the curriculum or the baleful influence of terminal examinations the results of which were annually trumpeted in the public press as schools sought to outbid one another in securing enrolments. While it is tempting to condemn the practice as a forerunner of the culture that has produced league tables, we should recall that, at this time, schools and their employees—teachers—relied upon results fees to augment salaries, buy equipment and books and carry out repairs to buildings and grounds. Nonetheless, payment by results was evidently counter-educational. It promoted a mercenary approach toward learning (in particular the culture of second-guessing the summer examination papers) cramming, competition between schools and punished those teachers burdened with recalcitrant or weak pupils. Reflecting upon the questions set in the first Intermediate examination, the governors of Newtown School Waterford concluded that, while not discouraging, 'we were unanimously of the judgement that it would be more conducive to the intellectual good of the boys if we adhered pretty much to our usual course of study' as 'the temptation to select two or three branches of study in which there might appear to be a possibility of 'passing' seemed a very serious one, and if yielded to would result in certain subjects receiving special attention, to the neglect of others of equal importance'.⁴²

The 1904 report of Dale and Stephens recommended the abolition of payment by results claiming that, 'under the results fees system anyone

can open a “school”, staff it by the cheapest methods, and draw public money for every examination success which by any method he can obtain’.⁴³ A ‘serious defect’ of the system was ‘the large number of inexperienced assistant teachers employed...no less than 82 undergraduates...are to be found in the Roman Catholic boys’ schools, 74 in the Protestant boys’ schools, and 67 in the Protestant girls’ schools [many of which had] no intention of adopting the profession permanently’.⁴⁴ Staff was ‘constantly shifting’ due to ‘low salaries’. ‘It is not surprising’, they concluded, ‘that...no Irish graduate, save in exceptional circumstances, will enter teaching...if any other career presents itself’.⁴⁵ Corish’s view that the report was ‘quietly shelved’ is not strictly accurate.⁴⁶ The Intermediate Education (Ireland) Act of 1914 introduced the Teachers’ Salaries Grant and also provided for the establishment of a registration council to take effect from July 31, 1918. Yet the report of the Intermediate Commissioners for 1919 noted that out of 1349 lay teachers only 100 were in receipt of a salary of £200 per annum (31 of these were heads of schools) while ‘about 30%...[were] in receipt of a salary of less than £100 per annum’.⁴⁷ The report of the Viceregal committee of the same year again urged the introduction of capitation grants and appropriate salaries, increments and pension provision for intermediate teachers.⁴⁸ These and other forward-looking recommendations were included in the 1919 *Report of the Viceregal Commission on Intermediate Education* but the radically changed political landscape of post-Rising Ireland meant that the Bill met with fierce resistance from nationalists, the republican press and the Catholic bishops.⁴⁹ The Intermediate system therefore limped underfunded, examination driven, privately owned and managed, employing a body of largely untrained and poorly paid teachers toward 1922 and the advent of Independence.

The Intermediate System then was a not, as is often thought, simply a mechanism by which schools could augment their income by results fees. Certainly these monies were welcome and many schools, particularly those operated for girls, embraced both the funding and the opportunity to compete in public examinations. M. Byers, Principal of Victoria College, Belfast noted in 1919 that the examinations had ‘revolutionised girls’ education in Ireland. The results fees enabled head mistresses to ‘increase the school staff...accommodation and general efficiency and to offer salaries that secured high-class teachers’. Pupils of Victoria College ‘have been in the foremost ranks at Newnham and Girton, Edinburgh and Glasgow’. Indeed, many years before this, school principals had praised the coming of the

Intermediate. Writing in 1885 Maurice Hime of Foyle College Londonderry praised the Commissioners of Intermediate Education for the 'thoughtful care which they have bestowed upon the discouragement of smattering' and 'the encouragement of sound and accurate scholarship' fostered by the examinations.⁵⁰ According to the evidence Byres submitted to the Commission, 'her teachers...repudiate teaching for results, and their mode of teaching is not interfered with by the system which is the most suitable to Ireland, as far as she knows'.⁵¹ Indeed, 23 years previously a schoolgirl at Loreto-on-the-Green Dublin dismissed 'trite observations' that fill 'newspaper articles, and ordinary educational discussions of which we are deadly tired' that complain of 'our course of studies for public exams[as] mere cramming (This reproach chiefly falls on the Intermediate.)'. She continued:

Quite true it is, that beginning with very empty heads, a great deal has to be got in a given space of time....but we cannot say that the matter proposed is useless knowledge... As it happens, *then* is the enjoyable time for the examinees...It is *then* they rouse up to voluntary exertions. Then they devour their books...*Then* ...the pupils are doubly alive. And, when the examination day actually arrives, there is no mistaking the genuine satisfaction of those whose stock is to be produced.⁵²

But the effects of the examinations upon schools, pupils, teachers and public perceptions of education were repeatedly condemned. They were, as previously noted, finally replaced with capitation funding but their form and outcome survive in the present Leaving Certificate. This, rather than the monetary remuneration associated with payment by results, is the legacy of the Intermediate Education Act. While schools operated 'in-house' examinations and had links with external examining bodies prior to 1878, the legacy of the Intermediate system is undoubtedly Ireland's historic embrace of high-stake, terminal examinations. Another overlooked outcome of the Intermediate system was that it arrested the development of scientific and technical subjects in schools; an omission from which Ireland never recovered. Even though some schools such as St. Kieran's had developed impressive science courses, the emphasis placed upon the already popular classical subjects such as Latin and Greek under the Intermediate reward system meant that scientific subjects faded further into the background. These schools were required to perform a *volte face* after 1878. In 1858, at the Friends (Quaker) Newtown School, Waterford, for example, 15 boys and staff had enrolled in a course on the chemistry of food being offered by the Mechanics Institute while the school had an active Scientific

and Literary Society.⁵³ While the declining influence of the classical subjects in education generally is regrettable, it is nonetheless tempting to wonder what was lost due to their historical influence when we consider the following essays set for pupils at Newtown School in 1885:

steam, steam navigation, pumps and machines for raising water, the invention of printing, the atmosphere, mechanical powers, hydraulics, the carboniferous groups, comets, photogenic drawings, human anatomy and physiology, the eye, sea fowls' eggs, the pearl oyster, bees.⁵⁴

The Intermediate system, rather than the 1965 *Investment in Education Report*, introduced understandings of education as related to capital gain. It encouraged teachers, pupils and the public to identify learning with monetary rewards and institutional prestige. It promoted a culture of competition between schools (particularly between Catholic and Protestant), and they quickly began employing the annual results in their advertising and recruitment literature and occasionally poached promising pupils from each other in the hope of securing increased results monies. When the first examination was held in 1879 the *Irish Times* encouraged pupils to view grades as 'targets' to be 'aim[ed]' at later describing it as a great 'contestation', an 'intellectual tilt and tournament' with 5000 pupils entering 'the lists'.⁵⁵ Seven years after its inception the Headmaster of Foyle College, Belfast praised the:

valuable pecuniary help in the shape of Result-fees, given to head-masters [sic]...enabling them to secure more assistant-masters, and better qualified ones; while many men with a natural taste for school work have been induced by these result-fees, and the general stimulus given to education by the Intermediate Education system, to open intermediate schools in towns, and even small villages, where there were none before.⁵⁶

Four years later, in 1889, he insisted 'The larger the number of the boys who pass the Intermediate each year, the better, pecuniarily, it is for the schoolmaster, and the higher in the eyes of the public stands the school'.⁵⁷

Indeed

Energetic and clever Assistant-masters like the Intermediate [examinations]; and no wonder. For they possess by their means an opportunity, never

possessed by them before, of having their teaching powers fairly tested year after year [making them] independent of their Headmasters in regard...to their teaching powers⁵⁸

The examinations allowed parents to 'judge for themselves' how 'efficiently' their boys were taught and encouraged 'idle boys' to study.⁵⁹

Schools such as St. Kieran's that joined the Intermediate education system in 1878 found that the advent of competitive examinations altered their internal culture. While payment by results provided relief for schools it also 'imposed a complete break with the traditional system these schools had been developing' and 'gave Irish education a totally new orientation'.⁶⁰ Learning became more focused on examinations and the possibility of work in England or in the expanding Empire further encouraged schools to adopt a system that was less continental than that which the Religious had originally brought from Europe.⁶¹ Simultaneously, increased opportunities in the British Civil Service in the wake of the reforms of 1854 began to deflect graduates away from teaching.⁶²

Payments secured through the Intermediate examinations were important to schools relying wholly on fees income. In 1887 St. Kieran's earned £160 in this way. Success earned publicity, increased enrolments and allowed teachers to demonstrate their 'worth'.⁶³ The period witnessed, perhaps initiated, 'an almost superstitious reverence for public examinations'.⁶⁴

'A HAPPY USEFUL LIFE': TEACHERS, PUPILS AND SCHOOLS

The memoirs of Patrick Kennedy, a schoolteacher in the mid-nineteenth century, reveal that the master might have 'for his schoolhouse a small house in the Chapel yard', where numbers might vary from 'a few pupils' to 'between 60 and a 100'.⁶⁵ Teachers such as Kennedy also taught night classes where older boys would take lessons 'once the day's labour had finished'.⁶⁶ It was not unusual for schools in this period to take pupils considerably older than their classmates; intermediate-type schools were rare and therefore valued.⁶⁷ In 1901, for example, Mount Sackville School for girls in Dublin counted a four-year-old, a 29-year-old and a 28-year-old among its pupils. The youngest member of staff was 24.⁶⁸ Kennedy was born in 1801 and first attended his local school at Castleboro, which was run by 'devout Protestants' Mr and Mrs Bowers.⁶⁹ Bowers was 'a kind...man, beloved by his pupils...Mrs. Bowers, a gentle...creature, taught reading

and needlework.⁷⁰ Later, Kennedy attended Cloughbawn School, which he described as ‘mixed’ in ‘every sense...Catholics and Protestants, boys and girls, rich and poor...’⁷¹ The master, a Mr. O’Neill, was a good man and utterly unlike those depicted by Carlton who,

for their mere amusement, would go out to the next hedge, cut a large branch of furze or thorn, and having first carefully arranged the children on a row...their naked legs stretched out before them, would sweep round the branch, bristling with spikes and prickles, with all his force against their limbs, until, in a few minutes, a circle of blood was visible on the ground where they sat, their legs appearing as if they had been scarified. This the master did, whenever he happened to be drunk, or in...good-humour.⁷²

Yet Kennedy recalled that ‘very little use was made of [the] birch...very few instances of impropriety...could be reckoned against us. Our dignified, though affable teacher being near-sighted, many things might have passed unnoticed’.⁷³ The master would rarely leave the classroom, but ‘many a brother of the birch could be “over persuaded” and then riot and idleness prevailed—for the two hours he was actually absent’.⁷⁴ Upon his return the master would, ‘if elevated, make a drunken oration to his tittering pupils and give them liberty for the rest of the day; or if he happened to have reached the quarrelsome stage of his *element* would give a general sweep of the rod, thrash a few individuals, and end with falling asleep on his chair’.⁷⁵

Kennedy began his teaching career in 1820, at the age of 19, and recalled that on his first day he ‘fell to the business...with...earnestness being very desirous...to establish a good reputation’.⁷⁶ Kennedy’s few observations have a strikingly contemporary resonance: ‘the hearing of spelling or grammar tasks committed to memory at home, interfered terribly with the ordinary school business, and was very annoying in other respects, as pandies (slaps) for forgetfulness were in full vogue’.⁷⁷ Again, he laments that, by the time teachers of the period had ‘got through’ the memory work set the previous day, ‘we were obliged to dismiss our pupils with an uneasy impression that we had not gone through as much business as could be wished’.⁷⁸ And, in a sentiment that is echoed in many teaching memoirs he says of the end of the school day:

I have seldom since experienced the same...satisfactory feelings that these evenings were sure to bring; feelings that arose from the conscientious discharge of a truly sacred duty...if I had given way to anger in the course

of the day, I was pretty well punished by unpleasant sensations during our homeward walk.⁷⁹

A 'Latin School' operated at Goffsbridge between 1824 and 1852. The master, Thomas Maher, started the school with 'twenty scholars'.⁸⁰ Hundreds of small schools such as this have left no trace and were, according to W.M. Murphy, who started a post-primary school in 1858, gradually 'frozen out' by the National System under which the majority of primary schools finally operated.⁸¹ Fortunately 'P.D.', who recorded its existence, had spoken with a past pupil, a Mr. John Banville. Banville's one noteworthy recollection was that Maher would host a Christmas party for pupils and parents and that 'in the scholarly contentions of the occasion, a young girl educated by a local Protestant clergyman, used to compete with the best of Mr. Maher's men'.⁸² Maher's school, like those alluded to in the Census of 1871, lost numbers to the expanding diocesan colleges and closed abruptly when the inhabitants on the Leigh estate at Rosegarland were evicted in the mid-1850s.

Catholics welcomed the newly founded National System of 1831 as offering an escape from the many proselytising bodies that had established networks of schools in Ireland over the course of two centuries. Perhaps the most disreputable of these was the Kildare Place Society (KPS), which operated between 1730 and 1830, when the establishment of the National System made it redundant. Briefly, KPS schools were established to further the Protestant interest in Ireland and were stridently proselytising. Following the investigations of John Howard in the 1780s, they were condemned by a parliamentary inquiry (1788) for neglect and abuse of children while teaching was judged to be of the most rudimentary type.⁸³ However, the Society can claim to be one of the first to recognise the importance of teacher training and originally proposed to set aside two single-sex schools in Dublin for the instruction of 'parish clerks and teachers of both sexes'.⁸⁴ The curriculum of the training institutions included English grammar, history, geography, arithmetic, writing, psalmody and scripture, while the girls also learned needlework, knitting, carding and spinning.⁸⁵ As early as 1803, the Society offered the same salary (£15) to both masters and mistresses.⁸⁶ The historian of the Charter Schools, Kenneth Milne, laments the paucity of first-hand accounts about individual schools, but does reveal, for example, that children were examined in handwriting.⁸⁷ He comments that only 'scrap[s] of what might be termed methodological policy' are to be found for the

period, although children in KPS schools were taught individually and having learned to identify the letters of the alphabet ‘without further ado...use the scriptures as their reader’.⁸⁸ As was common practice pupils were taught in English despite Irish being widely spoken in Ireland at the time.⁸⁹

Few of the 587 ‘superior schools’ operating in 1871 left any trace. Mostly they were small fee-paying institutions operated by individual masters, and they could not compete with the larger Religious schools that gained momentum and funding when they became connected with the Intermediate system after 1878. Again, in the late nineteenth century, Religious schools could charge modest fees as members of the Order received no salary, drew upon the institutional organisation of their respective Orders and had the goodwill of the predominantly Catholic population. These factors made it very difficult for smaller lay-operated schools to compete, and with the emergence of the ‘Second Reformation’ after Catholic Emancipation intermediate schooling came almost completely within the remit of the Religious.⁹⁰ Hence, documentary material relating to intermediate schools in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century relates almost entirely to institutions operated by Religious; a feature of Irish secondary schooling that lasted until the late 1960s. Consequently, teaching in this period was usually carried out under discipline, as a means of facilitating vocations, an act of charitable justice or a combination of all three.

One of the earliest such schools is St. Kieran’s College, Kilkenny, opened in 1783 to offer ‘every Branch of useful and polite Literature on the most improved Plan’.⁹¹ St. Kieran’s provided for both lay boys and those aspiring to the priesthood, a common feature of early post-primary schools.⁹² St. Mary’s College in Dundalk, for example, was initially intended as a novitiate for the Marist Fathers. The founder, Fr. Favre, discovered, however, that future missionary priests would require secondary education before embarking upon clerical studies, hence the school evolved. Boys usually entered St. Kieran’s at 11 years of age, and by 1785 the school curriculum included Natural Philosophy, Geography, Greek, Latin, French, History and Principles of Religion, with Geometry and Astronomy being added in 1788 and 1789 respectively.⁹³ From the beginning the school stressed its commitment to lay education, although couched in terms of fostering a Catholic social *milieu* aiming ‘to produce scholars with an intensive training in the cultural subjects of Latin and Greek...to take their place as priests or laymen amongst that [middle] class’.⁹⁴

Like similar schools, St. Kieran's went through changes of premises and priorities over time. The first mention of lay teachers is in 1811 when the ecclesiastical students and lay boys were separated into different premises, the latter being overseen by a Fr. Magrath and 'a staff of lay teachers'.⁹⁵ The boys travelled to see local entertainments and St. Kieran's hosted regular dramatic performances, to which, according to a former pupil 'many a fond parent flocked to see their beloved offspring exhibit their uprising talent to a crowded house'.⁹⁶ After 1830 the school published the results of 'in-house' examinations and in 1833, for example, the boys were examined in 'Demosthenes, Homer, Epictetus, Xenophon, Testament; Tacitus, Juvenal, Horace, Livy, Cicero, Caesar, Henriade [Voltaire], Lecteur, Telemaque, etc.'⁹⁷ The decision to become affiliated with London University in 1844 resulted in the curriculum developing a stronger scientific emphasis, and around this time, boys began to attend local lectures on astronomy and science and in the same year were permitted to witness the wonder of the age—a hot-air balloon show.⁹⁸ The school historian notes that discipline was 'strict' and expulsion 'not uncommon' although nothing is revealed of either.

We noted earlier that secondary schools in the nineteenth century were generally run by the Religious who employed few laypersons. But this should be understood within the context of the expectations of the Religious and society in nineteenth-century Ireland. For example, a proposal to employ lay staff at the Jesuit Belvedere College in 1838 led to accusations that the Order had opened a school merely 'to make profit'.⁹⁹ Significantly, the school temporarily employed a Protestant master in the 1840s, the Jesuit principal explaining that it was 'extreme[ly] difficult' to find a 'suitable Catholic' and because of 'his excellence as a teacher'.¹⁰⁰ However, a small number of lay teachers were employed and, while there is an almost complete absence of biographical information, some idea of their contribution and reputation can be gleaned from official histories and archive material.

Blackrock College, founded by the Holy Ghost Fathers in 1860, employed laymen from the beginning to teach English and Mathematics; a Dr. Burke was employed in 1862 along with Peter McDonald, later High Sheriff and Member of Parliament.¹⁰¹ The College Calendar of 1875 shows that, of the 40 'Professors', 15 were laymen and only four of these did not hold a BA or MA. The founder, Père Leman, realised that he 'could not run a successful school in Ireland without the help of lay teachers' and had 'no objection in principle to their employment'.¹⁰² Schools such

as Blackrock coached senior pupils for the examinations of the Royal University of Ireland and London University and some Christian Brothers schools catering for middle-class boys also turned to lay graduates to ‘cope with the university course’.¹⁰³ A former Christian Brothers boy recalled in 1931 that ‘we were a bit awed by the lay staff...[t]here was a real M.A., two or three B.A.’s., and one L.L.D., back in the eighties one very seldom saw the proud possessors of these rare distinctions panoplied in all the glory of the coloured millinery to which such degrees entitled them’.¹⁰⁴ The observation is significant in relation to lay teachers in Religious schools, but also to the general absence of qualifications among teaching staff.

Fees were the only source of income, and while Leman employed ‘two excellent laymen’ in 1862, they ‘did not last the pace very long’.¹⁰⁵ At the time he was paying a Dr. John Casey £200 per annum while boarding fees were £40. In this period, it was always more cost-effective to employ Religious, yet between 1862 and 1900 Blackrock employed 100 laymen, but as ‘tutors’, and therefore without security of tenure or teacher status. Some of these were past pupils pursuing university education and ‘until relatively modern times none of the lay teachers [were] involved in the life of the students outside of class, that...was taken care of by members of the community’; a feature of Religious-run schools that persisted in Ireland well into the 1960s.¹⁰⁶

By the 1930s, even though the Religious still operated most secondary schools, ‘many’ of them ‘were quite untrained’, bringing to the classroom ‘not the formulas of the training college, but the freshness of their own personality...the results [of which] were satisfactory rather than spectacular’.¹⁰⁷ Castleknock College was employing laymen by 1915, but details are few. We know that the Visitor, John Walshe, complained in that year that poor examination results appeared to be due to the ‘lay masters’ becoming ‘infected with the traditional laissez-faire spirit of the pupils’.¹⁰⁸

St. Andrew’s College, Dublin, a Protestant lay foundation, was established 1890 to ‘provide for boys a Higher Education free from sectarian aims’.¹⁰⁹ The school’s first headmaster was Mr. William Woods Haslett was appointed on the sum of £300 per annum.¹¹⁰ The first three teachers, all graduates of Trinity College, Dublin, were appointed in 1893 to teach mathematics and English, while four more laymen were appointed in 1894. Unusually for the time, the first three teachers had employment contracts. Other part-time appointees were remunerated from the fees paid by the pupils taking their subject. Piers Ward, appointed in 1893, encouraged the school to join the Intermediate System as a way of securing extra

income and in 1894 agitated for improvements in staff salaries. His salary was increased from £200 to £220 in 1895 to increase in £10 increments until it reached £350. Ward provides an insight into the issue of salary at a period when personal accounts are almost unknown. The school records show that in 1896 he accused the headmaster of withholding Intermediate examination payments from the staff, indeed of personally benefiting from them. Ordered to withdraw the accusation or resign, he withdrew it, but he was not alone in suspecting schools, rather than their teachers, of benefiting from Intermediate payments. Ward was remembered by a past pupil, writing in 1919, as 'a magnificent individual of fierce mien...a most kindly master' with a 'passion for gold and whose greatest dread was the possibility that some day, by accident, his frequent threat to "have somebody caned" might be carried into effect'.¹¹¹

Recollections such as this are uncommon until the 1940s and 1950s when older schools tended to mark various jubilees by producing school histories. These sometimes shed light on individual teachers, and while occasionally shaded by nostalgia, provide valuable insights. A Father Kernan, who taught chemistry at Clongowes Wood, was remembered in 1914 as 'extremely kind', allowing interested pupils to 'frequent the laboratory and assist in the preparations of experiments' he was 'greatly loved by his pupils' and often 'surrounded by a crowd of boys hanging onto his soutane'.¹¹² Edward Gaynor, a teacher at Castleknock College from 1878 to 1884, was 'an outstanding chemistry teacher'; one of his pupils, Joseph Slattery, later pioneering X-ray technology in Australia.¹¹³ The Rev. Bodkin was Prefect of Studies at same school from 1882 to 1890 and, including his time there as a pupil, was connected with Castleknock for 64 years. Dr. P.J. Dowling, who taught chemistry there from 1912 to 1923, remembered him as 'an avid reader and scholar' who, every summer, travelled to London to buy books for the school library. A Mr. Darragh, who taught at Catholic University School, Dublin, is remembered by M. Veale, who attended from 1925 to 1930, as 'sartorially perfect, bright as new pin radiating energy and goodwill as he trotted into class...exclaiming "Stand up all those who are absent"' as a 'good start for those wide awake enough to remain seated',¹¹⁴ and by 'L.L.L.' as 'a genius at his subject' and 'a man of charm who always treated his pupils with great understanding'.¹¹⁵

Rochelle School was founded in Cork in 1829 as a 'seminary for training young governesses'.¹¹⁶ Its Patroness, Hannah More, had two older sisters who had founded a school in Bristol. Their father was a schoolmaster and the girls were 'highly educated' for the time, although Hannah's

lessons in mathematics had been stopped because ‘she was becoming too good at them and this was unfeminine’.¹¹⁷ The school was established at the instigation of Charlotte Abbot, daughter of the Cork-based brewer Samuel Abbot. One of the first teachers at this school was a Mr. Lefebvre, who had previously operated a ‘fashionable’ school in Cork. In 1830 Lefebvre’s wife opened a boarding school for ‘young ladies’ near Glanmire, a town about 8 km from Cork city. The Lefebvre schools have left no trace, but Mrs. Lefebvre’s was a boarding school, and was therefore probably a secondary-type school; and these, as we have seen, were less common at the period. The school was founded to cater primarily for the Protestant community, and the staff was predominantly female. This school for governesses, in the 1840s, offered: ‘French, Italian, English, History, Geography, Writing, Arithmetic, Geometry, Music, Drawing, plain and fancy Needlework, Scripture and Church Catechism’.¹¹⁸ One of its later benefactors was Dr. Salmon, past-pupil of Hamblin and Porter’s School Cork and Provost of Trinity College, who vehemently opposed the opening of that university to women in 1903.¹¹⁹

Recollections of Rochelle tend to focus upon school life rather than teachers. Miss Whately became headmistress in 1879 and was remembered as ‘sail[ing] into the classroom’ making the girls open windows on ‘cold winter mornings’.¹²⁰ An unnamed French teacher with little English was teased by the girls who gave her ‘unorthodox translations’ and taught her ‘unusual phrases’.¹²¹ In 1887 Whately recorded that the school had:

six resident English teachers. We used to have two foreign teachers but we prefer to have English teachers trained abroad....All our English pupils get honours without exception in the Intermediate examinations....We have another lady—a most valuable English teacher and we have an English lady who has matriculated in the University of London....One of these has been trained in the Training College of St. Andrews.¹²²

When Miss Whately’s successor, Miss King, died in 1892, she was succeeded by Jane Marshall (‘much addicted to ferocious hats’) who had been educated at ‘Mrs. Byers College’ (Victoria College, Belfast) and previously taught in Bath, Gravesend and Brighton.¹²³ The English and Science teacher, Miss Maxwell, resigned in 1897 and was replaced by a Miss Frances Molyneux on the considerable salary of £50 per annum and in September of that year a Miss Bertie Cox was admitted as a pupil-teacher for one year, her fees being reduced by £10 to £20 per year.¹²⁴

This was common practice and we may assume other girls were similarly trained. The practice existed at Newtown School, Waterford, certainly by 1801 when, upon finishing, a Richard Allen was 'bound to the Master of the time being till he arrive[d] at the age of 21 years to be boarded and clothed by the institution.' Allen became Superintendent of the school in 1810 and held the post for 44 years.¹²⁵

These are only fragments but they demonstrate that, at Rochelle, Science was taught, that it was taught by a woman and that the school, at least on one occasion, admitted its pupils as trainee teachers. Indeed, Whately had been a founder member of the Association of Irish Schoolmistresses (1882), and in 1886 the Cork Branch called for a Registry of Teachers. There is no evidence that the proposal gained momentum, but coupled with the pupil-teacher appointment, it suggests that Rochelle was proactive in advocating training and registration. This is further evidenced by the employment, in 1891, of a 'specially qualified instructress in the Art and Practice of Teaching', although this is not surprising as, since 1884, the girls had been entering for the Royal University of Ireland examinations, and the school had drifted from its original *raison d'être* of providing governesses for the middle classes. By 1903, five of its teachers had BA degrees and Miss J. Eveleith (Mus. Doc. Oxon.) taught Music. By 1909 Marshall's staff of 12 women had qualifications ranging from the London Matriculation to Froebel, BA and LLD.

BRUTE FORCE AND BUTTERCUPS: SCHOOL LIFE

By modern standards the regimes of nineteenth-century schools were harsh indeed. Boarding pupils often rose at six and lessons were preceded by prayer, study and, in Catholic schools, Mass. Typically silence was insisted upon between rising and the end of breakfast.¹²⁶ Predictably, memoirs include various forms of mischief, but it is remarkable how early some of these are. Sometime in the late 1840s pupils at Middleton College, Cork, ignited fireworks during class, ball games were occasionally played during instruction while 'drinking, smoking and even shooting by the boys were commonplace'.¹²⁷ In the 1850s boarders at Clongowes Wood played a game called 'Bringing out the Hounds' in the Study Hall; one boy making a cry like a foxhound followed by others in unison so that it became impossible for the supervising teacher to tell the instigator from the rest.¹²⁸ In the late 1890s, a cockerel was let loose in the Study Hall allowing the

boys to make a pretence of catching it until a ‘Spanish-American’ pupil ‘produced a revolver...and with one shot brought the bird down to the floor—dead!’¹²⁹ Another memoir from the 1920s remembers boys collectively ‘humming...to relieve the tedium of the class’.¹³⁰

Girls who attended Rochelle in the nineteenth century left valuable information about school life. Frances Moran, who enrolled in 1875, recalled that servants made up her bed and that she took ‘many meals at the “Disgrace Table”’ for unrecorded misdemeanours. Lily Jellett, who attended in the mid-1870s, remembered her schooldays as ‘harsh and severe’ although ‘she enjoyed her lessons and the good teaching’.¹³¹ The school day started at seven, study followed from 7:30 to 8:30 and breakfast, consisting of bread and butter and tea, was followed by prayers and classes until 11.30. Lunch was ‘a slice of dry bread’, after which classes resumed until dinner; ‘there was one course: meat, potatoes and vegetables...the meat was often uneatable and the cooking abominable’.¹³² After dinner the girls walked ‘two by two’ along the road near the school. Their evening meal was tea and dry bread, followed by work until 7:30 and bed at 8:30. She also recalls that the procession to church on Sunday of young trainee governesses was ‘of great interest’ to the medical students at the South Infirmary who would ‘assemble *en masse*’ to observe the parade.¹³³ The girls dropped notes from the music room window during lessons which were collected by boys from the local grammar school and a visiting teacher who worked in various local schools allowed his hat to be used ‘as a post office by boys and girls, who slipped notes inside it’.¹³⁴ Elizabeth Woods, who attended the co-educational Friends Newtown School, Waterford, (1846–1852) recorded that, although Richard Allen (see earlier in this chapter) wished that the girls ‘should never even look at the boys or know their names’ she ‘managed to learn them’.¹³⁵ A past pupil of Alexandra College recalled that in the 1920s the girls attended service in Dublin’s Dawson Street. Boyfriends from Trinity College sat in opposite pews and when worship ended ‘they hurried down to the entrance porch...where [they] were able to...exchange notes without being seen’.¹³⁶ Despite (or perhaps because of) the harshness of the regime, Jellett won a first class prize in the Intermediate examinations of 1878. As late as 1937, the Rules of Newtown School, Waterford stipulated:

Affection between members of different sexes may not be demonstrated by contacts. If boys and girls are occupying the same rug on the lawn, they may not have the rug over them in common. They must be in full view of the windows of the Mistresses’ Common Room.¹³⁷

Almost a century earlier pupils could be punished, according to Margaret F. Fisher (1844–1850), for knowing the names of pupils of the opposite sex, glancing over at the boy's table when taking our meals' or speaking 'to a boy who was not a brother or a cousin'.¹³⁸ Returning to Rochelle, Frances Maybury, who enrolled in 1885, was 'very unhappy'; the food was 'dreadful' and, one evening, she was 'particularly horrified by sheep's head served complete with eyes and eyelashes staring at her from the dish'.¹³⁹ Like other early nineteenth-century schools, classes were often taught in the same large room. Harriette Hore attended Rochelle while Marshall was headmistress and recalled that 'Miss Acheson...sometimes in desperation put up a baize screen to separate her class from the others'.¹⁴⁰ Margaret Fitzgerald, who attended from 1892 to 1896, remembered five or six classes being held simultaneously in one large room.¹⁴¹ Mabel Lethbridge, who attended Rochelle around 1914, has the fictional narrator of *Fortune Grass* describe how: 'the school food was dreadful...the dormitories were unheated and I would like awake at nights numb with cold'.¹⁴² Lunch was secured by 'brute force', the girls having to jostle to ensure that they got a portion of the 'small slices of bread and margarine'.¹⁴³ Lethbridge's fictional schoolgirl was 'teased endlessly for [her] flat chest' and 'ever after... clothed and unclothed [her]self beneath [her] nightdress'.¹⁴⁴ Teachers' recollections are, perhaps unsurprisingly, somewhat different. Mrs. White, who taught under Bewley for five 'pleasant years', recalled 'pleasant hours passed on lawns and tennis courts, in music rooms and on the playing field'.¹⁴⁵ Hime captures the views of many when he recorded in 1885 that 'I like my profession better and better every year'. Graduating from TCD in 1866 he entered teaching and believed:

what I thought on the subject [of education] without much knowing why, in the summer of 1866, I feel perfectly sure of now in the spring of 1885. I am convinced there is no occupation so grandly useful as the schoolmaster's; none more charming....Can any work be more honourable? Can any work be more important? Any more humane? Any more ennobling to oneself, and useful to one's neighbour, than that of training aright a boy? Is not the very thought of doing so a tremendous one?¹⁴⁶

Again:

To teach a dull boy is a pleasant thing: it makes you so happy when you see his face brightening up...this...may be wearing work, but great is your

reward if you do it successfully....The young man, therefore, who wishes to lead a happy, useful life cannot do better than become a schoolmaster.¹⁴⁷

What we might term the ‘romance’ of school, or its recollection, permeates many memoirs. J. Burke-Gaffney attended Belvedere between 1900 and 1910 and recalled ‘warm days, lazy days, butter-cups...cricket—and the tea interval; stumps drawn at sun-down and home in the delightful cool...how comforting to recollect’.¹⁴⁸ Such memories are not unlike those of Patrick Kennedy reflecting each evening on his teaching day. They reveal a warm, emotional attachment to school. Marjory Sweetman, who enrolled at Rochelle in 1934 remembered ‘sunshine, the sound of the lawnmower, the still quiet of out-of-door class’.¹⁴⁹ More nostalgic still are the recollections of Hilda Sutton:

[I]t seems to have been a well-nigh perfect school. I think what I remember most vividly is the wonderful relationship between staff and pupils—affection and respect for the mistresses and the knowledge that whatever mischief we managed to get involved in we knew that we would get a fair and sympathetic hearing....Miss Watson...the perfect headmistress, and such a nice person...there was no special pressure about exams. We seemed to work when we were supposed and did not get into a flap about exams.¹⁵⁰

Yet Ruth Foley, who attended in the same years, considered that ‘conditions were austere...classrooms poorly heated’ and the diet ‘indifferent [although] served on starched white table cloths, [by] maids in cap and apron’.¹⁵¹ A past pupil of Alexandra College (c. 1915) remembers it as ‘dark and to some oppressive’, with a ‘sunless’ playground, ‘severely functional’, with bare classrooms.¹⁵² Another remembered the ‘incredibly dreary’ textbooks, while ‘English...Geography and History’ were ‘exclusively British’ and the Irish language unknown.¹⁵³

Schools reinforce wider social norms, regardless of the era. Rochelle—a Protestant lay foundation for girls—operated in an almost identical way to the Dominican Convent Cabra, Dublin, a typical foundation of the period. Founded in 1819, its Rules of 1914 reflect the same expectations and concerns. Girls were forbidden to purchase ‘novels or periodicals at Railway stations’ or to ‘introduce such into the school’; they were expected to write home ‘once a week’, while ‘useless and unnecessary correspondence with friends’ was not permitted.¹⁵⁴ They were expected to ‘acquire a ladylike easy manner and a refined pleasing accent’.¹⁵⁵ They were warned to avoid using ‘vulgarisms, slang or certain phrases, which, used by their

brothers, would be harmless and inoffensive, but when spoken by young ladies would betray a great want of self-respect and refinement’.¹⁵⁶ Pupils were also forbidden to ‘give orders’ to ‘Lay Sisters or maids’.¹⁵⁷ These regulations were typical of boarding schools until the 1960s. The regulations governing Santa Sabina in the 1940s, for example, stated that ‘boarders write to their parents only...once a fortnight. The Sister [in charge of boarders] will inspect all their correspondence, in-coming and out-going; but they should be told that, if for a special reason they desire to write a private letter, permission will be granted to them’. The boarders were not allowed to accept any invitations from the pupils of the school, or in the neighbourhood, and were never sent on messages to their home. Neither were they allowed to borrow books or magazines from the day pupils, or from anyone else ‘without special permission of the Sister in charge.... Strict silence [was] always observed in the Dormitory, at breakfast and during the hours of study’.¹⁵⁸ Other students remember small luxuries. Stanley Lyon, for example, entered St. Mary’s College, Dundalk in 1893 and remembered the installation of ‘the modern type of bath with hot and cold water’, making winter morning ablutions less severe. The ‘present generation’, he wrote in 1961, would scarcely believe the ‘Spartan conditions...it was hard going for small boys’.¹⁵⁹ Nevertheless, as with recollections of Rochelle, boys from St. Mary’s and other schools very often remember their schooldays with warmth, regardless of the period. Patrick Peacock’s recollections of the mid-1940s is a typical panegyric recalling,

Saturday night...gorg[ing] on chocolate, sweets and cake...a thriller from the Library...the calendar inside the top of the desk...used to tick off the remaining days of term. The rush for the handball alley after meals. The introduction of stew on the menu...ham and lemonade on special occasions....The School Bell, which so rudely interrupted our play. The snowy winter of 1946–1947 and lovely summer days in the fields.¹⁶⁰

‘WORK OF THE UTMOST IMPORTANCE UNDER THE MOST UNSATISFACTORY CONDITIONS’: SCHOOLS AND TEACHERS IN THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY

Recollections in school histories tend to be sympathetic, and it is unusual that those with unhappy memories submit these to, generally, celebratory publications.¹⁶¹ As already noted, intermediate teaching in

nineteenth-century Ireland was largely confined to the Religious. This had the effect of slowing the entry of laypersons, depressing remuneration and impeding the development of teaching as a professional occupation with the security of tenure we now associate with it. I previously noted that some teachers sought improvement in pay and that, generally, their position was uncertain.

F.H. O'Donnell's *The Ruin of Education in Ireland* (1902) was an acerbic attack upon the monopoly exercised by the Religious. Because the diatribe is so trenchant it must be treated with caution; however, the essay was incisive, damning of management and the standard of schooling and persuasive in its analysis of the position of lay intermediate teachers. O'Donnell's tract concerns the 'failure' of the Queen's Colleges in Ireland.¹⁶² His argument is twofold: the widespread National System retarded the growth of intermediate schools, hence preventing the development of a cohort of potential university students; and, as intermediate schools were operated as quasi-seminaries, lay staff were almost entirely excluded. According to O'Donnell the 'clerical smatterers' who ran these schools operated a 'practical Boycott of the Lay Graduate'.¹⁶³ Managers of Catholic schools in Ireland—'wretched diocesan abortions'—could employ 'eight teaching priests' for '£50 a piece a year', while a layman would cost £150. The payment by results system further damaged the 'Intermediate Bribery System' by making the schools a 'dishonest competing industry for cramming'; a criticism that appears repeatedly in inspectors' reports in the early twentieth century.¹⁶⁴ The Report of the Inspectors relating to Belvedere in 1910, for example, typically complains of the 'real needs of the pupils [being] sacrificed to the necessities of the examination'.¹⁶⁵ Schools competed for results monies but were not according to O'Donnell, accountable for their use, hence, he claimed, funding should be withdrawn where they were not used to employ an 'increasing proportion of...qualified laymen'.¹⁶⁶ His most stinging criticisms were reserved for the 'Female Orders' whose 'inculcation of pietistic ignorance...disqualifies multitudes of Irish girls for the duties of home and the holiest hopes of womanhood',¹⁶⁷ making their schools a 'fount of unpractical living and uncultured thinking...a perpetual agency for idleness, shiftlessness...and emigration'.¹⁶⁸

O'Donnell was not alone. A 1901 article in the *New Ireland Review* reflected: '[A] pupil who has been quiet and pious will leave with an excellent character, but when she comes to earn her living...will be found...worthless'.¹⁶⁹ If lay teachers were responsible for such lax teaching,

O'Donnell notes, 'nobody would hesitate to call them...shameless imposters'.¹⁷⁰ The issue was not new, although not everyone shared O'Donnell's baying antipathy. In 1874, 'anonymous' wrote in *Frazer's Magazine* that, while convent education in Ireland was uneven, the nuns made 'all the difference in the world...any pupils who have special aptitude may pick up a good deal from [the teaching nuns] and often do'.¹⁷¹ This is a modest endorsement. Katherine Tynan attended Dominican Convent Drogheda in the early 1870s and recalled that the nuns were 'excellent musicians and linguists' but old-fashioned...the progress of the world had stopped for them some ten or twenty or thirty or forty years before'.¹⁷² Male clergy were, seemingly, no less ignorant. O'Donnell cites the evidence of the Bishop of Limerick before the Irish University Commission of 1901, in which he stated, 'the clergy have no education corresponding to their position...of the 118 secular priests under my jurisdiction, none, save six, have any University degree of education whatsoever'.¹⁷³

Notwithstanding the polemical tone of O'Donnell's essay, it does throw light on a number of contemporaneous issues, in particular the place of lay teachers. Yet in 1907 an 'assistant teacher' wrote that despite the widespread belief that the Religious were hostile to lay involvement s/he was 'not aware that any person in ecclesiastical authority [had] expressed himself of that fact'.¹⁷⁴ The issues, rather, were poor remuneration and 'fixity' of tenure; the satisfactory solution to which would be 'an advantage to all—to the managers...teachers...and...students'.¹⁷⁵ Five years later, in 1912, 'Head Master' wrote in the *Irish Times* that inadequate salary was 'the root evil of Irish education'.¹⁷⁶ Another correspondent complained of the 'wretched position of secondary teachers'; urged the use of a new grant of £10,000 in results fees to increase salaries and supported O'Donnell's claim that schools were not accountable for the use of these public monies.¹⁷⁷ Noting that the 1919 *Report of the Vice-Regal Committee on Intermediate Education* would 'hardly be considered' in that parliamentary session, 'Teacher' complained that 'in the meantime, teachers are expected to live on practically the same salaries as they had in pre-war days although the cost of living has gone up by more than 100%'.¹⁷⁸

The issues of remuneration and tenure were to the fore of debates about intermediate teaching in Ireland in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The Intermediate Education (Ireland) Commission [1899] had collected absorbing evidence from a range of expert witnesses. The system had done little to improve intermediate education in Ireland, 'methods of

teaching' or the 'efficiency of teachers'.¹⁷⁹ Teachers, it was urged, should have a 'University degree or Diploma in teaching',¹⁸⁰ and results fees should be withheld if they had not done so after a given time.¹⁸¹ It is striking how many witnesses highlighted the examiners' lack of teaching experience. Rev. Bodkin of Castleknock called the practice 'fundamentally wrong'.¹⁸² A.J.W. Cerf, Professor of Modern Languages, argued that 'examiners...should have considerable experience in teaching', concluding that inspectors should be 'men of long experience and some of them specialists', although 'the registration of qualified teachers would render very little, if any, inspection necessary'.¹⁸³ Miss Mulvany, Headmistress of Alexandra School, also argued that examiners should 'have had experience as teachers',¹⁸⁴ a position supported by W.J. Dilwort, Examiner in Mathematics, and Robert Dodds, Principal of Banbridge Academical Institution.¹⁸⁵ Inspectors, too, should 'have some...experience in teaching'.¹⁸⁶ Mary Hayden urged that the inspectorate be drawn from 'graduates who have practical experience of school teaching, and who have passed a special examination in the theory and practice of education'.¹⁸⁷ The role of women in examining was also raised. Misses Day and Gillespie of the Ladies Collegiate College Newry noted that 'more women examiners might be appointed',¹⁸⁸ a position supported by the Central Association of Irish Schoolmistresses,¹⁸⁹ while H.M. White suggested that if salaries 'were raised to, say, £200, many teachers in full vigorous strength, who have got tired of teaching, might...devote themselves to examining'.¹⁹⁰

Related were comments regarding the education of girls. Despite O'Donnell's criticisms of two years later, M. Byres, Principal of Victoria College, submitted, as noted previously, that 'Intermediate examinations have revolutionised girls' education. The Dominican Sisters, Eccles Street, Dublin, pointed out that 'many subjects for girls...were not recognised by the Board' and objected to 'a programme being assigned to girls simply because it is suitable for boys'.¹⁹¹ This, they argued, disadvantaged girls' schools, and they urged that the Board accept qualifications from a number of other bodies.¹⁹²

This view was supported by the Intermediate Education (Ireland) Report of Messrs. F. H. Dale and T. A. Stephens (1905), which provided yet more detailed analysis of the position of intermediate school teachers and in particular the issue of initial teacher education. The issue of teacher training had been contested since the establishment of the first model schools in the 1830s. By 1905, the Religious had established a network of training colleges, but these catered largely for national rather

than intermediate teachers.¹⁹³ The teaching Religious, who dominated intermediate schooling, were almost wholly untrained. Their schools were private institutions and the State had no power of compulsion. The report, coinciding with the establishment in Trinity College Dublin (TCD) of the first Chair of Education in Ireland, noted simply that there was ‘no standard of qualification’ or ‘satisfactory provision for training... due to the fact that there is no single Authority...provided with powers for dealing with Intermediate education...the University or other authorities so as to make provision for the training of teachers’.¹⁹⁴

In the context of the history of initial teacher education in Ireland and England, the Report’s comments are instructive. Training was in its infancy in both countries and the Report noted that while ‘training of this kind has been provided in a dozen English centres’ for ‘five or six years... there has not as yet been sufficient time to find a common measure of the work done at these’.¹⁹⁵ Then, in a strikingly insightful passage, given understandings of teaching at the time, the authors remark:

Years must pass before conclusions as to the best methods of training teachers are reached...to teach, with all that the word “teach” should imply, for the pupil’s physical and mental development side by side with the formation of his character requires in the teacher qualities which may be strengthened, but can hardly be produced or measured in Training Colleges.¹⁹⁶

However, some formal system must be applied, and based on those operating in England and Germany, the Report recommended a course of studies combining academic subjects and practical experience, followed by a probationary period.¹⁹⁷ Several training colleges already existed for national teachers while intermediate teachers were catered for at a small number of institutions. The Royal University of Ireland offered a diploma in teaching; TCD’s new course provided examinations but not the theory, history and practice of education and was therefore ‘incomplete’.¹⁹⁸ St. Augustine’s College, Waterford offered a ‘small number’ of women students ‘training in preparation for the Teacher’s Certificate of the Cambridge Syndicate’ and so impressed Dale and Stephens that they were ‘strongly of the opinion that where such an institution is established...every encouragement and full recognition should be given by the Central Authority’.¹⁹⁹ Christian Brothers training at Marino College Dublin undertook a two-year course, including placement in a school, and sat examinations in educational theory before being allowed to teach.

These varied institutions, according to the Report, should be recognised by the Central Authority for the purposes of teacher education. In the first decades of the twentieth century, Alexandra College operated a training college for girls, accredited by Trinity College. A student in the early 1920s ‘found the year interesting but tiring’ and decided ultimately that she ‘would not like to teach in a school’.²⁰⁰

Training, therefore, was arbitrary; pay was ‘inadequate’ and, ultimately, anyone could ‘open a “school”, staff it by the cheapest methods, and draw public money for... examination success...by any method’.²⁰¹ Generally, lay teachers fell into two classes: graduates holding qualifications from a university; and those with ‘no special qualifications for their work who [took] up teaching as the readiest way of obtaining a living...before deciding on their permanent profession’.²⁰² Therefore, not only were intermediate schools disinclined to employ lay teachers, but those they did were, generally, poorly qualified. It is hardly surprising, then, that the Inspectors’ reports for the period reveal an uneven system.²⁰³ *The Report of the Intermediate Board for Ireland* (1900) recorded the ‘highest praise’ for teachers’ ‘sound’, ‘accurate’ and ‘conscientious teaching’.²⁰⁴ The following year inspectors spoke of ‘sound teaching’; of teachers deserving the ‘highest praise’; of ‘painstaking’ and ‘excellent’ teaching; and ‘teaching of a very superior character’.²⁰⁵ While there was much poor teaching, there were many examples of ‘very real, efficient and highly valuable work’ and of ‘care’ and ‘efficiency’ in Irish schools’.²⁰⁶ But lack of training, coupled with the influence of payment by results, meant that teachers were criticised incessantly for a number of failings, such as over-reliance on textbooks; lack of ‘scientific method’; encouraging pupils to be over-reliant on memory; carelessness; an absence of explanation and assistance to pupils; incompetence and negligence; antiquated methods²⁰⁷; lack of systematic instruction; mechanical and unintelligent teaching leading to ‘the shipwreck of many youthful intellects’²⁰⁸; a ‘great deal of inaccurate teaching’; constant attempts to predict upcoming examination questions; ‘very defective’ teaching, with one examiner recording that ‘the answering of many candidates was indeed so deplorable that one can only believe that, if they were taught French at all, is was by a person utterly ignorant of the language’.²⁰⁹ The inspectors repeatedly condemned teachers for ‘teaching to the examinations’, but this must be understood in the context of schools’ reliance on examination monies and the consequent pressure upon teachers. Again, there was no onus upon teachers to secure training; they were disenfranchised in Religious-operated schools and, as Dale

and Stephens pointed out, often uncommitted to teaching. The absence of training rankled with headmasters in particular. Maurice Hime, whose musings upon schooling in the nineteenth century were informed by his role as Principal of St. Malachy's Belfast, reflected in 1885 that it was 'in school' that masters learned how to teach and it would:

be so until the State interfere, and, with the co-operation of the Universities, where professorships of pedagogy must then be established for the purpose, insist that all teachers in our Intermediate [schools]...hold certificates to the effect that they have attended certain courses in pedagogy, and duly passed their examinations in same, and practised the art for a season, and are accordingly fitted to undertake the education of the young. But until this happy time arrive, teachers in our Intermediate Schools must blunder and blunder on as they do...to their pupils' present and permanent injury; and learning in this way something about the science and the art of education.²¹⁰

The continued plight of teachers was more sympathetically noted in 1910 when the *Report of the Intermediate Commission* noted that the inspectors 'have frequently referred...to the earnestness and untiring energy of the teachers. The defects...noticed were mainly due to circumstances not within the control of the schools', such as 'wants of financial support'.²¹¹ And in 1911, while standards of teaching were praised, the frequently criticised influence of payment by results was again stressed: 'The present system attempts to force all schools into the same mould, by making all submit to the same examinations, and forcing them into competition with one another—a competition which is naturally injurious to the best interests of education'.²¹²

The Molony Report of 1919 confirmed many of O'Donnell's 1901 observations, reinforced those of the Inspectorate and highlighted a number of systemic failures. The State 'paid on results without inquiring into the means by which the results were obtained'.²¹³ Teachers' qualifications 'varied to an extreme degree'; they 'had no professional status' and were 'employed under conditions which were most discreditable'.²¹⁴ The lack of 'professional status' is a curious grievance as the Higher Diploma in Education had been introduced in 1912; a one-year, part-time, consecutive course which became obligatory for registration in 1918 (and for eligibility for incremental salary in 1924).²¹⁵ According to the report, intermediate teachers were 'doing work of the utmost importance...under most unsatisfactory conditions'; training, if a teacher wished to undertake it, was 'at his own expense'; salary was dependent 'on the resources of the

school'; a teacher's only chance of securing a 'tolerable competence was to obtain a headmastership', a possibility 'so remote it may be said not to [exist] at all in the case of Roman Catholic teachers'.²¹⁶ The intermediate teacher was 'liable to dismissal without notice; and, when he was no longer fit for his work by reason of old age or physical disability, his position, in the absence of a pension scheme, was often deplorable'.²¹⁷

Poor remuneration was, according to Molony, the key challenge. Citing Dale and Stephens, the report states plainly that 'no Irish graduate, save in exceptional cases, will enter the teaching profession if any other career presents itself to him'.²¹⁸ This is why in 1914 the Teachers' Salaries Grant injected a further £40,000 into the system.²¹⁹ The grant had the effect of encouraging lay teachers to seek posts and between 1915 and 1918 the number employed in schools under Catholic management increased from 46 to 264 and in those not under such management from 237 to 370.²²⁰ For schools the fund made a real difference, the Treasurer of the The Diocesan Intermediate and Commercial School for Girls in Dublin reporting in 1915 that he had 'received the sum of £96 1s. 1d as the first payment from the new fund established by the State to assist lay teachers in secondary schools'.²²¹

However, there was no system for ensuring that the extra monies were employed to pay salaries, and teachers depended upon the goodwill of their manager. The issue was fundamental to the status of teaching in Ireland on the eve of independence. The report was unambiguous; if the State required professional services, 'it [was] but just that it should pay for them'.²²² The intermediate teacher of the future should secure a degree and also a diploma in 'the theory and practice of education'.²²³ Men and women would not be attracted to teaching unless the profession was 'raised altogether above its present level'.²²⁴ The remedy lay in three key areas. Uncertainty of tenure should be removed by an acceptance that a 'teacher's engagement should continue during efficiency and good conduct' and that employment might be terminated only after it had been indicated in writing three months previously.²²⁵ Hours of work were 'unreasonably long' and the report made the rather feeble recommendation that 'Central Authority [should] not approve a time-table which makes excessive demands upon either pupils or teachers'.²²⁶

Finally, the report recorded all but unanimous condemnation of the payment by results system and recommended that it be abolished; the desirability of compulsory schooling and that, in effect, the system required systemic change.²²⁷ The report and its counterpart, the Killanin Report, formed the basis of the Education (Ireland) Bill, which received

its first reading before Parliament in November 1919.²²⁸ The Bill provided for a Department of Education to replace the Boards of Commissioners; proposed the establishment of local education committees and systems of remuneration; and, finally, dealt with the mechanics of funding the system. The Association of Secondary Teachers (ASTI) felt that the Bill was insufficiently robust regarding security of tenure while the Catholic hierarchy viewed a proposal to establish local education committees as a threat to managerial autonomy. The government responded by insisting that there would be no progress unless the Bill was passed and demonstrated its resolve by refusing the Intermediate Board's request for increased funding 'pending the issue of existing proposals for legislation'.²²⁹ The Bill now became part of wider political debates in pre-independence Ireland. Nationalists objected to legislation emanating from Westminster that imposed local authorities (committees) and the Government of Ireland Bill overshadowed discussions concerning any one section of the workforce.²³⁰ Lloyd George's administration deserves much credit for seeking to rectify intermediate education in spite of strenuous objections. While opposition to the Bill is more readily understood in the context of post-1916 Ireland, as legislation concerning education it was the most comprehensive, progressive and realistic attempt to solve the problems of teachers' pay and tenure since the foundation of the Intermediate System. It is not surprising, given its failure, that teachers working in the decades following independence record never having seen or signed a contract of employment.

Hence on the eve of independence, the position of intermediate teachers was far from satisfactory. Education policy was increasingly designed to facilitate the revival of the Irish language, amateurism and casualization characterised official and local understandings of employment, lay teachers experienced difficulties in securing posts, schools were predominantly operated by Religious at little cost to the State and pedagogical innovation was unknown. Prior to the introduction of free secondary schooling in 1966 it remained the preserve of those who could afford it. Unless enrolled in one of the many free, usually Religious operated, schools, working-class children were excluded.

CONCLUSION: A 'HAPPY AND USEFUL LIFE'?

Throughout the nineteenth century, intermediate or intermediate-type schools operated across Ireland. Before 1878 they were usually self-funding and the examination payments of the Intermediate, while

welcome, only partly alleviated the running costs associated with maintenance and salaries. Yet, within these institutions lived and worked communities that are largely unknown. School histories reveal that, decades before the examination demands of the Intermediate system, schools operated in-house examinations and that the advent of the Intermediate meant that not only were these replaced but the new curriculum necessitated by the Intermediate examinations forced many schools to alter their intellectual emphases and ethos. This change was most marked in Religious-operated schools, many of which were acts of apostolate and quasiseminaries. The Intermediate, the expansion of Empire and the growth of the middle-class in late Victorian society encouraged parents to see schools increasingly as sites of professional and economic opportunity, again, bringing pressure to bear upon traditional understandings of education. But the Intermediate system also improved opportunities for lay teachers. Despite the pressures it evidently introduced, in forcing schools to become more formalised, more results driven and more publically accountable, it forced Religious run schools to accept that they would need to employ university graduates in order to cope with the new curricular demands. In the twentieth century, this was repeated with the advent of free education in 1966 which, given the rapid expansion of the pupil cohort, provided significant employment opportunities for secondary teachers. But inadequate pay and uncertainty of tenure were, generally, the lot of the intermediate teacher. Ward's accusation that his headmaster was withholding results money from his staff, O'Donnell's claim that a school could employ eight teaching priests for £50 each whereas one lay teacher cost £150 and "A Munster Teacher[s]" complaint that schools were not publically accountable for the manner in which they used results money reflect the tensions regarding remuneration and contracts so often rehearsed in official reports. It is unsurprising that teaching did not attract graduates as the reports of Dale and Stephens and Molony highlighted. Yet, for all this, intermediate teachers are remembered by past-pupils as generally hard-working and committed. Even O'Donnell's diatribe is concerned more with remuneration and employment than with the effectiveness of the teaching cohort. Again, his accusation that the teaching Religious were 'clerical matterers' is not supported by the evidence and while the 1899 Commission was critical of teaching standards, those it criticised were, generally, untrained, poorly paid, operating in an environment where their posts often relied on the examination results of their pupils and without the security of a contract of employment. This group was accorded the

'highest praise' by *The Report of the Intermediate Board for Ireland* (1900) and its work described as 'sound', 'accurate' and 'conscientious teaching'. It is unsurprising then that Dale and Stephens should criticise the lack of training available to, rather than the work of, intermediate school teachers. Yet, even within the profession there were differences of opinion. O'Donnell's criticisms of the 'Intermediate Bribery System' are supported nine years later by the Report of the Inspectors on Belvedere College who, in an observation that reflected the wider view of the Inspectorate at this stage, criticised the school for teaching to the examinations. Yet, in 1899, M. Byres, Principal of Victoria College, Belfast, submitted that the examinations had 'revolutionised girls' education while the results fees had enabled headmistresses to increase the school staff' and 'offer salaries that secure high-class teachers'. This reveals another tension within the system. Byres operated an all-girls school, competing not only with its rivals but with all-boys schools for funding and enrolments. The public examinations allowed such schools access to funding, increased staffing and the opportunity to demonstrate their ability and achievements in open competition. It was far from perfect, but it allowed girls' schools operate under near parity. Despite this, gender expectations remained those the Victorian period, working-class girls remained culturally and financially excluded from intermediate schools and the rules of behaviour governing schools in 1914 such as those at Dominican Convent, Cabra, would have seemed equally applicable a century earlier. Intermediate schools were frequently boarding institutions. Often pupils remained in school from September to August. School life was physically hard. Buildings were cold, hot-running water was rare, food was limited and usually of poor quality and, often, more than one group was taught in the same room. Some aspects, however, are readily familiar. Pupil mischief in the form of collective humming or coughing in study hall, the passing of intimate messages *via* day pupils to sweethearts, complaints that teachers were moving through course work too slowly or too quickly, injustices real or imagined and the formation of deep friendships are constants in school histories. Indeed, the recollections of pupils are often the only source of information about teachers in the nineteenth century. The Religious left almost no individual testimony and those of lay teachers are frequently mundane having to do with everyday schoolwork. Nonetheless, it is those voices we have attempted to reveal here—the vast indistinct ancestry of the modern, professional teaching body.

NOTES

1. See for example: Mulcahy, *Curriculum and Policy in Irish Post-Primary Education* (Dublin, 1981), Coolahan, *Irish Education: History and Structure* (Dublin, 1984), O’Buachalla, *Irish Educational Policy*, (Dublin, 1984).
2. Films, in particular, have tended to dramatise schooling in productions such as *To Sir with Love* (1967); *Dead Poets Society* (1989) or *Dangerous Minds* (1995), to name some modern offerings. Films about American high schools abound, as do British films concerning boarding schools from the farces of the St. Trinian’s productions to those of the Harry Potter series. See M. M. Dalton, *The Hollywood Curriculum: Teachers in the Movies*, *passim*. It should be recalled that teachers and schools were the subject of even the earliest films. The tragic decline of Professor Immanuel Rath in Sternberg’s 1930 *The Blue Angel* (based upon Thomas Mann’s *Professor Unrat*, 1905) is overshadowed in film history by the presence of Marlene Dietrich’s character Lola. Nonetheless the, film is closely concerned with the social role and public perception and expectation of the school teacher. Yet, after four decades of teaching, G. K. White ended his memoirs by remarking that ‘school life is not a series of comic and tragic and dramatic events...which is the reason why no exciting school novel can ever be quite true’. G. K. White, *The Last Word*, 153.
3. However, see Roger Waters’ comments, <http://www.pink-floyd.org/art-int/98.htm>.
4. R. Raphael, *The Teacher’s Voice: A Sense of Who We Are* (USA, 1985), 14.
5. See B. Barker, ‘Education Histories, 1885–2000’, *History of Education Society Bulletin*, November, 2002.
6. P. Gardner, ‘Classroom Teachers and Educational Change: 1876–1996’ in G. McCulloch, *The Routledge Falmer Reader in the History of Education* (UK, 2005), 214.
7. Elbaz, cited in D. Thomas (Ed.), *teachers’ stories* (UK 1995), 15.
8. P. Gardner, ‘Classroom Teachers and Educational Change: 1876–1996’ in G. McCulloch, *The Routledge Falmer Reader in History of Education*, 215.
9. D. Thomas (Ed.), *teachers’ stories*, 15.
10. The term ‘Intermediate’ is employed to denote post-primary (secondary) schooling before independence (1922); after that period the designation Secondary is employed.
11. Committee of Irish Catholics, *Intermediate and University Education in Ireland Part I*, 265. Diocesan schools were operated by diocesan priests, that is, priests who were not members of specific religious orders and, usually, dedicated to parish work.
12. Committee of Irish Catholics, *Intermediate and University Education in Ireland Part I*, 261.

13. P. Andrews, ‘To Deserve the Title of a College—The Jesuits at Belvedere’, in J. Bowman and R. O’Donoghue, *Portraits: Belvedere College, Dublin 1832–1982* (Dublin, 1982) 132–3.
14. The term ‘Intermediate’ is not generally employed pre-1878—the date of the Intermediate Education (Ireland) Act. *The Report of the Council of Education: The Curriculum of the Secondary School* (1950) defined ‘superior schools’ as ‘those schools in which a foreign language is taught, upon the assumed likelihood that the presence of a foreign language...argues a higher standard of general instruction than is to be found where such an element is wanting’ [40]. The earliest Intermediate schools include: St. Kieran’s College, Kilkenny (1783); St. Patrick’s College, Carlow (1793); Clongowes Wood College (1814); Brothers of St Patrick, Tullow and Mountrath (1825 and 1827); Castleknock College (1835); Vincentian College, Dublin (1830). Schools for girls included: the Quaker Newtown School, Waterford (1798); Wesley College, Dublin (1845); the Ladies’ Collegiate Institute Belfast (1859); Alexandra College (1866); Strand House School, Londonderry (1860); Methodist College, Belfast (1868).
15. ‘Superior school’ is defined by the Census as ‘all teaching not strictly elementary’, *Census of Ireland* 1871, p.162.
16. See *The Report of the Council of Education: The Curriculum of the Secondary School*, Dublin, 1960, 40.
17. Cited in *ibid.*, 170.
18. Committee of Irish Catholics. *Intermediate and University Education in Ireland Part I*, 267.
19. Maurice C. Hime, *Efficiency of Irish Schools and their Superiority to English Schools as Places of Education for Irish Boys proved and explained* (London, 1889) 1.
20. *Ibid.*, 42.
21. ‘Each pupil had an ink bottle hung to a button by a leather strap, a white lead pencil and a ruler. The advanced pupils, those from thirteen to twenty years of age, set to their own work as soon as they came in to school’. See James Delany, ‘Patrick Kennedy’, *The Past*, 1964, no. 7, 17.
22. Relief acts were passed in 1782, 1792 and 1793. The eighteenth century witnessed the widespread founding of schools by Catholic orders; for example: in 1771 Nano Nagle introduced the Ursulines and in 1782 the Presentation Sisters; 1802 the Christian Brothers are established by Venerable Edmund Rice; 1814 The Society of Jesus (Jesuits) establish Clongowes Wood College; 1827 the Sisters of Mercy established; 1860 the Holy Ghost Fathers establish Blackrock College; 1882 the Loreto Nuns established in Ireland.
23. See D.V. Kelleher, *James Dominic Burke* (Dublin, 1988), 93.
24. Endowed schools being those institutions that received full or partial funding from the State, benefactors or benefactors legacies.

25. *Report of Select committee on foundation schools and education in Ireland*, Parliamentary Papers 1837–38, vii, [701].
26. See, P. Corish (Ed.), *A History of Irish Catholicism, Vol. V, Catholic Education* (Dublin, 1970), 56.
27. *Ibid.*, 62. The Department Science and Art evolved during the latter part of the nineteenth century and moved to its South Kensington headquarters in 1857.
28. By 1868 there were 26 “science schools” in Ireland, all receiving funding from the Science and Art Department, see Graham Balfour, *The education systems of Great Britain and Ireland*, 1903, 201. The Kildare Commission had been initiated in 1854 with the Marquis of Kildare as its chairman; its findings were published in 1858. On St. Kieran’s involvement see P. Birch, *St. Kieran’s College, Kilkenny* (Dublin, 1951), 203–213.
29. On the initial development of technical and scientific subjects in Irish schools in the nineteenth century, see N. McMillan, *Prometheus’s Fire*, 180–182. The history of science teaching in Ireland is regrettably much neglected. Belvedere College entered 113 boys for the South Kensington Examinations in 1894 earning £52. 10s. See P. Andrews, ‘To Deserve the Title of a College—The Jesuits at Belvedere’ in J. Bowman and R. O’Donoghue, *Portraits: Belvedere College, Dublin 1832–1982*, 149. In 1878, the new Intermediate Board allocated 500 marks to Science subjects (200 to botany and zoology) whereas Greek, Latin and English were awarded 1000 marks. Hence, in Ireland, the development of Science in schools and therefore more generally was significantly handicapped from the outset. Money was not the sole obstacle, however. The classical curriculum was *de rigour* and Kelleher cites Hime, ‘a typical Victorian headmaster of the period’ who maintained, in 1899, that a classical education would enable pupils to turn their hand successfully to other disciplines and that, regardless, ‘we have no rooms, no apparatus, no qualified master, no money for the teaching of these sciences, no time for them’. D.V. Kelleher, *James Dominic Burke*, 105. Hime published *An Apology of [sic] the Intermediate* (Dublin) in 1899.
30. Before the advent of Intermediate schooling it was not uncommon for children attending hedge schools to study subjects in preparation for entering a Noviate. See J. Delaney, ‘Patrick Kenney’ in *The Past*, 1964, No. 7, 25; ‘Latin and Greek were also taught, as there were some pupils preparing for the priesthood...’. The period under discussion is the 1820s. Holy Ghost Fathers (Congregation of the Holy Ghost and of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, now, Spiritans) founded Paris 1703 by Claude-François Poullart des Place.
31. *Census of Ireland 1871*, Pt. 111, H.C., 1876, [C. 1377] LXXXI.

32. On the challenges of estimating enrolment and attendance at primary school level in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries J. Logan, ‘How many pupils went to school in the nineteenth-century?’, *Irish Education Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 1, 1989, 23–36.
33. *Irish Times*, 29 4.1871.
34. Graham Balfour, *The education systems of Great Britain and Ireland 1903*, 201; accomplishment is described as ‘very limited indeed’.
35. See E.R. Norman, *The Catholic Church in Ireland in the Age of Rebellion* (UK, 1965), 53.
36. See copy of the memorial of the Roman Catholic prelates relative to National education in Ireland and, of the reply thereto of the chief secretary for Ireland, dated 28th November 1859, Parliamentary Papers, 1860, liii, 26.
37. Also, the template of financial aid that operated under the Kensington Examinations served as a model. ‘We assume’ opined the *Irish Times* (29th April 1878) ‘that the Government Bill will be based on results. It is the true, the equitable principle. It excludes favouritism, and gives honour to whom honour is due. If we suppose a system of capitation grants to be adopted, a delicate question as to whom the rewards should go will necessarily be raised’.
38. Howley taught in Blackrock College, a prestigious school in south Dublin, founded by the Holy Ghost Fathers in 1860. See A. O’Rahilly ‘The Irish University question’, *Studies*, Vol. 50, No. 199, Autumn 1961. The school in Trinidad, St. Mary’s College, was operated mostly by pastmen of Blackrock College. The president of Blackrock, Fr. Père Leman, encouraged Howley to write to the press describing how Irish education was disadvantaged in not having a similar scheme. Howley’s missals being unproductive, the College appealed directly to the House of Commons. See by S. P. Farragher CSSp, *Blackrock College 1860–1995* (USA, 1995), 53 and *Père Leman: educator and missionary, founder of Blackrock College* (USA, 1988), 388–416.
39. See, P. Corish (Ed.), *A History of Irish Catholicism, Vol. V, Catholic Education*, 74.
40. See Intermediate Education (Ireland) Commission, *Appendix to the Final Report of the Commissioners. Part II. Miscellaneous Documents*. Stationary Office, Dublin 1899. [C.-9513] Section A.II - Documents Put in by Witnesses, *passim*.
41. P. Corish (Ed.), *A History of Irish Catholicism, Vol. V, Catholic Education*, 77. This system was attempted in 1902 but abandoned the following year due to the difficulty to computing the pass rate and public reaction to the high level of failure in the 1902 session.

42. M. J. Wigham, *Newtown School Waterford 1798–1998: A History* (Waterford, 1998), 69.
43. *Report of Messers F.H. Dale and T.A. Stephens, his majesty's inspectors of schools, Board of Education, on intermediate education in Ireland*, Parliamentary Papers, 1905, xxviii [Cd 2546].
44. *Ibid.*, 43.
45. *Ibid.*
46. P. Corish (Ed.), *A History of Irish Catholicism, Vol. V, Catholic Education*, 78.
47. Cited, *ibid.*, *Intermediate Education (Ireland) Report of Messrs. F.H. Dale and T.A. Stephens, His Majesty's Inspectors for Schools, Board of Education, on Intermediate Education in Ireland*. VI., paras. 75–80; 269, 270, 272, 273.
48. *Report of the viceregal committee on the conditions of service and remuneration of teachers in intermediate schools, and on the distribution of grants from public funds for intermediate education in Ireland*, Parliamentary papers 1919, xxi [Cmd 66].
49. The Easter Rising took place on Easter Monday 1916. The execution of its leaders resulted in bitter resentment. The MacPherson Bill was regarded as irrelevant and objectionable, being the work of an administration that was popularly regarded as lacking a political mandate in Ireland.
50. Maurice C. Hime, *A Schoolmaster's Retrospect of Eighteen and a Half Years in an Irish School* (London & Dublin, 1885), 23–24.
51. Vice-Regal Committee on Intermediate Education (Ireland). *Report of the Vice-Regal Committee on the Conditions of Service in Intermediate Schools, and on the Distribution of Grants from Public Funds of Intermediate Education in Ireland*. Stationary Office, Dublin 1919 [Cmd. 66], 246.
52. *The Loreto Magazine*, Christmas 1896, Recent Reminiscences, 13–14. On girls' experiences of schooling in nineteenth-century Ireland see B. Walsh, *Knowing Their Place? The Intellectual Life of Women in the Nineteenth-Century*, ch. 8.
53. M. J. Wigham, *Newtown School Waterford 1798–1998: A History*, 56.
54. *Ibid.*, 70.
55. *Irish Times*, 5.7.1879.
56. Maurice C. Hime, *A Schoolmaster's Retrospect of Eighteen and a Half Years in an Irish School*, 24.
57. Maurice C. Hime, *Efficiency of Irish Schools and their Superiority to English Schools as Places of Education for Irish Boys proved and explained* (London & Dublin, 1889), 55.
58. *Ibid.*, 56.
59. *Ibid.*, 57.
60. P. Birch, *St. Kieran's College, Kilkenny*, 167.

61. Although even before 1878 boys from St. Kieran’s and similar schools had joined the British Armed Forces and the Indian Civil Service.
62. Maurice C. Hime, *A Schoolmaster’s Retrospect of Eighteen and a Half Years in an Irish School*, 60. Between 1856 and 1881 for example, 153 graduates of Trinity College and Queen’s University, Belfast passed the Indian Civil Service examinations.
63. P. Birch, *St. Kieran’s College, Kilkenny*, 211.
64. D.V. Kelleher, *James Dominic Burke*, 100.
65. *Ibid.*, 15.
66. *Ibid.*, 17. Carleton records: ‘Nothing can more decidedly prove the singular and extraordinary thirst for education and general knowledge which characterises the Irish people than the shifts to which they have often gone in order to gain even a limited portion of instruction. Of this the Irish Night School is a complete illustration. The Night School was always opened either for those of early age, who from their poverty were forced to earn something for their own support during the day...or for grown young men who had never had an opportunity of acquiring education in their youth’, *Traits and Stories of the Irish Peasantry*, 242.
67. The paucity of Intermediate and, later, Secondary schools, as a statistical fact is translated into life history by comments such as those by Annette Andrews, who attended Mount Sackville School in the 1950s: ‘When I was eleven I left my home village...for Mount Sackville....I had always known I would be going. No Secondary School in Ballyjamesduff and no school transport gave my parents no choice in the matter’. M. Delaney, *Mount Sackville 1864–2004*, (Dublin, 2004) 60. Past pupil Frances Fagan, who began attending Mount Sackville in 1956, recalled in the same volume, ‘There was no secondary school in Kilcock in the early 1900s, so the Presentation nuns who ran the Primary school...set up a Continuation Class for girls’, 61.
68. *Ibid.*, 38. The girls were Mary Roche (four), Hannah O’Brien (29) and Mary Somers (28). The teacher was Winifred O’Connell.
69. J. Delany, ‘Patrick Kennedy’, *The Past*, 1964, no. 7, 20.
70. *Ibid.*
71. A small school built by Robert Carew, member of Parliament for Wexford in the Irish Parliament. ‘He was one of the first in Ireland to establish a school, to provide for the children of his large estates that elementary education—then denied them by the State and the adverse spirit of the times’. *Ibid.*, 24.
72. William Carlton, *Traits and Stories of the Irish Peasantry*, 242.
73. P. Kennedy, *The Banks of the Bora* (Dublin, 1875), 4.
74. *Ibid.*, 247.
75. *Ibid.*

76. P. Kennedy, *Evenings in Duffrey* (Dublin, 1869), 26.
77. *Ibid.*, 27–28.
78. *Ibid.*, 28.
79. *Ibid.*, 29.
80. See P.D., ‘The Latin School at Goffsbridge (1824–1852)’, *The Past*, 1964, no. 7, 92. P.D. is the *nom de plume* of ‘a venerable Wexford Priest’.
81. William Martin Murphy, ‘Reminiscences of fifty years ago’, *The Belvederian*, 1909, vol. 2, no. 1, 33–8.
82. P.D., ‘The Latin School at Goffsbridge (1824–1852)’, *The Past*, 1964, no. 7, 92.
83. *Report on the state of the protestant charter school of this kingdom 14 April 1788, Journals of the house of commons of the kingdom of Ireland, xii, pt 2, dcccx*. For details of Howard’s investigation and subsequent inquiry, see K. Milne, *The Irish Charter Schools 1730–1830* (Dublin, 1977), 193–204. See also M.G. Jones, *The Charity School Movement* (UK, 1938), 215–59.
84. Incorporated Society in Dublin for Promoting (English) Protestant Schools in Ireland, Committee books, 5258, 27 January, 1819, cited in K. Milne, *The Irish Charter Schools 1730–1830*, 106.
85. See K. Milne, *The Irish Charter Schools 1730–1830*, 106–107.
86. The contemporary equivalent being £482.55 see <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currency/results.asp#mid>, accessed 18 May 2012. Irish currency was amalgamated with English currency in 1826. See R. Heaslip, ‘Money’, in S.J. Connolly, *Oxford Companion to Irish History*, 384–385. See also P. McGowan, ‘Money and banking in Ireland: origins, development and future’, *Journal of the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland*, 1981, vol. XXVI, part 1, December, 45–132.
87. *Ibid.*, 125–126.
88. *Ibid.*, 125.
89. On Irish in schools at the period, see B. Walsh, *The Pedagogy of Protest*, (Bern, 2007) ch. 4.
90. On the ‘Second Reformation’, see I. Whelan, *The Bible War in Ireland* (USA, 2005), *passim*.
91. P. Birch, *St. Kieran’s College, Kilkenny*, 20.
92. See *St. Mary’s College Dundalk 1861–1961: Centenary Record*, (Dundalk, 1961).
93. P. Birch, *St. Kieran’s College, Kilkenny*, 38.
94. *Ibid.*, 39. However, the school was locally reputed to be a type of minor seminary which accounted for the presence of Catholic pupils at Kilkenny College—a ‘Protestant’ school—and also at other independent schools such as Castlemarket Academy, founded in 1810, and the Classical schools at Lisdowney, Callan, Thomastown and Kilkenny.

95. *Ibid.*, 120. Combining lay and ‘scholastics’ was not uncommon in the nineteenth century. At Blackrock College, Dublin, founded in 1860, ‘students intended for the Congregation’ when not in ordinary classes ‘followed a different regime from the other students’. S.P. Farragher, *Blackrock College 1860–1995*, 31.
96. P. Birch, *St. Kieran’s College, Kilkenny*, 131.
97. *Ibid.* A century later little had changed. J. McCarthy, recalling his school-days sometime in the second decade of the twentieth century, studied (for Junior Honours Examination) ‘all of Caesar’s *Gallic War* Bk. V and every line of Virgil’s *Aeneid* Bk 1. In Greek the prescribed texts were Xenophon’s *Anabasis* Bk. 1 and Euripides play *Medea*...translation from English into Latin and Greek: a passage of unseen and questions on syntax and grammar completed the ordeal’. ‘Remembrances of things past’, *Secondary Teacher*, 1987, vol. 16, no. 3, 24.
98. The nineteenth century witnessed a huge growth in the popularity of ballooning. Windham Sadler crossed from Dublin to Holyhead in 1817 and the pastime served to enhance the study of meteorology and the refinement of scientific instruments. See R. Holms, *The Age of Wonder* (London, 2009), ch. 3.
99. Correspondence from J. Bracken to Roothaan, 31 March 1853, Roman letters, cited in P. Andrews, ‘To Deserve the Title of a College—The Jesuits at Belvedere’ in J. Bowman and R. O’Donoghue, *Portraits: Belvedere College, Dublin 1832–1982*, 153.
100. *Ibid.*, my emphasis.
101. Blackrock College, one of Ireland’s most prestigious Catholic schools for boys, was originally established in a former Protestant boarding school. Father Ebenrecht of Blackrock College acted as architect for Mother Callixte Pichet, founder of Mount Sackville School for girls in the mid-1860s. A layman, Mr. Rigney, who had studied for the priesthood and was married with a daughter, was employed in the first year of the school’s operation. See E. Watters (Ed.), *Go Teach All Nations* (Dublin, 2000), 59.
102. S. P. Farragher, *Blackrock College 1860–1995*, 279. See also E. Watters (Ed.), *Go Teach All Nations*, 59–60.
103. D. V. Kelleher, *James Dominic Burke*, 144.
104. *Ibid.*, 114. The impressive spectacle of academic robes, at least in the early decades of the twentieth century, is occasionally remarked upon by those who were pupils at the time. Girls, in particular, seem more disposed to noticing robes and their colours, but this may well be due to their rarity amongst women at the time and one suspects such displays did much to encourage female pupils in thinking about the possibilities of academic degrees. Appearance is significant. Of the first nine women who

- graduated from the RUI, five were teachers at Alexandra College. Past pupil Mary Hayden recorded in her diary how ‘exceedingly well’ they looked in ‘their black gowns, hoods lined with white fur and tasselled caps’ adding ‘even the plain ones, and the ordinary looking ones appeared to advantage’. She records that the Lord Chief Justice pronounced them ‘an ugly lot’, although he had only seen one of them—Alice Oldham. *Mary Hayden Diaries*, 22.10.1884, MS. 16.641.
105. *Ibid.*, the names of the two teachers were Mr. Burke and Mr. McDonald.
106. D. V. Kelleher, *James Dominic Burke*, 281. Speaking of the early 1950s when St. Paul’s College, Dublin, was founded, T. Farmer writes that the Vincentian Fathers were always present ‘it is difficult to exaggerate the importance to the school of a body of men with broadly similar views whose lives...were dedicated to the school. This devotion was not unique to St. Paul’s, indeed it characterised the Irish education system as a whole’. T. Farmer, *Godliness, Games and Good Learning* (Dublin, 2000), 16.
107. P. Costello, *Clongowes Wood* (Dublin 1989), 232.
108. J. Murphy, *Nos Autem* (Dublin, 1966), 75.
109. *School Annual*, 1952, cited in G. Fitzpatrick, *St. Andrew’s College*, 9.
110. Haslett was 26 when he was appointed. He had attended the Royal Belfast Academical Institution from 1879 to 1885, entered St. John’s College, Cambridge, gaining a First in the Classical Tripos in 1891 and 1892. His application for post of Headmaster was supported by Professor Macalister of St. John’s, also a Trustee of St. Andrew’s College.
111. G.E. Nesbitt, ‘Dim recollections of the opening day’, *Magazine*, Easter 1919, 33.
112. Memory of William Patrick Kelly in P. Costello, *Clongowes Wood*, 135.
113. J. Murphy, *Nos Autem*, 72.
114. Cited in J. Martin and D. Kerr, *C.U.S. 1876–1967: A Centenary History* (Dublin, 1967), 108.
115. *Ibid.*, 110. ‘L.L.L.’ is not identified.
116. D. Rudd, *Rochelle*, (Naas, 1997) 7.
117. *Ibid.*
118. *Ibid.*, 27.
119. See A. V. O’Connor and S.M. Parkes, *Gladly Learn and Gladly Teach* (Dublin, 1984), 62.
120. D. Rudd, *Rochelle*, 39.
121. *Ibid.*
122. *Ibid.*, 83.
123. *Ibid.*, 52.
124. *School Minute Book*, 1897–1898, 13 September, cited in D. Rudd, *Rochelle*, 60.

125. M.J. Wigham, *Newtown School Waterford 1798–1998: A History*, 22.
126. See J. Cunningham, *St. Jarleth’s College* (Ireland, 1999), 166.
127. Trevor West, *Middleton College 1696–1996: A Tercentenary History* (Cork, 1996), 22.
128. The ‘game’ has variations and still survives today in schools, most commonly in the form of coughing or dropping books and so forth.
129. Recollection of Eric MacDermott in P. Costello, *Clongowes Wood*, 86.
130. J. Martin and D. Kerr, *C.U.S. 1867–1967*, 108.
131. D. Rudd, *La Rochelle*, 39. Again, these quotes are from Rudd who, here, does not cite her source.
132. *Ibid.* Jelllett’s recollections of food at Rochelle are particularly negative.
133. *Ibid.*, 41. Notes were sometimes passed between the young medical students and the girls from Rochelle at church; indeed, ‘a highly respected and eminent Cork doctor’ some time later ‘carried on a violent flirtation with an extremely pretty girl, a great friend of mine’. The South Charitable Infirmary and County Hospitals were founded in 1761.
134. *Ibid.*
135. M.J. Wigham, *Newtown School Waterford 1798–1998: A History*, 22.
136. Uncited, in A. V. O’Connor and S. M. Parkes, *Gladly Learn and Gladly Teach*, 134.
137. M. J. Wigham, *Newtown School Waterford 1798–1998: A History*, 68, 128.
138. *Newtown School Centenary. History of the School, Papers read at the Centenary Meeting, Record of Proceedings, Lists of Old and New Scholars, &c., &c., &c.* Waterford, 1898, 34.
139. D. Rudd, *Rochelle*, 39.
140. *Ibid.*, 71. Source not cited.
141. *Ibid.* Source not cited.
142. Quoted in D. Rudd, *Rochelle*, 74. *Fortune Grass* (London, 1934). G.K. White’s observations regarding novels about school life are interesting. Writing in 1977, he remarks: ‘I could have tried to enliven my pages with more good stories and with strange but true events. But to do so... would have given a false impression of a schoolmaster’s life. Actual school life is not a series of comic and tragic and dramatic episodes: it is a complicated tissue of people and events, almost all unremarkable, which is the reason why no exciting school novel can ever be quite true’. *The Last Word*, (Dublin 1977) 153. Again, he begins his history of St. Columba’s College as follows: ‘School histories can never be exciting if they are truthful, since school life is not dramatic’. *A History of St. Columba’s College* (Dublin, 1980), 1.
143. D. Rudd, *Rochelle*, 74. Of interest, therefore, is a note in the accounts for Santa Sabina School, Dublin for December 1912, which records that

items purchased included ‘meat, bread, butter, fish, coffee, rabbits, onions, sugar, tapioca, nutmegs’. Dominican Archives, Cabra, Dublin, Folder OPG/SSF.F. 002.

144. Ibid.
145. Ibid.
146. Maurice C. Hime, *A Schoolmaster’s Retrospect of Eighteen and a Half Years in an Irish School*, 93
147. Ibid., 94–95.
148. J. Burke-Gaffney, ‘Do you remember?’, *The Belvederian*, 1929, vol. 8, no. 3, 279.
149. D. Rudd, *Rochelle*, 109.
150. Ibid. In what might be described as the ‘romance’ of school, or recollections of it, F. O’Hanlon recalled an afternoon in Belvedere College when heavy snow meant that school would finish early. The ‘Jesuit teacher’ began to tell his class the history of the college, culminating in the story of the executed Plunkett. His recollection ends with an image reminiscent of the style of a former Belvedere boy, James Joyce: ‘There was silence in the room when the master finished talking. The only sound was the softly falling snow against the window panes. The silent falling flakes were a fitting refrain to the sombre mood that the account...had induced in the listening students’. See F. O’Hanlon, ‘Belvedere and Zurich’, *The Belvederian*, vol. 25, no. 2, 100. The teacher finished his ruminations by asking his pupils if they had heard of ‘the famous writer who is being buried today in Zurich?’ This was, of course, James Joyce.
151. D. Rudd, *Rochelle*, 107.
152. A. V. O’Connor and S. M. Parkes, *Gladly Learn and Gladly Teach*, 119.
153. Ibid., 129. Again, the recollections of those who lived in the period is indispensable. Margaret Nagle, who attended Sacred Heart, Roscrea in 1858–1859, recalled (in 1921) that ‘for Geography we travelled through England, told of each City and town...something of its History, products etc.’, ‘Roscrea 1861–1921’, memoirs written by Mrs. Moore, Sacred Heart Archives, Mount Anville, Dublin, RSA/127.
154. ‘Capturing the Atmosphere and Rhythm of the Boarding School: Immaculata Rules 1914’ in O. Burns and M. Wilson (Eds.), *Dominican Sisters Cabra 1819–1994*, 29–30.
155. Ibid.
156. O. Burns and M. Wilson (Eds.), ‘Capturing the Atmosphere and Rhythm of the Boarding School: Immaculata Rules 1914’ in *Dominican Sisters Cabra 1819–1994* (Dublin, 1994), 30.
157. Ibid., 30. The life of lay Sisters and Brothers in schools is almost wholly unrecorded. Wall notes that in Belvedere College, ‘[t]here were two lay brothers...and I never saw anyone, teacher or boy, speaking to them’.

- M. Wall, 'Recollections, 1917–1925', in J. Bowman and R. O'Donoghue, *Portraits: Belvedere College, Dublin 1832–1982*, 76. A past pupil of Loreto School, Bray in the late 1960s recalled that the lay sisters 'were real saints, hidden, humble and hard-working'. M. Lee, *Loreto Secondary School, Bray: Commemorative Year Book 1850–2000* (Dublin, 2000), 31. See C. Trimmingham Jack, 'The lay sister in educational history and memory', *History of Education*, 2000, vol. 29, no. 3, *passim*.
158. Dominican Archives, Cabra, Dublin, Folder OPG/SSS/F,008-F,029./FO26.
159. S. Lyon, 'An Old Boy Recalls the 1890s', in *St Mary's College Dundalk 1861–1961: Centenary Record* (Dundalk, 1961), 18, 20.
160. P. Peacock, 'Recollections, 1942–47', *ibid.*, 34.
161. Again, recollections tend to be those of past pupils rather than staff. Hence the historian is confronted with recollections of an adult who is retelling what s/he understood to be the case when s/he was a child, recollections that have been shaped since that time, perhaps by experiences of parenthood or similar relevant events. These recollections must be approached in this context.
162. Institutions proposed by Sir Robert Peel in 1844 to address the issue of university education for Catholics in Ireland. The proposed colleges at Galway, Cork and Belfast were to be non-denominational institutions, hence dubbed 'godless colleges' by the Irish Catholic hierarchy. See C. Barr, *Paul Cullen, John Henry Newman and the Catholic University of Ireland 1845–1865* (USA, 2003), *passim*. Hugh O'Donnell ('Crank Hugh'), previously an Irish Nationalist MP.
163. F.H. O'Donnell, *The Ruin of Education in Ireland* (London 1902), 24. Stephen Gwynn noted that the 'important Catholic schools' were 'managed by the great teaching orders...at astonishingly low cost. They give everywhere more than value for the fees which they receive. No endowed institution can compete...the regular clergy subsidise education with their own unpaid labour'. *Irish Books and Irish People*, 71.
164. *Ibid.*, 31. See also 57, where O'Donnell includes part of an article from the *Leader* [n/d]: 'Irish schools have been greatly hampered by...the Intermediate System...which has developed the keenest commercial rivalry between them. The outcome is hideous uniformity, which is destructive of all originality in teacher or pupil'. The same journal notes on August 24, 1902, 'we do not know of any Catholic College in Ireland that trains a student for a productive career...they are an emigration agency, factories for turning out incompetents'. *Ibid.*, 58.
165. Intermediate Education Board for Ireland, *Reports of the Inspectorates, 1910*, vol. 1, no. 58.
166. *Ibid.*, 70.

167. *Ibid.*, 103. Convent national schools had been highly praised by the Powis report of 1870: see *Report by the Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education* (Ireland) 1870, for example: Vol. II. Reports of Assistant Commissioners, Synopsis of Reports of Assistant Commissioners, Mr. Coward, 6, Thomas Harvey, 31 and Patrick Cumin, 23; P. Le Page Renouf, 21. See also Vol. III. Evidence taken before the Commissioners from March 12th to October 30th 1868, Evidence of Edward Sheridan, question 4802, 208; Patrick Keenan question 1578, 68 and Frederick O'Carroll, questions 4283–84, 189. F.H. Dale (1904) reported that the 'order and tone of the Convent Schools are excellent and the instruction, as a whole, is distinctly superior to that given in the ordinary National Schools'. See *Report by Mr. F.H. Dale, His Majesty's Inspector of Schools, Board of Education on primary education in Ireland, 1904* [Cd 1981] H.C. 1904. O'Donnell describes convent intermediate education as leaving 'the young girls of a whole country, steeped and sodden in mawkish sentimentalities instead of the higher truths of Catholic Religion, and habituated to devout exercise instead of useful learning'. For a more considered overview see D. Raftery and S. Parkes, *Female Education in Ireland 1700–1900* (Dublin, 2007), *passim*.
168. F.H. O'Donnell, *The Ruin of Education in Ireland*, 154. However, the education of middle-class girls was little different in other constituencies. In England, for example, teaching in the late 1850s was found to be so inadequate that it was deemed almost impossible to enter girls for the Queen's Scholarship examinations for teacher training. See E. Edwards, *Women in Teacher Training Colleges, 1900–1960: A Culture of Femininity* (London & New York, 2001), 16.
169. *New Ireland Review*, December 1901.
170. F.H. O'Donnell, *The Ruin of Education in Ireland*, 154. O'Donnell's conception of work for girls is wholly domestic, however, as is that of the writer in the *New Ireland Review*.
171. 'Anonymous', 'Convent Boarding Schools for Young Ladies', *Frazer's Magazine for Town and Country*, 1874, 9, 778–9.
172. K. Tynan, *Twenty-Five Years: Reminiscences* (London, 1913), 49. It is noteworthy that a century later Anna Mundow, a past pupil of Loreto Secondary School, Bray, reminisced that 'we were, I suppose educated in a time warp. Ireland transformed itself in the 60s and 70s...[but] my... ten years at Loreto certainly resembled the 19th century more than they did the 21st', M. Lee, *Loreto Secondary School, Bray: Commemorative Year Book 1850–2000* (Bray, 2000), 33.
173. F.H. O'Donnell, *The Ruin of Education in Ireland*, 132. The bishop pointed out that in 'almost every diocese' there is a seminary that caters for lay and ecclesiastical students, as we have seen at St. Kieran's, and

remarks that, even those who ‘come out of Maynooth’ are ‘absolutely deficient in all classical education, and in all scientific and mathematical education’, F.H. O’Donnell, *The Ruin of Education in Ireland*, 133. St. Patrick’s Pontifical College, Maynooth was established in 1795 to cater for Irish aspirants to the Catholic priesthood. The college remains a seminary and adjoins the campus of the National University of Ireland, Maynooth. See Patrick J. Corish (Ed.), *Maynooth College 1795–1995* (Dublin, 1995). The Dale and Stephens Report of 1905 noted that ‘the great majority of the clerical teachers’ in the boys’ schools had ‘received their training in Maynooth’ or with the Christian Brothers ‘at Marino’ (the Order’s training college); see *Intermediate Education (Ireland) Report of Messrs. F.H. Dale and T.A. Stephens, His Majesty’s Inspectors for Schools, Board of Education, on Intermediate Education in Ireland*, Dublin, para. 135, 42. On commissions pertaining to university education, see T. White, *Investing in People* (Dublin, 2001), ch. 1.

174. ‘Assistant Teacher’, ‘Assistant teachers in intermediate schools’, *Irish Times*, 17 December 1907.
175. *Ibid.*
176. ‘Head Master’, ‘Secondary school teachers’, *Irish Times*, 13 January 1912.
177. *Ibid.*, ‘A Munster Teacher’.
178. ‘Teacher’, ‘Secondary Teachers’, *Irish Times*, 24 February 1919. It is noteworthy that Thomas Molony, Chair of the Vice-Regal Commission on Intermediate Education, placed his son in St. Gerard’s School, Bray; an institution that was, at the time, unconnected to the Intermediate System.
179. Intermediate Education (Ireland) Commission (1899), *Appendix to the Final Report of the Commissioners. Part II. Miscellaneous Documents*. Stationery Office, Dublin [C.-9513]. Section A.II—Documents Put in by Witnesses, XVII—Memorandum put in by Hugh A. McNeill, BA, Classical Tutor, University College, Dublin, in correspondence with his evidence, 101.
180. *Ibid.*, Section B.—Digest of Answers to Queries, John P. Molohan and William A. Coligher, Examiners, 162. See also Rev. N.T. Sheridan, President, St. Peter’s College, Wexford, 172.
181. *Ibid.*, J.P. Johnston, Examiner, 147. See also L. Guilgault, Examiner in French to the Intermediate Board, 138. Mr John Thompson, Honorary Secretary, Dublin and Central Irish Branch of the Teachers’ Guild of Great Britain and Ireland submitted that compulsory registration would result in ‘keeping out men who only used the profession as a stepping-stone, and who took no real interest in their work’, 280.

182. *Ibid.*, Section E.—Digest of Minutes of Evidence, Rev. R.C. Bodkin, Professor, St. Vincent's College, Castleknock. 243. The Dublin and Central Irish Branch of the Teachers' Guild of Great Britain and Ireland noted that '[E]xaminers should have practical experience of pupils of the same age as those they are to examine'.
183. *Ibid.*, Section B.—Digest of Answers to Queries, 121. Cerf's institutional connection is not given. Miss Anna G. Day and Miss Mary Gillespie, Managers, Ladies Collegiate School, Newry, also believed that '[E]xaminers should have practical experience', as did Miss J. R. Galway B.A., Manager and Miss. L. Galway, Ladies' Collegiate School, Rosetta Park, Belfast, *ibid.*, 125, 136.
184. *Ibid.*, Section E.—Digest of Minutes of Evidence, Miss Mulvany, B.A., Head Mistress, Alexandra School, Dublin, 270.
185. *Ibid.*, Section B.—Digest of Answers to Queries, W.J. Dilworth, Examiner in Mathematics to the Intermediate Board, 127; Robert Dodds, Principal of Banbridge Academical Institution, 128.
186. *Ibid.*, Association of Intermediate and University Teachers (Ireland), 108.
187. *Ibid.*, 141. Mary Hayden (1862–1942), historian, Gaelic League activist, Professor of History at University College Dublin 1915–1942.
188. *Ibid.*, Miss Anna G. Day and Miss Mary Gillespie, Managers, Ladies' Collegiate School, Newry, 125.
189. *Ibid.*, Central Association of Irish Schoolmistresses, 121.
190. *Ibid.*, Section E.—Digest of Minutes of Evidence, Miss. H. M. White, Lady Principal, Alexandra College, Dublin, 238.
191. *Ibid.*, Mr Hugh A. McNeill, Classical Tutor, University College, Dublin, on behalf of the Dominican Nuns of Eccles Street, Sion Hill, and St. Mary's University College, 267: 'We...recommend that the Board should have proper power to accept, for the purpose of estimating the amount of the school grant for schools for girls, the examination of the Royal Irish Academy of Music, the Associated Board of the Royal Academy of Music and the Royal College of Music [London], or kindred bodies'.
192. *Ibid.* Failure to differentiate the Curricula of Schools, 55, para. 182: 'There is no doubt that many parents will not allow their daughters to enter for the Intermediate examinations, and that many persons hold... that the programme of work in a girls' school should...differ in important particulars...from the programme usually followed in boys' schools'. They point out, for example, that in higher schools for girls in Germany, 'Needlework is considered indispensable...and is compulsory throughout', yet note that generally girls' schools have 'joined the Intermediate system as enthusiastically as boys'. *Intermediate Education (Ireland) Report of Messrs. F.H. Dale and T.A. Stephens, His Majesty's Inspectors for*

- Schools, Board of Education, on Intermediate Education in Ireland.* Dale and Stephens visited 80 schools and were ‘disparaged for their trouble as “the English tourists” in an Irish clericalist press suspicious of any state intervention’, J. Cunningham, *Unlikely Radicals*, 22.
193. By 1903, the following had been established: Central Training Establishment, Marlborough Street, Dublin; St. Patrick’s College, Drumcondra, Dublin; Our Lady of Mercy College, Carysfort, Dublin; De La Salle College, Waterford; Church of Ireland College, Dublin; St. Mary’s College, Belfast; Mary Immaculate College, Limerick.
194. *Intermediate Education (Ireland) Report of Messrs. F.H. Dale and T.A. Stephens, His Majesty’s Inspectors for Schools, Board of Education, on Intermediate education in Ireland*, VI, paras. 251–253, 75–76.
195. *Ibid.*, para. 261,78. On ITE in England see H.G. Dent, *The Training of Teachers in England and Wales, passim*; P. Hirsh and M. McBeth, *Teacher Training at Cambridge*; and E. Edwards, *Women in Teacher Training Colleges, 1900–1960: A Culture of Femininity*.
196. *Ibid.* In the context of the Religious monopoly of teaching in Ireland, the comments of Dale and Stephens are notable: for example, remarking that in Germany, long before the creation of a state system, Religious Orders inducted teachers: ‘Wherever students had passed through a prolonged course of study in Philosophy and were teaching in schools in which their work was supervised by superiors who were scholars, trained observers, and experienced teachers, the essentials of a teacher’s training were to be found. It would be unjust to omit this consideration...when dealing with Ireland’, where ‘if anywhere there exists no small measure of this training at present’. Para. 262, 78–9.
197. Training should be subsequent to graduation and ‘include...study in the Mental and Moral Sciences bearing on Education, and...Theory and History of Education’; students should have ‘practical training...hearing others teach, both experienced teachers and fellow students, giving lessons under criticism’, ‘examination’ and ‘a probationary period in a school recognised for the purpose’. *Ibid.*, para. 265,79.
198. *Ibid.*
199. *Ibid.*, para. 269, 80. When Dale and Stephens visited, the institute had 503 pupils between national/kindergarten and high school and 25 teachers, including ten trainees.
200. A.V. O’Connor and S.M. Parkes, *Gladly Learn and Gladly Teach*, 62. At this time Alexandra College operated a teacher training college. Students attended lectures here and the diploma was awarded by Trinity College, Dublin. It is ironic but understandable that a school that pioneered the advancement of higher education for women should object to Trinity opening the diploma to them in 1925 as this impacted upon enrolment.

- The Alexandra College of teacher education closed in 1935. See *ibid.*, 167.
201. *Intermediate Education (Ireland) Report of Messrs. F.H. Dale and T.A. Stephens, His Majesty's Inspectors for Schools, Board of Education, on Intermediate education in Ireland*, VI, paras. 76–77, 253–256.
 202. *Ibid.*, para. 76, 253. 11.5% of male teachers were graduates of a 'University of the United Kingdom'. In girls' schools only 8% of female teachers were graduates.
 203. However, like school histories, these must be read critically. For example, Kuno Meyer speaks almost wholly positively about the teaching of Irish. Meyer (1858–1915) was an Irish scholar and founder of the School of Irish Learning, now the School of Celtic Studies in the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies. He was appointed to the Chair of Celtic at Berlin in 1911.
 204. *The Report of the Intermediate Board for Ireland (1900)*, Appendix III, Extracts from the Reports of the Examiners, 1900, 13, 22, 23, 44.
 205. *The Report of the Intermediate Board for Ireland (1901)*, 13, 16, 26, 37, 54, 68.
 206. *The Report of the Intermediate Board for Ireland (1902)*, xix, xxiv, xxxi.
 207. *The Report of the Intermediate Board for Ireland (1900)*, Appendix III, Extracts from the Reports of the Examiners, 1900, 24, 29, 31, 35, 38, 43.
 208. *The Report of the Intermediate Board for Ireland (1903)*, xvii; *The Report of the Intermediate Board for Ireland (1901)* 43.
 209. *The Report of the Intermediate Board for Ireland (1902)*, xv, xvii, xix, xxvi.
 210. Maurice C. Hime, *A Schoolmaster's Retrospect of Eighteen and a Half Years in an Irish School*, 47.
 211. *The Report of the Intermediate Board for Ireland (1910)*, x.
 212. *The Report of the Intermediate Board for Ireland (1911)*, x. Schools had competed from the outset. Kelleher notes that in the 1880s the practice of 'touting'—schools attempting to entice promising pupils away from their existing schools—was common. See D.V. Kelleher, *James Dominic Burke*, 104.
 213. *Report of the Vice-Regal Committee on the Conditions of Service in Intermediate Schools, and on the Distribution of Grants from Public Funds of Intermediate Education in Ireland*, 13.
 214. *Ibid.*
 215. It is noteworthy that a 1965 pay award was granted, with the declared intention, according to Taoiseach Seán Lemass, of improving teachers' standing as members of the community; see 'Radical Changes Needed in Education Planning', *Irish Times*, 24 May 1965.
 216. *Ibid.*

217. Ibid.
218. Ibid.
219. The grant was first mooted in 1912 by Augustine Birrell (1850–1933), Chief Secretary for Ireland 1907–1916, and after protracted and difficult negotiations with the CHA and ASTI, formed part of the Intermediate Education (Ireland) Act, which became law in August 1914.
220. See *Report of the Vice-Regal Committee on the Conditions of Service in Intermediate Schools, and on the Distribution of Grants from Public Funds of Intermediate Education in Ireland*, 15.
221. M. Jagoe and E. Oldham, *Records and Recollections: A History of the Diocesan Secondary School for Girls 1849–1974*, (Dublin, 1986), 10.
222. Ibid., 17.
223. Ibid.
224. Ibid.
225. Ibid.
226. Ibid., 18. Yet the Report did state that ‘[c]omplaints are made that the hours of work...are unreasonably long...apart from the time devoted to class...some teachers have long hours of supervision...correcting exercises and in preparing for class for which no allowance is made’. Ibid.
227. An interesting feature of the Molony Report is that a number of contributors withheld their signatures on various grounds, the most common being that it did not recommend suitable protection of tenure. See *Minority Report*, 43: 2. 3.4, and 44: 9.
228. The *Viceregal Committee of Inquiry into Primary Education (Ireland)* (1918) reviewed the conditions of the national school system.
229. Minutes of the Intermediate Education Board, 1919, 2401, cited in J. Coolahan, *The ASTI and Post-Primary Education in Ireland*, 47.
230. The Bill resulted in the Government of Ireland Act 1920 [10 & 11 Geo. 5 c. 67], leading to the partition of Ireland into the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

Historical Overview of Developments in Special Education in Ireland

Michael Shevlin

Dedication: This chapter is dedicated to the memory of a dear friend and colleague Sean Griffin who was a pioneer in the establishment of special educational provision.

INTRODUCTION

In reviewing the history of special education within Ireland, it becomes evident that significant milestones within this area cannot be considered in isolation from broader developments within Irish society and internationally. It is also clear that our understanding of what constitutes ‘disability’ within society has evolved considerably over time. The origins of special education were marked by interventions designed to address the learning needs of disabled children and young people. It is relatively straightforward to characterise the history of special education worldwide as encompassing three broad eras: segregation; institutionalisation; and integration/inclusion within mainstream society. However, on closer inspection, it is evident that the historical evolution of special education is not simply linear and provision through the ages has been influenced by a complex mix of

M. Shevlin (✉)
Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland

societal attitudes, perceived capacity to cope with difference and individual initiatives. Special education, as we recognise it, really emerged in the twentieth century, though there were examples of innovations in earlier centuries. In this chapter we will examine key milestones in the evolution of special educational provision with a particular focus on how segregated provision has been replaced by an inclusive model of provision as outlined in recent legislation. We will begin by examining some innovations in special education pioneered in earlier centuries, though we must not construe these individual initiatives as constituting a broad national movement.¹

ISOLATED INTERVENTIONS

For many children with difficulties in learning, severe physical punishment appears to have been quite common. In contrast, during the eighteenth century, an educational innovator, David Manson, established a school in Belfast where corporal punishment was expressly forbidden.² Manson advertised in the local paper and invited children from both religious traditions to attend his school where he had developed a teaching methodology that was play-centred and based on the belief that learning should be an enjoyable experience. Children were encouraged rather than compelled to learn, allowed to progress at their own pace and praised rather than punished. As a result, children with severe literacy difficulties and those with emotional/behavioural difficulties were attracted to the school and Manson is regarded as a pioneer of special education. Further evidence for this contention can be found in how Manson's teaching approach recognised differences in levels of ability and addressed this through developing pupil learning partnerships and encouraging helpful prompting by pupil monitors in the reading aloud sessions.

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century there were a number of examples of educational interventions for disabled children, mainly those with sensory impairments, from members of the medical profession who recognised their potential. This marked a significant shift away from the medieval perspective of disability that was dominated by a belief that many disabling conditions (general learning disabilities, mental illness, epilepsy, deafness) had supernatural or demonological causes. Disability and poverty were often closely intertwined, and families faced a struggle to survive if a family member was unable to contribute to the household due to a disability. In certain societies, disabled people were viewed as a social menace because of their perceived propensity for public begging and begging was outlawed, for example, in Paris in 1657.³ In the early modern era,

medical attention began to focus on finding cures for various disabilities, and while many of these were extremely limited in scope and ambition, it did demonstrate that there was a gradual move in societal perceptions of disability from the supernatural or demonological explanations for disabling conditions. A range of institutions were established to cater for disabled people including residential schools for children and young people with sensory impairments. In tandem with this development, the creation of workhouses and county asylums were designed to cater for the poor and those regarded as disabled. This culture of institutionalisation associated with disability remained the pervasive societal response for over 150 years in Ireland. Internationally, there was a similar trend towards establishing institutions to cater for people with disabilities that also lasted for a considerable time. In the nineteenth century, the institutional segregation of people with mental illness, and those with general learning disabilities became more prominent, and almost inevitably learning disability and psychiatric illness were closely associated in the official response to these conditions.

In Ireland, District Lunatic Asylums were built in the 1830s as a response to the abandonment of people with psychiatric illness and general learning disabilities by their families and characterised as a pervasive social problem described as ‘lunatics at large’. The 1838 Poor Relief Act sanctioned the building of 130 workhouses in Ireland, designed for people who could no longer support themselves financially. These workhouses also made provision for the separate containment of 2300 ‘idiots, imbeciles and lunatics’.⁴ Between the 1850s and the turn of the twentieth century, the number of disabled people accommodated in workhouses more than doubled.⁵ Assigned the generic term of ‘lunatics’, people with learning disabilities were neglected and ignored as reported by Dr. Connolly Norman in the Royal Commission report of 1908.⁶ Many of these institutions became overcrowded and abuse of residents was common. Training schools, initially established to enable people with learning disabilities to develop the skills required to function in their community, ended up as residences where people with learning disabilities worked in laundries, workshops and farms to maintain the economic viability of the institution.

In spite of the overwhelmingly negative effects of institutionalisation on the lives of disabled people at this time in Ireland, two innovations co-existed (Claremont Institute, Glasnevin; The Statistical Society and Stewart’s Institute) that had a more positive impact on the lives of disabled people and how they were perceived within society. Charles Orpen who, with his wife, had adopted a young boy Thomas Collins who was deaf

and mute from the Foundling Hospital of the Dublin House of Industry, established the National Institution for the Education of the Deaf and Dumb at Claremont in Glasnevin. The school was founded on the educational philosophy of Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, whose institute Orpen had visited in Switzerland in 1815. The centrality of sense experience as a gateway to learning was one of the Pestalozzian principles that had a positive effect on deaf children in the school. The school was modelled on a family community where children were respected and cultivated physically, emotionally, intellectually and spiritually. Pupils were encouraged to be independent, resilient and enabled to support themselves.⁷ The challenge of developing special provision was taken up by a philanthropic and reforming society named the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland. Jonathan Pim, Vice-President of the Society wrote: 'It is a duty, incumbent on society to educate and instruct the imbecile...and idiotic; so that as far as it may prove practicable, they may be rendered capable of contributing to their own support.'⁸ There was awareness within Ireland of educational developments in relation to this population in Europe as demonstrated by Dr. George Kidd, physician in the Coombe Hospital. His pamphlet, published in 1865, included a detailed account of Seguin's methods of instructing children with general learning disabilities and suggested how this educational approach could be replicated in an Irish institution dedicated to people with learning disabilities.⁹ This proposal was supported by the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland who organised a fundraising campaign. In 1867, Dr. Stewart made available his private asylum to the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland in order to establish an institution dedicated to educational provision for people with learning disabilities. From the outset, Stewart's Institute (as it became known) focused on education and training rather than the type of custodial care commonly available in institutions at that time. Stewart's School and Residential Centre remains the oldest functioning centre for people with learning disabilities in Ireland.

INVISIBILITY AND STATE NEGLECT

At the foundation of the Irish state in 1922, there was limited provision for people with disabilities and/or special educational needs. Eight private institutions that were both voluntary and charitable had been established by this time. None of these institutions received government support and most had been developed by religious orders in response to

the evident needs in the communities these orders served. For example, a special school for blind boys was opened in 1870 by the Carmelite Brothers in Drumcondra, Dublin and had received state recognition as a national school in 1918. Likewise a school for 'deaf and dumb' boys at Cabra, Dublin, was founded by the Irish Christian Brothers in the nineteenth century, and was also recognised as a national school in 1926. The educational priorities of the newly established Irish state were to provide basic instruction to a largely rural and devout population, but in particular, to put into operation the government's Gaelicisation programme. Teachers were required to make the Irish language the sole medium of instruction for all children in their first years at school at four and five years of age. A formal state examination, the Primary Certificate, was made compulsory from the 1940s for all primary school children at 12 years of age. Little attention was paid to the children and young people who struggled in their learning of basic concepts. The medical profession was again influential in the area of special education in Ireland when Dr. Louis Clifford conducted a census of people with learning disabilities ('mental handicap') in 1943. Clifford's Report provides some insights into the general attitudes towards disability that were prevalent in Ireland at this time.¹⁰ Clifford reported generally negative public attitudes towards disabled children and young people. Often the presence of a disabled child was seen as a source of shame for the family, a reaction that has been recorded in many civilizations.¹¹ According to Clifford, disabled children were sometimes hidden away and those who were attending school were kept at home on the day of Clifford's visit. The report also noted that disabled children were often negatively affected by the conflicting demands of academic tasks in school and parental resentment that their family had been damagingly labelled.

Gradually, the emphasis shifted from care for disabled children towards providing appropriate education in non-residential settings. In 1947 the first special school for children with general learning disabilities (St Vincent's Home for Mentally Defective Children) was recognised by the state. The first official government support for special education did not materialise until 1952 when the schools for the blind were allowed a reduced pupil-teacher ratio of 1:15 and financial aid towards the purchase of specialised equipment.¹² Until the 1950s special educational provision was characterised by individual initiatives usually supported by religious orders and focused on a specific impairment such as visual or hearing impairment.¹³ Pressure was applied by a combination of parents, teachers and influential

individuals to effect a more systematic response to the educational needs of children with disabilities. Mrs. Patricia Farrell, for example, a parent of a child with learning disabilities from Westmeath, placed a notice in the *Irish Times* on 2 June 1955 asking for support in forming an Association for Parents of Mentally Backward Children.¹⁴ Mrs. Farrell did not wish to send her son to a residential school and was frustrated by the lack of government interest in providing non-residential schooling for children like her son. Her notice prompted a positive response from many parents and educators, as well as Declan Costello, who was an influential young barrister and politician and the son of the then Taoiseach, John A. Costello. The Association of Parents and Friends of Mentally Handicapped Children—later called St Michael’s House—was founded. In 1960, the Association finally succeeded in opening their own special school in Rathmines, Dublin. This was the first special school founded, funded and managed by an association of parents, but even more significantly it was also the first national school recognised by the state that was not managed by a religious authority. Opposition to this development by Church authorities was overcome by a combination of parental and professional pressure along with growing state concern about how this population was being treated within Irish society. State concern was evident in the development of a White Paper in 1960 and the establishment of more formalised support and qualifications for teachers as outlined in this chapter.

STATE ENGAGEMENT

The increasing engagement of the state in the area of special education was evidenced by the appointment in 1959 of the first departmental inspector with responsibility for all aspects of special education in the country. This was followed by the first state-funded professional development programme in special education for teachers with the establishment of a post-graduate Diploma in Special Education course in 1961 delivered by St Patrick’s College of Education in Dublin. Course participants comprised teachers working in special education settings who received their salaries and had their tuition and substitution costs paid by the Department of Education. A specialised diploma was also provided for teachers of children who had a hearing or visual impairment.¹⁵

Government engagement at policy level became apparent with the publication in 1960 of the White Paper entitled ‘The Problem of the Mentally Handicapped’,¹⁶ which resulted in the establishment of a Commission

of Inquiry appointed by the Minister for Health. ‘The Report of the Commission of Inquiry on Mental Handicap’¹⁷ reported in 1965 and formed the core of state policy on special education development for the next three decades.¹⁸ The report strongly recommended that special school provision should be the key to future development of special educational provision. It also proposed that the number of places available in residential special schools should be tripled and that 3000 places should be provided for children in day special schools and in special classes attached to regular schools. It is evident that this key development for the future direction of special educational provision was formulated with little cognisance of international initiatives that were to fundamentally reshape special educational provision. In the USA and Scandinavia, for example, a process of de-institutionalisation had begun and policy makers and educators were questioning the validity and morality of segregated provision. The 1965 report in Ireland, by way of contrast, endorsed segregated provision and recommended its expansion. On a more positive note, the report recognised that special classes for children with mild general learning disabilities could be established in mainstream schools. This recommendation appears to have been based on the practical difficulties entailed in establishing special school provision throughout the country rather than a principled commitment to including children with learning disabilities in mainstream provision. The report recognised the educational potential of children with moderate general learning disability which was a positive development; however, those in the severe and profound categories of learning disabilities remained outside educational provision and care from health professionals was considered the only viable option.¹⁹

Within Irish society, the 1960s witnessed significant economic and subsequent educational developments. Ireland experienced an economic resurgence and the influential *Investment in Education report*²⁰ (1966) became a blueprint for government educational policy with the belated recognition that an educated workforce could contribute significantly to economic development. In 1967, secondary education, previously the domain of those with familial wealth or those of academic merit now became more available to a wider cohort of young people. In the late 1960s, the primary school curriculum was reviewed and substantial changes recommended.

The New Primary Curriculum,²¹ in contrast to the earlier, narrowly focused primary curriculum, advocated child-centred, activity-based teaching approaches and recognised individual differences in learning. The Primary Certificate Examination was also discontinued. Remedial

teachers were appointed at both primary and post-primary level to support children and young people who were experiencing literacy and numeracy difficulties. This constituted the first official recognition that a significant number of children in mainstream school, who did not have designated learning disabilities, required support.

By the mid-1970s, over 100 special schools had been established and a growing number of special classes (mainly for children with mild general learning disabilities) in mainstream schools had emerged. The vast majority of special schools were the result of voluntary initiatives, introduced and managed by religious or parental associations. While considerable progress had been made towards facilitating the provision for particular categories of children with learning disabilities, visual impairment, hearing impairment and physical disability, it was estimated that less than half of those needing special education could avail of this provision.²² The limited availability of assessment procedures designed to determine eligibility for access to special educational provision constituted a major barrier. Assessment was the responsibility of the Department of Health, and there was no readily accessible educational psychological service. There appeared to be a lack of cohesion between the Departments of Health and Education about overall responsibility for special educational provision and, as a result, a lack of urgency about addressing critical issues affecting access to and delivery of special educational provision.²³

Internationally, by the end of the 1970s, it was becoming increasingly evident that substantial progress in developing special educational provision required a proactive government policy supported by enabling legislation. In the United Kingdom, for example, the Warnock Report²⁴ made a range of radical recommendations to government, the majority of which were adopted and made operational in the Education Act of 1981. This Report also recommended the abolition of the categorical approach to special educational assessment and provision and advanced the term 'special educational need' to refer to any child or young person experiencing difficulties in learning for whatever reason. Special educational need replaced the numerous categories of disability previously in use, and it was estimated that up to 20% of children could experience a special educational need at some time in their school career. This paved the way for the development of more comprehensive provision for children with special educational needs with an emphasis on creating a support infrastructure within mainstream schools. In Ireland, meanwhile, in 1980,

the government issued a White Paper on Educational Development that, for the first time, stated unequivocally that integration in a mainstream school should become official policy in that it would be the first option to be considered in the education of disabled children and young people. However, this policy remained aspirational in the absence of enabling legislation to give it effect in practice in Irish schools.

Public policy in relation to people with disabilities remained relatively unchanged until the 1980s. The Department of Health developed a number of significant policy initiatives that had an impact on educational provision for disabled children and young people. These included the *Green Paper on Services for Disabled People*²⁵ (1984) and *Needs and Abilities: A Policy for the Intellectually Disabled*²⁶ (1991). The Green Paper contained a government commitment to developing 'services and facilities that will enable disabled people to achieve full participation and equality in our society'.²⁷ It further stated that the Department of Education had been 'intensifying efforts to enable disabled children to receive their education in the least restrictive environment'.²⁸ It was also recommended that increased resources were required to address psychological and care needs of disabled children and young people. Despite the reference to education in the least restrictive environment, few concrete proposals were advanced to dismantle the parallel systems of special and general education. Developing enabling legislation to safeguard the rights of disabled people, as was happening in other European countries at this time, did not appear to be on the agenda. Despite some positive proposals, there was a distinctive charity model response to disability issues: 'The most important thing which any disadvantaged minority needs is good-will and understanding'.²⁹ The year before the Green Paper appeared, the publication of *The Education and Training of Severely and Profoundly Mentally Handicapped Children in Ireland*³⁰ marked a significant breakthrough in recognising that these children and young people were educable in sharp contrast to the conclusions of the Commission of Inquiry almost 20 years earlier. The Departments of Education, Health and Social Welfare were centrally involved in the production of this Report, which introduced teachers into care settings on a pilot basis.

European and international policy was beginning to exert a greater influence on Irish society, and this had an impact on policies in relation to special educational provision. The 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child,³¹ for example, explicitly articulated the rights of disabled children to access and avail of appropriate high-quality

education suited to their learning needs. This Convention was ratified by Ireland in 1992 and Ireland's compliance with this Convention became subject to regular assessments by the United Nations. There was a gradual recognition within government that the marginalised position accorded to disabled people within Irish society was no longer tenable. As Doyle observed,

in the last decade, public policy has tried to address the twin issues of equality and universal access through antidiscrimination legislation, with right of redress, coupled with a mainstream approach to service delivery.³²

INITIATIVES FOR CHANGE

The 1990s marked a significant shift in government policy towards establishing a more inclusive position in relation to special educational provision. This policy shift was encapsulated in two ground-breaking government sponsored reports and policy documents that provided the foundation for a radical move towards guaranteeing the rights of disabled children and young people to access appropriate education. Parental litigation was another critical factor that influenced developments in both policy and practice.

In 1991, the Department of Education established the Special Education Review Committee,³³ whose brief was to examine the existing system and make recommendations in relation to developing more integrated special educational provision. The report published in 1993 has been acknowledged as one of the most significant set of policy recommendations that the state had ever produced.³⁴ This Report provided the blueprint for the development of special educational provision in the 1990s and early 2000s. The Report advanced seven principles to reinforce the development of comprehensive special education provision. These principles declared the right of children with disabilities and/or special educational needs to an appropriate education, stressed that provision should be guided by the child's individual needs and parents should be centrally involved in the decision-making process. It was envisaged that a continuum of services would be established to respond adequately to the diverse range of educational need within this population of children and young people. This continuum would encompass both special and mainstream schools and a variety of arrangements such as special classes also.

Many gaps in provision were identified in the Report including: difficulties accessing assessments; inadequate pupil-teacher ratios; inappropriate educational provision for particular types of disabled children; and lack of a support infrastructure for disabled children within mainstream schools. The Report recommended increased resourcing at both primary and post-primary levels and the development of an educational psychology service for schools along with a revised curriculum designed to support the learning needs of disabled children and/or those deemed to have special educational needs.

From the beginning, it was acknowledged that the term 'special educational needs' was problematic, as it encompassed a wide range of educational difficulties extending from those children who experience relatively mild learning difficulties and require relatively straightforward interventions to those who experience more life limiting conditions and/or severe intellectual disabilities requiring more complex interventions involving multi-disciplinary approaches. As a result, the report espoused a rather limited definition of disabilities/special educational needs that significantly diverged from that adopted by the influential Warnock Committee.³⁵ Pupils with 'disabilities/special educational needs' included all 'those whose disabilities and/or circumstances prevent or hinder them from benefiting adequately from the education which is normally provided for pupils of the same age, or for whom the education which can generally be provided in the ordinary classroom is not sufficiently challenging'.³⁶ This definition, while recognising the needs of gifted children, concentrated on within-child deficits, though the impact of socio-economic issues is acknowledged. Special education was described as: 'any educational provision which is designed to cater for pupils with special educational needs, and is additional to or different from the provision which is generally made in ordinary classes for pupils of the same age'.³⁷ Integration was defined as 'the participation of pupils with disabilities in school activities with other pupils, to the maximum extent which is consistent with the broader overall interests of both the pupils with disabilities and the other pupils in the class/group'.³⁸ This approach, while broadly supportive of social integration, contains a 'get out' clause that allows for the exclusion of pupils with disabilities if their inclusion in classroom activities is perceived to disadvantage their peers. While admitting that 'the nature of the additional educational services that a pupil may require is often not adequately established by identifying that pupil's primary disability or special circumstances'³⁹ the committee decided to

retain a categorical approach to resource allocation, mainly, it appears, for administrative and organisational reasons. This decision differed markedly from the influential Warnock Report,⁴⁰ which abolished the traditional categories of disability and established the more all-encompassing term ‘special educational need’.

It was strongly contended that enabling legislation needed to be urgently enacted in order to ensure that children and young people with disabilities and/or special educational needs could receive an appropriate education. Integrating these children into mainstream schools remained a contentious issue and the Committee decided to sidestep this by stating that: ‘we favour as much integration as is appropriate and feasible with as little segregation as is necessary’.⁴¹ However, it was envisaged that children with what were regarded as more amenable difficulties, such as sensory or physical impairments and those with mild general disabilities, could probably be accommodated within mainstream provision. Special education lacked any real presence or influence in general education decision making and policy development and tended to exist on the margins. This isolated position mirrored the isolation and marginalisation disabled children and young people often experienced within mainstream society. As a result, general and special education operated along parallel lines with few connections in terms of curriculum or pedagogy. The parallel systems of special and mainstream education was commented on unfavourably in the Report, and it was noted that this parallel provision ‘inhibits the realisation of one of the main goals of education for such students (students with special needs), namely that they should be capable of living, socialising and working in their communities’.⁴²

Parents of children and young people with autism, however, had serious reservations about the Report’s position on autism. Parents objected to the characterisation of their children as experiencing emotional behavioural disturbance as this was the category that continued to be assigned to these children and subsequent school provision tended to be in special schools designated for children with emotional behavioural disturbance. Parents continued to challenge this designation resulting in a significant increase in parental litigation throughout the 1990s.

The case for more integrated provision was supported by the publication in 1991 of the policy document *Needs and Abilities: A Policy for the Intellectually Disabled*⁴³ by the Department of Health. This strongly recommended mainstream provision where appropriate for children and young people who had learning disabilities (intellectual disability). It was

noted that: increasing numbers of pupils with general learning difficulties are now being provided with educational opportunities in their local environment'.⁴⁴ This policy document signalled the intent of the Department of Health to direct responsibility for certain elements of disability service provision away from the health sector and towards mainstream education and employment providers.

CAMPAIGNING FOR FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

During the 1990s, a series of court cases against the state were initiated by parents of children with autism and/or severe/profound general learning disabilities who were challenging what they perceived to be inadequate and inappropriate educational provision for their children. These parents were frustrated at the lack of official response to their concerns and 'litigation strategy was consciously pursued in an attempt to compel what was perceived as an indifferent political system to devote more resources to these particular marginalised groups'.⁴⁵ Traditionally, the Department of Health had responsibility for the education of children with severe/profound general learning disabilities. Despite some progress in the 1980s, it was evident that this model of education was mainly informed by a medical model that emphasised care rather than education. The state maintained that this approach was appropriate for this population of children while parents of these children argued that their fundamental right to an appropriate education had been profoundly compromised. Two cases (O'Donoghue and Sinnott)—described in greater detail later in this chapter—reached the High Court and the judgements delivered had a significant impact in reforming the educational provision available to children and young people with severe/profound disabilities within the Republic of Ireland.

In the case of Paul O'Donoghue, the state argued that 'the applicant, by reason of being profoundly mentally and physically disabled, was ineducable and that all that could be done for him to make his life more tolerable was to attempt to train him in the basics of bodily function and movement'.⁴⁶ The state also claimed that the constitutional entitlement to 'free primary education' referred to ordinary primary schooling and did not involve the sort of education/training appropriate for children with severe/profound general learning disabilities. There was considerable evidence that, internationally, there had been a significant shift towards developing educational programmes for this cohort of children in preference to the previously dominant emphasis on care. Justice O'Hanlon accepted

this perspective and stated that Paul O'Donoghue was educable and that the state was obliged to provide free primary education for this group of children in a similar manner to all other children in the state.⁴⁷ This judgement placed an obligation on the state to modify the primary school curriculum to accommodate all children with disabilities whatever the level of their need. No longer was educational provision for children and young people with severe/profound learning disabilities dependent on government policy makers or professional opinion. The state responded by providing significant levels of increased resourcing to support educational provision for this cohort of children and young people.

Approximately 90 classes were established with six pupils in each and extra teachers and special needs assistants were employed. The Sinnott case followed and Justice Barr concluded that Jamie Sinnott had received 'not more than about two years of meaningful education or training provided by the State, despite incessant efforts by his mother to secure appropriate arrangements for him'.⁴⁸ Justice Barr expanded on the judgement from the O'Donoghue case and asserted that the state was obliged to provide lifelong education for people with severe/profound general learning disabilities. The state successfully challenged this aspect of the judgement and consequently primary education was interpreted to end at 18 years of age. This litigation strategy had managed to achieve tangible changes in educational policy and demonstrated how this approach could stimulate reform.

CHALLENGING AN INEQUITABLE SYSTEM

At this time there was an increased perception within Irish society that many issues regarding inequities that had a profound impact on the lives of minority groups needed to be urgently tackled. Twenty years after the seminal Civil Rights movement in the USA, there was an increasing demand from disabled people and their advocates that these inequities needed to be addressed. As a result, the government established a Commission on the Status of People with Disabilities to investigate the impact of societal inequalities on all aspects of the lives of disabled people. The Commission Report entitled *A Strategy for Equality: Report of the Commission on the Status of People with Disabilities* was published in 1996.⁴⁹ The report was scathing about how societal inequality had affected the lives of disabled people. The Commission rejected the traditional models of disability, which were dismissed as deficit based and inappropriate as a response to the needs of disabled people in Irish society. Instead, a social model of

disability was adopted based on the contention that: 'equality is a key principle of the human rights approach'.⁵⁰ The Commission was particularly critical of the lack of access to and participation in appropriate education programmes for disabled children and young people. The Commission unambiguously declared that disabled children and young people have an inalienable right to an appropriate education in the 'least restrictive environment'. There is a clear assumption that most disabled children and young people will be educated in more inclusive environments alongside their peers. As alluded to earlier a 'get out' clause was inserted: 'except where it is clear that the child involved will not benefit through being placed in a mainstream environment, or that other children would be unduly and unfairly disadvantaged'.⁵¹ All schools were expected to plan to develop inclusive learning environments and the Commission urged that an inclusive Education Act should be enacted to establish inclusive provision as the norm. The Commission report was clearly influenced by legislation such as the American Individuals with Disabilities Act originally enacted in 1975 and regularly updated since, wherein the right of disabled children and young people to an appropriate education was enshrined.⁵²

ENABLING LEGISLATION

While significant progress had been made through the 1990s in developing a more equitable education system that was responsive to the needs of children and young people with disabilities and/or special educational needs, the lack of enabling legislation represented a substantial drawback. Undoubtedly, due to a combination of state-sponsored reports and parental litigation, increased resourcing had been allocated to the area of special education. However, maintaining adequate levels of resourcing on a long-term basis was not necessarily guaranteed without legislative support. The *Government White Paper on Education* gave a principled commitment 'to promote equality of access, participation and benefit for all in accordance with their needs and abilities'.⁵³ It was clearly stated that children and young people with disabilities were entitled to benefit from educational opportunities alongside their peers. The White Paper's stated aim was to 'ensure a continuum of provision for special educational needs, ranging from occasional help within the ordinary school to full-time education in a special school or unit, with students being enabled to move as necessary and practicable from one type of provision to another'.⁵⁴ It was evident that the White Paper had incorporated key recommendations from the Special

Education Review Committee Report, and this was now confirmed government policy in relation to special educational provision in the Republic of Ireland. The absence of enabling legislation over many decades placed children and young people with disabilities and/or special educational needs at a considerable disadvantage compared to their peers. The establishment of a statutory framework was considered essential to ensure that this population could receive an appropriate education. It has been acknowledged that developing social policy legislation is a complex task, particularly within the Irish educational context: 'with its diffuse nature, denominational character and tradition of negotiated consensus'.⁵⁵ Irish education had been almost totally unregulated by legislation until 1998 with the enactment of the Education Act, in sharp contrast to our European neighbours.

The Education Act 1998⁵⁶ stipulates the statutory basis for policy and practice in relation to all education provision. It is worth noting that there was a conscious attempt to include children and young people with disabilities and/or special educational needs as demonstrated by the fact that, throughout the Act, every reference to people availing of education is followed by the phrase 'including [those] who have a disability or who have other special educational needs'. The term 'special educational needs' was defined as 'the educational needs of students who have a disability and the educational needs of exceptionally able students'.⁵⁷ However, in line with other legislation enacted around that time, a primarily medical definition of disability was adopted that clearly implied educational difficulties were due to within-child factors and ignored environmental and contextual issues. The Education Act has been recognised as representing: 'first legislative step towards inclusive education for persons with special educational needs'.⁵⁸ The Equal Status Act,⁵⁹ enacted in 2000 and amended in 2004, had a direct impact on ensuring equitable access to and delivery of special educational provision as discrimination is prohibited on nine grounds, one of which is disability. According to the Equal Status Act, a school is obliged to provide reasonable accommodation, including special treatment, facilities or adjustments, to meet the needs of the child with a disability to ensure that the child can participate in school life.

The Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs (EPSEN) Act 2004⁶⁰ marks a significant milestone in legislating for an appropriate education for pupils with disabilities and/or special educational needs. Inclusion is at the core of this legislation, and from the outset it is clear that it is informed by rights and equality principles. Inclusive education is designed to facilitate full participation in adult life:

to assist children with special educational needs to leave school with the skills necessary to participate, to the level of their capacity, in an inclusive way in the social and economic activities of society and to live independent and fulfilled lives.⁶¹

Disability was defined in this Act as follows:

a restriction in the capacity of the person to participate in and benefit from education on account of an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or learning disability or any other condition, which results in a person learning differently from a person without that condition.⁶²

This definition is in sharp contrast to that employed in the 1998 Education Act and reflects a greater understanding that difficulties in learning are relative rather than all-embracing.

The EPSEN Act provides the statutory framework to support the development of inclusive learning environments in Irish schools and it was asserted that the Act will:

accelerate the changes within the education system from one in which the provision of inclusive education was an emerging feature of schooling to a system in which the provision of inclusive education is mandatory, except where this would not be in the best interests of the child or would be inconsistent with the effective provision of education for children with whom the child is to be educated.⁶³

However, the potential for this Act to deliver the type of transformation envisaged has been seriously compromised by the present economic recession, which prompted the government to postpone implementation of key elements of the Act indefinitely. Creating an inclusive learning environment, as charted in the Act, represents a considerable challenge for not just the school but the wider society.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

The evolution of special educational provision in Ireland did not differ markedly from similar developments in Europe and the USA. However, for many decades in the mid-twentieth century, there was limited recognition of the rights of people with disabilities to become equal participants in society alongside their peers. As a result, pressure for reform had to

be applied by a combination of disabled people, parents and concerned professionals. Gradually the state became engaged and began to assume responsibility for developing special educational provision. This process accelerated in the 1990s through the recommendations of state sponsored reports, litigation initiated by parents and the enactment of enabling legislation by the state. An infrastructure to deliver inclusive learning environments is being established. Irish society faces the ongoing challenge of ensuring that children and young people who experience difficulties in learning for whatever reason can experience and benefit from an inclusive learning environment.

NOTES

1. M. Gerber 'A History of Special Education', in J. Kauffman and D. Hallahan (Eds.), *Handbook of Special Education*, (New York, 2011), 3–14.
2. S. Griffin, 'Teaching for enjoyment: David Manson and his "play school" of Belfast', *Irish Educational Studies*, 24/2, (2005), 133–43.
3. D.L. Braddock, and S.L. Parish, 'An institutional history of disability' in G.L. Albrecht, K.D. Seelman and M. Bury [Eds.], *Handbook of Disability Studies*, (London, 2001), 11–68.
4. J. Robins, *Fools and Mad: A History of the Insane in Ireland*, (Dublin, 1986), 34.
5. *Ibid.*, 39.
6. *Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble-minded*, 8/117 (1908), 243.
7. S. Griffin, and M. Shevlin, *Responding to Special Educational Needs: An Irish Perspective*, 2nd edn. (Dublin, 2011), 35.
8. M. Byrne, 'Educational provision for the mentally handicapped in Ireland, 1869–1926' in J. Coolahan [Ed.], *Proceedings of the Fifth Annual Education Conference of the Educational Studies Association of Ireland*, (Limerick, 1980).
9. *Ibid.*, 11. Edouard Séguin (1812–1880); French physician and educationist.
10. J. Robins, (1986), *Fools and Mad: A History of the Insane in Ireland*, 76. On Gaelicisation see Tom Walsh in this volume.
11. D. L. Braddock, and S.L. Parish, 'An institutional history of disability' in G.L. Albrecht, K.D. Seelman and M. Bury [Eds.], *Handbook of Disability Studies*, (NY, 2001), 11–68.
12. J. Coolahan (1981) *Irish Education: History and Structure*. (Dublin, 1981), 185.

13. Ibid.
14. S. Griffin, and M. Shevlin, (2011), *Responding to Special Educational Needs: An Irish Perspective*, 2nd edn. (Dublin, 2001), 39.
15. Government of Ireland, *Report of the Special Education Review Committee*, (Dublin, 1993) 53.
16. Government of Ireland, *The Problem of the Mentally Handicapped*, (Dublin, 1960).
17. Government of Ireland, *Report of the Commission of Inquiry on Mental Handicap*, (Dublin, 1965).
18. B. McCormack, 'Trends in the development of Irish disability services' in P. Noonan Walsh and H. Gash [Eds.], *Lives and Times: Practice, Policy and People with Disabilities*, (Bray, 2004), 7–29.
19. P. McGee, 'Reflections on Irish special education over four decades', *REACH: Journal of Special Educational Needs in Ireland*, 17/2, (2004), 67–80.
20. Government of Ireland, *Investment in Education*, (Dublin, 1966).
21. Department of Education, *Curaclam na bunscoile : lámhleabhar an oide*, (Dublin, 1966).
22. P. McGee, 'Reflections on Irish special education over four decades', *REACH: Journal of Special Educational Needs in Ireland*, 17/2, (2004), 67–80.
23. S. Griffin, and M. Shevlin, *Responding to Special Educational Needs: An Irish Perspective*, 2nd ed., 43.
24. Department of Education and Science (UK), *Report of the Committee of Enquiry into the Education of Handicapped Children and Young People*, (London, 1978).
25. Government of Ireland, *Towards a Full Life: Green Paper on Services for Disabled People*, (Dublin, 1984).
26. Government of Ireland, *Needs and Abilities: A Policy for the Intellectually Disabled. Report of the Review Group on Mental Handicap Services*, (Dublin, 1991).
27. Government of Ireland, *Towards a Full Life: Green Paper on Services for Disabled People*, (1984), 9.
28. Ibid., 45.
29. Ibid., 112.
30. Government of Ireland, *The Education and Training of Severely and Profoundly Mentally Handicapped Children in Ireland*, (Dublin, 1983).
31. United Nations, *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, General assembly resolution (1989), 44/25.
32. A. Doyle, 'Disability policy in Ireland' in S. Quin and B. Redmond [Eds.], *Disability and Social Policy in Ireland*, (Dublin, 2003), 26.
33. Government of Ireland, *Report of the Special Education Review Committee*, (Dublin, 1993).

34. B. Spelman, and S. Griffin, [Eds.], *Special Educational Needs: Issues for the White Paper Conference on the SERC Report*, (Dublin, 1994).
35. Department of Education and Science (UK), Report of the Committee of Enquiry into the Education of Handicapped Children and Young People (1978).
36. Government of Ireland, Report of the Special Education Review Committee, (1993), 18.
37. *Ibid.*, 18–19.
38. *Ibid.*, 18.
39. *Ibid.*, 20.
40. Department of Education and Science (UK), Report of the Committee of Enquiry into the Education of Handicapped Children and Young People, (1997).
41. Government of Ireland (1993) Report of the Special Education Review Committee, (1993), 22.
42. *Ibid.*, 63–64.
43. Government of Ireland, *Needs and Abilities: A Policy for the Intellectually Disabled. Report of the Review Group on Mental Handicap Services*, (1991).
44. *Ibid.* 15.
45. G. Whyte, *Social Inclusion and the Legal System: Public Interest Law in Ireland*, (Dublin, 2002), 177.
46. *Ibid.*, 200.
47. *Ibid.*, 65–66.
48. *Ibid.*, 63–64.
49. Government of Ireland (1996), *A Strategy for Equality: Report of the Commission on the Status of People with Disabilities*, (Dublin, 1996).
50. *Ibid.*, 8.
51. *Ibid.*, 33.
52. Government of the United States of America (1975), Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.
53. Government of Ireland (1995), *Government White Paper on Education: Charting Our Education Future*, (Dublin, 1995), 7.
54. *Ibid.*, 24.
55. D. Glendenning (1999), *Education and the Law*, (Dublin, 1999), 163.
56. Government of Ireland (1998), Education Act.
57. Government of Ireland (1998), Education Act, Section 2 (1).
58. M. Meaney, N. Kiernan, and K. Monahan, *Special Educational Needs and the Law*, (Dublin, 2005), 16.
59. Government of Ireland (2000), Equal Status Act.
60. Government of Ireland (2004), Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act, (Dublin, 2004).

61. Government of Ireland (2004), Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act, Preamble.
62. Government of Ireland (2004), Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act, Section 1.
63. Meaney, Kiernan, and Monahan (2005), *Special Educational Needs and the Law*, 209.

Teachers' Experience of School: First-hand Accounts, 1943–1965

Brendan Walsh

INTRODUCTION

The discussion presented here forms part of a wider study into the history of teaching in Ireland primarily employing oral testimony from one-to-one interviews with retired teachers. This chapter is based upon recollections discovered in archive collections, teaching memoirs and the oral testimony of 29 retired post-primary teachers (hereafter, respondents) which took place between 2010 and 2013. Five respondents acted as school principals; one as a deputy principal, two as former presidents of the Association of Secondary Teachers in Ireland and two were former Ministers of Education and all were self-selecting. The oldest respondent (Sister Boniface) began teaching in 1943. All contributed under anonymity and are allocated pseudonyms with the exception of Niamh Bhreathnach and Mary Hanafin who spoke as former holders of the office of Minister for Education, the latter also contributing as a former secondary school teacher. Some of the respondents worked in more than one type of school during their career, 17% in Community Schools and the remainder in denominationally operated schools under Religious or lay management.¹

B. Walsh (✉)

School of Education Studies, Dublin City University, Dublin, Ireland

TIGHT SHIPS AND HIGH EXPECTATIONS: PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL

Between 1924 and 1961, the number of secondary schools in Ireland increased from 278 to 526 with a corresponding rise in enrolments from 22,897 to 76,843.² Most secondary schools were small and had grown independently in local areas serving often small communities. Teachers were often required to teach a number of subjects and school managers were unlikely to press for expertise in particular disciplines. Beatrice, who began teaching in 1944, captures the experience of many in recalling being asked to teach ‘a bit of everything’.³ The extent to which teachers were qualified is difficult to ascertain. By the end of the 1950s only 59% were registered with the Department of Education as qualified teachers leaving a large minority either unqualified or qualified but unregistered. Given that so many schools were operated by the Religious, who were often anxious to employ members of their Order or past pupils, and the almost total disregard for teaching qualifications, it is reasonable to assume that a large portion of this 41% had no qualification to teach. Karl, who began teaching in 1943 as a student teacher, recalls being given work merely ‘on the basis of [his] degree’.⁴

Sister R began attending primary school in 1924 in a rural village in southeast Ireland.⁵ The ‘senior classes’ were taught as a group and her ‘very good’ teachers ‘managed the different classes together’. Deirdre was educated by a ‘governess’ from 1935 to 1938 in Gorey (Co. Wexford) and later at a ‘dame school’ operated by a ‘maiden lady’ in which she ‘learned nothing’.⁶ Margery started in a two-teacher primary school (‘one qualified, one not qualified’) in the late 1950s.⁷ There were ‘about eighty children in the school,’ and the qualified teacher taught infants, first and second classes as a group.⁸ In 1940, she was enrolled in Glengara Park School for girls in Dun Laoghaire, Dublin. Founded by Ms. Darling, this large (200 girls) Protestant lay school accorded its pupils ‘a lot of freedom’. Senior girls, for example, were allowed to meet for ‘supper’ at 9:00 p.m. when they could freely socialise and, when the weather was warm, pupils were permitted to take their food on trays out into the grounds—an informality unknown in other schools. At the Dublin Masonic Charity School, for example, A past-pupil who attended the Dublin Masonic Charity School in the early 1940s, for example, recalled that ‘supper over, we would proceed, silently and in single file...to our respective dormitories’.⁹ Like others, Deirdre could not recall school tests. An outstanding

teacher at Glengara was Ms Gwynn, the French teacher, sister of Stephen Gwynn (1864–1950) and daughter of the Church of Ireland Warden of St. Columba's College, Rathfarnham.¹⁰ Teaching was mostly by rote, with 'masses of notes' to be learned. The girls would go 'two by two' ('croc') to the Forty Foot public swimming baths, and they once cycled to St. Columba's College to use the school's pool, despite the boys 'hiding in the bushes watching'.¹¹ Letters would pass between pupils in the two schools and Deirdre recalled receiving one from a boy she had 'never even seen'. It was 'a happy school'; unusually, the 'food was good' and compared favourably with her next school, Alexandra College, Dublin, where (enrolled in 1944) she found the boarding accommodation 'appalling', the teaching 'good' and the staff 'dedicated' and 'strict'.

Alexandra College, a prestigious Protestant boarding school, had been the *alma mater* of the first nine women graduates of the Royal University of Ireland in 1884, and the school encouraged the girls to aspire to university.¹² Pupils were permitted to go to town on Saturday mornings but not to frequent coffee shops. Naturally, the girls subverted this by locating their own haunts, in particular, Dublin's Switzers Department Store, although a planned rendezvous there with a boy had to be quickly jettisoned when Deirdre and her friend noticed one of their teachers having coffee in the same café. Because Deirdre was poor at Irish, she took the Cambridge School Certificate rather than the Leaving Certificate and, on leaving school in 1946, trained as a teacher of Physical Education.¹³

A past pupil of Dominican Convent, Cabra, Dublin, recalled in 1994 that, as a pupil in the 1940s, she was taught by 'a group of exceptionally gifted, cultured and...truly broad-minded women'.¹⁴ She mentions ten Sisters by name and a 'Tess' who 'set up the 4' telescope and took [pupils] out to see the planets...and constellations'.¹⁵ A past pupil who boarded there from 1936 to 1940 (her mother had been a pupil there at 'the beginning of the century') remembered the 'warmth' and 'motherliness' of the nuns.¹⁶ The school was 'strict', 'disciplined' and 'frugal'; the girls each had a cubicle divided from others by a curtain, a 'locker with a basin and ewer' that was 'filled with cold water when [they] were called at 6.20 in the morning' by 'Sister...ringing a little bell quite gently'.¹⁷ Girls had to 'take a bathing suit into the bath' and kept 'daring books' such as 'the *Life of Shelley*' under their pillows.¹⁸ Food was 'plentiful and nourishing', and breakfast could be supplemented with a boiled egg 'if we paid extra'.¹⁹ The teaching was 'excellent' and the 'dedicated' staff 'always willing to give extra time to anyone who was weak'.²⁰ Between 1957 and

1962, the senior girls received lectures in Sociology and Moral Philosophy and sat examinations at the Dublin Institute of Catholic Sociology.²¹

Megan began secondary school in 1939. The large rural boarding school of almost 300 girls, managed by two Presentation Sisters and a large lay staff, catered for girls ‘from everywhere’. There was a secondary school six miles from her home, but attendance there would have meant a daily bus journey, hence her parents opted for a boarding school, revealing the dispersion of schools in Ireland at the time; a feature highlighted by the *Investment in Education* Report as impairing participation.²² The two Sisters ‘did everything; they taught, they managed...looked after sick girls and kept a tight ship’. Pupils ‘were silent on the corridors’, and Megan recalls encountering the same silence when teaching in a Loreto school in ‘the 1970s’.²³ Senior girls acted as Prefects and had considerable influence, although Megan recalls that, when she started teaching at a Dominican school in the 1950s, ‘they wouldn’t touch Prefects’ as they believed the system encouraged ‘telling tales’.

Megan’s recollections touch upon the relationship between senior and junior girls, and it was not uncommon for ‘crushes’ to develop. The principal was reluctant to allow the younger girls spend too much time in the company of seniors, although Megan was adamant that the pupils were innocent of lesbianism, something she knew nothing of until she went to university.²⁴ Two girls were, however, found to have shared a bed and one was expelled. This was ‘during the war’, Megan recalled, and they shared the bed ‘to keep themselves warm...there was nothing between them’. Crushes took ‘different forms, someone might *admire* a girl, want to be like her’ because she ‘looked good’ and was ‘popular...[but] Mother N. wasn’t taking any chances [and] a strict eye was kept’. Megan recalled that, once, when a pupil was unable to complete an exercise on the blackboard, the Sister teaching the class exclaimed, ‘Now, that’s what happens when a girl is in love!’, but her classmates did not ‘bat an eyelid’. They were, Megan insists, sexually innocent; they did not talk about movie or pop stars and, given the culture of the school, ‘may as well have been in a convent’. Yet she acknowledged that the Sister had meant ‘in love with a girl’, as they certainly ‘wouldn’t get a look at a boy down the town’.²⁵ Megan taught with a particular nun in her early career upon whom ‘a lot of [the girls] had crushes...nice crushes...she was one that you would have a crush on, she walked beautifully straight and she wore this long black veil and her head well up, real deportment...and a kid would come along and say “Sister, can I carry your books?” and more likely than not “yes

dear, please” and that made her day’. The physical appearance of younger female staff (lay or religious) appears to have been, perhaps unsurprisingly, noticed by teenage female pupils, but the manner of this was never sexual, rather a type of admiration for physical beauty or elegance. It would be unwise, however, to assume an absence of homoerotic relations amongst staff or pupils in Irish schools. Edwards’ study of British women’s training colleges, for example, points to evidence for ‘homoerotic friendship[s]’ both between staff and between girls; one student who attended training between 1959 and 1961 commenting that ‘students accepted the lesbian relationships of some members of staff. *They were used to it in girls’ schools*’ (my emphasis). If a history of such relations exists in Irish schools, it remains unearthed. Yet, innocence is a recurring theme in the literature. A Dublin schoolboy recalled that, at school, ‘sex was rarely talked about... girls were galactic creatures who sprinkled the threshold of our imagination with fairy dust’.²⁶

Sister N taught Irish and Latin, and Megan was ‘riveted’ by her teaching, leaving school with a fluency in Irish that impressed her university lecturers. As at other schools, the Sisters taught extra one-to-one lessons to pupils who were falling behind. Apart from two Sisters, the staff were lay (all women). At that time, the school encouraged girls to apply for the Civil Service, particularly the higher grades, especially when girls came from families of modest means, and Megan believed that her ‘far sighted’ Principal did so in order that girls could be of assistance to their families. The school was career-oriented. Megan explained: ‘you see, if you’re working toward a career you won’t be acting the maggot and idling’ while fee-paying parents wanted ‘to be sure [their daughter] was going to make something’ of school.²⁷ This was during the war and the Sisters wanted to ensure that the girls had professional security; ‘she was right because at the time... we didn’t know what way that war was going to end’.

Grainne was enrolled in a primary school in Dublin in 1946, but after second class ‘about thirty’ pupils left while she and ‘about ten’ others stayed on. The following year she was enrolled in a private school run by nuns but remembers that the teaching in the local national school was ‘better’ as the teachers were ‘trained’; the sisters ‘were lovely... we had parties, it was a lovely time’, but ‘the education wasn’t great’. Mary started primary school in 1953 and remembers ‘about fifty in the class, very disciplined... the cane was flying around’ and the teachers were ‘superb’.²⁸ Mike attended a primary school (1953–1960) run by the Marist Order, where the emphasis was upon ‘cultivating bright, capable kids’ in order

to gain scholarships for the school.²⁹ Those thought capable were ‘given *everything*’.³⁰ The Marist Fathers were ‘bright people’ who did not believe in ‘rote learning’ rather in ascertaining ‘how much’ the pupil could ‘take’. The ‘elite’ boys were separated into a ‘Seventh Class’ for ‘polishing’; ‘we loved it’ Mike recalled: ‘it was *very*...demanding...we were wizards with mental arithmetic for example; it was very competitive...and taught us the discipline associated with learning’.

Mike recalled a ‘rumbling type of violence’ in primary school in the mid-1950s, but corporal punishment characterised boys’ rather than girls’ schools. Father Paul recalled boys at his Christian Brothers school being ‘fairly severely punished...mostly for discipline things’, rather than ‘lack of knowledge’.³¹ Boys who attended St. Mary’s College, Clonakilty, Co. Cork—a lay secondary school for boys—recall the ‘big leather strap’ ‘sticking out’ of Mr. Dineen’s (the school co-founder) ‘back pocket’.³² It was extremely unusual for girls to be slapped.³³ Beatrice’s recollections of the 1940s are typical: ‘the Master had a stick...up over the high press’, but ‘I don’t think he ever used it’. Another recalled that, in 1960 in her ‘middle-class’ co-educational Protestant school, ‘discipline was easy—no physical punishment was allowed or harshness: one punishment was having to walk around the tennis courts x number of times’. Another ‘more bizarre punishment was getting a kid to copy out a chapter of the Bible backwards!’³⁴

Respondents’ recollections of secondary school provided invaluable information regarding teaching at the period and shed much light upon the pre-1965 era when secondary schools usually charged fees, had small pupil numbers, often unqualified teachers and operated without the contemporary emphasis upon terminal, high-stake examinations. Karl attended a Christian Brothers secondary school in Dublin from 1934 to 1939; ‘we got biffed’, he recalled, but ‘I had the highest regard for what they did for me’.³⁵ Sixth year was comprised of 120 boys, ‘three classes in the one room...three lay teachers and a Brother...in the same room and teaching at the same time...there was no problem about discipline...the teachers were superb’. The school did not offer modern languages as ‘we were so close to the movement’, and ‘there was a great emphasis on Irish’.³⁶ The teachers were ‘very dedicated, every exercise would be corrected...the fabulous thing about the Brothers...was...you’d come back in the morning and they’d have stuff on the board, where, after hours they would be preparing their classes...they took great pride in your success’. Like others who attended school in the decades after Irish independence in 1922, Karl has no recollection of pressure being placed upon

him to succeed in examinations and his memories are unfailingly positive. The school did not practise selection; boys came from all parts of County Dublin and from all backgrounds: 'I cogged my ekkers in a tenement in Dorset Street', he recalled.³⁷ Learning was mostly by 'rote', but he insisted that this was not at the expense of learning '*about* the texts'. The recollections of retired teacher Hugh Colgan, published in *The Secondary Teacher* in 1985, support Karl's recollections of teaching in the 1930s:

Nothing could be nicer...Our classes were small and this made the work easy. The pupils lapped up the education. There were few messers or smart alecs. The would-be class disturbers got a quick shift from the other members.... If pupils did not understand a point they told you, [they would] without hesitation [seek] assistance....In those circumstances teaching was easy. Dish it out and they gobbled it up and retained it, because revision was second nature.³⁸

Again, reflecting the emphasis upon the Irish language of the early twentieth century, Beatrice's convent secondary schooling in Co. Mayo was 'done through Irish'.³⁹ Modern languages were not taught, but in this instance, the school's primary objective of preparing girls to enter national school teaching partly explains the emphasis as Irish was a prerequisite for entry to training. The relationship with the Sisters was 'very formal'. Unusually for a convent boarding school of the period, there were only three Religious; 'strangely', Beatrice recalls, 'there were a number of lay teachers...we really loved [them]...they were terrific; we had a terrific person for Irish and History and she'd sit up on the side of the desk and recite poetry and we had a terrific lady for English...they gave you a love of the subject...inspirational'. Again, 'there was never an emphasis on study and doing well, like you'd hear nowadays'. Beatrice's observation that 'strangely' there were a number of lay teachers is notable because given the number of aspirants to Religious Orders at the time meant there was little need to recruit lay staff; and she is not alone in mentioning it. Sister Mary Condon, who attended Dominican Convent Cabra, Dublin, in the early 1950s, recalled 'a small number of excellent lay teachers'.⁴⁰ In fact, there were eight lay staff there in 1957; an unusually high proportion.⁴¹

Fiona attended secondary school between 1956 and 1961 and, like Karl, remembers work done on Saturday being 'available on Monday morning' and, in the same way he held that rote learning did not undermine genuine learning, Fiona maintained that limited subject choice

meant that she had ‘*time* at them’.⁴² Again, teaching was through Irish and ‘quite competitive’; the nuns, as at Beatrice’s school, were primarily concerned to prepare girls for entry into national school teaching. But this aspiration should be understood against the exigencies of the time. Fiona recalls, for example, that her ‘options’ on leaving primary school were ‘the vocational school...factory work or the boat to England’, so the Sisters encouraged their pupils to continue on to secondary school.⁴³ Again, national school teaching was a ‘way out of small farms’ and menial clerical work for girls. There were three lay female staff in Fiona’s school, while, reflecting greater opportunities for lay teachers in the 1960s as the system expanded and religious Orders declined, two more were employed in 1960. Convent girls were often encouraged to enter college courses. A respondent recalled that, in the late 1950s, she had a ‘battle royal to stay on and do the Leaving Cert.’ as ‘money was scarce and 4 guineas a term was to come between [her] and [her] ambitions’. However, the ‘nuns came up trumps’ and allowed her to ‘continue *gratis* though money for the new uniform and books and music lessons and games caused [her] more heart-break’.⁴⁴ Fiona, like many of the female teachers interviewed, recalls the physical characteristics of one female teacher, who was ‘very elegant’, wearing ‘a long gown and high heels’. Fiona acted as ‘the post-man’ between the boarding girls in her school and the boys at the local college and held that contact ‘of a romantic nature’ was not uncommon. Indeed respondents occasionally allude to romances between boys and girls in local schools, although Fiona also acknowledged that ‘at that time school was your whole life...there wasn’t much social stuff’.

Others have less happy memories. Terence, who attended a prestigious south Dublin school (1951–1956) run by the Holy Ghost Fathers, was taught by a ‘wonderful’ French teacher and an ‘excellent’ Latin teacher, but complained that generally there was ‘no enthusiasm’ for teaching at the school.⁴⁵ His peers were mostly the sons of prosperous businessmen and ‘didn’t really need to work’. But Terence’s experience was not common among those interviewed. The former Minister for Education Niamh Bhreathnach was educated by the Dominican Sisters, Sion Hill, Dublin (1957–1962), and her experiences reflect those of others who attended convent schools at the time. The Dominicans were ‘fantastic... the reading, the debating, the acting...when I became a Minister the one thing that stood to me was that I had stood on a stage in Sion Hill...there was room for people like me...we had great teachers’. The nuns were ‘good’ at finding the girls’ talents; ‘they pushed you on’.⁴⁶ Margery began

secondary school in 1956. The rural convent school, approximately 40 miles north of Dublin, catered for between three and four hundred girls. The staff was predominantly Religious; indeed, Margery encountered only one lay teacher during her secondary schooling. Some class groups were as large as 50 and the Principal helped 'a lot of girls' to find work in the Civil Service, Aer Lingus and Dublin Corporation. The nuns taught 'all subjects...every day', having 'very hard timetables'. Pupils did 'nine or ten' subjects for Leaving Certificate, but not Science as 'there were no labs'; nor did the girls do Honours Mathematics ['it just wasn't done at the time'], although boys in the local Christian Brothers school were offered both subjects. Teaching was 'chalk and talk...book based' and Margery and her siblings completed 'three hours of homework every night'. She cannot recall 'pressure for points or exams' but there was 'an awful lot to get through'.⁴⁷ On Saturday mornings Margery, like pupils in many other schools, attended classes in Art and Elocution along with lectures in 'etiquette...how to speak properly...walk properly...thank people...how to write a letter of thanks...hold your knife and fork...drink your soup'. This was quite usual for the time; Denise recalls that at her school in Belfast the girls were 'expected' to be 'ladies' and not to 'eat in the street, wear your beret and gloves and behave yourself...*decorum!*'⁴⁸ Mary, too, remembers an atmosphere of hard work; her school had 'huge expectations of the girls...it was streamed and there was very *very* strong competition...you were challenged and you rose to the challenge'. Her teachers were 'mostly nuns, very inspirational, very bright, very committed, very driven women...super teachers', while the lay teachers were 'hard working, often past pupils, very much "with" the ethos of the school'.

Pupil behaviour started to become problematic in the 1970s, but in the pre-1965 period there appears to have been almost total compliance: 'behaviour was impeccable because they [teachers] didn't put up with anything...it was the culture...you just did what you were told...they weren't only strict in school, they were strict at home'.⁴⁹ The same retired teacher recalled that 'there was no cane in the secondary school...there was no detention'; good behaviour 'was expected'. Another teacher, writing in 1994, recalled that in the 1950s, 'children never spoke out, never answered back'.⁵⁰ Sister R concurs: 'there was no question' of indiscipline: 'we had 'to walk in file...and bow to the nuns...there was silence on the passageways'. Margo, who started secondary school in 1951, recalled that at this period many schools were boarding only, so 'there was money and hence no discipline problem'. The pupils usually came from homes where parents 'had a great interest in

education', so there was 'no conflict' between home and school; the desire for education was 'a shared culture'.⁵¹ A past pupil of Dominican Convent Cabra remembers that, as a pupil in the mid-1960s, there was 'less pressure to get good exam results. We all presumed that we would get jobs after our Leaving Certificate'.⁵² Sister R recalled that there was no pressure of 'points' at that time; 'it was a privilege to be educated then'.

While corporal punishment was widely administered in primary schools, only two female respondents remembered its use and only one recalled its use in secondary school. This was not the case in boys' schools, but it should be noted that the use of physical punishment in primary schools was widespread and often harsh. In 1955 the School-Children's Protection Organisation recorded instances of punishment including: 'excessive canings on the hands, legs, thighs and backs'; 'banging of heads together or against walls'; 'beatings with hands and fists on heads and bodies'; 'pulling of hair...ears...or cheeks'; 'standing for hours with face to wall'; 'kneeling...for long periods'; 'standing on window ledges or stools and being publicly ridiculed'; 'refusing permission to eat lunch'; 'locking out in the rain'; 'refusing permission to use toilet'.⁵³ An insight into the conditions of schools at the time is glimpsed in the organisation's complaint that they were 'often over-crowded, dirty and cold', an echo of Bryan MacMahon's description of starting teaching in the 1930s in a 'squalid mess'.⁵⁴ Mostly, this punishment took place in national schools, and parents who objected were 'quickly discouraged from pursuing the matter further and very often in a most humiliating manner'.⁵⁵ This is attested to by Mike, who attended primary school from 1953 to 1960 and recalled that those who suffered physical punishment were 'the weak, the impoverished, the [sons of] people who would never turn up and say "what are you doing?"' It could be for 'anything, and it could be any moment...the focus of any violence that was unleashed was very focused...because...they knew the guardians [would] never...turn up and complain'. Significantly, a petition against corporal punishment submitted to government in 1969 contained 8000 signatures, 2000 of which were from Ballymun—a disadvantaged community in west Dublin.⁵⁶ While the Tuarim report blamed curricular and methodological restrictions for the 'hostility' in Irish schools, *Punishment in Schools* pointed, perhaps more realistically, to the 'appalling conditions' of so many schoolhouses.⁵⁷ The report provides 22 pages of evidence of brutality, mostly in national schools; there was no distinction between lay or Religious. Only one instance of secondary school punishment was noted and concerned a Christian Brother, who was:

often seen [to] take a boy out of his seat by the hair or ears...punish him with the strap...and kick him either back to his place, to the side of the room, or outside the door...all this might be for not knowing some lesson or talking to another boy.⁵⁸

But corporal punishment was widespread in boy's schools throughout the period. At St. Columba's College, Derry, for example, pupils recall being pulled over seats and punished with a 'big broad strap'⁵⁹; having the 'daylights beaten out' of them⁶⁰; being 'brutalised'⁶¹; being 'batter[ed]... across the face'⁶²; 'random fits of rage' without 'rationale'⁶³; of being 'punched in the mouth' leading to bleeding; of teachers 'slapping copiously'; of boys being 'knocked' out of seats and being 'slapped up to thirty-six times in one lesson'⁶⁴; of pupils leaving school due to the 'brutality'.⁶⁵ Mike recalls that, when he pointed to an error his Mathematics teacher had made, he was called to the blackboard to correct it and then 'belted...around the room'. The teacher 'felt the way to deal with this situation was to flatten me....I never forgot that, never ever'.⁶⁶ When, in the 1940s, a teacher at St. Columba's College, Dublin, discussed a particularly intractable pupil with a colleague, the latter replied that he had no such difficulties as, 'I just give him a punch in the belly when I meet him'.⁶⁷

But it is difficult to be certain about the extent of corporal punishment. Father Jack, for example, said of his 1950s schooling that 'not even the priests were allowed to use it'.⁶⁸ Sister Fionnuala recalled that there was 'no corporal punishment' in her national or secondary schools in the 1940s,⁶⁹ but Sister Boniface remembered the 'Mercy Nuns in the national school [telling us] to bring in a stick the next morning to use to hit us with' in the 1920s. Its use, therefore, depended upon local circumstances and individual predilection.⁷⁰

As the majority of the respondents were women, recollections predominantly concern convent schools. The evidence of these recollections runs counter to anecdotal stories regarding Catholic convent education in Ireland. In this, the respondents echo the experiences of those interviewed in Bennett and Forgan's *Convent Girls* (1991). Their respondents were educated in the United Kingdom, Ireland, Italy and Australia, usually by Irish nuns and their recollections are strikingly similar to those of my interview cohort. While some have unhappy memories of convent schooling, others describe their teachers as 'kind, caring, loving people', 'supportive', and 'wonderful'.⁷¹

The debt owed to the teaching Religious, particularly female orders, was a recurring theme amongst the teachers I interviewed. In particular, they highlighted their importance as role models, especially their commitment to learning and career possibilities after the completion of school, their contribution to building education within the State at almost no cost to government and the absence of these women in Ireland's historical narrative. The *gratis* contribution of Religious is by no means particular to Ireland. Germaine Greer notes in *Convent Girls* that 'the Australian education system would have collapsed without the exploitation of this group of women'.⁷² Sister R observed that 'we did it for free, but...it was meant to be our vocation...but we had fees all the time...we weren't costing the state anything' other than 'a wage'.

Margo's description of the teaching nuns is typical:

formidable intellects [with] remarkable minds...remarkable women, remarkably qualified, exceptionally talented...intellectually, they were very open... they encouraged a broad education...and in terms of the development of their sisters [i.e. the Dominican nuns] they seemed to allow a personal and intellectual flexibility...quite remarkable women.⁷³

Margo remembers the nuns teaching 'a wide range of...literature that wasn't on the course' and as 'very wise, intelligent and independent women, in that sense role models...they were great teachers'. The girls were 'very strongly encouraged to go on to Third Level, which was interesting for the time'.⁷⁴ Denise, who was educated in Northern Ireland but later taught in the Republic, remembers the Dominican Sisters as 'lovely' and enrolled her two daughters in a Dominican school when she came to live in Dublin. Mary described them as role models, not just as teachers but as women: 'very committed, very bright and super teachers'. Indeed, 'they could even be feminists with a big "F"...they may not have articulated it but the fact that you had a bunch of women running their own affairs...what does that tell you?' If 'faced with a problem...there was never any question of asking someone what will we do about this...well they would...but they would never ask a man!' This attitude was reflected in a recollection of Sister Evelyn. When, as Principal of an all-girls' school in 1973, she was musing on the local bishop's possible reaction to a proposal to open the school to boys, a fellow sister asked simply, 'What has the bishop to do with it?'⁷⁵ The plan went ahead, despite the bishop's disapproval. Sister Fionnuala, who was educated by and later became a

member of the same order to which Sister Evelyn belonged, noted that independent thought was a characteristic of their Congregation: 'we were a French Order whose founder was illegitimate...they would have been outstanding women in their time—around the time of the (French) Revolution—who started education for girls...there was that kind of tradition'.⁷⁶ The international element is noteworthy. When, in 1991, Penny Chapman produced *Brides of Christ*—a film about the lives of nuns in Sydney—she was struck by how many successful women pointed to their convent education as a formative influence and by the seeming contradiction between apparently authoritarian institutions and their fostering 'so many interesting, outspoken, independent women. In their own subtle ways, nuns were early feminists'.⁷⁷ The literature is replete with examples of Sisters who encouraged their pupils to be independent-minded and career-focused.⁷⁸ Sister R remembers her teachers (there were no lay teachers in her secondary school which she attended from 1932 to 1938) as 'very cultured, nice ladies'. They had all been 'educated in Loreto' (i.e. by the Loreto Order) 'and would have come from educated homes...one had been in Cambridge' and all but one were qualified teachers.⁷⁹ They were 'very very friendly, there was always a good relationship with the nuns'.⁸⁰

Others had a more nuanced experience. Grainne recalled that 'some of them were terrible fussy [and] petty'; certainly one Sister was 'very able, very intelligent, very ambitious...I think she was trapped a bit in the convent'. Mike recalls that at the local Diocesan school in rural Ireland in the mid-1960s the quality of teaching was 'very mixed'; some teachers were 'good', but many priests were there 'to make up the numbers' thereby 'doing a disservice in terms of the classroom'. Classes were 'very controlled...dominated by the teacher at the front', while the school was 'poorly resourced...dilapidated' and 'not conducive to learning'.

Girls had little exposure to lay female and almost none to male teachers, although Denise's 'very happy' school had a 'good mixture' of 'all women' lay and Religious and Grainne recalls there being 'three or four' lay teachers in her school in 1953. Mary remembers that 'we had a male lay teacher for PE' and that her first year Latin teacher was a lay person who later entered the Order. The lay teachers were 'hard working' but 'weren't *allowed* to do anything other than teach...there were so many nuns...there were loads of Postulants and they had to find something for them to do so there really was no need to ask lay teachers'.⁸¹ These recollections are testimony to the absence of lay teachers in this period,

a feature that will begin to alter rapidly after 1967. But they also provide evidence, by implication, of the struggle that lay teachers faced during this period in securing work. Where they existed, lay teachers tended to be past pupils, sympathetic to the ethos of the Order, and thus perpetuated the culture and operational characteristics of their *alma mater*.

The choice of subjects offered to pupils in this period was limited, while the style of teaching and institutional culture differed from school to school. Grainne recalled that, usually, teaching was formal—‘there were no cosy chats’. She remembered the nuns as ‘very kind’, but ‘you wouldn’t get to know them...there was no kind of relationship’.⁸² In all school types, material was usually ‘learned off by heart’ while foreign languages were taught as ‘translation and grammar’.⁸³ Schools tended to have high expectations and a few offered a broader suite of subjects. Margo’s school, for example, had two Science rooms and she remembers the teaching nuns as ‘very wise, intelligent women...great teachers’. Grainne ‘loved’ secondary school and recalled that she was ‘strapped’ twice but had ‘deserved it!’ Her experience of the teaching nuns is typical of those interviewed. When her ‘very mechanical’ Latin teacher was replaced by a younger Sister who started ‘amazing us about Virgil’s poetry’, she decided to take the honours examination for Leaving Certificate and, encouraged and assisted by the replacement Sister, began studying on her own during the Easter holidays of her final year. Another of the teaching Sisters was ‘excellent, very good looking, very together, I really admired her, she just seemed to have it, she was quite young and knew what she was about...she had a great grasp of her subject and...of the classroom...she understood [we] were young girls growing up and were probably interested in boyfriends... she understood us’.

While children worked hard in school, there was little examination pressure; ‘there was the Junior Cert. and Leaving Cert. but it wasn’t talked about to any great extent...there was no big fuss...we never did tests... there was no talk about results, you did the exam, you passed the exam’.⁸⁴ This is a recurring theme in discussion with those who attended school in this period. Sister R’s ‘there was no pressure of points at the time’ characterises schooling in the pre-1965 era. If we understand ‘points’ (not introduced until 1968) to mean ‘results’ we must assume that Sister R’s view is that, while pupils evidently worked hard, the emphasis upon examination success as definitive and closely related to future opportunities was less apparent than in later decades. Oisín, who attended secondary school in the mid-1950s, recalled that ‘there wasn’t any great pressure to do

well in exams' which 'only became a dominant feature of schooling in Ireland in the 1980s'.⁸⁵ Reflecting the culture of such schools at the time, Beatrice could not account for pupil motivation: 'you just did it, it was the culture... maybe we were unquestioning'. This climate of consensualism is reflected in the recollections of all who attended school in this era.

Those who later became teachers, and had, therefore, been successful in school, represent only one cohort of pupils, but their experiences are also reflected in the written record.⁸⁶ For example, Collin's collection, *Tales out of School*, focusing on the 1950s, includes a number of recollections of past pupils of St. Columba's College, Derry, who later became teachers. While corporal punishment at the school was often severe, the recollections of boys who became teachers tend to be positive and, generally, punishment 'in excess of the crime' has been forgotten⁸⁷: 'docking' was 'of its day and I didn't get any chip on my shoulder over it';⁸⁸ the teachers were 'a model for us; we could see the good job they did'⁸⁹; teaching 'was of its time... there was fairness in it'⁹⁰; 'I have memories of some brilliant teachers'⁹¹; 'the dedication that all those people gave to their work... rubbed off on me... jeeppers, that was a great sacrifice they made'.⁹² White, who taught at St. Columba's, was similarly stoical, musing that 'punishment is a matter which exercises the minds of people outside schools rather more than those of the pupils and teachers'.⁹³

As a rule, teachers speak well of their teachers and serious criticism is rare, although it is possible that retired teachers' recollections are tempered by the experience of colleagues who struggled in the profession or the memory of their own difficulties. Hence, they more readily sympathise with the struggles their teachers once faced. In this way a culture of pardon appears to evolve within the profession and, importantly, teachers model their teaching on what they perceived as praiseworthy in their own teachers' practice. Oisín 'modelled' his teaching persona on his French teacher, a 'performer' and 'mysterious' figure who, while approachable in the classroom, 'kept his head down' on the corridors. However, an Irish teacher was 'hopeless' because 'he had no discipline'. The atmosphere at his school was 'generally good humoured'; the Order was anxious to have boys enter the novitiate and so there was little emphasis upon academic success. 'In fact', he mused, 'I often felt they resented boys who studied hard... to get into St. Pats or wherever'.⁹⁴ Fiona's experience of secondary schooling in the mid-1950s supports the views of others regarding the absence of haste in the teaching day. Her 'wonderful' Science teacher, 'a Mercy nun [was] ahead of her time: she was a fantastic teacher, she just

didn't teach the thing out of the book, we had *time* for practicals...our timetable never seemed to be crowded...there seemed to be plenty of time...I can remember them saying, "You *can* do this."⁹⁵

Non-Teachers Talking About Their Teachers

Oral and written testimony reveals a strong sense of gratitude toward teachers, although, again, this should be understood within the context of success in adult life. A former schoolboy recalls having 'the hell beaten out' of him by Jesuits who were, nevertheless, 'wonderful teachers... remarkable people...devoted to teaching you'.⁹⁶ Another was taught by a 'remarkable teacher' whose method of teaching Latin was 'wonderful'.⁹⁷ Former Taoiseach (Prime Minister) Garret FitzGerald recalled that his education was 'very liberal' in an 'open atmosphere' where 'relations were good'.⁹⁸ The actress Fionnula Flanagan remembers liking the nuns 'very much' and, in particular, Sister Aquinas—'one of the world's greatest teachers, a fine, fine teacher who could inspire people and a woman of immense intellect'.⁹⁹ Seamus Heaney, Nobel Laureate, recalled that the teachers at St. Columb's College, Derry, were 'terrifically devoted to academic excellence' and 'always remember[ed] the English teacher... reading the whole of "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner"...that reading will stay with me forever'.¹⁰⁰ Ireland's President Michael D. Higgins is strikingly eloquent on his primary school teachers, in particular William Clune, who 'loved the wonder of children...there was not one person who came into his school...who wasn't respected as a carrier of wonderment'.¹⁰¹ Of his secondary schooling in the mid-1950s he recalls Canon Maxwell, who, 'if he hadn't given his life to the Church, would have been in the Royal Shakespeare Society'.¹⁰² John Hume, Nobel Laureate and a past pupil of St. Columb's, remembered his 'first teacher' in primary school as 'highly influential' in his life. She 'got to know us; who we were, where we came from...she understood the pressures on children'.¹⁰³ The poet Brendan Kennelly's rural secondary school was 'run by an amazing woman...Jane Agnes McKenna', whose love of literature was 'genuine and profound' and who 'handed us this ability to be haunted, to leave our hearts and minds open to Shakespeare, to Latin, to French'.¹⁰⁴ Patrick Lynch attended Catholic University School, Dublin, where he 'had the good fortune to meet a number of teachers who played a very important part in [his] development',¹⁰⁵ in particular a 'remarkable' man called John Lyons who 'talked about...philosophy and...German and

French literature' and introduced Lynch to Pascal and Montaigne and 'talked about the influence of Buxtehude on Bach...Scarlatti's Portuguese period' and 'introduced [him] to...*Fabian Essays*'.¹⁰⁶ The writer and teacher John McGahern remembered the Presentation Brothers as 'marvellous people'.¹⁰⁷ 'Unquestionably the biggest influence' in the life of the actor T. P. McKenna was Father Vincent Kennedy, who introduced him to music while at secondary school in the 1940s.¹⁰⁸ The entrepreneur Tony O'Reilly attended Dublin's Belvedere College in the 1940s and had 'a very joyful twelve years there', having 'immense admiration for the Jesuits'; all the great influences on his life, he noted, had 'either been directly or indirectly related to the Jesuits'.¹⁰⁹ Ken Whitaker attended the Christian Brothers School, Drogheda, and was 'extremely fortunate to have excellent teachers' who gave him 'an absolutely superb education'.¹¹⁰ Whitaker recalls individual teachers by name and, in common with others, benefited from extra lessons given *gratis* by teaching Religious. Gordon Wilson, who came to public attention following the murder of his daughter on Remembrance Sunday 1987, when the IRA detonated a bomb in the town of Enniskillen, attended Wesley College, Dublin, where Dr. Sammy Powell taught in such a way that Wilson 'for the first time in [his] life appreciated the influence of history on people...a good man and a good teacher'. The former Minister for Education, Ruairi Quinn, writing in 2005, recalled that, at Blackrock College, Dublin, his English teacher Mr. Grace taught by 'question and discourse', helping him to lose his 'academic inhibitions...I still retain the sense of liberation that this way of teaching engendered'.¹¹¹

Reasons for Becoming Teachers

Generally, teachers decide that they would like to become teachers while they are still at school. Hence, school is a formative site in the creation of the teaching profession. Cunningham and Gardner's study of beginning teachers in early twentieth century England found that many decided to enter the profession from a 'very early' age.¹¹² For others it offered 'the best opportunity to prolong the gifts of childhood security and happiness'; a natural response of those who enjoyed school as children.¹¹³ Again, teaching represented secure work in uncertain times or the chance to escape menial labour.¹¹⁴ Others stumble into teaching 'more or less by accident' and find they are drawn to it.¹¹⁵ Not infrequently pupils are encouraged by teachers to consider entering the profession and, occasionally, are

actively recruited.¹¹⁶ The influence of an inspiring teacher is highlighted in countless memoirs and autobiographies and is supported by interviews undertaken for this chapter.¹¹⁷ Many of Rinehart's American respondents' parents, aunts or uncles were teachers and, as Sikes notes, this helps introduce children to 'the culture' of teaching.¹¹⁸

Occasionally, factors such as socio-economic change inform the decision.¹¹⁹ Economic expansion and the increasing availability of teaching work in Ireland during the late 1950s and 1960s certainly encouraged some to enter the profession. This, coupled with the introduction of free secondary education in 1966, led to greater opportunities for teachers. Margery, like others, was categorical that what 'inspired' her to enter teaching was 'a very good teacher'. But she had difficulty articulating how she had been inspired: 'she just had a way about her, I can't put it into words...she talked about things I was interested in'. Again, teaching was 'in the family'.¹²⁰ Mary too was inspired by her seventh class teacher: 'she inspired me...she was really topping'.¹²¹ But she could not 'remember a time when [she] didn't want to teach'. Denise recalled that the Dominican nuns 'certainly trained us for what we were going to face and there weren't *that* many opportunities for well-educated Catholic girls in Belfast [as] so many careers were closed to Catholics'.¹²² She, too, 'always wanted to teach, I played school with my brother and sisters' and was inspired by 'two teachers' from primary school: 'two lovely ladies [who] created classrooms that were nice places to be'.¹²³

While Denise faced the twin obstacles of being Catholic and female, a number of respondents make reference to the paucity of careers open to women in the 1950s as partly explaining their choice of teaching. Margo, for example, recalled 'it was the '50s, there were practically no careers for women' but, importantly, she 'really enjoyed school, it was no hardship to me...I sailed through, it was a pleasant experience'. Yet she was not influenced by any particular teacher; in fact, she would 'liked to have done law', but her father dissuaded her by explaining that the family lacked 'legal connections' and also because she was 'a woman'. Indeed, her father, a civil servant, was criticised by colleagues for 'wasting his time sending his daughters to college because "they're going to get married."' But, she insisted, teaching was a 'positive choice...[she] wanted to do it'.

Grainne is untypical, confessing that she had not initially considered teaching as she thought she would be 'far too shy', while an Arts degree involved 'too much reading'. Rather she hoped to study Pharmacy, but a

friend explained that ‘the hours are too long and there are no holidays’. Another respondent began teaching in 1960 but realised after one year that she and others ‘were in the profession simply because there didn’t seem to be anything else to do bar social work or nursing or the Bank or Civil Service’ and ‘this resulted in [her] changing schools year on year’ until she discovered that she ‘really disliked teaching’.

There are, therefore, similarities in motivation, but choices can be as individual as the people who make them. Sister R, for example, explained that her school did not encourage pupils to consider teaching as a career although, interestingly, she did not experience this in any school she subsequently taught in. But she insisted that, in the 1930s, ‘we didn’t think about what we were going to do’ after school; that ‘focus’ did not exist at the time. She never considered teaching per se, although she entered the Order ‘because it was a teaching Order’ and because she ‘liked dealing with young people’.

CONCLUSION

First-hand accounts of schooling in Ireland from the 1940s onward indicate a commonality of experience. At a time when access to post-primary education was limited, those who completed secondary school and transferred to teacher training must be viewed as a ‘privileged minority’.¹²⁴ Those interviewed here were already teaching when free education was introduced in 1966 and were the beneficiaries of schooling paid for by their parents or provided at little or no cost by one of the Religious orders. The percentage of 14–16 year olds in secondary and vocational education increased from 22% in 1944 to 46% in 1962. That only about one in five children progressed to post-primary education in the period under discussion, while most of the increased cohort entered vocational schools, only serves to emphasise how fortunate our cohort was.¹²⁵ It is not surprising that they recall being aware of, what the *Secondary School Teacher* termed, ‘the sacrifices’ their parents were making to send them to secondary school and how this influenced their attitude to schoolwork and achievement.¹²⁶ Undoubtedly they witnessed peers or siblings entering mundane and difficult occupations and, presumably, recognised the opportunities afforded by further education. Interviewed for the *Poverty and the Life Cycle in 20th Century Ireland: Changing Experiences of Childhood, Education and the Transition to Adulthood* report one respondent recalled:

all my friends left in primary and went to [the] technical school. And they went into clothing factories at 14 then. My friend next door, she was working at 13... Most of my friends started working at 14. I left school at 16 and I could have stayed on, my mother would have let us stay on, you didn't have to leave or anything, she would have done everything to keep us at school. There was nobody I knew in my school anymore, so I left at 16. I went off to England.¹²⁷

The shared sense of good fortune among the interview group was reflected in their willingness, as pupils, to take advantage of secondary school. They worked hard, felt a sense of obligation to parents and teachers, understood the opportunities afforded them and decided upon further education while still in their teens. Those who later worked in challenging schools believed that unruly environments prevented ambitious pupils from progressing in the system. They did not believe that free education or greater availability caused such environments, rather, the decline in the status of teachers, greater informality in schools and parental disengagement and occasional belligerence. However, they were unequivocal that pupil misbehaviour in the 1940s and '50s was not accepted by teachers and parents; it did not form part of the wider culture and was simply not countenanced. Certainly alterations in teacher/pupil relations can be traced from the 1960s onward but these originated in the broader social changes of the period and not in formal, internal modifications to school culture. Yet it is striking that teachers seemingly failed to recognise the extent to which their lives as pupils were regulated. I have written about this elsewhere in relation to girls' experience of school¹²⁸ but even the limited opportunities for adolescents to engage in "pop culture" in the 1940s and '50s does not fully account for the dearth of experience we would, now, commonly accord to teenagers. 'School' in the words of one interviewee 'was our life', and it is striking how, in the 1960s, pupil-penned school magazines start to appear chronicling the latest trends in music and fashion; a development that would have been stridently resisted only a decade earlier.¹²⁹ Teachers who attended school in the 1940s and '50s were accustomed to a regulated environment, very often boarding school, in which occupations apart from class and study were few and where a strict teacher/pupil hierarchy was maintained. High standards of schoolwork, conduct and dress were demanded. Pupils were expected to adapt to school culture, embrace school ethos and respect authority. Free time, such as it was, was also supervised, and even physical exercise was regulated in terms of suitability,

dress and contact with the world outside the school. An observation from 1930 that 'Every Girl Guide Organisation involves doubtful elements, i.e. public Drill displays, camping out, public sports, etc., which may tend to unsex girls' is indicative of the restrictions to which girls, in particular, were subjected.¹³⁰ Of course, upon entering university, some girls railed against gender expectations. Susan, a past-pupil of Dominican Convent, Eccles Street, Dublin, enrolled at University College Dublin in the mid-1960s and recalled being reprimanded for wearing trousers by the college librarian who was also 'in charge of women' as an example of institutional conservatism in the period. Margo, who attended the same university in the late 1950s, recalled that 'trousers were banned unless you were crossing hall to get to fencing class or something equally exotic!'

Teachers who attended school in the 1940s and '50s then began their careers having usually experienced conservative, insular, regulated, compliant and work-orientated school cultures. That they enjoyed them may reflect their personal predilections for particular working environments, but it is not unfair to assume that the often strident opposition to such settings articulated by pupils in the late 1960s and into the 1970s must have struck them as contrary, in the main, to the creation of ideal learning environments. Respondents talked of colleagues leaving teaching in the early 1980s because they 'just couldn't cope' with a more relaxed (and sometimes combative) school atmosphere, increased informality and what they considered the diluting of teachers' authority. Some shared their former colleagues' reservations concerning the increasing informality of the school environment, but this was considered a small price to pay for the wider improvements in schooling and teacher–pupil relations. While, generally, they enjoyed their experiences as pupils, they became accustomed to, or embraced, the informality of later decades. They spoke of the 'death of the ogre'; of teachers needing to change and of having been 'bullies' and how, despite difficulties in the 1980s, the working relationship between pupils and teachers had improved and evolved when compared to their schooldays, regardless of the era. They noted that younger teachers increasingly tended to possess a more relaxed and informal style of teaching, while those who had graduated in the last decade or so brought a degree of confidence and technical mastery unknown to previous generations. When considering these observations, it is tempting to assume that these retired teachers perceived an improvement in pupil–teacher relations because, having taught for four decades or more, they had themselves completely mastered the relationship, but this is not so.

Approximately one-third had been school principals or vice-principals, and all recognised the challenges facing contemporary schools. Nonetheless, they believed that nothing had been lost in the evolution of teaching in Ireland and much had been gained. Their disposition had also evolved as the decades passed; their expectations, practice and *modus operandi* having altered to accommodate wider changes in society and the pupil cohort. In wide-ranging conversations they spoke of their hopes for the future of the profession and of teaching as it related to feminism and of the evolution of opportunities for girls; the increasing burden of expectation placed upon them by government, 'external' agents such as employment bodies, parents and the inspectorate; of the difficulties of management and collegial relations; the pressures of teaching and its effect on health and home life; their affection for pupils and the rewards of the profession; the increasing hostility of the public media toward the profession; how initial teacher education should be reconstructed and of teaching as a worthwhile and life-enhancing endeavour. Teachers had, according to one respondent, worked 'nobly and well' over the decades in a profession that continued to develop and improve.

Certainly, there are those whose experience of teachers and schooling are at odds with this view, who found schools repressive and violent environments. But even in these environments there were children who determined that, should *they* become teachers, they would jettison the apparatus of corporal punishment and intimidation. Social inequality, too, led some to choose to teach in particular schools or towns. One respondent spoke of himself and his peers, who began teaching in the early 1960s, as 'the new guys' setting out to ensure that their working-class pupils would avoid the worn path to local factory work and enhance their opportunities for 'white-collar' employment by securing the Leaving Certificate examination. Females comprised 69% of those interviewed. The absence of social mobility for women in Ireland in this period meant that many chose teaching because there were few other options. Again, some men chose teaching in order to avoid manual, and in particular, agricultural work. For all, the untroubled passage through school meant that they were comfortable with its routines and culture while its demands were offset by the rewards of being engaged in something interesting and worthwhile. Teaching was a natural progression from schooling. It provided intellectual stimulation, a community of like-minded colleagues and, in economically uncertain times, secure and pensionable work that was socially valued. All agreed that it was the erosion of this social value and the increasing emphasis

upon high-stake, terminal examinations that posed the greatest threat to the teaching profession and pupils' positive experience of schooling.

Those who attended convent schools provide significant insights into schooling in these decades. While conventional, Catholic, attitudes prevailed and a multitude of sodalities and confraternities kept the girls busy with spiritual exercises and charitable work, intellectually, their schools were often stimulating and formative. Lay teachers were rare due to the vast numbers of postulants available to Religious orders in the period and relations between girls and nuns were formal but friendly. Throughout, girls were encouraged to consider careers, usually in banking, the Civil Service or teaching, to make constructive contributions to society and be economically and professionally independent. Schooling, even at primary level, was focused, work-orientated and often competitive. In the decades prior to *Curaclam na Bunscoile* (1971), which introduced a more child-centered curriculum into Ireland's primary schools, schooling was focused on the acquisition of content. Clever pupils were hot-housed in order to gain scholarships to secondary schools and boys, in particular, suffered often repellent degrees of corporal punishment. Secondary school differed little. Pupils who later entered teaching worked hard but without the pressure now commonly associated with the Leaving Certificate examination. Pupils accepted the de facto culture of schools as places of concerted effort. This reflected the wider socio-economic climate. During the 1940s and '50s education remained a privilege. In the mid-1940s approximately 20% of 14–16 year olds attended secondary school. Prior to the advent of free education in 1966 secondary school fees were either paid for by parents or scholarships defrayed the cost. Schooling reflected the realities of the wider socio-economic landscape; it was a place of industriousness and competition. Success granted further opportunities and ultimately professional status. Parents understood this and embraced the culture of aspiration fostered by teachers. Schooling was the currency by which their children secured advancement. In this much, the human capital paradigm, ostensibly embraced in the wake of the *Investment in Education Report* of 1965, already informed understandings of schooling, much indeed as it had in the great 'contestation' of the Intermediate examinations in the late nineteenth century.¹³¹ In this sense it was emancipatory—but only for those whose circumstances could bear the cost. Yet those interviewed were acutely aware of the demands on the family purse and of decisions made difficult by the reality of ongoing school expenses. This, rather than the impending Leaving Certificate examination, provided the motivation to

succeed and appears to have fostered a community spirit between parents, children and schools. Perhaps this accounts for the levels of tolerance we encounter in relation to corporal punishment. Yet, that it was necessary at all seems inconsistent with the repeated insistence that pupils were self-motivating, although this is tempered by the fact that children from working-class backgrounds tell quite different histories of schooling. Compliant children who worked hard for scholarships, whose parents were partners in the endeavour and for whom a place within the social hierarchy of 1940s and 1950s Ireland was readily identifiable did not have to be beaten into place. And where it was present, the experience of those who attended school in this period, and later entered the teaching profession, was positive and formative. They identified good practice and often modelled their own in similar ways once qualified. They understood school as a place of focused work, formality and hierarchy, where parties shared an understanding of agreed outcomes. It is striking, therefore, that these cohorts, particularly those schooled in the 1940s and 1950s, had to grapple with the transformation in the educational landscape when the introduction of free education instigated not only a seismic shift in the makeup of the school-going cohort, but in their understandings of the purpose of school, teacher–pupil relationships, hierarchy and formality and, ultimately, the authority schools and teachers claimed for themselves as agents of social good.

NOTES

1. Community schools aim to provide a comprehensive curriculum, combining traditional academic and technical/vocational education. They also provide adult education. They are publically owned, operated by boards of management and wholly stated-funded. The Association of Community and Comprehensive Schools (ACCS) is the representative body for this sector.
2. Compiled using *Annual Reports*, Department of Education, Dublin.
3. Beatrice, interviewed June 24, 2011.
4. Interviewed April 13, 2011.
5. Interviewed April 17, 2011.
6. Interviewed May 4, 2012. Elements of Deirdre’s experiences were firmly located in specific historic periods. For example, the ‘maiden lady’ who operated this small school was the daughter of a Protestant missionary who had been murdered by ‘bandits’ on the Yangtze River in China. Her mother and siblings lost their lives when shipwrecked on the voyage home to Ireland.

7. Interviewed June 2, 2009.
8. On being invited to give a presentation to a group of active retired (April, 2012), I were told by one attendee that he was one of 72 pupils taught by one teacher in a national school in the 1950s.
9. M.G. Parker in B. Bowden, *200 Years of a Future Through Education* (Dublin, 1992) 95.
10. Stephen Gwynn, Nationalist MP for Galway 1906–1918, Anglo-Irish writer.
11. ‘Croc’ was schoolgirl slang for crocodile; the shape of their formation as they walked in pairs. It appears regularly in the literature where girls attended boarding schools. Another respondent began teaching in a ‘small co-educational Protestant day school’ in 1960 and recalls ‘a swimming pool in the school garden; there was a tennis court and cricket was played on the lawns—quite a little up-market school it was in those days’. By email May 18, 2012.
12. On Alexandra College and the entrance of women to university, see A. O. Connor and S. Parkes, *Gladly Learn and Gladly Teach, passim* and J. Harford, *The Opening of University Education to Women in Ireland* (Dublin 2008), ch. 3. The Royal University of Ireland was established in 1879 as an examining and award granting body only. It was dissolved with the passing of the Irish Universities Act 1908.
13. Deirdre failed Irish in the Intermediate Examination, thereby failing to secure the Intermediate Certificate.
14. Sister Genevieve, O. P. (Ann Mooney), ‘Cabra Days’, in O. Burns and M. Wilson (Eds.), *Dominican Sisters Cabra 1819–1994* (Dublin, 1995), 22.
15. Ibid.
16. ‘School Days in Cabra Recalled 1936–1940’, *ibid.*, 23. The tendency of generations to attend the same school is repeatedly highlighted in school yearbooks and archives. The history of Mount Sackville School, Dublin, records that Mary and Elizabeth Glennon attended the school in the 1880s (a photograph survives) and that ‘one hundred years later’ their ‘great grand-nieces’ Carina and Mairead also attended Mt. Sackville. See M. Delaney, *Mount Sackville 1864–2004* (Dublin, 2004), 38. Annette Andrews, who enrolled there in 1950, recorded that ‘my mother, her sisters and brother had been there before me’. *Ibid.*, 60.
17. *Ibid.*, 24. The girls were allowed extra sleep, known as ‘sleeps’, as a ‘reward for particularly good behaviour or if Sister thought a girl looked very tired’.
18. *Ibid.* The pupils bathed weekly.
19. *Ibid.*
20. *Ibid.*

21. *Ibid.*, 26. No further information is given as this information is reproduced from the *School Yearbook 1957–1962*. It also includes information concerning everyday events including a magic show by Fr. Aengus Buckley O.P. in September 1957, in which he ‘produced’ a ‘real goose from a few handkerchiefs’. *Ibid.*, 27. The Yearbook demonstrates that, like others, this school provided its pupils with a range of activities and events, many set around religious feast days and events but providing, nonetheless, occasions for communal celebration and recreation. Sister Marie de Lourdes attended Mount Sackville School in the 1940s and recalled ‘evening recreation’ being ‘usually ballroom dancing’. See M. Delaney, *Mount Sackville*, 56.
22. The *IER* was published in 1965 and initiated in 1962 by the Department of Education in co-operation with the OECD, described by *Irish Times* in 1964 as ‘the most comprehensive document of its kind ever produced in this country’. See ‘End-of-year report on education’, *Irish Times* October 27, 1964.
23. The Institute of the [Blessed Virgin Mary](#), commonly known as the Loreto Order, founded by Mary Ward in 1609.
24. Nano Nagle founded the Institute of the Charitable Instruction of the Sacred Heart of Jesus (Presentation Sisters) in 1775, in Cork, Ireland.
25. See E. Edwards, *Women in Teacher Training Colleges, 1900–1960: A Culture of Femininity* (London and New York 2001), 129. See also D. Copelman, *London’s Women Teachers* (London and New York, 1996), 24.
26. C. O’Brien, ‘Days without Wine and Roses’, in J. Bowman and R. O’Donoghue, *Portraits: Belvedere College, Dublin 1832–1982* (Dublin 1982), 116.
27. ‘Acting the maggot’; colloquialism for misbehaviour.
28. Interviewed 23.10.2010.
29. Interviewed 20.4.2011. The Marist Order was founded by Claude Colin in France, in 1836, for the purpose of education and missionary work.
30. Emphasis by interviewee. [*Note*: all emphases by interviewee unless stated otherwise.]
31. Interviewed 8.3.2013.
32. M. Dineen (Ed.) *One Woman* (Ireland, 2011), 82, 98.
33. When asked about corporal punishment in school, Margery was emphatic that it did not exist in her secondary school, repeating ‘no’ eight times. However, Margo recalls of primary school, ‘normally they [the nuns] had these special belts and they strapped you with that’ (i.e., the leather waist belt worn on their habit); ‘it was very sore...they’d give you three belts with that’. Sister R recalls corporal punishment being administered in her primary school in the 1920s, although she ‘never got it!’ The former Minister for Education Niamh Bhreathnach commented in relation to

- schooling in the 1980s, 'we knew what happened in boys' schools, you see girls weren't hit'. Interviewed May 27, 2011.
34. By email, May 18, 2012.
 35. Interviewed February 16, 2012. Edmund Rice established the Congregation of the Christian Brothers in 1802. The Congregation operated single-sex primary and secondary schools.
 36. Here, Karl uses the term 'movement' to denote the events of 1916 and 1922 and the emphasis, in particular, upon the rejuvenation of the Irish language after independence.
 37. 'Cogg' and 'ekker' are Dublin slang for copy and homework, respectively; to 'cog ekker' is to copy a peer's homework and present it as one's own. Karl was from a middle-class, professional background. His relating how he copied a fellow pupil's work in 'a tenement in Dorset Street', a traditionally working-class area of inner-city Dublin, draws attention to the social mix of the school.
 38. *The Secondary Teacher*, 1985 Vol. 14, No 4, 25. Colgan retired in 1977. 'Messers' and 'smart alecs': respectively, colloquialisms for mischievousness and cheekiness or impertinence.
 39. Interviewed June 24, 2011. On the Irish language and schools, see B. Walsh, *Boy Republic: Patrick Pearse and Radical Education* (Dublin, 2013), ch. 3.
 40. Sister M. Condon, O.P., 'Cabra Revisited', in Burns and Wilson, *Dominican Sisters*, 21. They were 'Miss Kelleher, Miss Carmody, Mrs. O'Keefe, Miss Liston and Miss Ryan'. On the extent and distribution of lay/religious teachers at the period see P. Duffy, *The Lay Teacher* (Dublin 1965), *passim*.
 41. *Ibid.* See also M. Kelly, 'Plus Ça Change, Plus C'est Different', in Burns and Wilson, *Dominican Sisters*, 38.
 42. Interviewed October 16, 2011.
 43. On employment opportunities for women in Ireland in the 1930s–1950s, see E. Kiely and M. Leane, *Irish Women at Work 1930–1960: An Oral History* (Dublin, 2012), 20–22.
 44. By email May 2, 2012.
 45. The Congregation of the Holy Spirit (now Spiritans) founded by Claude Poullart des Places in Paris, 1703.
 46. Minister for Education 1993–1997, interviewed May 23, 2011.
 47. 'Points' were introduced by the universities in 1968 in order to select candidates for disciplines where numbers were restricted. School subjects were awarded points and candidates had to secure the number required for entry to the desired degree. Their introduction had the effect of making the Leaving Certificate more competitive. See J. Coolahan, *Irish Education: History and Structure* (Dublin, 1984), 199.

48. Interviewed March 2, 2011.
49. Interviewee Mary.
50. Margaret Kelly, 'Plus Ça Change, Plus C'est Different' in Burns and Wilson, *Dominican Sisters*, 37.
51. Interviewed December 13, 2010.
52. 'St. Dominic's College as I Remember it when I was a Pupil', Burns and Wilson, *Dominican Sisters*, 35. The Leaving Certificate was established in 1924 and is a terminal examination taken by pupils on exiting post-primary school. Results obtained in this examination generally form the basis of entry to further education and training courses.
53. School Children's Protection Agency, *Punishment in Schools*, 4. On being ridiculed, see J. Collins, *Tales Out of School* (Dublin, 2010), 161–162.
54. B. MacMahon, *The Master* (Dublin 1992), 11.
55. School Children's Protection Agency, *Punishment in Schools*, 5.
56. 'Seeking abolition of corporal punishment', *Irish Times*, February 25, 1969.
57. School Children's Protection Agency, *Punishment in Schools*, 5.
58. *Ibid.*, 21–2.
59. Collins, *Tales Out of School*, 11.
60. *Ibid.*, 13.
61. *Ibid.*, 21.
62. *Ibid.*, 29.
63. *Ibid.*, 36.
64. *Ibid.*, 147–8.
65. *Ibid.*, 161.
66. Rinehart records an incident where a pupil, later a teacher, corrected a teacher's pronunciation and was made to 'stay after school'. See *Mortals in an Immortal Profession* (NY, 1983), 72.
67. G.K. White, *The Last Word* (Dublin 1977), 94.
68. Interviewed March 22, 2013.
69. Interviewed April 11, 2013.
70. The author attended a Christian Brothers' national school between 1972 and 1979 where both Religious and lay teachers employed corporal punishment. Punishment could also take the form of hair-pulling, slapping on the face or head along with the more common use of leather strap or stick across the hand. Corporal punishment was discontinued in Irish schools in 1982.
71. J. Bennett and R. Forgan, *Convent Girls* (UK, 2003), 108.
72. *Ibid.*, 105.
73. Interviewee Margo.
74. Interviewee Margo.
75. Interviewed 30.4.2013.

76. Interviewed 11.4.2013.
77. Cited in, T. O'Donoghue and A. Potts, 'Researching the lives of Catholic teachers who were members of religious orders: historiographical considerations', *History of Education*, 2004, vol. 33, issue, 4, 481.
78. Imelda Tucker enrolled in Muckcross College, Dublin, in 1936 and remembered 'the nuns' who 'even then, encouraged an interactive exchange of ideas and an independent streak in their pupils', 'Muckcross Park in the late 30s and early 40s', *Muckcross Mail*, April 2000. Hilary Clancy attended the same school between 1952 and 1958 and in 2007 recalled Sister Patrick, who devoted the first part of her lessons to instruction and the second to discussion of 'newspaper articles, music, boys, movies, world affairs, social and family issues, even death' and 'supported me through one of my first big feminist struggles', 'Educator and nun: no nun like Sister Patrick', *Ibid.*, 2007, 5–6.
79. The recurring emphasis on teacher qualifications in early school prospectuses implicitly indicates their rarity. A draft letter to the press, in the archives of Dominican Santa Sabina school (founded in 1912), notes that 'several members of the Community have taken out Diplomas for Teaching both in Theory and Practice in the Cambridge University [sic], and have gone through a complete course of training at Bedford College, London'. Dominican Archives, Cabra, Dublin, OPG/SSS/F 005.
80. By 'educated in Loreto', Sister R means by the Loreto Sisters.
81. Mary's emphasis. Mary also had a lay teacher in primary school but not until fifth class, *c.* 1957/58.
82. The formality of schooling during this period permeates the literature also. Rinehart records a past pupil's typical recollections of elementary schooling in America: 'The relationship between teachers and students was very distant. You didn't become friendly'. *Mortals in an Immortal Profession*, 72.
83. Interviewee Margery.
84. Interviewee Margery.
85. Interviewed June 7, 2011.
86. Tony Gibson remarks, 'teachers are usually products of a system designed to promote academic success, and for the most part they look back appreciatively at the techniques which were made to work successfully for them'. *Teachers Talking* (UK, 1973), 29.
87. Collins, *Tales Out of School*, 92.
88. *Ibid.*, 110.
89. *Ibid.*, 133.
90. *Ibid.*, 139.
91. *Ibid.*, 163.
92. *Ibid.*, 82.

93. White, *The Last Word*, 127. B. Goldrey has argued that the harsh punishment administered by the Christian Brothers, in particular, was common among working-class parents in the period and is more abhorrent to modern sensibilities than it would have been to those of the mid-nineteenth century. See B. Goldrey, “‘A most unenviable reputation’: over two centuries’, *History of Education*, 1992, vol. 21, no. 3, *passim*.
94. ‘St. Pats’ is St. Patrick’s College, Drumcondra (established 1875), a training college for primary teachers. See J. Kelly (Ed.), *St. Patrick’s College, Drumcondra: A History* (Dublin, 2004), *passim*.
95. The Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy founded by Catherine McAuley in 1831 in Dublin, Ireland.
96. J. Quinn, *My Education* (Dublin 1997), 78.
97. *Ibid.*, 91.
98. *Ibid.*, 119. Garret FitzGerald (1926–2011), Irish Taoiseach on two occasions and Chancellor of the National University of Ireland from 1997 to 2009.
99. *Ibid.*, 127.
100. *Ibid.*, 172. Seamus Heaney (1939–2013), poet and playwright.
101. *Ibid.*, 185.
102. *Ibid.*, 190.
103. *Ibid.*, 197. John Hume (b. 1937) politician.
104. *Ibid.*, 222. Brendan Kennelly (b. 1936), poet and academic.
105. *Ibid.*, 247. Patrick Lynch (1917–2001), influential Irish economist and Professor of Political Economy at University College Dublin until 1980.
106. *Ibid.*
107. *Ibid.*, 258. John McGahern, (1934–2006).
108. *Ibid.*, 268. Thomas Patrick McKenna, (1929–2011).
109. *Ibid.*, 304–305.
110. *Ibid.*, 382–383. Ken Whittaker (b. 1915) played a key role as economic expert and civil servant in the rehabilitation of Ireland’s economy during the 1960s.
111. R. Quinn, *Straight Left: A Journey in Politics* (Ireland, 2005), 25.
112. P. Cunningham and P. Gardner, *Becoming Teachers* (UK, 2004), 121.
113. *Ibid.*, 122.
114. *Ibid.*, 123.
115. R. W. Connell, *Teachers’ Work* (UK, 1985), 125.
116. *Ibid.*, 158.
117. See J. Nias, *Primary Teachers Talking* (London 1989), 137; P. Sikes et al., *Teacher Careers: Crises and Continuities* (UK, 1985) 44, 45, 54, 135; Cunningham and Gardner, *Becoming Teachers*, 121, 119, 135, 161; A.D. Rinehart, *Mortals in an Immortal Profession*, 67, 106.

118. A.D. Rinehart, *Mortals in an Immortal Profession*, 20–22; P. Sikes et al., *Teacher Careers: Crises and Continuities*, 26.
119. R.W. Connell, *Teachers' Work*, 159.
120. Margery's paternal and maternal uncles were teachers, as were a number of her cousins, at both primary and secondary level.
121. It was usual at the time (1950s) for national/primary schools to have a seventh class. As most children did not proceed to post-primary school, pupils destined for this (often preparing for scholarship examinations), or perhaps for 'white-collar' employment, would complete an extra year at school.
122. Jack Mahon's memoirs recall one of his first teaching jobs in Enniskillen where most of the boys were 'not Catholics and they resented me. Some of them were members of the B Specials. They knew I was a Galway footballer and my Pioneer Pin didn't help endear me to them'. J. Mahon, *Only the Teachers Grow Old*, (Cork, 1992), 16. Pioneer Pin; small metal badge signifying that the wearer abstains from alcohol. Writing about her neighbours' children in her memoir *A Belfast Woman*, Mary Beckett noted that 'one got to be a teacher; another was in the Post Office which is about as far as a clever poor Catholic can get', 90.
123. One of these was a 'JAM' (Junior Assistant Mistress), i.e., without qualifications; but Denise remembers her as 'a super teacher'.
124. *That Was Then, This is Now: change in Ireland, 1949–1999* (Dublin, 2000), 45.
125. On contemporaneous attitudes to vocational education see J. Gray, *Poverty and the Life Cycle in 20th Century Ireland: Changing Experiences of Childhood, Education and the Transition to Adulthood* (Combat Poverty Agency, Working Paper Series 10/04, 2010), 30–31.
126. D. Buckley, 'Education: Rights and Responsibilities', *The Secondary Teacher*, Vol. 2, No. 1. January 1967, 9.
127. Gray, *Poverty and the Life Cycle in 20th Century Ireland*, 31.
128. See, M. McSharry and B. Walsh, *Fostering Complicit Femininity: Epoch, Education and the Young Female Body* in P. Kelly and A. Kamp (Eds.), *A Critical Youth Studies for the 21st Century* (Leiden, 2014).
129. See, for example, *School Echoes*, No. 10, 1962. Dominican College, Muckross Park, Dublin. School archives [not catalogued].
130. Report of the Sub Committee for Girl Guiding: Report of Meeting of Convent Secondary Schools in Ireland, 8.10.1930. Dominican Archives, Cabra, Dublin, Folder OPG/SSS/F, 008-F, 029.
131. *Irish Times*, July 5, 1879. On Investment in Education and the Human Capital Paradigm, see A. Loxley, A. Seery & J. Walsh, 'Investment in Education and the tests of time', *Irish Educational Studies*, 33.2, June 2014, 177.

Creating a Modern Educational System? International Influence, Domestic Elites and the Transformation of the Irish Educational Sector, 1950–1975

John Walsh

The educational sector in the Irish state, which had been notable for the enduring power of traditional institutions and values in the first generation of the independent Irish state, experienced a far-reaching transformation in the mid-twentieth century, linked to governmental intervention on an unprecedented scale. A dramatic change in government policy towards higher education, designed to produce a more highly qualified labour force and meet increased social demand for post-primary and later higher education, stimulated a long-term transformation of the educational sector in the 30-year period from the 1950s to the 1980s. Government policies incorporated expansion of participation at post-primary and higher level; rationalisation of traditional structures and institutional patterns; curriculum reform and the development of traditionally neglected strands of education, which took on greater importance for economic development.¹ Far-reaching policy changes were driven by changing attitudes among domestic political elites, linked to the influence of international

J. Walsh (✉)
Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland

ideas mediated through the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). This chapter sets out to explore the origins of the most significant policy changes in this period, underlying influences that shaped policy change and the long-term implications for the modern educational sector in the Republic: a comprehensive discussion of all of the many policy developments that occurred in this period falls outside the scope of this work.²

A CONSERVATIVE CONSENSUS

General Richard Mulcahy, Minister for Education in two inter-party governments, displayed apparently remarkable humility for a senior political figure in his statement to the Dáil on 19 July 1956:

You have your teachers, your managers and your churches and I regard the position as Minister in the Department of Education as that of a kind of dungaree man, the plumber who will make satisfactory communications.... He will take the knock out of the pipes and will link up everything.³

Mulcahy disclaimed responsibility for the formulation of educational policy, indicating that the only viable role for the minister was to facilitate the activity of the denominational institutions, which controlled the system. The Catholic and Protestant churches played a crucial part in providing both primary and second-level education, not least because the vast majority of schools were owned and managed by religious authorities. Political and administrative elites accepted the logic of a 'state-aided' system in which the churches were the main providers of education.⁴ Ministers in the period immediately following the Second World War tended to be preoccupied with the implementation of established policies, such as the attempt to revive the Irish language through the schools in accordance with the ambitious policy of Gaelicisation adopted in the 1920s and with the cautious management of existing educational structures.

The limited objectives and activity of the state in education reflected the cultural and political context of the era. Catholic social teaching envisaged only a supplementary role for the state in education, as in other areas of social policy.⁵ The political and official elite operated within a cultural atmosphere that was socially conservative and heavily influenced by 'integralist' Catholicism, which sought to make Ireland a more completely Catholic state than it had yet become and reached its peak

in the early post-war period.⁶ The underdevelopment of vocational and technical education was a defining feature of the Irish educational sector, not least due to a highly restrictive framework agreed between the new state and the Catholic bishops in 1930: vocational schools were intended to offer continuation courses of a strictly practical character and vocational students were denied access to the Intermediate and Leaving Certificate examinations which were reserved for the academic secondary schools.⁷

The deliberations of the Council of Education, which was established by Mulcahy in 1950 to conduct a review of primary, secondary and vocational education, illustrated the depth of 'integralist' attitudes among clerical and educational elites. The Council, which was dominated by professional educators and clergy of various denominations, showed considerable distrust of any innovation that might involve increased state power in education. The first report of the Council in 1954 expressed the fear that an unhealthy perception of state control could be created by the term 'National School', recommending that the designation 'Primary School' should be used instead, to indicate that the Irish schools were not state schools.⁸ The Council's second report in 1960 opposed the idea of a formal system of career guidance operated by any public authority at post-primary level.⁹ The Council also categorically rejected any general scheme of 'secondary education for all', dismissing the idea of free post-primary education as 'utopian' and undesirable, on the basis that it would reduce incentives for pupils and cause standards to fall.¹⁰ The Council underlined the dominant ideological and cultural assumptions dictating educational policy since the mid-nineteenth century, defined by commitment to denominational schooling, control of educational institutions by clerical and religious stakeholders and acceptance by the state of a firmly subordinate role in providing education.¹¹ The state's educational policy up to the late 1950s was informed by a conservative consensus, shared by politicians, senior officials and educational authorities, which dictated only a limited, subsidiary role for public authorities in providing education.

'A STAGNANT POND'

The Department of Education was perceived by many contemporaries in the 1950s not so much as a potential instigator but as a barrier to educational reform. John J. O'Meara, professor of classical languages in University College Dublin (UCD) was by no means alone in his scathing critique of the department in March 1958: 'Hardly more than a ripple or

two has come to disturb that stagnant pond which is the Department of Education since the State was founded—and it would seem that hardly a ripple ever will—for that department seems to share some of the qualities of the natural law: it seems to be immutable'.¹² Yet within two decades contemporary observers testified, not always favourably, to a dramatic transformation in policy and practice by ministers and departmental officials. Sr. Eileen Randles, a leading member of the Conference for Convent Secondary Schools (CCSS), undoubtedly reflected the view of many secondary school managers in 1975 when she argued that the 'intemperate zeal of the Department of Education officials' aroused widespread resentment among Catholic educational authorities.¹³ These negative but sharply divergent views of the department's approach underlined a contemporary perception of transformation of the state's policy within the space of a single decade.

This contemporary viewpoint is largely endorsed by scholarship in the area. Coolahan notes the wide range of educational initiatives undertaken between 1960 and 1980, reflecting increased public interest in education and wider societal and cultural change.¹⁴ O'Sullivan suggests that religious ideals associated with a dominant 'theocentric' paradigm, which provided the ideological backdrop for educational policy in the first generation of the Irish state, were gradually displaced from the 1950s by a 'mercantile' paradigm with economic considerations at its core.¹⁵ This transition was closely associated with the increasing influence of human capital theory, a major strand of international economic thinking since the early 1960s, which held that investment in people produced a greater return of investment than investment in physical capital.¹⁶ Various studies underline that the Irish political and administrative system enthusiastically embraced human capital theory during this period—in particular Clancy highlights the firmly utilitarian orientation of government policy in higher education from the 1970s, driven by vocational priorities linked to national economic development.¹⁷

ORIGINS OF REFORM

The reorientation of economic policy from protectionism to free trade, directed by Seán Lemass and TK Whitaker and the early success of the policy of export-led economic development in the early 1960s facilitated the allocation of increased resources to education. Lemass took the lead in developing a viable government policy for educational expansion shortly

after he succeeded Eamon de Valera as Taoiseach in 1959. The newly elected Taoiseach endorsed the raising of the statutory school leaving age from fourteen to fifteen years, on the basis of a gradual expansion of post-primary school facilities and teaching resources, as a key policy objective for the first time.¹⁸ Lemass exerted a profound influence on the politics of Irish education until his retirement as Taoiseach in 1966. He made the Department of Education an important career stepping stone for a new generation of Fianna Fáil politicians.¹⁹ Dr. Patrick Hillery received office for the first time as Minister for Education, while the department was George Colley's first Cabinet portfolio. Donogh O'Malley served as Minister for Health for little more than a year before he was transferred to Education. All three of the ministers appointed by Lemass undertook significant reforming initiatives, which contributed significantly to the transformation of the educational system.²⁰

The embrace by political and administrative elites of ideas drawn from 'human capital' theory, mediated largely through the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, was crucial in underpinning far-reaching educational reform. The OECD identified the development of education and scientific research as essential to the achievement of economic growth, promoting commitment to investment in 'human capital' among the developed countries of the West.²¹ The organisation's approach was shaped by the global conflict between the West and the Soviet Union at the height of the Cold War. The Governing Committee for Scientific and Technical Personnel of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation in Europe (OEEC)—the precursor of the OECD—considered that educational and scientific investment would play a significant part in 'the world competition' between the OEEC states and the Communist bloc.²² The committee's 'Programme for Scientific and Technical Personnel' published in January 1961 envisaged that the success of the competing global systems in achieving social progress and economic development 'will undoubtedly affect their respective influence in the world at large and particularly in the underdeveloped countries'.²³

Much of the impetus behind a gradual re-appraisal of traditional policies by domestic policy-makers came from the disastrous economic situation in Ireland during the 1950s. An international economic contraction and the failure of protectionist policies had led to a large balance of payments deficit in the late 1950s and emigration saw 400,000 people leave the country between 1951 and 1961. This crisis coincided with an important catalyst for the adoption of education as a key factor in economic devel-

opment at international level, namely the ‘Sputnik hysteria’ that broke out when the Soviet Union launched the first artificial earth satellite in October 1957.²⁴ The aftershock in the USA extended to the education sector that shared the widely held assumption that Soviet success was due to their more advanced education in science and technology. As early as 1958, Earl McGrath claimed that: ‘it is with matters of...educational practices that we must be primarily concerned if the gap between our own scientific developments and those of Russia is to be closed.’²⁵

The reverberations of this hysteria in US education did not pass unnoticed in Ireland. Seán O’Connor, an influential principal officer and future secretary of the Department of Education, later commented that the presumed technological superiority (actually more apparent than real) of the Soviet Union in the late 1950s gave a decisive impetus to educational expansion in the West: ‘it might well be claimed that the greatest single event in post-war education world-wide was the shooting into space of Sputnik One’.²⁶ O’Connor’s comment underlined awareness on the part of senior officials of the changing place of education in global political competition and its implications for Ireland.

‘A REVOLUTIONARY STEP’

A long-term process of educational reform began tentatively in the late 1950s. Jack Lynch abolished the marriage ban for primary teachers, which required the retirement of female teachers on marriage, in 1958, signalling a gradual dilution of conservative cultural values that had shaped educational policy in the previous generation.²⁷ The department under Lynch and Hillery sought to alleviate the extensive overcrowding in urban primary schools by seeking to expand the supply of trained teachers, authorising prefabricated classrooms and eventually limiting class sizes by regulation.²⁸ The initial changes were incremental and often small-scale, but testified to a greater willingness among political elites to allocate resources to long-neglected educational problems. The Local Authorities Scholarships (Amendment) Act in 1961, which introduced Exchequer funding to supplement the contribution of local authorities for the first time, transformed the financial provision for post-primary and university scholarships.²⁹ This legislation was shaped more by meritocratic than egalitarian ideas, as Hillery informed the Dáil on 1 August 1961: ‘The principle is that if there are brains in the country, we should get them through the full course of education as far as we can afford to do so and that

they should earn their way on merit'.³⁰ The initiative was no manifesto for equality in education, but a pragmatic attempt to help talented children: in this respect it was a striking illustration of an official worldview in transition—tentatively accepting the necessity for greater state intervention to encourage a more meritocratic system but as yet stopping short of more radical surgery to achieve wider access for traditionally under-represented social groups.

Yet the apparently modest initiatives introduced by Hillery marked the opening gambit in a sustained process of reform in post-primary education, which soon combined egalitarian objectives with a focus on previously neglected strands of the educational sector which were considered relevant to economic development. Hillery made a policy statement on May 20, 1963, in which he announced that the government would establish comprehensive schools on a pilot basis in thinly populated rural areas.³¹ The new schools were designed to offer a broad curriculum combining both academic and vocational streams, to bridge the gap between secondary schools and the vocational system, which traditionally operated in 'watertight compartments'.³² The ministerial announcement was the first major initiative by the Irish state to provide for broadly based post-primary education: it also marked a fundamental policy change from the practice of successive governments since the foundation of the Irish state, as the direct intervention of the national government to establish a new form of public post-primary school was unprecedented.

The Catholic bishops were hostile to the comprehensive schools scheme, concluding at their general meeting on June 25, 1963 that the initiative was 'a revolutionary step', as the Irish state would act to establish post-primary schools outside the narrow ambit of vocational education for the first time.³³ Hillery and the senior officials, however, undertook tortuous negotiations with the Catholic bishops, who reluctantly accepted the establishment of the first comprehensive schools in 1966. The eventual outcome of the negotiations was modest. The pilot project consisted of three comprehensive schools, in Cootehill, Carraroe and Shannon, which opened their doors to students in 1966, followed two years later by a fourth school in Glenties.³⁴ The creation of a network of comprehensive schools for the entire country did not prove a practical proposition. The foundation of additional comprehensive schools was not only a substantial financial commitment but also required protracted negotiations with individual bishops, who continued to regard state post-primary schools with considerable suspicion.

Hillery's policy announcement incorporated a proposal for the foundation of 'regional technological colleges', which later led to the establishment of the Regional Technical Colleges (RTCs) as an integral part of third-level education.³⁵ The two-year day course in vocational schools would also be extended to three years, facilitating the introduction of a common Intermediate Certificate examination for all post-primary students.³⁶ This proposal, which was implemented by 1966, was the beginning of a sustained attempt to extend the scope and raise the status of vocational education. Hillery's policy announcement, which was largely overshadowed both for contemporaries and many scholars of the period by the more dramatic announcement of free second-level education, was the first of a number of major reforming initiatives, which transformed the Irish educational system.

The initiatives launched by the state in the early 1960s were informed by new thinking about second-level education within the department itself, set out in a number of private memoranda including a confidential report by a committee of inspectors, which was drafted by its secretary, Dr. Finbarr O'Callaghan, and submitted to Hillery in December 1962.³⁷ Yet rapidly changing international policies according a high priority to investment in education also informed political and official decisions in Dublin. In 1962 the Department of Education invited two OECD examiners to undertake a review of technical education and training in the context of economic development. The investigation by the OECD examiners, Alan Peacock and Werner Rasmussen, exposed the long-term neglect of vocational and higher technical education.³⁸ A 'confrontation' between an Irish delegation led by Hillery and OECD experts to discuss the recommendations was held in Paris in January 1963; Hillery's subsequent policy announcement was undoubtedly influenced by the examiners' critical analysis of the academic bias in Irish education. The examiners' recommendation for the development of technical education at post-primary and higher level led directly to the proposal for the regional technical colleges.

But the OECD's most striking contribution to policy change in Ireland was the proposal by its Directorate of Scientific Affairs in 1961 for a pilot survey of long-term needs for educational resources in the Republic, which was presented at an international policy conference in Washington in September of that year.³⁹ The OECD proposal was approved by Hillery on the recommendation of the two Irish representatives at the conference, Séan MacGearailt, the influential assistant

secretary of the Department of Education, and John McInerney, deputy assistant secretary in the Department of Finance.⁴⁰ It was not only the most significant initiative of Hillery's tenure but one of the key policy decisions of the period, opening up an underdeveloped Irish educational sector to international influences. O'Connor regarded the decision to initiate the study as 'one of the most important policy decisions and, in my opinion, one of the most courageous ever made about Irish education'.⁴¹ The minister was acting deliberately knowing that the survey would hold the shortcomings of the Irish educational sector up to international scrutiny: 'The OECD would publish details of these inadequacies for the world to see. If blame was to be assigned—and he never doubted that the picture painted by the report, when it appeared, would be grossly unfavourable—then his Government would be the target. He could easily refuse, as many other countries did, and nobody might ever know'.⁴² Yet while Hillery showed political courage in authorising a comprehensive evaluation of the Irish educational system by an independent survey team, it was a calculated gamble rather than a leap into the unknown. A critical analysis of the Irish educational system would prove a potent asset for a reforming minister, who sought a coherent rationale for policy changes.

Moreover, the Department of Finance recognised the potential value of educational investment to economic salvation by the early 1960s. The first programme for economic expansion, *Economic Development*, drafted by Whitaker and other departmental officials, highlighted the potential contribution of vocational education to agricultural training.⁴³ John McInerney of the department's Economic Development Branch was one of the two Irish representatives who endorsed the OECD pilot study, while Whitaker advised Tarlach Ó Raifeartaigh, secretary of the Department of Education, on how to secure the agreement of other government departments to the initiative.⁴⁴ The Department of Finance's willingness to support increased investment in education was largely determined by its embrace of human capital theory and the economic rationale for educational expansion. The *Second Programme for Economic Expansion*, which indicated in 1963 that 'special attention' would be given to education, training and other forms of human investment, identified educational expansion as a key national priority.⁴⁵ The second programme confirmed a decisive policy shift among official elites, as education, previously valued, if at all, for its cultural and ideological mission, was reconceptualised as a central factor in national economic development.

THE IMPACT OF *INVESTMENT IN EDUCATION*

The pilot study was undertaken by an Irish survey team under the auspices of the OECD and the department between 1962 and 1965. The team was headed by Patrick Lynch,⁴⁶ assisted by Martin O'Donoghue, a young economics lecturer in Trinity College and William Hyland, a statistician who was seconded from the United Nations Statistics Office to work on the project; Pádraig Ó Nualláin, a senior inspector of Secondary Schools, was also a member of the team.⁴⁷ The report of the survey team, *Investment in Education*, made only one formal recommendation, the creation of a development unit in the Department of Education, to collate educational statistics and undertake long-term planning for future educational needs.⁴⁸ This recommendation was implemented in November 1965, with Seán O'Connor as the first head of the Development Branch. The national team avoided formal recommendations, as they might be vulnerable to criticism by established interests and employed cautious and judicious language, seeking to avoid any implication of excessive policy activism.⁴⁹ Martin O'Donoghue recalled that 'specific recommendations might be shot down; you could get the wrong minister and the Department of Education might then lapse back into inaction'.⁵⁰

Yet the originality of the report lay in a devastatingly critical analysis of the educational system, based on rigorous analysis and the accumulation for the first time of comprehensive statistical data about education in the Irish state. *Investment* illuminated severe deficiencies and inequalities in the Irish educational system:

- The report's analysis revealed a substantial gap between the projected output of qualified school-leavers and the requirements of the economy for qualified manpower. It was estimated that a shortfall of 76,000 would arise between the labour force demand for employees with a junior post-primary certificate by 1971 and the actual supply of school-leavers with such a qualification.⁵¹ The national team argued that the educational system was failing to meet the minimum needs of the Irish economy for an increased flow of qualified, skilled employees.
- While the report subjected the Irish educational sector to analysis through the methodology of economics, *Investment* did not focus narrowly on the labour force implications of educational underachievement. The survey team also highlighted striking disparities in

educational participation, between different socio-economic categories and regions of the country.⁵² Eleven thousand pupils, approximately one-fifth of all the children who finished primary education each year, left full-time education without securing any educational qualification at all, including even the Primary Certificate.⁵³ The study found ‘a marked association between participation and social group’, due to the low rate of participation in post-primary education by pupils drawn from low-income social groups.⁵⁴ The participation rate in post-primary education, among individuals aged 15 to 19 in 1961, was four to five times greater for pupils drawn from the higher professional, managerial and farming categories than for the children of unskilled and semi-skilled manual workers.⁵⁵ *Investment* also illustrated a massive disparity in participation between social groups at university level, where the survey team found that ‘the strong association between university entrance and social group is unmistakable’.⁵⁶ Sixty-five per cent of university entrants who undertook the Leaving Certificate in 1963 were the children of professionals, employers and higher white-collar employees, while 2% of university students were drawn from the unskilled and semi-skilled manual category, while 4% were the children of the unemployed or widows.⁵⁷ The report also highlighted wide regional variations in educational participation at post-primary level. While several counties in Munster showed a high level of participation in second-level education, all three Ulster counties in the Republic fared relatively badly in terms of educational participation, as did three Leinster counties, Laois, Meath and Kildare.

- *Investment* underlined a restricted grammar school type curriculum in a majority of secondary schools, which neglected science, mathematics and modern continental languages, as well as sharp gender disparities in subject provision and achievement. Only 25% of girls at junior cycle in secondary schools in 1962–1963 took science, while 70% took domestic science, a subject strongly associated with the traditional societal role of women as homemakers.⁵⁸ Similar patterns prevailed in mathematics, where 99% of boys took maths compared to 80% of female students; this pattern was dramatically reinforced in the senior cycle, where a majority of single-sex girls’ schools did not offer honours maths—as a result only 2% of girls secured honours in maths at Leaving Certificate level. Similarly, boys were seriously under-represented in modern languages. While four-fifths of girls at

junior cycle level took French, this was true for only 45 % of boys. Moreover, the proportion of boys taking French dropped dramatically by over half (to 21 %) at Leaving Certificate level—in part due to the dominance of Latin as an exam subject in single-sex boys' schools.

- Perhaps the most influential element of the survey team's analysis was a damning indictment of the haphazard distribution of educational resources in primary education, caused by an unplanned pattern of historical development.⁵⁹ The report noted that there were 736 one-teacher national schools in 1962–1963, while 76 % of all national schools taught less than 100 pupils.⁶⁰ The prevalence of small national schools, which were relatively high users of teaching resources, created an imbalance in the distribution of teachers, as the small schools contained 50.4 % of all national schoolteachers but only 38 % of all pupils.⁶¹ This in turn contributed to high pupil-teacher ratios in larger schools, particularly in urban areas, where most students were to be found in classes of forty or more.⁶² The survey team questioned whether 'the present distribution of schools is the most suitable, satisfactory or economical method of providing primary education', setting the scene for a major restructuring of the national school system.⁶³

Investment supplied a compelling rationale, essential statistical data and much specific policy content for many of the reforms that followed. Moreover, following the publication of *Investment*, long-term planning of educational needs became indispensable in a government's policy that emphasised expansion, equality of opportunity and rational use of resources.

The re-organisation of primary education began with the amalgamation of small national schools, which was largely inspired by the conclusions of *Investment*. Colley informed the Dáil on July 21, 1965 that one-teacher and two-teacher national schools would be replaced with larger central schools, served by school transport schemes financed by the state.⁶⁴ Amalgamation was strongly opposed by local interests in many areas and by several Catholic bishops, notably Dr. Michael Browne, bishop of Galway. Browne, a conservative prelate who was fundamentally opposed to greater state intervention in education, clashed publicly with Colley on February 5, 1966, at a meeting of NUI graduates in Galway. Colley firmly asserted the power of the minister to formulate and implement educational policy:

‘this was where a Minister stood apart, and alone’.⁶⁵ Browne, responding to the minister’s speech, denounced the policy of amalgamation as ‘a catastrophe—a major calamity for our Irish countryside’. Browne’s outrage at amalgamation was genuine but also informed by a wider suspicion of the new official agenda of rationalisation that led him to question the legal status of the minister’s actions: ‘There is one role that does not belong to the Minister for Education in this country: it is the role of a dictator.... National schools are not State property, like police barracks’.⁶⁶ Browne directly challenged the legitimacy of state intervention to reform the educational system, implicitly attacking the direction of government policy since the late 1950s.⁶⁷

The ‘clash at Galway’ caused a media sensation and certainly intensified opposition to amalgamation in the short-term, as Browne’s position was backed by a number of Fine Gael TDs, notably Oliver J. Flanagan, the ultra-conservative deputy for Laois-Offaly.⁶⁸ Yet neither Browne’s fulminations nor the scale of political opposition derailed the new policy; Colley, who forcefully defended the social and educational rationale for amalgamation, forged ahead with the implementation of the new policy, having secured the crucial support of the INTO. The amalgamation of small national schools proceeded apace under Colley’s successors. Over 1100 small schools were closed by 1973.⁶⁹ The department amalgamated over a third of all national schools between 1965 and 1984, when the total number of schools was reduced by a third from 4743 to 3270.⁷⁰ The policy of amalgamation delivered a radical reshaping of the traditional pattern of primary education within a decade of its introduction. The radical implications of the policy change, dramatised by the clash between Colley and Browne, underlined a far-reaching transformation in the state’s educational policy since the mid-1950s.

CURRICULUM REFORM

The department embarked on an equally ambitious project of curriculum reform at primary level, which was facilitated by the gradual amalgamation of small schools. The abolition of the Primary Certificate in 1968, itself a significant policy change, signalled the beginning of a wider review of the traditional approaches to curriculum and assessment. The department’s proposals for curriculum reform envisaged a child-centred programme, which set out to provide for the full development of each individual child. The proposals were drafted by an internal departmental committee composed

mainly of primary school inspectors, who were influenced by the ideas of Jean Piaget and by the Plowden Report published in England in 1966.⁷¹ Tomás Ó Floinn, assistant secretary with responsibility for primary education, publicly expressed the departmental view that the existing programme, largely unchanged since 1934, was inflexible and outdated, treating a child as 'the passive recipient of knowledge'.⁷² The proposals for change were designed to promote a more flexible and integrated learning process, which envisaged a greater focus on the child as an individual and closer interaction between subjects.⁷³ Certainly the child-centred approach underlying the new programme, combined with a wider range of subjects and the greater flexibility given to teachers, contrasted sharply with the rigidity, uniformity and narrow subject concentration of the traditional programme.⁷⁴

The introduction of the new curriculum in 1971, implemented in close consultation with the INTO, was effectively managed by senior officials and inspectors of the department through extensive use of pilot schools and in-service training. The influence of the new programme on educational practice was gradual and uneven, as the new curriculum was not fully implemented in many areas, due to the persistence of educational and structural problems, as well as the inadequate resources available for in-service training from the early 1970s.⁷⁵ Yet the introduction of the new curriculum itself marked a significant break not only with traditional educational policies but also with long-term ideological preoccupations. The state abandoned its previous commitment to achieving key policy objectives by imposing a rigid uniformity on the national schools through an inflexible, subject-centred school programme. The introduction of the new curriculum for national schools was perhaps the most far-reaching change initiated by the state in primary education in this period.

The department also promoted a range of curriculum changes at second level, supplemented by subsidies to encourage the greater availability of science and modern languages. Revised subject curricula were introduced for mathematics and science subjects at senior cycle level in the 1960s, while a new scheme of grants for science laboratories was established in 1961.⁷⁶ More controversially, Hillery introduced preferential funding on a pilot basis in 1964 for secondary schools that employed qualified science teachers, although this scheme did not survive subsequently.⁷⁷ Similar efforts to extend the teaching of modern languages combined additional allowances for foreign language teachers and incremental salary credit for teaching service abroad with support for research on modern teaching approaches.⁷⁸

Other curriculum initiatives were linked to the department's ambition to achieve a wider restructuring of post-primary education. The establishment of a common Intermediate Certificate examination in 1966 removed the traditional limitations imposed on vocational education by the state and the Catholic Hierarchy for the previous generation, introducing a broad subject curriculum and drawing vocational schools into a common examination system. Similarly, the Leaving Certificate programme was extended from 1969 to include a wide range of technical and practical subjects, including Accounting, Economics, Mechanics and Technical Drawing, with the first common examination for secondary and vocational pupils being held in 1971.⁷⁹ The reform of the Leaving Certificate expanded the subject options potentially available for pupils and enabled vocational schools to provide senior cycle courses at Leaving Certificate level. The revision of the Certificate examinations was a significant educational reform, establishing a common examination structure and a broad curriculum at post-primary level for the first time.

RATIONALISATION AND RESISTANCE

The comprehensive schools' pilot project marked the beginning of a broader attempt by policy-makers to establish an integrated post-primary system through collaboration between secondary and vocational schools. The department under successive ministers sought rationalisation of the fragmented system of post-primary education, with the declared aim of promoting equality of educational opportunity. Ó Buachalla argues that ministers and officials since the mid-1960s often used the concept of equality of educational opportunity as a general basis for policy without defining what it meant in operational terms.⁸⁰ But the department in the mid-1960s developed a definite, if somewhat limited, understanding of equality of educational opportunity, involving access to post-primary educational facilities for all children and availability of a comprehensive curriculum.⁸¹ Colley clarified the official view of equality of educational opportunity by announcing in October 1965 that the government aimed to provide a three-year post-primary course for all children and to extend the statutory school leaving age to 15 by 1970.⁸²

Yet the department's ability to enforce significant reform in a traditionally voluntary post-primary system was more limited, and traditional institutional stakeholders were more effective in resisting official initiatives. Colley issued a public appeal for collaboration between secondary

school authorities and the VECs in January 1966, with the aim of creating an integrated or ‘comprehensive’ post-primary system combining the vocational and academic streams. Comprehensive schools alone could not deliver the reshaping of post-primary education. The Development Branch undertook surveys of existing educational facilities in every county, issuing county reports that were considered at local meetings of school authorities and teacher union representatives throughout the country in 1966–1967.⁸³ But the local meetings proved unproductive, not least because the departmental initiative was received with widespread suspicion, especially on the part of the Catholic managerial bodies and the Association of Secondary Teachers in Ireland (ASTI), representing lay secondary teachers. O’Connor described the first meeting he convened as a complete failure: ‘Neither of the two sectors of the post-primary system wanted anything from the other sector and could not spare any part of its services for the other side’.⁸⁴ The Catholic managerial bodies feared that the Development Branch was seeking to undermine the traditional autonomy of the secondary schools and adopted a ‘go-slow policy’ towards collaboration’.⁸⁵ The ASTI was openly opposed to rationalisation, demanding in 1967 that ‘no existing secondary teacher be obliged to teach in other than a secondary school’.⁸⁶ Official attempts at rationalisation made minimal progress in the face of the hostility of powerful stakeholders and were soon sidelined by the initiative for free second-level education.

FREE POST-PRIMARY EDUCATION

The official commitment to equality of educational opportunity did not necessarily imply the early introduction of free second-level education. Both Hillery and Colley sought to encourage greater participation in post-primary schools by low-income social groups through incremental initiatives and rational educational planning. Departmental officials envisaged free tuition at junior cycle level but only in tandem with the extension of the school leaving age in 1970.⁸⁷ But Donogh O’Malley, who succeeded Colley in July 1966, had little interest in the slow process of rationalisation and was determined to introduce free second-level education. O’Connor recalled subsequently that: ‘Now he was not prepared to wait....He did not give a damn whether schools were coalescing or working together or not. He was going to give free education’.⁸⁸

O’Malley made the most sensational policy announcement of his term—and perhaps of the decade—to a weekend seminar of the National

Union of Journalists in Dún Laoghaire on September 10, 1966.⁸⁹ The minister made a sweeping commitment to provide ‘full educational opportunity’ for all children from primary to university level, announcing his intention to introduce a scheme for free post-primary education at least up to Intermediate Certificate level by September 1967.⁹⁰ O’Malley’s dramatic initiative was made without any consultation with the government as a whole and deliberately sidelined the Department of Finance.⁹¹ TK Whitaker responded furiously to the announcement, complaining directly to Lemass on September 12 about O’Malley’s disregard for official procedures: ‘It is astonishing that a major change in educational policy should be announced by the Minister for Education at a weekend seminar of the National Union of Journalists’.⁹² The secretary also commented pointedly that O’Malley should have had all the more reason for caution since he had recently left the Department of Health ‘gravely insolvent’.⁹³ Yet although difficult negotiations still lay ahead with the Department of Finance, O’Malley’s pre-emptive strike effectively compelled the government to accept the early introduction of free post-primary education. While the Department of Finance sought unsuccessfully to modify the key proposals or at least delay the introduction of the initiative, the Cabinet, under the leadership of a newly elected Taoiseach, Jack Lynch, endorsed most key elements of O’Malley’s unauthorised initiative in November 1966. The plans approved by the Cabinet incorporated a scheme for free tuition, a means tested allowance for free books and a nation-wide free transport scheme.

O’Malley did not consult in advance with the churches or managerial bodies, who were given only a general indication of his intentions by MacGearailt and O’Connor in the department’s offices on the same day as the ministerial announcement.⁹⁴ But the minister dealt adroitly with the complex process of negotiation required to secure the collaboration of the influential private stakeholders in the system with his initiative. He made sufficient concessions to secure the collaboration of influential constituencies, including the Protestant churches and Teaching Brothers’ Association (TBA), while maintaining and even extending his original scheme. The Secondary Education Committee (SEC), representing the educational interests of the Protestant denominations in the Republic, secured a separate scheme of assistance for Protestant students as an integral part of the initiative for free second-level education, which endured into the twenty-first century. O’Malley deftly outmanoeuvred the major Catholic managerial bodies, which were sceptical of his scheme, sidelining

the managers by negotiating directly with the bishops. Although several bishops, including Dr. John Charles McQuaid, the influential archbishop of Dublin, privately criticised elements of O'Malley's initiative, they were determined to avoid a public clash between the state and the Catholic Church over free education and ultimately acted to forestall this dismal prospect by instructing the managerial representatives to accept the free education scheme.⁹⁵ A total of 485 out of 551 secondary schools for day pupils opted to enter the scheme in September 1967: only 26 Catholic day schools did not participate and 92% of all day pupils in secondary schools were covered by the scheme in 1967–1968.⁹⁶ The minister and leading officials such as Ó Raifeartaigh and MacGearailt successfully cajoled and pressured the previously dominant clerical and religious elites to achieve far-reaching policy change.

The introduction of free second-level education delivered a dramatic upsurge in the level of participation in post-primary education, which far exceeded the expectations of the department or even O'Malley himself. The total pupil enrolment in secondary schools surged from 103,588 in September 1966 to 118,807 in September 1967, marking an extraordinary increase of over 15,000 in a single year—more than the double the estimate made by the department.⁹⁷ The vocational system experienced a less dramatic but still considerable increase of about 5000 in the number of day pupils undertaking full-time continuation courses in the same period. The secondary system had enjoyed an annual increase of approximately 5000 pupils immediately before the introduction of the new scheme.⁹⁸ But the initiative roughly trebled the annual intake of pupils to the secondary schools, and this accelerated rate of expansion was sustained for the remainder of the decade. The secondary school population expanded by no less than 39% between September 1966 and September 1969.⁹⁹

The limitations of the initiative should not be overlooked: it did relatively little to encourage low-income families to keep their children in full-time education beyond the school leaving age and tended to reinforce the existing pattern of second-level education, with its traditional imbalance favouring secondary schools over the vocational sector. But the reform initiated by O'Malley offered a viable means of expanding access to second-level education, which took account of the realities of the Irish educational system. *Investment* helped to pave the way for the initiative by illuminating the severe social and geographical inequalities in participation at post-primary level. But free second-level education would not have occurred in such a rapid and ambitious fashion but for O'Malley.

Although the senior officials were preparing plans for the phased introduction of free post-primary education by 1970, O'Malley exerted a decisive influence on the scope and timing of the initiative, so that the reform proved more far-reaching than the department or indeed the government had initially envisaged.

O'Malley's dramatic initiative was an important landmark in the rapid expansion of second-level education, which identified him more firmly with the reform and expansion of the educational system than any other public figure. O'Malley's flamboyant political style tended to overshadow the real achievements of his predecessors, especially Hillery,¹⁰⁰ as well as obscuring the underlying continuity between his policy approach and the reform initiatives of his immediate predecessors. Yet the transformation of the educational system was not simply the product of any single governmental initiative, even one as far-reaching as free post-primary education: it was an evolving process that began in the late 1950s and continued throughout the following two decades.

COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

The failure of the process of voluntary rationalisation during the 1960s led the officials to consider more formal arrangements for the integration of secondary and vocational education, which came to fruition with the initiative for community schools in 1970. William Hyland proposed the idea of a 'community or comprehensive school' providing both practical and academic education, which could replace a number of existing vocational or secondary schools, during the drafting process for *Investment*: it did not feature in the report itself, not least because the departmental representative on the team, Pádraig Ó Nualláin, was unimpressed with the idea, commenting 'Surely the plain people of Ireland are sufficiently confused as it is, without introducing more undefined terms?'¹⁰¹ Yet this concept was taken up by the Development Branch, with Hyland as its statistician, in the late 1960s as a means of achieving a comprehensive post-primary system. Séan O'Connor, in a highly controversial contribution to *Studies* in 1968, called for the establishment of co-educational community schools and a greater role in management for lay secondary teachers.¹⁰² The concept of the community school shared important features of the comprehensive system in Britain and the USA. But the officials of the Development Branch were concerned to adapt the comprehensive model to meet the demands of the Irish educational system, through the creation

of a new institutional arrangement involving joint management of schools by the secondary school authorities and the VECs. A working document on community schools issued by the department to the Catholic bishops in October 1970, envisaged the amalgamation of secondary and vocational schools and boards of management with a majority of representatives drawn from Catholic secondary schools. The community school was designed to deliver comprehensive education within the framework of an institutional model acceptable to established educational interests, particularly the Catholic bishops.¹⁰³

The proposed management structures for the new schools provoked sharp controversy, with the greater representation offered to Catholic religious orders arousing opposition from the VECs and the Protestant churches: complex and frequently acrimonious negotiations between the state and various educational interests about the management structures dragged on throughout the 1970s. The final Deed of Trust in 1981 represented a compromise, between the department, the different managerial authorities and the teaching unions, providing for boards of management that included three nominees of the religious authorities, three VEC nominees, two elected representatives of the parents and two teachers selected by the permanent teaching staff of each school: the principal of the school was also a non-voting member of the board.¹⁰⁴

The department moved to create facts on the ground in areas where new educational facilities were required, despite the unresolved issues concerning the management of the schools. Indeed 12 community schools were established before any formal deed of trust was published.¹⁰⁵ The department's latest initiative proved far more successful and influential than its previous attempts to reshape the post-primary sector. The rapid development of community schools testified to the emergence of a workable model for the expansion of second-level education and the implementation of a comprehensive curriculum.

HIGHER EDUCATION

Higher education (HE) in Ireland in the 1950s largely meant university education, with specialised provision for teacher training at non-degree level and relatively small-scale outlets for technical education, mainly restricted to the college of technology in Dublin. The four established universities, Trinity College, Dublin (TCD) and the three constituent colleges of the National University of Ireland (NUI), were largely left to their

own devices by successive Irish governments during the first generation of the independent Irish state.¹⁰⁶ Yet autonomy came at a high price: all four university colleges were severely under-resourced, with net state expenditure on HE in 1958–1959 amounting only to 0.62% of overall appropriations.¹⁰⁷ Trinity College occupied, at best, a semi-detached position in an Irish society heavily influenced by ‘integralist’ Catholicism, faced with the unremitting hostility of the Catholic Church, which re-affirmed an ecclesiastical ban on the attendance of Catholics at TCD as late as 1956.

The most ambitious intervention made by the state in higher education in the 1960s involved the diversification of higher education to establish a significant higher technical sector for the first time. This advance was due in no small measure to O’Malley’s initiative in establishing the Steering Committee on Technical Education. The report of the Steering Committee presented a compelling rationale for the rapid development of the RTCs, offering a detailed educational brief for the new colleges.¹⁰⁸ O’Malley lobbied the Cabinet successfully to implement key recommendations of the Steering Committee, although his approach was not simply dictated by the report and in some respects—notably his tenacious lobbying for a regional college in Donegal—went beyond the ambitious blueprint presented by the committee.¹⁰⁹ The policy decisions by the government in 1967–1968, in response to the recommendations of the Steering Committee, guaranteed the establishment of a network of technical colleges extending to most regions of the country. The first five colleges, in Athlone, Carlow, Dundalk, Sligo and Waterford, opened their doors to students for the first time in 1970, while a further three colleges in Galway, Letterkenny and Cork were in operation by 1974 and a fourth in Tralee by 1977.¹¹⁰ The development of the National Institute of Higher Education (NIHE) in Limerick in 1972 was another significant step in the diversification of the HE system. While the new NIHE was not a university in the traditional sense, it was designed to incorporate various features of university education, offering both non-degree qualifications in technical education and more traditional degree courses in Arts and Science. The establishment of the NIHE in Limerick, followed by a similar institute in Ballymun by 1980, reflected the rapid upgrading of higher technical education in the Republic, which emerged as a central strand of the state’s educational policy from the late 1960s.¹¹¹

The upgrading of higher technical education marked a decisive break with the tentative and restrictive approach of the previous generation, which had gravely limited the potential of the vocational sector. Higher

technical education emerged as a distinctive and coherent strand within the third-level sector, offering an alternative route to higher or professional qualifications alongside the more traditional disciplines pursued by the universities. The establishment of higher technical education on a national scale was one of the most significant educational advances achieved by the Irish state.

The government, largely at O'Malley's instigation, also attempted an equally ambitious but much less successful project of university re-organisation. The minister was determined 'to rationalise the university position in Dublin' by combining Trinity College and UCD in a single University of Dublin.¹¹² O'Malley's policy statement on April 18, 1967 identified the merger of Trinity College and UCD as the government's most urgent priority in the development of higher education. O'Malley's initiative sidelined the report of the Commission on Higher Education, which favoured two separate universities in Dublin; the Commission, originally set up by Hillery in 1960, exerted very limited influence on education policy, not least because it took over seven years to produce its report.¹¹³ O'Malley's initiative sought to solve several problems at once—overcome 'avoidable duplication' by two competing universities in Dublin; circumvent the ecclesiastical 'ban' and curb the autonomy of Trinity College, not least due to official dissatisfaction with the high number of British students enrolled in Trinity over the previous decade.¹¹⁴ The policy was flawed from the outset, partly due to the lack of detailed preparation for merger within the department and the official failure to develop any plausible educational rationale for the initiative. O'Malley also underestimated the extent of resistance to any significant rationalisation of faculties among professional elites in both institutions.¹¹⁵ The initiative was undermined, too, by a rapidly changing societal and cultural context, underlined by the decision of the Catholic hierarchy in June 1970 to withdraw their long-standing regulation restricting the entry of Catholics to TCD¹¹⁶: this *volte-face* rendered redundant the key political rationale for merger, promoted by successive ministers as a solution to traditional political and religious divisions. Perhaps more significantly, the authorities of Trinity College and the NUI unexpectedly came together to propose an agreed alternative to the merger in April 1970: the NUI/TCD agreement envisaged two independent universities in Dublin, which would collaborate closely together and rationalise their academic activity in a number of disciplines, including science, engineering and health sciences.¹¹⁷ This agreement was a strategic defence of institutional power by previously

antagonistic elements of a professional elite who found common ground to forestall a radical reshaping of established disciplines and institutional structures. The government ultimately abandoned not only the merger, but also any attempt to undertake a wider reorganisation of the university sector—comprehensive universities legislation would be postponed until the 1990s.

Yet while O'Malley's initiative for merger proved abortive, the initiative foreshadowed a long-term expansion of the role and power of the state in HE, which was exemplified by the foundation of the Higher Education Authority in 1968, with a wide advisory remit for higher education and significant executive powers in allocating funding to the universities. The HEA, which was established on a statutory basis in 1971, provided a new institutional framework for the regulation of the HE sector, creating a 'buffer' agency between the universities and the Department of Education.¹¹⁸ A striking outcome of the government's policies for expansion and diversification was the emergence of a binary model governing third-level education, characterised by differentiation of mission between universities and the new technical institutions and much tighter official control over the management of the RTCs. While the government delegated important executive functions to the HEA regarding the universities and NIHEs, the RTCs, technological colleges in Dublin and the colleges of education remained outside the remit of the authority. The RTCs were administered under the auspices of the VECs, but effectively controlled by the Department of Education, which funded the new institutions by a dedicated grant channelled through the VECs.¹¹⁹ The department was unwilling to surrender its ability to exert influence directly over higher technical education or to concede to the new institutions the autonomy traditionally enjoyed by the universities. This decision had lasting implications for the development of the higher technical sector, which lacked the support of an influential 'buffer' agency and remained subject to direct control by the Department of Education for the rest of the twentieth century.

The HEA enjoyed considerable influence on government policy in the first decade of its existence. The authority's report on university reorganisation in 1971, which accepted the continuation of two universities in Dublin within a collaborative framework, sounded the death-knell for the university merger.¹²⁰ The authority also produced a considerable variety of reports on new structures and institutions in a rapidly changing higher education landscape. The HEA played a significant role in the

foundation of the NIHEs, recommending in its first report to government in 1969 the creation of a new type of third-level institution, which combined a strong technological orientation with the prestige of more traditional Arts courses.¹²¹ The authority's report on teacher education in 1970 recommended that professional training for primary teachers should be extended to a three-year course leading to the award of an undergraduate degree validated by the newly created National Council for Educational Awards (NCEA).¹²² Successive ministers accepted the HEA recommendation for a three-year programme but favoured the award of a university degree to primary teachers. The new Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) degree programme, which was introduced for the first time in 1974–1975, was offered by the colleges of education in association with the universities. This model of primary teacher education proved enduring and was maintained with some modifications into the twenty-first century.

The predominant features of the Irish higher education system from the 1950s to the 1980s were a rapid expansion of student enrolments and far-reaching diversification at system, institutional and subject levels, driven by a high level of state intervention. The level of first-time entrants to third-level courses increased from only 10% of the relevant age cohort (17–18 year old school leavers) in 1965 to 22% in 1980–1981 and 28% by the mid-1980s.¹²³ The diversification of the HE sector also brought a significant change in the institutional balance between universities and higher technical institutions. The higher technical sector experienced a particularly dramatic expansion: this sector had accounted for only 5% of student enrolments in 1965, increasing rapidly to 26% in 1980 and 38% by 1992.¹²⁴

The distribution of student enrolments in non-university institutions showed a marked divergence from the traditional pattern in universities, reflecting the rapid expansion of more vocationally oriented disciplines in the higher technical colleges. The most marked feature was the relatively high participation in business courses, which accounted for 35% of total enrolments by 1985–1986; engineering and architecture and to a lesser extent science were the other major disciplinary areas in the non-university sector.¹²⁵ Other significant changes in the composition of the student body reflected the democratising influence of 'mass' education, even where they were not the explicit focus of state policies. Female participation, amounting to barely a third of university enrolments in 1965–1966, increased to 43% by 1980–1981 and 52% by 1992–1993, although female students continued to be under-represented in some disciplines, particularly

engineering.¹²⁶ Yet expansion in student enrolments did not translate into greater equality in participation. The transition to third-level education continued to be marked by sharp socio-economic inequalities. The five 'lower' socio-economic groups were significantly under-represented in higher education compared to their numbers within the population as a whole in the early 1980s.¹²⁷ Despite a much vaunted political commitment to equality of educational opportunity, government policies in HE were focused primarily on providing a wider range of vocationally oriented courses and directing social demand into a newly diversified system rather than on reducing socio-economic inequalities.

CONCLUSION

The educational policy of the Irish state was transformed between the late 1950s and the mid-1970s. The origins of educational reform reflected political and cultural transitions in Irish society, the emergence of human capital theory as a dominant strand of international discourse on education and a belated response from domestic elites to long-term failures in Irish educational and economic policy. A combination of pragmatic, egalitarian and economic motivations coalesced to create a powerful momentum for expansionist policies, which did not follow any overarching plan but were informed by a common rationale asserting a central role for education in national economic salvation. It was by no means accurate to ascribe crudely economic motivations to policy-makers in this period, who frequently promoted egalitarian policies, which both responded to rising public expectations and intensified social demand for higher levels of education. Yet the repositioning of education as a vital force in national economic salvation offered the predominant rationale for radical policy change. The *Investment* study was so influential precisely because theories of human capital formation dominant in international circles dovetailed with the changing political and economic priorities of national policy-makers.

The implications of policy change included a far-reaching expansion of participation at post-primary and later higher level; significant curriculum reform influenced by economic and educational objectives; a radical restructuring of the traditional pattern of primary education; the introduction of new types of school at second level and the re-imagining of traditionally neglected strands of the educational sector, notably higher technical education. The activist, reforming agenda adopted by the state

marked a fundamental break with the institutional inertia of the previous generation, underlining a gradual eclipse of traditional doctrines linked to cultural and religious objectives in favour of the primacy of national economic development. While the denominational basis of the system was not challenged by policy-makers in this period, the reforms brought profound changes in the balance of power between the state and the churches in education. The state's rationale, mission and authority to direct educational policy had changed beyond all recognition by the mid-1970s, and this transformation was central to the creation of the modern educational system in the Irish state.

Acknowledgements I wish to acknowledge the assistance of Prof. Áine Hyland in sourcing documentation for this paper and the comments of Dr. Ciara Breathnach on earlier drafts of the paper. I also wish to acknowledge the support of the Cultures Academic Values and Education Research Centre in Trinity College, Dublin.

INTERVIEWS

Prof. Martin O'Donoghue, January 10, 2005

Dr. Patrick Hillery, February 25, 2002

Mr. Tony Ó Dálaigh, May 3, 2002

Mr. James Dukes, April 28, 2003

NOTES

1. J. Walsh, *The Politics of Expansion: the transformation of educational policy in the Republic of Ireland* (Manchester, 2009), 311–327.
2. A comprehensive overview of educational developments between the 1950s and 1980s is given in J. Walsh, *The Politics of Expansion: the transformation of educational policy in the Republic of Ireland* (Manchester, 2009) and J. Coolahan, *Irish education: its history and structure* (Dublin: IPA, 1981); for the development of special education, see M. Shevlin's chapter in this work.
3. *Dáil Debates*, vol.159, col.1494, July 19, 1956.
4. Séamus Ó Buachalla, *Education Policy in Twentieth Century Ireland* (Dublin, 1988), 274.
5. Ó Buachalla, *Education Policy*, 212–13; Lindsey Earner Byrne, 'Reinforcing the family: The role of gender, morality and sexuality in Irish welfare policy, 1922–44' *History of Family: International Quarterly*, 13 no.4 (2008), 360–369.

6. J. H. Whyte, *Church and State in modern Ireland 1923–70* (Dublin: 1971), 158–61.
7. Áine Hyland and Ken Milne, *Irish Educational Documents 2* (CICE, 1992), 219–222.
8. *Report of the Council of Education (1) The Function of the Primary School (2) The Curriculum to be Pursued in the Primary School* (Dublin: 1954), 290.
9. *Report of the Council of Education (2), The Curriculum of the Secondary School* (Dublin: 1962), 256.
10. *Ibid.*, 252.
11. John Walsh, ‘Ministers, bishops and the changing balance of power in Irish education 1950–70’ in *Irish Historical Studies*, 38 no.149 (2012), 108–127.
12. J.J. O’Meara, *Reform in Education* (Dublin: Mount Salus Press, 1958), 6.
13. Eileen Randles, *Post-Primary Education in Ireland 1957–70* (Dublin: 1975), 322–323.
14. John Coolahan, *Irish education: its history and structure* (Dublin: IPA, 1981), 131–140.
15. Denis O’Sullivan, *Cultural Politics and Irish Education since the 1950s* (Dublin: 2005), 104.
16. *Ibid.*, 143.
17. P. Clancy, ‘The Evolution of Policy in Third-Level Education’ in Mulcahy, D.G and O’Sullivan, D. *Irish Educational Policy: Process and Substance* (Dublin: IPA, 1989), 99–150.
18. *Dáil Debates*, vol. 177, col. 470, 28 October 1959; Ó Buachalla, *Education Policy*, 73.
19. J. Walsh, *Politics of Expansion*, 323.
20. J. Horgan, *Seán Lemass: Enigmatic Patriot* (Dublin, 1997), 293.
21. J. Walsh, ‘A quiet revolution—International influence, domestic elites and the transformation of higher technical education in Ireland 1959–72’, *Irish Educational Studies* 30, no.3 (2011), 367.
22. Governing Committee for Scientific and Technical Personnel, *STP/GC (61) I, Outline Programme For Scientific And Technical Personnel 1961–62* (NAI D/FIN 2001/3/546, D500/2/62), January 30, 1961, 3–4; *OECD Press Statement*, October 5, 1961.
23. *Ibid.*, 4.
24. Andrew Loxley et al, ‘Investment and the tests of time’, *Irish Educational Studies*, 33, no.2 (2014), 173–191.
25. E. J. McGrath, ‘Sputnik and American Education’, *Teachers’ College Record* 59 no. 7 (1958), 379–395.
26. S. O’ Connor, *A Troubled Sky: Reflection on the Irish Educational Scene* (Dublin, 1986), 2.

27. Department of Education, *Memorandum to the Government* (NAI D/T 6231C), 28 April 1958, 1–3.
28. Department of Education, Circular 16/64, May 1964.
29. J. Walsh, *Politics of Expansion*, 49–50.
30. *Dáil Debates*, vol.191, col.2342, August 1, 1961.
31. Statement by Dr. P.J. Hillery T.D., Minister for Education, in relation to Post-Primary Education, May 20, 1963 (N.A.I., D/T 17405 C/63), 6–8.
32. *Ibid.*
33. Minutes, General Meeting of the Hierarchy, June 25, 1963, 3 (DDA., McQuaid Papers, AB8/B/XV/b/05).
34. Committee of Public Accounts, *Aropriation Accounts 1965–66*, 117–118.
35. J. Coolahan, *Irish Education*, 139.
36. *Ibid.*, 11–13.
37. Department of Education, *Tuarascáil Shealadach*, unpublished report, 1962; Imelda Bonel-Elliott, ‘The role of the Duggan Report (1962) in the reform of the Irish education system’, *Administration* 44, no. 3 (1996), 42–60. The Committee was headed by Dr. Maurice Duggan, a senior inspector, but consisted mainly of middle ranking inspectors, including O’Callaghan and Tomás Ó Floinn, who had their first significant opportunity to influence policy through this internal departmental forum; it is likely that a key purpose of the Committee was to draw middle-level officials and inspectors into the policy-making process and shake up a traditionally conservative department.
38. OECD, *Training of Technicians in Ireland*, *OECD Reviews of National Policies for Science and Education* (Paris: OECD, 1964), 88–89.
39. J. Walsh, ‘Have the Snakes Come Back? The Family and the defence of traditional Catholic educational structures in Ireland’, *History of Family: International Quarterly* 13, no.4 (2008), 416–425.
40. J. F. McInerney, Note of meeting (NAI D/Finance 2001/3/546, D500/2/62), October 31, 1961, 1; S. Ó Buachalla, ‘Investment in Education: Context, Content and Impact’, *Administration* 44, no.3 (1996), 10–20.
41. S. O’Connor, *A Troubled Sky*, 63.
42. *Ibid.*
43. *Economic Development* (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1958), 112–113.
44. Whitaker to N. S Ó Nualláin, 20 November 1961; Whitaker to Ó Raifeartaigh, December 15, 1961 (NAI D/Finance 2001/3/775, D500/8/63).
45. *The Second Programme for Economic Expansion, Part I, laid by the Government before each House of the Oireachtas, August 1963* (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1963), 17.

46. Lynch, who was then professor of economics at UCD, was a former adviser to Taoiseach John A. Costello and enjoyed strong connections with both the government and Fine Gael.
47. A. Hyland, 'The Investment in Education report 1965—recollections and reminiscences', *Irish Educational Studies* 33, no.2 (2014), 123–139.
48. *Investment in Education, Part I, Report of the Survey Team nominated by the Minister for Education in October 1962* (Dublin, 1965), 387.
49. D. O'Sullivan, *Cultural Politics*, 140.
50. Interview with Professor Martin O'Donoghue, January 10, 2005.
51. *Investment in Education, Part I*, 201.
52. *Ibid.*, 391.
53. *Ibid.*, 141.
54. *Ibid.*, 160–161.
55. NIEC, *Comments on Investment in Education* (Dublin, 1966), 12.
56. *Investment in Education, Part 1*, 12.
57. *Ibid.*, 172.
58. *Ibid.*, 277.
59. *Ibid.*, 392.
60. *Ibid.*, 228–289.
61. *Ibid.*, 262–263.
62. *Ibid.*, 233.
63. *Ibid.*, 264.
64. *Dáil Debates*, vol.217, col.1960-68, July 21, 1965.
65. *Irish Press*, 'Mr. Colley's Lecture', February 7, 1966.
66. *Irish Press*, 'School closures unconstitutional, says Dr. Browne', February 7, 1966.
67. J. Walsh, 'Ministers, bishops and the changing balance of power in Irish education 1950–70' *Irish Historical Studies* 38, no.149 (2012), 108–127.
68. *Irish Independent*, 'Clash at Galway', February 7, 1966.
69. T. Ó Floinn, *Recent Developments in Education in Ireland*, June 1972 (N.A.I., DFA 2003/17/383); J. Coolahan, 'Educational Policy for National Schools 1960-85', in *Irish Educational Policy*, (Eds.), D. G. Mulcahy and D. O'Sullivan (Dublin, 1989), 42.
70. Report of Central Executive Committee 1971–72 (INTO, 1972), 36; J. Coolahan, 'National Schools 1960–85', in *Irish Educational Policy*, (Eds.), D. G. Mulcahy and D. O'Sullivan, 42.
71. J. Coolahan, 'National Schools 1960–1985', in *Irish Educational Policy*, D. G. Mulcahy and D. O'Sullivan, 49; *Children and their Primary Schools: A report of the Central Advisory Council for Education (England) 1* (London, 1966), 189–202.
72. Tomás Ó Floinn, *Recent Developments in Education*, June 1972 (NAI DFA 2003/17/383), 17.

73. De Buitléar, 'Curaclam Nua le hAghaidh na Bunscoile', *Oideas* 3 (Autumn 1969), 4–12.
74. J. Coolahan, 'National Schools 1960–1985', in *Irish Educational Policy*, (Eds.), D. G. Mulcahy and D. O'Sullivan, 50.
75. *Ibid.*, 52–53.
76. Department of Education, W26/30, M80/1, *Progress Report for the Quarter ended on 30 June 1961*, July 21, 1961; Ó Buachalla, *Education Policy*, 281.
77. Department of Education, M.E.1, *Scheme in aid of the Employment of Graduate Science Teachers*, July 1963.
78. *Dáil Debates*, vol.195, col.1383, May 23, 1962.
79. Tomás Ó Floinn, *Recent Developments in Education*, June 1972 (NAI DFA 2003/17/383), 13.
80. S. Ó Buachalla, *Education Policy*, 358.
81. S. O'Connor, 'Post-Primary Education: Now and in the Future', *Studies*, vol.57, no.3 (1968): 233–249.
82. *Clonmel Nationalist*, 'Intermediate Certificate for Vocational Pupils, Minister's Clonmel Announcement', October 9, 1965.
83. *Dáil Debates*, vol.226, col.104, December 6, 1966.
84. S. O'Connor, *A Troubled Sky*, 159.
85. Br. Walsh and Br. O'Donovan to Colley, February 20, 1966 (Irish Christian Brothers' Archive, St. Mary's Province).
86. ASTI, Minutes of Central Executive Committee, January 4, 1967, 2.
87. *Ibid.*, 141.
88. D. G. Mulcahy and D. O'Sullivan, 'Extract from an interview of Séan O'Connor: 8 September 1986', *Irish Educational Studies* 33, no.2 (2014), 141–153.
89. The Minister was a guest speaker at a seminar of the NUJ held in Dún Laoghaire (the Co. Dublin suburb previously known as Kingstown).
90. *Irish Times*, 'State Plans Free Education For All Children', September 12, 1966.
91. Lemass to O'Malley, September 12, 1966 (N.A.I., D/T 96/6/356, S.12891F); Interview with Tony Ó Dálaigh, Dublin, 3 May 2002.
92. Whitaker to Lemass, September 12, 1966 (NAI D/T 96/6/356, S.12891F).
93. *Ibid.*
94. S. O'Connor, *A Troubled Sky*, 144.
95. J. Walsh, 'Ministers, bishops and the changing balance of power in Irish education 1950–70' in *Irish Historical Studies*, 38 no.149 (2012), 108–27.
96. E. Randles, *Post-Primary Education*, 276; *Committee of Public Accounts, Appropriation Accounts 1967–1968* (Dublin: 1969), 118.

97. *Tuarascáil, Tablaí Staitistic, An Roinn Oideachais 1966–1967* (Dublin: 1968), 36, *Tuarascáil, Tablaí Staitistic, An Roinn Oideachais 1967–1968* (Dublin: 1969), 3.
98. *Tuarascáil, Tablaí Staitistic, An Roinn Oideachais 1965–1966* (Dublin: 1967), 3, *Tuarascáil, An Roinn Oideachais 1966–1967*, 36.
99. Tomás Ó Floinn, *Recent Developments in Education*, June 1972 (NAI DFA 2003/17/383); *Tuarascáil, Tablaí Staitistic, An Roinn Oideachais 1968/69–1971/72* (Dublin: 1974), 26.
100. J. Horgan, *Seán Lemass*, 293.
101. Aine Hyland, ‘The Investment in Education report 1965—recollections and reminiscences’, *Irish Educational Studies* 33, no.2 (2014), 123–139.
102. S. O’Connor, ‘Post-Primary Education now and in the future’, *Studies* 57, no.3 (1968), 233–249.
103. J. Walsh, *Politics of Expansion*, 268–274.
104. Louis O’Flaherty, *Management and Control in Irish Education: the post-primary experience* (Dublin: 1992), 74.
105. D. Barry, ‘The Involvement and Impact of a Professional Interest Group’, in *Irish Educational Policy: Process and Substance*, (Eds.), D.G. Mulcahy and D. O’Sullivan (Dublin: 1989), 146.
106. The National University of Ireland was created by the Irish Universities Act, 1908, consisting of University College Dublin (UCD), University College Cork (UCC) and University College Galway (UCG); Maynooth College was subsequently included as a recognised college of the NUI. UCD was a newly constituted university college in Dublin that inherited the traditions, culture and many of the staff of the Jesuit college of the same name on St. Stephen’s Green (1883–1909). The other two constituent colleges were originally founded as Queen’s Colleges in 1849 but were condemned by the Catholic bishops at the Synod of Thurles in 1850 as ‘a system of education fraught with grievous and intrinsic dangers’ due to their non-denominational character. The NUI was designed to offer a federal university that met Catholic aspirations for higher education within a framework acceptable to the Catholic bishops.
107. Committee of Public Accounts, *Appropriation Accounts 1958–1959* (Dublin: Stationery Office 1959), 88.
108. Steering Committee on Technical Education. *Report to the Minister for Education on Regional Technical Colleges* (Dublin, 1969), 36–39.
109. J. Walsh, ‘A quiet revolution—International influence, domestic elites and the transformation of higher technical education in Ireland 1959–72’, *Irish Educational Studies*, 30, no.3 (2011), 379.
110. HEA, *Progress Report 1974* (HEA, 1974), 57; Tomás Ó Floinn, *Recent Developments* (NAI, DFA 2003/17/383), June 1972, 14.

111. J. Walsh, 'The Transformation of Higher Education in Ireland, 1945–1980' in *Higher Education in Ireland: Practices, Policies and Possibilities* (Ed.), Loxley, Seery and Walsh (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 5–32.
112. Memorandum by the Minister for Education, December 15, 1966 (NAI D/T 98/6/195).
113. *Report of the Commission on Higher Education 1960–1967* (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1967), 53; Interview with James Dukes, April 28, 2003.
114. J. Walsh, "'The problem of Trinity College Dublin': a historical perspective on rationalisation in higher education in Ireland", *Irish Educational Studies* 33, no.1 (2014), 5–19.
115. *Ibid.*; S. O'Connor, *A Troubled Sky*, 203.
116. McQuaid Papers, Minutes of the meeting of the Hierarchy, 22–24 June 1970 (DDA AB8/B/XV/b/07), 5.
117. HEA, Report to the Minister for Education on university reorganisation (Dublin, 1972), 83–87.
118. Séamus Ó Cathail, 'Ireland: The University and the State', *Cre-Information* 58 no. 2 (1982), 44–55.
119. John Coolahan, 'The National University of Ireland and the Changing Structure of Irish Higher Education, 1967–2007', in *The National University of Ireland 1908–2008 Centenary Essays* (Ed.), Coolahan et al (Dublin, 2008), 269.
120. HEA, *Report to the Minister for Education on university reorganisation* (Dublin: HEA, 1972), 59.
121. HEA, *First Report 1968–1969* (Dublin: HEA, 1969), 3–4.
122. HEA, *Progress Report 1974* (Dublin: HEA, 1974), 56.
123. HEA, *Interim Report of the Steering Committee's Technical Working Group* (Dublin: HEA, 1995), 25–27.
124. *Ibid.*, 18.
125. *Ibid.*, 30.
126. *Ibid.*, 19.
127. S. Ó Buachalla, 'Policy and Structural Developments in Irish Higher Education'. *European Journal of Education* 19 no.2 (1984), 165–171.

The Transformation of Irish Education: The Ministerial Legacy, 1919–1999

Antonia McManus

In this overview of some of the most significant changes in Irish education from 1919 to 1999, reference is made to the contributions of the relevant Ministers for Education during this period. The policy changes range from the introduction of the controversial Irish-language policy of the 1920s to the more progressive child-centred curriculum in the late 1960s; the changeover from an underfunded,¹ un-coordinated, socially divisive post-primary system to the more inclusive comprehensive model, and later the all-embracing ‘free education’ scheme; and from an elitist higher education system to one approaching levels of mass participation.

Other striking changes which transformed Irish education include the introduction of boards of management; the rise in ‘parent power’; the diminution of church authority; the potent European influence; and the modernisation of the Department of Education.

‘TOWARDS THE IRISHISING OF PRIMARY EDUCATION’

In January 1958, Rev. E.F. O’Doherty, Professor of Psychology at University College, Dublin (UCD), delivered a lecture to *Tuairim*,² in the course of which he attributed the Irish-language revival policy to ‘a series

A. McManus (✉)

Formerly, School of Education, Trinity College Dublin and of Hibernia College, Dublin, Ireland

of erroneous beliefs held in good faith by honourable men' who remained convinced, that it was 'through the schools the Irish language could be restored...without any evidence that it was even possible'.³ This was, of course, a charitable assessment and probably applied to just three Ministers for Education of the early 1920s—John J. O'Kelly, (1921–1922) Michael Hayes, (1922) and Finian Lynch, (1922) but the policy was continued for four decades.

It was John J. O'Kelly, President of the Gaelic League⁴ and Minister for Irish in the First Dáil, who commenced the Irish-language revival policy, using the schools and teachers as the prime agents of that revival. Eamon de Valera, President of the Executive Council, did not appoint a Minister for Education, but rather a Minister for Irish with responsibility for education. Education was under the spotlight at the time, as Catholic bishops campaigned vigorously against the much derided MacPherson Education Bill (1919–1920), which proposed, *inter alia*, to introduce local education committees, which the bishops believed would threaten the managerial system then pertaining in the schools.

O'Kelly's policy won widespread public support as it was promoted during the War of Independence, a period of heightened nationalist fervour. O'Kelly planned to take 'a practical step towards the Irishising of Primary Education',⁵ but it was the Irish National Teachers' Organisation, (INTO)—an organisation which strongly supported this ideal—that did so by calling the First National Programme Conference of Primary Instruction, on 6 January 1921. Its aim was 'to frame a programme, or a series of programmes in accordance with Irish ideals and conditions'.⁶

O'Kelly as Minister for Irish⁷ was occasionally present at the Conference, and the shadow Minister Frank Fahy deputised for him when he was absent. The influential advisor to the Conference was Rev. Timothy Corcoran, S.J., Professor of Education at UCD. Professor Corcoran succeeded in convincing the Conference that if infants were fully immersed in the Irish language in schools, they would become fluent Irish speakers, irrespective of the fact that 90% of them came from English-speaking homes,⁸ and that there was no empirical research conducted to support his claim. On his advice, the report of the Conference recommended that Irish should be used as a medium of instruction, and that infants should be taught through the medium of Irish—with no teaching of English.⁹ The INTO expressed grave reservations about the proposals, but nonetheless signed the Report.

The government's acceptance of these radical recommendations gave lie to the assertion by Kevin O'Higgins, Minister for Home Affairs, that he and his Dáil colleagues 'were probably the most conservative-minded revolutionaries that ever put through a successful revolution'.¹⁰ It was their intention to revive the Irish language on a budget of £10,000 per annum, 'when the British Exchequer spent in excess of £5 million on Irish education in 1920 alone'.¹¹ Most children came from English-speaking homes and most teachers lacked qualifications to teach Irish. Of the 12,000 lay teachers in national schools in 1922, only about 1100 had bilingual certificates,¹² and most inspectors lacked fluency in the language. To make matters worse, textbooks were in short supply and Irish literature was a rarity. León Ó Broin who had responsibility for *An Gúm*, the newly formed publication section of the Department, remarked that 'books in Irish, other than elementary school texts were regarded as economic monstrosities'.¹³ Furthermore, there was no standardised spelling, grammar or vocabulary for the Irish language and school attendance stood at just 69% compared to 90% in Scotland and 85% in England.¹⁴ It would appear that over-optimism was the order of the day.

John J. O'Kelly withdrew from the Dáil in January 1922, along with other anti-treaty Sinn Féin members, while the pro-treaty government maintained a Dáil cabinet, in an effort to keep open 'The door to rapprochement with the de Valera wing of the anti-treaty movement'.¹⁵ Two Ministers for Education were then appointed—Michael Hayes for the Dáil and Finian Lynch for the Provisional Government. Amid the growing excitement which accompanied the handover of power from the British to the Provisional Government in February 1922, the Minister issued *Public Notice No. 4*. He ordered that, from the following St. Patrick's Day, Irish was to be taught or used as a medium of instruction, for not less than one hour each day in all schools, where there was a teacher competent to teach it. The new programme came into operation for all national schools on April 1, 1922.

Hayes and Lynch sanctioned the closure of schools for three months in the summer of 1922 to allow teachers to attend courses in Irish. The courses cost about £76,000, but they were attended by approximately 12,000 teachers and students, despite the unsettled conditions that prevailed in the country at the time.¹⁶ An instructor on the summer courses recalled the 'extravagantly courageous decision' the Ministry took 'to teach the teachers Irish overnight', and how patriotic teachers sacrificed

their 'long summer holidays of 1922...to the forlorn hope of learning a difficult language before the schools reopened'.¹⁷

Their enthusiasm for the language policy was not shared by Eoin MacNeill, (1922–1925), the first Minister for Education in the Irish Free State, and founder member of the Gaelic League. He believed that it was a doomed policy. As far back as 1893, he wrote: 'No language has ever been kept alive by mere book-teaching'.¹⁸ But he felt honour bound to continue to implement the policy, despite believing that all attempts to do so were about as useful as attempting to put wooden legs under hens.¹⁹

John Marcus O'Sullivan (1926–1932), who succeeded MacNeill as Minister, could not speak Irish himself. However, he introduced a regulation that placed teachers under the age of 30 under inordinate pressure, firstly, to obtain a certificate to teach Irish (effective from June 30, 1932), and secondly, to obtain a certificate to teach through the medium of Irish, (effective from June 30, 1935)²⁰ at a time when inspectors' reports confirmed that the policy had failed.²¹ He did so by threatening them with the loss of their salary increments. He fulfilled his threat, but the regulation was found to be unlawful by the Supreme Court in 1940 in the case of teachers appointed before June 1930, and the government was forced to withdraw it, and to reimburse the teachers concerned.²² However, the rule continued to operate for teachers coming into the service on or after June 1, 1930.

Thomas Derrig (1932–1939; 1940–1948) served 15 years as Minister for Education in de Valera's first Fianna Fáil government. Reviving the Irish language was among its main nationalist aims, and it pursued this failed policy with even greater vigour than the Cumann na nGaedheal government. To this end, Derrig introduced his Revised Programme of Primary Instruction in 1934, which was, in effect, a desperate attempt to revive the Irish language by lowering the requirements in subjects like arithmetic, and by making English an optional subject for children in first class. Rural science was also made an optional subject, in order to allow teachers to concentrate on teaching Irish. Consequently, educational standards fell in arithmetic, and in English there was a drop in standard of approximately one year's school work.²³ Rural science ceased to be taught in 90% of schools within a few years in an overwhelmingly agricultural country.²⁴ As education standards plummeted, the government made the primary certificate examination compulsory for sixth class children, but the examination was a written one only, in Irish, English and arithmetic, even though it was government policy to revive Irish as a vernacular language.

All requests for an Irish-language inquiry were refused, so that the INTO felt obliged to conduct its own inquiry into the use of Irish as a teaching medium, for children whose home language was English. It reported in 1941 and confirmed that the language policy was: placing an undue mental strain on children; educationally regressive and unsatisfactory to parents. In fact, it was reported that some parents requested teachers to provide their children with English primers 'so that they might be given in the home, the instruction in English reading denied them in the schools'.²⁵ The official response was given by Joseph O'Neill, the Secretary of the Department of Education, who claimed that the report represented 'the views of middle-aged, somewhat tired, and not too linguistically-equipped teachers'.²⁶ De Valera supported Derrig's rejection of the 'unscientific' report, stating that 'the reports from the inspectors are very much more to be relied upon'.²⁷

In reality de Valera had been harbouring doubts about the efficacy of the language policy since the 1930s, and in 1943 he requested Dr. Johanna Pollok, a Czechoslovakian educationalist who was familiar with the methods used to revive the Czech language, to assess the situation with regard to Irish in the schools of Ireland. She produced an unpublished report, in which she concluded that 'the children get an overdose of it (Irish) in the school when they are still too young to benefit from it'.²⁸ Derrig himself revealed his true feelings about the futility of the language policy in a memo to cabinet in 1943,²⁹ yet he stubbornly refused to acknowledge the truth of the findings in the INTO report, and he continued to reject all calls for an education inquiry.

His successor Richard Mulcahy, (1948–1951; 1954–1957), who served as Minister for Education in the two Inter-Party governments,³⁰ admitted in retirement that he did not believe in the language policy, but he was caught for a way out.³¹ It was Patrick Hillery (1959–1965) who brought the curtain down on the Irish-language policy, when he introduced *Circular 11/60*, which allowed teachers the freedom to change the emphasis from teaching through the medium of Irish to teaching Irish conversation.

But the damage was already done. Doctoral research conducted by Rev. John Macnamara, in the mid-1960s confirmed the accuracy of the INTO's 1941 report. It revealed that Irish primary schools devoted 42% of the time available over the first six years of primary education, to Irish and a mere 22% to English. Consequently, Irish children were, on average, 17 months behind their English counterparts in written English and 11 months behind in problem arithmetic.³²

Jack Lynch (1957–1959) headed up a succession of reforming Ministers as he ushered in a new generation of ambitious, forward looking, Ministers for Education, men who had not played a role in Ireland's revolutionary past and who did not equate the Irish-language policy with education policy. Lynch was the first Minister for Education to recognise that he had a leading role to play in education policy making and that it was essential to rely on professional reports and advice in order to advance worthwhile reforms. He accepted the recommendations in the Report of the Council of Education, which called for: a reduction in the pupil-teacher ratio; an end to the policy of recruitment of untrained teachers and the 23% of untrained teachers in the system to be trained immediately.³³

He took steps to reduce large class sizes by rescinding the marriage ban on married women teaching,³⁴ introduced by Derrig 25 years previously. The ban was due in part to a teacher surplus, and to a general limitation in the number of women working in the public sector at the time. But it was caused mainly by the economic difficulties that faced the Government in the early 1930s.³⁵ Lifting the ban resulted in an extra 330 teachers being added to the workforce. Lynch also lowered the average number of enrolled pupils schools required in order to appoint an extra teacher. In two-teacher schools a third teacher could be appointed from July 1, 1959, as the Department had lowered the average on rolls and the average attendance required, from 100 and 85 days to 90 and 75 days respectively. He brought succour to the INTO by ending the policy of recruitment of untrained teachers and by insisting that special courses would be provided for the training of those already in the system. Unfortunately this did not put an end to the practice completely, but it brought about a marked improvement in the situation. Lynch can be credited with completing 'the largest ever school building programme in the history of the state' in 1958.³⁶

The modernisation of the education system was advanced considerably during Patrick Hillery's two terms in office, in the Seán Lemass government. Following on from Lynch's initiative, Hillery lowered the averages in schools with a staff of between five and 11 teachers, where the pupil/teacher ratio was at its worst, for the appointment of fourth up to ninth assistant teachers from 1 October 1964.³⁷ He had already decreased by ten units the averages necessary for the appointment of a second assistant teacher, with a further decrease of ten units for the average required for the appointment of third, fourth, fifth, and sixth assistant teachers from July 1960.³⁸ Hillery also made steady progress in reducing the number of untrained teachers in primary schools. On July 1 1959 the figure stood at

2907 untrained teachers, 364 of whom were awaiting entrance to a training college although by 1963 the number had fallen to 2275.³⁹

St. Patrick's Training College was expanded in September 1966 at a cost of £1,500,000,⁴⁰ and the Department put plans in place to train an additional 100 teachers annually, and the expectation was that this number would increase in the future.⁴¹ Within two years, the government was in a position to double the total annual expenditure on education. Seán Lemass prioritised educational spending and the fruits of the investment were to be seen especially in first- and second-level school expansion. Hillery was now in a position to inform the Dáil that it was their intention to increase the number of primary teachers by a further 1000 by 1970.⁴²

Hillery was the first Minister to appreciate the importance of educational research, and in the early 1960s, two inspectors from the Department, Seán de Búrca and Tomás Ó Cuilleanáin⁴³ were sent on a four-month visit to Jordanhill in Glasgow to research new teaching methods for special education. This was to have a direct effect on the mainstream primary curriculum, which was gradually becoming more child-centred in focus.⁴⁴ Further research was conducted by the Secretary of the Department, Dr. Torlach Ó Raifeartaigh, when he visited educational institutions in the USA for three months in 1960. The idea of an expanded integrated curriculum, along with project work and the use of educational teaching aids resulted from this research, and were later applied in Irish primary school classrooms.⁴⁵

The beneficial effects of linguistic research were evident in the new language laboratory in the Franciscan College, Gormanston, Co. Meath, which developed a series of Irish-language conversation lessons in conjunction with the Department of Education, for use in primary schools, as part of an audio-visual method of teaching Irish. The programme, known as Buntús Cainte (rudiments of language), involved new teaching methods and teaching aids, such as film-strips, projectors and tape-recorders. The merit of teaching oral Irish was now fully appreciated.

School buildings, too, came under the scrutiny of the Department, when a divisional inspector and an architect from the Board of Works visited England and Scotland in the summer of 1962. They studied not just school design, classroom size, furniture and play areas but also teaching methods, curriculum, the role of head teachers and standards of attainment. Subsequently, school buildings were modernised with regard to design and furnishings, and the curriculum was adapted to accommodate a more child-centred approach to teaching children.⁴⁶

Hillery vastly improved the resources available to primary schools as he provided grants for the establishment of reference libraries.⁴⁷ He also provided grants for painting and decorating schools in 1962,⁴⁸ and ensured that all schools had a proper water supply.⁴⁹ But the perennial problem of poor school maintenance continued in a number of sub-standard schools, even though joint deputations by Catholic clerical managers and INTO representatives to Ministers Mulcahy (1955), Lynch (1957–1958) and Hillery (1964) had taken place, seeking improved maintenance grants. However, it took a warning of industrial action by the INTO, followed by a three-week work stoppage by 12 teachers in five Ardfert National Schools in Co. Kerry in 1968, to concentrate managerial minds so that school maintenance became a priority nationwide.⁵⁰

George Colley's (1965–1966) policy of amalgamation of small primary schools also assisted the introduction of a child-centred curriculum. Using statistics from the recent joint OECD/Irish survey team's report, *Investment in Education*,⁵¹ Colley could prove that smaller schools were more likely to have a restricted curriculum, and even when the curriculum was not so narrow, teaching equipment was minimal.⁵² He could also demonstrate that the educational attainment of children in small one- and two-teacher schools was on average two years behind that of children in larger schools.⁵³

Donogh O'Malley's (1966–1968) 'free education' scheme proved significant as students could now proceed to second level education from age 12. Teachers were no longer constrained by having to prepare students for scholarship examinations for entry to post-primary schools.⁵⁴ Neither did they have to 'drill' students in preparation for the primary certificate examination, as O'Malley abolished it in early 1968, and replaced it by a system of record cards 'showing the progress through the primary school of each individual child'.⁵⁵ The education system was now ready for the introduction of a child-centred curriculum, and it fell to a small group of inspectors in the Department to develop it, which they did in 1969. Two years later, it was officially introduced into all primary schools by Minister for Education Pádraig Faulkner (1969–1973) who was himself a former primary school teacher.

Just Dead-End Schools for Dead-End Kids'

In 1931, John Marcus O'Sullivan complained of parental apathy in relation to education. He wondered, 'How many of them are interested in what is happening to their children at school? What interest do they take?'⁵⁶ Addressing the 1952 Fianna Fáil Ard-Fheis, the Minister for Education,

Seán Moylan (1951–1954) said, ‘I do not think there is any interest in education amongst the people in this country’,⁵⁷ but the statistics told a different story. It was not that parents were disinterested in the education of their children, it was simply a case of being unable to pay the fees required for secondary education—that is, if there was a secondary school available to them. For these reasons many 14–16 year olds completed their education in primary schools that pursued the secondary school curriculum, known as ‘secondary tops’.⁵⁸ As late as 1944, there were about 20,800 students in the age range 14–16 years in primary schools, 4000 of whom were in ‘secondary tops’.⁵⁹

In fact, there was a growing demand for secondary education, as the number of secondary schools rose from 278 in 1924–1925 to 424 in 1950–1951.⁶⁰ This demand continued, but the government deprived secondary school authorities of much needed funding, as they only received a capitation grant up until 1964, at which stage a building grant was introduced by Hillery. Even so, they succeeded in catering for a doubling of enrolments in the years 1945 and 1963, and furthermore, they ‘managed to keep fees at an exceedingly modest level and remit them entirely in many cases’.⁶¹ Remarkably, in 1963, there were ‘more students in secondary schools in Ireland, aged 16 than in Great Britain’,⁶² a country that had enjoyed free education for two decades.

Jack Lynch was correct when he commented on the haphazard manner in which students enrolled in post-primary schools. He said, ‘There might be too many children of a certain intellectual calibre in one type of school who should be in another’.⁶³ John J. O’Meara, Professor of Classical Languages in UCD, contended that students who should have been availing of the ‘first class scientific equipment in the vocational schools’ were attending the more prestigious secondary schools instead.⁶⁴ He called for immediate action to be taken to enhance the status of vocational schools, just as the INTO had done in its 1947 report, *A Plan for Education*.⁶⁵

Vocational schools catered for students aged 14 years and offered a technical education to those aged 16 and above, but they could only offer a two-year Day Vocational Group Certificate, which had little or no transfer value to further education. The drop-out rate in vocational schools was high, and some vocational teachers became demoralised at the perception of their schools as ‘just dead-end schools for dead-end kids’.⁶⁶ One dispirited vocational school teacher commented in 1957 that ‘vocational schools are being turned into educational dustbins into which are thrown the boys and girls who can’t get into secondary schools’.⁶⁷

Lynch identified the challenges post-primary education presented, but it was Hillery, who, on May 20 1963, announced policies that would cater for the one third of children who were deprived of second-level education, those he described as ‘the Modern Third Estate, whose voice, amid the babble of competing claims from the more privileged, had hitherto been scarcely heard’. These policies would in time break down the social barriers between secondary and vocational schools, and lead to greater co-ordination of the system. Hillery intended to provide comprehensive post-primary schools offering both academic and practical education. He announced that the two-year course in vocational schools would be extended to three years, and that a common Intermediate Certificate would be introduced into both types of schools.⁶⁸

His successor, George Colley, was an enthusiastic supporter of Hillery’s comprehensive schools. He believed that they would help to break down ‘the snob value of the secondary schools’.⁶⁹ He tried unsuccessfully to extend comprehensive education to all students, by appealing to vocational and secondary school authorities, ‘to cherish all the children of the nation equally’ by sharing staff and facilities with neighbouring schools.⁷⁰ However, when Colley opened the first three comprehensive schools and introduced the common Intermediate Certificate,⁷¹ he stimulated a much greater interest in education, and raised parents’ expectations about their children’s future prospects, if they could participate in post-primary education. It was left to Donogh O’Malley to satisfy these expectations.

Of the three Ministers, Hillery, Colley, and O’Malley, it was O’Malley who came closest to achieving their shared Republican ideal, to ‘cherish all the children of the nation equally’, as he, at least, provided equality of access. When he made his historic announcement in September 1966, he paid tribute to Hillery and Colley for having prepared the way, and to the Taoiseach, Seán Lemass for having guaranteed the necessary funding for educational reform. His announcement was rooted in social justice. The unfairness of an education system that deprived one third of the school going cohort the opportunity to advance to second-level education was described by him as ‘a dark stain on the national conscience’. His concern was for those children, the great majority of whom ‘through no fault of their own’ were condemned to be, as he said ‘part-educated, unskilled labour’. He was only too well aware that it was ‘always the weaker who go to the wall of unemployment and emigration’.⁷²

Thomas Derrig had two opportunities during his long tenure in office to introduce free post-primary education. As a young Minister, he had

ambitious plans to introduce Senior Schools that would offer a free practical second-level education in 21 Gaeltacht areas, and later he intended to provide Senior Schools countrywide. He even had plans for a free transport scheme, which consisted of the provision of free bicycles and waterproof clothing. This plan was treated with derision by the Department of Finance, which remarked in its reply, ‘bicycles for pupils three miles from new schools is “fantastic”....Will “disappear” frequently. Accident riding Department machine’.⁷³ The scheme was abandoned following the Catholic bishops’ meeting in October 1934, when they rejected it on the grounds that the proposals would lead to an erosion of clerical management and to an extension of state control. They were concerned, too, about the possible risk to morals ‘for boys and girls from 12 to 16 years coming long distances without any supervision’.⁷⁴

In the 1940s, there was momentum for change, as the United Kingdom had introduced free education in 1944 and Northern Ireland (NI) in 1947. There was, therefore, a reasonable expectation that the de Valera government would follow suit, and indeed de Valera placed Derrig under pressure, between 1942 and 1944, to establish how ‘the standard of education among the mass of the people’ could be raised and how ‘to provide improved educational facilities’. Ireland’s great Republican leader even suggested to Derrig, that he should study the White Papers of the UK and NI governments to see if they could be useful in this regard.⁷⁵ Derrig produced a report in June 1947, which recommended a free comprehensive type second-level education, but the report was never published, and the Fianna Fáil government was voted out of office in 1948. Thomas Derrig lost a golden opportunity to provide free education at a time when, as de Valera told the Dáil ‘for 9 out of every 10 Irish citizens, the primary school is their only centre of learning’.⁷⁶

‘IF A NATION IS TO DEPEND ON AGRICULTURE, IT MUST
PRODUCE MAINLY A POPULATION OF FARMERS’

In the 1920s, the Minister for Industry and Commerce, and UCD academic Patrick McGilligan, argued that, since Ireland was primarily an agricultural country, there was no need to advance university education, because what the country needed to produce was ‘mainly a population of farmers’.⁷⁷ He believed that university education would serve only to frustrate graduates, unless of course, they emigrated.⁷⁸ In 1933⁷⁹ and

again in 1942,⁸⁰ Joseph O'Neill sent memos to de Valera in which he castigated the fledgling vocational schools, for, *inter alia*, not directing students' attention to an agricultural life. The *Report of the Commission on Vocational Organisation*,⁸¹ likewise, condemned the reluctance of the Vocational Education Committees (VECs) to promote the full integration of agricultural education in vocational schools, as they blithely ignored the fact that this was the responsibility of the Department of Agriculture, which was 'assiduous in arguing that it alone had the right to organise agricultural education'.⁸²

There is no doubt that O'Neill had good reason to be concerned, as increasing numbers were fleeing the land, so that by 1956–1957 emigration reached its highest level, more than at any time since the Famine.⁸³ As the flight from the land accelerated, Bishop Cornelius Lucey of Cork and Ross commented that 'rural Ireland is stricken and dying. The will to marry and live on the land is almost gone'.⁸⁴ Government attention then shifted to developing vocational education. Seán Moylan and Jack Lynch both promoted vocational and technical education, with the latter providing funding for the extension of Bolton Street College of Technology and for a replacement building for Kevin Street College. Grants to VECs, which had been cut by 6% by Mulcahy, were restored by Lynch in 1958,⁸⁵ as demand for vocational education increased rapidly. The emphasis was now on equipping students with the skills necessary to meet the demands of the market place, and to revive Ireland's ailing economy.

At the time, the potential of the universities to fulfil a similar function was not recognised by some and was anathema to others. For example, the Commissioners of Higher Education who were appointed by Hillery in October 1960, remained convinced that the functions of institutions of higher education, especially universities, as centres of learning, scholarship and liberal education, should not be allowed to become overwhelmed by the claims made upon them to provide the country with the requirements of skilled manpower.⁸⁶ The Commissioners proposed a new type of third-level institution to carry out this function, called New Colleges. But educational plans overtook the Commissioners' report.

A major development occurred in higher education provision when Hillery announced the introduction of Regional Technical Colleges (RTCs) on May 20 1963. He did so in the belief that they would align technical education provision with manpower needs. In September 1969, the first five RTCs were opened in Athlone, Co. Westmeath, Arklow, Co. Wicklow, Dundalk, Co. Louth and in Sligo and Waterford.⁸⁷ Following Ireland's

accession to the European Economic Community in January 1973, Irish education benefited enormously from the European Social Fund (ESF).⁸⁸ In 1984, Gemma Hussey, (1982–1986) Ireland's first female Minister for Education, travelled to Brussels and secured £37 million from the Fund. Among the main beneficiaries were the RTCs and VEC colleges, which saw their courses expanded, their students' fees waived and, in certain circumstances, maintenance grants provided.⁸⁹

While the RTCs were set to become one of Ireland's finest success stories, it was widely believed in 1967 that further measures were necessary. A departmental committee set up by O'Malley to examine proposals set out in the *Report of the Commission on Higher Education*, recommended a technological institute of high prestige on a par with the universities, to meet the massive shortfall in skilled manpower. Their deliberations led to the establishment of two National Institutes of Higher Education, (NIHEs) one in Limerick (1972) and the other in Dublin (1976). Both institutes went on to win distinction by being raised to technological university status in 1989, as the University of Limerick and Dublin City University respectively. The City of Dublin VEC began to flex its muscles by merging its six higher education institutions in Dublin into a unified institute called the Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT) in September 1978. At the time it offered a serious challenge to the development of the NIHE in Dublin. DIT's bid for university status was rejected by the International Review Group two decades later.⁹⁰

In 1972 alone, Pádraig Faulkner awarded £490,000 to the RTCs, and 300 VEC scholarships to their third-level technical colleges, as these colleges were precluded from benefiting from Brian Lenihan's (1968–1969) higher education grants, first awarded in 1968. But the dearth of funding to the universities at the time illustrated that their potential for meeting manpower requirements was still not recognised. The government only provided £15 million of the minimum of £24 million, which the Higher Education Authority (HEA) had argued was essential to come to grips with the chronic accommodation problem that persisted.⁹¹

But all that was soon set to change, as industrial policy and educational policy were brought closer together, with the establishment of the Manpower Consultative Committee by the Department of Labour, in the late 1970s. The Committee identified occupational shortages in areas such as engineering and computing—areas generally supplied by university graduates. Universities were now called on to meet occupational shortages by the HEA, with the promise of funding from the Committee.

Between 1979 and 1983, engineering graduate cohort increased by 40% and computer science graduates increased tenfold.⁹² The universities were now mirroring the success of the RTCs in meeting market demands.

Profound changes took place in higher education in Ireland, apart from the fact that participation rates rose dramatically, as they did in other developed countries at the time. For instance, a strong binary system was introduced whereby the RTCs, the DIT and the two NIHEs represented the non-university sector. The designation of the NIHEs as universities ‘did not impair the binary approach’.⁹³ The HEA, which was set up in 1968 with specific responsibility for the higher education sector and for the university sector in particular, and the National Council for Educational Awards, which was established in 1972 with academic responsibility for the non-university sector, played pivotal roles in this expansion.⁹⁴

Ireland moved quickly from a situation where only one in ten advanced to higher education prior to 1968 to something approaching mass participation by the 1990s. Expansion was not confined to the university sector, since numbers in the non-university sector also increased, as these students benefited from the ESF. In 1965–1966 there were only 1007 full-time students in the non-university sector, but by 1993–1994 this had grown to 34,673. The growth in the university sector was greater, and it took place mainly in the 1970s and the 1990s. Full-time enrolments rose from 16,007 in the 1965–1966 academic year to 52,300 in 1993–1994.⁹⁵ There was a 50% increase in the number of students transferring to third-level education in 1994–1995, as a result current expenditure increased from about £10 million in 1965 to £430 million in 1995.⁹⁶

Niamh Bhreathnach (1993–1997) made history in 1995 by abolishing university tuition fees for undergraduates, although she did not extend the benefit to part-time students or to postgraduates. Hard-pressed parents appreciated the largesse, but university heads were far from impressed as they struggled to cope with burgeoning numbers and insufficient resources. This egalitarian gesture brought no political rewards either as Bhreathnach lost her Dáil seat in the 1997 general election.

‘OUR SYSTEM OF EDUCATION APPROACHES THE IDEAL’

A number of factors combined to alter the power structure in Irish education, among these were the direct involvement of Ministers in education policy making from the 1950s onwards; pressure from teaching unions; the influence of the Second Vatican Council; new Church alliances and a steep decline in religious vocations.

In 1947, the INTO took issue with Thomas Derrig, who claimed at the 1944 Fianna Fáil Ard Fheis ‘that our system of education approaches the ideal’, and accused him of adopting ‘an ostrich-like attitude of wilful blindness to its defects’.⁹⁷ Like MacNeill and O’Sullivan, Derrig remained convinced that the perfect partnership in education was that of Church and State working harmoniously together. Catholic Church opposition to lay involvement in education was evident from its reaction to the MacPherson Education Bill 1919–1920. Cardinal Logue of Armagh called for a national solemn novena in honour of St. Patrick ‘to avert from us the threatened calamity’.⁹⁸ Bishop Michael Browne reminded the long-serving General Secretary of the INTO, and former Labour party leader, T.J. O’Connell, while addressing the 1945 INTO Congress, that the managerial system ‘had given Ireland the most satisfactory state of Catholic school control of any country in Christendom’.⁹⁹ Subsequent Ministers for Education did not dispute his assertion.

But in the mid-1960s, the Irish Catholic hierarchy recognised that the winds of change were blowing. This occurred following the Second Vatican Council of 1962, which saw a role for lay involvement in education. The hierarchy now approved ‘of some broad principle for the formation of management, teacher-parent associations for primary schools’,¹⁰⁰ so that the path was now clear for Dick Burke (1973–1976) as Minister, to replace the 177-year-old managerial system with the more democratic boards of management structures, even if they had limited powers.

In the past the INTO was a lone voice advocating educational reform, but on this occasion its President, Seán Carew harboured genuine fears. At the 1975 INTO Congress, he cautioned that the election of parents to management committees could lead to these committees becoming ‘a stamping ground for aspiring demagogues’. A spokesman for the National Council of Parents’ Associations remarked that his comments were ‘so outdated’ that no one could possibly treat them seriously’.¹⁰¹ For four decades parents were all but excluded from the education system, and some would argue that this was deliberate ‘because it suited the interests of powerful sections of society—the middle classes, the churches, the politicians—to keep it so’.¹⁰² De Valera, who drew up Article 42 of the Constitution offered lip-service to the idea of setting up a parents’ committee in 1945, when he said, ‘I wish there was some way...in which the parents could be represented but I cannot honestly see how you can set up such a committee that will be in any big real way representative’.¹⁰³

In the 1980s, a much more enlightened and liberal approach was adopted by Gemma Hussey, as she recognised that ‘the education process’

was ‘a co-operative venture’ and that it was crucial that parents should participate in educational planning. With this in mind, preliminary meetings were arranged by the Department with the existing national body of parents to discuss the establishment of a National Parents’ Council (NPC). In 1985 Hussey provided funds to facilitate the establishment of such a Council and she designated a range of issues on which the Department would formally consult with the NPC.¹⁰⁴ An OECD report observed in 1997 that when planned reforms were introduced, ‘Ireland would have one of the most parent-participative systems in the world’.¹⁰⁵ The Education Act which gave statutory rights to the NPC and which gave similar status to any parent associations they might set up in schools,¹⁰⁶ brought parents centre-stage in Irish education.

For over two decades, a power struggle took place over the composition of boards of management, between the teaching unions, religious authorities and the Department of Education, and latterly, parents joined the fray. In 1978, John Wilson (1977–1981) as Minister was practically forced to review the operation of boards of management, as the INTO withdrew from participation on boards for over a year. Following protracted negotiations with the Catholic Primary School Managers’ Association, patron’s nominees to boards were eventually reduced. Negotiations in 1977 between the Association of Secondary Teachers, Ireland, and the Conference of Major Religious Superiors on the composition of boards of management, collapsed. It took 12 years since the proposition to introduce boards to secondary schools was first suggested in the Report on the Future Involvement of Religious in Education before agreement was finally reached in 1985.

The composition of boards of management for community schools caused a storm of protest, with Pádraig Faulkner being accused of sectarianism, when he permitted a greater weighting on boards to be given to the representatives of the Catholic Church at the expense of the VECs, in a bid to win Church approval for the new schools.¹⁰⁷ Teachers won representation on boards of management of community schools in 1979, some seven years after their introduction.

On three occasions in the final three decades of the nineteenth century, Church power in education was endangered by ministerial policy. The instinctive response of Church representatives and their respective management bodies was to unite in opposition. It happened in 1975 when Dick Burke attempted to introduce local education committees, and again in 1985 when Gemma Hussey made a similar bid. But it was Niamh Breathnach’s 1997 Education Bill that proved the last straw for

the Churches, as it diluted the power of patrons or owners of schools. It led to representatives of almost every religious faith in the country coming together on the lawn of the Church of Ireland College of Education to protest against the proposals on the management of schools.

Following this display of solidarity, a resolution was found whereby the composition of boards of management would result from an agreement arrived at by all the education partners and the Minister. Micheál Martin (1997–2000) incorporated this into the 1998 Education Act, which gave statutory recognition to patrons as owners of schools, and which required all boards ‘to uphold...the characteristic spirit of the school’ and to be ‘accountable to the patron for so upholding’.¹⁰⁸ Boards would have to ‘consult with and keep the patron informed of decisions and proposals of the board’.¹⁰⁹

Despite having to share power, and despite having fewer members, the Catholic hierarchy and religious authorities still maintained considerable influence in Irish education. Pádraig Faulkner, for instance, went to great lengths to secure Catholic Church support for the introduction of community schools,¹¹⁰ and in 1979 the VECs saw fit to invite representatives of the Catholic bishops to participate on the boards of management of their new community colleges, in order to lend status to them.¹¹¹ The religious authorities themselves found an ingenious way of ensuring that the religious ethos of their schools would be protected in the future, as they faced the prospect of steadily declining religious vocations. In the 1960s, almost half of the teachers in secondary schools were priests or members of religious orders, but by the 1990s, the proportion had fallen to 12%.¹¹² In 1999, the religious teaching orders set up trusteeships, in the form of companies, with directors consisting of a number of lay Catholics, to carry out the patron’s functions. It was to these companies that boards of management reported.¹¹³

‘TO-DAY’S ONE RIGHT WAY IS TOMORROW’S OBSOLETE POLICY’

In 1962, Hillery took what was described as ‘one of the most important policy decisions’ and ‘the most courageous ever made about Irish education’¹¹⁴ when he received government approval to allow our run-down education system to be scrutinised by a joint OECD/Irish survey team. Its landmark report, *Investment in Education*, informed education policy making, as did future OECD reports, which provided indicators of comparative educational performance across a number of European countries.

In the last decade of the century, the emphasis was clearly on economic and social objectives, and on producing a National Development Plan, to provide funding to achieve these objectives, through the education system. The National Development Plan received European funding, once it was ratified by the European Union. It should also be noted that Ministers for Education from the mid-1990s were very fortunate to benefit from a buoyant economy, which allowed them access to unprecedented levels of funding.

In the early 1980s, John Boland (1981–1982) had a vision of Ireland as the Silicon Valley of Europe, and he intended to computerise schools and equip students for the ‘technological revolution’,¹¹⁵ which was underway. Unlike Boland, Micheál Martin, as Minister in the newly named Department of Education and Science, had access to a £250 million Scientific and Technological Education Investment Fund, which enabled him to equip all schools with computers, and to set up a National Centre for Technology in Education.

In the late 1960s, Brian Lenihan declared, much to the dismay of educators, that ‘education has never been adequately geared to the requirements of the economy’.¹¹⁶ Three decades later, Micheál Martin collaborated with Mary Harney, the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade, and Employment in a Business/Education and Training Partnership, and in the Foreword to the *First Report of the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs*, he reminded educators of the important role they had to play in supplying the type of skills students and workers would need to fully participate in the knowledge economy.¹¹⁷ There were few dissenting voices.

OECD reports heavily influenced education policy. In 1997, the OECD conducted the International Adult Literacy Survey, which showed that, of a group of 12 European countries, Ireland had the lowest percentage population aged 25–64 years with upper secondary education.¹¹⁸ Another OECD report—*Education at a Glance: Policy Analysis*—studied the age profile of new entrants to all third-level institutions for 1995. It transpired that Ireland was in the lower part of a league table of 16 countries with regard to provision for mature students, that is students over 25 years of age.¹¹⁹ Little comfort could be taken either from the fact that Ireland ranked 16 out of 26 OECD countries for its retention rates in second-level schools.¹²⁰

The National Development Plan was published in November 1999, and as expected, second-chance education and the further education sector stood to gain most from it. The Back to Education Initiative received a staggering £1.027 billion for the expansion of part-time options. Adult

education got a financial boost amounting to over £108 million. The Plan also invested large sums of money in projects to promote social inclusion. It covered early childhood education, traveller education and allowed a budget of £95 million for a Third-Level Access Measure.¹²¹

There was one area that was badly neglected in the past with regard to funding and that was the area of research in third-level institutions. In 1984, Ireland shared bottom place with Greece in the EEC league tables with regard to government funding for higher education research and development.¹²² As late as 1996, CIRCA Group Europe conducted a comparative international assessment of higher education research, and it concluded that ‘Public funding of higher education research in Ireland’ was ‘among the worst in the OECD’.¹²³

Two years later, a Programme for Research in Third-Level Institutions was announced by the government. This was a £150 million three-year investment programme for scientific and other research in universities and Institutes of Technology (formerly RTCs). The programme was to provide for government capital spending of £75 million with £75 million in matching private funding to be raised by the colleges. The National Development Plan also included provision for an investment of £550 million over the period 2000–2006 in research, technological development and innovation in the educational sector, under the aegis of the Department of Education and Science.¹²⁴ Investment in higher education research was to have a knock-on effect on the Irish economy as it helped to improve Ireland’s competitive edge.

The White Paper on Adult Education *Learning for Life* (2000) confirmed that a competitive Targeted Higher Education Mature Student Fund was planned, which would rise on a phased basis to £10 million per annum. This was aimed at increasing mature student participation in higher education; however, a general programme of free fees for part-time students was not advocated.¹²⁵ But there were hopeful signs for the future as the Points Commission called for greater flexibility in higher education provision, and for major changes in patterns of access and participation in third-level education. It promoted the merits of distance-education in order to meet the demand for part-time study.¹²⁶ So, too, did the Review Committee on Post-Secondary Education and Training Places when it specified that flexible provision was essential.¹²⁷ Micheál Martin fully accepted the need to promote flexibility and responsiveness in educational structures, as he told the Senate on December 17, 1998, ‘To-day’s one right way is tomorrow’s obsolete policy’.¹²⁸

‘THAT STAGNANT POND WHICH IS THE DEPARTMENT
OF EDUCATION’

In March 1958, John J. O’Meara read a paper on Irish education at a public meeting organised by Fine Gael, in which he excoriated the Department of Education. He alleged that it shared ‘some of the qualities of the natural law: it seems to be immutable’ and added, ‘hardly more than a ripple or two has come to disturb that stagnant pond which is the Department of Education since the State was founded—and it would seem that hardly a ripple ever will’.¹²⁹ The Department, it would appear, was moribund. Richard Mulcahy was struck by the malaise he encountered when he took up office for the first time in 1948. He recalled ‘There was no sense of initiative, vision or power. No cerebation...there was no ministerial function in the Department for years...Derrig was simply a blue bottle on the window there’.¹³⁰ Yet he himself had a narrow view of his role as Minister for Education. Addressing the 1949 INTO Congress, he informed delegates that, ‘it was the function of the Minister to watch out for causes of irritation, and having found them, to go around with the oil-can’.¹³¹

A further example of inertia in the Department was the fact that it had not issued annual reports in 25 years, when Gemma Hussey issued annual progress reports on her Programme for Action in Education in 1984. There had been no clear overall educational plan, until she provided a blueprint for the overhaul of the education system in her Programme. She broke with tradition by conducting detailed consultations on it, even though this was greeted with scepticism and suspicion by some of the parties consulted.¹³² In the same year, Hussey introduced a partnership approach to education policy making by bringing the educational partners together in the Interim Curriculum and Examinations Board. However, power-sharing proved challenging for some of the partners involved at this time.¹³³

The Department had a culture of secrecy and confidentiality and suffered from a lack of accountability, which enabled it to conceal its most grievous failure. Despite individual cases of excessive use of corporal punishment in industrial and reformatory schools being brought to the attention of successive Ministers for Education, a full-scale inquiry¹³⁴ into these allegations was not conducted. This was to have horrific consequences for countless Irish children. In February 1968, the Kennedy Committee,¹³⁵ which had been set up by O’Malley to investigate industrial and reformatory schools, recorded an instance of abuse of a child in Daingean

Reformatory School, but the report on the school made no reference whatsoever to this incident, lest it ‘cause a grave public scandal’.¹³⁶ Three decades later, when the extent of the abuse of children in these schools was revealed in a three-part television documentary series *States of Fear*, it did indeed ‘cause a grave public scandal’, and Micheál Martin disclosed the contents of departmental records that supported the programme’s claims.

Departmental shortcomings account for another shameful chapter in our education history, which concerns the neglect of special education. This was largely due to the lack of accountability within the Department, and with the failure of Ministers and their officials to recognise the need for widespread remedial education provision. This deficiency was highlighted in 1952 by J. Brosnan of the Dublin branch of the INTO, as he angrily denounced what he called ‘one of the greatest crimes of our system...the callous disregard for subnormal and backward children’ many of whom were ‘condemned as fools and dunces’.¹³⁷ His words fell on deaf ears.

It took six decades before the government’s official policy on special education was confirmed in the White Paper on Educational Development, which called for the integration of children with special educational needs into mainstream classes. While advances were made in the late 1980s, and while the government signed up to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1992, which explicitly incorporated the rights of children with disabilities to an appropriate education suited to their needs, education provision in Ireland for severely handicapped children in the early 1990s ‘were limited if non-existent’.¹³⁸ It took a High Court judgment in the O’Donoghue case in 1993,¹³⁹ which placed the onus on the Minister to provide an appropriate education for all students, whatever their disabilities, as of right, before decisive action was taken. The ruling later informed aspects of the Education Act 1998.

The Department itself underwent a radical overhaul of its structures. An OECD report commented on the ‘patchwork’ character of the Irish education system, which ‘was not planned methodically but expanded in piecemeal fashion’. It observed also that ‘the department was over-stretched simply to administer the education system’.¹⁴⁰ Martin introduced a variety of agencies and a number of support teams, in order to devolve responsibility for the provision of a range of educational services, thereby lightening the excessive workload of the inspectorate. The Department was now issuing reports 15 years after Gemma Hussey’s annual progress reports. Its professional profile was raised by the establishment of the Evaluation

Support and Research Unit, and *Section 13* of the Education Act placed it on a statutory footing. It could no longer be referred to disparagingly as ‘that stagnant pond which is the Department of Education’.¹⁴¹

Three important Acts were introduced in the last three years of the century. One was Niamh Bhreathnach’s 1997 Universities Act, which was a remarkable achievement considering the formidable opposition she faced from academics, politicians and senators. It was the first such Act since the Universities Act of 1908, which established the National University of Ireland. Next came the 1998 Education Act, which was a *tour de force* to which five Ministers made a contribution, namely Mary O’Rourke (1987–1991), Noel Davern (1991–1992), Séamus Brennan (1992–1993), Niamh Bhreathnach and Micheál Martin. The third one was the vitally important Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 1999, which set out plans for the establishment of the first national system of certification covering the full range of qualifications from basic literacy certificates to specific skills training, to further and higher education. A National Qualifications Authority of Ireland was to be set up to act as an overall guarantor of the quality of further and higher education.¹⁴² Undoubtedly, the three Acts were long overdue, but nonetheless their enactment represents a proud Ministerial legacy.

Over the 80 years from 1919 to 1999, Irish education came under two main influences, namely the Irish-language revival movement of the early twentieth century and the influence of the OECD in the last three decades of the century. Despite the failure of the Irish-language policy, credit must surely be given to the early Ministers for Education, Eoin MacNeill and John Marcus O’Sullivan who conducted their ministries in a country ‘convalescing from the fever and prostration of two wars’,¹⁴³ and one of whom had to receive deputations ‘safe beneath the level of the ground’,¹⁴⁴ during the civil war. Through the worst of times, significant progress was made in passing the Ministers and Secretaries Act; which established the Department of Education, the Intermediate Education (Amendment) Act; the School Attendance Act; and the Vocational Education Act setting up the vocational school system.

Several Ministers for Education had plans for worthwhile educational reforms but then faced unpredictable events, such as the oil-crisis of the 1970s or the economic recession of the 1980s. The White Paper on Educational Development referred to no less than 11 specialist committees whose reports had to be shelved. Political instability also stalled reforms—there was a change of government three times in 1982—and

five different Ministers for Education, including the Taoiseach Charles J. Haughey who was acting Minister for 21 days.

While at the end of the century many challenges still persisted in Irish education, it had by then become a modern, vibrant system. This modernisation was due in large measure to the vision of two Ministers for Education from the 1960s—Patrick Hillery, who allowed the OECD to study our ramshackle education system, and who catered for those he styled ‘the Modern Estate’, and Donogh O’Malley, who removed the ‘dark stain on the national conscience’, and in so doing enhanced the future prospects of generations of Irish children.

The ‘free education’ scheme, which was accompanied by free transport, was undoubtedly one of the greatest successes in Irish education history because of its enduring benefits, not least of which is the international recognition of our educated workforce. It is reasonable to attribute our economic success in the 1990s, when Ireland was placed ‘top in Europe for its educated workforce and second (after Germany) for the skills of its workers’,¹⁴⁵ to O’Malley’s scheme. It came from a Minister with a strong sense of social justice, one who, with great foresight, informed a gathering of journalists on September 10, 1966 that ‘the world of to-day and to-morrow will give scant attention to the uneducated and those lacking any qualifications. We will be judge(d) by future generations on what we did for the children of our time’.¹⁴⁶

NOTES

1. According to the 1959 World Survey on Education prepared for UNESCO, expenditure on education in the U.S. was £5 per head of population, £2.25 in Scotland, £2 in the U.K., and 50p in Ireland. When vocational education was added the figure was 86p.
2. This was a research group or ‘think tank’ of the late 1950s, composed of young academics and researchers seeking solutions to Ireland’s social, economic and political problems.
3. E.F. O’Doherty, ‘Bilingual School Policy’, *Studies* No. 47 (1958), 266–267.
4. This was an organisation founded in 1893 to restore Irish as a spoken language.
5. *Report of Aireacht na Gaeilge*, June 1920, 2.
6. *National Programme of Primary Instruction. The National Programme Conference* (Dublin, 1922), 3.

7. He was appointed Minister for Education by de Valera in August 1921, when it was deemed safe to do so.
8. B. Ó Cúiv, 'Education and Language', in *The Irish Struggle 1916–1926*, D. Williams (Ed.), (London, 1966), 162.
9. *National Programme of Primary Instruction*, 4.
10. T. de Vere White, *Kevin O'Higgins* (London, 1948), 142. *Dáil Debates*, vol. 2, col. 1909, I March 1923.
11. *Report of the Ministry of the National Language* (Dublin, 1921), 9.
12. *Report of the Department of Education for 1924–25*, 21.
13. L. Ó Broin, *Just Like Yesterday: An Autobiography* (Dublin, 1986), 67.
14. *Freeman's Journal*, April 21, 1922
15. D. H. Akenson, *A Mirror to Kathleen's Face: Education in Independent Ireland* (Dublin, 1975), 27.
16. *Statistics Relating to National Education in Saorstát for the Year 1922–23* (Dublin, 1923), 13.
17. J. O'Connor, 'The Teaching of Irish Testament of a Pioneer', in *Capuchin Annual* (Dublin, 1949), 210.
18. Eoin MacNeill, 'A Plea and a Plan', in *The Gaelic Journal*, March 4, 1893, 179.
19. *An Claidheambh Soluis*, November 29, 1902, 623.
20. *Report of the Department of Education for 1928–29*, 20–21.
21. *Report of the Department of Education for 1931–32*, 23; *Report of the Department of Education for 1932–33*, 22–25.
22. T.J. O'Connell, *History of the Irish National Teachers' Organisation 1868–1968* (Dublin, 1969), 383–384.
23. J. Coolahan, *Irish Education: history and structure* (Dublin, 1981), 42.
24. *Report of the Commission on Vocational Organisation* (Dublin, 1944), 332–333.
25. INTO *Report of the Committee of Inquiry into the Use of Irish as a Teaching Medium to Children whose Home Language is English* (Dublin, 1941), 13, 24.
26. National Archives of Ireland (NAI) S7801A. The five men on the survey committee were experienced teachers with 'highly efficient' ratings, two of whom were former Presidents of the INTO.
27. *Irish School Weekly*, May 6–13, 1944, 186.
28. NAI S7801 Dr. Johanna Pollak, 'On Teaching Irish' 1943.
29. NAI S13180A, Position of Irish Language, March 30, 1943.
30. Fine Gael was formed in 1933, when Cumann na nGaedheal merged with the Centre Party and the Blueshirts. See M. Manning, *The Blueshirts* (Dublin, 2006).
31. R. Mulcahy, *Richard Mulcahy (1886–1971): A Family Memoir* (Dublin, 1999), 230.

32. J. Macnamara, *Bilingualism and Primary Education: A Study of Irish Experience* (Edinburgh, 1966), 136.
33. *Report of the Council of Education on the Function and Curriculum of the Primary School*, 1954, 202, 212.
34. *Dáil Debates*, vol. 168, col. 1501, June 11, 1958.
35. Arguments favoured by the Department of Education in defence of the ban included 'the woman cannot with full efficiency serve both home and school', 'two salaries coming into one house causes unfavourable comment', and 'the later months of pregnancy will occasion unhealthy curiosity'. See NAI S6369.
36. *Dáil Debates*, vol. 174, cols. 57–8, April 8, 1959.
37. *Dáil Debates*, vol. 208, col. 1566, May 14, 1964.
38. *Dáil Debates*, vol. 182, cols. 70–71, May 24, 1960.
39. *Dáil Debates*, vol. vol. 183, col. 422, June 28, 1960; vol. 207, col. 381, February 5, 1964.
40. J. Walsh, 'An Era of Expansion, 1945–75', in *St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra 1875–2000*, (Ed.), J. Kelly (Dublin, 2006), 170–171. St. Patrick's teacher-training college (primary), Dublin, established 1875.
41. *Dáil Debates*, vol. 195, cols. 1376–8, May 23, 1962.
42. *Dáil Debates*, vol. 211, col. 1339, July 1, 1964.
43. In 1959, Ó Cuilleanáin was appointed as the first inspector for special education.
44. J. Coolahan and P. F. O'Donovan, *A History of Ireland's School Inspectorate 1832–2008* (Dublin 2009), 180–181.
45. T. Ó Raifeartaigh, 'Some impressions of education in the U.S.A.', in *Studies*, No. 50 (1961): 55–74, 63.
46. J. Coolahan and P.F.O'Donovan, *A History*, 180–181.
47. *Dáil Debates*, vol. 208, col. 1567, May 14, 1964.
48. *Dáil Debates*, vol. 189, col. 842, May 24, 1961.
49. *Dáil Debates*, vol. 210, col. 331, June 2, 1964.
50. T. J. O'Connell, *History of the INTO*, 444–449.
51. *Investment in Education Report of the Survey Team appointed by the Minister for Education in October 1962* (Dublin, 1965).
52. T. Kellaghan and L. Gorman, 'A survey of teaching aids in Irish Primary Schools', in *Irish Journal of Education*, 2:1 (1968): 32–40.
53. *IIE Report*, 575. Annexes and appendices ix, table c2.
54. From 1966, a pass in the entrance examination to secondary schools was no longer a condition of recognition of a student for the payment of the capitation grant.
55. *Dáil Debates*, vol. 232, col. 463, February 6, 1968. The INTO had advocated the use of record cards. See T. J. O'Connell, *History of the INTO*, 433.

56. *Dail Debates*, vol. 38, col. 1900, May 22, 1931.
57. *Irish Press*, November 5, 1952. Seán Moylan T.D., Minister for Education addressing the Fianna Fáil Ard-Fheis.
58. 'Secondary tops' were introduced by Eoin MacNeill in 1924. See *Dáil Debates*, vol. 13, col.191, November 11, 1925.
59. J. Coolahan, *Irish Education*, 44.
60. *Report of the Department of Education for 1959–60*, 118, 121.
61. J. Sheehan, 'Education and Society', in *Ireland 1945–70*, (Ed.) J.J. Lee (Dublin, 1979), 65.
62. *Irish Times*, January 27, 1966 'On threshold of a new educational era' Cardinal Conway quoting statistics from the *IIE Report*.
63. *Irish Press*, May 2, 1957.
64. J.J. O'Meara, *Reform in Education* (Dublin, 1958), 16.
65. *INTO A Plan for Education* (Dublin, 1947), 73.
66. *Sunday Independent*, December 22, 1957. See also O'Meara, *Reform in Education*, 16.
67. *Ibid.*
68. Press Conference Dr. Patrick Hillery T.D., Minister for Education, May 20, 1963.
69. *Dáil Debates*, vol. 207, cols. 405–406, February 5, 1964.
70. Letter from Seoirse Ó Colla T.D., Minister for Education, to the Authorities of Secondary and Vocational Schools, January 1966 in *Education Policy in Twentieth Century Ireland*, S. Ó Buachalla (Dublin, 1988), 393–397.
71. In 1966, Colley opened three comprehensive schools at Carraroe, Co. Galway, Cootehill, Co. Cavan and Shannon, Co. Clare. The common intermediate certificate was introduced the same year, and permission to offer the leaving certificate course was granted by Hillery in February 1964.
72. Speech by Donogh O'Malley T.D., Minister for Education to the National Union of Journalists, Royal Marine Hotel, Dun Laoghaire, September 10, 1966 in *Unfulfilled Promise: Memories of Donogh O'Malley*, P.J. Browne (Dublin, 2008), 188.
73. NAI S20/1/34
74. NAI S9271 Copy of the Minutes of the meeting of the hierarchy, October 9, 1934 forwarded to O'Neill.
75. NAI S12891B Letter from de Valera to Derrig, December 16, 1944.
76. *Dáil Debates* vol. 80, col. 1566, June 6, 1940.
77. T. Garvin, *Preventing the Future Why was Ireland so poor for so long?* (Dublin, 2005), 169.
78. *Ibid.* Eoin MacNeill was Professor of Early and Medieval History and John Marcus O'Sullivan was Professor of History at UCD, but neither of them displayed any desire to develop university education.

79. NAI S9271 Education reconstruction S. O'Neill, July 21, 1933.
80. NAI S14392.
81. *Report of the Commission on Vocational Organisation* (Dublin, 1944), 216. In 1939 the government appointed the commission under one of the few bishops identifiably sympathetic to Fianna Fáil, Bishop Michael Browne of Galway, otherwise known as 'cross Michael' because of his stern personality.
82. Á. Hyland, 'The curriculum of vocational education 1930–1966', in *Teachers' Union: The TUI and its forerunners 1899–1994*, (Ed.) J. Logan (Dublin, 1999), 140.
83. *Irish Press*, May 2, 1957.
84. *Irish Independent*, May 28, 1952.
85. *Report of the Department of Education for 1959–60*, 118, 121.
86. *Commission on Higher Education 1960–67 Presentation and Summary of Report* (Dublin, 1967), 184.
87. J. Coolahan, *Irish Education*, 250.
88. During John Wilson's (1977–81) Ministry, officials in his Department devised pre-employment courses which incorporated work experience, and qualified for European funding. Up until 1984, it was only students from vocational, comprehensive and community schools who could benefit from this opportunity.
89. G. Hussey, *At the Cutting Edge: Cabinet Diaries 1982–85* (Dublin, 1990), 101.
90. *Report of the International Review Group to the Higher Education Authority. Review of the application of the DIT for the establishment of a university under section 9 of the Universities Act 1997*, Dublin, November 1998, 6.
91. *Irish Times*, April 29, 1970.
92. T. White, *Investing in People: Higher Education in Ireland 1960 to 2000* (Dublin, 2001), 187–188.
93. J. Coolahan, 'Third-level education: change and development in Ireland' in *Ireland in the Coming Times: Essays to Celebrate T.K. Whitaker's 80 years*, (Ed.) Fionán Ó Muircheartaigh (Dublin, 1997), 192.
94. *Ibid.*
95. HEA *Report of the Steering Committee on the Future Development of Higher Education Based on a Study of Needs to the year 2015* (Dublin, 1995), 105.
96. *Charting our Education Future*. White Paper on Education (Dublin, 1995), 90.
97. INTO *A Plan for Education* (Dublin, 1947), 10.
98. T. J. O'Connell, *History of the INTO*, 318–20.
99. *Catholic Herald*, April 20, 1945.

100. *Catholic Bishops' Pastoral Letter 1969*. Comprehensive schools had boards of management since 1966.
101. *Irish Press*, April 2, 1975 'Warning by INTO clash over school role of parents'.
102. *Tuairim*, pamphlet 8, 'Educating towards a united Europe', 6–7.
103. *Dáil Debates*, vol. 96, col. 2171, April 18, 1945.
104. *Circular 7/85*, Department of Education
105. CERI/OECD *Parents as Partners in Schooling* (Paris, 1997), 141.
106. *Education Act 1998*, Part VI, s.26 (i)
107. A. McManus, *Irish Education The Ministerial Legacy, 1919–1999* (Dublin, 2014), 198–204.
108. *Education Act 1998*, Part IV, s.15 (2) (b)
109. *Education Act 1998*, Part IV, s.15 (2) (c)
110. According to Christina Murphy, the *Irish Times* education correspondent, Faulkner and his officials travelled at least twice to Armagh to meet Cardinal Conway for discussions. See *Irish Times*, April 28, 1978.
111. L. O'Flaherty, *Management and Control in Irish Education: The Post-Primary Experience* (Dublin, 1992), 77.
112. Á. Hyland, 'Primary and Second-Level Education in the Early Twenty-First Century' in *Ireland in the Coming Times*, 187.
113. In 1999, the Irish Spiritans Holy Ghost Fathers, Brothers and Associates set up the Des Places Education Association as one such company. In 2007, five Catholic religious congregations established a company called CEIST—Catholic Education, an Irish Schools Trust.
114. S. O'Connor, *A Troubled Sky: Reflections on the Irish Educational Scene 1957–68* (Dublin, 1986), 63.
115. *Dáil Debates*, vols. 331–332, cols. 1010–1011, December 3, 1981.
116. *Sunday Press*, March 31, 1968, 'My Curriculum for Success' Kevin Marron interview with Brian Lenihan T.D., Minister for Education.
117. Forfás, *Responding to Ireland's Growing Skills Needs. The First Report of the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs to the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade, and Employment and the Minister for Education and Science* (Dublin, 1998).
118. Department of Education and Science, Green Paper *Adult Education in an Era of Lifelong Learning* (Dublin, 1998), 28.
119. Green Paper, *Adult Education*, 30.
120. National Economic and Social Council, *Opportunities, Challenges and Capacities for Choice* (Dublin, 1999), 277.
121. Department of Education and Science, *Learning for Life White Paper on Adult Education* (Dublin, 2000), 58–59.
122. *Programme for Action in Education 1984 to '87, the IFUT Response* (Dublin, 1984), 11.

123. CIRCA Group Europe, *A Comparative International Assessment of the Organisation, Management and Funding of University Research in Ireland and Europe* (Dublin, 1996), 4.
124. *Irish Times*, March 9, 2000.
125. Department of Education and Science, *Learning for Life*, 146–147.
126. *Commission on the Points System. First Report and Recommendations* (Dublin, 1999), 111–115. The Central Applications Office administers applications for third-level entry, and it employs a points system whereby applicants are ranked according to the points scored in any single sitting of the Leaving Certificate examination. In October 1997 Micheál Martin set up the Commission on the Points System to examine the system of selection for third-level entry.
127. *Report of the Review Committee on Post-Secondary Education and Training Places* (Dublin, 1999), 3.
128. Micheál Martin T.D., *Minister for Education and Science. Address to Seanad Éireann*, December 17, 1998.
129. O'Meara, *Reform in Education*, 6.
130. R. Mulcahy, *Richard Mulcahy*, (1999), 228.
131. *Irish School Weekly*, April 30 and May 7, 1949, 200.
132. J. Harris, 'The policy-making role of the Department of Education, in *Irish educational policy: process & substance*, (Eds.), D.G. Mulcahy and D. O'Sullivan (Dublin, 1989), 17.
133. Hussey, *At the Cutting Edge*, 85.
134. Martin McGuire an Independent member of Limerick City's borough council requested such an inquiry from Derrig on April 12, 1946, which he refused on the grounds that it would serve no useful purpose. See McManus, *Ministerial Legacy*, 174–175.
135. The Committee was chaired by District Justice Eileen Kennedy of the District Children's Court.
136. *Dáil Debates*, vol. 504, cols. 1181–1182, May 13, 1999.
137. *Irish School Weekly*, March 15 and 22, 1952, 127.
138. A. Hyland, 'Primary and Second-Level Education', 187.
139. S. Griffin and M. Shevlin, *Responding to Special Educational Needs An Irish Perspective* (Dublin, 2007), 45. O'Donoghue—v—the Minister for Education, 1993 Judgment of Justice R. O'Hanlon.
140. OECD, *Reviews of National Policies for Education: Ireland* (Paris, 1991), 39.
141. J. J. O'Meara, *Reform in Education*, 6.
142. *Dáil Debates*, vol 504, col. 1285, May 18, 1999.
143. *Irish Catholic*, February 23, 1924.
144. H. Kingsmill Moore, *Reminiscences and Reflections from Sixty Years of Life in Ireland* (London, 1930), 288. The Minister in question was Eoin MacNeill.

145. P. Sweeney, *The Celtic tiger: Ireland's Continuing Economic Miracle* (Dublin, 1999), 117.
146. Speech by Donogh O'Malley 10 September 1966, *Unfulfilled Promise*, 186. Donogh O'Malley died suddenly on Sunday, 10 March 1968. He was aged forty-seven years.

The Development of Vocational and Technical Education in Ireland, 1930–2015

Marie Clarke

INTRODUCTION

This chapter traces the development of vocational and technical education in Ireland from its introduction in 1930. Technical education was formally introduced into the education system in 1899. The development of vocational and technical education was closely linked to economic and social change. For most of the period, vocational and technical education was undervalued both in terms of its contribution to education and to the economy.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION: THE INITIAL YEARS

Prior to independence, Irish GDP per head was at a similar level to that in Denmark and Austria and was ahead of France and Sweden. Ireland's position remained positive throughout the 1930s until the 1950s when a gap emerged between Ireland and other European states. Ireland lagged behind—and the country experienced a difficult period of economic recession accompanied by high levels of emigration.¹ This was as a result of poor economic policies, the lack of foreign markets for agricultural produce and a failure of industrial policies to generate an expanding economy.²

M. Clarke (✉)
University College, Dublin, Ireland

A distinctive social structure existed in Ireland during the first 30 years of the Irish State, which was dominated by small farm holdings and characterized by late ages of marriage, high proportions not getting married, high marital fertility and high levels of emigration.³ Rural Ireland controlled the social structure of the country and was marked by differences in class and status between kinship groups.⁴ The state and the Roman Catholic Church promoted the traditional structures of rural life in Ireland.

The numbers of people engaged in agriculture fell relatively slowly between the 1920s and the 1940s.⁵ Emigration increased rapidly during the 1930s, with two major consequences. It led to a diminished demand domestically for Irish industrial or agricultural products, and it ensured that the vested interests in the country would remain immune from government intervention. World War II did not change things very much in Ireland. It reinforced the policy of self-sufficiency, and, because of the inevitable shortages of fuel, raw material and semi-manufactured goods of all kinds, any significant industrial advance was virtually ruled out. Emigration increased substantially during the war, as young people were attracted to work in wartime Britain. Until the late 1950s, the Irish economy moved along in the same fashion as it had done since 1932, although after World War II, the government and the country tried to readjust. Industry lacked raw materials, fuel and capital equipment. There was increasing demand for manufactured goods of all kinds, and the long wage freeze during the war had built up great pressure for pay increases in all sectors of the economy. The end of the 1950s witnessed the beginnings of economic recovery and the start of government engagement with economic planning. The first plan entitled the *First Programme for Economic Expansion* was published in 1958 and the *Second Programme for Economic Expansion* was published in 1963.⁶ This led to an increasing emphasis on the relationship between the economy and education.

THE INTRODUCTION OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

In the new Free State, primary, intermediate and technical education had little in common.⁷ The Department of Education had limited power over the management of primary or secondary schools which remained vested in the clergy of various denominations, with the state merely paying the salaries of national schoolteachers and offering building grants for secondary schools. The Department of Education exerted influence through the control of curriculum and by operating an inspection system to ensure

that minimum teaching standards were maintained.⁸ In Ireland during the 1920s, there was little demand for a workforce skilled in industrial technology. Those technical schools, which had been created under the Technical Instruction Act 1899, were located almost exclusively in towns and cities. In 1924, 65 technical schools catered for 22,800 students, the vast majority of whom were part-time day or evening students.⁹

A number of interests shaped perceptions about vocational education in Ireland in the context of the economic, political and social circumstances of the period. Different views about the role of technical instruction were expressed in Dáil debates and in the submissions made by various interest groups such as the Farmers Party, the Labour Party and the industrial lobby, members of Technical Instruction Committees and representatives from the Department of Industry and Commerce to the *Commission on Technical Instruction*, which published its report in 1927.¹⁰ The Commission recommended a new system, which targeted three categories that required separate provision. The development of full time continuation education was recommended for those aged between 14 and 16 years who did not attend secondary schools; the development of full-time continuation education was recommended for county borough areas, the major cities and rural areas. Technical education was viewed as training for specific apprenticeships or jobs. Higher technical education was regarded as a separate category, which catered for managers and for the training of teachers.¹¹

CONTINUATION EDUCATION IN VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS

The Vocational Education Act introduced in Ireland in 1930 created a binary education system at second level. Continuation education was defined in the act as:

education to continue and supplement education provided in elementary schools and includes general and practical training in preparation for employment in trades, manufactures, agriculture, commerce, and other industrial pursuits, and also general and practical training for improvement of young persons in the early stages of employment.¹²

The main purpose of the continuation education scheme was to provide vocational instruction for 14 and 16 year olds who had left primary or secondary school.¹³ Under Section 31, the newly established Vocational

Education Committees (VECs) were required to consider representations made by people in the catchment areas who had educational experience or were involved in trades and manufacturing.¹⁴ Membership of the committees also consisted of local politicians. With reference to the rural schools, a memorandum issued by the Department of Education in 1931 stated that: 'everything that would tend to make a rural school urbanised or abstract in its aims should be avoided'.¹⁵ The memorandum suggested that local VECs develop a system of education suited to the particular needs of respective areas.¹⁶ This marked the introduction of secondary vocational education into the Irish education system in addition to the existing well-defined secondary school system.

While the Department of Education did not prescribe curricular programmes in its initial years, it highlighted the different expectations of urban and rural schools. The Department defined the rural continuation school as:

rural continuation education should be directed towards securing a contented life in rural areas with employment in agriculture or rural industries, and should check as far as possible the constant drift of youth from the country to the town.¹⁷

The urban continuation school had the following focus:

In the larger urban centres, there were general courses in which the primary education of the pupil was continued and extended and some forms of handwork taught, as well as courses in which a bias was given towards employment in trade or commercial or domestic occupations.¹⁸

Pupils were generally 14 years old before they could enter a continuation school. In practice, there was little uniformity in the educational attainments of these students. In the early years, a typical rural continuation school catered for 22 boys and 26 girls. The girls received instruction in Domestic Economy with Hygiene and Sick Nursing for 13 hours per week out of a total of 27 hours. The boys spent 14 hours per week at Woodwork, Elements of Agricultural Science, Plan Drawing, Mensuration and Accounts Keeping, out of a total of 28 hours.¹⁹

Courses in rural schools were slow to develop. VECs were given autonomy to decide timetables, subjects of instruction, duration of courses, fees, and examinations in accordance with the needs of local areas. In

smaller rural areas, due to a lack of accommodation or teaching staff, only one group of students could be successfully taught.²⁰ In some cases VECs ran courses for either girls or boys in alternate sessions, this was also as a result of a lack of availability of teachers.²¹

In 1942, the Department of Education issued Memorandum V 40, which set out the rationale of continuation education with more precise guidelines.²² It specifically included religious studies as part of the courses offered and a greater emphasis was placed on the Irish language.²³ This marked the completion of the primary and experimental stage of the continuation education schemes started under the Vocational Education Act of 1930.²⁴ As Hyland has pointed out, the memorandum outlined that the main purpose of the continuation courses was to:

prepare boys and girls, who have to start early in life, for the occupations which are open to them. These occupations, in general require some sort of manual skill and continuation courses have therefore a corresponding practical bias.²⁵

It was further stated that:

the nature of the continuation courses in any centre must be closely related to economic conditions in the neighbourhood.²⁶

Memorandum V 40 referred to a sample of occupations identified in the 1936 Census of Population. The census classified occupied males and females aged 14 years and over in each occupational group. The occupational groups were Agriculture, Makers of Food, Makers of Apparel; Workers in Wood, Metal Workers, and Builders. Less than one fifth of women (17%) were involved in these activities. Women dominated in areas such as professional occupations, domestic service, and clerks and typists.²⁷ Memorandum V 40 used a sample of occupations from that census where there was a clear emphasis on occupational training that reflected a gendered workforce.²⁸

Different programmes were offered in urban and rural continuation schools. The Junior Day Technical Course (two years) for boys was orientated to skilled manual work.²⁹ The Day Junior Commercial Course (2 years) for boys was focused on Mathematics and Book-keeping and was scheduled for 28 hours per week. The Day Junior Technical course (2 years) for girls was primarily focused on Domestic Economy and

Household Management and the Day Junior Commercial Course (2 years) for girls in city schools focussed on short hand, typing and commercial arithmetic. Both courses were timetabled for 28 hours per week. In rural schools the Junior Rural Science Course was directed at boys who intended to take up farming and was scheduled for 25 hours per week. The Junior Domestic Science Course offered to girls in rural schools was primarily practical in orientation. Individual practical training was given to each girl in the principles and practices underlying various household duties and processes. The intention was that girls would receive training in the skills necessary to manage and run a home successfully or be prepared to work in areas such as textiles, laundry work and hotel work. Cookery, Needlework and Art were taught for ten hours per week. Six hours per week were devoted to semi-practical subjects such as Domestic Science, Household Science, Laundry and Household Management. The remaining ten hours was devoted to the continuation subjects Arithmetic and Accounts, Irish, English and Geography, Religious Instruction and Physical Education.

The Irish Technical Education Association—the representative body of the VECs—lobbied throughout the 1950s for the introduction of a nationally monitored examination in continuation education. Vocational education had a negative image, and it was felt that the introduction of a state examination would redress this perception. The examination was intended for students who had completed a two-year course in a whole-time day vocational continuation school. In 1947, the Day Group Certificate examination was held and it continued annually.³⁰ The introduction of this examination gave the Department of Education more control over the curriculum. It specified the syllabus and through the examination it set the standard. Students entered the Group Certificate examination by presenting a combination of subjects, which had to take account of a compulsory core and additional subjects from what the schools offered.

Irrespective of size and location all schools offered the core subjects, which were Irish, English, woodwork, domestic economy, typewriting, mechanical drawing, commercial arithmetic and commerce. Other subjects that formed part of the Day Group Certificate were: metalwork shorthand, mathematics, rural science, magnetism and electricity, other science subjects, commercial geography, art and continental languages. The range of subjects offered was dependent on the size of school. Smaller schools were unable to offer a full range of subjects. In most schools students could not exercise choice in relation to subjects.³¹

By 1953, there were 200 VEC schools nationwide providing whole-time continuation education of which 90 served the rural population. During the 1950s a number of bills were passed in the Oireachtas to provide extra funds to maintain and extend VEC schemes.³² In 1950, 11 VECs had reached the maximum income allowed under existing legislation and a further 23 could not expand due to a lack of resources.³³ In 1953, the Vocational Education Amendment Bill tried to address the financial inequities between rural and urban areas. Areas with low rating valuations were at a significant disadvantage, as the local rates produced small amounts of money, and as a result, the matching state grant was also small. The 1950s witnessed a series of financial cut-backs, in 1956–1957 and in 1957–1958, a 6% reduction in the state grant to VECs was imposed.³⁴

At the start of the 1960s, the number of vocational schools had increased to 308 providing various forms of vocational education, including four colleges and four other centres devoted exclusively to technical and commercial education, three schools of art and three schools of music. Forty-nine schools were used exclusively for evening courses. Whole-time day continuation courses were provided in the remaining 245 schools; in addition these centres provided evening classes for adults and a number provided part-time day technical education for apprentices. Occasional courses, mainly adult education, were provided in a further 416 centres, in temporary accommodation served from the nearest school.³⁵ The vocational schools provided a range of courses for post-primary students; various elements of technical education, adult education and some advisory community service. Continuation education was the biggest activity that took place in vocational schools. Technical education in the smaller schools was a marginal activity. Adult education took the form of evening classes, which was provided in nearly all schools.

Bonel-Elliott has made the point that, at the beginning of 1963, there were two types of post-primary schools in Ireland. There were private fee-paying academic secondary schools offering an academic curriculum, which prepared pupils for the Intermediate Certificate, the Leaving Certificate, and entry to university and to the professions. There were also the vocational schools, which catered for continuation education, culminating in the Group Certificate, after two years' study and technical education. In 1963, only 52% of young people aged 15 and 25% of young people aged 17 were at school, and about one-third of all pupils who left the national school system had received no second-level education whatsoever.³⁶

EDUCATION AND THE ECONOMY: NEW PERSPECTIVES

Educational thinking focused on the role of education in economic development. The two were regarded as being closely interlinked, and the main emphasis of government policy was placed on developing technology and related skills. However, this was a difficult goal to achieve. In 1961, the OECD had arranged the Washington Policy Conference on 'Economic growth and investment in Education'. Ireland participated in this conference and volunteered for a coordinated examination of the Irish education system. The survey team that worked between 1962 and 1965 concentrated on a number of issues.³⁷ They considered the lack of educational statistics available in Ireland regarding the system and devised methods of securing the relevant data pertinent to their inquiry. They examined manpower needs in the short term and the availability of resources to achieve them. Differences in education participation in the various socioeconomic groups and in different geographical areas were also examined.³⁸ This work was conducted within a context where it was generally acknowledged that existing school provision was not adequate to meet the needs of the school-going population.

In 1962, the Minister for Education, Patrick Hillery, set up a committee of civil servants (subsequently known as the Duggan Committee) from the Department of Education to study the education system. Two recommendations emerged from the work of this committee concerning the development of a comprehensive education system and the introduction of Local Education Councils.³⁹ The report concluded that a set period of post-primary education, reasonably well-planned and adequately provided for, was a national necessity from a social and economic point of view. The committee recommended that the school leaving age be raised to 15 years initially, and that after a period of 10 years it should be raised to 16 years. The authors of the report were unhappy with the divide between vocational and secondary schools and concluded that the distinction should disappear and a common programme of study be provided over three years in both the secondary and the vocational schools. These schools would be known as Junior Secondary Schools. One weakness of the system was the absence of a link between secondary and vocational schools.⁴⁰ In order to put vocational schools on an academic and social par with secondary schools, Minister Hillery announced that the two-year course in vocational schools would be extended to three years and that a wide Intermediate Certificate course would be offered by both secondary

and vocational schools.⁴¹ It was also announced that a Technical Leaving Certificate would be introduced and that new educational institutions called regional technical colleges would be developed to boost technical education and align educational provision with training needs.⁴² The immediate adoption of the Intermediate Certificate and subsequently the Leaving Certificate course by vocational schools paved the way for a high degree of convergence in the second-level curriculum.⁴³ Most vocational schools continued to provide the full range of technical subjects and to orient their pupils (disproportionately the children of less skilled manual workers, small farmers and the unemployed) towards whatever opportunities were available to them. Compared with secondary school pupils, more vocational school pupils were forced to complete their schooling earlier and to enter the lower end of the labour market where they bargained less effectively with fewer and lower level educational credentials.⁴⁴ The introduction of the Common Intermediate Certificate and the Leaving Certificate into the vocational schools ensured they would continue to play a central role in Irish education. While there would be protracted disagreements among VECs and the Catholic Church surrounding the introduction of community schools and VEC controlled Community Colleges during the 1970s, nevertheless the reforms of the 1960s had provided a much more level playing field for VEC schools. The VEC schools also developed a range of other educational activities, particularly in the adult education sector.

ADULT EDUCATION

The VECs, from their inception, continued the work of the Technical Instruction Committees with reference to adult education provision. VECs were linked to rural organisations such as *Muintir na Tire*⁴⁵ (founded in 1937)⁴⁶ and *Macra na Feirme*⁴⁷ (founded in 1944).⁴⁸ Extramural courses, provided by the universities, in vocational schools made an important contribution to the development of adult education in Ireland during the 1940s. University College Cork introduced a two-year part time diploma course in Social and Economic Science in 1946. UCG and UCD introduced similar courses in 1949. Apart from their own varied Adult Education programmes, VECs provided classes in a number of different areas and in conjunction with other organisations, such as the Health Boards. Where finance allowed, classes were provided for patients and staff in local hospitals.

During the 1950s, education for adults fell into three main categories: training in practical subjects like Woodwork, Metalwork and Domestic Science; instruction in theory subjects like, Irish, Bookkeeping and Maths, and cultural and social activities, which included Drama, Choral singing, lectures, debates and meetings. Classes in practical subjects were usually conducted on two evenings per week and were of two hours duration. These classes usually took place from mid-September to the end of March. Most of the projects undertaken in these classes were home based.

The training received was useful to people in their everyday working lives but securing accommodation for these classes was always a problem, especially in areas where no school already existed. Irish was a popular subject in evening classes. During the 1950s, adult education activities of an informal type developed. Many evening groups produced plays throughout the country and competed at Drama Festivals, which were held nation-wide. VECs also received requests from organisations to provide classes for their members.

Towards the end of the 1960s, government attention turned towards the adult education sector. Aontas⁴⁹ was founded in 1969, and the subsequent work of this organisation reflected the diverse nature of the sector. In 1973, a report entitled *The Committee on Adult Education* was published. The report pointed to significant under-funding in the area. In 1984, *The Report of the Kenny Commission on Adult Education "Lifelong Learning"* was published, which recommended the establishment of a National Council for Adult Education.

In the 1970s, VECs appointed Adult Education Organisers (AEOs) to facilitate a more structured approach to adult education provision.⁵⁰ Many other government departments were involved in adult education provision other than the Department of Education and the sector in general was uncoordinated.⁵¹ In 1986, the Educational Opportunities Scheme was introduced on a pilot basis that targeted people aged 24 years and over who were unemployed for a year. This was replaced in 1989 with the Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS), which targeted the unemployed who were over 21 years of age to return to education. Many of these programmes were run in vocational schools. The Back to Education Initiative was established in 2002 to provide part-time courses for young people and adults, targeting those with less than upper secondary education and/or in receipt of a social welfare payment. In the late 1990s, Irish education witnessed the publication of a series of green and white papers on various aspects of education. Within the adult education

sector, two papers were published, the Green paper *Adult Education in an Era of Life Long Learning* (1998) and the White paper *Learning for Life* (2000). The White paper emphasised economic development but also stressed social and community goals.⁵²

The community education sector also witnessed considerable growth from the 1980s onwards and VECs played an important role in this area. Community education was funded through a range of sources, including local area partnerships, community development programmes and by the Department of Education through the VECs. The Adult Literacy and Community Education Scheme (ALCES) is funded through the allocation of tutor hours and/or small grants to community groups, through VEC Community Education Facilitators (CEFs).⁵³ The National Adult Literacy Programme, with the National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) as the executive agency, is delivered through VECs, FÁS and community/voluntary groups.⁵⁴ The development of the further education sector in Ireland has its origins in the vocational education sector.

FURTHER EDUCATION

From the 1970s onwards, a more focused vocational education programme was developing as a response to the needs of the long-term unemployed. In 1976, the Education Ministers of the European Community discussed the transition of young people from education to work. As a result of these discussions, vocational preparation and pre-employment schemes for young people were developed. In September 1977, Pre-Employment courses were offered at senior cycle in vocational schools for young people unable to find work. Career Foundation courses, developed in consultation with employers, were introduced into vocational schools in 1980. The widespread introduction of Vocational Preparation and Training Programmes in 1984 enabled vocational schools to develop one- and two-year programmes at both post-Junior and post-Leaving Certificate level. They became known as VPT1 and VPT2 courses. The VPT1 programme began as a self-contained one-year whole-time programme. It was designed as preparation for work and as a basis for entry into a further year of vocational training. The VPT2 programme largely evolved into what became known as PLC courses.⁵⁵

Post Leaving Certificate Courses (PLCs) were formally recognised in 1985. This sector became one of the main purveyors of a complex array of vocational qualifications awarded by bodies ranging through the City and

Guilds, the Business and Technician Education Council (BTEC) and the National Council for Vocational Awards (NCVA). PLC courses cover a range of disciplines such as Art, Craft and Design, Business, Social Studies, Childcare, Leisure and Tourism, Media and General Studies. The courses met a need in educational provision that had not been previously catered for. It was the student market rather than immediate industrial or commercial needs that determined course development at PLC level.⁵⁶ The sector suffered from poor investment and a lack of progression opportunities.⁵⁷ The National Council for Vocational Awards provided certification for the sector from 1991 to 1999 when the 1999 Qualifications Act established the National Qualifications Act Ireland (NQAI) and subsumed the NCVA into the Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC). This Act gave legislative status to the sector. Most of the further education sector was located within the VEC schools and a number of issues that prevented development of the sector were identified in the McIver Report, which was published in 2003. These included lack of recognition for the area, barriers to provision, a more coherent focus with reference to management and buildings, facilities and student services. The majority of the recommendations made in this report were not implemented at the time, as they would have required significant resources and the political will to invest in this sector was absent.⁵⁸ In 2012, Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) was established as a new integrated agency, replacing the Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC), the Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC), the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI) and the Irish Universities Quality Board (IUQB). QQI is responsible for the maintenance, development and review of the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). It is also the body in charge of quality assurance of further and higher education and training (including English-language provision) in Ireland. In addition, QQI validates programmes and makes awards for certain providers in these sectors.

In 2013, the vocational education system underwent a complete reorganisation. Under the Education and Training Act, the VEC system was reconfigured into 16 newly established Education and Training Boards.⁵⁹ The Further Education and Training Act was passed in 2013, which established An tSeirbhís Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna (SOLAS), a new further education and training authority called SOLAS that replaced FÁS. The role of this organisation is to oversee funding, planning and coordination of a wide range of training and further education programmes.⁶⁰

SOLAS was mandated to work closely with other groups such as the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (EGFSN) to help identify skills gaps, point to weaknesses and duplication in existing provision, and link courses more closely to both the needs of the individual and the labour market.⁶¹ With the disbandment of FÁS, its apprenticeship function, as set out in the Industrial Training Act of 1967, was transferred to SOLAS.

APPRENTICESHIP EDUCATION

Under the 1930 Vocational Education Act, VECs were given responsibility for the provision of technical education for specific apprenticeships and positions. This was accompanied by the introduction of the Apprenticeship Act, which was passed in 1931. This legislation did not provide for an officially regulated country-wide system of compulsory instruction, instead apprenticeship training relied on the willingness of employers to release apprentices to courses offered by VECs. Outside of the large cities, the absence of adequate school provision inhibited apprenticeship education. The 1950s witnessed a renewed focus on training. The 1931 Act was repealed by the 1959 Apprenticeship Act, which established the National Apprenticeship Board with the power to require employers to send apprentices to courses. A number of proposals were suggested with reference to uniform training standards. Yet, apprentices did not avail of the education provided. In 1961 just over a third (5774) of the 15,323 apprentices in the state attended apprenticeship courses run by vocational schools,⁶² and just over 10% of provision in vocational schools focused on technical and apprenticeship education.⁶³ Tables 11.1 and 11.2 illustrate the data.

The National Apprenticeship Board did not have sufficient regulatory power to compel apprentices to take education courses. Tensions also existed about the status of an apprentice, whether they should be viewed as employees or students.⁶⁴ Whole-time higher technical education was confined to the cities; in the four colleges in Dublin and the technical institutes in Cork and Limerick. Concerns were expressed in the *Investment in Education Report* that two Dublin colleges had developed to such a point that apprentice courses would be excluded and that they would become colleges of technology only.⁶⁵

In 1963, The Council for Education, Recruitment and Training (CERT) was set up to coordinate education and training for the hotel, catering and tourism industry. The 1967 Industrial Training Act set up

Table 11.1 Vocational schools—percentage of teaching hours by type of day course, 1962/1963

	<i>All areas</i>	<i>County Boroughs (including Dublin)</i>	<i>Dublin City</i>	<i>Scheduled Urban Areas</i>	<i>Counties</i>
<i>Type of course</i>	<i>(%)</i>				
Continuation	69.6	45.4	44.9	76.5	79.8
Whole time	4.6	11.7	13.1	—	1.9
technical					
Apprentice	4.2	9.4	11.7	2.4	1.9
Part-time	2.5	8.1	7.8	0.8	0.2
technical					
Part V	0.8	2.8	—	—	—
Other	1.6	0.9	0.6	3.2	1.8
Total Day	83.3	78.3	78.1	82.9	85.6

Source: *Investment in Education—report of the survey team*, (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1966) Pr. 8311, p.295

Table 11.2 Vocational schools—percentage of teaching hours by type of evening course, 1962/1963

	<i>All areas</i>	<i>County Boroughs (including Dublin)</i>	<i>Dublin City</i>	<i>Scheduled Urban Areas</i>	<i>Counties</i>
<i>Type of course</i>	<i>(%)</i>				
Apprentice	1.8	4.6	5.3	2.7	0.4
Technical and	8.4	11.4	13.9	6.7	7.2
Commercial					
Technological	0.8	2.5	2.5	0.3	0.1
and Professional					
Other	2.9	3.2	0.2	7.3	2.4
Total evening	13.9	21.7	21.9	17.0	10.1

Source: *Investment in Education—report of the survey team*, (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1966) Pr. 8311, p.295

AnCO (An Comhairle Oiliúna), which was funded by grants from government and, after 1973, from the European Social Fund. This body assumed responsibility for training within industry, training centres and apprenticeship. FÁS was established in 1987 under the Labour Services Act to consolidate the work of AnCO, the Youth Employment Agency and the National Manpower Service. In 1973, one year off-the-job train-

ing for apprentices was introduced with apprentices spending their first year in an AnCO training centre, thereafter combining on-the-job training with attending day release or block release courses in the Regional Technical Colleges.⁶⁶ In 1976 the apprenticeship period was reduced from 5 to 4 years. In 1992, it was reorganized around competency-based standards with a modular structure. Work experience was funded by the employers and education provision was funded by the State. In 1992, the *Culliton Report on Industrial Development* recommended that FÁS resources should focus on training for those in employment rather than the unemployed.⁶⁷

The OECD (1995) in its survey of the Irish economy argued that Ireland fared particularly weakly in terms of the low emphasis placed on vocational education and training (when compared to many other EU countries). A review of provision of vocational education and training in Ireland was undertaken by the OECD in 2010.⁶⁸ The national qualifications framework, a well-structured apprenticeship system and the range of provision at post-secondary level were identified as positive aspects of the Irish system. The report identified a number of challenges to the sector, which included the prevalence of literacy and numeracy difficulties; the paucity of career guidance services, a lack of teacher education opportunities for instructors and an absence of data about the sector. The range of occupations where apprenticeship opportunities were available was considered gender biased in favour of males.⁶⁹

In the period 2006–2012, the number of new entrants into the apprenticeship system declined from 8306 to 1434. There was a slight increase in registrations in 2011 and 2012.⁷⁰ In 2013, apprenticeship programmes continued to be provided for approximately 1700 new registrants, and more generally, for an existing apprentice population of 9000 at various stages of both on and off-the-job phases of their apprenticeship. The population of redundant apprentices (made redundant during their training) was 2600 at the end of 2012 (56% were in construction-related trades while 21% were in the electrical trade). A number of new initiatives were introduced and this ensured that a significant cohort of this redundant apprentice population completed their apprenticeship.⁷¹ In May 2013, the Minister for Education and Skills announced a wide-ranging review of apprenticeship education in Ireland. An Apprenticeship Council was established in 2014, with a remit to investigate the expansion of apprenticeships into new sectors of the economy.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF HIGHER TECHNICAL EDUCATION

The system of technical training that had developed in Ireland was based on the craft apprenticeship model inherited from Britain. There was no steady demand for technicians in any one industry, few firms seemed disposed to co-operate with vocational education committees. One of the major problems with Irish technical education lay in obtaining the support of industry for the establishment of courses. In 1964 the OECD published a report on the *Training of Technicians in Ireland*. The report did not generate much discussion when it was first published.⁷² The Commission on Higher Education established in 1960 was mandated to make recommendations in relation to university, professional, technological and higher education generally.⁷³ It did not make its report until 1967. The report recommended the establishment of a Technological Authority, which would provide technological education and training, research and service, and information including testing and standards. The commission acknowledged that there was a shortage of trained technicians in industry and that this deficiency had to be remedied. These recommendations were not implemented. In 1963, out of the 1607 students enrolled on full-time technical courses, 1383 were in the technical schools and colleges of the major cities of Dublin, Cork and Limerick. By the 1960s, higher technical courses were being distinguished from the bulk of technical instruction by the designation 'third level', which implied that their students had already progressed successfully through two lower levels of schooling.⁷⁴ The regional technical colleges, as originally proposed in 1963, were not intended to become third level higher education colleges. They were viewed as places through which the Technical Leaving Certificate would be offered. This proposal was dropped in 1967. In 1966 the Minister for Education Donogh O'Malley, established a Steering Committee on Technical Education, the report was published in 1967.⁷⁵ It set out a broad role for the new regional technical colleges nine of which were opened in 1970. The RTCs operated under the Vocational Education Acts from 1970 until 1992 as special sub-committees of the Vocational Education Committees.⁷⁶ The development of regional technical colleges was of great interest to politicians who wanted these colleges located within their own constituencies.⁷⁷ In the early years it was envisaged that almost a third of students in the regional technical colleges would be at Senior Cycle or Advanced Senior Cycle level and almost half would be

apprentices. However, the setting up of An Comhairle Oiliuna (AnCo) the industrial training authority in 1967 took responsibility for training apprentices. Private secondary schools and vocational schools retained their role as providers of senior cycle education. This context resulted in the colleges becoming third-level institutions.⁷⁸

The National Council for Educational Awards was established in 1972, which provided academic validation and acted as the examining and awards body for the sector. The focus of these colleges moved towards skills-based vocational and technical training in areas such as business, engineering, electronics, science and food technology but also containing from an early time elements of music, art, languages, media studies, social science and child care.⁷⁹ In 1972, an institute of higher education was opened in Limerick. This institute was established to provide higher level technical education above the standard of the Regional Technical College system. A second national institute of higher education was opened in Dublin in 1980. Both these institutes were granted university status in 1989.

Throughout the 1980s, the technological colleges and institutes grew in terms of student enrolment. During this period the technological sector sought an end to its connection with the VEC committees.⁸⁰ In 1992, the regional technical colleges and the Dublin technical colleges, which since 1978 had been designated as the Dublin Institute of Technology, severed links with the VECs and their governing bodies would be appointed by the Minister for Education and budgetary control would come under the aegis of the Department of Education. Students from the skilled manual group formed a higher percentage of entrants to the regional technical colleges and to the Dublin Institute of Technology. Students from the higher professional families were under-represented in these colleges.⁸¹

From the 1990s, various acts were passed with reference to the technical education sector. These included: Vocational Education Acts (1930; Amendment Acts, 1936; 1944; 1970; 2001); Dublin Institute of Technology Act (1992); Regional Technical Colleges Act (1992); Regional Technical Colleges Amendment Acts (1994, 1999) and the Institutes of Technology Act (2006). The regional technical colleges were upgraded to Institute of Technology status (Institute of Technology Act 1998). Additionally, they were given delegated authority to confer their own awards.⁸² The Institutes of Technology Act (2006) further amended

the law with respect to the institutions and set out the autonomy of Institutes of Technology.

The Institutes of Technology (IoTs) offer programmes at levels 6–9 of the national framework of qualifications. Some institutes such as Dublin, Waterford and Cork also offer level 10 programmes. The programme types include; apprenticeship, undergraduate programmes leading to higher certificate awards, Ordinary Bachelor degrees, Honours Bachelor degrees and postgraduate awards, both taught and by research, leading to Masters and Doctoral degrees in a wide variety of subjects. Institutes provide a comprehensive range of apprenticeship programmes and industrial focused continuous professional development courses. Most institutes have schools of Science, Engineering, Construction, Technology and Business. In addition, many of the institutes have developed special programmes in areas such as Humanities & Languages, Paramedical Studies and Healthcare, Art & Design, and Tourism.⁸³ Table 11.3 lists the 14 institutes of technology and the year they opened.

In February 2014, the General Scheme for Legislation on Technological Universities was published by the Government. It outlined the legislative provisions for technological universities, including specifics on a merger amongst Dublin IoTs and more general merger provisions for other IoTs considering applying for re-designation.⁸⁴

Table 11.3 IoTs designated under the RTC Act 1992 as amended 1998

<i>Name</i>	<i>Abbreviation</i>	<i>Opened</i>
Athlone Institute of Technology	AIT	1970
Institute of Technology, Blanchardstown	ITB	2000
Institute of Technology, Carlow	ITC	1970
Cork Institute of Technology	CIT	1974
Dublin Institute of Technology	DIT	1992
Dundalk Institute of Technology	DkIT	1970
Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology.	IADT	1997
Institute of Technology, Sligo	ITS	1970
Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology	GMIT	1972
Letterkenny Institute of Technology	LYIT	1971
Limerick Institute of Technology	LIT	1993
Institute of Technology, Tallaght	ITT Dublin	1992
Institute of Technology, Tralee	IT Tralee	1977
Waterford Institute of Technology	WIT	1970

CONCLUSION

Vocational education developed in a piecemeal and disjointed way over the period under review. A number of economic and social reasons contributed to this. The country in its early years was industrially under-developed and was dominated by an agricultural society, where the Catholic Church played a significant role in all aspects of Irish life particularly in the education sector. The 1930 VEC Act marked the first attempt by the state to become directly involved in education provision. This was met with significant resistance from the Catholic Church, which controlled both primary and post-primary schools.

Until the late 1950s there was very little demand for a workforce skilled in industrial technology. Continuation education had a different focus in urban and rural areas. In urban areas continuation education prepared young people for available jobs, in rural areas the preparation was a life on the land. For most of the period, until the education reforms of the 1960s, vocational schools were compared unfavourably to the existing secondary schools. They suffered a negative image and catered for a disproportionate number of the poor compared to their secondary school counterparts. The introduction of the state examination the Group Certificate in 1947 did little to change perceptions. The educational reforms of the 1960s witnessed considerable change and vocational education was incorporated fully into mainstream post-primary provision through the introduction of the common Intermediate Certificate course and in time the Leaving Certificate course. VECs supported the development of adult education through the provision of courses, facilities and resources. In urban and rural areas, adults had the opportunity to develop new skills, and the social aspects of these activities were important. VECs also worked closely with community organisations and were part of the community development and education movements that developed from the 1950s onwards.

The Further Education sector owes much of its origins to the VEC sector. Emerging as a response to long-term youth unemployment the sector provided courses and programmes in a range of diverse areas. However, the sector was not closely aligned to the needs of the industrial or commercial sectors. The area also suffered from a lack of investment and there was little opportunity to progress to other forms of education. The vocational sector was not successful in the area of apprenticeship education. While the 1930 act mandated VECs to provide technical education for specific apprenticeships and positions attendance at such courses was not

compulsory. Even when the Apprenticeship Board was established in 1959 to monitor apprenticeship education only a minority of apprentices availed of the educational opportunities available. Outside of the cities there were too few schools available to provide apprenticeship education.

The development of higher technical education was confined in the initial years to the larger cities. The introduction of the Regional Technical Colleges into the system created a new and dynamic system of higher technical education, which had clear links with developments in the economy. This new dimension to vocational education greatly enhanced a sector which had evolved in disparate ways from the 1930s. Recent policy and legislative changes have sought to bring more coherence to the system, to widen apprenticeship education and develop new technological universities. These proposals and initiatives have highlighted the complexities and challenges that have faced the vocational sector since its inception in 1930.

NOTES

1. D. S. Johnson and L. Kennedy 'The two economies in Ireland in the twentieth century', in J. R. Hill (Ed.), *A New History of Ireland VII: Ireland 1921–1984*, (Oxford, 1984), 452–486.
2. C. O'Grada, *The Irish Economy half a century ago*, UCD Centre for Economic Research, Working Paper Series WP08/18. (Dublin, 2008), 1–20.
3. J. Gray (2014), *The circulation of children in rural Ireland during the first half of the twentieth century*, *Continuity and Change*, 29, 399–421.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. S. O'Buachalla *Educational Policy in Twentieth Century Ireland* (Dublin: 1988), 60.
8. M. Clarke, (2012) 'The response of the Roman Catholic Church to the introduction of vocational education in Ireland 1930–1942'. *History of Education*, 41, 477–493.
9. Department of Education *Annual Report*, 1924.
10. *Report of the Commission on Technical Education*, (Dublin, Stationary Office, 1927), 41–53, refers to continuation education.
11. Ibid.
12. *Vocational Education Act 1930*.
13. *Vocational Education Act*. Section 31.
14. Ibid.

15. Department of Education, *Vocational continuation schools and classes: memorandum for the information of committees*, 1931.
16. Ibid.
17. Department of Education *Annual Report 1931–32*, P. No. 962, (Dublin: Stationery Office), Part V. 46.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid.
20. Department of Education *Annual Report 1933–4*, P. No. 1693. (Dublin; Stationery Office), Part V, 58.
21. Ibid.
22. J. Coolahan, *Irish Education, History and Structure*, (Dublin, 1981), 98.
23. M. Clarke, (2012) ‘The response of the Roman Catholic Church to the introduction of vocational education in Ireland 1930–1942’. *History of Education*, 41, 477–493.
24. J. Coolahan, *Irish Education, History and Structure*, 99.
25. A. Hyland and K. Milne *Irish Educational Documents Vol. 2.* (Dublin, 1992), 190.
26. Ibid., 227.
27. Government of Ireland (1940) *Census of Ireland 1936, Vol. 2 Occupations*, Table 4 (C), 30 and Table 4 (c) 32. <http://www.cso.ie/en/census/historicalreports/census1936reports/census1936volume2-occupations/> (last accessed 22 May 2015).
28. A. Hyland, ‘The Curriculum of Vocational Education 1930–1966’, in J. Logan (Ed.), *Teachers’ Union: the TUI and its forerunners 1899–1994*, (Dublin, 1999), 139.
29. Ibid.
30. J. Coolahan, *Irish Education, History and Structure*, 99.
31. *Investment in Education—report of the survey team*, (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1966) Pr. 83111, 293.
32. The Oireachtas sometimes referred to as Oireachtas Éireann, is the legislature of Ireland. It consists of: the President of Ireland, the two Houses of the Oireachtas: Dáil Éireann (Lower house) and Seanad Éireann (Upper house).
33. Dail Debates, Oct–Dec. 1950, 955.
34. *Investment in Education—report of the survey team*, Pr. 8311, 282.
35. Ibid.
36. I. Bonel-Elliott, (1994) ‘Lessons from the sixties: Reviewing Dr Hillery’s Educational Reform’, in *Irish Educational Studies*, Vol. 13, 20.
37. M. Clarke, ‘Educational reform in the 1960s: the introduction of comprehensive schools in the Republic of Ireland’. *History of Education*, 39, (2010), 383–399.
38. M. Clarke, ‘Educational reform in the 1960s’, 385.

39. I. Bonel-Elliott, (1996) 'The role of the Duggan Report (1962) in the reform of the Irish education system', in *Administration*, 44, no.3, 42.
40. B. O Reilly, *Vocational Education and Society in Ireland 1930–1990: A Case Study in the Politics of Education*. (PhD dissertation, University of Edinburgh, 1998), 282.
41. Ibid.
42. J. Coolahan, *Irish Education, History and Structure*, 98.
43. See J. Logan, *Teachers' union: the TUI and its forerunners in Irish education, 1899–1994*.
44. Ibid., 291.
45. Muintir na Tire translation as 'people of the country'. It is a national Association for the Promotion of Community Development.
46. S. Dooney, *Irish Agriculture an Organisational Profile*, (Dublin, 1988), 72.
47. Macra na Feirme translation as 'stalwarts of the land'. It is a rural youth organisation.
48. S. Dooney, *Irish Agriculture an Organisational Profile*, 70.
49. Aontas translation 'union' is the Irish National Association of Adult Education.
50. S, McGuinness, A. Bergin, E. Kelly, S. McCoy, E. Smyth, A. Whelan and J. Banks *Further Education and Training in Ireland: Past, Present and Future*. (Dublin, 2014), 1–166.
51. L. Murtagh, 'The Irish Adult Education Policy Process since 1997'. Ph.D. thesis, National University of Maynooth, 2009.
52. B. Connolly, 'Adult and Community Education: A Model for Higher Education' Maynooth: Department of Adult and Community Education Working Paper, 2006.
53. Aontas, *Community Education: More Than Just a Course*, (Dublin, 2010).
54. L. Murtagh, 'The Irish Adult Education Policy Process since 1997', 100.
55. F. Geaney, *The development of Further Education in the Republic of Ireland with particular reference to the role of Vocational Education Committees and comparable models for Further Education in Britain and Germany*, Masters in Education thesis, University College Dublin, 1996, 40–41.
56. Ibid.
57. M. L. Trant, 'The quest for an inclusive curriculum and assessment culture: the national council for vocational awards 1991-2001', *Irish Educational Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 1, (2002), 19–32.
58. S. McGuinness et al. *Further Education and Training in Ireland: Past, Present and Future*, 16.
59. Ibid., 22.
60. Ibid., 20.
61. Ibid., 21.

62. J. Logan, *Teachers' union: the TUI and its forerunners in Irish education, 1899–1994*, 297.
63. *Investment in Education—report of the survey team*, Pr. 8311297.
64. J. Logan, *Teachers' union: the TUI and its forerunners in Irish education, 1899–1994*, 298.
65. Ibid.
66. L. O'Connor, (2006) 'Meeting the skills needs of a buoyant economy: apprenticeship—the Irish experience', *Journal of Vocational Education and Training*, Vol. 58, No. 1, 31–46.
67. S. McGuinness et al. *Further Education and Training in Ireland: Past, Present and Future*, 17.
68. V. Kis, *Learning for Jobs. OECD Reviews of Vocational Education and Training: Ireland*, (Paris, 2010).
69. S. McGuinness et al. *Further Education and Training in Ireland: Past, Present and Future*, 12.
70. Ibid., 13.
71. Ibid.
72. T. White, *Investing in people: higher education in Ireland 1960–2000*, (Dublin, 2000), 136.
73. Ibid., 42.
74. J. Logan, *Teachers' union: the TUI and its forerunners in Irish education, 1899–1994*, 292.
75. T. White, *Investing in people: higher education in Ireland 1960–2000*, 51.
76. Ibid., 53.
77. Ibid., 58.
78. Ibid., 59.
79. M. Clarke, A. Kenny, A. Loxley, *Creating a supportive working environment in higher education: Country report Ireland* (Dublin, 2015), 1–138.
80. J. Logan, *Teachers' union: the TUI and its forerunners in Irish education, 1899–1994*, 295.
81. Ibid., 296.
82. Under the 1999 Qualifications, Education and Training Act, the DIT became an awarding body in its own right, offering awards from level 6 to level 10 of the National Framework of Qualifications. The other institutes of technology had to apply to the Higher Education Training Awards Council (HETAC) for designated awarding authority. From 2013 both HETAC and FETAC have been replaced by Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) <http://www.qqi.ie/>.
83. M. Clarke et al. *Creating a supportive working environment in higher education: Country report Ireland*, (Dublin, 2015), 20.
84. M. Clarke et al. (2015) *Creating a supportive working environment in higher education: Country report Ireland*, p.21.

Current Developments at Third-Level Institutions in the Light of the Origins of the University

Catherine Kavanagh

There is currently a deep concern being expressed in many quarters about the future development of third-level education and of the University in general. This apprehension is expressed not merely in Ireland but also globally: it first emerged in the USA when Harvard University began applying the business school model to the faculties of liberal arts and humanities.¹ The evidence to date is largely anecdotal but worrying: concerns are expressed about the drop in academic standards, about the increasing links between the Universities, on the one hand, and the corporate sector, on the other, and the possible interference with academic freedom that could imply, and about the ever increasing bureaucratisation of the Universities themselves. Teaching staff complain that a great deal of their time goes on pointless meetings and on paperwork, to the detriment of the teaching and writing that should be central to their profession, whereas parents express concern that the high fees they pay are going to fund administrators rather than teachers. In Ireland, since the Universities Act of 1997, the number of administrators as opposed to teaching and research staff has increased exponentially. Part of the justification given for this is the idea of accountability: academics cannot be trusted to run things

C. Kavanagh (✉)
Mary Immaculate College, Limerick, Ireland

properly (we are told off the record), and so managers must be appointed instead, at high salaries, to oversee the academics. However, since the professional, corporate-style management structures were introduced, university costs have risen enormously, and most institutions are now in debt.

On the purely academic level, complaints are heard that standards are not what they were; that people who are not capable of the course of study required for a degree somehow graduate with university degrees. One hears this largely in relation to the humanities, and the value of the BA in particular has plummeted, but scientists also express the same concern: linguistic competence matters also in the sciences and engineering, and many students now lack an adequate level. Disquiet has also been expressed about the level of mathematical competence of incoming students. There is sometimes a tendency to create an opposition between scientific and mathematical subjects (STEM), on the one hand, and humanities disciplines, on the other, but in fact, the concerns are very similar. Academics claim that it is now difficult to mark students severely; few students fail, and such failures are blamed on the teacher rather than the student by administrators—and it is the administrators who have the final say in the overall outcome. The vocabulary of the factory is increasingly employed to describe relations between university staff: a Dean is now a ‘line-manager’ rather than *primus inter pares*. On the whole, there is a growing sense of unease about university management amongst the academic community: it is perceived as hostile to scholarship and to scholars, who increasingly feel themselves reduced to the level of mere purveyors of a consumer product. What the long-term effect of this move will be remains to be seen (changes in educational policy manifest their practical results slowly, for obvious reasons), but the almost total collapse in mutual trust and esteem is already very painfully obvious, and the human problems that accompany that—bullying, endless disciplinary issues—increasingly bedevil our universities.²

Much of the problem can be attributed to the changing nature of educational establishments. The very word ‘university’ (Lat. *universalis*) implies breadth and openness: the university is that place where all things are of interest. The product of the university is typically the person who can comment sensibly on all, or at least a great many, things, who has a well-informed, broad-minded but well-integrated intellect, which, whilst attending to a particular field or specialism, is aware of others, and capable of dealing with them.³ A few decades ago, this was done by putting all students, no matter what their course of study, through some Arts courses—

many American universities still follow that model, although how long that will last remains to be seen. Personal formation through intellectual effort was very much part of the enterprise; almost as important, in fact, as the professional qualification. Society was all the better for having a well-formed professional and intellectual class, cooperative but independent, and it was the universities that furnished it. Any good university graduate could be relied upon to know something about many things, and thus enrich their specialist interests; writers were, in that sense, professional intellectuals and their comments on political, philosophical, historical and theological matters often shaped future developments in those fields.

However, as Michel Foucault remarked in a late interview with Paul Rabinow,⁴ we are now seeing the death of the intellectual. Specialists are what we require now; we do not care if they are narrow, as long as they can resolve the particular issue that concerns us, and educational curricula reflect this. The goal is to produce a worker who is serviceable to industry, rather than the independent human being who can assess the value of the industry in the first place. This is evident in so many fields: we do not ask economists, for example, what the ethical implications of their recommendations will be; anyone who did ask such a question would be considered impertinent or simply stupid—this is not a question they can answer. (Newman foresaw this when the School of Economics was established at the University of London in his day, and it alarmed him.) Taken to its logical conclusion, clearly this poses enormous problems: as has become all too evident in the case of medical research, where the need for ethical guidelines is grudgingly, but resentfully conceded, and a certain awkwardness accompanies it, as though, really, we had no right to introduce such a concern into the purity of such scientific research—no matter what such research involves. The need for someone who can take an overall view of many issues has not gone away; what has gone away, thanks to the increasing specialisation of educational programmes, is the person who can do so.

The question does need to be asked: to what extent is the bureaucratisation and corporatisation of the university responsible for the loss of a broad humanistic curriculum? Or, to put it another way, did the independence of the universities, when they had it, serve some good purpose, which we will now miss? To this end, it might be interesting to look at the origin and development of the universities, the structures they developed and what emerged from them, and to ask if a different type of institution, even if it retains the name of ‘university’ is in fact the same thing, and capable of fulfilling the same purpose. This is worth doing, on Alasdair

MacIntyre's principle, formulated in relation to ethics in his definitive *After Virtue*, that our institutions function according to elements taken from several different systems of thought. We are unaware of many of these elements, with the result that we often talk at cross-purposes, and if we wish to restore some kind of meaningful dialogue in relation to the issues that concern us, it is imperative that we should become aware of the various elements that operate in our discussion.⁵ To this end, for the remainder of this paper, I shall first of all give an account of the origins and rise of the Western university system, highlighting those elements that are of particular concern to our current debates. I shall then discuss the Irish situation in particular—Irish universities emerged, of course, from the same cultural matrix as all Western universities, but because of the particular difficulties that Ireland faced, certain problems emerge with great clarity here, especially in the nineteenth century. Finally, I will consider our current discussion in the light of the origin and nature of the university as such, and conclude.

THE ORIGINS OF THE UNIVERSITY

Universities are essentially a mediaeval invention.⁶ Prior to the definitive emergence of universities in Western Europe in the thirteenth century, there had been a number of different kinds of educational and research institution. The most notable of these in antiquity, are the Academy of Plato, the Lyceum of Aristotle and the great *Mouseion* of Alexandria (i.e., the great Library of Alexandria), founded by Ptolemy I Soter under the direction of Demetrius of Phalerus.⁷ What characterises each of these is the emphasis on the thought and methodology of their great founders. Even when the scholars who worked in them developed the ideas of Aristotle or Plato in directions which seem very far removed from their original thought, the intention was always to develop the philosophy of the master—as the thousand-year history of the Academy indicates. From its foundation by Plato in the third century BC to its final closure by the Emperor Justinian in 527 (and, in the context of our current problems, it is interesting to note also that Justinian had that kind of authority over it—the Kings of France could not have shut down the Sorbonne in the same way), debate at the Academy was 'Platonic': from the Old Academy through the scepticism of the New Academy through Middle and Neo-Platonism, it was all Platonic.⁸ Likewise, the *Mouseion* of Alexandria founded under the direction of Demetrius of Phalerus, former tutor at the Lyceum of

Aristotle (who brought with him part of the Library of Theophrastus) was indebted to its royal patron—who did, in fact, allow it a great deal of autonomy. The *Mouseion* of Alexandria inherited the Aristotelian ideal of disinterested and independent scientific research, dedicated to the deepening of natural science and exact science. Literary criticism and philology were developed here for the first time: for scholars such as Callimachus and Aristarchus, the literary work was an object of scientific research.⁹ The significance of the Alexandrian grammarians was twofold: first, they preserved a great many texts that would otherwise have been lost; second, in their research on older texts, noticing obsolete forms that were nonetheless intelligible if one understood the process of linguistic change, they formulated for the first time some of the rules governing linguistic development.¹⁰ None of these institutions claimed to be universal in their scope, none of them was independent, and scholars who worked there understood clearly that, in entering them, they were undertaking an apprenticeship in the thought of a master rather than embarking on any kind of independent and disinterested scientific research—with the exception, perhaps, of the literary and grammatical research carried out at Alexandria.

With the fall of the Roman Empire in the West in the fifth century, the preservation and transmission of knowledge found new institutional structures. Monasteries and cathedral chapters ran schools, some of which achieved great renown—Chartres, for example, St. Gallen and Rheims.¹¹ With the rise of the Carolingians, these were supplemented by Palace schools, sponsored by the Emperor; the Palace school of Charles the Bald in the ninth century attained a very high level of scholarship under the direction of the Irish philosopher Johannes Scottus Eriugena.¹² Much of the work in these schools depended on the strong support of the Abbot of the monastery or the Bishop of the diocese: they were essentially dependent on the goodwill of the institutional superior. The inherent weakness of such dependent institutions became apparent on the death of Charles the Bald, when his empire dissolved into warfare and anarchy, and the members of his Palace school scattered to the four winds—we know the fates only of those who found refuge in monasteries.

During the twelfth century, these schools were supplemented by independent institutions run by well-known scholars on their own account: this was in some respects a return to the model of the Academy, which was Plato's school. One of the most famous of these was the school of William of Champeaux—this is rather a romanticised period in intellectual

history, the period of the ‘City of Lights’, the scholars of the Pont-Neuf and the colourful career of Abelard, a rather ungrateful student of the above-mentioned William of Champeaux.¹³ Each of these scholars was independent, and each of the schools was a free enterprise. The extent to which the Church interfered with the work of these scholars is greatly exaggerated by later historians, who have their own axes to grind. It is often forgotten that the very elaborate scheme of Christian theology was hammered out over centuries of very lively debate, which would have been simply impossible had the Church been the kind of dead hand pictured by Victorian agnosticism. The controversialist Peter Abelard was just as keen to convince the thinkers of the School of Chartres of the error of their ways regarding the Trinity as they were to convince him; he lost that particular battle, but, as Gilson pointed out, much of his work on logic and philosophical method informed subsequent generations of scholastic philosophers, and paved the way for the revival of Aristotelian scholarship as the texts became available during the course of the twelfth century.¹⁴

The universities, then, arose during the course of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries as cooperatives of independent scholars, drawn largely from the cathedral schools, and making use of new developments in civil and canon law to form free corporations of scholars, similar to the mediæval craftsmen’s Guilds, also developing at this time. At Paris and Oxford, these were corporations of Masters (*universitas magistrorum*), who pooled their resources in one enterprise rather than continuing with independent schools; at Bologna, the university began as a corporation of students (*universitas studiorum*). Unlike the great schools of antiquity, they were not associated with the thought of any one master; unlike the monastery and cathedral schools, they were not dependent on any one monastery, religious order or cathedral chapter for their existence. (Unsurprisingly, it is at this point in history that we hear the first student complaints about university fees). Religious orders were associated with them, above all the mendicant orders, and there were complaints that the orders had too much influence at the universities, but, significantly, the orders never actually controlled them. We do not have charters of foundation for these earliest institutions, but later universities received charters from Popes and kings, indicating their rights and privileges.¹⁵ They enjoyed a great deal of autonomy, both as regards the State and as regards the Church: it was often the universities, in fact, who legislated for the Bishop regarding charges of heresy rather than vice versa.

THE CURRICULUM AT THE UNIVERSITY

What was on the curriculum at the mediaeval university? Students normally arrived at university at the age of around fifteen, and began the course of study for the Baccalaureate. This consisted of the Liberal Arts, so called because they were ‘free’—that is to say, pursued for their own sake rather than for the sake of any practical application they might have. Initially these were seven—Grammar, Rhetoric, Dialectic, Arithmetic, Geometry, Astronomy and Music, but in the course of the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the curriculum was somewhat streamlined (much to the disgust of scholars such as John of Salisbury).¹⁶ For the BA, students studied ‘philosophy’ that is, the logic and natural philosophy of Aristotle, which was supplemented by the rich commentary tradition that had grown up around it. This took approximately three to four years; the final examination consisted of a disputation the student had to settle to the satisfaction of the Masters. Following that, the student took the MA, lasting a further year or so, which was awarded on the successful settlement of a final disputed question with his Master. At that point, and only then, could the student proceed to one of the learned professions: theology, law or medicine.

As is evident from the curriculum in Arts, scholastic method—the method of the disputed question—was the predominant method of teaching and research. This offered certain advantages, still evident today: whereas, on the one hand, literary style and the careful reading of texts suffered, on the other hand, all sides of a question had to be aired. A glance at the works of a well-known scholastic, such as Aquinas, makes this very clear. In the *Summa Theologiae*, we see Aquinas state the proposition under consideration (e.g., ‘That the existence of God can be proven’), state the reasons in favour of the proposition, state the reasons against it, consider the arguments on both sides in more depth, before honing in on the arguments he considers decisive, stating why they are decisive, and concluding with final responses being given to the arguments found wanting.¹⁷ What is notable in this method is the exposure given to all sides of any issue in dispute. It uses authorities—Scripture, the Fathers of the Church—but it does not depend on them for the cogency of its argument.¹⁸ This is quite a break with the earlier, monastic tradition of study, which accepted the authority of the texts under consideration, and set itself to interpret them as closely as possible. There is a break with that very close examination of texts here, and a shift in emphasis to the actual problem to be considered;

in fact, mediaeval students often studied their key texts from anthologised collections of extracts from their key authors—*florilegia*—rather than from the textbooks themselves; clearly this could and did lead to a loss of literary and hermeneutical value. However, what was perhaps lost in terms of hermeneutical subtlety was compensated for by an extraordinary freedom of argument. Because a disputation had to settle a question finally, it had to defeat any possible argument against it. Therefore, in order to confront all possible arguments, it had to state them, and state them clearly, before going on to defeat them. This meant that there was great freedom of speech at the Universities: that certain conclusions would be reached was anticipated, but along the way, one could say anything.¹⁹

It also indicates great confidence in the rational intellectual process in and of itself. There were several notable disputes between authorities and scholars in the course of the Middle Ages, perhaps most famously the Condemnations of 1277, when 219 propositions of Aristotle were condemned as heretical by Etienne Tempier, Bishop of Paris, and the teaching of them was forbidden at the University. Scholars of Aristotle from all perspectives, including Aquinas, were also included in the condemnation, and forbidden to teach. As Aquinas had recognised in his disputes with the followers of Averroes' approach to Aristotle, this was largely a dispute concerning the interpretation and presentation of Aristotle by different groups of scholars, at the heart of which was the question as to whether scientific and theological claims could contradict each other, and both remain true: Aquinas maintained they could not.²⁰ However, even a person who was wrong could be acting in good faith and deserved to be treated with respect depending on the inherent quality of the intellectual effort involved.²¹ Aquinas himself had died by 1277, but his approach was defended by his teacher, Albert the Great. His student, Giles of Rome, included like Aquinas in the condemnations, was fully rehabilitated in 1285; he finished his days as Archbishop of Bourges. What is notable about the whole process surrounding the Condemnations of 1277 is the robust attitude to their freedom on the part of the scholars involved: they draw the line at talking nonsense and accept that they must act in conformity with what is acknowledged to be true, but, in the event of a conflict of authorities, it is logical, rational argument that must be the final arbiter.

This implies a strong belief in the ultimate intelligibility of problems, and tremendous confidence in the capacity of human reason to resolve them. It is a confidence which spreads itself in all directions, in all fields. Issues in law are examined as carefully as issues in theology; the work

in logic during the fourteenth century following the rehabilitation of Aristotle in the thirteenth is still of interest, and it is at this point that natural science begins to develop.²² Of course, it would be a mistake to look for anything like the apparatus of the contemporary study of science in the medieval university, but certain key developments opened the possibility of the later development of science, and without them, we would not have it, chiefly the rediscovery of the complete works of Aristotle, accompanied by their Neoplatonic Arabic and Jewish commentaries, which did a lot to condition the western response to them. Included in this corpus of Greek, Arabic and Jewish material, both Aristotelian and Neoplatonic, is a great deal of scientific material, above all, Aristotle's physics, astronomy and biology. These piqued the curiosity of key philosophers, notably Albert the Great, Robert Grosseteste and Roger Bacon, who set themselves to study certain elements that interested them—Grosseteste, for example, studied optics and the workings of light very closely.²³

The motivations for doing this are complex and perhaps not easy for the typical modern mind to grasp: Grosseteste was interested in light as symbolic, based on such Biblical allusions as 'the light of the world'—and in the real significance of these statements. He did not expect any work he might do on optics ever to have any practical application but to enlighten him spiritually. The metaphorical language of Scripture is very rich, rooted in the experience of the world, and the expectation is that the better ones' understanding of the physical world, the richer ones' spiritual experience in the meditation on Scripture. This goes some way to explaining the juxtaposition that puzzles the modern observer: the interest in scientific matters, combined with the lack of practical work. However, the point to note here, and the element from which we can learn, is the fact that scientific work first develops in a culture of knowledge cultivated for its own sake, because any wisdom is good, and is worth having. Had the Middle Ages confined themselves to what was purely practical, to merely technical subjects, useful to the then economy, the technology of the Middle Ages is what we would still have. The technical applications of new discoveries often emerge centuries after the knowledge itself is uncovered: we see this, for example, in the case of quaternions, or the Boolean arithmetic that underpins modern computing, of no practical use whatsoever when first discovered.

The spiritual rationale for the interest in Aristotelean and Arab science has this great benefit: in its linking of spiritual and scientific experience, it establishes, definitively, that the physical world is intelligible and worthy of study. Again, we are so accustomed to the idea (which we never justify)

that reason is purely empirical and that what we can experience physically is of course intelligible and open to rational analysis—and manipulation—that we find it difficult to understand the older, fundamentally Platonic mentality, according to which the spiritual is certainly rational, but there is no guarantee whatsoever about the physical. When Plato, in the *Timaeus*, placed the physical world in some opposition to the spiritual, inherently irrational and only with difficulty formed by rational process, he articulated a very common human idea about that physical world: that it is not ultimately or inherently intelligible. The combination of Scriptural assertion regarding the work of *Logos* (i.e., rational process) in the physical world, Scriptural metaphors, which delight in the physical world and the study of Aristotelian science resulted in a mentality according to which it was worth studying the world: it had been made according to a rational plan, and study of it would yield real knowledge.

However, Aristotle and key authors within the Western tradition were clearly in conflict on a number of key points. From this conflict of authorities arose scholastic method, as noted above. An older method of study regarded a single author as having said the last word on everything—we have noted the ongoing reference of everything that arose back to Plato at the Academy of Athens, and there a several further examples: Servius wrote extensive commentaries on Virgil, in which Virgil becomes an expert on everything possible, from the gods of Rome to cosmology to agriculture; either one accepted Virgil as the final authority on everything or one did not—there was no room for manoeuvre.²⁴ The same mentality emerges in regard to Augustine during the early middle ages—there are several pseudo-Augustinian texts from the early middle ages, on all sorts of topics, indicating a belief in the final authority of Augustine on just about anything (Augustine, of course, would have rejected this belief outright).²⁵ However, scholastic method compared a variety of authoritative sources. It noted that often they clashed and sought to find a way of dealing with that conflict—hence the emphasis on logic. It also noted that sometimes they could be added to, or perfected, and from this arises the idea that there are things we do not yet know, but can discover; that knowledge itself is not complete with any authority, and that authorities need to be scrutinised. From this ultimately comes the belief, taken for granted now, that by exploration and experiment we can discover new things. Most things were studied initially for their inherent interest; their practical or industrial applications only came later—a long time later—and as a side effect of a pursuit of knowledge for its own sake.

THE ORIGINS AND THE CURRENT UNIVERSITY

What do we owe this independent, co-operative corporation that was the mediaeval university? The history of mediaeval universities is long and complex, and we have only skimmed the surface of their foundation and purpose here. However, certain key features do emerge that may help us to understand the peculiar position of universities in our own time. In the first place, universities were self-governing corporations of independent scholars, whether masters or students. They arose from the schools of the early Middle Ages, especially the Cathedral schools, once these schools began to go beyond their immediate purpose of training clergy for the diocese or Cathedral chapter. This incorporation of the university as a self-governing entity switched the focus of governing power from the Cathedral chapter to the scholars themselves. Thus the university, although it was patronised by State and clergy, was independent of both. Its future did not depend on pleasing the local potentate, and it was not seriously affected by his fate. Rather, the survival of the university depended on whether or not it could attract students, which placed the emphasis firmly on the quality of the people actually teaching in it. The schools of the early middle ages sponsored by monasteries, cathedrals and kings engaged in a very intense hermeneutical enterprise, the study and interpretation of Scripture and of the Fathers of the Church. In one sense, this had a fundamentally practical aim: the formation of the monk or the training of the priest or courtier, and so it worked for centuries. However, as the intellectual culture of Western Europe deepened, it became evident that much was of interest that was not of immediate practical use, and the emergence of the university reflects the value that our ancestors placed on interest alone.

Scholarship, therefore, became the primary value, rather than training a certain class or pleasing the powerful—in fact, the powerful were frequently displeased, but the juridical status of the university prevented that from having much of an effect on the scholars, unless, of course, the matter were very serious.²⁶ This independence, although it could be abused, like any other good thing, led to great freedom of enquiry, and a shift in emphasis from attaining the correct understanding of authorities to attaining knowledge as such. Notably, universities were not practical. They only gave professional qualifications in three areas: theology, law and medicine, and, in order to study those, one had to come through the Arts faculty first. During the Middle Ages, on the whole, professional qualifications were obtained through the Guilds, an interesting blend of

professional association and trade union. The Guild took in the apprentice, trained him, qualified him, and guaranteed his work thereafter. It may have been a closed shop, but it was clear-headed. Nobody would have expected the Universities to take over the role of the Guilds in providing professional formation in fields other than law and medicine: the goal of the universities was not that of providing workers to the economy, although the middle ages needed those too. Since the goal of the university was not purely practical, and since this was understood (it is estimated that the majority of people who attended universities merely attended for a year or two, and never obtained degrees), scholars were free to pursue knowledge for its own sake. Out of this arose the modern value of the free pursuit of knowledge by scholars who are themselves free to do so, and out of that has come so much of what we understand to be science and disinterested research.

THE SITUATION IN IRELAND

Throughout the later Middle Ages, Irish students tended to attend the English or Continental universities—in the career of Richard Fitzralph, for example, we see how an Irish scholar and philosopher could negotiate the university system of medieval Europe. Thomas Aquinas was taught by a scholar called Peter of Ireland, who had evidently made a career at the University of Naples, recently founded (1224) by the Emperor Frederick II (it is the oldest State university in the world). Culturally, this seems to be a continuation of the pattern established in the early Middle Ages of wandering Irish scholars on the Continent, who presumably found there resources unavailable to the same extent at home. With the coming of the Reformation, the easy passage between English and Continental universities came to an end, Oxford and Cambridge adopting a fundamentally Protestant culture, whereas Paris, Salamanca and Louvain (the nearest universities to Ireland otherwise) remained Catholic. Trinity College Dublin was founded in 1592 by Elizabeth I to encourage the adoption of the Elizabethan Settlement by Irish Catholics; it rapidly became the university attended by the Protestant Anglo-Irish ascendancy, although it had some Catholic students also as time went by—for example, the poet and musician Thomas Moore.

Following Catholic Emancipation in 1829, the need for a Catholic University became acute. The Catholic seminary at St. Patrick's College, Maynooth had already been founded by George III in 1793, in response

to the French Revolution: it was thought highly undesirable for Irish candidates for the priesthood to travel to the Irish Colleges at Paris or elsewhere on the Continent, where revolutionary ideas were rife. However, a university that addressed the needs of lay Catholics in Ireland did not exist. Parliament (at Westminster), especially the House of Lords, was reluctant to endow an institution that would essentially challenge the Established Church in Ireland, and Catholics, including such eminent ones as Daniel O'Connell, disliked the idea of a non-denominational institution. Particularly in the earlier part of the nineteenth century, non-denominational was a phrase that had in any case very little meaning: the State was a confessional State (Church of Ireland), and such opposition or resistance as existed to that was either Catholic or Non-conformist.

In 1850, the Queen's University of Ireland was founded, in order to award degrees to students of the Queens Colleges at Belfast, Cork and Galway, which had been established in 1845 for the University education of Catholics. They were never endowed as Catholic colleges, largely due to Protestant opposition, and they met with a good deal of resistance from Catholics—they were nicknamed the 'godless colleges,' and disapproval of them went as far as Rome, where Pius XI condemned them. In 1854, John Henry Newman arrived in Dublin as Rector of the newly founded Catholic University, with five faculties of law, letters, medicine, philosophy and theology; from his involvement with this attempt at a Catholic university emerged his classic *Idea of a University*, the definitive statement of the humanistic educational ideal in modern times. The Irish Hierarchy and Newman did not see eye to eye on the development of the university—essentially they refused to allow him the resources and freedom to develop it according to his own vision of things, and Newman returned to England in 1857. Although it had some eminent staff and students, and the medical school always enjoyed a high reputation (unlike the other faculties, the medical school was chartered by the appropriate authority, the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland), the Catholic University struggled from then on. It was not chartered, due to the prejudice and short-sightedness of various different authorities and influential groups already mentioned, and by 1879, student enrolment had fallen to three students.

In 1880, the Royal University of Ireland was founded, which, unlike the Queen's University, was willing to recognise and grant degrees to Catholic institutions: St. Mary's College, Belfast, St. Patrick's College Maynooth and the Catholic University at Dublin, which became University College Dublin. This institution eventually became the National University of

Ireland in the Republic, with constituent colleges at Dublin, Cork, Galway and Maynooth, and the Queen's University of Belfast in the North of Ireland. One interesting feature of QUB was the foundation of the Department of Scholastic Philosophy there in 1908, due, amongst other things, to the influence of Edward Carson, who, although Protestant and very strongly identified with the Protestant cause, thought that Catholics should be adequately catered for in an institution that aimed to be inclusive.

What is notable about the university debates in Ireland in the nineteenth century is the emphasis on cultural elements: Newman is definite about the fact that the heart of university education is the humanistic curriculum, and the curriculum he wished to introduce in Dublin was essentially that from which he had benefited so much himself at Oriel College, Oxford University. It emphasised Classics, but, unlike other Colleges in the Oxford system at that time, Oriel did not emphasise examinations, but viewed scholarship as an ongoing process of formation of both masters and students in a shared enterprise. This high view of the value of education in the humanities persisted down to recent times: James Joyce, an intending medical student, studied literature at University College Dublin, and students in all faculties, including science and engineering, studied an Arts discipline in the 1940s. The ideal of scholarship as a collaborative search for truth by both professor and student was certainly known well into the final decade of the twentieth century: Mary Gallagher has referred to it several times in her different articles and presentations, and the present author remembers it as a feature of her own undergraduate education at UCD, from 1985 to 88. That education ought to be essentially commercial is an innovation of the early years of this century, and this has led to a fall in standards, misleading claims by university administrators, spiralling costs, and the complete break-down in mutual trust referred to above.

CURRENT DISCUSSION

In our own time, and in our own country, we see this value of the disinterested pursuit of knowledge being attacked with a new vigour. We are told that what we need are practical degrees, degrees that will enable people to get jobs—in other words, the Universities are now expected to fulfil the role played in the Middle Ages by the Guilds in obtaining professional qualifications. Corporate and industrial sponsorship of the Universities ensures that the particular practical and educational needs of those corporations are met, but areas of study not having immediate,

obvious technical or commercial application are suffering badly. Yet, to confine the activities of the university to the immediate practical needs of society is to re-enter the closed intellectual circle of the study of authorities and the resolving of practical problems obtained before its foundation. It was not immediately apparent when Albert and Grosseteste began to study the natural philosophy of Aristotle that from this would emerge the miracle that is modern science, with all its accompanying material benefits to humanity. It was simply something that was interesting for its own sake. How many things are there now that are simply interesting for their own sake? To what extent is that kind of knowledge being squeezed out of the university, and, if it is lost, what future possibilities will we lose along with it? Truly creative innovation cannot be scheduled, for the simple reason that it is truly creative, something new, unseen, creating a new place for itself. But openness to whatever it is possible for the human mind to know can prepare the way for it and recognise it all the more quickly. That openness has, until now, been the legacy of the medieval university to us. We should not be so quick to throw it overboard.

NOTES

1. See M. Gallagher, *Academic Armageddon: An Irish Requiem For Higher Education*. (Dublin, 2013), Part 1 for a comprehensive overview of current developments in the faculties of arts and humanities across the USA and Europe, which display the same patterns and arouse the same concerns everywhere. See also B. Walsh, *Degrees of Nonsense* (Dublin, 2012).
2. See D. J. Twale and B. M. De Luca, *Faculty Incivility: The Rise of the Academic Bully Culture and What to Do About It* (Jossey-Bass, 2012), for an interesting account of the effect of corporatization on American universities. Many of the phenomena described there are increasingly features of Irish universities now.
3. The classic statement of this humanistic ideal in modern times is of course Newman's *Idea of a University*: see John Henry Newman, *The idea of a university: defined and illustrated in nine discourses delivered to the Catholics of Dublin in occasional lectures and essays addressed to the members of the Catholic University*, M. J. Svaglic (Ed. with an introduction and notes) (Notre Dame, 1982).
4. P. Rabinow and M. Foucault, 'Polemics, Politics and Problematizations: an Interview with Michel Foucault' in *The Foucault Reader*, Paul Rabinow (Ed.), (New York, 1984), 369ff.

5. See A. C. MacIntyre, *After Virtue: a study in moral theory* (Notre Dame, 1984). See also by the same author, *God, Philosophy, Universities: A Selective History of the Catholic Philosophical Tradition* (Lanham, 2009) for some interesting observations on the development of universities from the perspective of a philosopher.
6. For a general overview of this enormous area of scholarship, see A. B. Cobben, *The medieval universities: their development and organization* (London, 1975); A. L. Gabriel, *Garlandia; studies in the history of the mediaeval university* (Notre Dame, 1969); A. L. Gabriel, *The ideal master of the mediaeval university* (Washington, D.C., 1974) and all Prof. Gabriel's indispensable work on the University of Paris, published in more than 100 volumes; Roland Hissette (1977) *Enquête sur les 219 articles condamnés à Paris le 7 mars 1277* (Louvain: Publications universitaires); H. Rashdall, (1895) *The Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages* New Edition (F. M. Powicke and A. B. Emden (Eds.), 3 volumes, (Oxford, 1936, 1995); R.W. Southern, *Western Society and the Church in the Middle Ages* (England, 1970); JMMH Thijssen, 'Master Amalric and the Amalricians: Inquisitorial Procedure and the Suppression of Heresy at the University of Paris' *Speculum* (1991) 71:1; JMMH Thijssen, *Censure and Heresy at the University of Paris: 1200–1400* (Philadelphia, 1998) and '1277 Revisited: A New Interpretation of the Doctrinal Investigations of Thomas Aquinas and Giles of Rome' *Vivarium* (1997) 34; L. Thorndike, *University Records and Life in the Middle Ages* (New York, 1994).
7. See H.A. Phillips, 'The Great Library of Alexandria?' *Library Philosophy and Practice*, August 2010.
8. For a definitive account of the Old Academy, see J. Dillon, *The heirs of Plato : a study of the Old Academy, 347–274 B.C.* (Oxford, 2003); for subsequent developments, see S. Gersh, *Reading Plato, tracing Plato : from ancient commentary to medieval reception* (Aldershot, 2005) and Gersh's work generally; also M. Bonazzi and J. Opsomer (Eds.), *The origins of the Platonic system : Platonisms of the early empire and their philosophical contexts* (Louvain, 2009).
9. See L. Holtz (Ed.), *Donatus. Ars minor/Ars major. Donat et la tradition de l'enseignement grammaticale. Étude sur l'Arts Donati et sa diffusion (IV - IXe siècle) et édition critique.* (Paris, 1981), Intro. 4–5.
10. L. Holtz, *Donatus*, 4; see also Steintal, vol. II, 82–121.
11. For the general educational history of this period, see P. Riché, *Éducation et Culture dans l'Occident barbare, VIe - VIIIe siècles*, Third ed. (Paris, 1972). J. Contreni (Transl.) *Education and Culture in the Barbarian West, Sixth through Eighth Centuries*, (Columbia, 1976) also P. Riché, *Écoles et Enseignement dans le haut Moyen Age. Les Écoles et l'enseignement dans l'Occident chrétien de la fin du Ve au milieu du XIe siècle*, (Paris, 1979). For

- the Cathedral School of Laon, see J.J. Contreni, *The Cathedral School of Laon from 850 to 930: Its Manuscripts and Masters*, (München, 1978); for the extremely important School at Chartres, see É. Jeuneau, *Rethinking the School of Chartres*, C. P. Desmarais (Transl.) (Toronto, 2009).
12. See M. Cappuyns, *Jean Scot Érigène. Sa vie, son oeuvre, sa pensée* (Louvain, 1933), also idem (1966) ‘Les ‘Bibli Vulfadi’ et Jean Scot Erigène’. (Louvain: *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale* 33) 137–39.
 13. See: R. B. Begley and J. W. Koterski, *Medieval education Conference on Medieval Studies* (New York, 2005); also: I. P. Wei, *Intellectual culture in medieval Paris: theologians and the university, c.1100–1330* (Cambridge/New York, 2012); also J. Marenbon (Ed.), *The many roots of medieval logic: the aristotelian and the non-aristotelian traditions: special offprint of Vivarium* 45, 2–3 (Leiden, Boston, 2007). The definitive account of the foundation, academic and legal, of the University of Paris is: A. Gabriel, *Prospectus: The charters of foundations and statutes of all the Colleges at the University of Paris from the twelfth century to the French Revolution*. S.l. : s.n. 1966.
 14. On Abelard’s Trinitarian theology, see Peter Abelard, *De l’unité et de la trinité divines = Theologia summi boni* introduction, traduction et notes par Jean Jolivet, (Paris: 2001), a position that aroused the opposition of the School of Chartres, which eventually led to the condemnation of Abelard’s position; for more general comment, see E. Gilson, *The unity of philosophical experience* (New York, 1973), many reprints.
 15. See, *Prospectus: The charters of foundations and statutes of all the Colleges at the University of Paris from the twelfth century to the French Revolution*. Astrik L. Gabriel S.l. : s.n.; also: L. Thorndike, *University Records and Life in the Middle Ages*, (New York, 1944).
 16. John of Salisbury 1120–1180. Bishop of Chartres from 1176 until his death.
 17. See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* Ia, q. 2, a. 3.
 18. See B. Lawn, *Rise and decline of the scholastic Quaestio disputata: with special emphasis on its use in the teaching of medicine and science* (Leiden/New York, 1993) for a comprehensive account of the mediaeval form of teaching and disputation, and, notably, of its role in the development of modern scientific method.
 19. This is particularly evident in the quodlibetal literature of the medieval universities. A ‘quodlibet’ was literally a free-for-all, where a question was posed to a master, who had to respond to all sides of the question, thinking on his feet as he did so. Some of them are extremely important to the philosophical development of scholasticism—e.g., the quodlibets of Henry of Ghent, Thomas Aquinas, and Godfrey of Fontaines, but there is a huge literature, since quodlibets were practised by everybody from the twelfth to the sixteenth centuries. *Quodlibet Henrici de Gandavo*; R. Macken, (Ed.),

- O.F.M. (Leuven, 1979), Ancient and medieval philosophy: De Wulf-Mansion Centre; Series 2. Opera omnia; 5, 6, 10, 11, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18, 20) for some indication of the richness and diversity of this literature.
20. See R. McInerny, *Aquinas against the Averroists: on there being only one intellect* (West Lafayette, 1993) for a more extensive account of this debate.
 21. We see this in Aquinas' treatise on the Eternity of the World in Aristotle, where, himself accepting Scriptural claims as to the origin of the world in time, an acceptance based on his own faith in the veracity of Scripture, he nonetheless maintains that, given the limitations under which he was working, one could not have expected Aristotle to have reached any other conclusion. Thomas Aquinas, *On the eternity of the world (De aeternitate mundi)* (Milwaukee, 1964); also J.B.M. Wissink (Ed.), *The eternity of the world in the thought of Thomas Aquinas and his contemporaries*, (Leiden, 1990).
 22. See L. Thorndike, *History of Magic and Experimental Science* 8 volumes, (New York, 1934–58), George, *Introduction to the History of Science* (3 volumes in 5, Baltimore, 1931); E. Grant, 'Late Medieval Thought, Copernicus and the Scientific Revolution' *Journal of the History of Ideas* (1962), 23:2; E. Grant, *Foundations of Modern Science in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1996); J. Hannam, *The Genesis of Science: How the Christian Middle Ages Launched the Scientific Revolution* (Washington D.C., 2011) xiii ff, 177–93; P. Duhem, *Essays on the History and Philosophy of Science* (R. Ariew and P. Barker (Trans.) (Indianapolis, 1996).
 23. See J. J. McEvoy, *Robert Grosseteste (Great Mediaeval Thinkers)* (Oxford, 2000) 109 ff.; R. Grossatesta *Metafisica della luce* introduzione, traduzione e note di Pietro Rossi, 1a ed. (Milano, 1986); See J.J. McEvoy, *The Philosophy of Robert Grosseteste* (Oxford, 1987) for a complete contextualisation of Grosseteste's work on science, above all, light, *passim*.
 24. Servius. *Servii Grammatici qui feruntur in Vergilii carmina comentarii*. Georg Thilo and Hermann Hagen (Eds.), 3 vols. (Leipzig, 1881); *The Virgilian tradition: the first fifteen hundred years*, J. M. Ziolkowski and M. C. J. Putnam, (Eds.), (New Haven, 2008).
 25. See M. Smyth (1996), *Understanding the universe in seventh-century Ireland* (UK & NY, 1996) for an account of some of the pseudo-Augustinian texts, especially those of scientific interest.
 26. Even in these cases, such as the debate over John Wycliffe's theological works, which convulsed fourteenth-century England, the process was generally thorough and long-drawn out, and the people concerned were given the opportunity to defend their theses, or else appeal the verdict, as we see in the case of the disputes of 1277, which are the fruit of a century-long debate over the works of Aristotle. For Wycliffe, see A. Hudson and A. Kenny, 'Wyclif, John (d. 1384)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford, 2004); for 1277 see n. 3 above.

Advanced Education for Working People: The Catholic Workers' College, a Case Study

David Limond

INTRODUCTION

Whether for good or ill, the rapid decline of the standing of the Catholic Church in the Republic of Ireland in the late twentieth and early twenty first centuries is a well enough known story. Though a crude measure of anything, it is a striking fact that, in 1932, a Eucharistic Congress, culminating in an open-air ceremony in Dublin's Phoenix Park, could attract an estimated 1 million people, but an equivalent event in 2012 saw unsold tickets left over for a gathering in a rather more modestly sized stadium.¹ In addition to the more general processes of secularisation that have been at work in Europe and elsewhere for decades, if not centuries, and which have had obvious implications for Ireland,² a series of scandals related to clerical abuse of children/adolescents have been documented in official³ and popular publications,⁴ some of the latter harrowingly autobiographical.⁵ Rightly or wrongly, concern at the undoubtedly repressive conditions in such residential institutions as orphanages, children's homes and so-called Magdalene laundries now often spills over in such a way as to contribute to the construction of a place of fearful repute: 'the Catholic

D. Limond (✉)
School of Education, Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland

school?. In this way, Catholic education in Ireland has come to be thought of as a site of widespread abuse of power. These matters are probably only now beginning to receive systematic academic attention,⁶ but some Catholic educational institutions continue to be remembered (or so it seems to me, though this is, admittedly, anecdotal and impressionistic on my part) with affection and respect. One such institution was the Catholic Workers' College (CWC), though it is perhaps better remembered by its later title, the National College of Industrial Relations (NCIR).

The foundation of what would become the CWC was first mooted in 1947 when Irish Jesuit Provincial Thomas Byrne (1904–1978) proposed to establish a 'Social Centre' to which a college for Catholic workers was to be attached.⁷ The Social Centre would have been an ambitious project, involving scholarly research and publication, matters that were dealt with in the CWC only as time/resources permitted, which it rarely did, and in a more or less haphazard way.⁸ But implementation of the Jesuit Provincial's proposal, even in its eventual, truncated version, did not come about until 1951, in part as a result of the CWC's prospective Prefect of Studies, Edward Joseph Coyne, S.J. (1896–1958), then occupied in giving lectures to extra-mural students at University College Dublin.⁹

Opening its doors to students in a building belonging to the Irish province of the Society of Jesus in Dublin's genteel Ranelagh district in February 1951, the CWC commenced a history of operation that, in a strict sense, has not ended yet. Between 1951 and 1966, it provided lectures on moral and socio-political topics to students from a range of backgrounds, including industrial managers, supervisors and union shop stewards. From 1966 to 1984, what was effectively the same body 'traded' as the College of Industrial Relations (CIR), a change in name intended to reflect the fact that it was 'open for business' to Catholics and non-Catholics, workers and managers, all alike.

Finally, in the early 1980s, as there were no other colleges of industrial relations to rival its claim, it took the more grandiose designation of *National* College of Industrial Relations, though this signified less of a change in mission or culture than that from CWC to CIR. In 1998, in a shift far more profound than either of those that had occurred previously, the NCIR became part of the newly formed National College of Ireland (NCI). This last change was accompanied by a move from its Ranelagh home to one in the recently redeveloped Docklands area, site of the city's then growing financial district. By 2011, the heirs of the original venture were the staff and students of the NCI's School of Community Studies,

which faced closure as a result of cost-cutting measures.¹⁰ Thus, it may be something of a moot point whether or not the CWC any longer exists. The NCI exists, and even thrives as a small, though seemingly effective, provider of vocational higher education, but it is *nothing like* the CWC in culture/ethos. However, my concern is with the CWC, and I proceed now to describe it at its height, in the 1950s and 1960s, and to analyse some aspects of its institutional culture or ethos.

INSPIRATIONS AND PRECURSORS

By the late 1940s, the idea of a Catholic college for workingmen, as distinct to a Catholic university or seminary, was hardly new. In 1921, in an article published posthumously in the journal *Studies*, founded in 1912 by the influential but controversial priest Timothy Corcoran (1871–1943),¹¹ the English Jesuit Charles Dominic Plater (1875–1921) described the work he had then been involved in over the course of some years, organising lay retreats. These gatherings, usually for men, had been spiritual in nature for the most part, but Plater emphasised his awareness of the need to cultivate ‘a number of well-trained lay people’.¹²

In saying so, he was effectively ‘setting out the stall’ of the Catholic Social Guild [CSG] that, along with Henry Parkinson (1852–1924), he had been instrumental in founding in 1909, in a belated response to the encyclical *Rerum novarum* promulgated in 1891 by Vincenzo Gioacchino Pecci (1810–1903; Leo XIII, 1878–1903). In turn, the CSG was an offshoot of, if not entirely a breakaway from, the older and more conservative Catholic Truth Society (CTS) and the retreats for lay people that became central to the CSG’s work were, as Plater readily admitted, inspired by European models dating back the 1880s.¹³ Working alongside Plater in the early days of the CSG was another Jesuit, Leo O’Hea (1881–1976) and when Plater died suddenly in 1921 it largely fell to O’Hea to continue the educational work of the CSG. This he did in 1922 by founding what would become Plater College.

Plater was, at first, something of a success, though patently it did not spring full-formed from the brow of some Catholic Zeus (were such a thing possible). Thus, in addition to the direct, if slightly delayed, influence of *Rerum novarum*, other influences were at work in its formation, including what might be called the new trade unionism. The changed and changing Britain of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries saw increased union militancy but also an upsurge in interest in

political education, exemplified in British secular culture by the Workers' Educational Association and Ruskin Hall (now College).¹⁴ Plater grew and prospered in parallel with these. Operating on a succession of sites in the quaintly picturesque medieval city of Oxford, though not formally affiliated to the university,¹⁵ and closely modelled on Ruskin,¹⁶ it only closed, amidst scandal and acrimony, in 2005.¹⁷ But in 1923, presumably confident that it had a long and productive future ahead of it, O'Hea outlined its work as promoting a: 'right understanding of [social] conditions'. This, he insisted, relied on 'knowledge of Economics and History...[and] Moral Philosophy'.¹⁸

Elsewhere, directly inspired by the efforts of Plater and O'Hea, the American Laymen's League was created as early as 1911. At first specialising in the organisation of retreats, its founders soon established a School of Social Studies.¹⁹ However, despite some early success, the Laymen's League fell on hard times and from the 1920s was incorporated into Fordham University in New York as the basis of its School of Social Studies, in the process becoming part of a more conventional, albeit still Catholic, educational project.

Labour colleges other than the famous *Catholic* institutions operating in the US in the period from the 1920s to the 1950s included the broad left Brookwood College and the explicitly Communist Jefferson School of Social Science. Nonetheless, by 1948 a recognisable 'sector' of Catholic labour colleges had come into being.²⁰ Despite some European equivalents (most obviously Plater College and the CWC itself) the labour college movement was always largely a North American phenomenon. Many, though not all, of these American Catholic colleges were Jesuit foundations and their fame in general, and of those in New York especially, was in no small way bound up with the personal charisma of one Jesuit in particular, John Corridan (1911–1984),²¹ the son of Irish immigrants to north American and the prototype for the popular ideal, or *one* ideal, of the 'worker priest'.²² The international nature of the Jesuit order makes it hardly surprising that news of such developments, and the inspiration of such figures as Corridan, drifted over the Atlantic, like seeds on the wind, to take root in Ireland.

Thus, anyone in 1940s or 1950s Ireland intent on founding a college for workers did not have far to seek for examples or models. And it was to America, specifically New York, that a young Jesuit was dispatched, in the hiatus between the decision to found the college and its eventual establishment, to seek inspiration for and advice on the new venture. This young

priest, Edmond Kent, S.J. (1915–1999), later recalled his busy itinerary, making special mention of his encounter with one of the most turbulent figures in modern American Catholic history, Dorothy Day (1897–1980). Day was a Catholic convert and, with Peter Maurin (1877–1949), co-founded the Catholic Worker Movement (CWM).²³ Between them and working at first in the depths of the economic conditions of the 1920s and 1930s, Day and Maurin built a small but significant mass movement of highly committed Catholic lay people which campaigned on social and political causes. Initially, the CWM expressed its convictions amongst the poor and destitute of the Depression years in urban locations but (largely under Maurin’s influence) it became more ruralist in outlook, developing self-sustaining, anarcho-communist agrarian communities at sites in Pennsylvania and elsewhere. Latterly, largely at Day’s behest, it took on the cause of pacifism and became active on a range of political issues. In itself it was never an educational provider and Day founded no college or school personally but, writing in 1952 she felt able to claim that, ‘it was *The Catholic Worker* [the movement’s newspaper] and its stories of poverty and exploitation that aroused the priests to start labor schools’.²⁴ She gave no credit to the earlier initiative of the Laymen’s League, but even allowing for some exaggeration on her part of the CWM’s inspirational lead, there can be no doubt that it did play a significant role in inspiring the emergence of labour schools in America.

Of all those whom Kent met in his whirlwind visit, it was Day by whom he was most impressed, as he later made clear in a description of their encounter in the cramped, dirty office of the CWM in New York:

She...face[d] me with a look which seemed to say: ‘I am a very busy woman; what can I do for you?’ I sat down...feeling like a small boy awaiting a lecture from his mother; for there was something motherly about her despite her frigid, business-like attitude.²⁵

Despite her apparently intimidating manner and despite the CWM’s sometimes awkward relationship with Catholic orthodoxy and its more than occasional forays into anti-clericalism, Kent emerged sure that Day was ‘possessed of so many gifts that she could, if she wished, be a person of considerable means’ and left invigorated by her ‘stress on the dignity of the human person, fashioned in the likeness of God’.²⁶ He was now determined to follow her lead, and the nascent CWC offered him the perfect opportunity to do so.

THE CWC'S FOUNDERS

Formally, the first head of the new institution was Edward (Ned) Coyne who, when the CWC commenced operation, was already professor of theology at a nearby Jesuit seminary (the Milltown Institute), though his active involvement with the college until his retirement in 1954 does not seem to have been great. However, his influence on the early years of the college's history cannot have been insignificant and some examination of his personal interpretation of the meaning and nature of Catholic social teaching and his relationship to Irish Catholic society generally is relevant to understanding the CWC.

The overwhelming impression to be garnered of Coyne from the available sources is that he was markedly more conservative, socially and politically, than his younger colleague Edmond Kent. Coyne, who had previously studied at University College Dublin (formerly the Catholic University of Ireland) and later returned to teach there, was a pillar of Catholic Irish society in the 1920s and thereafter, and had been involved in organising Catholic 'social order' summer schools since the 1930s, something of a precursor to the CWC's work, though not so explicitly political.²⁷ In addition to his teaching work and writing, he served on various official and quasi-official bodies largely concerned with labour-management relations and had been a member of the Commission on Vocational Organisation, established in 1938 by Éamon de Valera (1882–1975) to explore options for closer integration of Catholic social teaching into Irish socio-economic life.²⁸ But Coyne was not concerned only with the needs and conditions of urban, industrial workers and took a keen interest in rural Ireland. To this end, he was closely involved in the formation of the rural lobby group (still extant, though now diminished from its heyday in the 1950s) *Muintir na Tíre*.²⁹ He was close to the movement's founder, John Hayes (1887–1957), also a cleric, and evidently shared the latter's 'virulent Anti-Urbanism' and sense that, 'cities were the place of sin, dancing, cinema, materialism, individualism, and above all else of 'foreign' culture'.³⁰

Further evidence of Coyne's conservatism is found in his trenchant role in what is typically seen as the single most important conflict between church and secular politicians in Ireland's early history as an independent state, the so-called Mother and Child Scheme debate of 1948–1951. Here Coyne stood foursquare behind the Catholic hierarchy's decision virulently to oppose proposals deemed contrary to the more conservative aspects of the teachings of *Rerum novarum*. Briefly, the radical politi-

cian and medical doctor Noel Browne (1915–1997), then Minister for Health in a weak coalition government, proposed to introduce limited, state-funded antenatal and general medical care for mothers and their children. The scheme was deemed by Catholics contrary to the principle of subsidiarity, the devolving of social and political responsibility to the lowest practical level at every turn. This was then widely interpreted to mean that families ought to be required to make provision for their own medical needs, other than in *extreme* circumstances. As a consequence, and fearing that any change along these lines would generally contribute to an undermining or corrosion of Catholic values, the official church used its not inconsiderable influence to oppose Browne's plans. (Medical doctors of the time also often opposed the scheme for financial reasons).

Ultimately, the government of which Browne was a part fell as some orthodox Catholic politicians withdrew their support in deference to clerical censure. Coyne's was a significant voice raised in support of the claim that, not only had the Catholic hierarchy the right to speak in such matters, it had a duty to do so and governments did well to listen if their members wanted to have their decisions properly aligned with Catholic doctrine.³¹

Thus, Coyne was prepared to defend and promote an ideal of a ruralist Ireland, which employed a rhetorical language that often strongly hinted at the 'soul' of the nation residing outside the major urban centres. He was happy to defend the right of the Catholic hierarchy to interfere in political decision-making and felt able, in conscience, to justify the denial of what some deemed to be basic welfare rights. His was a stern, conservative Catholicism founded on unswerving commitment to hierarchy and authority.

But what of the CWC's co-founder? It might be tempting to tell the story of his relationship with Coyne as that of the Young Turk and the Old Sultan, a tale of generational change and a corresponding drift towards the political 'left', though it may be unhelpfully simplistic to cast Coyne and Kent as, respectively, radical and conservative clerics. That said, Kent was certainly the more turbulent of the two priests and I have often used the word radical hereafter to describe him, his policies and the milieu in which he operated. However, this should always be read with the qualification of noting that his was not a secular, political radicalism of the left. Perhaps yoked to the same plough by their superiors so the one (Coyne) might moderate the other (Kent), the CWC's de facto twin founders had a productive relationship nonetheless, with much hinging on a visit Kent made to the US and the lessons he was able to learn there.

Thus, it was important to note that Kent visited New York City shortly before the CWC opened its doors to students with the explicit intention of finding models on which to base the proposed new college. He met Dorothy Day and other figures in the left-leaning Catholic milieu of the time and this must have had some bearing on his actions as Prefect of Studies of the CWC, a role he took up in 1954 and held until after the change from CWC to CIR, the end of the period under study.

In 1961, in his annual report to the college's Board of Sponsors (which represented, jointly and in more or less equal measure, the interests of employers and trade unions) he 'devote[d] more space than usual [in such a report] to general matters' and gave an outline both of his view of 10 years of the college's operation and his priorities for its future.³² It is an instructive insight into aspects of his thinking, and even his character. He was conventionally religious, as his position required him to be, stressing that: 'We record [the college's]...successes in a spirit of thankfulness to God' but hinted at a more radical cast of mind than might have been associated with Coyne when he went on to say:

no system of education can afford to dispense with training such as this College seeks to give. Too frequently, when we speak or think of education here in Ireland, we think of youth preparing for the battle of life in some way or other. That concept fitted well enough a static world where ideas, once learned never changed and were never challenged. It was enough when traditional moral, social, political and cultural values and ideals were accepted, understood, acted upon and taken for granted. But this is no longer so. There are no social systems that are quite secure. There are few personal landmarks which could not very quickly be ploughed under. There can be no final preparation for a way of life the brand mark of which is instability.³³

While he was not necessarily relishing the 'instability' to which he alluded, this did not smack of the same seeking after a return to bucolic simplicities and certainties with which Coyne had been associated. Over several pages, he continued:

to this welter of change men [sic] react differently and frequently badly. On the one hand there are the traditionalists...[opposed to] every sort of change.

Other men...resist all change that is detrimental to their own private interests...

At the other extreme are the so-called Progressives...[characterised by] a rebelliousness or a restlessness with the world as they see it...Progressives believe, implicitly or explicitly, in human progress in every field of human endeavour...Marxism is perhaps the most explicit [version of this]...

Another type of progressive is found among our teenagers and younger men and women. Theirs is more rebellion against the present than concern with the future...they drift from job to job, from place to place, restless and rebellious.³⁴

Against all of this, he set out his own vision of a productive radical or progressive stance, one grounded in the ability to analyse current conditions and to understand them in historical context.³⁵ It was a humane vision of popular intellectualism and of moderate radicalism. As such, it was increasingly removed from the earlier tradition of social action through workers' education that sought to cultivate and instil not criticality but, as O'Hea had said of the CWC's English precursor, 'fearless...loyalty to the Faith'.³⁶ But does it really entitle us to conclude that Kent was profoundly radical in a way Coyne was not and, further, that the CWC under Kent was a provider of radical education to Irish workers? These are questions to which I return in the concluding section, but it is probably long overdue that we begin an examination of the CWC in practice and it is to this that I turn next.

TEACHING AND CURRICULUM

If we are not to confine ourselves to a 'top-down' history of education that is largely concerned with structures and leaders, a more wide-ranging and subtle project sometimes referred to as the social history of the classroom (here taken to make adult, as well as school, classroom),³⁷ then we must be prepared to ask such questions as: who attended the CWC, in what numbers, with what expectations and what results? However, given the dearth or paucity of certain records (perhaps, at least partly, as a result of a widespread destruction of archives by twentieth century Irish Catholic organisations), this has not entirely been possible. Thus, much of what follows is a more conventional 'acts and facts' history of the CWC than I might like, with correspondingly little emphasis on nuances of students' biographies and experiences.

Coyne and Kent were the major figures instrumental in founding and leading the CWC between 1951 and 1966, but they were not alone in their

work. What was initially ‘a small Jesuit staff and a number of dedicated laymen who worked on a voluntary basis’,³⁸ did not grow significantly over the next 15 years, but by 1968 there were seven Jesuits involved with the CWC full-time (including two Jesuit brothers, members of the order in an associate or lesser standing than ordained priests, such as Coyne and Kent, a status phased out following the reforms of Vatican II).³⁹ The initial number of lay, volunteer lecturers is unclear, but by 1966 it seems to have stood as high as a dozen and this may have risen to as many as 20 by 1988, though it was by then a more ‘professional’ organisation.⁴⁰

The content of the trade unionism course, the mainstay of the CWC’s work, was outlined in a 1960 synopsis by a Jesuit staff member. This began with lectures on ‘The Nature and Personality of Man [sic]’, progressed through explicitly Catholic social ethics teaching and culminated with an emphasis on practical issues of relevance to trade union officials and members’.⁴¹ A parallel managers’ course comprised the same elements of ‘Nature and Personality of Man...Social Theory and Social Ethics’ to be found in the trade union course, but was augmented by teaching said to, ‘deal with industrial and management problems from a specifically human point of view in such courses as Human Relations in Industry and Occupational Psychology’.⁴² Supervisors were taught ‘twenty lectures on the Nature and Personality of Man and twenty on Human Relations in Industry in the first year...[and] Psychology for Supervision and a discussion forum on practical matters of supervision in the second’.⁴³ Course examinations were conducted orally until at least 1960.⁴⁴

A more general course in political studies was offered from 1956, encompassing practical aspects of Irish politics and constitutional law and the rather polemical sounding ‘philosophy of National Patriotism’.⁴⁵ Some advanced teaching was available on moral and theological matters for selected students, though ‘adapted to the required intellectual level’.⁴⁶ Diplomas and certificates were awarded annually to members of various groups, the first awards for supervisors being made in 1964,⁴⁷ and the supervisors’ course, sometimes referred to as Course D, remained significant until at least 1976.⁴⁸

But alongside, and perhaps at odds, with such socio-economic or political courses there were also marriage preparation classes. Teaching of the latter kind began in 1955 and was still being undertaken in the mid-1970s.⁴⁹ Preparation of soon-to-be-married couples began with emphasis being placed on the particularly Catholic view of the threefold nature of marriage, ‘as an institution...a sacrament and...a vocation’.⁵⁰

The aim was to present marriage as being ‘based on the union of Christ with his Church...develop[ing] a union of heart and mind as complete... mutual, exclusive and durable as Christ’s for his Church’.⁵¹ An unashamedly gendered view of roles in married life was promoted, with lectures on ‘The Distinctive and Complementary Qualities of Men and Women’⁵² and much stress placed on ‘pitfalls resulting from the ignorance of the distinctive differences of man and woman’.⁵³ Time was given over to promoting Catholic education for children, outside the home and within its confines, and to stressing the importance of ‘domestic spirituality’.⁵⁴ But, there was also provision made for more practical matters, including ‘simple home crafts’,⁵⁵ ‘making up a household budget’,⁵⁶ ‘the preparation of the trousseau, reception, wedding and honeymoon...[including] such details as seating, speeches and toasts [at the wedding]’.⁵⁷ In these respects, what was on offer may not have differed greatly from anything that might have been found in many secular advice manuals of the 1950s and early 1960s. But the Catholicity of the teaching was, it seems, rarely, if ever, far to seek. Thus, although lay speakers contributed on topics such as children’s health and welfare, the marriage preparation courses were clerically led,⁵⁸ and the highest aim of those who contributed to this always significant strand of the CWC’s teaching was to promote ‘union in marriage’, which, in turn, required ‘union with God’s will’.⁵⁹

Patently, the CWC was a Catholic college, and it would be unreasonable, even perverse, to expect its staff to confine their teaching to non-religious matters. The domestic sphere, understood in that way, was a legitimate part of the CWC’s interests. But, that said, although Kent had been influenced or inspired by Dorothy Day, the ‘uncompromising laicism’ of the American CWM, which made it, ‘quite different from devotional Catholicism’⁶⁰ had little or no equivalent in 1950s Ireland and thus, however radical the CWC could seem in certain respects, it was straightforwardly Catholic in others.

ETHOS: MARY OR JOSEPH?

By the 1950s, Marian devotion was a significant element of Irish Catholic religiosity. Only shortly before the CWC began operations in 1951, Eugenio Pacelli (1876–1958; Pius XII, 1939–1958) had promulgated the doctrine of the bodily assumption of Mary. Hardly the most politically radical of twentieth century Catholic leaders, he has been described as filling a ‘vacuum created by the suppression of dynamic, creative theology

in the postwar period' with, 'a popular combination of private devotion and exhibitions of mass loyalty and fervour...[crowned by] papal exaltation and triumphalism'.⁶¹ Indeed, the belief persists in some quarters that he might have gone so far as to '[declare] Mary Co-Redemptrix with Christ', a move that would certainly have been 'even more earth-shattering than...the Assumption'.⁶² That aside, there can be little doubt that the cult of Mary dominated Irish Catholicism in the first half of the twentieth century, though its hold was considerably lessened in and after the 1960s.⁶³ Certainly, the terrain of Irish Catholic conservatism was crowded. One highly visible expression of this was the *Maria Duce* group, founded in 1942 by Denis Fahey (1883–1954) to agitate for the adoption of Catholicism as something akin to a state religion,⁶⁴ but other groups, although less specifically Marian in their focus, were active in the period of 1920–1950 lobbying in avowedly conservative terms on various issues. *Maria Duce* had a mass membership far outstripping that of either of its principal confreres (or rivals?) of the time, *An Rioghacht* and *Christus Rex*, but it did not long outlast Fahey personally and was soon defunct after he died.⁶⁵

By contrast, the Legion of Mary (LoM), founded in Ireland in 1921 by Frank Duff (1889–1980), had both mass membership and longevity, making it the most successful organisation of its kind to operate in the period—though it may be misleading to bracket the LoM straightforwardly with the avowedly social conservative *An Rioghacht* and *Christus Rex*, as the LoM has a more complicated or contested history.⁶⁶ However, these groups aside, one other bears mentioning, the Jesuit-run Our Lady's Sodality (OLS). Dating back to 1563, OLS had been open to women only from 1825, though by the 1950s in Ireland they comprised the majority of its members.⁶⁷ Despite waning religious influence in general, as late as 1978 it was possible for the sodality to organise a major national convention in a Dominican girls' school in Dublin's Donnybrook, only a short distance from the CWC, with several hundred delegates attending.⁶⁸ Thus, there were significant links between the Irish Jesuits and popular Marianism in the 1950s and early 1960s. But the overwhelming impression of the life and ethos of the CWC in the same period is that it was dominated by the attention paid to the image of Joseph. If the Marianism of Pius XII and others represented conservatism, tradition, domesticity, piety and even mysticism, Joseph, as the workers' saint, could seem to stand for very different things.

From its foundation, the CWC was associated with Joseph. This somewhat shadowy figure, whose nature and even employment are only ever hinted at (Matthew 13:55), featured prominently on the CWC's original crest. A statue of its spiritual patron (carved, appropriately, in rough and gnarled wood) was added to the college's premises in 1958. The feast day associated with Joseph, 1 May, was the centre of the CWC's symbolic calendar. Reports of the gatherings of students convened to mark the feast day and the speeches by lecturers from the college's staff that they often heard appeared in national newspaper reports frequently in the 1950s and early 1960s.⁶⁹ And all this was in keeping with the tone of the US labour colleges, where Joseph often bulked large in teaching.

The [American] Jesuits' decision to concentrate on St Joseph was of course not surprising. They saw in episodes of his life numerous opportunities to reinforce the message which they hoped to communicate...present[ing] him to workers as a colleague who shared a common identity with them.⁷⁰

Viewed one way, the Marian tendencies of the Irish Jesuits (tendencies that emphasised the traditionally *feminine* role in the social order and barely, if at all, touched on concerns that might be described as *feminist*, making them profoundly conservative) could appear to be at variance with the more radical Christianity of the CWC and its cult of Joseph. This might seem to entail conflict. But I suggest any 'conflict' between the paradigms is illusory. Ultimately, given the masculinist history of trade unionism that, in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, was typically as socially conservative as it was politically radical, with a particular stress on gender hierarchy at home and in the workplace, this largely reflecting fear that the feminisation of labour and 'dilution' would drive down wage rates, it may be no surprise that more emphasis was placed on the masculine figure of Joseph than the feminine Mary.

ANALYSIS

Although attendance at the CWC was never limited to Catholic workers, it cannot be doubted that they formed the majority of students over the years. In 1954, a representative of the Plumbing Trades Union addressed the annual conference of the Irish Trade Union Congress (ITUC), a pan-national or cross-border body that had members in both the Republic and Northern Ireland and historically close links to the British Trade Union

Congress and which was to merge with the more nationalistic Congress of Irish Trade Unions in 1959 to form the Irish Congress of Trade Unions. He insisted that workers' education in Ireland should, above all else: 'be Christian education...Irish and Christian' because it was, 'necessary to be a Christian both at work and at [union] meetings'; he added: 'I am afraid that the Irish worker is frightened of the trade union movement's educational schemes', claiming that this would remain so until it was clear that such schemes were informed by 'Christian as well as trade union principles'.⁷¹ Although he did not allude to the CWC directly, he contrasted the spectre of more secular workers' education with that being organised by such Catholic leaders as Alfred O'Rahilly (1884–1969; President of University College Cork, 1943–1954) and may have been correct in his reference to a wariness of teaching conducted under such secular auspices as the People's College, with which the ITUC was then closely involved. The CWC might well have seemed a safe alternative for many intellectually curious Catholic workers in the period, as opposed to this more radical seeming option, founded in 1948 and still extant in 2014.⁷² But, ultimately, my account of the CWC will not, I sincerely hope, be seen as an antiquarian piece on Irish church history. The College's story belongs to a much broader mobilisation on the part of the Catholic Church: the Catholic social action 'project', an attempt to locate Catholic workingmen's lives in a religiously authorised political and social orthodoxy—keeping them untainted, so to speak, by socialism (and the apparently more pernicious threat of communism).

CONCLUSION

Nothing I have said, I trust, makes the CWC appear as a mere curiosity or failed experiment in education. But are we warranted in thinking of it as a significant case study and if it *is* a case study, then of what? Patently it is case of a labour college; it is also a case of (terrible cliché that it might be) a grass-roots educational organisation and it is a case of Catholic social action at work. It would take more time or space than is available here to locate it any wider tradition of the establishment and operation of informal/adult/working-class education in Ireland but it might also be a case for such purposes. Perhaps more important is the question of whether or not it constitutes an important precedent or can provide some *inspiration*. In other words, even if it has not been so thus far might it be, however long we have to wait, a model for a new sort of university in Ireland?

I have suggested elsewhere that institutions of a kind markedly different to the CWC are ‘on the march’ and making significant inroads in Ireland, much as they are in other parts of the world. These other providers of higher education may be private, unashamedly money-making ventures or they may be, much like the NCI, notionally not-for-profit but thoroughly imbued with a certain neo-liberal spirit or ethos.⁷³ Admittedly, against this background it could seem as though any alternative vision is naïve at best. Yet I remain determinedly optimistic.⁷⁴ The inchoate, quasi-anarchistic Occupy Movement of 2011 and 2012 amounted to little in the short-term. But informal universities (perhaps properly so named in a very literal or etymological sense) sprang up in protest camps in various cities, including Dublin.⁷⁵ For all its faults (and as one who is not Catholic I am troubled by some features of the CWC, especially its gendered curriculum), I simply assert that the *very fact* of the CWC having existed is evidence that other (nobler?) things are possible.

Acknowledgements I am grateful to the editor of *Catholic Historical Review* for comments.

NOTES

1. J. McCarthy, ‘Pilgrims are Yet to Flock to Congress’, *Sunday Times*, June 10, 2012, News section, Irish edition.
2. L. Fuller, *Irish Catholicism Since 1950: The Undoing of a Culture* (Dublin, 2002).
3. Commission of Inquiry into Child Abuse, *Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Child Abuse* (Dublin: Commission of Inquiry into Child Abuse, 2009).
4. See, for example: E. McCann, *Dear God: The Price of Religion in Ireland* (London, 1999).
5. See, for example: P. Toucher, *Fear of the Collar: My Terrifying Childhood in Artane* (Dublin, 2010). And for some thoughts on the experience of *knowing* a clerical abuser, see: Mary Kenny, ‘When a Priest is Named as a Paedophile’, in *Something of Myself and Others* (Dublin, 2013), 135–148.
6. Paul Michael Garrett, ‘Review Article: ‘It is with deep regret that I find it necessary to tell my story’—Child Abuse in Industrial Schools in Ireland’, *Critical Social Policy* 30, no. 2 (2010), 292–306.
7. Interim Report on Province Ministries, undated, National College of Ireland archive [NCIA] item 69.
8. The CWC’s principal research output in the 1950s and 1960s came in the shape of a series of pamphlets on Catholic answers to common industrial

- relations problems. For example: T. Hamilton, *The Challenge of Collective Bargaining* (Dublin: Catholic Workers' College, 1963) and A. Ryan, *God, Law and the Unions* (Dublin: Catholic Workers' College, 1964). But it would seem reasonable to say that this was only an adjunct to the work of teaching.
9. The best general accounts of the college are: E. Kent, 'Education for Industrial Relations', *Studies* 218 (1966), 139–46, the same author's 'History of the College', in *College of Industrial Relations: Silver Jubilee*, (Dublin: Catholic Workers' College, 1976), 10; T. Morrissey, 'From Catholic Workers' College to National College of Ireland, 1951–1998', *Studies* 347 (1998), 291–6 and A. Seery and L. McKenna, 'The Catholic Workers' College Dublin: A Personal History', *Saothair: Journal of the Irish Labour History Society*, 39 (2015), 45–53.
 10. Seán Flynn, '10 to Lose Jobs as Part of College Cost-Cutting Plan', *Irish Times*, January 14, 2011 www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/ireland/2011/0114/1224287488725.html (accessed August 23, 2013).
 11. Corcoran exercised significant influence on education policy in newly independent Ireland, particularly on the adoption of Irish language as a compulsory subject in schools and espoused a conservative, even racist nationalism. B. Titley, 'Rejecting the Modern World: The Educational Ideas of Timothy Corcoran', *Oxford Review of Education* 9, no. 2 (1983), 137–45.
 12. C. Plater, 'Retreats for Working-Men', *Studies* 37 (1921), 97–108, 106
 13. *Ibid.*, 97.
 14. J. Rose, *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes* (Yale, 2001), especially 282–297.
 15. D. Chiles, *A Silken Thread: The History of Plater College, 1921–1996* (Oxford, 1996). No doubt Plater had some Irish students in the 1920s–1950s.
 16. On Ruskin, named after the mercurial medieval revivalist and arts and crafts pioneer John Ruskin (1819–1900), see: B. Harrison, 'Oxford and the Labour Movement', *Twentieth Century British History* 2, no. 3 (1991), 226–71 and J. Rose, *The Intellectual Life*, 256–307.
 17. 'Objectors Drop College Action', *Oxford Mail*, November 9, 2005, www.oxfordmail.co.uk/archive/2005/11/09/Oxfordshire+Archive/6643546.Objectors_drop_college_action (accessed August 23, 2013).
 18. L. O'Hea, 'A Catholic Labour College', *Irish Monthly* 598 (1923), 165–70, 167. It went without saying that 'right understanding' on socio-moral questions was the Catholic view of the matter.
 19. J. McShane, 'To form an elite body of laymen': Terence J. Shealy, S.J. and the Laymen's League, 1911–1922', *Catholic Historical Review* 78, no. 4 (1992), 557–80.

20. At its height in the 1940s and 1950s, this loose sector or movement probably boasted as many as 60 members and their operations were known in Ireland. For example: F. Corley, 'Education for Workers: Catholic Labour Schools in the United States, Part I', *Irish Monthly* 901 (1948), 296–302 and 'Education for Workers: Catholic Labour Schools in the United States, Part II', *Irish Monthly* 902 (1948), 366–72. On non-Catholic/secular colleges, see, variously: C. Howlett, *Brookwood Labor College and the Struggle for Peace and Social Justice in America* (Lewiston, NY, 1993) and M. Gettleman, 'No varsity teams': New York's Jefferson School of Social Science, 1943–1956', *Science and Society* 66, no. 3 (2002), 336–59.
21. History and legend have long since become blurred where Corridan is concerned, partly as a result of sensationalist contemporary depictions (see, for example: M. Johnson, 'Father Gangbuster of the Docks', *The Catholic Digest* 16, no. 6, 1952, 22–33) and partly because a version of his story was told in *On the Waterfront*, directed by Elia Kazan (1909–2003), scripted by Seymour Wilson 'Budd' Schulberg (1914–2009) and starring Marlon Brando (1924–2004) and Karl Malden (1912–2009), the latter as the thinly disguised Corridan. More sober treatments of his life and work are: J. Fisher, 'John M. Corridan S.J. and the Battle for the Soul of the Waterfront, 1948–1954', *US Catholic Historian* 16, no. 4 (1998), 71–87 and C. Davis, 'Launch out into the deep and let down your nets': Father John Corridan, S.J. and New York Longshoremen in the Post-World War II Era', *Catholic Historical Review* 86, no. 1 (2000), 66–84. On Corridan's contemporaries in this work more generally, see: J. McShane, 'The Church is not for the cells and the caves': The Working Class Spirituality of the Jesuit Labor Priests', *US Catholic Historian* 9, no. 3 (1990), 289–304. And on the film itself, now widely regarded a classic, see: J. E. Rapf, [Ed.], *On the Waterfront* (Cambridge, 2003) and L. Braudy, *BFI Film Classics: On the Waterfront* (London, 2005).
22. The essential difference between men such as Corridan and those in the other worker-priest tradition, for example in France, is that Corridan was primarily a priest *amongst* workers while some took the role more literally and *became* workers, preaching only as an adjunct to a more visceral ministry that involved living a certain life in sympathy with those for whom there was no alternative. See also: G. Siefer, *The Church and Industrial Society: Complete History of the Worker-Priests and the Present Dilemma* (London, 1964) and J. Mantle, *Britain's First Worker-Priests* (London, 2000).
23. E. Kent, 'Dorothy Day: An Interview', *Studies* 154 (1950), 176–86, 176.
24. Dorothy Day, 'Labor', (extract from *The Long Loneliness*, 1952) in R. Ellesberg [Ed.], *Dorothy Day: Selected Writings*, (NY, 2005), 240.
25. E. Kent, 'Dorothy Day', 179.
26. *Ibid.*, 186. Much as Kent's account hinted, Day was a notoriously 'difficult' character and the paradoxes of her life are many and various. See:

- D. McKanan, 'Inventing the Catholic Worker Family', *Church History* 76, no. 1 (2007), 84–113.
27. E. Coyne, 'The Social Order Summer School', *Irish Monthly*, 771 (1937), 577–87. On older forms of Catholic social action in Ireland, see, for example: S. L'Estrange, 'The community of communities': Catholic Communitarianism and Societal Crises in Ireland, 1890s–1950s', *Journal of Historical Sociology* 20, no. 4 (2007), 555–78.
 28. D. O'Leary, *Vocationalism and Social Catholicism in Twentieth-Century Ireland: The Search for a Christian Social Order* (Dublin, 2000), 74–8.
 29. People of the Land.
 30. E. Devereux, 'Saving Rural Ireland: Muintir na Tíre and its Anti-Urbanism, 1931–1958', *Canadian Journal of Irish Studies* 17, no. 2 (1991), 23–30, 23.
 31. D. McCullagh, *A Makeshift Majority: The First Inter-Party Government, 1948–51* (Dublin, 1998).
 32. E. Kent, *Education in a Changing World: Report of the Prefect of Studies, 1960–1961* (Dublin: Catholic Workers' College, 1961), 2.
 33. Kent, *Report*, 3.
 34. *Ibid.*, 4–6.
 35. *Ibid.*, 7.
 36. L. O'Hea, 'A Catholic Labour College', 168.
 37. The case for such a revitalised form of history of education is powerfully made in various contributions to, and an editorial introduction in: Ian Grosvenor et al., [Eds.], *Silences and Images: The Social History of the Classroom*, (New York, 1999).
 38. E. Kent, 'History of the College', 10.
 39. The implications of this dramatic change in the culture of the Jesuit order are discussed more fully in: P. McDonough, 'Metamorphoses of the Jesuits: Sexual Identity, Gender Roles, and Hierarchy in Catholicism', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 32 (1990), 325–56.
 40. 'National College of Industrial Relations', *Education* 3, no. 5 (1988), 7–15, 7.
 41. T. Hamilton, 'The Catholic Workers' College in Dublin', *Christus Rex* 16, no. 3 (1960), 191–9, 194.
 42. *Ibid.*, 196. Original curricular documents from the earliest history of the college seem not to have been preserved, often leaving us to depend on secondary accounts compiled by contemporary observers, but later course outlines are available (see, for example: Management and Business Relations Course, 1964, NCIA item 35) and there is little evidence of major change. The standard textbook on social justice for Jesuits in the 1960s and 1970s was Jean-Yves Calvez and J. Perrin, *The Church and Social Justice: The Social Teaching of the Popes from Leo XIII to Pius XII, 1878–1958* (Chicago, 1961).

43. T. Hamilton, 'The Catholic Workers' College in Dublin', 197.
44. Ibid., 194.
45. Ibid., 198.
46. Ibid., 194.
47. 'News and Views', *Solidarity: Associate Members Bulletin of the Catholic Workers' College* 8 (1964), 1.
48. 'Present Work and Future Policy of the College', in *College of Industrial Relations: Silver Jubilee*, (Dublin: Catholic Workers' College, 1976), 11–13, 12. The only part of this pamphlet to be by an identifiable author is Kent's (see note 9).
49. Generally speaking, primary sources are wanting but a detailed account of the curriculum is given in: M. Moloney, 'Marriage Preparation Course', *The Furrow* 7, no. 2 (1956), 86–96.
50. Ibid., 89.
51. Ibid., 89.
52. Ibid., 90.
53. Ibid., 91.
54. Ibid., 94.
55. Ibid., 90.
56. Ibid., 91.
57. Ibid., 92.
58. Ibid., 94.
59. Ibid., 95. See also: J. Edwards, 'In This Unique College, They Learn How to be Happily Married', *Irish Pictorial*, September 28, 1957.
60. L. W. Tentler, 'On the Margins: The State of American Catholic History', *Catholic Historian* 16, no. 4 (1998), 71–87, 90.
61. J. Cornwell, *Hitler's Pope: The Secret History of Pius XII* (London: Viking, 1999), 345.
62. C. Matthews, 'Sophia: Goddess of Wisdom', in *The Inner West: An Introduction to the Hidden Wisdom of the West*, ed. Jay Kinney, (New York, 2004), 140–55, 150.
63. J. Donnelly, 'Opposing the 'Modern World': The Cult of the Virgin Mary in Ireland, 1965–1985', *Eire-Ireland* 40 nos 1 & 2 (2005), 183–245.
64. E. Delaney, 'Political Catholicism in Post-War Ireland: The Revd. Denis Fahey and Maria Duce, 1945–1954', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 52, no. 3 (2001), 487–511.
65. An Rioghacht (League of the Kingship of Christ) was founded in 1926 and Christus Rex in 1941.
66. On Duff and his organisation in his own terms, see his: *True Devotion to the Nation* (Dundalk: Dundalgan Press/Legion of Mary, 1966), especially the political manifesto, 'The Legion's Programme of True Devotion to the Nation', 37–48.

67. G. Ffrench, 'The Sodality of Our Lady', *The Furrow* 5, no. 9 (1954), 539–48.
68. J. Donnelly, 'Opposing the 'Modern World'', p. 195.
69. For examples, see: 'Greater Interest in Unions Urged', *Irish Times*, May 2, 1958, News section; 'Lecturer Urges Need for Adult Education', *Irish Independent*, May 2, 1959, News section; 'Luxury Never a Problem for Ordinary Worker', *Irish Times*, May 2, 1960, News section and 'Role of Trade Unionist Defined', *Irish Times*, May 2, 1961, News section.
70. J. McShane, 'The Church is not for the cells and the caves', 296.
71. Quoted in: *Sixtieth Annual Report: Report of the National Executive, 1953–1954* (Dublin: Irish Trade Union Congress, 1954), 143.
72. For further details of its work, see: www.peoplescollege.ie.
73. I have discussed the former at greater length in: 'Prospects for a Private, Indigenous and For-Profit University in Dublin' in *Higher Education in Ireland: Practices, Policies and Possibilities*, ed. A. Loxley, A. Seery, A and J. Walsh (London, 2014) and notwithstanding the legal claim of the NCI to be the CWC's heir, by 2014 its spiritual (if socialist and secular) successor might actually have been the small college operated by the Services, Industrial, Professional and Technical Union. For a description of its work, see: M. de Coursey, 'Trade Union Studies Course—Interested?', *Liberty*, June 2013, 26.
74. I discuss this theme at length in: "The gods of the market tumble": Against Neo-Liberalism, for Intellectualism and Towards New Universities in Ireland', in *Degrees of Nonsense: The Demise of the University in Ireland*, B. Walsh [Ed.], (Dublin, 2012).
75. Though not easily summarised or encapsulated, the Occupy Movement involved an alliance of anarchists, socialists and the generally disgruntled reacting to the seemingly unrestrained excesses of neo-liberal capitalism in the early twenty-first century. For details and descriptions of some of the informal universities it spawned, see, for example: C. T. Reed, 'Step 1: Occupy Universities, Step 2: Transform Them', *Tidal*, December 2011: 4–5; J. Grove, 'Unplugged', *THE*, January 26, 2012 <http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/features/unplugged/418786.article> (accessed November 11, 2014); P. Stanistreet, 'Anyone can teach, everyone can learn', *Adults Learning*, Spring 2012: 21–26 and A. Bonnett, 'Something New in Freedom', *THE*, 23 May, 2014 <http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/features/something-new-in-freedom/2003930.article> (accessed November 11, 2014).

Teacher Accountability in Education: The Irish Experiment

Martin Brown, Gerry McNamara, and Joe O'Hara

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

School and teacher accountability have had a somewhat fluctuating existence in Irish education. For example, in the nineteenth century, and up to the formation of the Irish Free State in 1922, various frameworks for teacher and school accountability, such as incidental inspections and the Payment by Results system,¹ were regular and at times an unnerving feature of school life. The rating of primary teachers by inspectors² and the public availability of post-primary schools examination results were also significant means of making teachers accountable to school and state. At primary level, the frequency of inspections also related to the perceived quality of the school and teacher, as determined by the inspectorate; what might be referred to as incidental or proportionate inspections in the modern era.

However, inspectorate appraisal of Irish schools and teachers has not always been a regular feature of teacher accountability in Irish education. In the last decades of the twentieth century, excepting the inspection of probationary teachers, inspection of individual post-primary teachers was limited.³ The primary school inspectorate also reverted back to a cyclical model of inspection where schools were visited on a cyclical basis once

M. Brown (✉) • G. McNamara • J. O'Hara
Dublin City University, Dublin, Ireland

every four to seven years, resulting in the production of an inspection report referred to as *Tuairisc Scoile* (School Report).⁴ At post-primary level, for various reasons, such as the multitude of duties assigned to inspectors, coupled with the strongly held view of the Association of Secondary Teachers in Ireland (ASTI) that ‘a teacher may or may not decide to carry on teaching in the presence of an inspector’,⁵ the inspection of individual post-primary teachers had almost ceased to exist. However, with the implementation of various circulars and legislation, such as the Education Act of 1998, and the public availability of school inspection reports since 2006, an increasingly transparent and frequently applied framework for teacher and school accountability has once more emerged within the Irish education system. According to the Department of Education and Skills, at the primary level, from 2010 to 2012, ‘inspection visits of some type took place in over half of all primary schools in the country’.⁶ In the case of post-primary schools, from 2010 to 2012 ‘inspections of some type occurred in 93% of second-level schools’.⁷ As a result, regular and incidental, teacher and whole school inspection, have once more become part of what it means to be a teacher in twenty-first century Ireland.

This chapter examines the evolution of inspection and accountability in the Irish teaching profession from the early nineteenth century to the middle of the twentieth century, a period of school reform that saw the establishment of a publically funded system of primary and post-primary education. The chapter describes how that accountability has articulated itself over this period and how this has influenced the present culture of accountability and transparency through inspection and legislation. The chapter starts by providing an overview of the establishment of a national system of school inspection the origins of which date back to early nineteenth century Ireland and examines why, historically, the teaching cohort managed, to a degree, to avoid accountability, a situation that was not fully resolved until the Inspectorate was placed on a statutory basis by the Education Act of 1998. The next section provides an overview of teacher and school accountability in the first decades of independence. Taking the position that ‘educational development always occurs within a larger social, economic, and political context, and it is difficult to appreciate the former without the latter’,⁸ the final section discusses the milestones of school and teacher accountability during this period and how these accountability mechanisms influenced the re-emergence of teacher and school accountability that currently exists through the process of whole school, incidental and subject inspections.

SCHOOL INSPECTION AND TEACHER ACCOUNTABILITY IN PRE-INDEPENDENCE IRELAND

The context for the evolution of accountability in Irish education is closely linked with the establishment of a national system of education, the implementation of which can be traced back to the early nineteenth century. Up to this period, education for the majority of Catholic children in Ireland was through an illegal network of schools, more commonly referred to as the hedge school system; what Coolahan (1981) describes as a 'wide-ranging, if rather haphazard system of unofficial schools'.⁹ However, with the easing of the penal laws during the later parts of the eighteenth century, the practice of educating children 'beneath the sunny side of the hedge' (so called because this was deemed the safest place to keep children safe and to alert the master of the imminent arrival of soldiers)¹⁰ began to be increasingly replaced by a national system of non-denominational education. This system was under, primarily, the initial guidance and control of The Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in Ireland, unofficially referred to as 'The Kildare Place Society'. It was through the establishment of The Kildare Place Society in 1811 that the foundations of a national system of school inspection began to materialise. According to O'Heidean (1967), 'an inspection carried out on behalf of the Kildare Place Society in the Autumn of 1818 by John Vevers is regarded as the first approach not only in Ireland but in England and Scotland to a government inspection of schools'.¹¹ In many respects this is no surprise given the view that Ireland was sometimes used as a 'social laboratory where various policy initiatives were tried out'.¹² Nonetheless, prior to the establishment of the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland (CNEI) in 1831, the Kildare Place Society had developed through various mechanisms, such as teacher observation, a national system for school inspection that was almost identical to that used by the CNEI inspectors. According to Hislop, 'the care with which the system of inspection was organised was typical of the managerial efficiency of the Kildare Place system, so much so that it became the working model for the Inspectorate of the National Commissioners in 1831'.¹³ Indeed, O'Heideain, comparing the code of instruction for inspectors of the Kildare Place Society and the CNEI concludes, 'in the two codes, therefore, there are enough similarities to make one feel that the author of the National Board's instructions had the other document before him as he wrote'.¹⁴ In other words, the only significant difference between the methods of inspection of the two inspectorates was

the introduction of unannounced, incidental, inspections to CNEI inspection methods; that is, the inspector 'is not to give previous notice to the conductors of any schools of the time of his visit, but rather endeavour to arrive with each when he is unexpected'.¹⁵

The justification of incidental inspections during this period are very much in line with that given when similar inspections were reintroduced for all teachers in Ireland at the beginning of the twenty-first century, 'because it is an unannounced inspection, an incidental inspection can provide a more authentic quality assurance process than inspection models that provide schools with advance notification'.¹⁶ A more colourful explanation of the importance placed on incidental inspections is supplied in the 1855 report of the CNEI which stated that, 'as many abuses may be prevented or corrected by incidental visits to schools, the inspectors are required to make as many such as possible, and in every case after having ascertained whether former suggestions have been attended to, and evils previously pointed out and corrected, to leave an entry of such visit in the Report Book, and record it under the head, incidental visit in his weekly diary, accompanied if necessary, by a special letter, in the case of anything of pressing importance having come under his notice'.¹⁷ An inspector giving evidence at a Special Committee of Inquiry in 1837 further emphasised the benefits of incidental inspections, 'I would not venture to report positively on the character of the school unless I come upon it unawares, and when I cannot succeed in doing so, I always take another opportunity of coming upon it unexpectedly before I make up my mind as to the character of the school'.¹⁸

With advances in transport in the modern era, one can readily ascertain how incidental inspections are conducted today. However, in relation to incidental inspections in nineteenth century Ireland, Akenson asks the following, 'it would be interesting to know how an inspector was supposed to be able to manage an unexpected visit in rural Ireland'.¹⁹ Nonetheless, the commissioners also required that, 'every National School be inspected by the Superintendent of the district, at least three times in each year',²⁰ of which, 'he is not to give any intimation of his visit, but during the middle term of the year, from the 1st of May to the 31st of August, when the inspection is to be made Public'.²¹ (It is questionable, however, whether inspections of individual schools were ever this frequent and perhaps, once per year is suggested as a fairer estimate).²² Indeed, apart from the harsh terrain in which inspectors were required to travel, inspectors, like those operating today, had other duties to perform. For example, they were

also expected to investigate new applications for aid and to investigate complaints relating to teachers. In one such example, a complaint was made by a clergyman concerning a teacher whom the former felt was promoting 'Liberty and Religion', 'after this second application, the Board, without the slightest notice to the clergyman sent down an inspector, but, unhappily, for want of notice, no witnesses were forthcoming'.²³ Another example of the work of an inspector that, in many ways, sums up the reciprocal relationship between inspectors and schools during this period, is when inspectors were asked to provide opinions relating to the suitability of, for example, dwellings for teachers, 'some of Board's inspectors are of the opinion that residences should not be too near the school, suspecting that the teacher will not be constantly in the school-room as he ought, if his own dwelling is close at hand'.²⁴

Incidental inspections became a significant part of the framework for teacher accountability in the early years of primary school inspection. Remarkably, it was only in 2004 that prior notice inspections, and in 2011 that incidental inspections, were introduced for post-primary teachers. The reasons for the omission of post-primary schools from school inspection during the early period of educational reform primarily relates to the initial funding arrangements for a national system of education in 1831 as described in what is commonly referred to as the Stanley Letter²⁵; that is, to the 'granting [of] aid for the erection of schools'.²⁶ By way of explanation, although the National System (established in 1831) was state-funded, and the post-primary, Intermediate System (established in 1878) was funded, as in England, by a system of Payment by Results, Parliament's position, that publically funded schools should be publically accountable, was hard to implement. This is because Irish post-primary schools, in particular, had been privately established and funded prior to 1878, and they were unwilling to countenance the incursion of 'spies' (inspectors) into their schools. This led to post-primary schools remaining without any significant mode of inspection until the advent of Whole School Evaluation in the late 1990s.

The funding of a national system of primary education is particularly relevant to the rapid expansion of a quasi-private secondary education system in Ireland, and also to the history of school accountability in Irish education more generally. Between 1831 and the establishment of the Vocational Inspectorate in 1900, it was only the primary school system that had a formal inspectorate. Furthermore, although post-primary schools were to receive state funding with the passing of the Intermediate

Education Act of 1878, it was not until 1902 that the post-primary inspectorate came into being with the appointment of temporary inspectors. These were ‘mainly imported English HMIs (His Majesty’s Inspectors). These were replaced in 1909 by permanent inspectors many of whom had been former primary inspectors’.²⁷ O’Buachalla’s assertion that, ‘the existence of these inspectorates proved remarkably resilient to attempts to modify the structure’²⁸ proves true as it was not until 2004 that these three separate bodies merged into one inspectorate—‘the unified school system’ or ‘royal highway’ which the first Minister for Education, Eoin MacNeill, claimed he had created in 1925.²⁹

For those primary teachers who were subject to inspection, Akenson notes that, ‘as far as routine inspection visits were concerned, the inspectors’ tasks were just what one would expect’.³⁰ For example, upon arrival, inspectors were required to examine attendance patterns, the structural state of buildings and other matters not directly related to teaching and learning. In terms of teacher observation, inspectors were required to ‘observe the course of instruction given and the methods and processes of teaching employed...Whether the teachers are competent, efficient, and influential, faithful in the observance of all suggestions left for their guidance, prompt in the correction of abuses, and eager for improvement; duly impressed with the importance of their office, and earnest and content in the discharge of their duties’.³¹ Further, inspectors were also required to inspect the proficiency of students in areas such as: ‘Reading (including oral language and spelling); Arithmetic; Penmanship; Writing from Dictation; Grammar; Geography; Needlework; Extra Branches (such as singing, drawing)’.³²

Inspection and teacher accountability continued along these lines until the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education (1870) (Powis Commission). The Commission’s recommendations significantly shaped the future of school inspection and teacher accountability for the remainder of the nineteenth century. For example, in moving teacher accountability away from the Government and towards the school—what might be referred to as decentralisation in the modern era—the Powis Commission recommended that ‘the power of appointing and dismissing teachers should be in the hands of the local Managers’.³³ Perhaps one of the most significant interlinked recommendations for teacher accountability during this period related to that of teachers’ remuneration, whereby salary was to be ‘fixed—the class salary allowed by the Board’.³⁴ However, it was also to be ‘variable—the capitation fees due for the “passes” at the last general

inspection, school pence, and the payment out of the rate according to average attendance'.³⁵ Furthermore, the Commission acknowledged that, 'these three called variable, would be liable to fluctuation from year to year, according to the popularity and success of the teacher'.³⁶ This heralded the era of the 'Payment by Results' system, whereby inspectors examined the proficiency of all eligible students, that is, of those students who attended school on a minimum number of days, in the subjects of Arithmetic, Reading and Writing, or what might be referred to as Literacy and Numeracy in the modern era. Moreover, if eligible students were successful in these subjects, they could also be tested at senior class level in two other subjects. From this, a significant proportion of a teacher's salary was to be based on the results obtained by students in these examinations. Consequently, student attendance became increasingly important for schools, and it is no wonder that the focus of teaching and learning shifted from that of process to output as the salary given to the teacher was directly proportional to the result obtained by each student. Coolahan notes the following, 'as a system of accountability for teachers it laid down precise programmes, regular examinations, and encouraged a narrow and mechanical approach to teaching'.³⁷ Adding further scepticism to the Payments by Results system was the fact that examination standards seemed to vary considerably during the Payment by Results era. Madaus et al., analysing the annual reports of the Intermediate Education Board during the nineteenth century indicate that, 'when the pass rate became too high, and thus too costly, the tests were made more difficult and the standards of passing were increased in order to reduce the pass rates. This manipulation of pass rates assured that there was no significant upward or downward trend in the percentage of students passing during the results era'.³⁸

Part of the purpose of the Payment by Results system was to allow for a rigorous evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning, and by association an increase in the quality of education provided in the school. On the other hand, Madaus et al. also make the following observation regarding the Payment by Results system—a comment that can be equally applied to the value placed on human capital and high stakes testing in this century, 'a more telling commentary on the reality of the Payment by Results system is provided by the Newcastle Commission of 1858',³⁹ which showed that, 'as in other periods of history, in the face of expenditures on war [Crimean War], national education was regarded as a suitable field for economics. At any rate, value for money should be received'.⁴⁰ In other

words, as with other publically funded initiatives in this era, the overarching motive of the Payment by Results system was to ensure that there was a financial return received from the government's initial investment in the school and the maximum return was dependent on the teachers who were tasked with managing the initial investment.

However, this method of ascertaining the quality of teaching and learning through high stakes examination was eventually viewed as a very crude method of evaluation, with many unintended consequences, such as: '(1) restrictions on the scope of a good teacher, (2) "overpressure" on pupils, in the general drive to win results, fees and prizes, (3) a neglect of weaker pupils, and (4) unhealthy competition between pupils and between schools'.⁴¹ Indeed, Coolahan, in reference to Literacy and Numeracy statistics up to 1899 notes, 'despite various caveats which can be made about these statistics, evidence of significant improvements in literacy and numeracy was recorded during this period. However, the system took a serious toll on various other aspects of schooling. Educationally speaking, the evaluation of the quality of a school system by such a crude evaluation scheme was unsatisfactory'.⁴²

This system of teacher accountability continued into the early twentieth century. However, it is thought-provoking to note that the perceived interconnectedness between examination and inspection as a form of teacher accountability during this period has, it can be argued, remained constant for most inspectorates up to this date. According to the former Chief Inspector of England to the Committee of Enquiry into Primary Education in Ireland:

I am quite with you that the results system was vicious, that its principle was vicious, and its practice was injurious, and that too much was put on the teacher and too much put on the children....I object myself to the antithesis drawn between inspection and examination. Inspection, as I understand it, includes a certain amount of what I call informal examination, and examination is useless without some form of inspection.⁴³

After the formation of an independent Irish Free State in 1922, a significant focus of government policy, which was to significantly affect education during this period, related to the setting up of State Certificate examinations at primary and post-primary level, and the revitalisation of the Irish language. This was particularly evident in the primary sector. As Coolahan observes, 'gaelicisation was the paramount concern in

many respects and nowhere more centrally than in the primary education sphere'.⁴⁴ It is this era of school and teacher accountability that forms the next part of this chapter.

SCHOOL INSPECTION AND TEACHER ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE FREE STATE

In line with the government agenda at the time, a significant priority for the inspectorate related to the development of policies towards the restoration of the Irish language, which was to be achieved chiefly through the national system of education. Moreover, because the primary inspectorate was involved in almost every aspect of primary education, from inspecting teachers to sanctioning what textbooks could be used in schools, they were seen as a significant asset for the Gaelicisation of the Irish people. The importance placed by the inspectorate on the Gaelicisation agenda is evident in a summary of inspectorate findings relating to the lack of progress in this respect:

There is a general note of disappointment in the Inspectors' reports with regard to the work of the schools in making Irish speakers of the pupils. If the majority of our schools pupils do not acquire a reasonable facility in expressing their ordinary ideas in Irish before they leave school and if they are not imbued with a love for the language that will urge them to employ it in daily use and to seek opportunities after leaving school of improving their command of it, we shall make little progress in getting nearer the goal of an Irish-speaking Ireland, and our efforts in the schools will be almost fruitless.⁴⁵

The key milestones for school and teacher accountability in the Free State related primarily to the introduction of, at primary level, the teacher rating system and the Primary Certificate examination and at post-primary level, the establishment of the state examinations and the public availability of examination results.

An intensive mode of accountability was initiated, or rather extended, for all primary teachers in Ireland following the formation of the Department of Education in 1924, to be achieved through a combination of school inspection and standardised testing of students, referred to as the Primary Certificate. Indeed, following the *Report of the Committee on Inspection of Primary Schools*,⁴⁶ the most significant changes to school inspection

arrangements occurred when the Department of Education published a new framework for inspection outlining how inspection of primary teachers was to occur.⁴⁷ This heralded a new, although analogous, era to that of the previous high stakes accountability measures, and consisted of two types of inspection, referred to as 'Incidental' and 'General' inspections. For incidental inspections, it was stated that, 'incidental visits should, in future, be much more frequent than they have been in the past'.⁴⁸ In terms of the continuous improvement function of evaluation, a record was also to be left in the 'Observation Book' and 'should give praise and commendation where deserved, should indicate any serious faults or weaknesses in the work where found and make suggestions for their removal'.⁴⁹ However, and quite extraordinarily, in terms of the tools used for teacher observation, a retired inspector notes in Frehan that, 'the observation book used by the inspectors remained unchanged from 1834 to 1959'.⁵⁰ Indeed, Coolahan, summing up the rate of change within the Free State primary inspectorate up to the 1960s, notes, 'the most significant feature of the primary inspectorate as the years passed was that very little had changed'.⁵¹ Information obtained from incidental inspections would also be used to determine the frequency of more intensive inspections, that is, 'constant incidental visits will always enable inspectors to judge when a more thorough inspection is necessary'.⁵² Thorough inspections referred to as General Inspections were far more intensive than incidental inspections and consisted of various pre-observation tasks such as an examination of schemes of work, records of preparation for work and so forth. Indeed, every class and subject was to be 'carefully tested'.⁵³ Finally, as with most inspections, the sum total of all evaluation methodologies employed resulted in the production of a report on the teacher:

The general report should be comprehensive and balanced. Instead of the comparatively short minute, there should be given, as regards each subject in charge of a teacher, an account of the points, favourable or otherwise, observed in his teaching, and of the results, good or bad, attained by him. Attention should be made of any abnormal circumstances which may have affected the results of his work.⁵⁴

The final judgement relating to the efficiency of the teacher resulted in the production of a 'voucher' where the teacher was classified according to a three point rating scale, 'Non Efficient', 'Efficient', 'Highly Efficient'. According to the Department, 'the rating should be the sum-total of the

inspector's estimate of the teacher's success or lack of success in the discharge of all his many-sided duties'.⁵⁵ Most interestingly, in terms of the shift towards proportionate or risk-based inspections among European Inspectorates in this century, the frequency of inspections was to be based on a proportionate risk-based model. In other words, 'General Inspections need not be held in all schools as frequently as heretofore. The constant incidental visits will always enable inspectors to judge when a more thorough inspection is necessary or advisable'.⁵⁶ That is to say, Annual General Inspections were obligatory for those classified as 'Non Efficient'. For those teachers who did not fall into this high risk category, that is in 'schools not visited during the school year for the purpose of holding a general inspection'⁵⁷ inspectors were still required to produce an annual voucher detailing the teacher's scaled status. However, if during the course of incidental visits inspectors noticed a deterioration in the 'not at risk' classified teachers these teachers would also receive a general inspection that could ultimately change their quality rating. That is, 'teachers whose work appears to the inspector, from observations made in the course of his incidental visits, to have deteriorated to such an extent that it does not justify the retention of the existing rating'.⁵⁸

As with the former Payment by Results system, the rating (voucher) received directly affected a teacher's annual salary so that those teachers who received a status of 'Highly Efficient' received a higher annual salary than those in the other two categories. For example, the *Report of the Department of Education 1936-1937* states that in a school with an average attendance of 30 or more pupils, a trained male post-primary teacher was to receive an annual salary of '£140, rising by seventeen annual increments to £300'.⁵⁹ However, if the teacher was rated as 'Highly Efficient', they then entered what was termed a 'supernormal scale' and 'proceed by five annual increments to maxima varying from £340 to £377'.⁶⁰ The reasons for teachers not to be accorded the 'Highly Efficient' rating were varied and many. For example, it was suggested that, 'the principal teachers of some large schools do not exercise a directive influence over the work of their staffs'.⁶¹ Another reason given for teachers not receiving a 'Highly Efficient' rating was due to the increased use of 'Motor Cars' by teachers travelling to schools in rural areas. It was claimed that, 'this weakens the bond which ought to exist between teachers and parents, between the school and the school district'.⁶² In reality however, it would appear that the most significant reason for a teacher not to receive a 'Highly Efficient' rating related primarily to the teacher's competence in the Irish language,

‘many teachers do not yet possess a competent knowledge of Irish, and the preparation for Irish teaching is often inadequate, or unsuitable. This criticism applies to a lesser extent to other subjects’.⁶³

Given the ramifications that these judgements could have on a teacher, it is no wonder that inspection, incidental or otherwise, was a significant and unnerving event for teachers who wanted to maintain or increase their status. Indeed, due to the benefits of obtaining a ‘Highly Efficient’ rating, it is no surprise that often general inspections carried out were at the written request of a teacher who considered his rating to be too low. Sadly, however, few teachers attained this rating. The *Report of the Department of Education 1930–1931* shows that the rating of primary teachers by inspectors in Ireland was: ‘30%—Highly Efficient; 65%—Efficient; 5.0%—Non Efficient’.⁶⁴ 16 years later, an analysis of the *Report of the Department of Education 1946–1947* shows that the rating of primary teachers by inspectors in Ireland was: ‘30.8%—Highly Efficient; 67.8%—Efficient; 1.4%—Non Efficient’.⁶⁵ Indeed, while trying to ascertain if there was any significant increase or decrease in teacher ratings for the school years 1940–1941 to 1946–1947, an analysis of Department of Education annual reports reveals that teacher ratings remained constant throughout these years (Fig. 14.1).

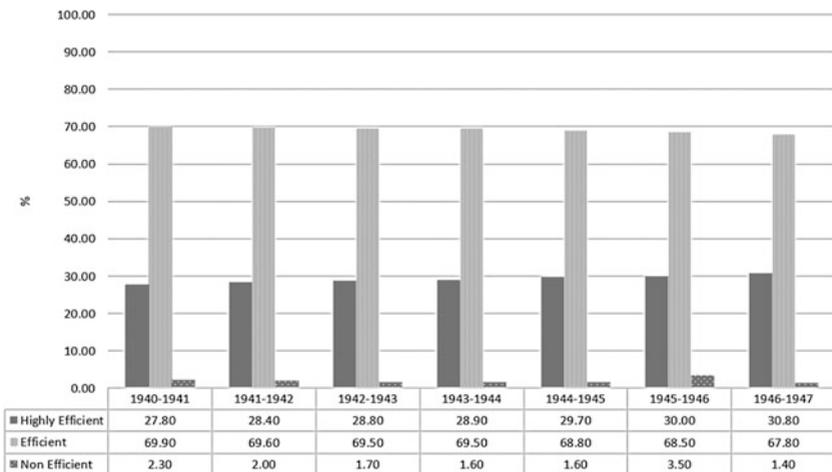


Fig. 14.1 Analysis of Department of Education Primary Teacher Efficiency Ratings (1940–1947)

According to O'Connell, 'this consistency in the grading and classifying of so many thousands of individuals into three groups was a source of wonder if not of admiration to the individuals concerned!'⁶⁶

The 1940s also saw significant changes in other school accountability arrangements. From 1943, all primary students were required to sit the Primary Certificate Examination in Irish, English and Mathematics. Until this point, since the introduction of the Primary Certificate in 1929, this decision had been at the discretion of the school. The logic of making the Primary Certificate compulsory for all students was based on the views that: (1) educational standards had fallen since the foundation of the state, (2) as with the Payment by Results era, there was a need to assure the public that they were getting value for money and (3) in the absence of competence based testing, it would not be possible for an inspector to gauge the progress made for each student. The Minister for Education at the time put it as follows:

If we are to get down to the individual pupil in such a way that we can be sure of his or her progress, it is obvious that some other more detailed test than inspection must be applied and there is no way of supplying this additional test except by the reintroduction of the former system of a definite examination of each pupil in each subject, at least at some stage towards the end of the normal primary course. Until we have such an examination, the public cannot have any real guarantee that the actual proportion of pupils who leave the Primary Schools with a satisfactory knowledge of reading, writing and arithmetic, is such as to justify our huge expenditure of nearly £4,000,000 on these schools.⁶⁷

Despite strong opposition from members of the Irish National Teachers Organisation (INTO), this mode of competency based testing was widely embraced by primary schools in which preparation for the examination became a significant and ever-present feature of school life up to the cessation of the Primary Certificate in 1967. According to O'Connell, 'the emergency was upon us. The inevitable rise in the cost of living caused the teachers, in common with other workers, to concentrate on questions of remuneration, and matters like the primary certificate, had to take a backward place in their activities'.⁶⁸ Nonetheless, for the first time in the history of the Irish State, the Department was able to execute minimum competency standards on schools and, by association, they also had another evaluative tool from which to gauge the competency of students

at both a system and school level. In other words, for the inspectorate, the benefits of introducing standardised testing were akin to the re-introduction of such testing as part of the Department of Education and Skills National strategy to improve Literacy and Numeracy in 2011 namely ‘to use aggregated data from standardised tests as one element of the evidence used to support the inspection of schools (for example, in inspection planning; during the inspection process; in the identification of good practice; and in the targeting of under-performing schools)’.⁶⁹ Whereas previous annual Department of Education reports provided a quantitative analysis of the quality of teaching through the rating scale system, with the introduction of the Primary Certificate for all students, the Department of Education reports now provided a statistical analysis of Primary Certificate examination results at both a system and, quite peculiarly, at a county level. For example, the *Report of the Department of Education: 1948–1949* states, ‘the percentage of passes was highest in Clare at 85.8 per cent and lowest in Donegal at 63.08 per cent; the overall average percentage was 77.1 percent’.⁷⁰

Gradually however, both the Primary Certificate and the teacher rating scale became highly contentious issues for teacher unions, and, until their cessation, were of significant concern to the INTO. The first substantial change to the rating system occurred in 1949 when the ‘Highly Efficient’ rating system was discontinued, to be replaced by an inspector giving a teacher a rating of ‘Satisfactory’ or ‘Not Satisfactory’. However, except for those newly qualified teachers on probation and extreme cases of teacher transgression, the rating system was further modified in 1959, to be replaced with a short inspection report detailing the collective strengths and weaknesses of the school.⁷¹ If the Stanley Letter was a significant milestone in the formation of an independent inspectorate, it would be reasonable to suggest that Circular 16/59⁷² created a fundamental shift to a new mode of school, as opposed to teacher accountability in education. Indeed, O’Connor makes the following observation on these new inspection arrangements, ‘here then for the first time was the forerunner of the more formalised whole school inspection of today with its primary focus on the school as a central unit’.⁷³ Previously inspection was viewed by many teachers as being a somewhat punitive measure where the main focus of the inspection centred on the quality of the individual teacher. New inspection arrangements would now focus on the collective quality of education provided in the school and in consequence was greeted far more favourably than previous forms of inspection.

In the wake of the cessation of the Primary Certificate Examination, a significant task for the primary inspectorate was the development and implementation of the radically new Primary School curriculum in 1971. Coolahan refers to this as ‘the finest hour so to speak of the primary inspectorate in its long history’.⁷⁴ In terms of the changing face of school and teacher accountability, it became evident that contemporaneous school inspection arrangements needed to be more in line with the implementation of the new curriculum, and in 1976 further modifications were made to how schools would be inspected. Within these arrangements, schools were to be visited every four years on a cyclical basis and, from this, a *Tuairisc Scoile* would be provided by the inspectors, with the overarching theme being that of ‘an assessment of the organisation and work of the school as a whole’.⁷⁵ Inspection of primary schools continued along these lines for the remainder of the twentieth century and was greeted far more favourably than previous modes of inspection. Indeed, as stated by the INTO at the time:

It is to be regretted that in 1976 the Annual Congress of INTO found it necessary to pass a resolution evocative of the periodic malaise in the relationships between teachers and inspectors. Just as in Britain, where they [Inspectors] exist side by side with advisers, there will always be a place for Inspectors in Ireland. Combined with the other players on the stage of Irish Primary Education, they have constituted an alliance which, in the past, was often afflicted with unease. It is time instead to constitute a partnership, *sine die*.⁷⁶

Similar to the arrangements in place in pre-independence Ireland, post-primary Schools and teachers were largely excluded from any form of centrally administered accountability in the form of teacher observation in the new state. The main work of post-primary Inspectors at the time related to, among other tasks, the voluminous development of curriculum specifications and the establishment of the State Certificate examinations, a preoccupation that was to continue into the twenty-first century.

Post-primary Schools were not completely immune to accountability, however. It has been stated that schools in Ireland have managed to avoid high-stakes accountability mechanisms that would allow for the production of League Tables, primarily because of the stance taken by various organisations such as the ASTI and the Department of Education. For example, according to the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment

(NCCA), ‘successive Ministers for Education and Science have made it clear that comparison between schools in any ‘league-table’ scenario is not envisaged’.⁷⁷ Furthermore, by act of legislation, the Department of Education is also required to refuse access to any school information that would: ‘enable the compilation of information (that is not otherwise available to the general public) in relation to the comparative performance of schools in respect of the academic achievement of students enrolled therein’.⁷⁸ However, this has not always been the case. For many years, the Department of Education published the Annual State Examination results for every student, including the school that they attended, and these subsequently resulted in the compilation of school performance tables. For example, the *Irish Independent*, August 14, 1928, reads, ‘the Leaving Certificate Examination Results—How Schools Fared’ and provides the cumulative total of the Leaving Certificate Examination results for schools in Ireland, grouped into the following categories: ‘Number of Presented’, ‘Number of Honours’, ‘Number of Passes’, ‘Total Successes’. In the case of one listed urban school, the number of students that presented was 30 and the ‘Total Successes’ was 30, resulting in a pass rate of 100%. In another neighbouring urban school, the number of students that presented was 16 and the Total Successes was 8, resulting in a pass and failure rate of 50%. While there is no empirical evidence to suggest that this was the case, one could infer that, given that these schools were within 4 km of each other, the public availability of these results would have had some effect on the choice of school for those parents who had the means of sending their children to post-primary education. Indeed, continuing with the details of the analysis provided, another column reads, ‘the Leaders—First in each Subject’ and states the name of the student and school where the highest mark was obtained for each subject. Another article in the *Irish Independent*, October 31, 1938, leads with the title: ‘The Girl Students were better again’, followed by an analysis of the ‘Leading Boys Schools, Leading Girl’s Schools’. The article then provides a list of the results for every school in the country. However, quite naturally, as the level of data provided by the Department of Education was reduced, the tone and narrative of public commentary also changed over the years. *The Irish Press*, November 6, 1940, comments: ‘Schools and pupils are no longer named and it is therefore impossible to select the leading pupils and colleges from the official lists’. Coolahan also notes the following, ‘the unhealthy rivalry was further exacerbated by many schools publishing the success rates of their named pupils, as advertisements in the public press’.⁷⁹

On the other hand, apart from post-primary schools being classed according to their frequency of instruction through Irish; that is, as Class ‘A’, ‘B’, and ‘others’, with for example, Class ‘A’ schools representing ‘schools in which the whole instruction is given in Irish’,⁸⁰ there were no other significant forms of centrally administered accountability mechanisms for post-primary schools and teachers in place during the first 50 years of the Irish Free State. Indeed, on the rare occasion when post-primary inspectors did enter the school, they were always greeted as guests as opposed to having any form of authority over the teachers. School and teacher accountability arrangements for post-primary teachers largely remained the same until, as with primary teachers, the implementation of the Education Act of 1998 saw a significant change in the way that schools and teachers were inspected.

CONCLUSION

The emergence of a publically funded system of education in 1831 allowed for the interlinked establishment of a national system of school and teacher inspection that was strongly influenced by inspection frameworks that were previously developed by the Kildare Place Society. In allowing exchequer finances to be used for a national system of education, the government also required that value for money was to be achieved. For this purpose, as stated in the Stanley Letter, exchequer funding was also to be used for ‘paying Inspectors for visiting and reporting upon schools’.⁸¹ However, because funding arrangements contained within the Stanley letter specifically related to primary schools, the post-primary education sector remained without any significant form of government mandated accountability mechanisms up to the deployment of the State examinations and consequent school league tables after the formation of the Irish Free State. For primary schools, what emerged from 1831 onwards was a high-stakes accountability environment that used various mechanisms such as incidental inspections and the Payment by Results system to ensure that value for money was achieved. It is unsurprising that the figure of the school inspector became a feared part of school life in nineteenth-century Ireland. Although the Payment by Results system was eventually abolished at the end of the nineteenth century, inspection of teachers continued in this manner until the establishment of the Irish Free State.

The newly formed government of the Irish Free State saw an opportunity for primary education to be a significant catalyst for the Gaelicisation

of the Irish people. As a result, the quality of Irish language teaching became an added significant determinant of the quality of education provided in schools. With the introduction of the voucher system, for teachers to achieve the accolade of 'Highly Efficient', a significant emphasis was placed on the quality of Irish instruction provided. Interestingly in the context of the push to revive Irish the percentage of teachers receiving a 'Highly Efficient' rating remained constant throughout the lifetime of the voucher system. Moreover, in terms of the continuous improvement purpose of inspection, it would be reasonable to suggest that the voucher system had little impact on the quality of education provided as the proportion of teachers receiving an 'Efficient' or 'Non—Efficient' rating remained constant during this period (Fig. 14.1).

During the 1940s, there were also concerns relating to falling education standards and as a result, the Primary Certificate became compulsory for all students. The results of the Primary Certificate allowed the government to set minimum competency standards at a system and school level and allowed inspectors to have another tool from which to judge the quality of education provided in schools.

For post-primary teachers, things remained much as they had been before independence. Teacher accountability was left to individual school managers. Indeed, as previously stated, the only significant mode of school accountability that existed was the public availability of state examination results and consequent publication of informal league tables in the newspapers for the first three decades of the Irish State.

School and teacher accountability continued along these lines until the 1950s and what had originated as a high stakes accountability environment eventually evolved into one where accountability arrangements were left largely to the discretion of the school. However, in many ways, there was no option but to move in this direction. At post-primary level, inspectorate resources were limited and devoted for the most part to the state examinations. Moreover, Ireland had introduced a free system of post-primary education for all of its citizens in 1966. Any policy that would upset teachers and the teaching unions and endanger the acceptance of a free post-primary education system would be unwise. For primary teachers, what was initially an immensely high stakes accountability environment, eventually transformed into one where high stakes testing and inspection were to be replaced with cooperation and trust between inspectors and schools. As O'Connell remarks, 'fault finding, threats and

penalties as incentives were to be replaced by sympathy, friendliness and co-operation'.⁸² This can only be described as a remarkable turnaround given that, for more than 100 years, inspectors were often regarded with a degree of dread by teachers. However, it was probably inevitable for several reasons but in particular because when the radical new 'child centered' primary curriculum of 1971 was in its infancy it was imperative to ensure that primary teachers gave it their full support. In the words of O'Connor:

The School Report does not represent a threat and, according to the Deputy Chief Inspector...this is in accord with a deliberately contrived though unstated policy of the Department of Education to ensure that the new curriculum gains a foothold in a poorly resourced school system.⁸³

In conclusion, there are many lessons that can be learned from the history of accountability in Irish education. In particular, as is usually the case when high stakes accountability mechanisms are applied to any education system, there will be a greater probability of unintended consequences. In the case of Ireland, these unintended consequences related to hostility and a lack of partnership between inspectors and teachers and the mechanical mode of teaching and learning as a result of the Payment by Results and Voucher systems. In contrast, more modern forms of accountability that stress the collaboration and trust between schools and inspectors that was largely absent for more than 100 years, has completely changed the picture. Inspection is now perceived to be one of several methods, not only of assuring educational quality but also of driving school improvement. It is interesting to note that inspection as thus conceptualised has now migrated from the small number of countries where it was developed in the nineteenth century to virtually every education system in the world: 'school inspection has become so generally accepted and adopted throughout the civilised world that it needs no supporting argument to recommend its continuance'.⁸⁴

Perhaps it is fitting to leave the final word to the pioneers of school accountability and inspection in Ireland, 'the success which has attended our labours, as appears by the progress we have made, abundantly proves that the system of education committed to our charge has been gratefully received and approved by the public in general; we trust it will continue to spread and prosper'.⁸⁵

NOTES

1. Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education (Ireland), *Teachers in National Schools*, Vol. 1, Part IV [C-1], 1870.
2. See: Department of Education, *Report of the Department of Education for the school years 1925-26-27 and the Financial and Administrative Year 1926-1927*, Dublin: Stationery Office, 1928.
3. See: Department of Education, *Circular 12/76, Inspection of Schools*, Dublin: Stationery Office, 1976.
4. Ibid.
5. Cited in J. Coolahan, *Ireland's School Inspectorate 1831-2008* (Dublin, 2009), 207.
6. Department of Education and Skills, *Chief Inspector's Report: 2010-2012*, Dublin: Inspectorate of the Department of Education and Skills, 2013, 102.
7. Ibid, 22.
8. G.F. Madaus, J.P. Ryan, T. Kellaghan, and P.W. Airasian. 'Payment by results: An analysis of a nineteenth century performance-contracting programme', *The Irish Journal of Education/Iris Eireannach an Oideachais* (1987): 80.
9. J. Coolahan, *Irish education: Its history and structure* (Dublin, 1981), 9.
10. A. McManus, *The Irish hedge school and its books, 1695-1831* (Dublin, 2002), 16.
11. E. O'Heidean, *National School Inspection in Ireland: The Beginnings* (Dublin, 1967), 12.
12. J. Coolahan, *Irish education*, 3.
13. H. Hislop, 'Inspecting a Doomed Non-Denominational School System: The Inspectorate of the Kildare Place Society in Ireland, 1811-1831', *Paedagogica Historica*, 35, no.1 (1999), 178.
14. E. O'Heidean, *National School Inspection in Ireland*, 31.
15. Commissioners of National Education, *3rd Report of the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland for the Year 1836*, Appendix, Section II (E). Inspection of Schools. 1836, in: *Report of the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland from the Year 1834 to 1845, Inclusive, Vol. 1*, ed. (Dublin: G and J Grierson, 1851), 109.
16. Department of Education and Skills, *A Guide to Incidental Inspection in Second-Level Schools and Centres for Education*, Dublin: Inspectorate of the Department of Education and Skills, 2012, 2.
17. Commissioners of National Education, *21st report of the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland for the year 1854*, Appendix, Section IV (D): Instructions for District and Sub Inspectors. Dublin: Alex Thom and Sons, 1855, 435.
18. Cited in E. O'Heidean, *National School Inspection in Ireland*, 100.

19. D. H. Akenson, *The Irish education experiment: The National System of Education in Ireland in the nineteenth century* (London, 1970), 146.
20. Commissioners of National Education, *9th Report of the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland for the Year 1843*, Appendix, Section IV. Inspection of Schools. 1843, in: *Report of the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland from the Year 1834 to 1845, Inclusive, Vol. 1*, ed. (Dublin, 1851), 203.
21. *Ibid.*, 204.
22. See E. O’Heidean, *National School Inspection in Ireland*, 85.
23. Commissioners of National Education, *3rd Report of the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland for the year 1836*, 1836 in: *Report of the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland from the Year 1834–1845, Inclusive, Vol. 1*, ed. (Dublin, 1851), 52.
24. Royal Commission of Inquiry, 381.
25. *Letter of the Right Hon. E.G. Stanley, Chief Secretary to His Grace the Duke of Leinster*, London, 1831 in: *Report of the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland from the Year 1834–1845, Inclusive, Vol. 1*, ed. (Dublin, 1851).
26. *Ibid.*, 5.
27. S. O’Buachalla, ‘The Inspectorial Role in Twentieth Century Irish Education’, *European Journal of Education*, 21, no.4 (1986), 359.
28. *Ibid.*
29. *Ibid.*
30. D. Akenson, *The Irish education experiment*, 146.
31. Commissioners of National Education, *21st report of the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland for the year 1854*, 437.
32. Commissioners of National Education, *34th report of the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland for the year 1867*, Appendix, Section VII (D): Extracts from District Inspectors’ Annual Report for the Year, Observations as to the Proficiency of Pupils, (Dublin, 1868), 236.
33. Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education, Vol. I, Part IV-Teachers, Chapter I, ‘Teachers in National Schools’, 1870, 383.
34. *Ibid.*, 378.
35. *Ibid.*
36. *Ibid.*
37. J. Coolahan, *Irish education*, 28.
38. G. F. Madaus, Michael S. Russell and Jennifer Higgins, *The paradoxes of high stakes testing: How they affect students, their parents, teachers, principals, schools, and society* (Charlotte, NC, 2009), 121.
39. G. F. Madaus et al., ‘Payment by results’, 81.
40. Newcastle Commission of 1858 cited in Madaus et al., ‘Payment by results’, 81.

41. Palles Commission, 1889, cited in P. Hogan, 'The Fortress of the Good and the Liberation of Tradition: A Review of Irish Education in the Late Twentieth Century', *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* (1986): 270.
42. J. Coolahan, *Irish education*, 29.
43. Vice-Regal Committee of Inquiry into Primary Education, *Appendix to the First Report of the Committee: Minutes of Evidence 13th March—25th June, 1913, With Appendices*. [Cd.7229], (Dublin, 1914), 250.
44. J. Coolahan, *Ireland's School Inspectorate*, 115.
45. Department of Education, *Report of the Department of Education: 1930–1931*, (Dublin, 1932), 17.
46. A committee was initially established to make recommendations for new modes of school inspection and assessment in Ireland. The committee was tasked with various duties such as a review of primary certificate programs and inspection practices in European Countries. The outcomes of the committee were published as: *Report of the Committee on Inspection of Primary Schools*, 1927.
47. Department of Education, *Report of the Department of Education for the school years 1925-26-27*, 1928.
48. *Ibid.*, 10.
49. *Ibid.*
50. P. G. Frehan, *Education and Celtic Myth: National Self-image and Schoolbooks in 20th Century Ireland*, (Amsterdam, 2012), 165.
51. J. Coolahan, *Ireland's School Inspectorate*, 132.
52. Department of Education, *Report of the Department of Education for the school years 1925-26-27*, 11.
53. *Ibid.*
54. *Ibid.*
55. Department of Education, *Report of the Department of Education for the school years 1925-26-27*, 12.
56. Department of Education, *Report of the Department of Education for the school years 1925-26-2007*, 1982, 11.
57. *Ibid.*, 14.
58. *Ibid.*, 12.
59. Department of Education, *Report of the Department of Education: 1936–1937*, (Dublin, 1938), 131.
60. *Ibid.*
61. Department of Education, *Report of the Department of Education: 1930–1931*, (Dublin, 1932), 16.
62. *Ibid.*
63. *Ibid.*
64. Department of Education, *Report of the Department of Education: 1930–1931*, 16.

65. Department of Education, *Report of the Department of Education: 1946–1947*, 1948, 87.
66. T. J. O’Connell, *100 years of progress—The story of the Irish national teachers’ organisation 1868–1968* (Dublin, 1968), 416.
67. English translation, cited in G. F. Madaus & V. Greaney, ‘The Irish Experience in Competency Testing: Implications for American Education’, *American Journal of Education* 93, no. 2 (February 1985), 271.
68. T.J. O’Connell, *100 years of progress*, 426.
69. Department of Education and Skills, *Literacy and numeracy for learning and life. The national strategy to improve literacy and numeracy among children and young people 2011–2020*, (Dublin, 2011), 84.
70. Department of Education, *Report of the Department of Education: 1948–1949*, (Dublin, 1950), 9.
71. Department of Education, *Circular 16/59, School Inspection*, (Dublin, 1959).
72. Department of Education, *Circular 16/59*.
73. Patrick P. O’Connor, ‘The policy, process and impact of whole school inspection at primary level in the Republic of Ireland from the perspective of some inspectors and teachers.’ (EdD diss., The Open University, 2001), 18.
74. J. Coolahan, *Ireland’s School Inspectorate*, 185.
75. Department of Education, *Circular 12/76*.
76. Irish National Teachers Organisation, *A Proposal for Growth (1980)—The Administration of National Schools. Report of a Special Committee* (Dublin, 1980), 23.
77. National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, *Supporting Assessment in Schools. Standardised Testing in Compulsory Schooling—April 2005* (Dublin, 2005), 15.
78. Government of Ireland, *Education Act of 1998*, Section 53 (a): Refusal of access to certain information. Dublin: Stationery Office. 1998.
79. J. Coolahan, *Ireland’s School Inspectorate*, 136.
80. Department of Education, *Report of the Department of Education: 1928–1929*. Dublin: Stationary Office. 1930, 16.
81. *Letter of the Right Hon. E.G. Stanley, Chief Secretary*, 4.
82. T. J. O’Connell, *100 years of progress*, 420.
83. P. P. O’Connor, ‘The policy, process and impact of whole school inspection’, 20.
84. J. V. Gallagher, ‘Economic value of school inspection’, *The Journal of Education* 73, no. 14 (1824) (April 6, 1911), 372.
85. Commissioners of National Education, *1st Report of the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland for the year 1836*, 1836 in: *Report of the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland from the Year 1834–1845, Inclusive, Vol. 1*, ed. (Dublin, 1851), 14.

INDEX

A

Abbot, Charlotte, 146
adult education, 303, 305–7, 315
Aikenhead, Mary, 97
Akenson, D.H., 15–16, 362, 364
Alexandra College (Dublin), 117, 119,
154, 163n14, 169–70n104,
177–8n200
 personal accounts, 148, 150, 205
Allen, Richard, 148
Andrews, Annette, 167n67
An Gúm publications, 269
apprenticeship education, 309–311
Association of Secondary Teachers
 (ASTI), 159, 203, 250, 360

B

Banville, John, 141
Beale, Dorothea, 116
Bell, Rev. Andrew, 46, 56, 89, 100n21
Belvedere College (Dublin), 132, 143,
150, 152, 161, 164n29, 172n150
Bennett, J., 213

Bhreathnach, Niamh (Minister for
 Education), 203, 210, 228–9n33,
280, 282–3, 288
Bicheno, James, 92, 95
Bilingual Programme, Irish language,
20, 22
Blackrock College (Dublin), 143–4,
165n38, 169n95
Blake, A.R., 54
Boland, John, 284
Bonel-Elliott, I., 303
Boulter, Hugh, 86–7
Brennan, Séamus, 288
Browne, Bishop Michael, 246–7, 281,
293n81
Brown, Martin, 4, 359–77
Browne, Dr. Noel, 345
Burke, Dick (Minister for Education),
281, 282
Burke, Edmund, 84
Burke-Gaffney, J., 150
Buss, Frances, 116, 118
Butler, Professor Edward, 60, 71,
79n50

Byers, Margaret, 117–18, 119, 120,
136–7, 154, 161
Byrne, Thomas, 340

C

Campbell, Julia, 58
Cardwell, Edward, 67–8
Carew, Seán, 281
Carlile, Reverend James, 52, 56
Carlton, William, 140
Castleknock College (Dublin), 4, 144,
145, 154, 163n14
Castle, Richard, 54
Catholic Church
 dominant position in school system,
 11–12, 74, 132, 177n196, 315
 employment of lay teachers, 143–5
 establishment of denominational
 teacher training colleges, 18–19
 funding of school system, 14
 resistance to nondenominational
 education, 47, 48–9, 66–9,
 67–8, 69–73
 Second Vatican Council, 280, 281
Catholic Social Guild (CSG), 341
Catholic Worker Movement (CWM),
343–4
Catholic Workers' College (CWC), 3,
339–53
 curriculum, 347–9, 356n42
 origins, 344–7
 religious ethos, 349–51
Cerf, A.J.W., 154
Chapman, Penny, 215
Charter Schools, 2, 9, 86–7, 108–9,
141–2
Christian Brothers. *See* Irish Christian
 Brothers
Church Education Society, 10, 36n15,
61, 73, 111
Clancy, P., 238
Clarke, Aidan, 85

Clarke, Marie, 6, 297–316
Clifford, Dr. Louis, 185
Clongowes Wood College (Dublin),
145, 147–8, 163n14
Clune, William, 218
Cobbe, Frances Power, 117
Colgan, Hugh, *The Secondary Teacher*,
209
Colley, George (Minister for
 Education), 239, 246–7, 249–50,
274, 276, 292n71
Collins, Thomas, 183–4
Commissioners of National Education
 in Ireland (CNEI), 45, 361
Community Schools, 203, 226n1,
253–4, 305
comprehensive schools, 241–2, 249
continuation education, 299–303, 315
Cooke Taylor, W., 59–60
Coolahan, John, 238, 361, 365, 366,
374
Copleman, Dina, 3
Corcoran, T., 85–6
Corcoran, Rev. Timothy, 268, 341,
354n11
Corish, P., 136
Corridan, John, 342
Coyne, Edward Joseph, 340, 344–5,
346, 347–8
Cromwell, Oliver, 85, 87
Cullen, Clara, 3
Cullen, Mary, 105
Cullen, Archbishop Paul, 66, 67, 70,
98
Cunningham, P., 219
Curtis, Sarah, 89

D

Dale, F.H., 20, 135–6, 154, 156–7,
158, 160, 174n167
Darley, Frederick, 54, 79n56
Davern, Noel, 288

Davies, Emily, 117, 118
The Higher Education of Women,
 116

Day, Dorothy, 343–4, 346, 349,
 355–6n26

de Búrca, Seán, 273

Delapsie, Mr., 56

De La Salle, Jean-Baptiste, 89

Department of Education, education
 reform, 237–8, 244, 286–7

Derrig, Thomas, 270–71, 272, 276–7,
 281

De Valera, Eamon, 21, 268, 271, 344

Dilwort, W.J., 154

disability
 campaigns for fundamental rights,
 193–4
 changes in societal perceptions,
 182–4
 legislation, 195–7
 provisions in education, 181–98
 right to appropriate education,
 194–5

district model schools. *See* model
 schools

Dodds, Robert, 154

Dominican Convent (Cabra), 205–6

Donovan, Michael, 93

Dowling, P.J., 85

Doyle, A., 14, 190

Drummond, Thomas, 54, 61

Duggan, Br Bernard, 97

Duggan, Dr. Maurice, 262n37, 304

Dwyer, Rev. George, 92–3

E

Edgeworth, Maria, 89, 100n21

Education Act (1998), 27, 196, 197,
 288, 360, 375

education reform, 235–60, 267–89.
See also comprehensive schools;
 vocational education

abolishment of marriage ban for
 primary teachers, 240, 272,
 291n35

amalgamation of small schools,
 246–7, 274

building modernisation, 273–4

curriculum and examination reform,
 247–9, 270

Department of Education, 237–8,
 244, 286–7

development of vocational and
 technical education, 237

Education Act (1998), 27, 196,
 197, 288, 360, 375

free education scheme, 237, 242,
 250–53, 274, 276–7, 289, 376

higher education, 254–9, 285

impact of global developments,
 239–40

integration of secondary and
 vocational schools, 249–50,
 253–4, 276

Qualifications Act (1999), 288

reduction of class sizes and
 overcrowding, 240–41

resistance of church and authorities
 to changes, 238, 241–2,
 249–50, 251–3, 277

Universities Act (1997), 288, 321

education system. *See* Minister for
 Education; schools system

Edwards, E., 207

endowed schools, 133, 163n24

F

Fagan, Frances, 167n67

Fahy, Frank, 268

Faulkner, Pádraig (Minister for
 Education), 274, 279, 282, 283

female education. *See* girls education

Fisher, Margaret F., 149

FitzGerald, Garret, 218, 232n98

Fitzgerald, Margaret, 149
 Fitzpatrick, David, 112, 114, 125n48
 Flanagan, Fionnula, 218
 Flanagan, Oliver J., 247
 Foley, Ruth, 150
 Forgan, R., 213
 Fortescue, C.S., 69–70
 free education scheme, 237, 242,
 250–53, 274, 276–7, 289, 376
 Frehan, P.G., 368

G

Gaelic Athletic Association (1884), 15,
 38n53
 Gaelic League (1893), 15, 38n53
 Gaelscoileanna, 25, 42n113
 Gallagher, Mary, 334
 Gardner, P., 131, 219
 gender, influence on education, 105–6
 Gibson, Tony, 231n86
 Gilson, E., 326
 girls education, 105–122, 148–9
 class distinctions, 107, 111
 education for middle-class girls,
 115–20, 174n168
 entry into higher education, 119–20
 ideology of domesticity, 105–7,
 111–12, 121, 174n170,
 176–7n192
 role of female religious orders,
 112–14, 121, 152, 174n167
 role of feminism in education
 reform, 106–7, 116–18, 121
 schooling for working class girls,
 108–114
 Girls Orphanage (Dublin), 2
 Goffsbridge, 141
 Grace, Br. Austin, 93
 Greer, Germaine, 214
 Grey, Sir George, 69
 Grey, Maria, 117, 121

Group Certificate examination, 275,
 302, 303, 315
 Gwynn, Stephen, 173n163, 204–5,
 227n10

H

Hall, Samuel, 93
 Hanafin, Mary, 203
 Harford, Judith, 3, 120, 122, 127n68
 Harney, Mary, 284
 Haslam, Anna, 119, 126n56
 Haslett, William Woods, 144,
 170n110
 Haughey, Charles J. (Minister for
 Education), 288–9
 Hayden, Mary, 154
 Hayes, John, 344
 Hayes, Michael (Minister for
 Education), 268, 269
 Heaney, Seamus, 218, 232n100
 hedge schools, 1, 2, 8–9, 13, 16,
 85–6, 109, 164n30, 361
 Higgins, Jennifer, 365
 Higgins, President Michael D., 218
 Higher Education Authority (HEA),
 257–8, 279–80
 Hillery, Dr. Patrick (Minister for
 Education), 5–6, 239, 240–43,
 248, 250, 253, 256, 271–4, 275,
 283
 Hime, Maurice, 132, 137, 138–9,
 149–50, 157, 164n29
 Hislop, H., 361
 Hore, Harriette, 149
 Howard, John, 141
 Howley, E., 134, 165n38
 Hullah method, 58–9, 78n40
 Hume, John, 218, 232n103
 Hussey, Gemma (Minister for
 Education), 279, 281–2,
 286, 287–8

Hyland, A., 18, 19–20, 301
 Hyland, William, 244, 253

I

Inglis, Henry, 95
 inspectors, 359–77
 incidental inspections, 362
 role in school system, 16–17, 375
 Intermediate Certificate examination,
 134–5, 137, 304, 315
 intermediate education system
 (1878–1922), 129–61, 162n10,
 163n14
 state involvement, 133–4
Investment in Education OECD
 survey, 24–5, 225, 242–6, 253,
 259, 274, 283–4, 289, 304
 Irish Christian Brothers, 2, 5, 8, 66,
 83–99, 113
 educational principles, 88–92, 94
 Manual of School Government,
 90–92, 95
 Presentation Rule, 89
 Irish language
 Bilingual Programme, 20, 22
 curriculum developments following
 Independence, 21–3, 23–4
 linking competence in Irish to
 increments and ratings, 24, 270
 revalist policy in schools, 1, 3–4,
 13, 15, 20, 21–3, 24, 28, 236,
 267–71, 367
 Irish National Teachers' Organisation
 (INTO), 17, 82n88, 372
 role in education reform, 268, 274,
 281, 282

J

Jellett, Lily, 148–9
 Jellicoe, Anne, 117, 119

Joyce, Patrick W., *A Handbook of
 School Management*, 19, 72

K

Kavanagh, Catherine, 4, 321–35
 Kavanagh, James, 81n74
 *Mixed Education-the Catholic Case
 stated*, 67
 Keenan, Sir Patrick, 63, 70, 73,
 79n61, 134, 174n167
 Kennedy, Patrick, 139–41, 150
 Kennelly, Brendan, 218, 232n 104
 Kent, Edmond, 342–4, 345–8
 Keogh, Dáire, 2, 5, 83–99
 Kidd, Dr. George, 184
 Kildare Place Society (KPS), 9, 16, 52,
 58, 73, 74, 77n18, 89, 109–110,
 141–2, 361
 Killanin Report, 158–9

L

labour colleges, 341–2, 352. *See also*
 Catholic Workers' College (CWC)
 Lancaster, Joseph, 46, 56, 89, 90,
 100n21
 learning difficulties, provisions in
 education, 181–98
 Leaving Certificate examination,
 41n101, 205, 230n52, 237, 305,
 315
 Leman, Père, 143, 144
 Lemass, Séan, 238–9, 251, 272, 276
 Lenihan, Brian, 279, 284
 Lennon, Colm, 84–5
 Lethbridge, Mabel, 149
 Limond, David, 3, 6, 339–53
 literacy, impact of national school
 system on rates, 11, 18, 28
 Lucey, Bishop Cornelius, 278
 Luddy, M., 112

- Lynch, Finian (Minister for Education), 268, 269, 274
 Lynch, Jack, 240, 251, 272, 275, 278
 Lynch, Patrick, 218–19, 232n105, 244
 Lyon, Stanley, 151
- M**
- MacMahon, Bryan, 212
The Master, 129–30
 MacNeill, Eoin (Minister for Education), 270, 281, 288, 292n78, 364
 MacPherson Education Bill, 268, 281
 Madaus, G.F., 365
 Magray, M.P., 94
 McAuley, Catherine, 232n95
 McDermid, Jane, 5, 105–122
 McDermott, William, 52
 McElligott, T.J., *This Teaching Life*, 129–30
 McGahern, John, 219
 McGauley, Rev. James William, 57–8, 60
 MacGearailt, Séan, 242–3, 251, 252
 McGilligan, Patrick, 277–8
 McGrath, E.J., 240
 McInerney, John, 242–3
 MacIntyre, Alasdair, *After Virtue*, 324
 McKenna, Jane Agnes, 218
 McKenna, Thomas Patrick, 219, 232n108
 McMahan, Maurice, *Mr Mac*, 129–30
 McManus, Antonia, 2, 5–6, 267–89
 McNamara, Gerry, 4, 359–77
 McNamara, Rev. John, 271
 McQuaid, Archbishop John Charles, 2, 252
 Mahon, Jack, 233n122
 Manson, David, 182
 Marist Order, 207–8
 Marlborough Street Institution, 46, 47, 48–9, 50–51, 53–60, 62, 67, 70–71, 111
 Marshall, Jane, 146
 M'Arthur, Dr. Arthur Alexander, 52–3, 56
 Martin, Micheál (Minister for Education), 283, 284, 285, 287, 288
 Masonic schools, 2
 Maurin, Peter, 343
 Maybury, Frances, 149
 Mercy Sisters, 8, 66
 introduction of pupil teachers, 68
 Methodist schools, 96–7
 Meyer, Kuno, 178n203
 Middleton College (Cork), 147
 Milne, Kenneth, 2, 18, 141–2
 Minister for Education, 5, 203
 model schools, 46, 46–7, 48–53, 76n15
 development of district network, 60–64, 70
 development of Infant Model School, 59–60
 Molony Report (1919), 157–9, 179n227
 Molony, Thomas, 175
 Monahan, Jane, 4
 monitorial system, 46, 52, 89–90
 Moran, Frances, 148
 More, Hannah, 145–6
 Mount Sackville School (Dublin), 139–40, 167n67, 227n16
 Moylan, Seán, 274–5, 278
 Muckross Park Girls' School (Dublin), 4, 231n78
 Muintir na Tíre, 344
 Mulcahy, General Richard (Minister for Education), 236, 271, 274, 278, 286
 multid denominational schools, 25

- Murphy, W.M., 141
 Murray, Archbishop Daniel, 66, 97, 98
- N**
- Nagle, Margaret, 172n153
 Nagle, Nano, 88, 163n22, 228n24
 National Board, 5, 9–10, 45–75, 89,
 122. *See also* teachers, teacher
 training
 establishment, 9–10, 45–6, 110;
 central training institution
 (Marlborough Street), 46–51,
 53–60, 62, 67, 70–71, 111;
 district model schools, 46–7;
 in-service graded examination
 programme, 47, 64–6
 graded lesson books, 48, 52–3,
 56–7, 65
 use of untrained teachers, 47–8, 136
 National College of Industrial
 Relations (NCIR)
 National College of Ireland (NCI),
 340–41. *See also* Catholic
 Workers' College
 National Institutes of Higher
 Education (NIHEs), 255, 258,
 279–80
 national schools, 375. *See also*
 Gaelscoileanna;
 multid denominational schools;
 National Board
 attendance legislation, 20
 Catholic Church's dominant
 position in schools system,
 11–12, 28–9, 155
 establishment of national system
 (1831–1872), 7, 8–11, 16–17,
 134
 evolution of system, 7–35
 factors impacting upon the
 development of school system,
 8, 9, 10, 11–16; cultural,
 15–16; economic, 14–15;
 political, 13, 28; religious,
 11–12, 28; social, 13–14, 28
 failure of mixed denominational
 principle, 10, 29, 48, 69–73,
 72–5, 134
 post-Independence curricula
 developments, 8, 13, 21–3, 28,
 31–3, 375
 Primary Certificate, 23, 185, 187,
 245, 270, 274, 367, 371, 372,
 376
Primary School Curriculum
 (1971), 8, 24–6, 29, 33, 248,
 373
Primary School Curriculum (1999),
 27, 29, 33
 pupil-teacher training, 24, 41n101,
 61–2, 64–5
Revised Programme of Instruction
 (1900), 7, 19–21, 31
Stanley Letter, 9–11, 17, 45–6,
 76n5, 363, 372
 New Education Movement in Europe,
 28
 Normal Establishment. *See* teachers,
 education
 Norman, Dr. Connolly, 183
 Normoyle, M.C., 92
- O**
- O'Brien, Hannah, 167n68
 Ó Broin, León, 269
 Ó Buachalla, S., 249, 364
 O'Callaghan, Dr. Finbarr, 242,
 262n37
 O'Connell, T.J., 281, 371, 376–7
 O'Connell, Winifred, 167n68
 O'Connor, Anne, 115
 O'Connor, Patrick P., 372, 377

- O'Connor, Séan, 240, 243, 244, 250, 251, 253
- Ó Cuilleanáin, Tomás, 273, 291n43
- O'Doherty, Rev. E.F., 267–8
- O'Donnell, F.H., 152–4, 157, 160–61, 173n163
The Ruin of Education in Ireland, 152–4
- O'Donoghue, Martin, 244
- O'Donoghue, Paul, 193–4, 287
- O'Donoghue, Tom, 3, 15
- OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development), 239, 282, 289, 304
influence on education policy, 284, 289, 304
Investment in Education survey, 242–3, 244–6, 253, 259, 274, 283–4, 289, 304
- Ó Floinn, Tomás, 248, 262n37
- O'Flynn, Edward, 91, 93
- O'Flynn, Grainne, 119
- O'Hara, Joe, 4, 359–77
- O'Hea, Leo, 341, 347
- O'Heidean, E., 361
- O'Higgins, Kevin, 269
- O'Kelly, John J. (Minister for Education), 268, 269
- Oldham, Alice, 119, 120, 127n68
- O'Malley, Donogh (Minister for Education), 6, 15, 239, 250–53, 255–6, 274, 276, 279, 286–7, 289, 296n146, 312
- O'Meara, John J., 237–8, 275, 286
- O'Neill, Joseph, 271, 278
- Ó Nualláin, Pádraig, 244, 253
- Ó Raifeartaigh, Tarlach, 243, 252, 273
- O'Reilly, Tony, 219
- O'Rourke, Mary, 288. *See also* Gaelscoileanna; multid denominational schools; National Board
- Orpen, Charles, 183–4
- O'Sullivan, Clare, 3–4
- O'Sullivan, Daniel, 71
- O'Sullivan, Denis, 238
- O'Sullivan, John Marcus, 270, 274–5, 281, 288, 292n78
- Owen, Jacob, 54
- Owen, James H., 79n56
- P**
- parents, role in schools system, 12, 267, 281
- Parkes, Susan M., 5, 45–75, 105, 120, 122
- Parkinson, Henry, 341
- Peacock, Alan, 242
- Peacock, Patrick, 151
- performance tables, schools system, 374, 376
- Pestalozzi, Johann Heinrich, 56, 184
- Pim, Jonathan, 184
- Plater, Charles Dominic, 341
- Plater College, 341–2
- Pollok, Dr. Johanna, 271
- post-primary schools system. *See* intermediate schools system; secondary schools system
- Powis Royal Commission of Inquiry (1870), 17, 47, 49, 65, 69–73, 174n167, 364
- Presentation Sisters, 8, 88
- Primary Certificate, 23, 185, 187, 245, 270, 274, 367, 371, 372, 376
- primary school system. *See* national schools
- Protestant Church, declining numbers, 12
- pupils, personal accounts of school life, 130, 147–51

Q

- Quaker school (Newtown, Co. Waterford), 2, 135, 137–8, 147, 148–9, 163n14
 Qualifications Act (1999), education reform, 288
 Quinn, Ruairi, 219

R

- Rafferty, Deirdre, 105, 121, 122. *See also* Gaelscoileanna; multid denominational schools; National Board Randles, Sr. Eileen, 238
 Rasmussen, Werner, 242
 reform, creation of modern education system. *See* education reform
 regional technical colleges, 241, 255, 278–9, 280, 305, 312–14
 registration, teachers, 147, 154, 175n181, 204
 Rice, Edmund Ignatius, 83–99, 163n22, 229n35
 educational principles, 88–92, 94
 Rinehart, A.D., 220
 Rintoul, John, 56, 71
 Roche, Mary, 167n68
 Rochelle School (Cork), 145–7, 149
 Russell, Michael S., 365
 Ryland, Richard, 93–4

S

- St. Andrew's College (Dublin), 144–5
 St. Columba's College (Derry), 217
 St. Columba's College (Dublin), 3, 213
 St. Kieran's College (Kilkenny), 137–8, 139, 142–3, 163n14, 168n94, 174–5n173
 St. Malachy's (Belfast), 157

- St. Mary's College (Clonakilty), 208
 St. Mary's College (Dundalk), 151
 St. Michael's House, 186
 St. Paul's College (Dublin), 170n106
 Sandymount High School (Dublin), 2
 Santa Sabina (Dublin), 151, 171–2n143
 Schools system. *See also* education reform; intermediate education system; national schools; secondary schools; teachers attendance legislation, 20
 capitation funding, 135, 137
 church influence, 2, 11–12, 152–3, 155
 corporal punishment, 208, 211–13, 286–7; abolition (1982), 29
 developments in special education, 4, 181–98, 273, 287; state engagement, 186–90
 employment of lay teachers, 143–5, 152–3, 155
 impact of intellectual movements, 2, 13, 28
 payment by results system, 7, 17–18, 28, 65, 80n68, 134–5, 135–6, 138, 152, 156, 160–61, 359, 365–6, 371, 376–7
 performance tables, 374, 376
 post independence administrations, 1, 21–3
 power of education in shaping polity, 84, 85–6
 relationship with nationalism, 1, 21–3
 role of women in education, 2
 secondary schools system, 204–226.
 See also intermediate school system
 choice of subjects, 216
 corporal punishment, 212–13, 225, 228–9n33, 230n70
 impact of teaching Religious, 214–15, 225

Sheehy, Edward, 60
 Shevlin, Michael, 4, 181–98
 Sikes, P., 219
 Sinnott, Jamie, 193, 194
 Sion Hill Dominican Convent, 210
 Slattery, Joseph, 145
 Society for the Preservation of the
 Irish Language (1876), 15,
 38n53. *See also* education reform;
 intermediate education system;
 national schools; secondary
 schools; teachers
 Somers, Mary, 167n68
 souperism, 97–8
 Special needs. *See* schools system;
 schools system, developments in
 special education
Stanley Letter, 9–11, 17, 45–6, 47–8,
 76n5, 363, 372
 Starkie, William J.M., 19, 20–21
 State Certificate examinations, 373–4,
 376. *See also* Group Certificate;
 Intermediate Certificate; Leaving
 Certificate; Primary Certificate
 Stephens, T.A., 135–6, 154, 156–7,
 158, 160
 Stewart's Institute, 184
 Sugrue, C., 26
 Sullivan, Professor Robert, 56–7, 60,
 71
 Sutton, Hilda, 150
 Sweetman, Marjory, 150

T

teachers, 3, 12. *See also* National Board
 abolishment of marriage ban, 240,
 272, 291n35
 accountability, 4, 16, 359–77
 career choice motivations, 219–21
 number of untrained teachers, 47–8,
 136, 272

payment by results system, 7,
 17–18, 28, 65, 80n68, 134–5,
 135–6, 138, 152, 156,
 160–61, 359, 365–6, 371,
 376–7
 personal accounts of teaching
 practice, 129–34, 203–226
 rating 'voucher' system, 368–71,
 372, 376, 377
 recollections by non-teachers,
 218–19
 recollections of own teachers,
 217–18
 registration, 147, 154, 175n181,
 204
 social restrictions, 20–21, 34–5
 teacher education, 45–75, 155–7,
 231n79; (1831–1872), 17–18;
 (1872–1900), 18–20; (1900–
 1922), 20–21; (1922–1971),
 23–4; (1971–1999), 26–7;
 in-service education, 27, 47,
 48, 64–6, 80n67; *Stanley*
Letter, 45–6, 47–8, 372
 technical education, 6, 237
 third-level education, 242
 changes in university ethos, 321–35,
 331–2
 corporatisation of universities,
 3221–324
 evolution of curriculum, 327–30
 origins of university, 324–6, 331
 perception of standards decline,
 322
 Tod, Isabella, 117–18, 119, 120
 training institutes, 6
 Trench, Dr Richard Chenevix,
 115–16, 117
 Troy, Archbishop John Thomas, 87
 Tucker, Imelda, 231
 Tynan, Katherine, 153
 Tyrone House, 53–4

U

Universities Act (1997), education reform, 288, 321

V

Vevers, John, 361
 Victoria College (Belfast), 117–18, 119, 136–7, 154, 161
 Vocational education, 6, 237, 276–7, 278, 297–316
 adult education, 303, 305–7, 315
 apprenticeship education, 309–311
 continuation education, 299–303, 315; urban and rural distinctions, 300–301, 315
 further education, 307–9, 315–16
 higher technical education, 312–14, 316
 integration of secondary and vocational schools, 249–50, 253–4, 276
 introduction, 297–9

W

Wall, M., 172–3n157

Walsh, Brendan, 1–6, 129–61, 203–226
 Walsh, John, 5–6, 235–60
 Walsh, Oonagh, 107
 Walsh, Tom, 4–5, 7–35, 121
 Walshe, John, 144
 Ward, Piers, 144–5, 160
 Warnock Report, 191–2. *See also* National Board
 Whately, Archbishop Richard, 57, 67, 78n34
 Whitaker, T.K., 238–9, 243, 251
 White, G.K., 3, 162n2, 171n142
 The Last Word, 129–30
 White, H.M., 154
 Whittaker, Ken, 219, 232n110
 Wilderspin, Samuel, 56, 59
 Wilson, John (Minister for Education), 282, 293n88
 Wiseman, Brother John, 91
 Woods, Elizabeth, 148
 workers' education. *See* labour colleges; vocational education
 Wyse, Thomas, 133

Y

Young, Thomas Urry, 59