

Governance and Funding of Voluntary Secondary Schools in Ireland

Merike Darmody
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List of Acronyms

ACCS	Association of Community Comprehensive Schools
AMCSS	Association of Management of Catholic Secondary Schools
ASTI	Association of Secondary Teachers
ATCS	Association of Trustees of Catholic Schools
BOM	Board of management
BTEI	Back to Education Initiative
CBCEW	Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales
CCMS	Council for Catholic Maintained Schools
CEIST	Catholic Education an Irish School Trust
CES	Catholic Education Service
CSO	Central Statistics Office
CSP	Catholic Schools Partnership
DBE	Diocesan Board of Education
DDE	Diocesan Director of Education
DEIS	Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools
DES	Department of Education and Skills
EEC	European Economic Community
ERST	Edmund Rice Schools Trust
ETB	Education and Training Board
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
IHRC	Irish Human Rights Commission
IVEA	Irish Vocational Education Association
JMB	The Joint Management Body of Voluntary Secondary Schools
LCA	Leaving Certificate Applied
LCVP	Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme
LEA	Local Education Authority
LMS	Local Management of Schools
NCEC	National Catholic Education Commission
OCSTA	Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association
OCSA	Ontario Catholic Schools Trustees Organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OPSBA	Ontario Public School Boards' Association
SCES	Scottish Catholic Education Service
SIAS	Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools
SNA	Special Needs Assistant
SSSF	School Services Support Fund
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
VEC	Vocational Education Committee
VTOS	Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme

Executive Summary

AIM OF THE STUDY

This study presents a comprehensive picture of educational governance and financing among second-level schools in Ireland. There are three second-level sectors in Ireland,¹ which have their origins in historical developments and policy changes: voluntary secondary schools, vocational schools (including community colleges), and community/comprehensive schools (see Chapter 3). Broadly interpreted, governance refers to the ownership, organisation and management of schools. The mode of governance varies across different types of schools, with voluntary secondary schools increasingly being governed by lay School Trusts; community/comprehensive schools under the joint trusteeship of religious orders and the state while vocational schools (including community colleges) are under the trusteeship of the state. The way in which the different school types are financed and the extent to which the state supports the trusteeship function across the three second-level sectors also varies, as shown in this report.

While all sectors have undergone significant changes since the conception of the education system, these changes have been particularly pronounced in denominational² voluntary secondary schools, the prime focus of this study. Denominational schools have been an important part of the educational landscape in Ireland and currently make up just over half of all second-level schools catering for almost 60 per cent of all second-level student intake. Recent years have seen a decline in the number of religious personnel, resulting in less direct involvement of religious orders in school governance and the emergence of new structures in the form of lay Education Trust Companies (see Chapter 4) responsible for the education enterprise and properties. In tandem with this development, members of religious orders who previously provided Trustee services on a voluntary (unpaid) basis have been replaced by paid personnel funded by Congregations or independent Trust Companies. In the context of constrained educational expenditure in general, these developments have raised concerns about the sustainability of the voluntary secondary sector (McGrath, 2006; Reynolds, 2005).

¹ While there are more accurately four types of second-level education provision, for the purposes of this report vocational schools and community colleges are treated as one sector, governed by the VECs/ETBs.

² A wide variety of terms are used in the literature, including 'faith schools' and 'religious schools'. Here, to reflect ordinary usage in Ireland, the term 'denominational school' is used to refer to a voluntary secondary school under the trusteeship of a religious order, diocese or lay trust.

This study seeks to provide new evidence to inform the debate on school governance and funding. It draws on in-depth interviews with key stakeholders in Ireland, including the representatives of Education Trust Companies, vocational and community/comprehensive school sectors as well as the Department of Education and Skills and religious organisations; administrative data, and a large-scale representative survey of second-level chairpersons of school boards of management and school principals. The analysis of data on the Irish context is contextualised with an analysis of school and funding structures in four international case-study jurisdictions.

THE INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Debate about the future of denominational schools is not confined to the Irish context. An analysis of the models of governance of schools and funding of trusteeship in the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Australia and Canada (Ontario) was conducted based on existing research and policy documentation as well as direct communication with relevant stakeholders in these jurisdictions. School structures are found to be firmly embedded in national (or regional) political, cultural and social contexts, thus constraining the possibility of directly ‘transplanting’ one model from one context to another. However, insights from other systems can contribute to ‘policy learning’ (Raffe, 2011), allowing us to reflect on what can be gleaned from international models through the lens of the Irish experience.

Our analysis indicated that the countries studied had adopted different approaches to the governance, ownership and funding of denominational schools that can be broadly characterised as distinct models or typologies:

1. The hand-over of school ownership to the state, which fully funds their entire costs, along with legal provision to maintain their denominational ethos (Scotland, Northern Ireland);
2. The maintenance of school autonomy (including covering the development of the characteristic spirit or ethos), while receiving 90 per cent of their funding from the state and 10 per cent from the Church (England and Wales);
3. The hand-over of schools to the state, with full funding of schools but little autonomy at school level (the Netherlands);
4. Religious orders retain ownership of schools with a small proportion of government funding allowed to be used for system administration; schools funded mainly by state and federal government and have low fees (Australia);
5. Denominational schools (including properties) are transferred to the provincial authorities at no cost (diocesan schools) or are purchased (religious

orders). Schools are funded through a Catholic school board, with considerable autonomy (Ontario, Canada).

The four jurisdictions were chosen to demonstrate variation in approaches taken to the funding of denominational schools. It is important to note that each of these models is subject to on-going debate and challenge, especially in the context of the financial crisis on the one hand and a greater plurality of belief systems on the other, and the models adopt different trade-offs between control and funding. In Ireland, denominational schools (a small proportion of which are fee-paying) are privately-owned but publicly-funded. The state pays teacher salaries and provides schools with various grants for the day-to-day running of the school. The trustees of voluntary secondary schools do not receive funding for the trusteeship function from the state; instead, funding for this statutory function is received from the congregations or Education Trust companies, with schools also providing fees to the Trusts on a per capita basis.

THE GOVERNANCE OF SECOND-LEVEL SCHOOLS IN IRELAND

The governance of second-level schools differs across the sectors. Voluntary secondary schools, the vast majority of which are denominational in character, were originally set up by Catholic and Protestant religious orders ahead of state provision in the nineteenth century, with most becoming part of the ‘free education scheme’ in the 1960s. Because of their dispersed catchment, the situation for Protestant schools is distinctive, with schools receiving a block grant to cover the expenses of less advantaged students and those required to attend as boarders with the remainder of students paying fees. Vocational schools were set up in the 1930s in order to provide a technical education largely catering for working-class boys, with their role developing over time into the arena of further and adult education. Community colleges that emerged in the 1960s are managed by the Vocational Education Committees (VECs) and along with providing second-level education play an important part in providing adult education. Comprehensive schools were established in the 1970s in order to bridge the gap between the more academic voluntary secondary schools and the more technical education in vocational schools. Community schools (different from community colleges) emerged in the 1960s as a partnership between VECs and religious orders/diocesan trustees under the responsibility of the Department of Education and Skills and with funding from the EEC for a community model. In the case of Catholic and Protestant schools, the owners are either diocesan trustees (patrons), individual religious congregations, Education Trust Companies or Boards of Governors, whereas the other second-level schools are either under the trusteeship of the state or have joint trusteeship between

the state and religious orders. The Education Act 1998 gives a statutory basis to the role of the patron and sets out the rules for determining who the patron is.

The diversity among second-level schools in Ireland must be seen in the context of the Constitutional guarantee of the freedom of parents to choose a particular type of education for their children. School choice remains a pertinent feature of the Irish educational landscape, with around half of second-level students not attending their nearest or most accessible school (Hannan *et al.*, 1996; Smyth *et al.*, 2004). New survey data collected for this study indicate that compared to other types of second-level schools, voluntary secondary schools are more likely to be over-subscribed. A considerable proportion – more than four in ten – of such schools are oversubscribed (having more applicants than places) (see Chapter 5).³ While a consultation process on school patronage was carried out in 2011 at primary school level⁴ to gauge parental preference for different types of school, no similar exercise has yet been carried out at second level, although the Minister has asked interested bodies to provide proof of parental preference for the type of patronage when applying for new schools.⁵ At a time when new players, such as Educate Together,⁶ are entering the second-level landscape and new schools are being established under different (mostly vocational or community) patronage, it would be timely to explore parental preference for different types of second-level school.

Currently, voluntary secondary schools make up 52 per cent of all second-level schools (catering for 58 per cent of students); vocational schools (including community colleges) comprise 35 per cent of schools and community/comprehensive schools make up 13 per cent of schools. The number and share of voluntary secondary schools has declined somewhat over time, reflecting the amalgamation of smaller schools and, until recently, the lack of new schools awarded to Catholic patronage.

The Education Act of 1998 set a legal standing for all school trustees and specified their role in the setting up of boards of management and in maintaining the

³ It is important to note that school choice is a complex issue, influenced by a number of factors including proximity of school, perceived quality, religion, previous association with the school and so on (Darmody *et al.*, 2012). It was beyond the scope of this study to explore the reasons behind school choice. Section 5.3 in this report addresses some of the debates concerning school choice and admission policies.

⁴ For further information see: <http://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Information/Diversity-of-Patronage/>

⁵ Some existing studies have addressed school choice in second-level schools demonstrating the complexity surrounding the choice process (Smyth *et al.*, 2004).

⁶ The first Educate Together second-level schools will open in September 2014 in the following areas: Drogheda, Co Louth; Blanchardstown West, Dublin 15; Lucan, Co. Dublin.

specific school ethos. However, the function of trusteeship operates differently across the sectors. VECs, recently restructured into Education and Training boards,⁷ operate as the trustee for vocational schools and community colleges; they thus combine a trustee and a management role and are in receipt of full state funding. For community/comprehensive schools, VECs and religious orders/Bishops operate as joint patrons/trustees. For voluntary secondary schools, the trustee can be a religious order, diocese, private individual, Board of Governors or, increasingly, a lay independent Education Trust Company. In the voluntary secondary sector, the management function receives some state funding under the auspices of the Joint Managerial Body (JMB)⁸ but the trusteeship function is funded by the Education Trust Companies. Schools provide fees to the Trusts on a per capita basis, as a licence fee for the premises. New survey data collected for this study indicate that these fees vary across schools but are typically in the order of €6 (or more) per student per annum. Based on data from two case-study education Trusts, it is estimated that the annual operating costs for these Trusts amount to an average of €25 per student. Interviews with key stakeholders point to the challenges in maintaining funding for the trusteeship function in voluntary secondary schools.

The majority of principals (64 per cent) and chairs of boards of management (BoM) (61 per cent) of all schools surveyed reported that they were clear about the function of Trustees. Interviews pointed to the role of the trustee in maintaining the (religious) ethos of the school as well as in providing leadership development for principals and training for BoM members. Voluntary secondary schools were more likely than other schools to agree strongly that they were clear about these functions (68 per cent). The corresponding figures were 57 per cent for vocational and 65 per cent for community/comprehensive schools. However, a more detailed analysis revealed some ambiguity in principals' understanding of the role of the Trustees. Across all second-level schools, survey data indicate that trustees have the most say in certain aspects of school management, particularly, school buildings and extensions, school ethos and values, and school budget. In voluntary secondary schools, the Trustees were perceived to have most influence in school ethos/values (26 per cent), providing training for members of the BOM (24 per cent), school buildings/extensions (19 per cent) and religious education (15 per cent), among other duties. However, legal requirements would suggest that Trustees should be the primary decision-maker on broad issues such as the development of school ethos and on practical

⁷ As the interview and survey data were collected before the establishment of the Education and Training Boards (ETBs), the term VEC is used throughout the report. However, the discussion of the policy implications explicitly takes account of the potential of the establishment of ETBs to yield broader change.

⁸ A substantial part of JMB funding comes from payments from schools on a per capita basis.

issues such as school buildings/extensions. The findings reflect the fact that not all school principals are clear about the main functions of the Trustees.

In terms of ethos, survey data indicated a certain degree of commonality across schools in relation to their fundamental educational goals, as might be expected. Although the three school sectors operate within a common curriculum and assessment framework, they are quite distinct in their governance and funding structures. Denominational schools place more emphasis on incorporating faith-based practices into the day-to-day life of the school. Interviews with key stakeholders indicated that religious orders see themselves as imparting a distinctive mission or ethos, reflecting the foundational principles of individual orders.

BOARDS OF MANAGEMENT

After much debate, the Education Act of 1998 established the functions of boards of management in second-level schools on a statutory basis, including the responsibility to uphold the characteristic spirit or ethos of the school. While these functions are specified for all school types, the composition and responsibilities of boards of management vary across sectors. Survey data indicate that the majority of principals and BoM chairs indicated that they are clear about the role and function of the board. Across all schools, boards of management are seen by principals as having greatest influence in relation to the implementation of legislation for second-level schools, financial management and planning, and the school budget. In voluntary secondary schools, the board of management is seen to have the greatest influence in financial management and planning (60 per cent), school buildings/extensions (59 per cent), school budget (57 per cent), providing training for members of the BOM (46 per cent), and the implementation of legislation relevant to second-level schools (45 per cent). With regard to the topics discussed at BoM meetings, the chairpersons indicated that the five most regularly discussed topics included the implementation of child protection (83 per cent), financial management and planning (75 per cent), school policy development (72 per cent), the school budget (67 per cent) and Department of Education and Skills (DES) circulars (65%).

The study findings highlight two issues of potential concern in relation to the running of boards of management. First, both principals and BoM chairs pointed to the lack of training available for board members from the government and

trustees.⁹ Training provision is vital in assisting boards in the discharge of their duties. Second, there was a perceived lack of specialist skills available to boards and the majority surveyed felt that paid expertise would be required in the future. This was more frequently highlighted by voluntary secondary principals, who take on more of the legal and financial management than principals in VEC schools where such functions are largely dealt with centrally in head office.

THE FUNDING OF SECOND-LEVEL SCHOOLS

The three sectors¹⁰ are funded through different mechanisms: voluntary secondary schools receive per capita grants for their students; VECs are allocated a 'block grant' and then distribute funds to their schools; instead of per capita grants, community/comprehensive schools negotiate a budget with the DES on an annual basis. While teacher salaries in fee-paying schools are paid by the state, these schools receive additional funding from school fees. In addition, all school types can receive some funding on the basis of student need in terms of socio-economic disadvantage (through the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) programme) and the prevalence of special educational needs (see Chapter 6). The (unpublished) Blackstock report (1999), the aim of which was to explore models of funding of Irish second-level schools, had pointed to the lack of transparency in the funding mechanism and it remains difficult to compare directly the funding allocated to the different school types. This difficulty is further compounded by the diverse function of VECs in providing further and adult education as well as 'traditional' second-level education.

Our findings indicate a disparity in the funds available to, and costs to be covered by, voluntary secondary, vocational and community/comprehensive schools:¹¹

- Insurance costs are paid centrally by VECs or are covered by state indemnity in community/comprehensive schools while these are paid by individual schools in the voluntary secondary sector.

⁹ It is important to note that the Department offers training possibilities for the members of BOMs – for further information, see: <http://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Information/Boards-of-Management/Board-of-Management-Training.html>. The scheme was introduced in recognition of the responsibilities of Boards of Management outlined in the Education Act and in consideration of the increasingly complex environment in which they must operate.

¹⁰ While there may also be differences within the three sectors, this study focuses on differences across the three types of second-level schools.

¹¹ In addition, disparity of funding can be observed in other areas: Chaplains are funded by the state for VEC and community/comprehensive schools (amounting to an estimated €9 million per annum) but not for voluntary secondary schools.

- Pay for non-teaching staff is covered by the VECs while secretarial and care-taking in voluntary secondary schools are not fully covered by grants. Any deficit is covered by the school.
- Survey data indicate that voluntary secondary principals are more likely than those in other sectors to spend the capitation grant on secretarial services, lighting, security and insurance than those in other sectors.

The survey findings show that (non-fee-paying) voluntary secondary schools receive just over two-thirds of their funding from government sources while the vast majority of schools in other sectors receive a much higher proportion of funding from the state (90 per cent in vocational schools and 93 per cent in community/comprehensive schools). As a result, voluntary secondary schools are more reliant on other sources of income such as fund-raising or parental voluntary contributions (see Chapter 6), sources which are likely to be particularly vulnerable in a recessionary context.

This study provides the first systematic evidence on the prevalence and level of such parental voluntary contributions. Some 87 per cent of voluntary secondary schools receive such contributions compared with 62 per cent of community/comprehensive schools and 49 per cent of vocational schools. In addition, the levels of contributions tend to be higher in the voluntary secondary sector, with half asking for €150 or more per year, while the levels of contributions in the other sectors tend to be between €50-75 per annum. DEIS schools are significantly less likely than other schools to ask for parental contributions; where they do so, they tend to have lower proportions of parents paying them. Overall, voluntary secondary schools tend to receive a much higher proportion of their income from parental contributions – 12 per cent compared to 5-6 per cent in other sectors. This is likely to reflect a combination of factors such as ability to pay and school funding needs.

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Almost fifteen years after the Blackstock report was written, there continue to be difficulties in comparing funding and expenditure across school sectors. These difficulties are due to the use of different funding mechanisms (e.g., block grant to VECs) that make it hard to compare government funding of specific categories across the sectors. The information collated by the Department of Education and Skills only allows comparison of some items. This, however, does not allow for a full picture to emerge. This study highlights the need for greater transparency in the funding of school governance and operational costs. The findings also highlight the importance of funding for schools to be equitable, reflecting

variation in need rather than historical origins. The recent restructuring of VECs into Education and Training boards may provide an opportune time to change the basis on which such information is reported and recorded, thereby making it easier to compare schools across second-level sectors.

International experience points to different models for maintaining and funding denominational schools in changing times. Each of the models makes different trade-offs between autonomy and funding resulting from a process of challenge and contention. What the models have in common is that there is generally one central (national or provincial) organisation through which state funding to denominational schools is channelled. This feature contrasts with Ireland where there are a number of different religious orders and trust bodies currently operating voluntary secondary schools, raising challenges for developing a comprehensive approach in school governance and management while maintaining the specific denominational ethos of schools. Analyses of available data indicate differences in the nature of funding and costs across different school types in Ireland, with non-fee-paying (denominational) voluntary secondary schools more reliant on discretionary funding in the form of parental contributions and fund-raising, in some cases even for the day-to-day running of the school. This reliance on discretionary funding is likely to make voluntary secondary schools more vulnerable to broader economic trends, with a significant proportion of households reducing their consumption (expenditure) since the start of the recession (Gerlach, 2013).

There are also different funding models for trusteeship. VECs combine management and trusteeship functions and, as such, receive state funding which is delivered as a block grant to VECs. The centralisation of specialist services (such as human resources, financial and legal support) at VEC level also reduces the need for specialist expertise at the school level. In contrast, the work of the JMB as a management body is partly funded by the state while the trusteeship function for voluntary secondary schools is paid for by religious orders or lay education Trusts. The latter funding appears increasingly vulnerable in the wake of a declining number of religious personnel who formerly provided services to schools on a voluntary basis and are now increasingly replaced by paid personnel, funded by the congregations or Education Trust Companies. In order to optimise resources, decisions have to be made about whether the voluntary secondary school sector should be governed by a number of trust companies or one representative body.

Chapter 1

Introduction, Research Aims and Methods

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the appropriate level of investment in education has been subject to much debate. Debate has also centred on which bodies should govern schools and on how funding should be allocated to different types of school. The aim of this study is to provide the first systematic analysis of variation across sectors in the governance and funding of second-level schools, drawing on in-depth interviews with key stakeholders as well as a nationally representative survey of principals and chairpersons of boards of management. In particular, it focuses on denominational voluntary secondary schools – a privately-owned but publicly-funded sector in Ireland.

In Ireland, the three school sectors within second-level education – denominational voluntary secondary schools, vocational schools (including community colleges) and community/comprehensive schools – have developed independently in response to the different socio-political processes at play in the 19th and 20th centuries (Walsh, 1999). Denominational schools have played an important role in the development of the Irish educational system. Until the introduction of voluntary secondary schools, secondary education was largely provided by religious orders that set up ‘voluntary secondary schools’ (King, 2010). Nano Nagle (founder of the Presentation Sisters), Catherine McAuley (founder of the Mercy Sisters), and Edmund Rice (founder of the Christian Brothers) were particularly instrumental in this process in the 19th century. While many of these schools were fee-paying, the Congregations also provided scholarships to some young people who could not afford to pay fees (Tuohy, 2013). State involvement in second-level education grew in the subsequent period, with the introduction of ‘technical schools’ in 1899 to provide more practical vocational training. The 1930 Vocational Education Act gave local councils the job of developing technical education. Thirty-eight Vocational Education Committees (VEC) were set up to provide free post-primary education with an emphasis on vocational skills, such as woodwork, metalwork, domestic economy and commercial subjects. New school types – community/comprehensive schools and community colleges were established in the 1960s and 1970s. Importantly, free second-level education was introduced in 1967, increasing the participation rate. Each sector is governed, managed and funded differently, although the Department of Education and Skills (hereafter referred to as the Department of Education or DES) exercises considerable control over

the day-to-day running of most schools. Parallel to the emergence of state-owned schools has been the declining number of religious personnel in general and in the school system since the 1970s with religious personnel playing a diminishing role in day-to-day teaching and in membership of school boards of management (Coolahan, 1994). The diminishing supply of religious to teach in or to govern denominational schools has been considered one of the reasons for the growth of second-level community schools (Tovey and Share, 2003), the second reason being amalgamations (Tuohy, 2013).

Over the years, debates about patronage/trusteeship and funding of second-level schools in Ireland have gathered pace, at least partly driven by greater ethnic and religious diversity in the school-going population. Compared to the primary school sector, the second-level sector is more diverse, with a number of different school types. This diversity of provision has its origins in historical developments as well as Constitutional support for the parental right to choose between different types of schools. In the last decades, changes have taken place in the governance of second-level schools, especially voluntary secondary schools. These changes include the gradual withdrawal of the religious orders from active involvement in schools¹², the introduction of lay principalship and boards of management as well as the establishment of Education Trust Companies in the voluntary secondary sector. The trustee¹³ representatives perform a number of functions, as set out in the Education Act 1998, and provide a largely voluntary service to their schools. Debates about the sustainability of the work of Education Trust Companies in the light of the diminished role of the religious orders in the running of voluntary secondary schools, reduced funding available for the Trusteeship function and having no direct state support for the governance of denominational schools¹⁴ have spurred a consultation process among the different religious orders and an attempt to explore new models of governance¹⁵ among voluntary secondary schools. One of the significant outcomes of the fall in the numbers of the religious is that their voluntary work (including Trustee work) in the schools and Education Offices in the past has to be replaced by hiring paid personnel funded by the Congregations, thus putting the religious orders under

¹² In 1970, nearly one in five teachers were members of religious orders, mainly nuns; by 1998, this had fallen to only 3 per cent (CSO, 2000).

¹³ The Trustees represent the founding vision of the school and strive to maintain, with the Board of management and the school community, the characteristic spirit or ethos of the school. They exercise the role of Patron/Trustee as stated in the Education Act (1998). Trustees hold 'in trust' the school property and the educational enterprise. They appoint the Board of management of each school.

¹⁴ As the denominational schools were first set up by religious orders, ethos development was the responsibility of the members of these orders. This role has now been adopted by lay Education Trust Companies.

¹⁵ For the purposes of this report, the term 'school governance' is used as a broad definition of school leadership, including both instrumental and ideological aspects. School governance is seen to differ from school management as the latter is first and foremost concerned with the technical and instrumental dimensions of governing (Bäckman and Trafford, 2006).

increasing financial strain. This situation raises questions about sustainability of Trustee function in future (Reynolds, 2005).

The past two decades have also seen public debate on the differential funding of different types of second-level schools. Research by Sheehan, Durkan and Thom (1994) indicated lower expenditure levels among voluntary secondary schools than among vocational or community/comprehensive schools. The DES-funded (unpublished) Blackstock Report (1999) highlighted a lack of transparency in the mode of funding as well as a lack of readily available computerised data on state funding across the sectors, fuelling perceptions of unequal funding across the sectors and between schools. In part, this perception also stems from different funding mechanisms: while voluntary secondary schools receive capitation grants, vocational schools receive a block grant and funding of community/comprehensive schools is based on an annual budget which each school negotiates with the Department of Education.¹⁶

1.2 AIMS AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Although there is growing research on the governance and funding of denominational schools in other countries, there is a dearth of similar research in the Irish context. Within the broader context of analysing the governance, management and funding of all Irish second-level schools, this study aims to provide information to be considered in drawing up models for future funding of the Trusteeship function of the voluntary secondary school sector. It highlights the difficulties in current funding structures across second-level school sectors and places Ireland in comparative context by highlighting school funding practices in a set of case-study countries (the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Australia and Ontario, Canada). The study thus aims to build up an evidence base for the future development of policies regarding the governance and funding of the second-level school sector.

In so doing, it seeks to answer the following questions:

1. How are Irish second-level schools currently governed and to what extent do governance structures differ by type of school?
2. Is there a 'characteristic spirit' or school ethos in second-level schools in Ireland and how is it maintained?

¹⁶ Community/comprehensive schools negotiate their annual budget based on student numbers and other criteria with the Department of Education.

3. What are the current funding structures (and the extent of funding) in second-level schools and to what extent do they differ by type of school/sector?
4. To what extent do the funding structures for denominational schools in Ireland differ from those in other countries?
5. What is the role and function of Trusteeship? How is it perceived by key stakeholders and how is it funded?
6. What is the cost of Trusteeship? What are the other costs in second-level schools and how do they vary by sector?
7. What are the funding and governance-related challenges faced by schools and patrons/Trusts in Ireland?

1.3 DATA SOURCES AND METHODOLOGY

In order to provide a multifaceted view of the governance and funding of second-level schools in Ireland, the study drew on information from a range of sources and involved three distinct phases.

Phase 1

In order to situate the research, a comprehensive review was conducted of existing research and other available documentation on the governance and funding mechanisms of second-level schools in Ireland and elsewhere. This phase enabled the researchers to determine the main themes emerging from the existing research and use them to guide the primary research conducted in the Irish context. Drawing on the information gathered from the literature review, this phase reported on existing practices regarding funding and school governance in other countries. In addition, in order to provide examples of funding models of state-funded schools, a detailed study of four different case-study jurisdictions was undertaken. The jurisdictions examined were the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Australia and Ontario, Canada. The four jurisdictions were chosen to demonstrate variation in approaches taken to the funding of denominational schools.

Phase 2

This phase involved primary qualitative data collection. The key informants were initially drawn from the Study Advisory Group with members identifying other stakeholders relevant to the study. Interviewees were selected who had specialist knowledge and expertise in the field of school governance and funding of second-level schools. Their responses represent their individual views and cannot necessarily be taken to reflect the views of their respective organisations.

Letters containing a detailed description of the aims of the study and the procedures involved were sent to the prospective interviewees. In total, 23 key stakeholders were selected and interviewed, mostly on a one-to-one basis (with some in a small group) (see Table 1.1). Where the person initially identified was not available for an interview, another individual from the same organisation was selected. The interviewees represented the voluntary secondary, vocational and community/comprehensive sectors and other organisations, such as the Department of Education and the Education Commission of the Irish Catholic Episcopal Conference.

TABLE 1.1 Key Stakeholders and Organisations Represented

Organisation	Interviewees
Association of Community Comprehensive Schools (ACCS)	General Secretary
Catholic Education an Irish Schools Trust (CEIST)	CEO, Chairperson
Catholic Schools Partnership	Executive Chairperson
CEIST Property Company (EDUCENA)	CEO, Chairman, Member
Department of Education and Skills	Assistant Secretary General
Education Commission of the Irish Catholic Episcopal Conference	Executive Secretary
Edmund Rice Schools Trust (ERST)	Chief Executive
Educate Together	CEO
Irish Vocational Education Association (IVEA)	Education and Research Officer
Jesuit European Committee for Secondary and Primary Education	Education Delegate
Loreto Education Trust	Education Officer and two Trust representatives
Presentation Brothers Schools Trust	CEO
Síol, Le Chéile School Property Trust	CEO
The Le Chéile Schools Trust	Education Officer
The Management Body of Voluntary Secondary Schools (JMB)	General Secretary
The Methodist Board of Education	General Secretary

The interviewees were assured that participation was voluntary and the information they provided was anonymous and was to be used only for research purposes. The purpose of the interviews was to explore the views of the stakeholders with regard to issues surrounding the funding and governance of second-level schools. The interviews focused on the following broad topics:

- Governance of Irish second-level schools;
- The ethos of second-level schools and how schools maintain that ethos;
- The responsibilities and functions of boards of management in Irish second-level schools;
- Items of expenditure in second-level schools;
- Different sources of funding received by schools;
- The nature, responsibilities and functions of Trusteeship;
- Costs and funding of Trusteeship;

- The Trusteeship model;
- Challenges facing second-level schools.

The interviews¹⁷ lasted approximately 60 minutes each and were digitally recorded. The voice files were transcribed and analysed using qualitative data software, NVivo 8, to identify emerging themes. Considering the diversity of the stakeholders, the interviews allowed for the exploration of a range of issues around the funding and governance of second-level schools. They provided insights into how second-level schools differ with regard to the funding received by the state. Moreover, the interviews investigated the factors that drive expenditure in school and how schools differ in this respect within and between sectors. Analysis of these qualitative data was particularly relevant for highlighting differences in governance and funding across the sectors.

Phase 3

This phase of the study involved a postal survey of all second-level school principals (excluding further education colleges) and chairpersons of boards of management in schools (see Appendix 3). The issues explored included general characteristics of the schools, the characteristic spirit/school ethos, school governance, current and capital funding, fees, parental voluntary contributions, fundraising, and other relevant issues. This phase allowed for a more comprehensive analysis of governance and current funding structures in all second-level schools. There was a satisfactory response rate¹⁸ to the survey: 63 per cent of school principals (n=464) and 43 per cent (n=300) of the chairpersons. The response rate for principals was somewhat higher among voluntary secondary schools (69 per cent) than among vocational schools (52 per cent) or community/comprehensive schools (56 per cent). Data were reweighted so that responses were representative of all second-level schools. In the survey phase, ESRI researchers were assisted by Amárach Research who distributed the questionnaires, organised follow-up and undertook data entry.

1.4 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

School Ethos or Characteristic Spirit: Denominational Schools

One measure of school ethos is its religious identity (Avram and Dronkers, 2010). Denominational schools – schools where the ethos of the school is based on the

¹⁷ The general Interview Guide is provided in Appendix 1.

¹⁸ International literature considers response rate greater than 50 per cent in postal surveys high. The high response rate was achieved by follow up letters and phone calls.

values of a particular religion – have played an important part in the state educational system in many countries. Their identity can be expressed in a number of ways, including their ownership, names, admission criteria and curriculum. The state did not fund schools in many European countries until the nineteenth century. Prior to the introduction of state funding for education, many schools were founded and run by religious orders; they were particularly catering for children from poorer families, although some catered for the professional classes (Hannan and Boyle, 1987). These schools, established and governed (either wholly or partly) by religious orders, generally incorporated religious and spiritual elements into the school day. This tradition has continued to the present day and denominational schools remain a common feature of education systems in many European countries, although there is considerable variation across countries reflecting the historical legacies of individual systems (see Chapter 2 for a more detailed discussion).

Public and academic debate concerning state funding of denominational schools in Europe has intensified in recent decades (McKinney, 2006). From some quarters there is strong support for the continuation and extension of state-funded denominational schooling (despite declining numbers with a formal religious affiliation in many European societies) and the variety of religious groups seeking to open denominational schools has increased (Grace, 2005). Supporters of such schools argue that they promote social justice and fairness for children, parents, and religious communities, offer high quality education, and promote social cohesion and the integration of minority communities into democratic societies (Jackson, 2003). Some authors in favour of denominational schools note that students attending such schools do better academically (O'Donnell, 2001), although others have argued that high academic achievement in these schools is likely to reflect a selection effect, in other words, that more advantaged families are more likely to send their children to denominational schools in systems where these schools are in a minority position (Gibbons *et al.*, 2006).

Although often seen as a positive development in providing more choice for parents, expanding the network of denominational schools has been criticised in relation to “...the possible segregative effects of denominational schools in systems where such schools are in the minority” (Willaime, 2007: 367). By providing separate schools, some commentators argue, children face being separated along religious and often ethnic lines for their schooling, potentially reinforcing divisions within the broader society, limiting the personal autonomy of pupils and imposing on them a restricted view of their religion (Jackson, 2003). In Northern Ireland, denominational schools are seen to have a divisive role in

society. In order to combat this, several integrated schools that cater for different faiths and none have been set up (Abbott *et al.* 1997). Some denominational schools are also seen to disadvantage other schools through selection procedures that cream off the most able students (Jackson, 2003). Judge (2010) notes that by further extending state aid to denominational schools, resources are diverted away from schools which are striving to develop a common culture while at the same time respecting the variety of cultural identities found among their students. One argument that has been put forward suggests that public schools are not just public spaces but public institutions, and as such they should not manifest a preference for a specific religion or belief, that is, they must be religiously neutral (Ferrari and Pastorelli, 2010). In some countries (e.g. France), the exhibition of religious insignia in public schools is prohibited.

There have been efforts made by some schools to challenge the notion that denominational schools are socially divisive arguing that the *responsive* denominational school engages with cultural, religious and ethnic diversity in general (Breen, 2009). In a number of countries, there has been a long-standing tradition of separate Catholic and Protestant schools. In recent years, the denominational school sector in Europe has become more diverse, with Hindu, Muslim and Sikh schools joining existing Christian and Jewish schools in countries such as the United Kingdom and the Netherlands.

While these debates are ongoing, the position of denominational schools must be seen in the context of the specific social, economic and historical factors which have shaped the development of particular education systems. As a result, the extent and nature of state funding of denominational schools differ significantly across countries. Historically, for example, only Christian and Jewish schools in the United Kingdom have been granted state funding, although in recent years Muslim schools are also looking for funding from the British government (Grace, 2005; Parker-Jenkins, 2002; Jackson, 2003). In the Netherlands and Denmark, full state funding is available for various faith groups who have set up schools promoting the ethos of their communities, although these schools are subject to strict state control. The nature of cross-national variation in funding practices for denominational schools will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2.

School Choice

There is now extensive literature on denominational schools, mostly focussing on school choice and academic attainment (Grace, 2005; O'Donnell, 2001). Religious affiliation is one of the factors, but not the only factor, found to influence school choice (see Darmody, *et al.*, 2012 on the primary sector in Ireland). Parents with a

specific religious background may seek out schools with an ethos which corresponds to their beliefs. In the same way, denominational schools may prefer to admit students that share the same beliefs and values promoted by these schools. Most of the existing research into the effectiveness of denominational schools is based on US Catholic schools, which are all private. Denominational schools in the UK, on the other hand, are generally part of the state system. Yeshanew *et al.* (2008), exploring the impact of denominational schools on the performance and progress of pupils, found that pupils across all denominational schools, in particular, Roman Catholic and Church of England schools, made slightly more academic progress than those attending non-denominational schools. On the other hand, Gibbons *et al.* (2006) argue that the parents of students attending such schools have different preferences and attitudes towards education compared to other parents, stemming from their socio-economic background. In fact, Allen (2011) notes that in England secondary schools with a religious character have pupil intakes that are of a higher social background and ability than their secular counterparts, even taking into account the characteristics of pupils living in the local neighbourhood. The author observes that a great deal of variation exists within the group of denominational schools. In Ireland, where such schools are predominantly Roman Catholic, with a handful of minority faith (mainly Protestant) schools, there has been a lack of research on the profile and intake of denominational voluntary secondary schools. Existing research indicates differences between school sectors in their student profile, with middle-class and higher ability students over-represented in voluntary secondary schools and under-represented in vocational schools (Hannan *et al.*, 1996).

School Governance

Across Europe, systems of school governance¹⁹ are rooted in historical legacies and range from strongly centralized to those with minimal state regulation and control. School governance is a broad definition of school leadership and includes both instrumental and ideological aspects and can be seen as the leadership, direction and control of an organisation. Across Europe, there has been a move towards greater decentralisation of education systems (Ainley and McKenzie, 2000). Most decentralization initiatives fall into one of two types: 1) the devolution of service delivery responsibilities from national to local or regional governments, and 2) the delegation of many service delivery decisions and functions to the level of the school (Ainley and McKenzie, 2000). Under the second type, school autonomy, a school board or school management committee is usually formed to provide oversight and is made up of elected community

¹⁹ Generally understood as all of the principles, modes and practices that guide how a school operates.

representatives in addition to teachers and the school principal. The extent of decentralisation differs between countries and has been seen as having both positive and negative aspects (Busemeyer, 2012).²⁰ Decentralisation moves decision-making closer to the people and may give them greater say in schooling decisions. On the downside, it may increase local bureaucracy (ibid.). In some cases high degrees of autonomy in one domain may be coupled with limited autonomy in another. For example, in the Netherlands, denominational schools are relatively free to select students and recruit teachers, but they have little leeway in shaping the curriculum and selecting assessment methods.

In Ireland, there has been increasing debate about school governance and the need to reflect diversity within Irish society through the provision of a greater variety of school types. There is a diversity of school patronage/trusteeship within the second-level sector, with state-funded denominational schooling forming one form of governance (see Chapter 3 for a more detailed discussion of school governance in Ireland). The education system is centralised, with the Department of Education setting down a curriculum and a broad regulatory framework. The students sit for state exams after the completion of Junior and Leaving Certificate courses. However, schools are left with considerable autonomy in deciding on teaching and general assessment methods. Like the state-run schools, denominational schools are subject to control and accountability and are expected to adhere to the same standards and curriculum as other schools.

Public Financing

Most European countries have a well-established network of denominational schools. However, the level of financial support that these schools receive from the state varies substantially, depending on their public or private status²¹ (Avram and Dronkers, 2010). Exploring educational systems across Europe with regard to the position of (non-state) denominational schools, the authors developed the following categories:

- Countries in which private (but government-funded) education is more or less on the same footing as public education – integrated educational systems: Denmark, Finland, Ireland, Netherlands, Poland, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden;
- Countries where denominational schools (of some or all of the denominations) receive more favourable treatment than other schools in

²⁰ <http://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/1903/Decentralization-Education.html>, accessed 13 May 2013.

²¹ The definition of the private sector used by Avram and Dronkers (2010) is based on the OECD definition according to which private school is a school managed directly or indirectly by non-government organisation, i.e., a Church (OECD, 2012b).

the privately managed government-funded sector – denomination-supportive educational systems, including Austria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Malta, Portugal, Scotland, England and Wales; the denominational bias can be more prominent such as in Austria, Malta, Portugal or the UK where almost no funding is made available for private non-denominational schools or relatively mild as in the Central European countries of Hungary and the Czech Republic where denominational schools are entitled to have a larger share of their expenses borne by the state;

- Countries that offer varying degrees of subsidisation to the private sector, but (always) less than the corresponding amount they spend on the public sector – semi-integrated educational systems: Belgium, Estonia, France, Germany, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Slovenia; this category is rather eclectic, containing countries that make public funding available on generous terms, such as Belgium and Slovenia, but also countries where no public funding is guaranteed although it is offered in some cases, such as Italy;
- Countries that fail to make any public funding directly available to the private sector – segregated educational systems: Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, Romania (ibid. p. 14).

Their analysis shows that while there are some countries in which state funding of privately managed (non-fee-paying) schools is broadly similar to the funding of public sector schools, there are countries (many of them recently joined members of the European Union), where funding of the private sector is smaller or nonexistent. East and Hammond (2006) note that where there is strict separation between the church and state (e.g., the US and France), denominational schools are generally considered ineligible for state funding. In other cases (e.g., the UK and the Netherlands), denominational schools can be fully funded by the state.

In recent years, debates have intensified over state funding of denominational schools and to what extent the latter can maintain their characteristic spirit once they receive such funding. In England and Wales, individual denominational schools exist within the general framework of school types. Throughout the twentieth century, Britain had a dual system of provision by which the state and Churches cooperated in the provision and funding of schools (Skinner, 2002). One of the key ways in which religious diversity and the education system interact in Britain is through the “...right for religious groups to provide and maintain state-funded schools based on their own beliefs and values” (Skinner, 2002: 173). In the Netherlands, there are two main categories, namely state and

denominational (e.g., Roman Catholic, Protestant) schools; both are eligible for state funding and state and denominational schools are funded equally.

Driessen and Bezemer (1999) note that in recent decades, efforts have been made in various countries in Western Europe to extend the state-funded denominational school sector. For example, in the Netherlands, several Islamic primary schools are completely funded by the Dutch Government. However, this development was surrounded by controversy. Despite objections, a legal standpoint was adopted at the policy level noting that according to the Constitution, every religious group in the Netherlands has the formal right to establish a denominational school. In some other countries that allow for faith-based schooling, such as Greece and Romania, all expenses have to be paid by private sources (Sunier and Meyer, 1997). In Denmark, about three quarters of the costs of ‘free schools’²² are subsidised by state funds. In the United States, denominational (private) schools are supported through tuition payments and fund-raising. Catholic schools receive no federal or state funding²³.

Ireland has a complex structure of government funding of state schools, covering a significant proportion of the operating costs of denominational schools. The latter (voluntary secondary schools) receive funding for teacher salaries as well as a number of grants. These funding structures are discussed further in Chapter 3.

Public Expenditure on Education

The amount countries spend on education per capita has increased dramatically and consistently over the past century (Schaefer, 2010), although in many countries the current recession has impacted on all public expenditure, including education. Education accounts for a significant proportion of public expenditure in all of the EU Member States – the most significant budget item being expenditure on staff. In Ireland, the proportion of public expenditure on education fell from 13.7 per cent to 9.7 per cent in the decade between 2000 and 2010 (OECD, 2013)²⁴. As the fiscal crisis continues, funding of the educational sector remains a challenge, especially in the face of recent cuts in some aspects of educational expenditure in Ireland.

²² ‘Free schools’ have many identities: some are independent rural schools, academically-oriented lower secondary schools, religious schools, progressive free schools, Rudolf Steiner schools, German minority schools, or immigrant schools (such as Muslim schools) (Patrinos, 2001).

²³ Some Catholic schools in the US participate in voucher programs, which is government money given directly to families to pay for private schools.

²⁴ Despite the drop in the share of money being spent on education, the expenditure per student in, fact rose by 33 per cent Ireland between 2005 and 2010 (OECD, 2013).

Education expenditure includes both current and capital expenditure. Current expenditure takes account of the spending on school resources used each year to operate schools, including salaries, maintenance of school buildings, student meals or the rental of school buildings and other facilities. Capital expenditure refers to spending on assets that last longer than one year, for instance, spending on the construction, renovation, new or replacement equipment and major repair of school buildings. Given the labour-intensive nature of instruction, the largest share of expenditure in schools is current expenditure (OECD, 2012b). This share varies from country to country due to differences between education systems. Four factors influence expenditure on education per student related to the salary cost of teachers: instruction time of students, teaching time of teachers, teachers' salaries and estimated class size. Consequently, a given level of teacher salary costs per student may result from different combinations of these four factors and substantial differences in the salary cost of teachers per student between countries (OECD, 2012a).

There may also be differences within systems in the funding available to different types of schools, an issue explored in greater detail in Chapter 2. In 2011 the Government of the United Kingdom for the first time released figures on state schools, showing funding and expenditure per pupil and how the money is spent. Secondary schools varied substantially in how much was spent per pupil. The existing schools' funding formula allocates higher levels of funding to areas with higher deprivation (using three band categories). As for spending, teaching (as in teacher salaries) is the largest category taking up between 27 and 73 per cent of secondary school budgets in the United Kingdom, depending on the size of the school.

In Ireland expenditure on education has been at the centre of public debate since the economic recession. The four-year National Recovery Plan included multi-annual expenditure ceilings for each Government Department, covering the period 2011 to 2014. The plan required reductions in expenditure of a total of €350million in education over four years (DES, 2011). Benchmarking Ireland in international comparison, in 2009, the most recent year for which figures are available, public expenditure on primary, secondary and higher/further education in Ireland was 4.9 per cent of GDP compared with 3.8 per cent in the OECD as a whole (OECD, 2012a). Per capita spending (adjusted for purchasing power) on secondary students in Ireland was \$11,831 in 2009 compared to \$9,169 in the EU 21. This comparison should be treated with some caution, however. First, teacher

salaries were (then) high in Ireland by international comparison²⁵ and, given they are the largest single component of expenditure, were a key driver of these patterns. Second, since Budget 2009, there have been a number of measures which have reduced the resources available to second-level schools, with further savings to be made in 2014. These include:

- A reduction in the capitation grant to schools;
- An increase in the pupil-teacher ratio for all schools and for fee-paying schools in particular;
- The removal of the ex-quota allocation for guidance provision;
- Withdrawal of some additional funding for schools designated as disadvantaged;
- A reduction in the allocation of language support posts;
- Withdrawal of teaching hours for members of the Travelling community;
- The abolition of some grants for resources and equipment as well as a change in the funding for specific programmes and subjects.

There is variation within the second-level system in the funding structures employed, a key focus of the current study. At present, such structures differ across the second-level sector: voluntary secondary schools receive Government funding based on a per capita formula. Schools under the auspices of the Vocational Education Committees²⁶ are funded by a block grant and funding of schools is based on the school's needs²⁷ within the area of a VEC, also taking into account VEC individual priorities. Community/comprehensive schools present their annual budget proposals to the Department of Education and Skills and their funding is largely based on student numbers in the schools.

Funding for management and governance costs are resourced differently across the sectors, as is the use of monies generated locally by the schools via fund-raising. Under the *School Services Support Initiative*, all second-level schools receive an additional per capita grant per pupil to meet the costs of essential services such as secretarial and caretaking. These differences in funding are discussed further in Chapter 3.

²⁵ With austerity measures introduced across many EU countries, reduction of teacher salaries is likely to have happened in other countries as well, so relative positions may not have changed.

²⁶ In 2012 there were 33 VECs engaged in the delivery of second-level education in addition to delivering Post-Leaving Certificate (PLC) courses, adult and further education courses, youth work services, student support services and outdoor education courses. The VECs have now been replaced with 16 Education and Training Boards (ETBs).

²⁷ These include second-level school programmes, further education PLC courses, adult and community education, administration and services.

The general message from the literature review indicates that debates about the role and funding of denominational schools across different jurisdictions are ongoing, irrespective of the specific historical legacies. On the one hand, there is a demand for denominational schools and even expansion of this sector as new religious groups are seeking state funding. On the other hand, however, there are voices calling for ending state funding of denominational schools. Where these schools have retained funding, certain trade-offs have occurred, that have enabled the state to have greater control over these schools.

1.5 STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

Chapter 2 presents an overview of international literature about the funding and governance of schools, placing particular emphasis on funding structures in four case-study jurisdictions. Chapter 3 outlines the nature of funding structures in the Irish second-level system. Chapter 4 examines the function and funding of trustees in voluntary secondary schools. Chapters 5 and 6 present new research findings, drawing on a survey of principals and boards of management combined with in-depth qualitative interviews with Trustee representatives in voluntary secondary schools, representatives of vocational and community/comprehensive sectors and other educational stakeholders. Chapter 7 presents an overview of the key findings of the study and discusses the implications for policy development.

Chapter 2

Case Studies of the Structure and Funding of Denominational Schools

2.1 INTRODUCTION

As outlined in Chapter 1, school governance and funding practices are often rooted in the socio-historical developments in individual countries. Reflecting broader changes in European societies, denominational schools are facing increasing challenges in maintaining their overall ethos while being part of broader multicultural and pluralistic societies (Belmonte *et al.*, 2006). Denominational schools are schools where the ethos of the school is based on the values of a particular religion, and are generally wholly or partly governed by a religious organisation. The various debates about denominational schools can be situated in a broader discussion about the place of religion in modern society (Halsall and Roebben, 2010) and the relationship between state and church, or between secular power and religious freedom (Judge, 2002). These discussions take place in a complex context where, on the one hand, there is a growing secularisation of education systems, while, on the other hand, in some countries there is an increased investment in denominational schools, with some faith communities becoming part of the state-funded school system (Willaime, 2007; Judge, 2002).

The aim of this chapter is to provide a detailed discussion of governance and funding in four case-study jurisdictions: the Netherlands, Australia and Ontario (Canada) and the United Kingdom. These countries were chosen to demonstrate the different approaches the Governments in these jurisdictions have taken to funding denominational schools. It is important to note that, while we can learn from the experiences of other countries in terms of policy solutions and good practice, one should exercise caution in direct 'policy borrowing', as 'what works' is often system-specific and situated in the complex origins of individual jurisdictions (Smyth and McCoy, 2011). However, the information provided in this chapter is useful for consideration in the Irish context where state-funded denominational schools form a considerable proportion of the second-level sector. Due to the dearth of published material on the funding of second-level schools, the chapter also draws on information compiled from various relevant websites of organisations involved in promoting denominational schools and education, as well as personal communications with the representatives of a number of these organisations: Ontario Catholic Schools Trustees Organisation

(OCSA); National Catholic Education Commission (Australia); Catholic Education Commission NSW (Australia); Council for Catholic Maintained School Northern Ireland (CCMS);²⁸ Chair, International Comparative Research on Educational Performance and Social Inequality, Maastricht University (the Netherlands); Public Information Service, Government of the Netherlands. Several Catholic organisations were contacted to provide comparison with Irish denominational second-level schools, the majority of which are Catholic.

2.2 THE NETHERLANDS

2.2.1 School Types and Organisation

In the Netherlands, there is a large degree of school choice. Two-thirds of government funded schools are *independent (private)* schools. These schools are either denominational schools or promote a specific philosophical/pedagogical approach. The vast majority (approximately 60 per cent) of Dutch schools are set up on the basis of a religious identity (Maussen, 2013). These private schools are governed by a board or the foundation that set them up. Parents can ask a public authority school to provide religious or humanistic instruction. This takes place during school time and is optional. Such lessons are provided by organisations associated with the Churches or a humanistic institution. Private schools can reject students if their parents do not subscribe to the belief or ideology on which the school's teaching is based. *Public, or state-run, schools* are non-denominational in nature and are open to all children, irrespective of their religious beliefs or outlook. Public schools are governed by the municipal council or a public legal entity or foundation set up by the council.

Private schools do not differ much from public schools: they are merely schools administered by an independent school board, as opposed to a local government authority, and are based on a denomination or a specific educational philosophy. At the same time, they are, as are public schools, under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education and its Inspectorate who oversee the curriculum and the quality of education in both primary and secondary schools. Approximately 60 per cent of all secondary schools are private schools. Recent years have seen a definite loss of religious influence on schools, with schools becoming increasingly independent of religious organisations.

The Dutch education system is unified, with national policy directives from the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science impacting all areas. School

²⁸ A Protestant organisation was also contacted but no reply was received by the researchers.

administration and management are decentralised, and the authority over schools is held at the municipal level. The Ministry's jurisdiction extends to length of courses; compulsory and optional subjects; lesson frequency and length; class size norms; examination syllabi and national examinations and qualifications; and the salaries, teaching hours and status of teachers. The municipal authorities are responsible for ensuring compliance with Ministry standards, establishing public schools when necessary and planning and coordinating facilities, equipment and staff. They may also determine specific curricula and teaching materials, though the subject matter must fall within the Ministry framework. Below the municipal authorities are school boards which govern small groups of schools. The school board hires the school's managerial staff and makes decisions about the school's management alongside the principals. They do not, however, determine curriculum or teaching methods for the schools. School boards are responsible for implementing legislation and regulations in schools. Much of the authority formerly held by the central government has now been transferred to school boards. Central government is becoming more and more responsible only for more general or framework legislation and for ensuring and monitoring the quality of education (OECD, 2007).

2.2.2 School Funding

The Dutch constitution sets public and private school on an equal footing (Ladd and Fiske, 2010). Since 1917 all Dutch schools – public and private – are financed on an equal basis by national government, provided they answer to the same national requirements on quality and curriculum (Walford, 2001; Walford, 2000). However, in private (including denominational) schools parents are asked to contribute a 'voluntary' nominal amount, which varies from school to school, with additional payments for lengthier school trips and lunchtime supervision and after-school care which the school is supposed to provide or sub-contract. Parental voluntary contributions must not be used for regular lessons but are only meant to fund extra activities. If parents choose not to pay (a part of) the contribution, their child is not allowed to participate in these extra activities. The school is then obliged to provide an alternative programme (OECD, 2007).

The ministry gives school funding to the school boards in a lump sum/block grant and they are free to allocate the funding as they see fit. The block grant covers both personnel and material costs (e.g., books, furniture, and maintenance). The size of the budget that schools receive depends among other things on the number of pupils, their age and school type. In addition, the number of schools under the management of a school board plays a role. For each level of schooling there are separate rules or regulations around the block grant funding. For

secondary education, the lump sum for staff costs is calculated by the number of individuals among management, teaching and support staff multiplied by the average employee expense. The average employee cost is a standard amount used for the salary, including allowances and charges and so on. The extent of the average employee expense is shown in the publication *Adaptation and Adoption of the National Average Employee Expense Amounts Secondary Education*, which is published each year. The figures are constructed on the basis of funding per school (fixed base) and per pupil. The funding per school is the same for all schools, with the amount per student depending on school type, department and grades. Additional funding is given for cleaning, servicing or maintenance of buildings and other operating costs (such as materials, administration, energy and water) (personal communication, 19 March, 2013, Public Information Service, Government of the Netherlands).

In order to qualify for state funding, the religious congregations (Protestant in various forms, Catholic, Jewish, Hindu, Islam, etc.) need to hand over the schools to a foundation (Catholic) or an association (Protestant). This way the funding is not seen as going directly to the Churches. This arrangement was one of the conditions for securing state funding for denominational schools. In the face of a declining number of members of religious congregations, the foundations and associations have continued to exist, with some representation from the relevant religious order on the board, although it is now increasingly rare (personal communication, 15 March, 2013, Chair of International comparative research on educational performance and social inequality, Maastricht University). A central feature of the Dutch system is that all school buildings are supplied and owned by the state (Walford, 2000). Schools can also receive extra income from the Municipal Council, interest on capital, contracts and sponsorship.

2.3 AUSTRALIA

2.3.1 School Types and Organisation

Schooling in Australia is structured on a sectoral basis, comprising *government* and *non-government sectors* (Deloitte Access Economics, 2011). *Government schools* have the responsibility of ensuring universal education for all young Australians, with state and territory legislation generally requiring that schooling should be provided for free and open to any child that is eligible to attend (although most jurisdictions allow government schools to charge a small fee). The non-government sector is further divided into *Catholic* and *independent* sectors. Non-government schools provide parents with choice in schooling for their children, as they offer an alternative to the government school system. Catholic schools are generally organised into systems at either state/territory or Diocesan levels and are characterised by their religious commitment to the Catholic faith.

Most Catholic schools charge moderate fees and are open to students from families who support Catholic principles. *Independent schools* tend to be autonomous and are managed by a school principal in conjunction with a governing body. Fee levels differ in magnitude and most independent schools are affiliated to churches or religious bodies. Access to independent schools often depends on ability to pay the designated fee and the extent to which a student's values align with those of the school (Dowling, 2007).

The Australian Government has not required Catholic schools to set up specific public governance structures to run Catholic schools, although some religious institutes (run by religious orders) have established such bodies (known in Church Canon Law as "public juridical persons") to govern their schools (personal communication, 19 March 2013, Catholic Education Commission NSW). Diocesan-owned and the majority of religious institute-owned schools have formed state Catholic Education Commissions that are recognised by the Commonwealth and State Governments as the agencies responsible (for the purposes of public reporting, accountability, viability etc.) for Catholic schools. The National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC) was established in 1974 by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference through the Bishops Commission for Catholic Education to maintain effective liaison with the Commonwealth Government and other key national education bodies. NCEC complements and supports at the national level the work of the state and Territory Catholic Education Commissions.

NCEC has a number of Standing Committees (Religious Education; Parent; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education; Employment Relations; Data; Technology) and several working parties. NCEC organises a major national Catholic education conference every five years, as well as biennial meetings of all diocesan Directors of Catholic Education and Directors of Religious Education. A small Secretariat based in Canberra manages the work of NCEC.

Australia also has a number of Catholic Education Offices that work in partnership with Catholic schools to facilitate ethos development in the schools within the area. At secondary school level, college boards are established under various governance models and vary in responsibility and function from advisory to decision-making. The boards:

- are intimately involved in the development and implementation of the mission statement of the college;
- demonstrate a strong commitment to supporting the Catholic ethos of the college;

- support the congregational leaders, canonical administrators, principal and staff in their work of developing the spiritual and intellectual life of their students.

Catholic schools in Australia operate with a high degree of autonomy. The parish priest appoints the parish primary school principal and a secondary school principal is appointed by either the parish priest, a group of parish priests (canonical administrators) or by the religious order which owns the school.

2.3.2 School Ownership and Funding

In Australia, funding for schooling is a shared responsibility between state and territory governments, the Commonwealth Government (the main funder of non-government schools) and private sources (such funding can range from local collections, e.g., through the Parish, to centralised collection and distribution to schools through the Catholic Education Office), with the government and non-government sectors each receiving a mix of funding from all three sources. However, the burden of primary funding responsibility varies depending on the school sector, largely as a consequence of constitutional arrangements. This has resulted in a complex funding environment, with an array of funding models that interact to provide the total level of funding to individual schools. Complexities in funding arrangements are further compounded by indirect funding of schooling that occurs through the property taxes (Deloitte Access Economics, 2011).

Schools receive three types of funding: recurrent, capital and targeted funding (for example, additional funding programmes for specific purposes such as supporting low socio-economic schools or indigenous students). Government schools receive a greater proportion of their funding from state and territory governments, and non-government schools receive a greater proportion from the Commonwealth. Governments are the predominant capital funders for government schools across all jurisdictions. Capital funding patterns are broadly similar across the Catholic and independent sectors, with about half of all capital expenditure funded by government sources (although there is variation between jurisdictions, e.g. in the NSW, Western Australian and Victorian independent sectors, only about 30 per cent of capital expenditure is funded by government sources). There are substantial differences in funding mechanisms and allocations across and between Catholic schools in each of the states and dioceses. While the majority of Catholic schools are 'systemically' funded (i.e. Commonwealth funding is provided as a single allocation to the Catholic 'system' in states and territories to allocate to Catholic Education Offices/Schools Offices – rather than to dioceses), a number of Catholic schools are 'non-systemic' and receive their

per-student funding directly from the Commonwealth and state governments, rather than through the Catholic ‘system’. A number of the religious institute schools, especially in NSW, are non-systemic. Religious Institute schools (those owned or run by religious orders) may also be systemic or non-systemic. Furthermore, the arrangements are significantly different across the orders (personal communication, 19 March 2013, Catholic Education Commission NSW).

In summary, 96 per cent of all 1,700 Catholic schools (21 per cent of the national primary and secondary student enrolment) are “block funded”. The Commonwealth (and in some states, the state) Government recurrent grants are allocated to a state Catholic Education Commission that then allocates this funding on a needs basis. The Commonwealth Government allows 2 per cent of its recurrent grants to be used for “system administration”. The Australian government does not provide any specific funding for Trusts to run Catholic schools. The funding model does not exist uniformly and some states are unable to report on funding at the school level. There is currently no national comparability in school funding between the states and the Commonwealth. There are significant differences in the state funding and private (non-government) income across states and territories and recent debates have highlighted the need for Australian schools to be funded on the same basis regardless of sector; some commentators have suggested pooling Commonwealth and state funds and then disbursing these funds equally across sectors through an agreed framework (Dowling, 2007).

2.4 ONTARIO, CANADA

2.4.1 School Types and Organisation

In Ontario, Canada there is a mix of *non-denominational common schools*, *grammar schools*, and *denominational schools* (MacLellan, 2008). The education model in Ontario was built upon the vision put forward by Egerton Ryerson that acknowledged the need to ensure the local administration of schools overseen by school boards. These local boards were there to assist and encourage local communities to elect trustees, build schools and hire teachers. Ryerson believed this model was important for the maintenance of both the common and separate school systems across Ontario (Althouse, 1967). Alongside the proposed system, the Catholic Bishop of Toronto worked towards establishing a similar system for the Catholic population. Over the next few decades the attempts to establish a Catholic system met with stiff opposition but survived. In 1867, following the establishment of the country of Canada, minority education rights, Catholic in Ontario and Protestant in Quebec, were guaranteed at the level existing at the time of Confederation. For Catholics in Ontario that was to the end of Grade 10,

whereas the system went to Grade 13. For Catholic parents who wished a Catholic education for their children this meant paying fees for Grades 11, 12 and 13. This situation persisted until 1985 when then Premier Bill Davis extended paid-for tuition to the end of Grade 13. This is now abolished and the Catholic schools now get the same funding as public schools up to the end of grade twelve (personal communication, OCSTA, 18 March 2013). Historically, Protestant and Catholic schools were recognised as the only options available to parents and students who wanted their children to attend a publicly funded system. Over the years, the Protestant system has changed into a secular one. Catholic secondary schools which were owned by the dioceses were transferred to the province at no cost. Secondary schools owned by religious Congregations are gradually being purchased by the state. The publicly-funded Catholic education is often challenged but currently enjoys the support of the three main political parties in Ontario (personal communication, OCSTA, 18 March 2013).

The province's Education Act outlines the responsibilities of key partners in the education process (the provincial government, school boards, and teachers) and provides for the establishment of the following district school boards: Public (English, French) and Catholic (English, French) that govern these schools. Schools are overseen by the local Boards of Education. The aim of Ontario's public district school boards is to provide universally accessible education for all students, regardless of their background or religious preference. The Catholic district school boards have the same obligations under the Education Act but also aim to create a faith community, with faith development being an integral part of the curriculum.

The responsibilities of school boards with regard to its key governance role are outlined in the Education Act and include operating schools according to provincial legislation; having a vision statement that reflects the board's philosophy and local needs and priorities; setting the board's budget within the provincial grants and accompanying regulations; implementing curriculum according to ministry curriculum policy; developing and delivering other programmes that reflect provincial policies and local priorities; providing for the hiring of teachers and other staff required in their schools; maintaining school buildings and property with regard to student safety and in accordance with provincial legislation; and monitoring the policies of the schools and the achievement of students and, through the director of education, holding the entire system accountable for meeting provincial and board standards.

All district school boards are governed by locally elected lay trustees rather than religious orders. Trustees play a key leadership role in ensuring that schools

operate within the standards established by the province, and reflect the needs of the communities where they operate. Trustees are elected by the Ward and are responsible for forming a Board of Education and hiring a Director, who is, in turn, responsible for hiring other staff (personal communication, OCSTA, 18 March 2013).

2.4.2 School Ownership and Funding

All four school types are publicly funded. School boards in Ontario receive money from property taxes, with the province topping up the received amount to bring the total for each board up to the amount set out by the funding formula. Ontario has funded Roman Catholic schools since the 1840s, an arrangement with constitutional protection under the provisions of Section 93 of the Constitution Act 1867. As government funding is not available to other faith groups, there have been continuous public debates about equity of funding (Arragon, 2011).

Ontario's Education Act states that separate schools are entitled to full funding, and separate schools are defined as Roman Catholic only. At present, Ontario is the only Canadian province that funds Catholic schools fully. Each year the ministry provides funds to school boards through a series of grants. Various grants in the education funding formula fall into three broad categories:

1. Basic or foundation funding that every board receives for general costs, such as staff salaries, textbooks, classroom computers and other supplies.
2. Funds to help boards meet the unique needs of their students: English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) programmes, special education classes and funding for remote or rural schools are just a few examples.
3. Funds that are used to build new schools, repair and maintain existing schools and provide a bus service.

This funding is then used by the school board to develop its budget for the school year. It has been recognised by the government that the funding formula must be responsive to local needs as schools, boards and regions of the province have their own needs and challenges. It was noted that, funding "fairly" does not necessarily mean funding "exactly the same."²⁹

²⁹ http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/funding/How_Education_WebE2008.pdf, accessed 3 March, 2013.

TABLE 2.1 Governance and Funding of Denominational Schools in Ontario (Canada); Australia; the Netherlands

	The Netherlands	Australia	Ontario (Canada)
Governing Body	Boards of Foundation or Boards of Association. There are several of these and they may work together in national organisations (which are not a representative body of the two).	State Catholic Education Commission [recognised by the Commonwealth and state governments as the agency responsible for Catholic schools]; some religious institutes have established 'public juridical persons' to govern their schools.	School Boards or Wards; one Board looks after several schools (e.g. in Toronto, 1 School Board looks after 25 Catholic schools)
Funding of schools	Denominational schools are 'non-governmental' schools and financed equally with others; the same regulations and standards apply. The Dutch government finances secondary schools through a block grant.	Funding arrangements vary widely across Australia. Catholic schools are funded by 3 sources: Commonwealth [i.e., systemic funding], state governments and private sources [parents, fees]. The funding is provided as 'block funding'. Differences re: funding mechanisms and allocations across and between Catholic schools in each of the states and dioceses.	Funding is provincial responsibility. Department of Education allocates funding. Church funds Catholic curriculum development.
Ownership of buildings, land	If religious orders want to avail of state funding, their property (school buildings, lands) is given over to a Foundation (Catholics) or an Association (Protestants) which acts as Trustees. Insurance and running maintenance costs are part of the Government grants.	Diocesan owned schools and schools owned by religious institutes. Religious organisations own schools buildings and land.	Catholic secondary schools formerly owned by the dioceses were transferred to the province at no cost. Secondary schools owned by religious congregations are gradually being purchased by the state. Some Catholic schools are still owned by the religious orders and the Board pays rent for the use of the premises (often these schools are part of a bigger cluster of buildings/facilities).
Influence in running the schools	Denominational schools are relatively free to select students and recruit teachers but are considerably restricted in shaping curriculum and selecting assessment methods. Free to decide curriculum for Religious Education, rules and dress code, behaviour reflecting their religious and philosophical views.	Considerable autonomy in schools over pedagogy, curriculum, staffing, facilities and finances. The parish priest appoints the parish primary school principal and the secondary school principal is appointed either by the priest, a group of priests or religious order who owns the school. These authorities are legal employers of staff in Catholic schools.	Curriculum and pedagogy – as in all other schools; the Bishop approves the curriculum for Religious Education. Teachers hired have to be Catholic who need to apply to the Faculties of Education that provide preparation for Catholic education.

General grants available to schools are the same. The ministry does not allocate grants for religion courses, pastoral services or other specific components of Catholic education. There exists, however, special financing for French language education. Catholic school boards rely on general financing to pay the costs of teachers of religious education as with other subjects. Catholic curriculum development is financed by school boards, or other organisations such as the Provincial Office of Catholic Education in Ontario.

2.5 THE UNITED KINGDOM

2.5.1 School Types and Organisation

There are some differences in school types and organisation across the United Kingdom. Prior to the nineteenth century, there was a variety of schools in England and Wales, from charity schools providing basic education for the poor to endowed schools (often grammar schools) providing secondary or all-age education. Early in that century, the British and Foreign School Society and the National Society for Promoting Religious Education sought to provide elementary schooling for poor children, setting up non-denominational British schools and Church of England national schools respectively. From 1833, the state began to provide grants to support these elementary schools and the less wealthy endowed schools. They were joined by the Catholic Poor School Committee, which established Roman Catholic elementary schools and received its first state grant in 1847. Secondary education also expanded at the same time, including a number of Roman Catholic secondary schools established by religious orders (McLaughlin *et al.*, 1996). The state continued to increase funding to the schools run by private organisations, now known as voluntary schools. In return, these schools were increasingly influenced by the state, and were subject to jointly administered inspections. In 1926, voluntary secondary schools were required to choose between being "grant-aided" by the Local Authority, or receiving a "direct grant" from central government. The Education Act 1944 imposed higher standards on school facilities, and offered the remaining voluntary schools a choice in funding:

- *Voluntary controlled schools* would have all their costs met by the state, but would be controlled by the local education authority (LEA).
- *Voluntary aided schools* would be only partly funded by the state, with the (religious) foundation responsible for a proportion of capital works but having greater influence over the running of the school. These schools do not charge fees to students.

The Catholic Church chose to retain control of its schools (all became voluntary aided), while more than half of Church of England schools became voluntary

controlled. The (religious) foundation owns the school's land and buildings and appoints a majority of the school governors in voluntary-aided schools. Over time, the variety of secondary schools in England and Wales grew and at present, the following school types are in existence:

Controlled schools – in these schools the Church appoints some of the governors. Church trustees normally own the buildings, but the local authority (LA) is responsible for maintaining them. The LA employs the staff and controls admissions.

Voluntary aided schools – in these schools the Church appoints the majority of the governors. The Governing Body of the school is responsible for the buildings (which are normally owned by Church trustees), they employ the staff and are responsible for setting the admissions criteria.

Foundation church schools – the Church appoints some governors. The Governing Body of the school is responsible for the buildings (which are normally owned by Church trustees, but the LA is responsible for maintaining them), they employ the staff and are responsible for setting the admissions criteria.

Academies – the arrangements for the school are determined by documents individually agreed with the Secretary of State for Education. The Governing Body and Academy Trust of the school are responsible for the buildings, they employ the staff and are responsible for setting the admissions criteria (see Table 2.1).

Each diocese in England and Wales has a **DIOCESAN BOARD OF EDUCATION (DBE)** and **DIOCESAN DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION (DDE)**. Denominational schools may fall under the jurisdiction of a Diocesan Board (usually Church of England or Catholic) and these schools may have access to additional grant funding (e.g., a building programme). The DBE determines school policy and focuses on standards, Christian distinctiveness, religious education and strategic system development. DBEs are made up of a wide variety of people who have the skills, experience and interests required to run the school system on behalf of the Church. The DDE's team comprises experts in buildings and finance, governance, admissions, religious education and school support. Denominational schools receive guidance, advice and support from many national and local bodies, including Local Authority Children's Services Departments, Diocesan Boards of Education and the National Society. Diocesan Boards of Education (DBEs) have a legal responsibility for education within their boundaries. Each diocese funds a number of staff who, under the leadership of the Diocesan Director of Education (DDE), provide legal and technical support and assume the following roles:

- Manage and fund school building projects, including new schools;
- Negotiate with local authorities on provision of church school places;

- Prepare for, organize and follow up denominational inspection (Statutory inspection of Anglican Schools, SIAS);
- Monitor church school performance and work with schools in difficulties;
- Offer training for leaders and governors of church schools;
- Appoint governors and assist in the appointment of church school head teachers;
- Support clergy in their role as *ex officio* governors;
- Support school chaplains.

The National Society in England and Wales (NS) is responsible for:

- Negotiating with Government and other national agencies to maintain and develop the contribution of church schools to public education in England and Wales;
- Supporting and advising diocesan education teams on legal and technical, curriculum and ethos issues;
- Working closely with the Church of England Board of Education to contribute a Christian perspective to educational debate.

The NS and the Board of Education collaborate with the Catholic Education Service and the Methodist Church, along with other Christian and faith education representatives to ensure that the role and needs of faith communities are represented in national debate. The Board's three main Committees include: Schools; Finance and Development; and Further and Higher Education. The Board assists church school governing bodies in maintaining, managing and improving their school buildings. The Finance and Development team administer the payments and recovery of grant aid for all building projects carried out at schools. They administer schools' Devolved Formula Capital (DFC)³⁰ on behalf of the school governors.

The Catholic Education Service (CES) is an agency of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales (CBCEW). It works closely with the Department for Education and Formation and represents the Bishops' national education policy in relation to the Catholic schools.

³⁰ Funding is allocated each year to nursery (maintained), primary and secondary schools' priority work on buildings, ICT and other capital needs.

In addition to Church of England and Roman Catholic schools, there are also some Methodist, Jewish, Muslim Sikh, Hindu, Greek Orthodox and Seventh Day Adventist schools. There are also free schools: a free school has the same freedoms as an Academy. The difference is that it is a new school started by a variety of parents', teachers' or faith groups (or education charity). It is also possible for a free school to be a denominational school, but it must offer 50 per cent of its places to non-believers – a requirement not asked of mainstream denominational schools.

In Scotland, the picture is less varied than in England and Wales. The denominational schools are run in the same way as other education authority schools, except that teachers may be selected on the basis of religious beliefs as well as educational qualifications. Special time may be set aside for religious services and an unpaid religious supervisor, possibly the local priest, will report to the education authority on the religious instruction in the school. The majority of denominational state schools in Scotland are Roman Catholic. The Scottish Catholic Education Service (SCES) was established in August 2003 by the Bishops' Conference of Scotland. It is the operational arm of the Catholic Education Commission which sets national policy on all educational matters on behalf of the Roman Catholic Bishops of Scotland. The Bishop of each Diocese is responsible for setting education policy to suit the needs of the Catholic community within the local diocesan context. Independent (or private) schools are not funded by government. Funding may be from fees only or from both fees and charitable donations (see Table 2.1).

The education system in Northern Ireland consists of different types of schools under the control of management committees who are also the employers of teachers. The *controlled schools* are under the management of the school's Board of Governors and the Employing Authorities are the five Education and Library boards. *Voluntary maintained schools* are under the management of the Board of Governors and the Employing Authority is the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS). There are also *voluntary grammar schools* and grant-maintained *integrated schools*. Every school is managed by a Board of Governors. The Boards of Governors of controlled primary and secondary schools include members nominated by the three main Protestant Churches. Controlled nursery, grammar and special schools do not include church representation. Most but not all voluntary maintained schools are Catholic and their Boards of Governors include trustee representation from the Catholic Church. A few voluntary maintained schools are Irish medium and their trustees are drawn from the Irish medium sector. Also, there are a few "other" maintained schools whose trustee members represent other interests, including Protestant Church interests. Voluntary

grammar schools in Northern Ireland include Catholic schools and schools with no or other church connections. Grant-maintained integrated schools cater for all faiths. The Trustees, i.e., Bishops, are still the owners of the schools. The Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) is the advocate for the Catholic Maintained Schools sector in Northern Ireland. CCMS supports the management of Catholic Maintained Schools through Boards of Governors, and supports Trustees in the provision of school buildings and Governors and Principals in the effective management and control of schools. CCMS also has a wider role within the Northern Ireland education sector and contributes with education partners to policy on a wide range of issues such as curriculum review, selection, pre-school education, pastoral care and leadership. There are four categories of Council members: Department of Education representatives; Trustee representatives (recommended by Northern Bishops); parents' nominees, teachers' nominees. Catholic Maintained schools are owned by the Catholic Church through a system of trustees and managed by a Board of Governors. Teachers are employed by the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS). CCMS (The Council for Catholic Maintained Schools) is funded by the Department of Education and as its primary role it advises and supports schools and Governors in raising standards in the Catholic Maintained sector (personal correspondence, 13 March, 2013 CCMS). School Governors set the admissions criteria for the school, with guidance given by the Department and CCMS. School Governors appoint teachers to the school although CCMS is the employing authority. CCMS provides the scheme of management for the Catholic schools. The curriculum is set by the Department.

The Church of Ireland Diocesan Board of Education (DBE) promotes religious education and collective worship in schools and promotes and supports denominational schools. The Board provides professional advice on inspection, employment and accommodation; sets up occasional training seminars for clergy, parishes, teachers and governors; and works in a close partnership with the Children's Services department of the Local Authority. It is responsible for the quality of education provided in Voluntary Aided schools and provides specific support to special schools. The Church appoints the majority of governors and the governing body is responsible for the employment of staff, admissions and maintaining and replacing the buildings. The Board is the responsible authority in the preparation for and aftermath of inspections (in voluntary aided schools) (see Table 2.2).

2.5.2 School Ownership and Funding

A state-funded school in the United Kingdom is essentially a school whose budget comes from public sector funds. This can be from the local education authority (a local authority or education board) or from central government. Independent (or

private) schools generally raise their own funds and charge fees. Other schools, known as denominational schools, are funded by churches, including (most frequently) the Church of England, the Roman Catholic Church, the Methodist Church and the Muslim community. These schools are likely to have an emphasis on faith in their teaching and in their culture.

Funding for Catholic education in voluntary aided schools in England and Wales is partially shared by the state and Catholic Education Service. The only exception to this general rule is in the matter of initial building works and external repairs where government provides 90 per cent of the total costs, the 10 per cent remaining being met by Diocesan, Parish or school funds or a combination of all three. In England, any organisation wishing to start a new school has to find at least 15 per cent of the costs, and the buildings of former private schools have often been incorporated for use within the state-maintained system at no cost to the state (Walford, 2000).

In Scotland, Catholic schools are state schools and are fully funded by the state. This includes capital costs. Funding comes from two sources: central government (70 per cent) and local government (30 per cent) – from taxes raised nationally and locally. Contributions are made by the Church in terms of the appointment of Chaplains to schools and support for religious education in Catholic schools, and to the Scottish Catholic Education Service (SCES).

In Northern Ireland, the 1968 Education Act increased to 100 per cent the local Government's contribution to the running costs of Catholic schools. Catholic authorities can avail of 100 per cent funding for both the capital costs and running costs of their schools (Catholic maintained second-level schools and Voluntary Catholic grammar schools). Under the Local Management of Schools (LMS) arrangements in Northern Ireland, the Board of Governors of every school receives a delegated budget to meet the on-going costs of running their school, enabling them to plan and use resources to maximum effect in accordance with their school's needs and priorities. A Common Funding Scheme provides delegated funding to all grant-aided schools in Northern Ireland (other than special schools or schools established in hospitals). Controlled and maintained schools receive their budget shares through the Education and Library Board in whose area the school is located, while voluntary grammar schools and grant-maintained integrated schools receive their funding through the Department. From 1st April 2005, all grant-aided schools have been funded under the common funding formula arrangements set out in the Common Funding Scheme. In Catholic Maintained schools in Northern Ireland, recurrent costs are met by the Education and library boards, who also employ non-teaching staff. Council

members receive payment for travelling and incurred costs only. In the case of voluntary controlled schools, the buildings and admission procedures are the responsibility of the Local Authority.

In Northern Ireland, the running costs come out of the school's budget which is calculated and allocated by the Department of Education. The bulk of the funding is based on the school population. Any significant maintenance issues of a capital nature are funded by the Department. According to CCMS, the insurance premiums for Maintained schools in Northern Ireland are paid by the local education and Library Board from a central fund (personal communication, 28 March, CCMS). The Trustees, i.e. Bishops, are still the owners of the schools. CCMS (The Council for Catholic Maintained Schools) is funded by the Department of Education and as its primary role it advises and supports schools and Governors in raising standards in the Catholic Maintained sector. The funding arrangements across the different types of schools differ slightly:

Controlled schools which receive all their recurrent and capital funding from the local education authority;

Voluntary Maintained Schools which receive all their recurrent funding from the local education authority and have the option of 85 per cent or 100 per cent grants from the Department of Education on approved capital development works;

Voluntary Grammar Schools which receive all their recurrent funding from the Department of Education and have the option of 85 per cent or 100 per cent grants on approved capital development works;

Grant Maintained Integrated Schools which receive all their recurrent funding from the Department of Education authority and 100 per cent grants on approved capital development works (see Table 2.2).

2.6 INTERNATIONAL MODELS OF GOVERNANCE AND FUNDING OF TRUSTEESHIP: A TYPOLOGY

The overview of governance and funding utilised in the case-study jurisdictions presented in previous sections of this chapter can be used to derive a typology of models. The models reflect the historical legacies and highlight potential trade-offs in terms of autonomy maintained by denominational schools when accessing funding from the state.

- **Model 1:** The hand-over of school ownership to the state, which fully funds their entire costs, along with legal provision to maintain their denominational ethos (Scotland, Northern Ireland).

TABLE 2.2 Governance, Ownership and Funding of Denominational Schools (United Kingdom)

	Voluntary Aided Schools (England, Wales)	Voluntary Controlled Schools (England, Wales, NI)	Catholic Maintained Schools (NI)	Foundation Schools (England, Wales)	Denominational Academies and Free Schools (England)	Denominational State Schools (Scotland)
Governing Body	Board of Governors: Church (foundation) governors have a majority of 2 over all other governors. A proportion of foundation governors must also be parents.	Board of Governors: Church (foundation) governors are in a minority (E, W). In Northern Ireland Board of Governors is the governing body and Library Boards are the Employment Authority.	Board of Governors Employment authority: the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools.	Board of Governors: Church (foundation) governors may be in a minority or majority.	Academies are established as companies limited by guarantee with a governing body that acts as a Trust. The governors also act as the Trust's Board of Directors (they are legally, but not financially, accountable for the operation of the academy).	In 2011 the Scottish Executive was replaced by a number of Directorates. Education Scotland is an Executive Agency of the Government responsible for the education system. Local Authorities are the governing body. The governing role of school boards was replaced in 1997 by parents' councils as a means of parents getting involved in the life of the school.
Funding of schools	Partially State funded (England, Wales).	Entirely state funded (England, Wales, NI).	Entirely state funded (Catholic Maintained Post-Primary schools and Voluntary Catholic Grammar Schools)	Entirely state funded (England, Wales).	Directly funded by central government (DfE) (England).	Denominational schools are state schools and are entirely funded by the state.
Ownership of buildings, land	Foundation/Trust (usually a religious organisation) (apart from the playing fields which are normally vested in the local authority).	Foundation/Trust (usually a religious organisation) (apart from the playing fields which are normally vested in the local authority).	Foundation/Trust (usually a religious organisation).	Foundation/Trust (usually a religious organisation) in case of Trust schools; Governing body (other cases).	Land typically leased by LA or Diocese to the Academy Trust for 125 years at reduced rate. Otherwise, the school's land and buildings are owned by the Academy Trust.	State schools are owned and operated by the local authorities. Catholic school buildings, which had been built and maintained by the Catholic Church, were handed over to the state under the Education Act. Since then, these schools have been fully funded by the Scottish Government.

TABLE 2.2 Governance, Ownership and Funding of Denominational Schools (United Kingdom) (Continued)

	Voluntary Aided Schools (England, Wales)	Voluntary Controlled Schools (England, Wales, NI)	Catholic Maintained Schools (NI)	Foundation Schools (England, Wales)	Denominational Academies and Free Schools (England)	Denominational State Schools (Scotland)
Influence in running the schools	The governing body employs the staff and has responsibility for admissions to the school.	The Local Authority is the employer and their employment policies are used when appointing staff; primary responsibility for the school's admission arrangements.	School governors set the admissions criteria for the school. Guided by the Dept. and Council for Catholic Maintained Schools. School governors appoint teachers to the school although CCMS is the employing authority. CCMS provide the scheme of management for Catholic schools. The curriculum is set by the Dept.	The governors of foundation schools with a religious character are the employers. Candidates for the post of Head teacher in a voluntary controlled or a foundation school can be asked to demonstrate their ability and fitness to sustain and develop the religious character of the school. The governing body has responsibility for admissions to the school.	The Trust serves as the legal entity which the school is part of, and the governing body oversees the running of the school (although the day to day management of the school is, as in most schools, conducted by the principal and their senior management team, who are appointed by the sponsor who set up the school).	Specific legal provisions were made to ensure the promotion of a Catholic ethos in state-funded denominational schools

- **Model 2:** The maintenance of school autonomy (including covering the development of the characteristic spirit or ethos), while receiving most of their funding from the state and a small proportion from the Church (England and Wales).
- **Model 3:** The hand-over of schools to the state, with full funding of schools but little autonomy at school level (the Netherlands).
- **Model 4:** Religious orders retain ownership of schools with a small proportion of government funding allowed to be used for system administration; schools funded mainly by state and federal government and have low fees (Australia).
- **Model 5:** Denominational schools (including properties) are transferred to the provincial authorities at no cost (diocesan schools) or are purchased (religious orders). Schools are funded through a Catholic school board, with considerable autonomy (Ontario, Canada).

2.7 SUMMARY

This chapter demonstrated the historical complexities of navigating the intersection of religion and education in the case-study jurisdictions: the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Australia, and Ontario (Canada). The analysis has unveiled similar debates across countries with regard to whether the state should fund denominational schools and, if so, to what extent. Each country has experienced its own tensions, debates and challenges. Denominational schools experience additional challenges in maintaining their autonomy and overall ethos while responding to the needs of increasingly diverse societies. Catholic schools in the case-study jurisdictions have secured state funding over the decades but have needed to find a compromise to best serve their students and parents. In order to maintain greater control over their schools, controlled schools in the United Kingdom have done so by relying on additional funding from religious congregations/bodies whereas in the Netherlands where all denominational schools are fully funded by the state, they are subject to rigorous inspections by the government. In addition, growing secularisation in many countries has resulted in a reduced (direct) religious influence in schools. In order to maintain and develop the religious ethos in schools, in some jurisdictions Catholic education organisations have emerged that work with schools in their areas.

Chapter 3

The Structure, Governance and Management of Irish Second-Level Schools

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an overview of the structure, governance and management of second-level schools. In the Irish education system there are three types of second-level schools – voluntary secondary schools, vocational schools (including community colleges) and community/comprehensive schools. Each sector has its own historical legacy resulting in differences in governance, management and funding. The chapter starts off by providing a short overview of the historical development of second-level schooling and the legislative context. It then moves on to describe the main structural features of the contemporary education system. The following sections discuss the governance and management of second-level schools.

3.2 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE IRISH SECOND-LEVEL SECTOR

While it is beyond the scope of this report to examine in detail the historical development of the Irish education system at second level, a brief overview assists in understanding the central issues addressed in this report. In Ireland the Catholic Church has historically held a prominent position in providing second-level education (Coolahan, 1981). Alongside Catholic schools, there has also been a long-standing tradition of Church of Ireland (Protestant) schools (O’Flaherty, 1999). In the 1780s, with the relaxation of penal laws, the religious orders, Bishops and lay people began setting up secondary schools, with the number of such schools expanding during the nineteenth century. While these schools generally charged fees, there were also scholarship schemes available and in some cases fees were waived. The vast majority of these schools were single-sex in nature. After the foundation of the state, the number of secondary school students began to increase but these schools remained independent private institutions who had the right to sever their connection with the state (O’ Raifeartaigh, 1958). This right, however, meant that there were no state grants towards the building of voluntary secondary schools. From 1924 these schools received an annual capitation grant for each recognised student; before that date these schools did not receive a capitation grant, but only a relatively modest sum based on examination results, hence called ‘results fees’ (ibid.).

The Irish Constitution in 1937 established that the state will “...endeavour to support and give reasonable aid to private and corporate educational initiative” [Article 42.4], thus establishing the basis for state support for existing denominational schools which were to be supported if thus required. Up to 1964 secondary schools received no direct state grant for building (Coolahan, 1981). As the state had no obligation to provide secondary education, religious congregations continued to support the ‘voluntary’ schools from a combination of private resources, fund-raising and school fees. The independence from state funding meant that the denominational schools were largely free from state influence (IHRC, 2011), apart from regulation and examination of what was taught in the schools (Smith, 2006). The religious orders continued to be the main providers of second-level education until the 1960s (Hannan and Boyle, 1987). In recent years, resulting from a decline in the number of religious personnel, the religious congregations gradually withdrew not only from management of the schools they had originally set up but also from trusteeship of these schools (Smith, 2006). Over time, new models of trusteeship in voluntary secondary schools began to emerge, with groups of religious congregations cooperating in the running of schools. In 2013 Educate Together, formerly a patron of multi-denominational primary schools, was recognised as a new second-level patron.

Up to the 1960s, participation in secondary education was very strongly differentiated by social class background. The joint OECD/Department of Education *Investment in Education Report* (OECD/DES, 1966) highlighted significant social class and regional disparities in educational participation as well as detailing the limitations of the educational system in producing the trained workforce necessary for economic growth. The report prompted the introduction of the Free Education Scheme which resulted in free second-level education for all pupils in participating schools. The vast majority of secondary schools joined the free education scheme. This development meant that secondary school students were now entitled to a free education as were students attending state-run vocational/technical schools. A small number of second-level schools, currently 55 (or 8 per cent) – all of these in the voluntary secondary sector, remain outside the free scheme and charge fees to students.

The introduction of the ‘free scheme’ raised particular issues for Protestant schools, which in many cases were operating as boarding schools in order to serve the geographically dispersed minority population. As a result, a separate funding scheme was devised for Protestant schools. An annual ‘block grant’ was provided to Protestant fee-paying schools to offset the fees for low income students. In addition, an ancillary grant (since abolished) was provided to cover

non-teaching costs and thus put Protestant schools on the same footing with those in the free scheme (Daly, 2010).

The origins of the vocational system date back to the establishment of the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction in 1900. The Vocational Education Act (1930) provided a basis for present arrangements regarding vocational schools. The Act established 38 Vocational Education Committees, funding for which came from the state and from the local rating authority in each Committee area (O' Raifeartaigh, 1958). Under the sanction of the Minister for Education, these Committees are local authorities in their own right (*ibid.*). Initially, these schools were intended to provide an education largely geared towards preparation for manual occupations in contrast to the more academic orientation of voluntary secondary schools. The curriculum and examination structure in these schools differed from that of voluntary secondary schools as they did not provide the more academic Intermediate and Leaving Certificate courses. As a result, the schools acquired lower status and tended to have student intake from lower socio-economic groups (Hannan and Boyle, 1987). The situation changed somewhat in later years, with the integration of the Group Certificate and Intermediate Certificate curricula and the provision of more academic courses (*ibid.*). Vocational schools are also the main providers of adult education and community education courses. In the 1970s the vocational education committees introduced community colleges. The aim of these institutions is not only the provision of education to local school-going population but also to provide education and additional services to adults.

Comprehensive and community schools were set up in developing areas in the 1960s to provide students with as broad and comprehensive an education as possible (Hannan and Boyle, 1987). The number of comprehensive schools established was small and there have been no new comprehensive schools opened since 1972. Community schools and community colleges emerged as a partnership between VECs and religious orders under the responsibility of the Department of Education. These new schools were run by boards of management with representatives of different interest groups (religious orders, parents and local authorities) and were seen to represent the traditions of both the vocational and secondary school sectors (Walsh, 1999).

Gaelscoiláisti³¹ are the second-level schools for the Irish language medium education sector in English-speaking communities. These schools cross-cut existing sectoral frameworks; among these schools, 29 per cent are voluntary secondary (of which: 25 per cent Catholic and 4 per cent interdenominational); 62 per cent vocational and 9 per cent community/comprehensive. Approximately 3 per cent of all second-level students attend these schools.

3.3 LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT: RELIGION AND SCHOOLING

In order to provide the background to discussing the governance, management and funding of denominational and multi-denominational second-level schools in Ireland, this section provides a brief overview of relevant legislation. The Irish education system is underpinned by various legislative documents, several of which deal with patronage issues and religion in schools. For example, according to Article 42 of the 1937 Constitution, the Irish state is obliged to give reasonable aid to private and corporate educational initiatives. The Article also highlights the rights of parents, who shall be free to provide religious education to their children in their homes or in private schools or in schools recognised or established by the state. Lodge and Lynch (2004) note that Articles 42 and 44 have been interpreted to support denominational education.

According to Article 44, the people of Ireland are free to practice their religion. The state cannot discriminate between the different denominations, and children have a right to attend state-aided schools without religious instruction: “Legislation providing state aid for schools shall not discriminate between schools under the management of different religious denominations, nor be such as to affect prejudicially the right of any child to attend a school receiving public money without attending religious instruction at that school” [2.4]. Parents have a right to withdraw the child from religious education, if they so wish.

The 1998 Act places a statutory duty on the Minister to ensure that appropriate education and support services are available to everyone. The main pieces of legislation governing schools are the Education Act (1998)³² and the Education (Welfare) Act (2000).³³

³¹ In 2013 there are 41 Irish-medium second level schools in 32 counties (see: <http://www.gaelscoileanna.ie/en/about/statistics/>)

³² <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/1998/en/act/pub/0051/index.html>, accessed 5 June 2013.

³³ <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/2000/en/act/pub/0022/index.html>, accessed 5 June 2013.

Schools are expected to have respect and promote respect for the “diversity of values, beliefs, traditions, languages and ways of life in society” (1998 (15) 2e).

3.3.1 Governance and Patrons

The Education Act 1998 provides a statutory basis for the whole education system, setting out the rights and responsibilities for all involved in education. The Department of Education and Skills (DES) has the statutory responsibility to implement the Education Act, including the funding of recognised schools and accountability for such funding. The Act recognises the autonomy of each school, under the patron, and sets out the main responsibilities and rights of the patron, the board of management, and the principal, subject to regulations made by the Minister. The Education Act defines the patron of the school as “...the persons who /.../ stand appointed as trustees or as the board of governors of a post-primary school and, where there are no such trustees or school board, the owner of that school” [8.b]. It further states that “...in case of a school established or maintained by a vocational education committee that committee shall be the patron of the school for the purposes of this Act” [8.4]. In cases where two or more persons “...exercise the functions of a patron they may be registered as joint patrons” [8.5]. The Education Act left each school to determine which particular ethos or character it wishes to adopt.

The Act also establishes the functions of boards of management in second-level schools on a statutory basis: “It shall be the duty of a patron, for the purposes of ensuring that a recognised school is managed in the spirit of partnership, to appoint where practicable a board of management the composition of which is agreed between the patrons of schools, national associations of parents, recognised school management organisations, recognised trade unions and staff organisations representing teachers and the Minister” [14.1]. The board of management is responsible for all business carried out in connection with or on behalf of the school.

Functions of the board of management include managing the school on behalf of the patron and for the benefit of the students and their parents and providing appropriate education to each student. The Board of management also ensures the development of the moral and religious education of pupils: “...uphold, and be accountable to the patron for so upholding, the characteristic spirit of the school as determined by the cultural, educational, moral, religious, social, linguistic and spiritual values and traditions which inform and are characteristic of the objectives and conduct of the school” [15.b]. The board of management further has to ensure that “...as regards that policy principles of equality and the

right of parents to send their children to a school of the parents' choice are respected and such directions as may be made from time to time by the Minister having regard to the characteristic spirit of the school and the constitutional rights of all persons concerned, are complied with" [15.d].

The Equal Status Act 2000 deals with educational establishments; Section 7(c) of the Equal Status Act allows exemptions to denominational schools where the objective is to provide education in an environment that promotes certain religious values. A school that has this objective can admit a student of a particular religious denomination in preference to other students and employ teachers of a certain religious persuasion. Such a school can also refuse to admit a student who is not of that religion, provided it can prove that this refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school (The Equality Authority, 2005).

Various other legislative documents also deal with religion and schooling. The European Convention of Human Rights (ECHR), Protocol 1, Article 2 states that: *No person shall be denied the right to education. In the exercise of any functions which it assumes in relation to education and to teaching, the state shall respect the right of parents to ensure such education and teaching in conformity with their own religions and philosophical convictions.*³⁴ In addition, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), Article 18.4, establishes: "The liberty of parents or legal guardians to ensure that their children receive a religious and moral education in conformity with their own convictions"³⁵.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), Article 26.3, notes that "Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children".³⁶ Ireland signed the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) on 30 September 1990, and ratified it, without reservation, on 21 September 1992. The Convention entered into force in Ireland on 21 October 1992. With ratification, Ireland has undertaken to respect the Convention as international law and to implement its provisions. Article 30 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child declares the "...right to children of minority groups to enjoy their own culture, language and practice their religion". In 2012 Ireland held a Constitutional Referendum on children's rights, setting these on a firmer legislative footing.

³⁴ <http://www.hri.org/docs/ECHR50.html>, accessed 5 June 2013

³⁵ <http://www.minorityrights.org/?lid=3273>, accessed 5 June 2013

³⁶ <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/>, accessed 5 June 2013

3.4 MAIN STRUCTURAL FEATURES OF THE CONTEMPORARY SECOND-LEVEL SECTOR

This section provides an overview of the main features of the contemporary Irish second-level school system. In Ireland, education is compulsory for children from the ages of 6 to 16 or until students have completed three years of second-level education. State-funded education is available to all students, unless parents choose to send their child to a private school. The second-level sector comprises voluntary secondary schools; community and comprehensive schools; and vocational schools. While each category of school evolved from a distinctive historical context (see above), and have different ownership and management structures, there are certain commonalities: they are largely state funded and follow the same state prescribed curriculum and take the same state public examinations (DES, 2004). Many aspects of the administration of the Irish education system are in the centralised control of the Department of Education and Skills. This sets Ireland apart from other jurisdictions such as Great Britain and Northern Ireland where local education structures (Local Education Authorities in Great Britain and Library Boards in Northern Ireland) have significant autonomy (Walsh, 1999). The Department sets the general regulations for the recognition of schools, prescribes curricula, establishes regulations for the management, resourcing and staffing of schools, and centrally negotiates teachers' salary scales (DES 2004). Vocational Education Committees are the only regional administrative structures for education (Walsh, 1999).

Irish second level-education consists of a three-year Junior Cycle (lower secondary), followed by a two or three year Senior Cycle (upper secondary), depending on whether the optional Transition Year is taken. It is usual for students to commence the Junior Cycle at age 12. A State Examination, the Junior Certificate, is taken after three years. The principal objective of the Junior Cycle is for students to complete broad, balanced and coherent courses of study in a variety of curricular areas, and to allow them to achieve levels of competence that will enable them to proceed to Senior Cycle education. A complete overhaul of the Junior Cycle is now underway, and will be supported by an investment of €3 million in 2013, and €8.7 million in 2014. The Senior Cycle caters for students in the 15 to 18 year age group. Transition Year (introduced in 1994), which has been one of the major innovations in Irish education, is an option which is now firmly embedded in the system.

There are also 55 fee-paying, state-aided second-level schools (making up approximately 8 per cent of all schools). A recent government report has shown that the fee income available enables these schools to privately recruit additional subject teachers and extra ancillary staff or invest in capital improvements and extracurricular activities (DES, 2013b). Different schools charge differing levels of

fees. Recent media coverage suggests that a small number of fee-paying schools are now seeking to revert to the free scheme. A small proportion of second-level schools are Irish medium schools, with these schools represented in all three sectors (see above). Under the DEIS programme, additional funding is allocated to schools which have a higher concentration of students from more disadvantaged backgrounds. The highest proportion of schools with DEIS status is found among the vocational school sector.

Different types of schools can have a specific ethos, that is, a distinctive range of values and beliefs, which define the philosophy or atmosphere of an organisation. One determinant of school ethos may be the moral/ethical/religious nature of each school (Catholic, minority faith, multi-denominational). However, according to Buchanan and Fox (2008), school ethos in Ireland is a “multidimensional matter” as some all-Irish schools have a different religious ethos (e.g., Catholic or inter-denominational) while the defining ethos of this school type is the language of instruction and promotion of Irish culture. Furthermore, Catholic and minority denominational schools can be co-educational or single sex, DEIS or not. For these schools the distinctive ethos is most likely religion. At second-level, in 2013, over half of schools are owned by religious congregations, the local Catholic diocese or by Education Trust Companies.

In the year 2011/12, there were 722 second level schools in Ireland, catering for 359,047 students.³⁷ Of the 722 schools, 376 (52 per cent) were voluntary secondary, 254 (35 per cent) vocational, and 92 (13 per cent) community/comprehensive schools. Voluntary secondary schools cater for the largest body of students (see Table 3.1). The size of second-level schools varies, with some schools catering for student populations of less than a hundred, whereas others have more than 500 students (see Table 3.2).

TABLE 3.1 Number of Full-time Students in Institutions Aided by the Department of Education and Skills, 2011/2012

Second Level School	Number of Pupils	%
Voluntary secondary	185,607	58
Vocational	78,377	25
Community and Comprehensive	53,443	17
Total	317,427	100

Note: This includes only junior and senior cycle students, thus excluding PLC and other full-time students.

Source: <http://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Statistics/Key-Statistics-2011-2012.pdf>

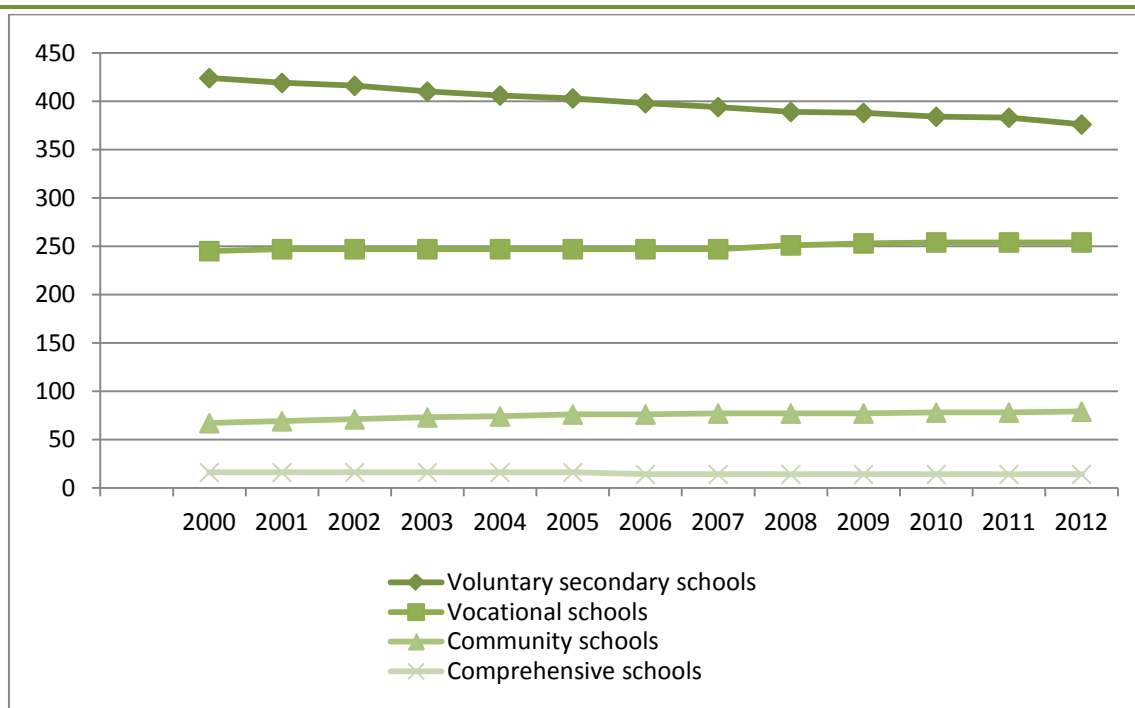
³⁷ See Key Statistics <http://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Statistics/Key-Statistics-2011-2012.pdf>.

TABLE 3.2 School Size at Second Level in 2011/2012

Enrolment Size (Number of Pupils)	Number of Schools (Second Level)	%
Fewer than 50 Pupils	4	0.5
50 - 99	11	2
100 - 199	66	9
200 - 299	97	13
300 - 499	212	29
500+	332	46
Total	722	100

Source: <http://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Statistics/Key-Statistics-2011-2012.pdf>

The levels of expenditure in education are largely driven by the enrolment levels in schools. According to DES (2012b), there will be significant increases in second-level enrolments after 2014, with continuing enrolment growth up to 2025/2026. The projected increase in the second-level population is expected to peak at 413,118, a 15 per cent increase on 2011/2012 figures.

FIGURE 3.1 Number of Second-Level Schools, 2000-2012

Source: DES database (www.education.ie).

Figure 3.1 shows that over time, the numbers of schools across the three sectors have changed. While the number of voluntary secondary schools has fallen (424 in 2000 and 376 in 2012, down 48 schools), the number of other types of schools has increased (by 9 schools in the vocational school sector and by 12 in the community school sector over a period of 13 years). The very small

comprehensive school sector has also decreased slightly. The diminishing number of voluntary secondary schools has been driven by amalgamations with other schools accompanied by changed patronage, school closures and by not being awarded patronage of new schools. Since the 1970s, over 200 voluntary secondary schools have been closed (Tuohy, 2013). Until recently, the vocational sector has been the preferred patron in awarding patronage to new schools (ibid.).

3.4.1 Admission Policies

While in theory parents and students can choose any second-level school for their children, in practice the options may be limited due to the availability of places in specific second-level schools or the admission policy practiced by the school (see Smyth *et al.*, 2009; Smyth and Darmody, 2011, for further discussion). Under the Education Act 1998, all schools must develop and publish their own admissions policy and different schools use different criteria for enrolment when they are oversubscribed. Some denominational schools, for example, give preference to children living in the area, or children of families who practice the particular faith of the school, while most multi-denominational schools allocate places by date of application (Smyth *et al.*, 2009).

The Board of management of each school must devise its own admissions policy and make this information available to parents. Such policies should include the provision of services for children with special needs and respect for the rights of parents to send their children to a school of their choice. Parents should know the criteria used in selecting or rejecting children for enrolment. Schools are allowed to take account of their religious and educational philosophy when developing an admissions policy. They cannot, however, refuse admittance to a student unless that refusal is in accordance with their stated policy and does not discriminate under the Equal Status Acts 2000-2011. Parents can appeal a decision to refuse enrolment to the Department of Education and Skills. The appeal must be made within 42 calendar days from the date that the decision of the board of management was notified to the parents/guardians. The National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB) is the statutory agency which can assist parents who are experiencing difficulty in securing a school place for their child.

On the 13th of June 2011 the Minister for Education and Skills opened the way for an overhaul of the enrolment policies in all schools. The Minister published a discussion document on admissions policy aimed to bring about changes in regulations and legislation on how primary and post-primary schools allocate places to students. Central to this debate on enrolment is the need to ensure a

fair and transparent system in all schools, which does not discriminate unfairly against students or parents (DES, 2011a). Draft legislation, the Education (Admission to School) Bill 2013, aimed at making school enrolment policies fairer, was released in September 2013.³⁸

The proposed changes include:

- parents will no longer have to pay simply to apply for a school place;
- schools will no longer be permitted to give preferential treatment to more than 25 per cent of the children of past pupils;
- schools will be prohibited from interviewing parents and children prior to acceptance; and
- first-come first-served enrolment policies will be abolished and date of application considered.

3.4.2 Governance and Management of Second-Level Schools

This section takes a closer look at the governance and management of Irish second-level schools. The governance/management interface in Ireland is not clearly defined. International research shows that successful schools are characterised by the fact that both the Board and principal demonstrate that they have a very clear understanding of their different roles and responsibilities by functioning as a partnership team (Gordon, 2005). While school governance and management are interlinked, the former is concerned with the strategic leadership, policy development and school planning led by the Board of management; the latter represents more instrumental and technical dimension of governance, mostly dealing with the day to day operation of an organisation (Bäckman and Trafford, 2006; Madigan, 2012). The Education Act 1998 sets out a framework within which the various stakeholders in the education system are expected to operate. The Education Act 1998 places a duty on the patron of a recognised school, for the purposes of ensuring that such a school is managed in a spirit of partnership, to appoint, where practicable, a board of management. Boards of management typically have a three year term of office. While the legal standing of the school patron/owner was established in the Education Act 1998, it does not explicitly list the functions of the patrons apart from them being responsible for setting up boards of management. The Madigan report (2012) notes that patrons and trustees have both a moral and legal responsibility to maintain schools in accordance with a particular ethos or founding ethos (ibid: 40). As seen in Table 3.3, patronage/trusteeship differs between second-level

³⁸ For further information see: <http://www.education.ie/en/Press-Events/Press-Releases/2013-Press-Releases/PR13-09-02.html>

schools: the Trustee of voluntary secondary schools is the Bishop, religious order(s), Boards of Governors or Education Trust Companies, whereas the trustee of a vocational school is the Vocational Education Committee (now the Education and Training Board). Community/comprehensive schools have as trustees the Bishop or religious orders and the VEC operating as joint patrons.

Due to their historic legacy, there are some differences in governance across second-level sectors. Voluntary secondary schools are privately owned and managed, and are, in most cases, under the trusteeship of religious communities, Boards of Governors or Education Trust Companies. These schools were set up voluntarily by individuals or groups with a particular intention or mission (Smith, 2006). Governance-related requirements are detailed in the Education Act (1998), which describes the mandatory composition of boards of management in these schools. Boards of management of voluntary secondary schools are represented by the Joint Managerial Body (JMB). This organisation was founded in 1972 to represent the interests of all voluntary secondary schools in the Republic of Ireland and is the main decision-making and negotiating body for the management authorities of voluntary secondary schools. The JMB comprises two founding organisations: the Association of Management of Catholic Secondary Schools (AMCSS) and the Irish School Heads' Association (ISA), representing Protestant Schools in Ireland.

The JMB provides the following services for Member Schools:

- Consultations.
- Responding to telephone queries.
- Schools' Database and Statistical Information.
- Communicating with the Education Partners.
- Industrial Relations.
- Secretariat for the Council of Management of Catholic Schools and the Joint Managerial Body (JMB).
- Representation on various committees, e.g., NCCA, NCVA.
- Publications.
- Contact with the Education Secretariats of Northern Ireland, Scotland, England & Wales.
- EU Relations.
- Training for boards of management (in conjunction with the Trustees), New Principals, & New Deputy Principals (www.jmb.ie).

In order to deal with the growing complexity and duplication of patron services, new organisations have emerged, such as the Association of Trustees of Catholic Schools (ATCS), the Catholic Schools Partnership (CSP) and the Catholic Education Service (CES) in order to “...coordinate all the educational and pastoral services of the Church” (Tuohy, 2013:243), as well as the increased complexity and duplication of Patron services new organisations, such as Association of Trustees of Catholic Schools (ATCS) and others have emerged. Where Education Trust Companies exist, governance is exercised by the Board of Directors appointed by the members of the Company. The Board of Directors may delegate many of their functions to personnel working within an education office established specifically for the purpose of exercising governance. In lay owned Catholic secondary schools, the function of governance is carried out by the owners or representatives of the owners (Madigan, 2012:40).

Vocational schools are state established, and are owned and administered by Vocational Education Committees (VECs).³⁹ The VECs were set up in every county under the Vocational Education Act 1930 (amended Act 2001) and consist largely of elected representatives of the local community. Members of these committees are paid travel and other expenses⁴⁰. No systematic information is available on the scale of such costs, though information from annual financial reports for two VECs in 2010 indicate that per capita expenses varied between €1,343 and €3,483. Schools under the auspices of the VEC have boards of management (DES, 2011b), which are sub-committees of the VEC. Membership of the boards includes VEC representatives and parent, teacher and community representatives. Community colleges are owned by the Vocational Education Committee and are usually managed by a Board of management which is a sub-committee of the VEC. The composition of these boards is a matter for local negotiation. A “Designated” Community College will usually have three nominees of the religious trustees, three nominees of the VEC, two teachers and two parents. Each community college is part of the local VEC and board decisions have to be ratified by the VEC itself.

Each VEC appoints a Chief Executive Officer and staff to administer and manage the various educational activities carried out by that VEC. Financial allocations are made to the VECs on the basis of the financial year, to cover pay and non-pay, and are paid as a block grant. VECs are given a high level of autonomy in the

³⁹ VECs are statutory education authorities which have responsibility for vocational educational training, youth work and a range of other statutory functions. VECs also manage and operate second-level schools, further education colleges, pilot community primary schools and a range of adult and further education centres delivering education and training programmes to all sectors of the communities served by the VECs.

⁴⁰ The roles of BoM members in voluntary secondary schools are voluntary and unpaid.

management and appropriation of their budgets in line with their individual priorities. In 2010 the Government agreed a restructuring of the Vocational Education Committee system, involving a reduction in the number of VECs from 33 to 16 through the merger of existing VECs. Education and Training Boards (ETBs) have taken over the work of the VECs and have an expanded role, underpinned by the Education and Training Boards Bill (2012), in the delivery of further education and training across the country. The ETBs are expected to play a strategic leadership role in their respective catchment areas in terms of the delivery of education and other training programmes. This major reform reduces the number of Chief Executive Officers in line with the number of bodies and full year savings are estimated at €2.1million (www.education.ie). The affairs of ETBI are currently managed under the supervision of the Standing Council which meets four/five times a year to agree policy position papers and assess the progress of work undertaken by the two sub-committees i.e., Steering and Executive Support Committees (www.etbi.ie). ETBs will continue to maintain and grow both first-level (community national schools) and second-level (258 schools and colleges) provision, but will now work with SOLAS (established by the Further Education and Training Bill 2013) to meet the needs of jobseekers and other learners through a range of further education and training programmes, as well as apprenticeship training programmes.

ETBI provides a range of services to its membership including:

- Representing, negotiating and advocating on behalf of member ETBs;
- Consulting and negotiating at national level on behalf of ETB members with Government Departments, Trade Unions and with a range of other relevant bodies and authorities;
- Promoting the development and implementation of appropriate education and training policies, procedures and guidance for member ETB;
- Conducting research, devising and delivering education and training programmes targeted at the general ETB membership.

ETB head office services to its members include education policy, HR, IR and legal support, procurement, training and IT.

Community and comprehensive schools are managed by boards of management of differing compositions. One school can have several patrons: the Education Act 1998 states that “Where two or more persons exercise the functions of a patron they may be registered as joint patrons” [Education Act 1998, Part II, Section 8 (5)]. In the case of community schools, the joint Trustees are the Vocational Education Committee, the religious order(s), and/or the Bishop [Deed of Trust,

Community School] or the authorised nominated person(s) deemed to be acting on behalf of the Trustee (ACCS, 2004).

3.4.3 Boards of Management

The composition of a board of management is based on centrally agreed arrangements between the relevant stakeholders. It specifies the various duties and functions of a Board. The Board must manage the school on behalf of the patron for the benefit of the students and their parents and provide, or cause to be provided, an appropriate education for each student in the school. It must uphold the characteristic spirit of the school and must at all times act in accordance with any *Act of the Oireachtas* relating to the establishment or operation of the school (DES, 2011b).

The introduction of boards of management in Irish schools has been a long and complex process. The vision of Ministers for Education on whether there should be a legal obligation on schools to establish boards of management differed. While Niamh Bhreathnach (Minister for Education 1993-1997) supported such a move, Micheál Martin (Minister for Education 1997-2000) stated that schools had a duty to establish boards where feasible (Walsh, 1999). In addition, there was an attempt to tie receipt of public funds to the establishment of boards of management so that only schools that had done so were eligible for incremental funding. The composition of boards was also a matter of contention. The discussions culminated in 1996 when such composition was agreed upon: it was agreed that a Board should consist of equal representation of parents, teachers, owners of the school and the wider community, instead of an “inbuilt voting majority for the owners of schools” (Walsh, 1999:112). The establishment of the National Parents’ Council in 1985 helped parents to achieve a more central role in schools (Coolahan, 1994). The establishment of boards differed somewhat across sectors: comprehensive and community schools that were established in the 1960s were to be managed by boards of management; boards were also established in vocational schools and in most voluntary secondary schools (Coolahan, 1994). At present, the majority of second-level schools have boards. Those that do not include small, lay managed, Catholic voluntary schools (Walsh, 1999).

There are some differences in the composition of boards of management between the three sectors at second level (see Table 3.3). In the voluntary secondary sector, the board of management consists of eight persons appointed by the Trustees. Four are nominated by the Trustees and the rest are made up of two parent and two teacher nominees. The term of office lasts for three years.

Although the majority of voluntary secondary schools have boards of management, there is a small number of schools where this is not the case. A small number of voluntary secondary schools, mainly lay/family owned, have a single manager and do not and never had boards of management. There is a further small number of schools, across all sectors, that have a manager in place in circumstances where the trustees have sought and been granted approval by the Minister to step down the board for a period of six months at a time due to some identified issue (s) arising in the way the Board has been carrying out its functions. Such approval by the Minister is granted under section 16 of the Education Act 1998 (personal correspondence, 23 March 2013, JMB). In general, the religious order(s) ratify the board. The boards of management of VEC second-level schools are sub-committees of the VEC. There are a number of models in operation, but in general include: three/four nominees of the VEC, two parent and two teacher nominees (DES, 2009). Community colleges are owned by the Vocational Education Committee and are managed by a board of management which is a sub-committee of the VEC. The composition of the Board of management is similar to that of community schools. In community schools there are 10 members on the Board of management, three of which are nominated by the religious authority and three are nominees of the local county Vocational Educational Committee. As with vocational schools, there are two teacher and two parent nominees. Comprehensive schools can be either Catholic or under the Trusteeship of the Church of Ireland. In the case of the former, the composition of the Board consists of two nominees of the Diocese, one nominee of the VEC, the Chief Executive Officer of the VEC, two nominees of the parents and two nominees of the teachers. The term of office is usually five years. In the Protestant schools the composition of the Board is six nominees of the Trustees, one Chief Executive Officer, two parents and two teachers. The term of office is five years.

Under the Education Act 1998 boards of management became a requirement for all schools where possible. The composition of a Board of management is based on centrally agreed arrangements between the relevant stakeholders. The Education Act established the functions of the boards including upholding the characteristic spirit of the school; overseeing the development of the School Plan, responsibility regarding accounts and expenditure and ensuring that the accounts are available for inspection. In addition, the Education Act makes boards responsible for ensuring the provision of appropriate education at the school under their management, for each student and for establishing and maintaining communications with the parents regarding matters relating to the operation and performance of the school. These functions apply to all schools. Regarding financial responsibilities there are some small differences between the sectors: in voluntary secondary schools the financial responsibilities of the board are

detailed in the Articles of Management and include: the keeping of proper books and minutes; the opening of a bank account; the preparation of a forward budget and financial report to the trustees annually; ensuring that expenditure does not exceed income (www.asti.ie). In community/comprehensive schools the financial responsibilities of the board include: the preparation of an income and expenditure estimate required for the school during the following financial year; the submission of a monthly report on expenditure from the school's fund to the Department of Education and Science; the opening of a bank account in the name of the school; ensuring that expenditure does not exceed income approved by the Minister under any head of the estimates for any year without the previous consent of the Minister; the keeping of accounts of financial records and statements; creation of adequate systems of control, delegation and accountability regarding use of school's finances (*ibid.*). In the case of vocational schools and community colleges, the Vocational Education Committee is the patron of these schools. The executive functions of the VEC as patron are to be performed by the CEO in accordance with sections 12 and 15 of the Vocational Education (Amendment) Act, 2001. The boards of management are sub-committees of the VECs, according to Articles of Management and their functions determined by the Minister and VECs informed by the Education Act. The function of the board is also to ensure that schools under their management provide access to a comprehensive system of second-level education open to all young people in the community and that ongoing support is provided to persons living in the area in keeping with national policies on lifelong learning. It is the responsibility of the board to keep the VEC informed of decisions and proposals of a board, and act in accordance with the board's management functions, outlined in the instrument and articles of management (IVEA Handbook, p. 30).

Apart from the duties and functions specified in the Education Act, other legislation such as the Education Welfare Act, the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act and employment and equality legislation have placed legal obligations on boards. In addition, the boards must act in accordance with Acts of the Oireachtas relating to the operation of the school.

TABLE 3.3 Governance and Management of Irish Second-level Schools

	Voluntary Secondary Schools	Vocational Schools	Community Colleges	Community Schools	Comprehensive Schools
Patron body/Trustee	Bishop/religious orders Boards of Governors/Education Lay Trusts.	Vocational Education Committees (VECs).	Vocational Education Committees (VECs).	The joint Trustees are the Vocational Education Committee, the Religious Order(s), and/or the Bishop [Deed of Trust, Community School] or the duly authorized nominated person(s) deemed to be acting on behalf of the Trustee.	Comprehensive Schools operate under the trusteeship of religious denominations – either Catholic Bishop or under the Trusteeship of the Church of Ireland.
Executive functions of Patrons performed by	Trustees.	Chief Executive Officer of the VEC.	Chief Executive Officer of the VEC.	Each community school is a completely independent school dealing directly with the Department of Education and Skills.	Each comprehensive school is a completely independent school dealing directly with the Department of Education and Skills.
Governing/ Management Body	Boards of management.	VEC, boards of management are sub-committees and have no discretionary powers.	Boards of management.	Boards of management.	Boards of management.
Other relevant governing organisations	All BoMs represented by JMB; Association of Trustees of Catholic Schools (ATCS)	BoMs are sub- committees of VECs.	BoMs are sub- committees of VECs.	Association of Community and Comprehensive schools (ACCS)	Association of Community and Comprehensive schools (ACCS)
Make-up of BOM	Four members are nominated by the Trustees, two parent and two teacher nominees.	A Board of a school shall consist of not more than 12 members nominated or elected: Three/four members (at least two of whom shall be members of the VEC) shall be nominated by the VEC. Two parent and two teacher nominees; additional places may, with VEC approval on the nomination of the board, be filled to facilitate relevant partnership.	The composition of these boards is a matter for local negotiation. A “Designated” Community College will usually have three nominees of the religious trustees, three nominees of the VEC, two teachers and two parents with the option of co-opting a tenth member. Each community college is part of the local VEC and Board decisions have to be ratified by the VEC itself.	Three nominees of the Religious Authorities. Three nominees of the Vocational Education Committee. Two parents of children who are pupils in the school which is established and who are resident in the area. Two teachers employed in the schools forming the new community school or who are employed in the existing community school. The principal acts as a non-voting member of the Board.	a) Two nominees of the Diocese, one nominee of the VEC, the Chief Executive Officer of the VEC, two nominees of the parents and two nominees of the teachers; b) Six nominees of the Trustees, one Chief Executive Officer, two parents and two teachers.

Source: www.asti.ie (<http://www.asti.ie/?id=276>); http://www.ivea.ie/publications/bom/bom_handbook.pdf

3.4.4 Patronage of New Second-Level Schools

In June 2011 the Minister for Education announced that 20 new post-primary schools were to be established in the period to 2017 across a number of locations to cater for increasing student numbers. In addition, new criteria were unveiled informing recognition of the new schools. The criteria used included how the proposed schools under the respective patrons would provide for extending or strengthening diversity of provision in each area, having regard to the views of parents. In order to aid the process, a New Schools Establishment Group, an independent advisory group, was set up to assist the Minister (DES, 2013a). More than a dozen new second-level schools will be established in 2013 and 2014, mostly in the greater Dublin region. The new schools to be established in 2013 and 2014 include:

- Blanchardstown West, Dublin 15 – Educate Together.
- Drogheda, Co. Louth – Joint patronage County Louth VEC and Educate Together.
- Mulhuddart, Dublin 15 – Le Chéile Schools Trust.⁴¹
- Greystones, Co. Wicklow – Church of Ireland.
- Lusk, Co. Dublin – County Dublin VEC.
- Claregalway, Co. Galway – County Galway VEC.
- Naas, Co. Kildare – County Kildare VEC.
- Navan, Co. Meath – County Meath VEC.
- Cork City – South Suburbs/ Carrigaline – County Cork VEC.
- Maynooth, Co. Kildare – County Kildare VEC.
- Dundalk, Co. Louth – County Louth VEC.
- Ashbourne, Co. Meath – County Meath VEC.
- Balbriggan, Co. Dublin – An Foras Pátrúnachta (*instruction through the medium of Irish*).
- Dundrum, Co. Dublin – An Foras Pátrúnachta (*instruction through the medium of Irish*).

For the first time, Educate Together has been officially recognised by the Department of Education and Skills as a second-level patron. While the consultation about awarding patronage to various patron bodies at primary level involves surveys of parents, no such measure has been used for awarding

⁴¹ The Le Chéile Schools Trust comprises the schools of fourteen religious congregations. The aim of the Trust is to carry on the legal, financial and inspirational role of trusteeship that has, up to now, been carried out by individual congregations.

patronage of second-level schools. However, the Minister is seeking proof of parental preference of specific patronage from interested bodies applying for new schools. The Forward Planning Section of the Department of Education carried out an assessment of all applications received by prospective school patrons, taking into account the following criteria:⁴²

- Confirmation that the prospective patron is willing to accept and open special education facilities.
- Confirmation that the prospective patron is willing to enter into the standard lease agreement with the Department of Education and Skills or that the prospective patron will provide their own school site.
- Confirmation of willingness to operate by the rules and regulations laid down in various Department of Education and Skills circulars and operating procedures.
- Confirmation of willingness to operate the school within the resourcing and policy parameters established by the Department of Education and Skills.
- Confirmation of willingness to share school buildings with other schools as may be determined by the Department should the school building not be in full use.
- Confirmation of willingness to be part of a campus development with other primary or second-level schools as identified by the Department.
- Confirmation of willingness to enrol children in the area for whom the Department has identified the need for a school.
- Confirmation of willingness to follow the prescribed curriculum.
- Confirmation that the prospective patron is willing to expand/operate in the size range of 800 to 1,000 pupils.
- Confirmation of willingness to establish an Aonad⁴³ where there is a demand for it (for a school where the primary medium of instruction is to be English) (www.education.ie).

At second-level, the procedure involved in establishing (the need for) new schools include the following steps:

- Identification of locations of new schools and sizes of new schools by the Department.
- Decision by the Department in relation to whether the school would operate through the medium of Irish or English.
- Written applications from prospective patrons addressing all of the criteria.

⁴² http://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Information/Establishing-a-New-School/Report-for-the-New-Schools-Establishment-Group_30052012.pdf

⁴³ An Aonad refers to resources to provide education through Irish at junior cycle.

- Consideration of the applications by Department officials and report drafted for consideration by the News Schools Establishment Group.
- Consideration by Group of report and endorsement by Group or identification of need for further analysis by Department and subsequent consideration by Group.
- Report from the Group submitted to the Minister for consideration.
- Decision by the Minister (www.education.ie).

TABLE 3.4 Number of Second-Level School Classified by County in 2011/2012

County	Voluntary Secondary	Vocational	Community	Comprehensive	Total
Carlow	5	5	1	0	11
Cavan	4	5	1	1	11
Clare	8	7	2	1	18
Cork City	18	6	3	1	28
Cork County	29	21	7	1	58
Donegal	4	15	6	2	27
Dublin South	14	13	8	0	35
Dublin City	59	22	2	2	85
Dublin Fingal	11	11	6	0	28
Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown	25	5	4	1	35
Galway City	8	3	0	0	11
Galway County	16	11	6	1	34
Kerry	14	8	3	1	26
Kildare	12	9	4	0	25
Kilkenny	7	8	1	0	16
Laois	3	3	3	0	9
Leitrim	1	5	1	1	8
Limerick City	11	3	1	1	16
Limerick County	7	8	1	0	16
Longford	4	4	1	0	9
Louth	11	5	1	0	17
Mayo	16	8	3	0	27
Meath	6	9	4	0	19
Monaghan	6	6	0	0	12
Offaly	4	5	2	0	11
Roscommon	4	3	1	0	8
Sligo	7	6	1	0	14
Tipperary	19	11	1	0	31
Waterford City	8	2	0	0	10
Waterford County	5	3	1	0	9
Westmeath	10	4	1	0	15
Wexford	12	8	2	0	22
Wicklow	8	11	1	1	21
TOTAL	376	254	79	14	722

Source: DES database (www.education.ie).

In the light of continuing projected growth in the second-level school-going population (CSO, 2012), the governance of new schools is likely to be an important policy issue for many years to come.

The distribution of second-level schools in Ireland differs across counties (see Table 3.4). The figures show that not all counties have a choice between all three types of schools. For example, Galway city, Monaghan and Waterford city have no community/comprehensive schools. Dublin city has the largest number of voluntary secondary schools whereas there are fewer such schools compared to vocational and community/comprehensive schools in Donegal. The overarching recommendation of IHRC (2011) was that “...the state should ensure that there is a diversity of provision of school type within educational catchment areas throughout the state which reflects the diversity of religious and non-religious convictions now represented in the state” (ibid. p.6). The Report of the Commission of School Accommodation (DES, 2011a)⁴⁴ notes that it has been possible to meet the demand for diversity in areas of significant demographic growth and acknowledges that the demand for diversity of provision of different types of new schools still exists where such demographic increase has not occurred. The report also recommends that: “...the Department should take all reasonable measures to ensure that there is a choice of patronage of schools available where there is a critical mass of demand for such choice, having regard to the finances available” (ibid. p.5).

3.5 SUMMARY

This chapter has provided an overview of the governance and funding of second-level schools in Ireland. It has shown that the development of this sector needs to be viewed in the context of historical developments taking place in Ireland from the nineteenth century onwards. In the face of lack of state provision of free second-level education until 1967, the religious orders set up a number of schools on a ‘voluntary’ basis. Over time state-funded schools were set up and the introduction of free education saw an expansion of the second-level sector. In addition to voluntary secondary and vocational schools, the religious orders and local government introduced a new community school model in areas with growing populations and where amalgamations of a number of smaller schools were agreed. Each sector has its own characteristic spirit and the ownership and management of the three types of school differ (see Chapter 5 for a more detailed discussion on school ethos/ characteristic spirit).

⁴⁴ While the report deals with primary schools, several aspects discussed in the report are also relevant for second-level schools.

Many second-level schools are facing increasing challenges in terms of in-school management as well as funding. A vision to involve lay people in the management of schools, parallel with the declining numbers of religious personnel in voluntary secondary schools, has resulted in new management structures being set up. The role of Trustees will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4. There is also some differentiation regarding government funding structures, with vocational schools funded by a block grant and a Protestant block grant available to Protestant (largely fee-paying) schools taking account of the dispersed student population of the latter. In 1999 the (unpublished) Blackstock report highlighted an urgent need for greater transparency of funding and the establishment of a database enabling the comparison of state funding across the different second-level sectors. In 2013 it is still an issue with little comparable data available on the resources provided to different types of second-level schools.

Chapter 4

Trusteeship in Voluntary Secondary Schools

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Previous chapters of this report described the role of religious organisations in setting up second-level schools in Ireland in the absence of state provision. In the past, a majority of boys in the voluntary secondary sector attended schools run by the Christian Brothers, with the Mercy Congregation providing secondary education for most of the girls (Hannan and Boyle, 1987). The authors argue that the growth of second-level education for the Catholic population in Ireland can be explained, at least in part, by the establishment and rapid growth of the Catholic religious orders and congregations (ibid: 29). The background, origins and charters of various religious orders also shaped the characteristic spirit of these schools over and above an overall Catholic ethos; in part, this was informed by student intake in terms of gender and social class background.

In Ireland, there are still a large number of religious congregations – over 50 male and over 70 female, many of which are patrons of voluntary secondary schools.⁴⁵ As seen in an earlier chapter of this report, the Education Act 1998 provided a definition of the Patron/Trustee of a school. While the Act does not elaborate on the function of such trustee, it notes that:

The patron of a school shall carry out the functions and exercise the powers conferred on the patron by this Act and such other functions and powers as may be conferred on the patron by any Act of the Oireachtas or instrument made thereunder, deed, charter, articles of management or other such instrument relating to the establishment or operation of the school [8.6].⁴⁶

It clearly shows that the Trustee or Patron is responsible for ensuring the running of schools, the responsibilities of which include provision of education appropriate to the abilities of the students and promotion of the moral, spiritual, social and personal development of students. Trustees/Patrons are also seen to have a moral as well as legal responsibility to maintain schools in accordance with a specific ethos or characteristic spirit (Madigan, 2012). Education Trusts exercise their function of trusteeship through various activities, including providing support for the school and leadership development. The Catholic and Protestant

⁴⁵ <http://www.catholicireland.net/orders/>, accessed 6 June 2013.

⁴⁶ <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/1998/en/act/pub/0051/sec0009.html#sec9>, accessed 6 June 2013.

Churches in Ireland support the rights of Catholic and Protestant parents to send their children to the school of their choice, should they opt for a school with a distinctive denominational ethos. At the same time, both types of school accept students from different religious denominations and none (see Smyth *et al.*, 2009).

In recent decades, there has been a considerable reduction in the number of religious personnel in general and the number of members of religious orders and congregations directly involved in education in Ireland (Madigan, 2012; Smith, 2006). The numbers of second-level teachers in religious orders used to be relatively high, but have fallen over the years. For example, there were 3,700 such teachers in 1970, but only 740 in 1998 (CSO, 2000). This has led to a situation where religious orders and congregations have had to withdraw from sole trusteeship and management of some schools, leading to school amalgamation in some areas and closure of schools in other cases (OECD, 2007). The introduction of boards of management meant that many of the day-to-day operations of schools could be referred to these boards (Madigan, 2012).

4.2 EDUCATION TRUST COMPANIES IN VOLUNTARY SECONDARY SCHOOLS

In recent years, several voluntary secondary schools under the patronage of different religious orders have joined under one Education Trust Company, while others have remained independent. Education Trust Companies are comprised in whole or in part of lay people and responsibility for running schools has been transferred to these companies by the religious orders (Madigan, 2012).

A definition of trusteeship of voluntary secondary schools was put forward in the 1990s by the Conference of Religious in Ireland (CORI), noting that:

- The trust relates to Catholic education to which “each congregation brings the richness of its original charism”;
- There is a firm legal basis for the trustee role;
- Decisions about the future of the school rest ultimately with the trustees albeit after extensive consultation.⁴⁷

In short, trusteeship can be seen as “...the holding of an enterprise and property in trust with the legal and moral responsibility to use and administer it for its intended purpose” (Reynolds, 2006). *A Handbook for Leaders of Religious*

⁴⁷ http://www.cori.ie/Education/Relevant_Publications/409-Trusteeship_schools_perspectives, accessed 12/03/2013.

Congregations, referred to as the 'Trustee Handbook', was published in 1996. In addition to providing a formal definition of 'trusteeship', it also provided a framework for an operational relationship between trustees and the other educational partners. The role of religious orders in schools is [...] increasingly seen as "...supportive, educative, inspirational, rather than hands-on and administrative" (Reynolds, 2006).

There is a growing recognition among the religious orders who set up voluntary secondary schools that existing arrangements for trusteeship are not sufficient and new models are being sought to ensure the continuation of Catholic schools and Catholic education into the future. The Education Trust Companies functioning at present include: CEIST for secondary schools formerly run by several separate religious orders (Daughters of Charity, Presentation Sisters, Sisters of the Christian Retreat, Sisters of Mercy, Missionaries of the Sacred Heart); the Edmund Rice Schools Trust (ERST) that caters for all second-level schools previously run by the Christian Brothers; Le Chéile, that caters for secondary schools formerly under the trusteeship of several different congregations (Cross and Passion Sisters, Patrician Brothers, Poor Servants of the Mother of God, Dominican Sisters, De La Salle Brothers, Sisters of Christian Education, Holy Faith Sisters, Sisters of Jesus and Mary, Faithful Companions of Jesus, Sisters of St. Louis, Sisters of St. Paul, Society of the Holy Child Jesus, St. Joseph of Cluny); Loreto Education Trust for Loreto secondary and primary schools; Des Places Education Association for Holy Ghost (Spiritan) schools; and The Presentation Schools Trust for schools formerly under the trusteeship of the Presentation Brothers. The largest Education Trust Companies are CEIST, with 112 voluntary secondary schools, ERST, with 61, and Le Cheile, with 51 such schools. Some single voluntary secondary schools are also run by Education Trust Companies (Madigan, 2012). The duties of these Companies are underpinned by the objective of preserving the continuation of a denominational ethos in the school they own.

Considering the broad range of functions and duties of school patrons (Education Trust members/Directors, Bishops, religious orders), many of them have set up education offices. Where this is not the case, Education Officers have been appointed by dioceses and religious orders to deal with patronage-related issues in schools under the management of specific religious orders. The Trustees/Patrons of voluntary secondary schools are assisted in management-related issues by the Association of Management of Catholic Secondary Schools (AMCSS) and other organisations (Madigan, 2012).

In order to explore the issues around the governance, management and funding of schools, interviews were conducted with a selection of key stakeholders in education and Trustee representatives (see Table 1.1). The following sections of this chapter present an analysis of these interviews.

4.2.1 Duties and Responsibilities of Education Trust Companies

All interviewees representing the various Education Trusts highlighted the challenges facing denominational schools regarding the declining numbers in the religious orders and their diminishing presence in schools.

By virtue of education up until the 60s [the schools were in] the hands of religious, it was privately run, privately controlled and [the] religious were happy [...] to maintain that because they wanted to be able to determine the ethos of their own schools. I think now with declining numbers and the absence of religious in the schools, they realise this is completely unsustainable. [Trustee 4]

As a response to these challenges, a number of Trusts have emerged, some of which have merged, uniting a number of schools belonging to different religious orders. However, other Trusts/patrons have remained independent. Educational Trust companies are currently run mostly by lay people. As seen in the next section, lack of funding will pose serious problems for these companies in the future.

They have it structured in such a way that it can function from now on as a totally lay trust. The only problem is that it's a lay trust without money and that poses a problem for sustainability into the future. [Trustee 9]

The responsibilities of the Trustees are articulated in the Education Act and also in the Articles of Management of second-level schools. The core aim of the Catholic Education Trusts is to ensure the continuation of Catholic education:

The foundation stone of the trust is to ensure continuation of Catholic education – [...] to provide support to the schools, to the leadership and management of schools and boards of management; the characteristic spirit, the development of that is the foundation stone of the trust body; it also provides financial advice, advising the boards of management of the schools on what their legal responsibility is, property-related issues. [Trustee 1]

Trustee 1 noted that ensuring availability of choice to parents and upholding the characteristic spirit are the core features of the Trust:

To ensure there is a choice of Catholic voluntary schooling for parents, that is our core purpose, to ensure that there is that choice available [...] the quality of teaching and learning is one element but they're living out of the core values of being just and responsible, respect for every person, having the sense of creating

community, critically important and knowing the community that you serve, giving service to others. Those are the key elements; those are the key components of the work of the Trust. [Trustee 1]

Some Trusts differentiate between two pillars of the Trusteeship function: the educational enterprise (to uphold the characteristic spirit of the schools that they manage) and property. The work of Trustees involves a number of different aspects. In addition to ethos development, they are also responsible for policy and consultation, strategic issues, change of status of schools, appointments, school accountability, school policies, school effectiveness, communication and training.

We appoint the boards of management so therefore that's a critical one. We devolve all responsibility for governance to them but it doesn't absolve us from our responsibility and our responsibility is to ensure that there is training for the boards of management, which we offer in conjunction with the partners in education, which is the Joint Managerial Body, sometimes with the inspectorate, sometimes with the Educational Welfare Officer in terms of pastoral care or various elements of regulation that have to be brought into place. [Trustee 1]

The members of the Education Trust Companies have an "...active engagement in terms of conference, days for chairpersons, presence in the school at celebratory events and school visits to the schools the first time a new Board of management meets" [Trustee 1]. Other functions involve the management of finance and property under their care.

Part of our responsibility is around the use of the school /.../ if a school wishes to lease out its own, a classroom or part of the building for use in the group, they have to receive Trustee permission, you know, so there are sort of, even on the operational side of things at times they need to come to us to ensure that what they're doing is in keeping with what we're happy with because when it comes down to it we own the premises /.../ all the grants, emergency grants, summer works schemes, building grants and so on, all that have to receive our permission, which requires us to go through the documentation that we receive, contact the schools, maybe take advice from engineers, whatever it is, to ensure that all that is happening is for the benefit of the school and the locality and so on. [Trustee 7]

The work by members of Education Trust Companies is often carried out in a voluntary capacity, taking up a considerable amount of time of the people involved: "The responsibilities and obligations of Directors of the Trust are quite onerous and they require the organisation to actually fulfil the demands of legislation" [Trustee 9]. The Directors are generally retired individuals who carry out their functions as pro bono work.

Overlapping of responsibilities with boards of management (see Chapter 3) was discussed by some interviewees noting that there are ‘grey areas’ [Trustee 3], but that the Trustees try and avoid ‘micro-managing’ schools [Trustee 1] as the day-to-day running of the school is the responsibility of boards of management. While the boards of management and Trustees share the same concerns, the role of the former was perceived to be more direct:

We share the concerns that a board would share about, say, for example, promoting the ethos or indeed about the financial situation of the school or about the state of the property of the school building. But our role in relation to those would be if you like further removed; theirs would be more hands on. [Trustee 6]

While the Trustees generally agreed that their functions did not overlap to any great extent with the boards in schools, some confusion seemed to exist with regard to the role of Trust Boards “...because people can come to the board with different interests and different amounts of knowledge” [Trustee 3], but any uncertainties are generally resolved at the meetings of Trust Board and its members: “...we’re going away for a two day think in, get together to clarify all of these areas and to clarify what is our role and how it can fulfil it better /.../ we’re also working on the strategic plan but I would say that we’ve developed a very clear vision as to what we want to do” [Trustee 3].

Some overlap between the activities of Trusts and the Joint Managerial Body (JMB) was also commented on: *there is an overlap between what we do and they do and it appeared to me that there was a bit of, a bit of a turf war at times, we trying to do this and they, JMB, trying to do this and, I will say now, resources are so scarce, we’re committed to meeting with JMB and saying what is it that you do and do well, this is what we do well/.../ That hasn’t been done and I would think it would make perfect sense that we would do that* [Trustee 3] (See Chapter 3 for JMB duties). Trustee 8 noted that identifying the roles and responsibilities of the various organisations is important to establish what services are already provided:

So the question is, you know, are the provision of those services, you know, unique to the JMB or is there, is that model working adequately for the schools and therefore the role of the trustee narrows to just into, you know, the aspect of board appointments, representation in the school and authorization of various, you know, capital programmes and such matters. [Trustee 8]

Duplication of activities and potential for revising responsibilities of different groups in the light of limited resources was also pointed out by one education stakeholder who favoured giving more responsibility for supporting schools to the JMB and newly-established Education and Training boards:

It seems to me that it has emerged now there's a level of duplication or whatever that's potentially going to go on here in terms of that, that the Trusts are doing things which could arguably be done in a better way. /.../ We would prefer to be, to be shoring up and, and, and supporting the JMB in a stronger way if there was a compelling argument that they needed to be done so with the absence of the religious orders who might have voluntarily provided support. Rather than replicating a whole lot of different tiers of it across the system, so the issue of the Education and Training Boards as to whether they can be supplying certain services. [Education Stakeholder 2]

In-service training of school principals was one of the areas highlighted by the interviewee that could be taken over by the JMB or the National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals (NAPD). In fact, as will be seen in Chapter 5, these (along with other) organisations currently provide training for principals and chairs of boards of management.

4.2.2 Financial Challenges Facing Patrons/Trustees and Education Trust Companies

The financing of work undertaken by the independent Education Trust Companies has been a challenge, particularly in the current economic climate that has seen many cutbacks in the education sector. The money necessary to run the Education Trust function originates from 'seed funding' from religious orders that originally set up the school.

When the congregations got together they obviously addressed that issue very significantly and they invested, each congregation invested a certain amount of money depending on their circumstances, the number of schools etc. so there was kind of a formula agreed and worked out. [Trustee 6]

[The Trusts are] funded completely by the congregations, they're not funded by the Episcopal conference and they're not funded by parishes or dioceses, they're funded by the congregations themselves. [Trustee 1]

This money was invested to ensure the continuation of funding of Education Trust activities and the running of Education Offices. While the Trustee work in the Offices was previously provided on a voluntary basis, in recent times the fall in the number of religious has meant that they have now been replaced by paid personnel. Furthermore, there has been a sharp decline in the value of property investments held by companies or religious orders. Funding challenges were identified by all Education Trust representatives as a major concern.

Education Trusts] do not have any golden bucket or bottomless pit of money. They did have a lot when they were set up, on paper they were worth an awful lot but now that figure on paper is very little. [Trustee 3]

The congregations' investments were not realizing the deposit interest; properties were not going to be sold as readily as had been planned. [Trustee 1]

Some Education Trusts also receive money from the licence fees in schools, funding from the province,⁴⁸ and, in some cases, the pensions of religious personnel previously involved in schools. The interviewees were aware of the implications for their schools if they were to replace current employees with professionals holding full-time positions:

Our funding comes mainly from the license fees in the schools, but there's also partial funding from the province, from XXX province and likewise there are some of us working here who are actually in receipt of pensions from the Department of Education, and while we are receiving money, the province is receiving money for the service that we give; if we were to be replaced by professionals in full-time employment fulfilling the kind of role that is being fulfilled by XXX, it would have huge implications into the future. Our finance person is constantly reminding us of that. [Trustee 2, group interview]

If we had no money to maintain the system, the service, the services we provide would fold but somebody else would provide them and that other provider would probably have to be paid for services anyway. [Trustee 9]

When in the past the members of religious orders provided their services free of charge, now in the face of the diminishing number of such individuals, some staff have had to be hired in order to facilitate the work of the Educational Trust Body, incurring additional costs. Research conducted for the current study suggests that the cost of running an Educational Trust Body varies depending on the number of schools owned by the religious body represented by the Trust:

The cost of Trusteeship, it is substantial 1.3 million, you know, it's significant money.

There is still a significant cost to Trusteeship. [Trustee 1]

Half a million euro a year to run [XXX] office. [Trustee 10]

A hundred and fifty grand a year. [Trustee 12]

The expenses incurred include mostly personnel-related costs, but also other financial outlays:

A day for principals, our conference and the AGM of the company, we provide funding to some schools for work with chaplaincy and that I'm employed there as well. [Trustee 12]

⁴⁸ The province here refers to religious congregation.

An executive of approximately ten people and they're all paid and they have a remit and they have work to do and they visit schools and they work from the office and that. There's a Board of Trust which is voluntary, and they would be I think at the moment forty people on that. [Trustee 3]

A lot of the events that are organised for the schools, like the network day and so on, the Trust will put a subvention into those, now the schools will contribute a certain amount but they never pay the full amount as far as I'm aware. There's always an amount paid from the Trust finances for that promotion of that strong network that we have, principals meeting. [Trustee 2]

To respond to the financial challenges, many congregations have joined forces in order to govern their schools:

The congregations have pooled their resources collectively... have signed over legally property and monies /.../ Where it's either in the people or your overheads, so we have [reduced] our overheads now and we have really [reduced the number of] our people' [Trustee 1].

In addition to reducing spending, where possible, other scenarios, such as amalgamation and selling of property, have also been considered. However, these attempts have been hampered by the current economic climate:

Amalgamate two schools and sell off one of the schools and that would give you money for the thing, but the flaw in that argument is, is that there is going, like a) the property [prices are] gone, you know, through the floor and b) who is going to buy a school. [Trustee 10]

Empty school buildings place an additional financial burden on the Trustees who have to pay for security to ensure these buildings remain intact [Trustee 1].

Trustee 1 also noted that the Education Trust has rationalised their Education Offices (the Trust caters for a number of schools in the country): "there would have been regional education offices, ten of them, and now there's just one, which is us, the Trust itself".

The functioning of the Trust and maintaining its funding is influenced by the people on the Trust Board:

Our Board has been, has operated very well, has managed the resources extraordinarily well and has managed to by prudent foresight to stretch the envelope of money that we started off with, which would have it run out in [time]. [Trustee 5]

In order to ensure efficiency, the Trusts are now appointing people with a specific set of skills to be members of the Education Trust Board, which was not the case in the past:

I think at an early stage they didn't do that and we were devoid and we were scarce and really of some skills and we have now been looking at skill sets that we have and the skill sets that we need and I think that would be majorly (important) in the recent people that have been appointed, the certain skill set they have. [Trustee 3]

Another measure that is currently considered by the Education Trusts is avoiding duplication of services provided by Education Trust Companies and other organisations.

One of the things the [name of ET] group were very conscious of was not to duplicate services so if the JMB is providing a service, like for example the training of boards of management, then we wouldn't do it without doing it alongside them. [Trustee 6]

Being funded by congregations, the Trusts have a high degree of autonomy in their work, although some direction is provided by the Bishops:

Complete autonomy because they're funded completely by the congregations, they're not funded by the Episcopal conference and they're not funded by parishes or dioceses, they're funded by the congregations themselves, but there are some core fundamentals outside of funding that are required by Rome through the bishops and that is that schools observe a minimum of religious instruction a week. [Trustee 1]

Voluntary secondary schools receive a licence fee from the schools:

The schools do pay us; second-level schools pay a licence fee to ourselves as Trustees. The purpose of the licence fee is that they run a school in our premises so that really is where the licence fee came from. [Trustee 7]

One Education Trust is currently considering a differentiated licence fee, whereby schools from wealthier areas would pay higher licence fees compared to schools in disadvantaged areas. The survey of second-level school principals conducted for the current study showed that voluntary secondary schools generally pay a licence fee to the relevant Trust or patron body. The amounts vary across schools: 21 per cent pay €1-3 per student; 34 per cent pay €4-5 per student and 45 per cent pay more than €6 per student.

The Trustee representatives generally felt that the same amount of work needs to be done with less people, at the same time complying with legislation:

Same structure but less resources, there were shall we say eight people visiting schools, now there are four people doing the work of eight, in faith formation and also, providing services to the school in relation to corporate compliance, whatever and that's all being done now by four people. There's one person less in finance, there are two people now, one finance officer and I think there were two secretaries and now there's one so it, the whole structuring of that and some people's contracts were not renewed so we had to be very careful, complying with all the legislation. [Trustee 3]

While considering various options for future funding, some interviewees felt that becoming fee-paying schools is not an option for them as it contradicts their founding intentions:

I would hate to think that we would have a situation where a faith based school was a fee paying school because it would absolutely contradict the founding intentions. /.../ I would have a real reservation if there was that absolute segregation because in the absence of funding probably a lot of our schools would close. [Trustee 1]

4.2.3 Funding of the Trustee Function – A Case Study

In order to gauge the resource implications of the Trustee function, a case study based on the activities of two Trusts was undertaken with a view to estimating the average operating costs in 2013. The analysis indicated that staff and employee related costs made up 68 per cent of the current spending. The rest (32 per cent) was spent on various other activities, including the running costs of the Trustee Office. The estimated cost was €1,150,000 to cater for 46,000 students (in other words, €25 per student or €10,952 per school). A more detailed breakdown is shown in Table 4.1.

TABLE 4.1 Estimated Costs for 2013 (€000s)

	Governance Finance & Properties Costs (€000s)	Ethos Costs	Average Cost of Trustees	%
Staff & Employee Related Costs	684	93	777	68
Legal & Professional Fees & Audit Fees	101	5	106	9
Programme Costs	68	35	103	9
Office & General running costs	81	8	89	8
Communications	41	20	61	5
Insurance	5	0	5	0
Board Expenses	10	1	11	1
Total Costs €000s	988	162	1,150	100

Source: Figures based on audit data from two Education Trusts.

Note: The figures are subject to rounding so the totals may differ from the sums of the columns.

In addition, members of Education Trusts are involved in a number of voluntary activities.

4.2.4 Future Scenarios

Difficulties around the funding of Education Trust functions have created a lively debate on future sustainability. The interviewees suggested different options that could be considered for the future. All Trustee representatives and some education stakeholders suggested that some form of state funding should be available for Education Trust bodies to assist them with the running of their Patronage function. Two education stakeholders noted that as the role of the patron is clearly defined in Irish legislation, some funding should be allocated to run the patronage/trusteeship function:

I think there's an extraordinary strong case to make for some rebalancing of funding /.../ some level of funding; even if it's limited of the patronage function of those schools is absolutely undeniable. There's no legal or moral ground that anyone could make or say no, because there are parents who want it. Not because those entities have rights, but because the parents of the pupils in those schools have rights and the right to a properly structured patronage system because the system is patronage driven. But there is a trustee role, a patron role defined by the Education Act and that needs some level of funding and those schools have a right, even if it's to a limited level of funding. [Education stakeholders 4 and 5]

However, Educational Stakeholder 2 argued that there is no case for state funding for the Education Trustee Companies as “the orders didn’t get any funding” and that it was made clear from the outset that these Companies ‘could not count on any particular funding’ from the government.

It was generally felt that although Trusts are a relatively new phenomenon, ‘hardly bedded down yet’ [Trustee 2], the landscape of Trusteeship will look different in five years’ time, with possibly fewer Education Trusts. This, however, depends on the extent to which different Trusts are willing to collaborate: ‘I imagine there will be less Trusts, if there’s more trust. If the different Trusts can come together’ [Trustee 3]. Established religious orders have a strong identity and are seen to be resistant to joining a general representative body: *it’s a branding thing but it’s, it’s also part of a genuine sincerely felt commitment to something distinct. When you move into a kind of a general trust body or tacit body, it becomes too amorphous, and I think that’s part of the actual experience of, of people in trust bodies* [Trustee 4].

From a pragmatic point of view there probably are, however I suppose at an individual school level there's a huge tradition usually within that community of an association with the De La Salle order or the Holy Faith Sisters or whoever and that's historical and cultural probably for the, for that individual place. So it's very hard to come in and say sorry, we're bringing in an overseer for all of these, you can go ahead now and go away kind of thing. [Education Stakeholder 1]

Stakeholder 1 also commented on the Department's perceived preference of dealing with one representative body:

Now the difficulties from the department's point of view are dealing with multiple patrons, you know and that's certainly an issue for them because it just makes things very complicated./.../ for example we contacted some of our schools' trustees to say you know, let's say we're running the NTF, the National Trustee Forum conference and we, we find out well who's the patron, and you write to the religious order and it's normally the provincial of the religious order. But then this order says now we don't have provincials any more, we're all equal. And you're saying well who am I writing to here and who is the actual legal entity. [Education Stakeholder 1]

One Trustee representative, however, envisages in time only one trustee body for all Catholic voluntary secondary schools. Other thoughts expressed by the interviewees included divesting ownership of the buildings to the state but retaining a licence to remain a Trustee for the schools; a confederation of Trustees representing interests of different religious orders; and shared responsibilities with other organisations such as the JMB (contracts, allocations, staff employment and FSSU (finances). Some interviewees felt that the Education Trustee bodies could be modelled in a similar way to the VECs that would be funded by the state.

There could be a model of Trusteeship in the voluntary secondary sector somewhat along the lines of the VEC sector, funded comparatively, comparably, and that would, you know, that would answer and assuage concerns around the funding of ethos. But it would mean the Trusts taking on a much greater role. [Trustee 7]

The majority of interviewees felt that at present there are too many Education Trustee bodies and that going into the future it is necessary to rationalise the resources and clearly define the roles of different organisations.

There is a proliferation of services there with the JMB, the AFCSS, the CDSMA, the management groups and so on, and all the Trust groups. Someone needs to sit down and say well hold on a second folks, what do we actually need here in terms of Trustee and management and maybe there needs to be maybe two Trust groups, rather than all that exist at the moment. [Trustee 7]

If you want to get near what is the future going to look like I believe that we won't have ten or eleven Trusts. I think we'll have one single Catholic Trust. [Trustee 10]

According to Education Stakeholder 2, “what public policy is driving us now is to aggregate, to try and even pull the whole education sector closer together in common procurement”. The interviewee alluded to the perceived separateness within the voluntary secondary school sector that values their tradition and origin. Greater collaboration between different religious orders was recommended in maintaining Catholic education.

It would be a no brainer probably that if two Catholic schools were wanting to merge and, and they clearly had a proposal for it to be a voluntary Catholic school, that that would happen but what I’m saying is there isn’t a dynamic in the sector to even start to look at those. [Education Stakeholder 2]

The interviewee acknowledged that:

Unquestionably there’s going to be a demand for Catholic secondary education, second level education provision on-going, right. And it’s going to be the choice of parents for all the diverse reasons that parents exercise choice. Perception that it’s, they’re good schools and all of that type of thing comes into it as well, following tradition, I went there, I want my daughter to go. [Education Stakeholder 2]

4.3 SUMMARY

In recent years several religious orders have set up Education Trusts and transferred the governance of schools to these Trusts. This is a relatively recent phenomenon and not all orders have decided to follow this practice. The size of the Trusts also differs – while some cater for a substantial number of schools, others have a much smaller number of schools under their patronage. The work undertaken by Education Trust bodies is mostly voluntary, although seed money provided by the religious orders has provided some funding for running the Trustee function. Some limited funding is received from school licence fees, religious congregations and pensions of the religious personnel. However, the current economic climate has made it increasingly difficult for these organisations to maintain their function into the future and new models are seen as necessary to ensure the viability of voluntary secondary schools. In response to this situation, the current Trust bodies are considering new models of operation to continue to provide a service to the schools under their care and ensure upholding the characteristic spirit of these schools. It is generally felt that closer collaboration between Education Trusts and other organisations is needed, as well as identification of the clear roles of Trusts in relation to other organisations to avoid duplication of services. While the idea of coming under a single Catholic Trust body has been viewed with caution, it is generally felt that in future the number of Education Trust bodies will be reduced.

Chapter 5

School Governance

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 3 provided an overview of the structure and governance of the second-level sector in Ireland. This chapter explores information provided by second-level school principals, chairpersons of boards of management and key stakeholders with regard to school governance in the three types of schools: voluntary secondary, vocational and community/comprehensive schools. It discusses issues such as school choice and student intake; the characteristic spirit or school ethos; school policies, procedures and management, highlighting differences within schools and across the different types of second-level schools. The following section of the chapter provides an overview of profile of these schools. Section 3 focuses on school choice and school admission policies while Section 4 discusses school ethos and characteristic spirit. Section 5 focuses on school governance and Section 6 on the role and responsibilities of chairpersons of boards of management. Section 7 discusses the role and responsibilities of Trustees while the final section provides a summary and concludes the chapter.

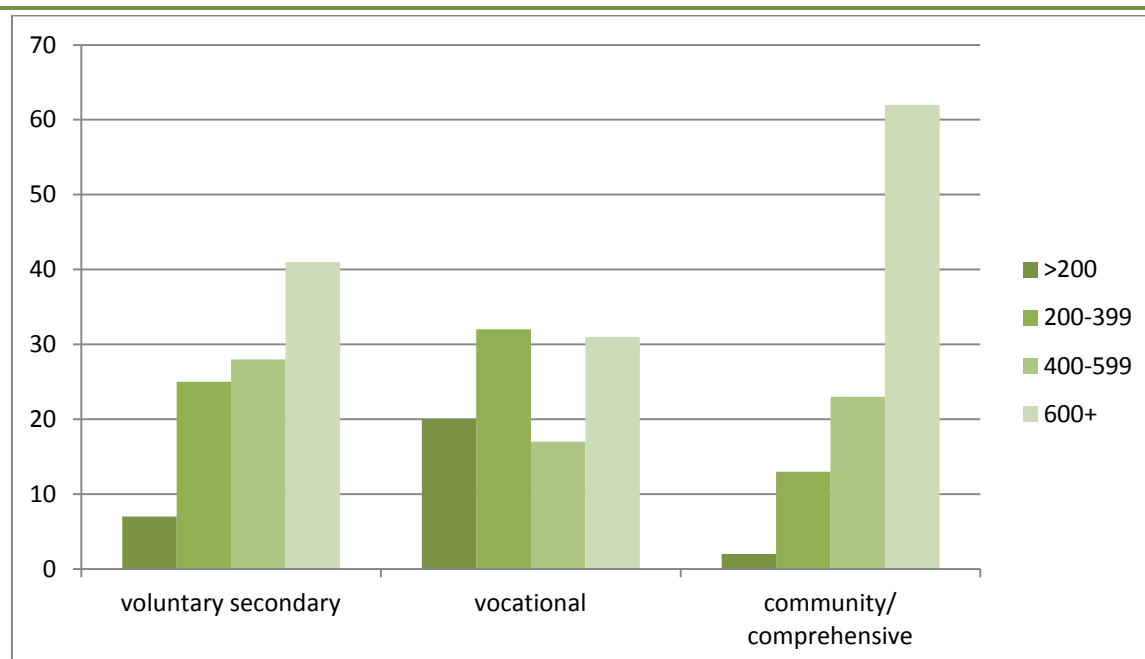
5.2 PROFILE OF SECOND-LEVEL SCHOOLS

This section outlines the main dimensions of differentiation among second-level schools in order to contextualise the findings presented in the following sections of this chapter. As discussed in Chapter 3, the three types of second-level schools, voluntary secondary, vocational and community/comprehensive, have a common curriculum and assessment framework but differ in their management and funding structures. According to previous studies (see Smyth *et al.*, 2004), the three types have also been found to differ in their student intake with more middle-class students over-represented in voluntary secondary schools.

The size of second-level schools varies in Ireland, with some schools having a relatively modest student intake whereas others have over a thousand students among their student body. Based on the survey of all second-level school principals, Figure 5.1 presents an overview of school size across the three types of

second-level schools. The three sectors vary significantly in size,⁴⁹ with vocational schools generally smaller in size (20 per cent have a student population of less than 200) compared with 7 per cent of voluntary secondary schools and 2 per cent of community/comprehensive schools. The community/comprehensive sector is more likely to have larger schools (that is, with 600 or more students) (62 per cent) compared to vocational (31 per cent) and voluntary secondary schools (41 per cent).

FIGURE 5.1 School Population Size by Sector (% of schools)



Source: Survey of second-level school principals; (p<.000).

5.3 SCHOOL CHOICE AND ADMISSION POLICIES

As discussed in Chapter 1 of this report, school choice has been the subject of numerous international studies. Taken together, these studies demonstrate the complexity of the process, with a number of factors found to impact on choice processes. These include family background but also location of the school and its reputation and ethos. The interaction of parental choice and school admission policies is likely to shape enrolment patterns. Interviews with stakeholders revealed the complex and multifaceted process of school choice:

And it's going to be the choice of parents for all the diverse reasons that parents exercise choice. Perception that it's, they're good schools and /.../ following tradition, I went there, I want my daughter to go. [Educational Stakeholder 2]

⁴⁹ In order to test the relationship between the variables, a Person's chi square test of significance was used. A significance level of p<.001 means that the likelihood is less than one in a thousand that this relationship would occur by chance.

Factors other than being a Catholic school often informed parental choice. Several stakeholders felt that the perceived reputation of a school is often the main factor informing the choice parents make. Additional factors mentioned included being a local school, perceived quality of teaching in the school, good discipline and a good range of extra-curricular activities:

I would have a strong belief parents choose the schools where people get the best education, I would have no evidence in my travels in education that people are saying I'm sending my child to school because it's a Catholic education, that would be, I'd hear more about that from the states and from England and other countries but not in Ireland, that people tend to send their children to where they believe is the best school and the best school very often is academically [strong] and academic achievement would be [high]. [Trustee 3]

They send their children because it's local, at primary level in particular, at second-level it might be because they hear there's good results because there might be excellent teaching, they hear that there's good discipline and order in the place, that there's great extracurricular activities, that their child is into music or drama or, or games or whatever. So that, I suspect that the fact that it's a Catholic school will probably come about fifth or fourth or fifth /.../ So there's a whole range of, of factors out there, operating at the moment. [Educational Stakeholder 3]

What parents /.../ want really, they want a good school, you know, they're not overly concerned, even though the government might be or the Department of Education might be, but parents aren't overly concerned [about patronage]. [Trustee 7]

While parents are seen as wanting a 'good school' for their children, little is known about the sources of information used by parents in Ireland in assessing whether a school is 'good' or not.

The fact that no second-level school characterises themselves as secular (vocational and community/comprehensive schools are considered to be multi- or inter-denominational),⁵⁰ is perceived as an indication that some parents may still prefer schools to have a religious ethos:

You'll notice though that very few if any call themselves secular schools, /.../ nobody's prepared to say we're non-denominational, nobody's prepared to say let go of the denominational [ethos] /.../ Parents still want some denominational element, even if it is multi-denominational, that's fine for us, or inter-denominational, that's fine for us, or denominational, but don't tell us it's nondenominational and nobody's prepared to take that gamble, that's

⁵⁰ There is currently no official information available regarding the ethos of these schools with some considered to be multi-denominational while others are inter-denominational. This confusion may reflect general ambiguity about the use of these terms in Irish educational policy documents until the publication of the Intercultural Education Strategy 2010-2015: http://www.pdst.ie/sites/default/files/Intercultural_education_strategy.pdf, accessed 6 June 2013.

fascinating. I mean you look at the community national schools it's the same thing, I mean they're multid denominational. [Educational Stakeholder 3]

Trustee 9 felt that some parents still favour voluntary secondary schools, having high regard for such schools in their area:

Where the biggest battles being fought in rural Ireland are very often to get two or three children into what was called the Brothers school. So they do have a high degree of popularity throughout the community and as expressed in the wish of parents to register their children to the schools. [Trustee 9]

Parental choice between the three sectors may sometimes depend on the availability of schools in the area and their perceived reputation and educational performance. According to Trustee 9, if a local vocational school in the area is perceived to perform well, parents may opt for this school rather than seek other alternatives. Similarly, should the local school be a voluntary secondary school that has a good reputation, parents may choose to opt for this school:

A lot of parents don't necessarily know what the different patronage systems mean and a lot will depend on the kind of schools that are already in the area. So if you have a VEC school in the area and it is doing very well, you'd imagine parents will probably have a, have favouritism for that. On the other hand if there's no VEC school but there's a, a voluntary secondary school that is doing very well, the opposite might be the case or the situation where you have town where there are three schools, the Brothers, the Nuns and a vocational school and as we know, by and large what you've had is the more disadvantaged student in the VEC school where you have three in a particular town. So therefore you know, that colours the view of the VEC, even though the VEC school may be doing, you know, as well if not a lot better than the other two schools, the sense of what they're doing with the kids that come into them. Because how well a school does, certainly when you look at the Leaving Certificate and, and other results, it depends on, on your, on your, on, on, on your cohort of students. [Trustee 9]

Trustee 1 felt that in the light of the current economic climate some re-configuration of school choice is likely to take place with parents more likely to opt for local schools considering the cost involved in sending the children to schools further afield:

There was a time during the Celtic Tiger period when the local school, regardless of what ethos or whether it was faith based or otherwise, didn't necessarily enjoy the security of having its feeder schools, the primary schools, feeding directly into it within a particular radius because the parents had the wherewithal for transportation and to pay for it or themselves were driving somewhere to work and they dropped the children off. Now, in a very different climate, that local school is a very attractive option for parents /.../ I suppose the student population into the future, there is that practicality that has certainly kicked in regardless of whether a school is a VEC, faith based or otherwise, it's a practical, it saves bus

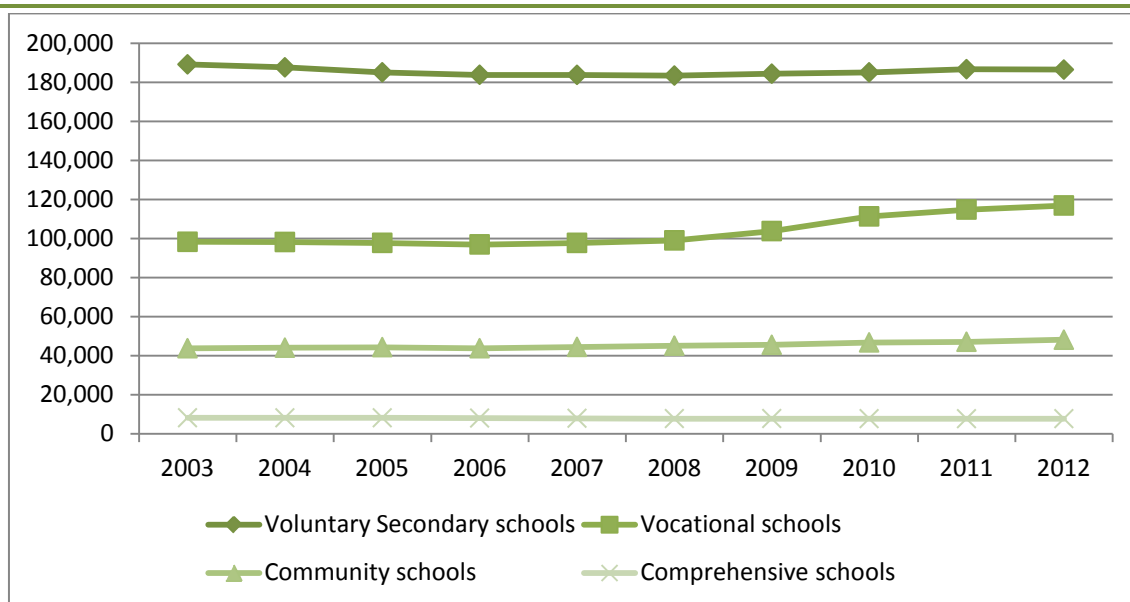
fares, three children not going on buses, not paying fees, same books that can be handed on from one student to another in the family. [Trustee 1]

A new type of second-level patron, Educate Together, emerged recently as a response to a need to provide a second-level school that would carry the same ethos that characterised Educate Together primary schools:

[...] we've had very vibrant campaigns by parents for Educate Together second-level schools, so ... there is a substantial parent base of parents who are looking for this, this approach for their children. [Trustee 11]

As part of the current study, we investigated change in student numbers in second-level schools over time. In order to provide a national context to the data collected from second-level principals in the survey, we explored the trends over time based on data available from the Department of Education and Skills (see Figure 5.2). The analysis shows that there had been a decrease in the number attending voluntary secondary schools from 2003 to 2008, with an increase thereafter. There has been a slight increase in student numbers in community schools, with the rise in student numbers most marked in vocational schools.

FIGURE 5.2 Changes in the Number of Students Attending Second-Level Schools over Time by Sector

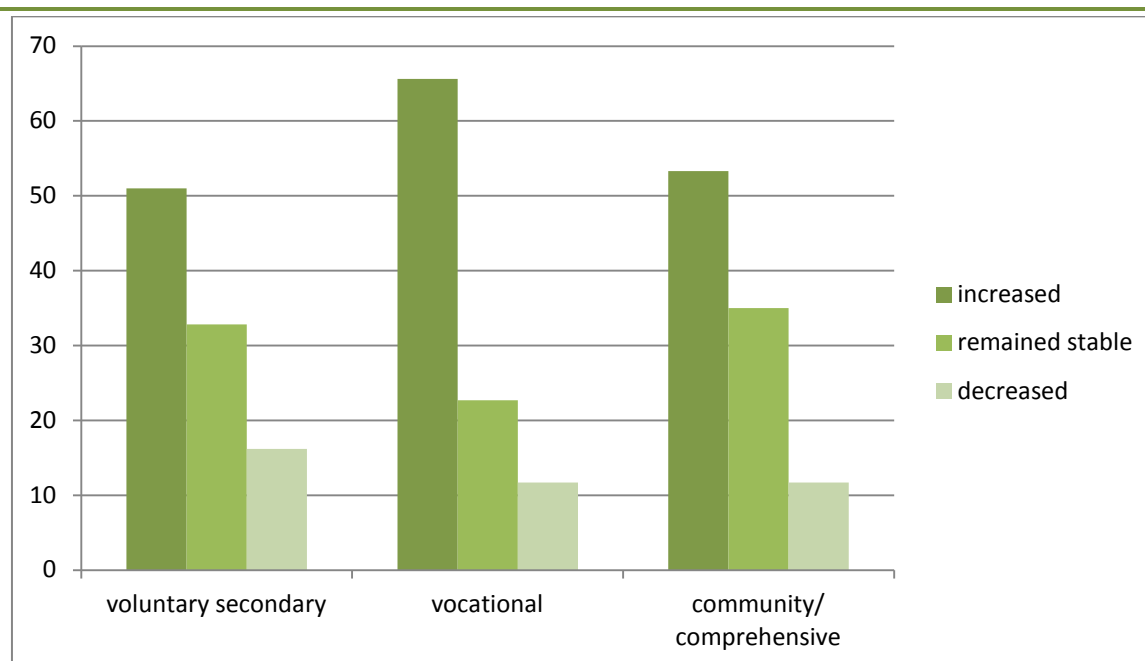


Source: DES administrative data.

Aggregate data may, however, obscure changes in numbers at the individual school level. The survey of school principals explored whether the student numbers coming to their second-level schools had changed over the last five years. We were also interested in whether there were any other local schools to

which the students might go and whether more students applied to the schools than there were places available. The analysis showed that 56 per cent of all second-level schools reported that their school intake had increased over the past five years (2009-2013), with 14 per cent reporting that the numbers had decreased and in 30 per cent of cases the number of incoming students had remained stable. The increase was most prominent among vocational schools (66 per cent), in keeping with aggregate patterns nationally.⁵¹ The corresponding figures were 51 per cent in voluntary secondary and 53 per cent in community/comprehensive schools (see Figure 5.3). Some 19 per cent of DEIS schools had experienced a fall in student numbers compared to 12 per cent in non-DEIS schools.

FIGURE 5.3 Changes in Student Intake over the Past Five Years



Source: Survey of second-level school principals.

The principals were asked to estimate whether they expected any change in the number of students coming to their school. Of all principals 49 per cent expected the student numbers to increase. There was no statistically significant difference across the sectors; 43 per cent of voluntary secondary school principals expected an increase in student numbers. The corresponding figures were 61 per cent for vocational and 40 per cent for community/comprehensive schools.

⁵¹ The increase in numbers into the vocational sector is partly due to amalgamations of denominational voluntary secondary schools into community colleges in the VEC system.

While the survey of school principals indicated that many voluntary secondary schools expect their pupil numbers to increase in the coming years, the interviews with stakeholders suggested that the overall number of such schools is slowly declining due to mergers, with no new voluntary secondary schools opened in the past decades.

In the context of the last fifteen, twenty years the landscape is such that the voluntary secondary schools have remained both static in number but they have decreased, declined really in that there has been a number of mergers and amalgamations, which has seen a reduction of the classic voluntary secondary schools then. There has been no new Catholic voluntary secondary school created in the country in the last twenty-five, twenty-six years but there has been at least twenty, thirty, VECs, community schools, in that period of time, there hasn't been one Catholic voluntary secondary school. [Trustee 1]

At the time of preparing this report, 14 new schools were scheduled to be opened under different patron bodies:

For the first time in 22 years there's a new voluntary secondary school in the Catholic tradition opening out in XXX under the Le Cheile trust and there's a Church of Ireland school for the first time probably in forty or fifty years opening in the Church of Ireland tradition in XXXs. [Trustee 10]

The fact that no new voluntary secondary school has been opened in recent decades led many stakeholders to query the rationale and procedures involved in awarding a patronage to a school.

There's no level of accountability in so far as we know as to why, what were the reasons that they decided in favour of that particular trust body. [Trustee 1]

[Community school] was the preferred model from, from the Department's point of view. [Educational Stakeholder 1]

They highlighted the lack of transparency in the past of the process involved and hoped that in future the process will be more open:

Mary Coughlan introduced a transparent process but there was a new process used for the fourteen new second-level schools where patronage was announced there in July [2013] and it was a, an open transparent process. [Educational Stakeholder 3]

Now there are new guidelines in place regarding the awarding of patronage of second-level schools and the process is going to be more transparent than it was previously. [Educational Stakeholder 7]

While some Trustees and educational stakeholders were critical of the level of transparency involved in awarding patronage, Trustee 1 felt that the situation is slowly improving under the current Minister for Education: *I think with Minister*

Quinn there has been a greater, there's an explicitness around the state's commitment very clearly to offer variety and that's a very good thing. However, a commitment to offering variety of choice to parents was not the experience of Trustee 11:

We had, I think, twelve applications for recognition of second-level schools and they were simply, the Department refused to process them and just did not process them at all. [Trustee 11]

The reluctance of the Department of Education to engage in dialogue with a number of Trustees representing different religious orders was highlighted by several interviewees representing this school sector:

The Department of Education put their foot down and they said we wouldn't allow you; we wouldn't talk to you unless you had one representative body for all the Catholic Patrons or Catholic Trustees. [Trustee 6]

Previous studies (see Darmody *et al.*, 2012, on the primary school context; Smyth *et al.*, 2004, on the second-level context) have shown that Irish schools are likely to compete for students as many schools are located within the same area. In order to explore this, the principals were asked to indicate whether there were any other local schools to which students in their school might go. Of all second-level schools 83 per cent reported having another school nearby. Of voluntary secondary schools 87 per cent reported that there was another school in the same neighbourhood. The corresponding figures were 79 per cent for vocational schools and 75 per cent of community/comprehensive schools. As might be expected, schools in small rural areas were somewhat less likely to report having another school nearby. In general, there was a variety of different school types in the local community. However, schools in rural areas were somewhat less likely to have vocational or community comprehensive schools nearby. As a significant number of these schools are located in rural areas, it is likely that there was no other such school nearby.

Interviews with stakeholders indicated that it is difficult to provide choice of schools across all regions, with some areas having one stand-alone second-level school:

I recognise that there are practicalities as well, on every crossroads in Ireland you can't have two or three types of schools standing side to side. The Forum on Patronage recognises that when it talks about the challenges for standalone schools and I think they are challenges that are there at second-level as well because we've standalone Catholic schools but we've also standalone community schools and vocational schools throughout, peppered throughout the Irish landscape and there are challenges there as a result of that but where we can provide choice, in urban centres and, and towns we should strive to provide that

choice for parents and then it's essentially up to the local schools to be able to articulate what they stand for and allow parents then to, to select where to send their children. [Educational Stakeholder 3]

In the same vein, Trustee 10 argued that a stand-alone school has to reflect the community around them and needs to cater for the needs of parents in the area:

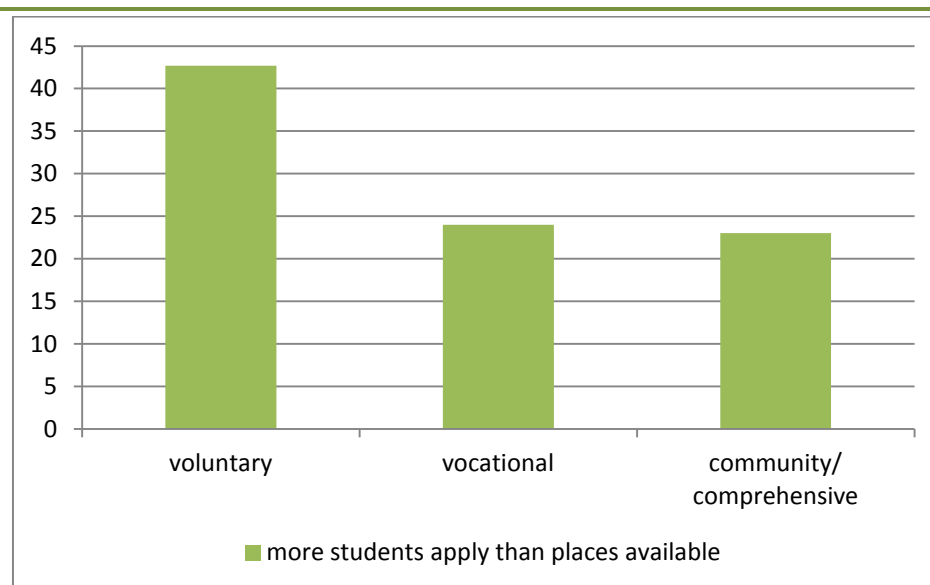
If you're in a town and it's the only school in the town well then it's going to be the school for the community, whatever you call it. So those stand alone schools have got a particular issue to face up to, how do they keep their ethos and yet be welcoming to everybody within the town. /.../ In secondary's it's only 50 per cent, we're already at half the schools are not in Catholic patronage for historical reasons. Some of them, people will argue, are de facto Catholic, like two Catholic schools became a Community school twenty years ago, that's still a Catholic school, but it's not a Catholic school as in the definition. So we would say that stand alone Catholic schools have to continue to be welcoming of people of all faiths and none. [Trustee 10]

In terms of availability of places, the analysis of the survey data showed that across all the schools, 34 per cent reported that more people apply to their school than there are places available. When this was broken down by school sectors, the figures revealed statistically significant differences between the sectors: voluntary secondary schools were most likely to report that their schools were over-subscribed (43 per cent), followed by vocational schools at 24 per cent and community/comprehensive schools at 23 per cent (see Figure 5.4). Only 11 per cent of DEIS schools reported that more students apply to come to the school than are places available compared to 42 per cent of non-DEIS schools. Some 52 per cent of large schools (600+) report having more applicants than places compared to 12 per cent of very small schools (<200). Schools in rural areas were less likely to report having more applicants than places compared to urban schools. Among oversubscribed schools, 20 per cent were fee-paying, more than double their representation in the total population of schools.

As indicated in Chapter 3, schools use a number of admission criteria for students applying for a place in their schools. In this study, principals of the schools that were oversubscribed (34 per cent of schools in our sample were oversubscribed) were asked to list the admission criteria used in their school (sometimes/often/always). Preference given to family members of current or former students was mentioned by 81 per cent of the principals; other factors included: living in a local area (64 per cent), parents' endorsement of the religious philosophy of the school (35 per cent), recommendation from feeder schools (30 per cent), students' record of academic performance (12 per cent), and entrance exams (6 per cent). Principals of oversubscribed schools also used a number of other criteria, and sometimes a combination of different factors: attending a local

feeder school, being the child of a staff member, attendance record in primary school, being a boarder, using a lottery system, attendance at Gaelscoileanna in the local area, and being on a waiting list.

FIGURE 5.4 Availability of Places in the School by Type of School



Source: Survey of second-level school principals; ($p < .000$).

As the next step, a closer look was taken at the differences and similarities between voluntary secondary, vocational and community/comprehensive schools that were oversubscribed regarding the school admission criteria used. The two most frequently employed criteria were used across all three sectors: having a sibling (or parent) who attended the school, and being from the local area. There were also some differences between the three school types, with religious ethos more frequently used as an admission criterion in voluntary secondary schools and academic performance in vocational schools (see Table 5.1).

TABLE 5.1 School Admission Criteria across all Second-Level Schools (2013)

	Voluntary Secondary %	Vocational %	Community/ Comprehensive %
Residence in local area	59	71	77
Student's record of academic performance	8	26	7
Entrance examination	6	8	0
Recommendation of feeder schools	26	41	36
Parents' endorsement of the religious philosophy of the school	46	11	14
Preference given to family members of current or former students	88	65	64

Source: Survey of second-level school principals.

Very few interviewees specifically commented on enrolment/admission policies. Trustee 12 listed among the admission criteria children of past pupils, siblings of students already attending the school and readiness to accept the Catholic ethos of the school:

Well first and foremost the school board has to have an admissions policy and in the admissions policy it has to state very clearly that we are a [name of religious order] school, like the, they are a Catholic school [...] and that we welcome all students. But first and foremost it's a Catholic school and then [...] after that then you deal with past pupils or sisters and brothers of present pupils etc. but when people apply then, they have to accept that these are the rules, this is the code of behaviour but they also accept that we're a Catholic school and if they accept that then they have to row in as much as they're able to with that. [Trustee 12]

Several respondents, however, highlighted the role of Trustees in approving the admission policies of the schools:

As part of our role under the Education Act and anyway the Trustees' function would see it, the characteristic spirit is important. That is always evident in policies like the admissions policies and the code of behaviour of a school. We do insist that all schools submit to us their admissions policies. We read them and we vet them and where we see that there are inaccuracies, inconsistencies or aspects that we don't agree with we will not agree to the publication of that admissions policy. [Trustee 7]

The Education Act gives the patron in every school a particular responsibility, one is ethos or characteristic spirit, the other is enrolment policy and the other is discipline. [Educational Stakeholders 4 and 5]

5.4 CHARACTERISTIC SPIRIT/SCHOOL ETHOS IN SECOND-LEVEL SCHOOLS

As discussed in Chapter 1, it is difficult to define the school ethos or school climate. School ethos is made up of different components including the 'mission' or 'vision' of the school, the policies and practices put in place to reflect these, and the day-to-day interaction between teachers and students. The ethos of a school or organisation emerges from individual and group interaction and is a feeling that permeates every aspect of the school environment. Ethos then is not that which is formally stated or documented but is a process of social interaction; it is not independent from the organisation but inherently bound up with it (Donnelly, 2000). Existing research has highlighted the association of school climate or ethos with positive student outcomes (Putnam, 2001) and its impact on various school processes (Monahan, 2000).

One measure of school ethos is students' engagement with, and behaviour in, the school. As a first step, principals were asked to indicate their opinions of students in their school across a range of dimensions: students enjoy being at school; are

well-behaved in class; show respect for their teachers; are rewarding to work with; and are well-behaved during break times. Overall the responses were very positive across the different dimensions (see Figure 5.5). The principals reported that the majority of students in the school enjoy being at school, are well-behaved in class, show respect for their teachers, are rewarding to work with and are well-behaved during break-times.

Next, the responses were broken down by school type (see Table 5.2). Voluntary secondary schools were somewhat more likely to report that the statements were true of nearly all students in their school compared to vocational and community/comprehensive schools, although the differences are not statistically significant. DEIS schools reported that 'students enjoy being at school' was 'true of nearly all' in 74 per cent of the schools, compared to 92 per cent in non-DEIS schools.

FIGURE 5.5 Principals' Views on Students in their School (true of nearly all)



Source: Survey of second-level school principals.

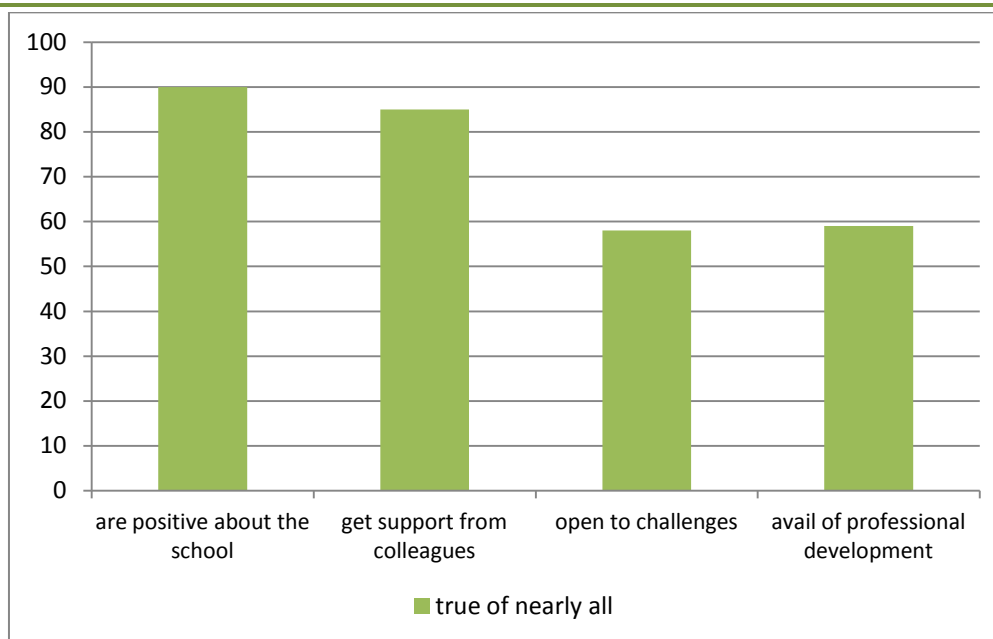
TABLE 5.2 Principals' Views on Students in their School (true of nearly all)

	Voluntary Secondary %	Vocational %	Community/ Comprehensive %
Enjoy being at school	90	82	82
Are well-behaved in class	90	81	84
Show respect for their teachers	92	86	84
Are rewarding to work with	86	79	82
Are well-behaved during break times	88	80	82

Source: Survey of second-level school principals.

The ethos of a school and a classroom is also influenced by the work of teachers. In order to explore this aspect, the principals were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with various statements about teachers in their school: teachers are positive about the school; teachers get a lot of help and support from colleagues; teachers are open to new developments and challenges; and teachers are eager to take part in professional development (see Figure 5.6). The analysis shows that across all schools the principals found the teachers in their school to be positive about the school (90 per cent 'true of nearly all') and getting a lot of help and support from colleagues (85 per cent). Teachers were found to be somewhat less open to new developments and challenges (58 per cent) and eager to take part in professional development (59 per cent).

FIGURE 5.6 Principals' Views on Teachers in their School (true of nearly all)



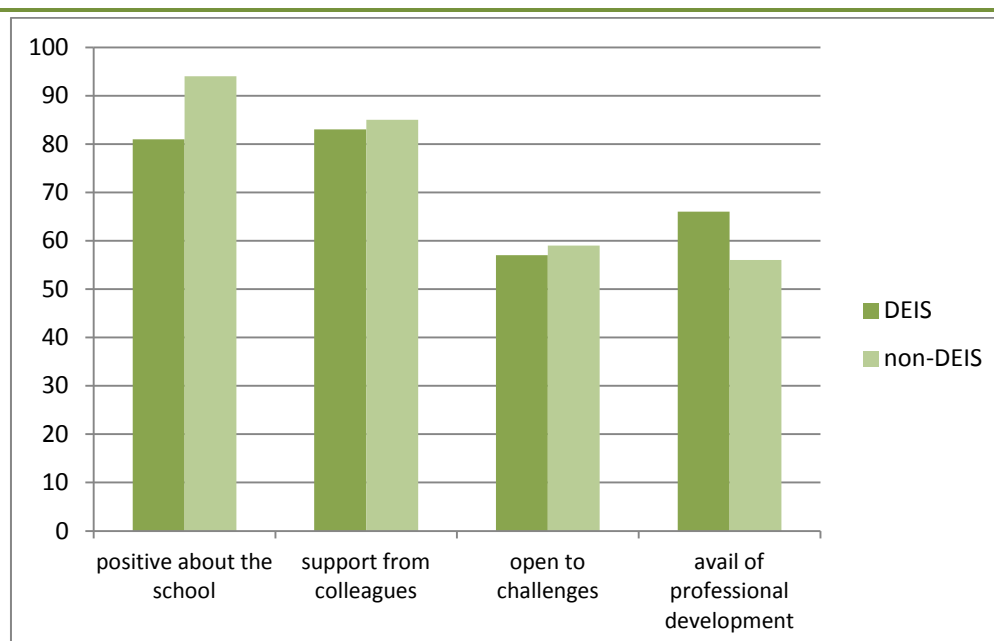
Source: Survey of second-level school principals.

As a next step, the responses of school principals were broken down by school type (see Table 5.2). There was no statistically significant variation between the three sectors regarding the various dimensions indicated in Table 5.3. Voluntary secondary schools were somewhat less likely than the other school types to report that the statement 'teachers are open to new developments and challenges' was 'true of nearly all' teachers in their school. There was some difference across the dimensions between DEIS and non-DEIS schools (see Figure 5.7): most teachers are positive about the school (81 per cent DEIS; 94 per cent non-DEIS); get support from colleagues (respective figures 83 per cent and 85 per cent); are open to new developments and challenges (respective figures 57 per cent and 59 per cent) and teachers are eager to take part in professional development (respective figures 66 per cent and 56 per cent).

TABLE 5.3 Principals' Views on Teachers in their School (true of nearly all)

	Voluntary Secondary %	Vocational %	Community/ Comprehensive %
Teachers are positive about the school	92	87	92
Teachers get a lot of help and support from colleagues	85	84	84
Teachers are open to new developments and challenges	54	66	56
Teachers are eager to take part in professional development	55	67	53

Source: Survey of second-level school principals.

FIGURE 5.7 Principals' Views on Teachers in their School by DEIS Status (true of nearly all)

Source: Survey of second-level school principals.

A further measure of school ethos may be its denominational, multi-denominational or secular character. Chapter 3 gave a detailed overview of the historical development of the Irish second-level sector. Denominational schools (Catholic and Protestant) form an important part of this sector, along with vocational and community/comprehensive schools that are generally considered to be multi-denominational.⁵² All three types of schools are currently undergoing a change reflecting broader changes in terms of greater societal plurality. Exploring the ethos of Catholic schools, Skelly (2012) argues that, in a changing

⁵² However, there is currently no consensus on the ethos of these schools with both 'multi-denominational' and 'inter-denominational' used when referring to these schools. The report by IHRC (2011) recommends that these terms should be clearly defined in Irish legislation (p. 104).

context, a Catholic educational ethos is no longer an unquestioned element of school culture.

In order to gain better insight into the ethos or characteristic spirit in Irish schools, the principals were asked through open-ended questions how they would describe the ethos of their school and in what concrete ways their school seeks to develop or maintain its ethos or philosophy. From an international perspective, the concept of school ethos is a contested one, given its multifaceted nature (Furlong, 2000). Many principals had clearly noted that their school maintains a religious ethos, either Catholic or minority faith, e.g., *A Carmelite school in the Catholic and Christian ethos*. However, for many, school ethos or characteristic spirit is a much broader concept, in line with the international literature. The principals described their school as a safe environment for the students, all inclusive, holistic and supportive. Many Catholic schools elaborated on their ethos describing it as [a] *pupil is encouraged to develop and reach their full potential in an atmosphere that fosters self respect and self confidence; open and inclusive schools striving towards integrated development of all members of the school community guided by Catholic values*. Many multi-denominational and denominational schools shared the same general principles with regard to providing a caring and supportive environment for the students and providing them with a good education.

The interviews with stakeholders further explored the issue of characteristic spirit or school ethos. Catholic schools were defined as the *...schools originated from the teachings of Jesus Christ* [Trustee 7]; *Well first of all they're Catholic in nature, that's fundamentally in common with other Catholic voluntary secondary schools* [Trustee 2].

Trustee 7 referred to the multi-dimensional aspect of school ethos whereby a Catholic school could also be an all-Irish school:

They don't just represent just our charter, they can adopt something else, it may be the Irish language that they value /.../ But we try and get our schools to sort of have a common spirit around the charter of the Trust. [Trustee 7]

It is important to note that Catholic schools are not a homogenous group. Speaking of the characteristic spirit of their school, the Trustees of Catholic voluntary secondary schools commented on how their schools differ from that of other Catholic schools in offering a 'particular flavour' to the schools belonging to a specific religious order:

We believe that each patron brings a particular flavour to the exercise of its patronage and in our case our characteristic spirit, ethos would be based on the principles or values of our, our own founders going back to four hundred years ago /.../ I think ethos is a very difficult thing to talk about or to express maybe in words, but I think you'd be under no doubt if you were to visit different XXX schools /.../ I think it's very, very easy to pick up the distinctive character of those schools when you go into them, there are certain things in common. For example, justice and peace education would be part, a very, very strong part of the agenda. Student leadership, I mean obviously in different schools it finds expression in different ways and you might find that some aspects are stronger than others in different schools, but in general, these things are given priority and that comes from the philosophy, it comes from you know, the founding intention way back when. [Trustee 2]

However, Educational Stakeholder 7 felt that while the 'particular flavour' is important to the Trustees, it may not be so evident to an ordinary member of staff in the school:

We talk about Mercy school or we talk about Loreto Schools or we talk about Dominican schools, I see it more as a branding/.../ I know that the trustees of those schools believe passionately that they have but I think if you talk to the ordinary member of staff you'd probably find that they don't see it necessarily /.../ you'd see iconography around the place, if you attended the religious services of the celebrations they would be particular /.../, but on a day to day basis I'd say schools by and large tend to look after the kids that are put in their care. [Educational Stakeholder 7]

The interviewee argued that schools from different sectors do not necessarily differ much with regard to their characteristic spirit; that the aim is first and foremost to cater for the needs of students in individual schools:

Having taught in the three different systems, I, I don't see this massive difference at all, you know. Well I mean you know, we've the same teachers, they've come from the same training colleges, a lot depends on the students you're getting in to your schools, you know, whether you are getting a fair number of marginalised or kids that have learning difficulties, or you're getting the high flyers academically, you know. You know the kind of focus that your school might take on, right. So the schools to a very significant degree adjust to cater to the felt needs of their students. [Educational Stakeholder 7]

In an open question in the survey, the school principals were asked to describe in what concrete ways their schools seek to develop or maintain its ethos or philosophy. The responses demonstrated that the schools maintain their ethos in a number of ways. Most respondents highlighted an inclusive and caring approach adopted in their schools for all students. Denominational schools celebrate the main events of the Church as well as employing a Chaplain who attends assemblies and is available for all the students when needed.

Denominational schools also organise daily prayers and exhibit iconography; some have constructed a prayer room within the school. These schools also hold regular liturgies and prayer services, students participate in local parish youth choirs, retreats are organised for all students and religious education is studied as a core subject but not necessarily for examination. Many principals highlighted the importance of the pastoral care system in their school. The denominational schools considered religious education an important element in upholding their ethos.

Vocational schools described upholding their characteristic spirit through an open enrolment policy and an inclusive approach to all applicants; in collaboration with parents creating an environment where everybody is valued; promoting respect for self and others; providing pastoral care, guidance and counselling; focusing on the needs of students and supporting staff in the school; celebrating success and achievement and providing a good range of subjects.

Community schools mentioned open enrolment policy; no streaming; recognising students' needs and supporting them; providing liturgical services and Mass; promoting positive interpersonal relationships at school; organising carol services at Christmas; providing pastoral care; providing Christian values and spiritual education; providing daily tutorials, assemblies and meditation for all classes.

To further gauge the issues of school ethos and characteristic spirit, the principals were also asked about the importance that their schools place on various educational goals. From the eight goals: building basic literacy skills (reading, math, writing, speaking); encouraging academic excellence; promoting good work habits and self-discipline; promoting personal growth (self-esteem, self-knowledge, etc.); promoting social skills; promoting specific moral values; promoting multicultural awareness or understanding; and fostering religious or spiritual development the principals were asked to select which they consider most important (see Table 5.4).

TABLE 5.4 Principals' Views on Educational Goals

	1 st %	2 nd %	3 rd %
Building basic literacy skills (reading, math, writing, speaking)	40	11	9
Encouraging academic excellence	25	35	15
Promoting good work habits and self-discipline	5	19	32
Promoting personal growth (self-esteem, self-knowledge, etc.)	26	21	16
Promoting social skills	0.7	4	6
Promoting specific moral values	0.6	4	7
Promoting multicultural awareness or understanding	0.0	2	4
Fostering religious or spiritual development	2	5	11

Source: Survey of second-level school principals.

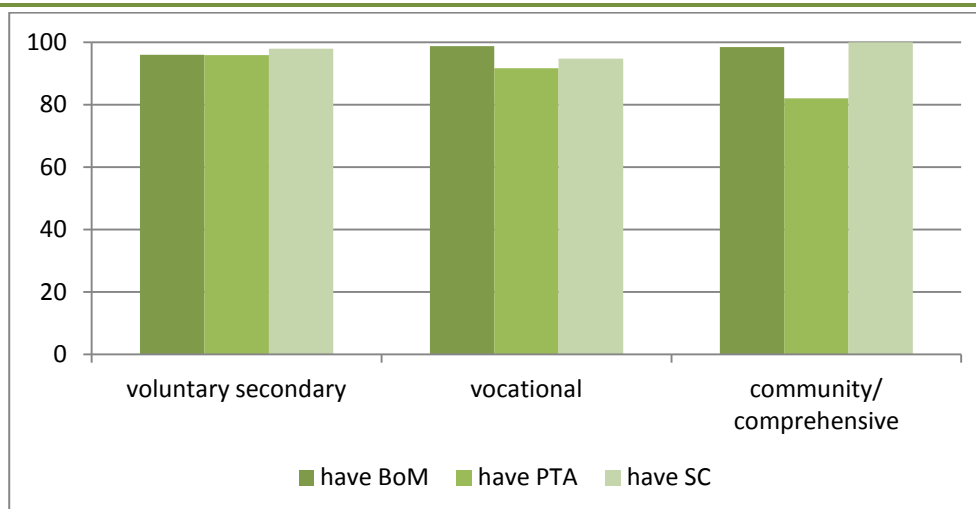
Note: The figures do not add up to 100% due to rounding.

School ethos may also be linked with the educational goals of that school. Of all schools, building basic literacy skills was considered ‘most important’ (40 per cent). This was followed by promoting personal growth (26%) and encouraging academic excellence (25 per cent). There were some differences across the three sectors regarding educational goals. Vocational schools were somewhat more likely to consider building basic literacy skills as ‘most important’ (50 per cent), whereas voluntary secondary schools were more likely than other schools to consider academic excellence as a ‘most important goal’ (29 per cent). Fostering religious or spiritual development was mentioned only by a small number of voluntary secondary schools as the ‘most important’ goal (4 per cent). The analysis demonstrates that the educational goals are more associated with developing literacy, social skills and academic excellence than explicitly with the spiritual element. There was a difference between the three types of second-level schools with regard to academic goals ($p < .005$). Some differences across sectors also emerged regarding the ‘second most important goal’: vocational schools were now somewhat more likely to mention ‘academic excellence’ as a goal (37 per cent), compared to the other two school sectors. Community/comprehensive schools were significantly more likely to mention ‘work habits’ (33 per cent). There were no statistically significant differences between the sectors concerning the third most important educational goal.

5.5 GOVERNANCE OF SECOND-LEVEL SCHOOLS

Chapter 3 provided a detailed description of governance in second-level schools. This section provides an analysis based on the survey conducted among school principals. Principals are accountable to the Trustees and boards of management in relation to a number of areas of school life. As a first step, the principals were asked whether their school had a Board of management, a Parent Council/Parent-Teacher Association and a Student Council. Of all the schools, 97 per cent had boards of management. Some 13 schools reported having no BoM.⁵³ Of schools in the sample 93 per cent had Parent Teacher Associations or Parents’ Councils and 97 per cent had student councils. In general, there was very little difference across the three types of second-level schools with regard to the existence of these organisations; this is not surprising given that the vast majority of schools have such structures in place (see Figure 5.8). However, community/comprehensive schools were somewhat less likely to report having Parent Teacher Associations than other school types. All community/comprehensive schools reported having student councils.

⁵³ Although it is envisaged that eventually all schools will have Boards of management, currently there are some schools without a BoM (see Chapter 3).

FIGURE 5.8 Existence of Governing Bodies in School

Source: Survey of second-level school principals.

An important aspect of school governance is parental involvement. Parental involvement was measured in the survey by the extent to which principals reported parents attending parent-teacher meetings and other meetings organised by the school. The analysis showed that, across all schools, 71 per cent of principals reported that nearly all parents attend parent-teacher meetings. Attendance levels at other meetings organised by schools were more modest, with only 10 per cent of schools reporting 'nearly all' parents attending these. While 2 per cent of non-DEIS schools reported that 'less than half/only a few' parents attend parent-teacher meetings, the figure was 15 per cent in DEIS schools. Parents of students attending DEIS schools were also less likely to attend other meetings organised by the school when compared with other parents.

Table 5.5a presents principals' views on the involvement of various staff members, parents and Trustees in various school processes. The analysis shows that the principal of the school has the most say across various dimensions outlined in the table, particularly with regard to hiring personnel, dealing with the Department of Education and Skills, in-school management and so on. The main three areas of activity for the Board of management as indicated by the principals are: implementation of legislation for second-level schools, financial management and planning, and school budget. Trustees have the most say in school buildings, extensions; school ethos and values and school budget. According to the principals, teachers in their school have the most say in the following areas: curriculum issues, evaluation/school planning and migrant education/language. Parent Teacher Associations were seen to have a central role in fundraising.

TABLE 5.5A Principals' Views on Who Has the Most Say in Various School Processes

	Principal %	Teachers %	Parent-Teacher Association %	Board of management %	Trustees %
Implementation of legislation relevant to second-level schools	58	9	1	42	10
Implementation of child protection (policies and legislation)	66	12	1	40	4
DES Circulars/correspondence	87	10	0	13	6
Evaluations/school planning	57	46	2	14	1
School policy development and drafting policies[e.g. admissions]	52	41	9	34	4
Financial management and planning	64	2	0.2	39.	14
School buildings/extensions	44	5	1	42	26
Provision of teaching resources/equipment	73	19	1	14	7
Curriculum issues (policies, use of texts, etc.)	40	64	3	12	4
Training for members of BOM	30	10	2	43	27
School ethos/values	41	36	8	37	23
Religious education	41	46	3	21	17
Contract, payment, supervision of cleaners/caretaker	72	4	0.4	14	14.
Employment/management of SNAs and others	81	3	0.2	12	12
Staffing structures/in-school management	83	6	0.4	15	8
Traveller Education	39	30	0.4	7.0	4
Migrant education/ language support	37	41	0.4	9	4
School budget	60	2	2	40	15
School fees (if applicable)	29	4	4	21	4
Fundraising	43	22	37	17	4

Source: Survey of second-level school principals.

Table 5.5b describes the perceptions of the principals of voluntary secondary schools only (as opposed to those in all school types in Table 5.5a). Across the different dimensions, voluntary secondary school principals are seen to have the most say in implementing policies and hiring staff: 93 per cent reported having the most say in implementing child protection policies; 91 per cent reported having the most say in employment/management of SNAs and others; 86 per cent in staffing structures/in-school management; 85 per cent in contract, payment, supervision of cleaners/caretakers and 63 per cent in the

implementation of legislation relevant to second-level schools. Interestingly, while 39 per cent of principals considered themselves or the Board of management (59 per cent) to have the most say in planning school buildings and extensions, in reality it is the Trustees who are deemed to have ultimate control over this area (just 19 per cent of principals of voluntary secondary schools note that this is the case). This raises issues about a principal's understanding of the role of Trustees who are the legal owners of the schools, despite the fact that the principals considered themselves well informed about the purpose, duties and functions of the BOM (76 per cent strongly agree) and the functions of Trustees (64 per cent strongly agree), as demonstrated in Figure 5.9 below.

TABLE 5.5B Principals' Views on Who has the Most Say in Various School Processes (voluntary secondary schools only)

	Principal	Teachers	Parent-Teacher Association	Board of management	Trustees
	%	%	%	%	%
Implementation of legislation relevant to second-level schools	63	12	2	45	3
Implementation of child protection (policies and legislation)	93	6	0	13	0.4
DES Circulars/correspondence	57	44	2	14	0.4
Evaluations/school planning	57	44	2	15	0.4
School policy development and drafting policies[e.g. admissions]	50	36	7	37	4
Financial management and planning	51	3	0.4	60.	12
School buildings/extensions	39	6	1	59	19
Provision of teaching resources/equipment	41	21	2	18	3
Curriculum issues (policies, use of texts, etc.)	40	62	3	14	3
Training for members of BOM	32	9	2	46	24
School ethos/values	44	33	8	37	26
Religious education	44	50	3	20	15
Contract, payment, supervision of cleaners/caretaker	85	5	0.7	18	2
Employment/management of SNAs and others	91	3	0	16	0.4
Staffing structures/in-school management	86	7	0.4	17	3
Traveller Education	42	28	0.4	7	2
Migrant education/ language support	39	42	0.8	9	2
School budget	41	3	1	57	9
School fees (if applicable)	23	3	2	32	5
Fundraising	48	16	33	25	4

Source: Survey of second-level school principals.

Teachers were seen to have the most say in relation to curriculum issues (reported by 62 per cent of principals); Religious Education (50 per cent); DES Circulars/correspondence (44 per cent); evaluations/school planning (44 per cent) and migrant education/language support (42 per cent).

As might be expected, the Board of management was seen to have the most say in financial management and planning (60 per cent); school buildings/extensions (59 per cent); school budget (57 per cent), providing training for members of BOM (46 per cent), and implementation of legislation relevant to second-level schools (45 per cent); while the Trustees were perceived to have most influence in school ethos/values (26 per cent), providing training for members of BOM (24 per cent), School buildings/extensions (19 per cent), and Religious Education (15 per cent).

The varied role of school principals and their workload was also discussed by some of the interviewees participating in the study:

The span of responsibilities that a secondary, a school principal carries and if you compared it with somebody in say the private sector in a business, who would have a whole team of people doing all these various bits and it's one individual, it's unreal. And it's, it's unfair It's not sustainable /.../ It's an area which is, it's a dam that's going to burst at some stage /.../ were at a meeting lately of school principals in this area and the, really the air of depression and, and feeling helplessness in the light of more, more and more demands. [Trustee 2]

Like unbelievable now, yeah, even in the last few years yeah, there's just so many responsibilities falling on their shoulder and everything goes to the principal, you know and then we tell them they should be distributing leadership, but they still have to take the ultimate responsibility and now they've nobody to distribute to, you know, well they don't have, they don't have the structures that they had before. [Trustee 6]

Let's face it ninety x per cent of the work in between the Board meetings is going to be carried out by the Principal, that's the problem. [Trustee 10]

The quality of the work carried out by the principal was seen to affect the whole school:

Very often I think the success of schools will be, will depend to a large extent on the principal. If you have a good principal in a school, by and large you'll have a good school. [Trustee 3]

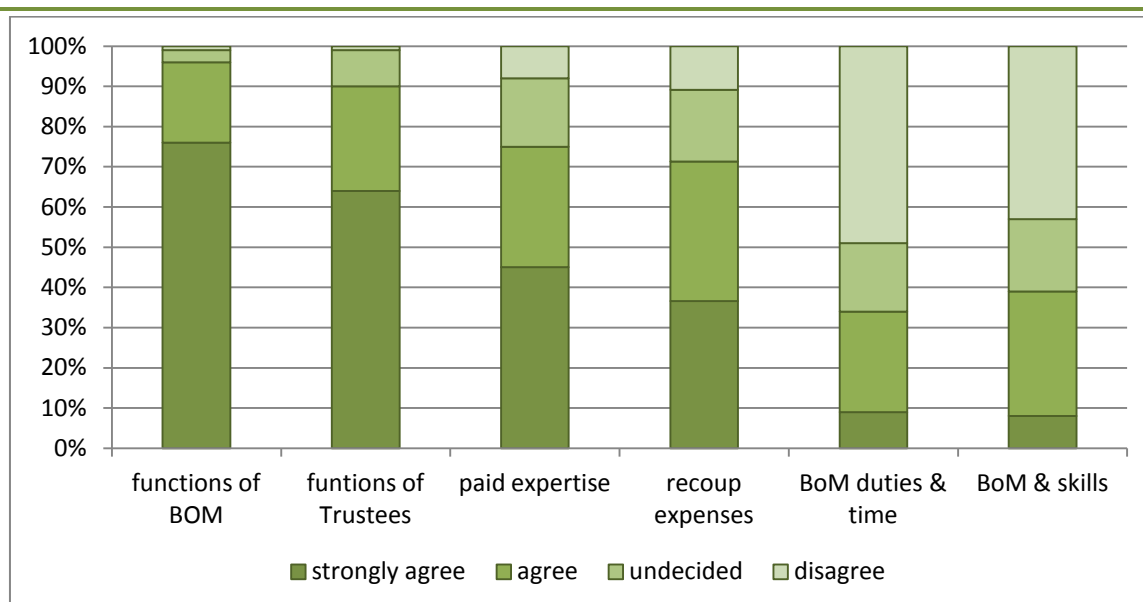
Educational Stakeholder 2 felt that the workload of school principals reflects the changing times:

There's a whole range of things whether it's the, the, the suite of education legislation or whether it's health and safety legislation where life has simply become more complex everywhere you go, you know what I mean. And they are at the, at the helm of a particular enterprise. [Educational Stakeholder 2]

The situation was seen as exacerbated by the failure to replace middle management posts within the school so that *you don't have a support, a support structure for the principal* [Educational Stakeholder 2]. One interviewee (Educational Stakeholder 7) also felt strongly that the governance of second-level schools was made more difficult by the lack of a 'real system for preparing people for leadership in our education system', leading to 'a crisis in school management'.

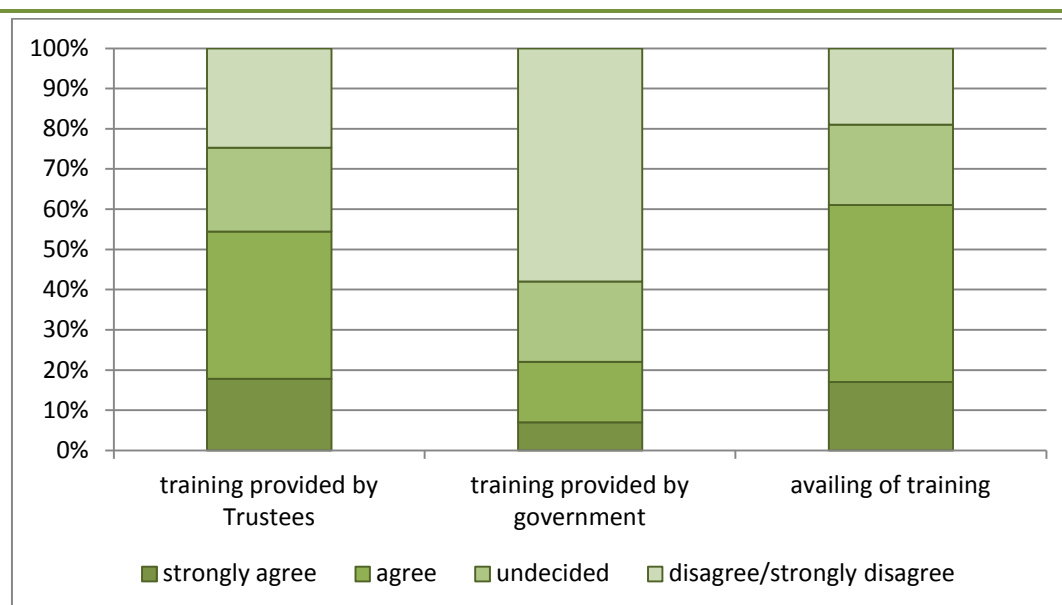
Comparing the work of school principals across the sectors, one interviewee commented on the benefit of having a general Education Office overlooking the VEC schools: 'a lot of the work is, is taken off the shoulders of the principal'.

The study also explored principals' perceptions of school governance across the range of areas: whether they were clear about the purpose, duties and functions of the Board of management; whether they were clear about the function of Trustees; their views on need for paid expertise available in schools (e.g., human resources, financial, etc.); whether BoM members should be entitled to recoup the expenses incurred when engaged in the work of governance; whether BoM matters take up too much of the principal's personal time and whether the BoM in their school has the necessary skills available to it to conduct all matters, legal, financial, employment etc., appropriately (see Figure 5.9). In general, the principals considered themselves well informed about the purpose, duties and functions of the BoM (76 per cent strongly agree) and the functions of Trustees (64 per cent strongly agree). Some 45 per cent of principals also considered that in future governance structures will require paid expertise.

FIGURE 5.9 Statements about Governance in School (all schools)

Source: Survey of second-level school principals.

Other statements concerned training: whether there has been sufficient training provided for the members of BoM by Trustees; whether members of BoM take the time to avail of training; and whether there has been sufficient training provided for members of BoM by the government. The survey showed that only a small proportion of principals strongly agreed with there being sufficient training provided by the Trustees (18 per cent strongly agree) or the government (6.7 per cent strongly agree) (Figure 5.10).

FIGURE 5.10 Statements about Training (all schools)

Source: Survey of second-level school principals.

As the next step, the responses were broken down by school type (see Table 5.6A). The analysis shows that the majority of principals across the three types of second-level schools were clear about the functions of boards of management and Trustees. Principals in voluntary secondary schools were significantly more likely to 'strongly agree' with the statement that in future governance structures in schools will require paid expertise available to them (54 per cent) compared to other types of schools, most likely because in vocational schools, VEC offices provide specialist support while voluntary secondary principals deal directly with financial and legal issues.

Of voluntary secondary school principals 41 per cent also 'strongly agreed' with the statement that all Board members should be entitled to recoup expenses incurred while engaged in the work of governance (32 per cent vocational and 34% community/comprehensive schools), but the difference was not statistically significant. Principals of community/comprehensive schools were significantly more likely to 'strongly agree' with training by the government being sufficient (20 per cent). Of principals in voluntary secondary schools 12 per cent 'strongly agreed' with board matters taking up too much of his/her personal time, significantly higher than for other types of schools. Only a few principals across the three school types (strongly) agreed with the statement that the Board has the necessary skills to conduct all matters appropriately, but the difference was not statistically significant.

TABLE 5.6A Statements about Governance of Schools (strongly agree)

	Voluntary Secondary %	Vocational %	Community/ Comprehensive %
I'm clear about the purpose, duties and functions of the Board of management	79	66	87
I'm clear about the function of Trustees	68	57	65
In future, governance structures in schools will require paid expertise available to them (e.g., financial, HR, etc.)	54	34	43
All Board members should be entitled to recoup expenses incurred while engaged in the work of governance	41	32	34
Board matters take up too much of my personal time	12	3	10
The Board has the necessary skills available to it to conduct all matters – legal, financial, employment, etc. appropriately	9	6	8
There is sufficient training provided for members of BoM by Trustees	18	16	23
There is sufficient training provided for members of BoM by the government	4	6	20
Members of BoM take time to avail of training	19	14	18

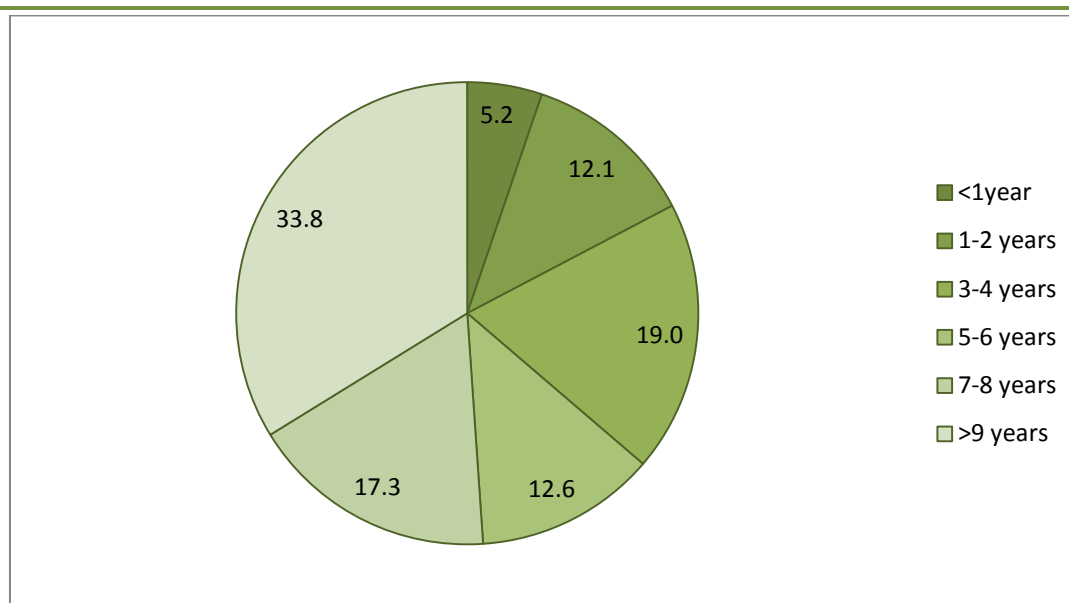
Source: Survey of second-level school principals.

5.6 CHAIRPERSONS OF BOARDS OF MANAGEMENT: ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Education Act specifies the various duties and functions of a Board. The Board must manage the school on behalf of the patron for the benefit of the students and their parents and provide, or cause to be provided, an appropriate education for each student in the school. It must uphold the characteristic spirit of the school. Catholic Voluntary Secondary Schools with boards operate in accordance with the Articles of Management for Catholic Secondary Schools negotiated by the Association of Secondary Teachers (ASTI) and the Catholic Managers. Community schools, comprehensive schools and community colleges operate under the Deeds of Trust for such schools.⁵⁴ Boards of management of VEC second-level schools are sub-committees of the VEC. Chairpersons have an important role to play in the governance of schools. Such a person is appointed by the Trustees and, once appointed, a Chairperson is required to attend all meetings of the Board of management and has discretionary power to direct the Secretary to summon a special meeting.

In a postal survey, the chairpersons of boards of management (n=300, response rate 43 per cent) were asked a range of questions about their role in the school. The survey showed that the length of their service on the Board varied: 34 per cent had been on the Board for more than 9 years, 17 per cent 7-8 years, 19 per cent 5-6 years, 12 per cent 3-4 years, 12 per cent 1-2 years and 5 per cent had been in the position for less than a year (see Figure 5.11).

FIGURE 5.11 Length of Service of Chairpersons of Boards of Management

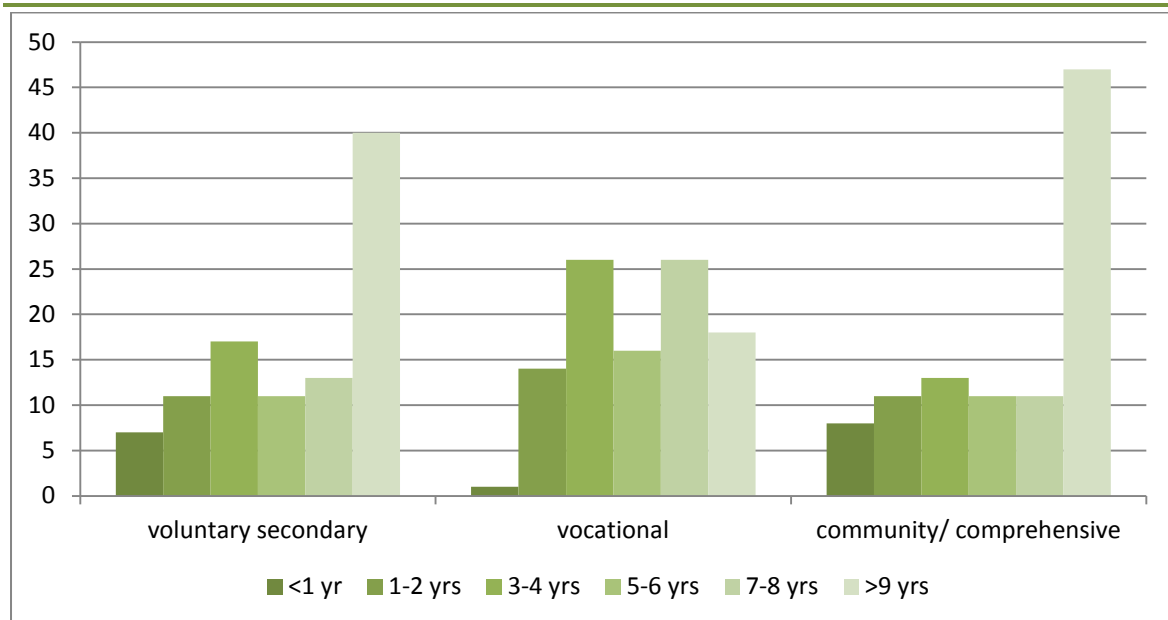


Source: Survey of chairpersons of second-level schools.

⁵⁴ <http://www.asti.ie/operation-of-schools/management-of-schools/boards-of-management/>

When this was broken down by school type (see Figure 5.12), the differences were statistically significant; the analysis showed that 47 per cent of chairpersons in community/comprehensive schools and 40 per cent in voluntary secondary schools had been on the Board for more than nine years (the corresponding figure for vocational schools was 18 per cent). The mean for all schools was 4.3 years.

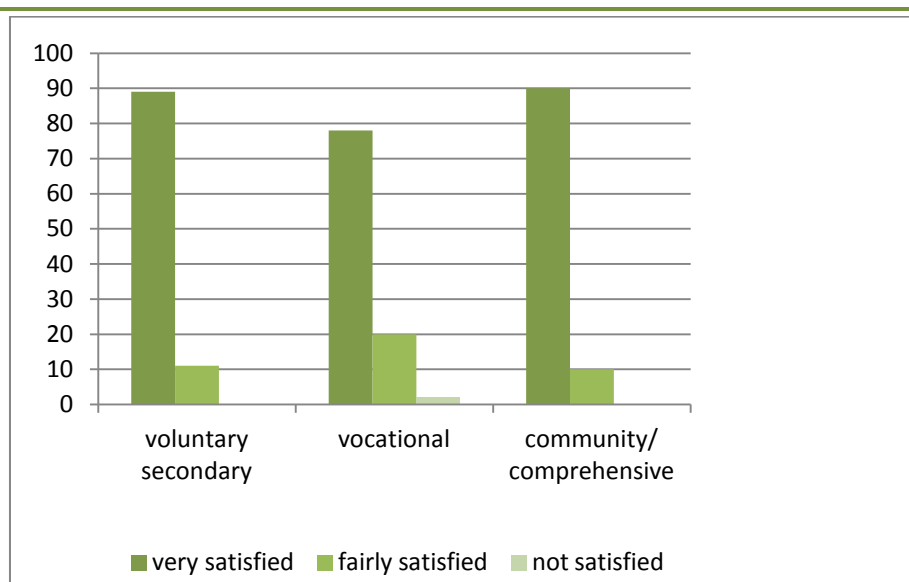
FIGURE 5.12 Length of Service on Boards of Management by School Type



Source: Survey of chairpersons of second-level schools.

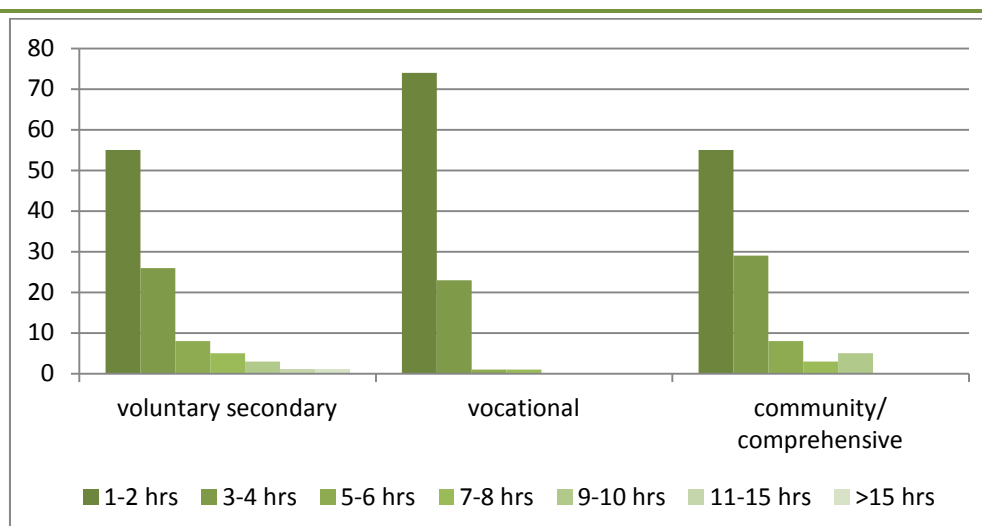
The chairpersons were asked about their satisfaction with the frequency of BoM meetings. An overall majority of all chairpersons (85 per cent) were very satisfied with the frequency, with 14 per cent being fairly satisfied and 0.8 per cent not satisfied. Figure 5.13 presents the findings by type of school. There were no significant differences between the three types of schools. The chairpersons were predominantly very satisfied with the frequency of meetings. Only a small proportion (3 per cent) of chairpersons in vocational schools indicated that they were dissatisfied with the frequency of meetings.

The chairpersons were also asked how much time they spend per week on school management/governance issues. Across all the chairpersons surveyed, 60 per cent spend 1-2 hours per week on governance issues with 26 per cent spending 3-4 hours. Spending a substantial number of hours per week on governance issues was relatively rare. However, a small proportion of chairpersons (0.7 per cent) reported spending more than 15 hours per week on governance-related tasks.

FIGURE 5.13 Satisfaction with the Frequency of Board of Management Meetings

Source: Survey of chairpersons of second-level schools.

When the figures were broken down by school type, the analysis revealed no statistically significant difference between the sectors. Across all three types the chairpersons spend a few hours every week on governance-related issues. Only on rare occasions do the chairpersons spend more than seven hours a week on such issues (see Figure 5.14).

FIGURE 5.14 Time Spent on Governance Related Tasks per Week

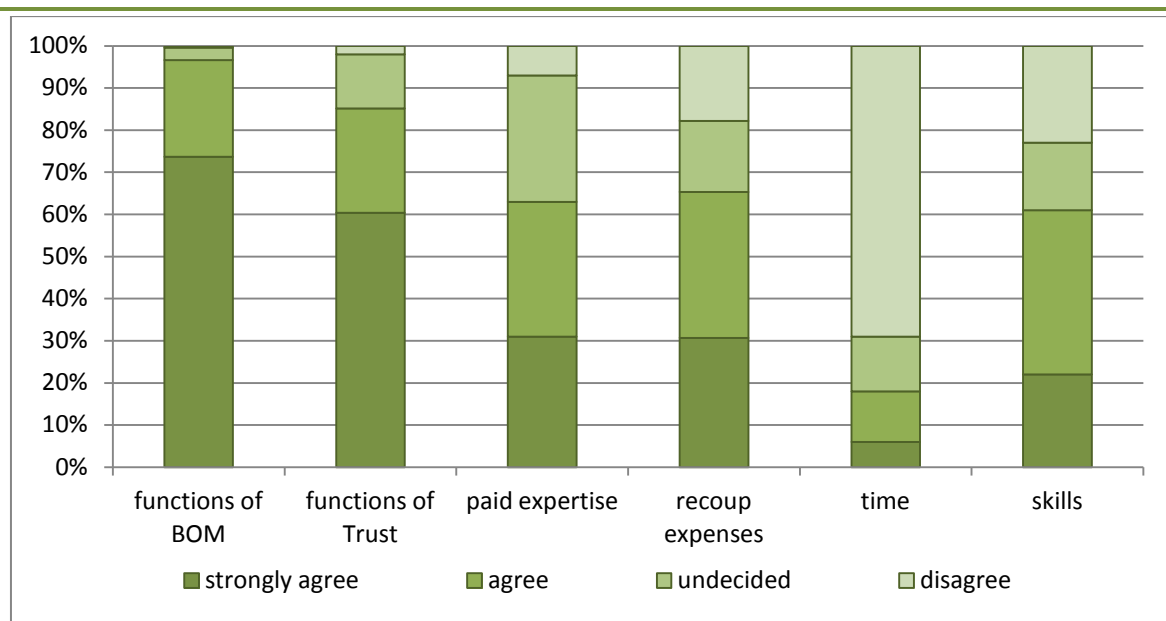
Source: Survey of chairpersons of second-level schools.

The chairpersons were asked to express their opinions across a range of dimensions regarding school management/governance: they were asked whether they were clear about the purpose, duties and functions of the Board of

management; whether they were clear about the function of Trustees; their views on need for paid expertise available in schools (e.g., HR, financial, etc.); whether BoM members should be entitled to recoup expenses incurred when engaged in the work of governance; whether BoM matters take up too much of their personal time and whether the BoM in their school has the necessary skills available to it to conduct all matters – legal, financial, employment, etc. appropriately (see Figure 5.15). The overall majority of chairpersons strongly agreed with the statement that they were clear about the functions of boards of management (74 per cent) and Trustees (61 per cent). Fewer chairpersons felt that the Board had the necessary skills (22 per cent), needed paid expertise in future (31 per cent), and should be able to recoup expenses (31 per cent). Only 6 per cent strongly agreed that too much of their personal time is taken up by BOM matters.

There was a good deal of similarity in the responses of chairpersons across different types of schools (Table 5.6). However, two differences are worth highlighting. First, chairpersons of VEC boards of management were less likely to be clear about the function of that board and the role of trustees than those in other school types. Second, chairpersons of voluntary secondary school boards were less likely to feel that the board had access to the necessary skills, on the one hand, but, on the other hand, felt that board members were less likely to avail of available training.

FIGURE 5.15 Views of Chairpersons on School Management/Governance



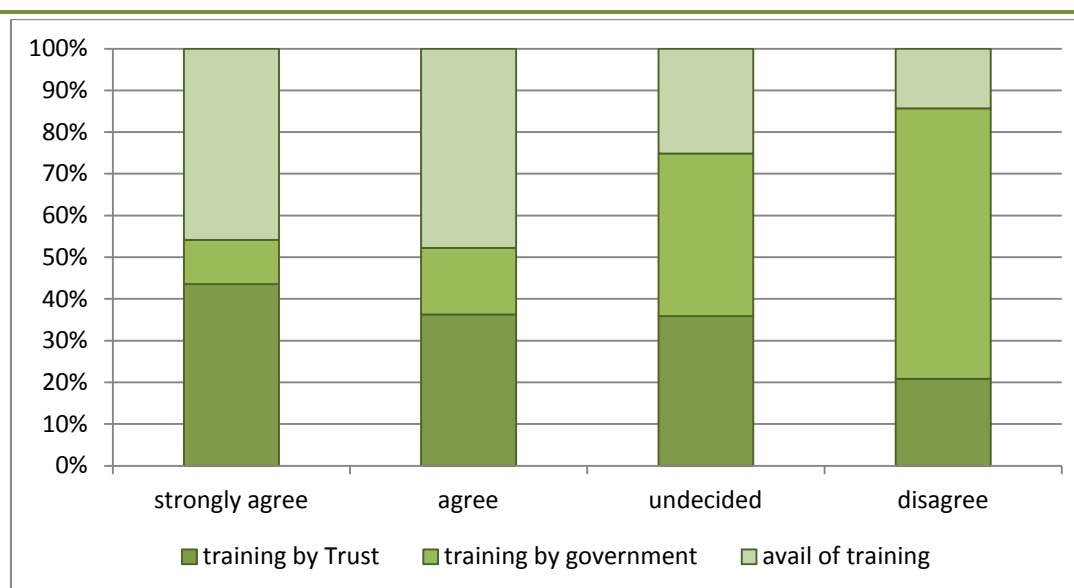
Source: Survey of chairpersons of second-level schools.

TABLE 5.6B Statements about Governance of Schools: Chairpersons (strongly agree)

	Voluntary Secondary %	Vocational %	Community/ Comprehensive %
I'm clear about the purpose, duties and functions of the Board of management	79	63	82
I'm clear about the function of Trustees	72	43	61
In future governance structures in schools will require paid expertise available to them (e.g. financial, HR, etc.)	36	24	31
All Board members should be entitled to recoup expenses incurred while engaged in the work of governance	29	31	37
Board matters take up too much of my personal time	7	4	8
The Board has the necessary skills available to it to conduct all matters – legal, financial, employment, etc. appropriately	19	24	27
There is sufficient training provided for members of BoM by Trustees	21	18	18
There is sufficient training provided for members of BoM by the government	3	3	13
Members of BoM take time to avail of training	16	23	34

Source: Survey of chairpersons of second-level schools.

They were also asked whether there has been sufficient training provided for the members of BoM by Trustees, whether members of BoM take the time to avail of training, and whether there has been sufficient training provided for members of BOM by the government. The chairpersons were least satisfied with training provided by the government (see Figure 5.16).

FIGURE 5.16 Views of Chairpersons on Training

Source: Survey of chairpersons of second-level schools.

In the open question in the questionnaire, the chairpersons were given the opportunity to highlight issues which they consider important. Many of them highlighted training-related issues:

- 'Boards of management should meet at least every two months during school term. More training should be provided';
- 'Funding the governance needs to be specific to continue appropriate training and facilitation re self evaluation and dealing with under achieving staff';
- 'More training and advice from trustees would be required if I was chairperson of a bigger school';
- 'JMB training is very useful';
- 'School clusters in e.g., Dublin west should meet and share ideas and training';
- 'The government places a very onerous burden on BoM members. If BoM members understood the detail of that burden it is unlikely that many of them would be happy to continue to volunteer. There is not nearly enough training or funding available';
- 'There is too much duplication in training. Trustees are currently running in-service training already available from JMB. That is utterly pointless';
- 'VEC has not offered any training on economy to non-VEC schools. I understand this may change in the future. I require more training';
- 'We need more training as a board of management and expect school advice and help us at least once a term. Come to the school or a group of schools and train us'.

In the survey, the chairpersons were asked whether they had received any training across a range of areas in an academic year 2011/2012 in their capacity as a chairperson. The responses are shown in Table 5.7A. The figures show that a considerable number of chairpersons had not availed of or been provided training in the areas listed below. Of chairpersons some 26 per cent had attended training on maintenance of school ethos/characteristic spirit organised by the Trust, 21 per cent had availed of training on board meetings and the role of school management. Some 20 per cent had attended training on school management organised by the Trust. A very low proportion of chairpersons had attended government-organised training. A higher proportion had attended training provided by another organisation/body.

TABLE 5.7A Chairpersons' Attendance in Training

	Training Provided by Trust	Training Provided by Government	Training Provided by Other Body (give example)	Have not Availed of Training
	%	%	%	%
Maintenance of school ethos/characteristic spirit	26	2	9	58
Personal Spirituality and Development	14	1	8	69
School Policy Development	14	10	14	56
Property	11	1	6	73
Finance	14	4	15	61
Insurance	8	3	6	75
Board meetings	21	6	13	54
Role of chairperson	21	7	13	53
School management	20	7	14	53
Legal responsibilities (school, students, parents, staff, etc.)	17	9	17	53

Source: Survey of chairpersons of second-level schools.

The chairpersons also availed of training provided by a number of other organisations, including JMB, ACCS, religious orders, VECs and others. In the survey, the chairpersons were asked to indicate what other training they had availed of. The responses included child protection, interview competencies/training, new Junior Certificate, staff recruitment, support of principal, VAT and RCT workshop.

Table 5.7B presents the responses of the chairpersons of voluntary secondary schools separately (see Table 5.7B). The table shows that although a sizable proportion had not availed of training, 43 per cent had attended training organised by the Trust in the maintenance of school ethos/characteristic spirit. Some 30 per cent had attended training on the role of chairperson, with 27 per cent attending training in relation to board meetings and school management. The most frequently availed of training by another body/organisation included finance (22 per cent), legal responsibilities (18 per cent), school policy development and school management (14 per cent). Availing of training organised by the government was low across all of the dimensions. The chairpersons were more likely to mention having availed of government-organised training areas such as school policy development (10 per cent), finance (7 per cent) and school management (7 per cent).

The chairpersons were asked how satisfied they are with the training received. Over half (53 per cent) reported being satisfied, 43 per cent fairly satisfied, 3 per cent not satisfied and a small number reporting not being sure. There were no statistically significant differences between the three types of schools: 64 per

cent of chairpersons from community comprehensive schools, 55 per cent of voluntary secondary schools and 44 per cent from vocational schools reported being very satisfied with the training received.

TABLE 5.7B Chairpersons' Attendance in Training (voluntary secondary schools only)

	Training Provided by Trust	Training Provided by Government	Training Provided by Other Body (give example)	Have not Availed of Training
	%	%	%	%
Maintenance of school ethos/characteristic spirit	43	1	8	46
Personal Spirituality and Development	24	0	10	61
School Policy Development	14	10	14	57
Property	19	0.6	8	67
Finance	23	7	22	47
Insurance	11	3	7	74
Board meetings	27	6	13	53
Role of chairperson	30	5	13	50
School management	27	7	14	50
Legal responsibilities (school, students, parents, staff, etc.)	23	6	18	50

Source: Survey of chairpersons of second-level schools.

With regard to the topics discussed at BoM meetings, the chairpersons indicated that the top five regularly discussed topics included: implementation of child protection (83 per cent); financial management and planning (75 per cent), school policy development (72 per cent); DES circulars (65 per cent) and school budget (67 per cent) (see Table 5.8). The topics not discussed at BoM meetings included professional underperformance of a member of staff (62 per cent), school fees, if applicable (64 per cent), Traveller education (55 per cent), migrant education/language support (40 per cent), and fundraising (30 per cent).

In general, work on boards of management is voluntary. This is reflected in the fact that in the survey just 9 per cent of chairpersons reported getting paid for their work. There were significant differences between the three types of school ($p<.001$), with 17 per cent of chairpersons of vocational schools and 11 per cent of community/comprehensive schools reporting getting paid for their role compared to 3 per cent of voluntary secondary schools. The chairpersons in our survey represented a range of academic and other professions. However, the largest group ($n=46$) were retired.

TABLE 5.8 Chairpersons' Views on Topics Discussed at BoM Meetings

	Regularly Discussed %	Occasionally Discussed %	Not Discussed %
Implementation of legislation relevant to second-level schools	59	37	4
Implementation of child protection (policies and legislation)	83	16	1
DES Circulars/correspondence	65	30	4
Evaluations/school planning	65	33	2
School policy development and drafting policies	72	26	2
Financial management and planning	75	20	6
School buildings/extensions	52	40	7
Provision of teaching resources/equipment	47	45	8
Curriculum issues (policies, use of texts, etc.)	32	59	9
Training for members of BoM	13	76	11
School ethos/values/religious education	35	54	11
Religious education	9	66	26
Policy on pupil enrolment	46	49	5
Professional underperformance of a member of staff	5	33	62
Contract, payment, supervision of cleaners/caretaker	6	54	41
Employment/management of SNAs and others	13	57	29
Staffing structures/in-school management	31	56	13
Traveller Education	5	40	55
Migrant education/ language support	5	55	40
School budget	67	25	9
School fees (if applicable)	14	22	64
Fundraising	18	52	30
Other, please specify			

Source: Survey of chairpersons of second-level schools.

In an open question in the survey, the chairpersons commented on a number of issues that were of concern to them. The two most often discussed themes were the funding challenges facing second-level schools and concern about the equity of funding across three types of second-level schools (see Appendix 1).

5.7 SUMMARY

Drawing on information provided by second-level school principals, chairpersons of boards of management and key stakeholders (Trust representatives or educational stakeholders), this chapter has provided an overview of school ethos and governance across different types of second-level schools.

The landscape of Irish second-level education is changing in the midst of broader changes in Irish society characterised by the current fiscal crisis, significant cuts in educational spending and increasing student numbers in the near future. There is now a lively debate about the patronage of second-level schools and a

broadening of this sector by the addition of a new school patron: Educate Together. The information presented in this chapter shows that while the number of students in second-level schools is on the increase, the number of schools in the voluntary secondary school sector has decreased over time due to amalgamations. However, there is a concern among stakeholders to ensure choice for parents between all types of second-level schools. Several interviewees recognised, however, that factors other than school sector may be more important in parental choice of school. School mergers have also renewed debate about the nature of the school ethos or characteristic spirit, with voluntary secondary schools particularly concerned about maintaining their identity not only as Catholic secondary schools, but also as schools with an ‘added flavour’ of a mission/vision-specific congregation. However, a closer look at the principals’ perceptions of school ethos revealed many similarities across the three sectors, with student well-being and providing them with good education most paramount. Declining numbers of members of religious orders have necessitated setting up Trusts to run the schools that were established by the religious orders. However, the funding of the multi-faceted Trustee function is a continuing challenge which has led to concern about the viability of the current model of Trusteeship (see Chapter 4).

Additional challenges were evident in exploring the role of school principal. The analysis demonstrated that principals are involved in a range of aspects in school management. Interviews with stakeholders revealed that the demands of the role are seen as having increased over time in such a way as is likely to affect principals’ job satisfaction and levels of occupational stress (see also Darmody and Smyth, 2011 for primary schools). One way to alleviate the job-related pressure is the presence of a well-functioning and adequately trained Board of management together with the support of a central system as is the case for VEC Chairs and principals and which would more adequately support the principals of voluntary secondary schools. The analysis demonstrated that despite the onerous tasks of the chairpersons of the BoM, the majority have availed of training. However, only a minority of chairpersons felt that sufficient training was available for them.

Chapter 6

Costs and Funding of Second-Level Schools in Ireland

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The following Section 2 of the chapter focuses on the funding structure of second-level schools. Section 3 presents research findings focussing on state funding while Section 4 discusses funding from private sources. Section 5 discusses overall sources of income in second-level schools. Section 6 focuses on the main items of expenditure in schools while Section 7 deals with changes in school provision. Section 8 explores issues around the equalisation agenda and Section 9 presents case study findings on funding of the different second-level sectors. Section 10 summarises and concludes the chapter.

6.2 SETTING THE SCENE: THE FUNDING OF SECOND-LEVEL SCHOOLS

The funding of second-level schools is complex and rooted in the historical legacies of the three sectors (see Chapter 3). The Department allocates teacher posts to each school (or to the VEC for schools run by the VECs), generally based on a specified ratio of pupils to teachers. While staff in voluntary secondary schools are employed by the Board of management, the Department runs the payroll for primary, voluntary secondary and community/comprehensive schools. Schools receive funding under the heading of 'pay' (sanctioned posts, teacher salaries) and 'non-pay' (grants). The main portion of funding received from the Department covers teacher salaries.

Capitation grants are paid to schools within the free education scheme on a per capita basis. Non-pay expenditure on schools comprises capitation grants and ancillary/support service grants. Capitation grants are intended to contribute towards the general operating costs of schools which would include heating, lighting, cleaning, insurance, painting, teaching aids and other miscellaneous charges. The capitation grant also covers the non-pay costs of specific educational programmes, such as Transition Year and the Leaving Certificate Applied programmes (DES, 2011c). Being flexible in nature, the capitation scheme affords boards of management discretion as to how the funding is used in meeting a school's day-to-day running costs. Other grants are specific (book grant, secretarial services and so on) and can only be spent on these purposes (see Table 6.1).

TABLE 6.1 Range and Amount of Grants Provided to Voluntary Secondary Schools, 2011

	€
Standard Capitation Grant	317
School Services Support Fund (SSSF)	201
<i>Grants for Secretaries</i>	
Basic Secretarial Grant	36
SSSF Secretary Grant	24
<i>Grants for Caretakers</i>	
Basic Caretaker Grant	30
SSSF Caretaker Grant	18
Special class Grant	191
<i>Irish and Bilingual Grants</i>	
All subjects taught through Irish	115
Maximum of 4 subjects taught through Irish (per subject)	23
Traveller Capitation	201
<i>Book Grant</i>	
Non-DEIS schools	24
DEIS schools	39
<i>Programme Grants</i>	
Junior Certificate Schools Programme	60
Transition Year Pupil	95
Leaving Certificate Applied Programme	151
Physics and Chemistry	13

Source: Written answer for the Houses of the Oireachtas (2012).

Voluntary secondary schools also receive some equalisation funding, combined with the school services support fund. The funding was increased in 2009, bringing it to €212 (DES, 2009). This equalisation measure was designed to address anomalies and inequalities in the way the different sectors (voluntary secondary, community/comprehensive and VEC) have been funded, particularly in relation to back-up services such as insurance, cleaning, caretaking and secretarial services. Schools also generate additional funding through fundraising and other measures. The Department report (2011a) noted that there is no reliable information available on the level of local fundraising or its variance from school to school or by locality, a gap that is addressed in the current study.

Voluntary secondary schools may be fee-paying (n=55 or 15 per cent) or non-fee-paying (85 per cent). Fee-paying schools are not eligible for Government funding to assist with running costs. There are currently 55 schools, out of 722 second-level schools, that charge fees ranging from €2,550 to €10,065 per annum for day pupils. At present the state pays the salaries of one teacher for every 23 pupils in these schools compared with one teacher for every 19 pupils in schools in the free education scheme. However, these schools have the resources, through fees charged, to employ teachers privately, an option which is not affordable to schools in the free education scheme that often need to subsidise core costs.

Unlike voluntary secondary schools in the free scheme, community/comprehensive schools do not receive per capita grants (for an overview of the funding mechanisms, see Table 6.2). Instead, each school is given a budget designed to cover normal school running costs, apart from teacher salaries and major capital expenditure which are paid directly by the Department of Education. While the annual budget is based on student numbers, it also takes into account other factors which vary from school to school such as the condition of the building, security costs and so on (DES, 2009).

In vocational schools, pay covers the cost of sanctioned posts, where the employees are on the VEC's payroll at authorised rates of pay. Funding is allocated by the Department under the headings of instruction, administration and maintenance pay. Both teaching and non-teaching staff allocations are approved on a VEC basis and it is a matter for each VEC to distribute its staffing allocations within its scheme. Teachers' salaries account for approximately 85 per cent of pay costs, while instruction, administration and maintenance account for 15 per cent. Non-pay covers all items other than pay and grants for committed items that are provided for separately. The non-pay allocation to each VEC is determined having regard to the VEC's estimate of expenditure and receipts, the level of VEC receipts indicated being achieved, pupil enrolment variation, various programmes being run by the committee and the amount available for distribution. To afford flexibility, a block allocation is made under this heading, giving each VEC a high level of autonomy in its management.

Additional funding is provided to schools to reflect their student profile in terms of special educational needs (SEN) and socio-economic disadvantage. Prior to 2012/13, all young people with special educational needs attending second-level schools were individually assessed with resource teaching hours allocated accordingly. Since 2012/3, second-level schools have been allocated resource teaching hours to support students with high incidence special educational needs (borderline or mild general learning disabilities and specific learning disabilities); this is decided by reference to historic levels of allocations to the school. Further resource teaching hours are allocated to schools where students have been diagnosed as having low incidence special educational needs. In addition, special classes in mainstream schools are allocated resources on a much lower student-teacher ratio (NCSE, 2013). This model of SEN funding allocation is currently under review because of concerns about the need to wait for formal diagnosis and because of the reliance on the category of disability rather than student need (NCSE, 2013).

TABLE 6.2 Funding of Irish Second-Level Schools

	Voluntary Secondary Schools	Vocational Schools	Community Colleges	Community Schools	Comprehensive Schools
Government funding for day-to-day and recurring expenses	Allocation of a per capita grant to schools; under the School Services Support Initiative, all second level schools receive an additional per capita grant per pupil to meet the costs of essential services such as secretarial and caretaking. Teachers' salaries paid by DES.	Block grant from the government; covers pay and non-pay; Schools under the auspices of the Vocational Education Committees are funded on an historic cost basis. The allocation for an individual school within the envelope for a given Vocational Education Committee is determined in accordance with the school's needs and Vocational Education Committee's priorities and policies.	Block grant from the government; covers pay and non-pay; Schools under the auspices of the Vocational Education Committees are funded on an historic cost basis. The allocation for an individual school within the envelope for a given Vocational Education Committee is determined in accordance with the school's needs and Vocational Education Committee's priorities and policies.	Funded on an annual budget basis through a process of negotiations. Teachers' salaries paid directly by DES.	Funded on an annual budget basis through a process of negotiations.
Funding of trusteeship function	No state funding for Trustee function (activities of members of Trustees, education offices); funding based on investments of money donated by religious orders. Licence fees charged by the Trusts/religious orders used to part-fund Trusteeship costs; this is taken from capitation fees.	Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of VECs are paid directly by the Committees which employ them. The CEO is not a member of the VEC. The CEOs receive no payment for attendance at VEC meetings (travel and subsistence is payable); they may qualify for payment of an allowance in respect of the discharge of the role of Secretary to a Board of management of a Comprehensive school ⁵⁵ . The state also funds the local VEC Education offices.	Similar practices as in vocational schools.	Direct budgetary funding from the Department of Education. There is no funding received from the DES for trustee work of Community schools. Board of management members are reimbursed for travel expenses, attendance on interview boards and so on.	Direct budgetary funding from the Department of Education for day-to-day running of schools but no specific funding for the Trustee work.
Funding of management	Each school, from capitation fees, pays a contribution to fund the JMB office.	VEC personnel and other Board members/councillors manage the schools and receive expenses to attend meetings.			

⁵⁵ Written answers, Houses of the Oireachtas, 2012.

TABLE 6.2 Funding of Irish Second-Level Schools (continued)

	Voluntary Secondary Schools	Vocational Schools	Community Colleges	Community Schools	Comprehensive Schools
Ownership of buildings and land	Privately owned. Four voluntary secondary schools are owned by the Minister for Education and Skills and are controlled/managed by boards of management. All capital costs were borne by the owners (religious orders, dioceses, private individuals) until 1964. Sites were provided by the religious order. 100 per cent of capital costs are now borne by the state.	Owned by the state and vested in Vocational Education Committees under the Vocational Education Act, 1930. 100 per cent of capital costs are borne by the state.	College usually owned by VEC. In amalgamations, would normally be lease agreement.	Community schools are owned by the Minister for Education who vests the ownership in Religious and VEC Trustees. Thus, the school is not owned outright by either a Religious Order or a VEC. There are 78 such schools (this number excludes the 14 Comprehensive Schools) with more at planning or construction stages. 100 per cent of the capital costs of community schools are provided by the state less a nominal amount paid by the VEC and religious trustees. Historically, there was a contribution from voluntary trustees but this is no longer the case. 100 per cent of capital costs are borne by the state.	School owned by Minister who vests ownership in the religious order/Bishop and VEC Trustee. 100 per cent of capital costs are borne by the state.

Source: www.asti.ie (<http://www.asti.ie/?id=276>); DES Vote 26 (2012).

The DEIS programme allocates additional resources to schools designated as serving populations with a concentrated level of socio-economic disadvantage. The calculation of this enhanced capitation is based on the enrolment of the school and its level of disadvantage relative to other schools (DES, 2011c). At second-level there are 200 schools in the DEIS scheme in receipt of enhanced capitation (DES, 2011c). Enhanced capitation of €14.07 million (€10.767 million at primary level and €3.302 million at second-level level) was allocated to DEIS schools in the 2010/11 school year, ranging from €1,300 to €56,000 per annum per school at post-primary level. All DEIS schools are supported by the provision of additional financial supports. These supports in second-level schools include:

- additional capitation funding based on levels of disadvantage;
- additional funding for school books;
- access to the School Meals Programme;
- access to Home School Community Liaison services;
- access to the School Completion Programme;
- enhanced guidance counselling provision at second level;
- access to planning supports;
- provision for school library and librarian support in second-level schools with most disadvantage;
- access to the Junior Certificate School Programme and Leaving Certificate Applied;
- access to a range of professional development supports (DES, 2011b).

Protestant schools in Ireland are dispersed and as such, have been, until 2008, in receipt of additional support services or an ancillary grant from the state to facilitate the running of these schools (the block grant remains in place). Thus, apart from the block grant to subsidise the education of lower income Protestant students, after 2008 Protestant secondary schools were treated the same as fee-charging Catholic schools. Additional funding has been provided by parents by way of fees or by donors and trustees (Daly, 2010). The Protestant Block Grant is payable to the Secondary Education Committee, under the Central Protestant Churches' authority, for distribution among disadvantaged Protestant children to enable them to attend a Protestant secondary school, all of which charge fees. The method of calculation is broadly similar to the per capita grants payable to schools under the Free Education Scheme (DES, 2009).

In the past, a number of attempts have been made to explore the funding of second-level schools in Ireland. Research by Sheehan and Nolan (1982) suggested significant differences between the three sectors in per pupil expenditure in

1978/9, with estimates of £621 in vocational schools, £456 in community/comprehensive schools and £429 in voluntary secondary schools. The main differential was in terms of non-pay expenditure. A report by Nolan and Burke (1991) examined the financial position of Catholic voluntary secondary schools in the free education scheme and assessed the impact of the level of state funding on the range of educational provision in these schools. The report indicated that the schools were in 'serious crises' (p. 24) as the gap between school running costs and the level of state funding had widened in the 1980s. In particular, the report highlighted the increasing costs of administration, maintenance, insurance, security and malicious damages while the state support was decreasing in real terms (*ibid.*). It was found that the level of capitation grant made available to the schools did not keep pace with increasing inflation. Nolan and Burke (1991) argued that these trends had resulted in "...a steady erosion of the range and quality of the educational services provided by the schools" (p. 25). The audited accounts of the schools they inspected demonstrated that due to the shortfall of funding, the Catholic voluntary secondary schools raised 12 per cent of their total school income; an increasing proportion of that income was allocated for hiring part-time teachers; schools were carrying substantial deficits; and the expenditure on teaching materials and administration was at a minimum level (p. 29).

Using Department of Education records, school accounts and survey data for 1988/9, Sheehan, Durkan and Thom (1994) found significant variation in expenditure between schools, even within the same sector. Statistical models were used to control for variation in school size, age of school buildings, location and number of laboratory/workshop subjects. Comparing like with like in this way, expenditure was found to be significantly higher for vocational and community/comprehensive schools than for similar schools in the voluntary secondary sector. The ratio in vocational schools was 1.57 times the expenditure in voluntary secondary schools, with a ratio of 1.75 times for community/comprehensive schools.

In 1996 Minister for Education Niamh Bhreathnach established a steering group to explore the funding of second-level schools. The Technical Working Group was engaged to draw up a recommended transparent funding framework that would ensure equal treatment of different schools within the second-level sector. The report (later to be known as the Blackstock report after the Chairman of the Steering Group), completed in 1999, noted the lack of reliable and easily accessible data on schools in individual sectors, particularly in relation to operating costs and school buildings. In order to facilitate comparisons across the second-level sector in the future, the report recommended setting up a post-

primary accommodation database and a computerised database of expenditure covering all state-funded schools. One of the challenges highlighted by the report was the fact that data on vocational schools expenditure were submitted only in aggregate form for each VEC (more detailed data was available in the DES on comprehensive, community and voluntary secondary schools). The report argued that the system of funding of vocational schools lacked transparency and may thus “...lead to perceptions of inequality of treatment as between individual schools within a VEC scheme” (pp. 41). It was recommended that a formula funding approach taking account of student enrolment, insurance and the cost of teaching materials should be used to allocate most (initially 90 per cent) of the total non-pay funding, with the balance allocated as supplementary funding to cover capacity utilisation, age/condition/size of school and location (pp. 41-42).

Although many years have passed since the completion of the Blackstock Report, many differences remain between second-level sectors regarding funding provision from the state. Rationalisation of spending on schools has meant an overhaul of the VEC sector, whereby 33 VECs have been restructured into 16 Education and Training Boards. The development of a single payroll service for VECs is also being progressed. Chaplain posts in community and vocational schools are funded by the state, at an estimated cost of €9 million per year, but not in voluntary secondary schools (DES, 2011c). It is not yet clear what funding model will be used in the new Educate Together second-level schools; at primary level, their schools are currently funded by the state (through a capitation grant and teacher salaries) with some assistance towards the running costs of the patron body provided by a philanthropic organisation.

As was the case at the time of the Blackstock report in 1999, the lack of availability of comparable statistical data presents a challenge when gauging the funding allocated to schools across the three second-level sectors. This is mainly due to the fact that funding is provided as a block grant to VECs, who then divide the funds between the schools in their area, according to the needs of these schools. The breakdown of VEC expenditure is thus not available at central level. Annual financial reports give a detailed breakdown of such expenditure but not all VECs publish such reports online and the most recent data relate to 2010. In addition, it can be difficult to disentangle the costs related to junior and senior cycle provision from those related to further education and other programmes for adults. Table 6.3 demonstrates what data are available from the DES regarding the funding of second-level education. Unfortunately, salary costs for teaching and non-teaching staff do not differentiate secondary schools from those in the community/comprehensive sector.

TABLE 6.3A The DES 2012 Estimates for the Second-Level Sector⁵⁶

Categories	2012 Estimate (€000)
Salaries etc. of teachers in secondary, comprehensive and community schools	1,148,095
Grants to secondary school authorities and other grants and services in respect of secondary schools	103,800
Salaries etc. of non-teaching staff in secondary, comprehensive and community schools including special needs assistants and clerical officers	50,345
Superannuation of secondary, comprehensive and community school teachers	351,131
Comprehensive and community schools – running costs	45,492
Annual grants to vocational education committees (excluding certain grants in respect of specialist colleges and student support)	727,245
Payments to local authorities in respect of superannuation charges	219,918
State examinations commission	54,702
Building, equipment and furnishing of national and second level schools	357,000
Secondary and Comprehensive/Community Teachers Salary Costs	1,001,524
Capitation payments comprising of the per capita grant, ancillary grants for secretaries and caretakers, the Protestant block grant and the remote area boarding grant	102,047
Equipment grants	1,313
Grants for Irish and bilingual schools: Additional grants payable to managers of recognised secondary schools in which Irish is used as a medium of instruction	440
Clerical Staff in Secondary Schools	5,690
General running expenses of 14 Comprehensive and 79 Community Schools	
Pay	17,342
Non-Pay	28,150

Source: Department of Education.

The differences between sectors and schools regarding funding received from the Department of Education can be summed up as follows:

1. Funding models vary across the three sectors even though equalisation measures have applied to make provision “fair” across sectors. For example, community and comprehensive schools receive an annual budget rather than a per student grant.
2. Additional funding may be payable on the basis of student need; for example, DEIS schools get a higher capitation rate per student. In addition, additional teaching resources are allocated on the basis of the number of students with special educational needs.
3. Different schemes are in place to provide for non-teaching staff. Some secretaries and caretakers are still directly employed by the Department under an older scheme, whereas in some schools a per capita grant is paid to cover the employment of such staff (personal communication, 19 June 2013, Department of Education).

⁵⁶ Estimate of the amount required in the year ending 31 December 2013 for the salaries and expenses of the Office of the Minister for Education and Skills, for certain services administered by that Office, and for the payments of certain grants and grants-in-aid.

Differences in the funding received and costs incurred by schools will be discussed in greater detail in the following section on the basis of new survey data.

Schools were authorised in 2009 to consider the separate grants they receive (e.g. capitation, ancillary services, book grant, etc.) to be a common grant that they can use according to their school's priorities. The Department's stated policy is to streamline the payment of grants, in order to ease the administrative burden on schools and on the Department itself. The eventual goal is to make all payments in a single grant. The Department is currently consulting with the management bodies and upgrading I.T. systems in order to advance this (DES, 2011c).

6.3 RESEARCH FINDINGS: STATE FUNDING

6.3.1 Capitation Grant

This section explores the size of the capitation grant received by Irish second-level schools and its use. The capitation grant is paid to schools within the free education scheme based on the number of recognised pupils enrolled in the schools at the rate applicable at the time the grant is issued (see www.education.ie). In the school year 2012/2013, the standard grant is €306 per capita, less the contribution to teachers' salaries of €562 per whole time equivalent (WTE) teacher on the DES payroll (see www.jmb.ie).⁵⁷ The size of the student body determines the amount received from the state; as the funding is provided in instalments,⁵⁸ one interviewee felt that the funding is uneven: '*[...] the larger your student cohort the greater the grant, even though two-thirds of the year it's €306 per student and one-third of the year it's €317*' [Trustee 1].

Budget 2012 provided for a 2 per cent reduction in the funding for capitation and related grants to primary and second-level schools in both 2012 and 2013 and a further 1 per cent reduction is planned for 2014 and 2015. The interviews with Trustees and educational stakeholders demonstrated general dissatisfaction with the level of funding received from the government.

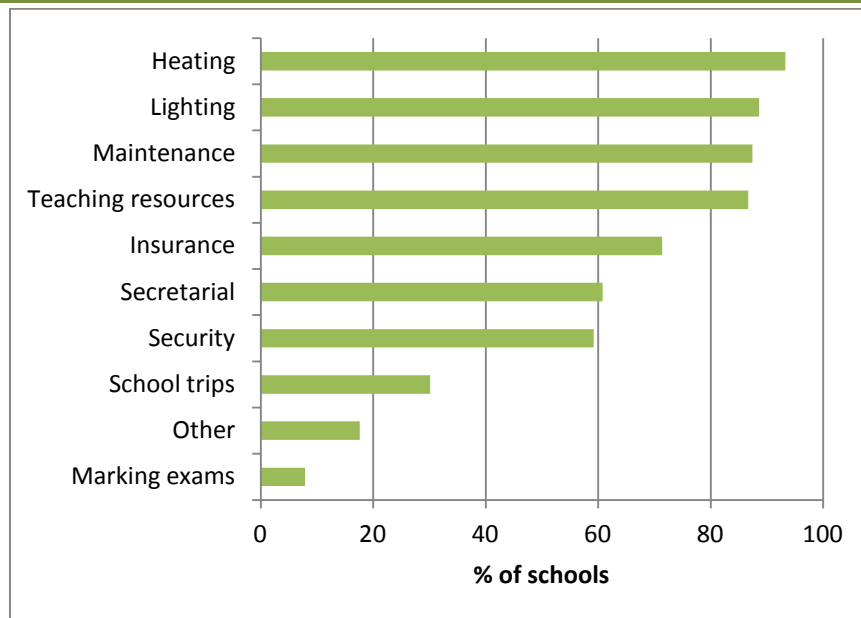
The capitation grants [...] are being reduced and grants for other services have been reduced and it's a major concern to many of the schools. [Trustee 1]

⁵⁷ Compared to 2011/2012 the standard per capita grant per student was reduced by €11. For further information see: <http://www.jmb.ie/school-grants>.

⁵⁸ Where the school's enrolment increases or decreases, the September and January payments are calculated on the basis of the 2011/2012 enrolment and the full adjustment for current year enrolment is applied to the April payments (www.jmb.ie)

Funding to community and comprehensive schools is provided on a budget basis. In practice, this means that the schools present their budgets to the Department for each following year. These budgets take into account student numbers, but also additional factors which vary from school to school such as age of buildings, size of school, etc. The budgets are negotiated between each individual school and the Department. One stakeholder felt that compared to the voluntary secondary sector, community/comprehensive schools receive more money from the government [Educational Stakeholder 1].

FIGURE 6.1 Use of Capitation Grant Among Second-Level Schools



Source: Survey of second-level school principals.

Figure 6.1 shows the ways in which second-level schools use the capitation grant. It is evident that it is used mainly for heating (93%), lighting (89%), general building maintenance (87%) and teaching materials/resources (97%). A majority of second-level schools use the capitation grant to pay for insurance (71%), secretarial services (61%) and security (59%). A smaller number of schools use the grant for school trips, marking exams and other activities.

Representatives of the voluntary secondary sector felt strongly that while all sectors receive the capitation grant, voluntary secondary schools need to cover various costs from the grant, unlike the other two sectors:

I'm not sure, the actual capitation grant I think may be the same but it's when you add on all the other things that you get that the voluntary secondary school doesn't get. For example the, the insurance is paid by the Department for community schools. [Trustee 6]

Table 6.3B shows the extent to which the use of the capitation grant varies across school sectors. The percentage of schools using the capitation grant for heating, maintenance and teaching resources is fairly similar across the three sectors. However, significant differences are evident in relation to other items of expenditure. Voluntary secondary schools are much more likely to have to spend the grant on insurance since no state aid is provided for this purpose to these schools; 93 per cent use the grant to pay for insurance compared with 57 per cent of vocational schools and 23 per cent of community/comprehensive schools. This is not surprising, considering the fact that voluntary secondary schools do not receive additional state support for covering insurance-related expenses.⁵⁹ A similar pattern is evident in relation to security and secretarial services. Over three-quarters (76 per cent) of voluntary secondary schools spend the grant on security compared with over half (55 per cent) of community/comprehensive schools and just under a third (32 per cent) of vocational schools. Over four-fifths (83%) of voluntary secondary schools spend their grant on secretarial services compared with 55 per cent of community/comprehensive schools and just a quarter of vocational schools. Voluntary secondary schools are also somewhat more likely to spend the capitation grant on lighting than the other school sectors. Vocational schools are found to be more likely to spend the grant on school trips than voluntary secondary or community/comprehensive schools.

TABLE 6.3B Use of the Capitation Grant by School Sector

	Voluntary Secondary	Vocational	Community/ Comprehensive
	%	%	%
Heating	95.3	89.0	95.7
Lighting*	93.1	82.0	85.1
Maintenance	90.1	83.0	87.5
Teaching resources	84.9	87.0	93.6
Insurance***	93.1	57.0	22.9
Secretarial services***	83.2	25.0	55.3
Security***	76.3	32.0	55.3
School trips*	26.7	39.4	22.9

Note: *** differences are statistically significant at the $p < .001$ level; * $p < .05$. N=320.

Interviews with stakeholders from the voluntary secondary sector revealed dissatisfaction with the unequal funding of different sectors of second-level school.

⁵⁹ The Blackstock report (1999) notes that the funding model for second-level schools should also take account of insurance arrangements for the three sectors: 'either a common system of insurance should be introduced or, alternatively, payments should be made to voluntary secondary and vocational schools to compensate for the state funding of the principal insurance costs of comprehensive and community schools' (p. 41). At present voluntary secondary schools pay insurance from the capitation grant and vocational schools from the block grant under 'non-pay' heading. For vocational schools funding for heating and lighting are also provided as a part of non-pay grant. Pay grant covers administration, caretaking, cleaning and instruction (personal communication, 20 June, VEC).

The VEC, they get their capitation grant, the teacher claw back, all their insurance is paid by the state, all of their security is paid by the state, all of their caretaking is paid by the state, on top of what they get in terms of the capitation grant. [Trustee 1]

Chaplains are paid for in the VEC and the community comprehensive scheme, they're not paid for in the voluntary secondary [sector]. [Trustee 4]

Government funding is equally a concern for Protestant schools and a new type of second-level school – Educate Together.

We are given less teachers now because they have increased the pupil/teacher ratios for fee-paying schools much more. So we have less teachers paid for and no other funding now and they've made it clear they are not going to give us anymore capital funding either/.../ the XXX Church is not in a position actually to give us money for anything. [Educational Stakeholder 6]

We were quite anxious to seize the opportunity to trial all three models [of partnership] /.../ we think that schools, the educational infrastructure should be owned by the state and it should be [...] maintained by the state and should be allocated to particular suppliers in accordance to community needs. [Trustee 11]

When discussing the provision of the capitation grant, one stakeholder argued that while voluntary secondary schools and community/comprehensive schools have more discretion regarding the use of capitation grant, the principals of vocational schools are more restricted:

The other schools are individually sort of given capitation grants and whatever and have a fair amount of discretion, a principal of a VEC school wouldn't have necessarily the direct funds of the capitation grant even though he might calculate how he funds the VEC aggregation of the schools in its bundle, you know. [Educational Stakeholder 2]

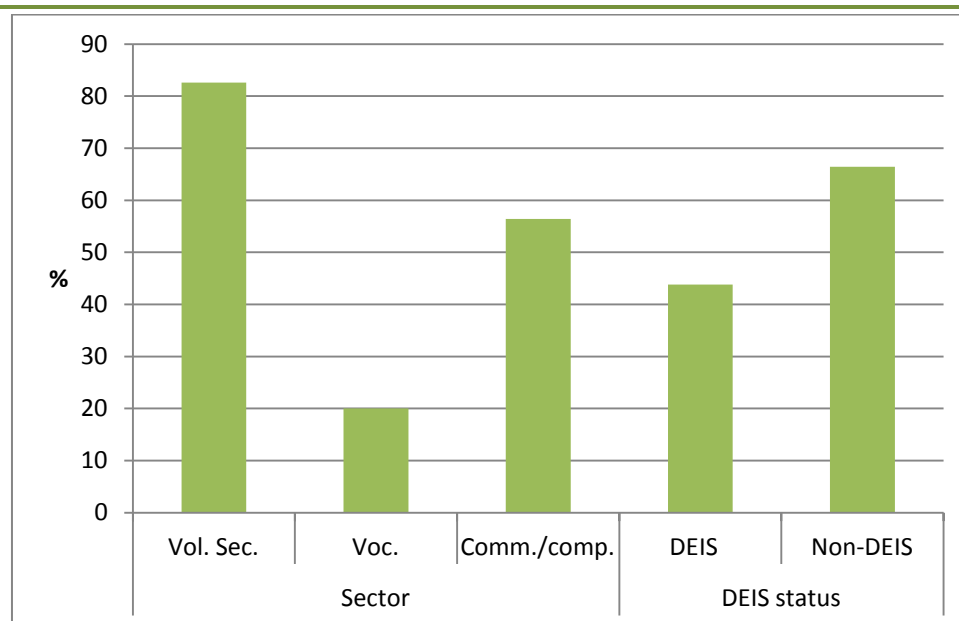
6.3.2 Specific Grants

In addition to the standard capitation grant, voluntary secondary schools are eligible for a number of other grants: the school services support fund (SSSF), grants for secretaries, grants for caretakers, Irish and bilingual grants, book grants and programme grants.⁶⁰ Figure 6.2 shows significant differences between sectors in receipt of a separate grant for caretaking and/or secretarial services; four-fifths of voluntary secondary schools receive such a grant compared with a fifth of vocational schools and over half (56%) of community/comprehensive schools. Overall, DEIS schools are significantly less likely to receive a grant than

⁶⁰ See <http://debates.oireachtas.ie/dail/2012/05/01/00095.asp>, accessed 20/06/2013. It should be noted, however, that the grant for secretaries and caretakers may not be sufficient and any shortfall needs to be covered by the schools themselves.

other schools, a pattern that reflects the distribution of DEIS schools across sectors. Among voluntary secondary schools, 91 per cent of DEIS schools receive this grant compared with 81 per cent of non-DEIS schools.

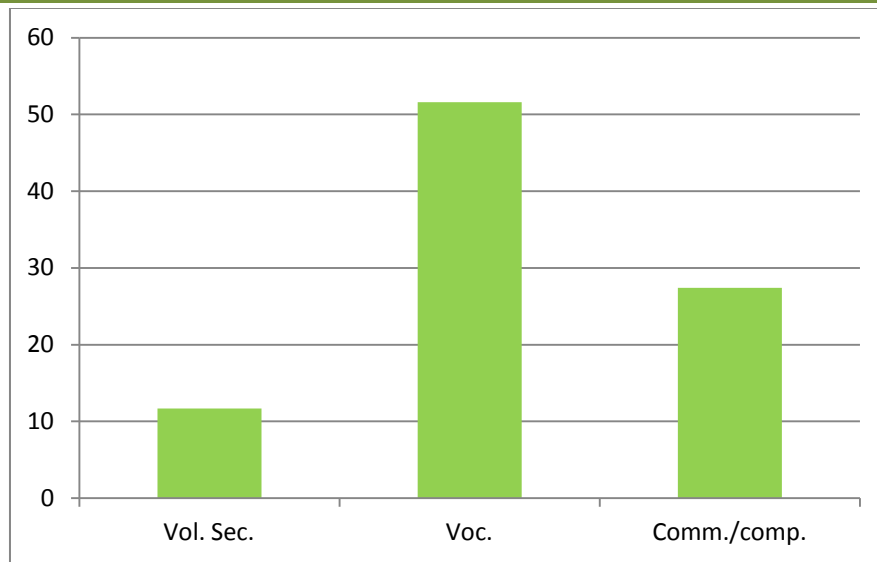
FIGURE 6.2 Receipt of Grant for Caretaking and/or Secretarial Services



Source: Survey of second-level school principals.

Schools are also eligible for additional funding to reflect the composition of their student body in terms of socio-economic disadvantage and special educational needs (SEN). Figure 6.3 shows that voluntary secondary schools are significantly less likely to be designated disadvantaged and in receipt of DEIS funding than other school types (12 per cent compared with 57 per cent of vocational schools and 27 per cent of community/comprehensive schools). Among schools with DEIS status, the average per capita funding does not vary across school sectors. Over half (57 per cent) of DEIS school principals felt that DEIS status had a positive effect in attracting students to the school, over a third (34 per cent) felt it had no effect while only just over a tenth (11 per cent) considered it had a negative effect.

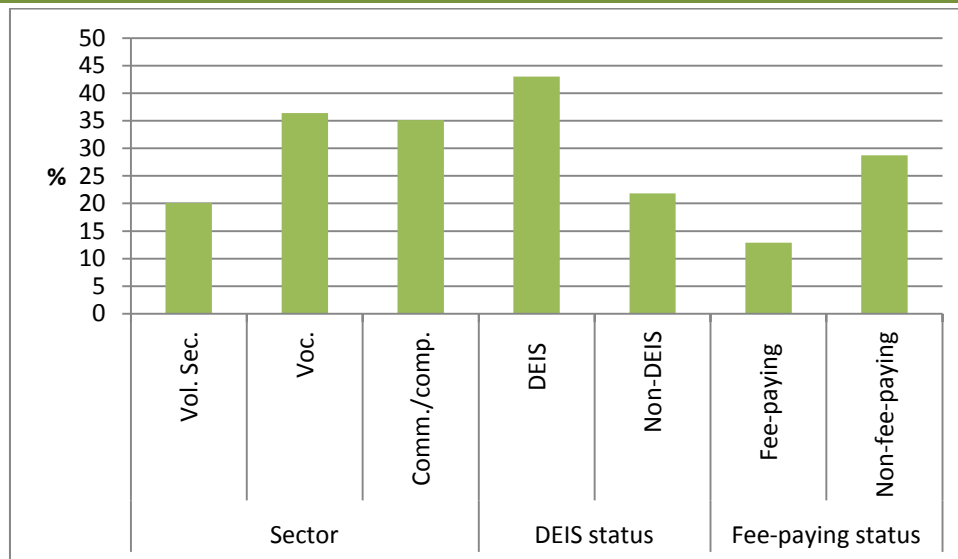
FIGURE 6.3 Receipt of DEIS Funding



Source: Survey of second-level school principals.

Figure 6.4 shows the proportion of schools receiving additional funding for SEN students by school characteristics. Voluntary secondary schools are significantly less likely to receive such funding (20 per cent do so compared with 36% of vocational schools and 35 per cent of community/comprehensive schools). As might be expected, DEIS schools are significantly more likely to receive such funding than other schools (43 per cent compared with 22 per cent). Fee-paying schools are much less likely than other schools to receive such funding (13 per cent compared with 29 per cent). Schools that are oversubscribed (that is, have more applicants than places) are somewhat less likely to receive SEN funding than other schools (21 per cent compared with 31 per cent).

FIGURE 6.4 Receipt of Additional Funds for Special Educational Needs Students



Source: Survey of second-level school principals.

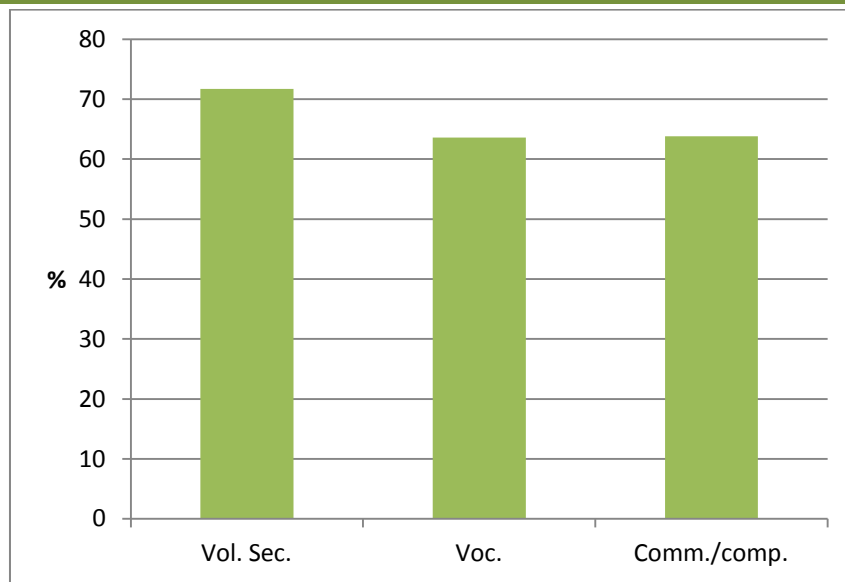
6.3.3 Capital Grants

Provided that the Trustee approves an application, the Board of management may seek capital funding from the Department of Education and Skills under the following categories:⁶¹

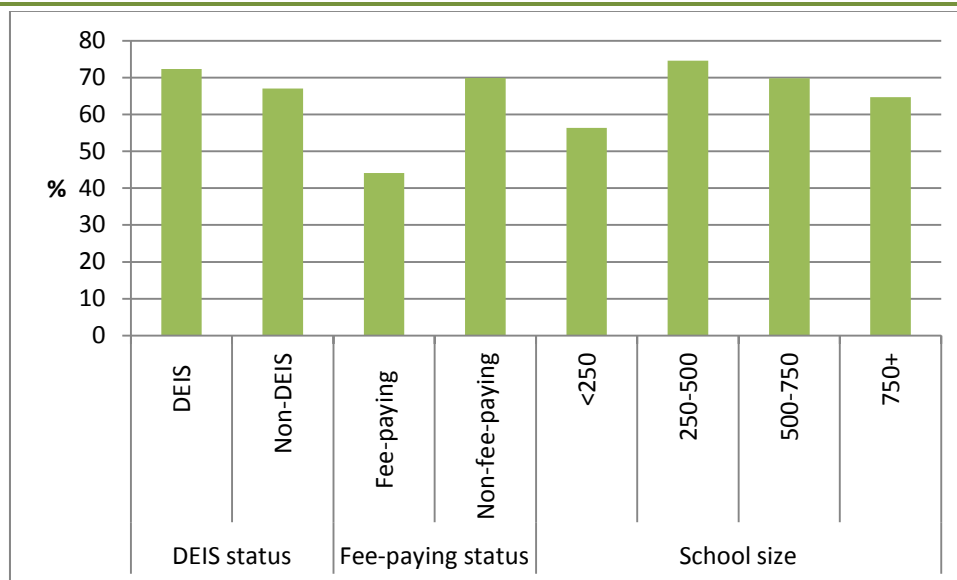
- New building and extensions.
- Extensive refurbishment/conversion works (over €500,000).
- Improvement works (under €500,000).
- Emergency works (See Circular 18/2011).
- Temporary accommodation.
- Health and safety.

School principals were asked whether their school had received any capital grants from the state in the three years prior to the survey. It should be noted that the receipt of such grants is likely to depend on a number of factors, principally the age of the school. As voluntary secondary schools tend to be housed in older buildings than vocational or community/comprehensive schools (Tuohy, 2013), the patterns found should be interpreted in light of this context. The majority of second-level schools had received capital grants over the specified period; voluntary secondary schools were somewhat more likely to receive grants (71% compared with 64 per cent of vocational and community/comprehensive schools) but this difference between sectors is not statistically significant (see Figure 6.5). Receipt of capital grants did not vary significantly by whether the school had DEIS status. However, fee-paying schools were less likely to have received a capital grant than non-fee-paying schools (44 per cent compared with 70 per cent). Some variation was found by school size, with the smallest schools (those with fewer than 250 students) less likely to receive grants than other schools (see Figure 6.6).

⁶¹ See <http://www.jmb.ie/school-grants>

FIGURE 6.5 Receipt of Capital Grant by School Sector

Source: Survey of second-level school principals.

FIGURE 6.6 Receipt of Capital Grant by School Type

Source: Survey of second-level school principals.

A logistic regression model was used to look at the simultaneous influence of different school characteristics on receipt of capital grants (see Table 6.3). Taking account of school size, DEIS status and fee-paying status, voluntary secondary schools are somewhat more likely to have received a capital grant than vocational or community/comprehensive schools; this pattern is not surprising given the older average age of school buildings in the voluntary secondary sector. All else being equal, DEIS schools are somewhat more likely, and fee-paying schools less likely, to have received capital grants. Small schools (<250 students) are

significantly less likely than other schools to have received grants, even taking account of their sector and status.

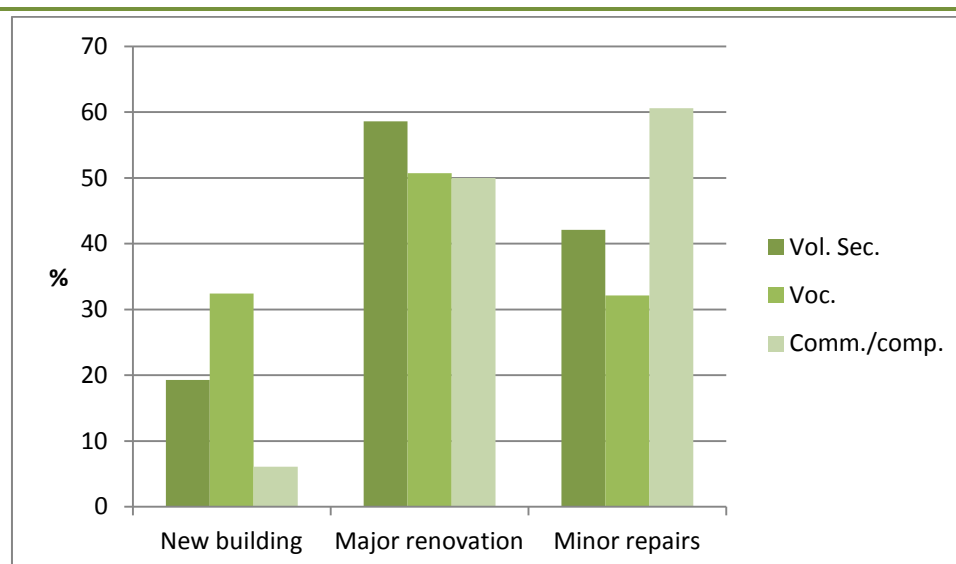
TABLE 6.3C Logistic Regression Model of Receipt of Capital Grants

	Coefficient
Constant	0.464
<i>School sector:</i>	
Vocational	-0.666*
Community/comprehensive (Base: Voluntary secondary)	-0.785*
DEIS school (Base: Non-DEIS)	0.566*
Fee-paying school (Base: Non-fee paying school)	-1.206**
<i>School size:</i>	
250-500	0.988*
500-750	0.647±
>750 (Base: <250)	0.613±

Note: *** p<.001; ** p<.01; * p<.05; ± p<.10.

In terms of the type of grant received, over half (55 per cent) of those receiving a grant used it for major renovation of the school building, 42 per cent used it for minor repairs to the school building while over a fifth (21 per cent) used it to construct a new school building (see Figure 6.7). These figures total to more than 100 per cent because schools may have received more than one grant and/or used a grant for multiple purposes.

FIGURE 6.7 Type of Capital Grant Received (among those who received grants)



Source: Survey of second-level school principals.

Vocational schools were more likely than other schools to have used the grant for a new building (32 per cent compared with 19 per cent of voluntary secondary schools and 6 per cent of community/comprehensive schools). Community/comprehensive schools were more likely than other school types to have used the grant for minor repairs (61 per cent compared with 42 per cent of voluntary secondary schools and 32 per cent of vocational schools). There was no significant variation across school sectors in the use of grants for major renovation.

Any major development for which funding is sought from the government needs to be approved by the Trustees: *...if there was to be a capital development in a school, the trust board, the trust must, must approve of that.* [Trustee 2]

For instance the maintenance comes down to the board of management, for what grant aid they can get from the government departments, particularly where it comes to building extensions, that's all capital grants, which have to be approved, well first of all it has to be, applications have to be approved by the trustee before it goes to the Department and then if they were fortunate to get that grant aid well then it's a full compliance with regard to tendering of the project, appointing all the design team and fulfilling it. [Trustee 8]

Even if the Trustee approves the application, the government does not always grant an agreement to fund the project: 'if they agree to it' [Educational Stakeholder 1]. In some cases, the schools cover the necessary costs through fundraising:

Some of our schools, maybe the Department (DES) doesn't agree that there should be additional [work done], some of our schools would have gone ahead and fundraised for various things locally and, and built themselves or maybe part funded by the department and local contributions. It depends, it really depends on the exact situation you're in. [Educational Stakeholder 1]

Any smaller maintenance work is normally covered by the school budget: *That's all down to the school management to do out of their school budget, out of their normal school budget* [Educational Stakeholder 1]. The Trustees have an important role to play in monitoring the work of management boards as on some occasions *...boards of management haven't been keeping a tight rein on their capital expenditure and have gone beyond the, gone outside the protocols within which they must operate* [Trustee 5], in which case the schools have been forced to seek assistance from the Trustee.

Receipt of capital funding was a cause of concern for Protestant schools since they (as fee-paying schools) no longer receive capital grants:

No, we used to [receive capital grant] and we had, I mean our buildings are good at this stage, so in most cases schools were able over the years they did get support from the state, money was a bit more around. But in the current climate they are indicating to us that we are not going to get anything now. [Educational Stakeholder 6]

Smaller maintenance and repair issues were often covered by the Summer Works grant, which was discontinued in 2012 due to budgetary cuts in the education sector:

Smaller issues will relate to, but yet important issues, where there's roof difficulties, roof problems, repairs were required, where there may be windows requiring replacement and the Department will view these repairs in the context of health and safety and of how important they are. So, for instance, in recent years, in the better times there was always what would be commonly referred to as the Summer Works Programmes, so that might for instance be replacing floors, doors, windows, small extension, maybe toilet facilities, etc. This year, 2012, there's no Summer Works Projects because there's no funds going on. [Trustee 8]

Currently, if a school is experiencing serious issues with the building, an emergency application can be made to the Department of Education and Skills who then evaluate the situation.

For instance, if there's, for instance if there's issues with regard to, say health and safety issues regarding fire safety, escape routes, lack of lighting, lack of egress from a building, normally that will engage, you'll have the local fire officers in to evaluate, to set a standard and to insist that the building must meet regulations, then the board of management would go to the Department seeking emergency funding. Once that's received then the works are undertaken in the normal manner and that's repaired. [Trustee 8]

Should the school need to upgrade its facilities, the board of management has to fund the work required: 'upgrading facilities, which would or could be defined, for instance, as maybe non-essential, that's where it will come down to the coffers of the board of management'[Trustee 8]. On occasion, schools may need to draw down bank loans for the funding of a particular development within the school. A representative of the VEC sector highlighted the benefits of the Education office dealing with a number of vocational schools in their area in terms of dealing with issues such as major capital works and maintenance: "all of that is taken out of your hair" [Educational Stakeholder 7].

6.4 FUNDING FROM PRIVATE SOURCES

6.4.1 Parental Voluntary Contribution

Voluntary contributions may be requested from parents provided it is clearly stated that there is no compulsion to pay. However, certain charges may be legitimately requested from students or their parents as follows:

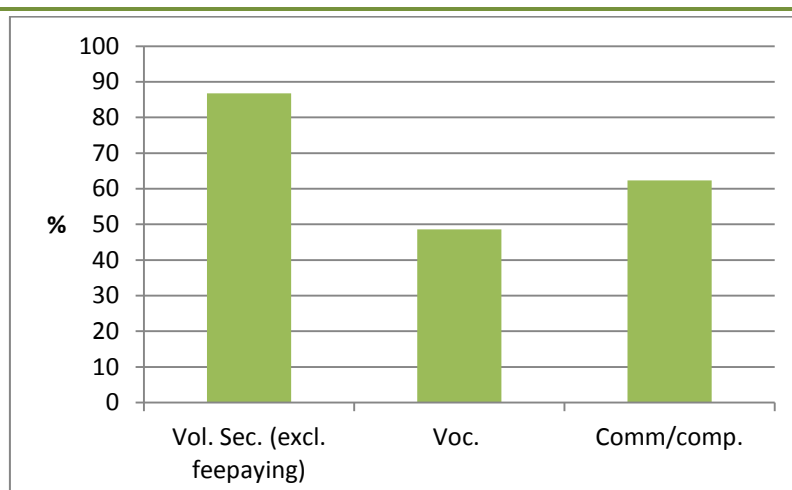
- Payment for school books or photocopied material provided by the school where the charge is reasonable and reflects the true costs concerned;
- Charges for meals and refreshments which are not compulsory;
- Charges for services and activities which students may avail of and which are not compulsory, e.g. supervised after-school study, school tours and trips of an educational nature such as visits to theatres or sporting events.⁶²

However, until this study, there has been a lack of information on the level and use of parental voluntary contributions. Interviews with stakeholders indicated that parental voluntary contributions from parents, the extent of which varies across the schools, form an important source of income for schools:

In the non-fee paying schools generally throughout Ireland parents are asked to give a voluntary contribution and that can range [...] from fifty Euros up to six or seven hundred Euros. [Trustee 2]

Principals were asked whether their school received parental voluntary contributions from parents of the students. Figure 6.8 shows clear and significant differences among school sectors: almost four out of five (87 per cent) of non-fee paying voluntary secondary schools receive such contributions compared with 62 per cent of community/comprehensive schools and under half (49 per cent) of vocational schools. DEIS schools are significantly less likely to receive parental contributions than non-DEIS schools (47 per cent compared with 73 per cent). Table 6.4 looks at the simultaneous impact of school sector and DEIS status on whether schools receive parental contributions.

⁶² See <http://www.jmb.ie/news/615-funding-a-october-returns>.

FIGURE 6.8 Whether School Receives Parental Voluntary Contributions

Source: Survey of second-level school principals.

All else being equal, vocational and community/comprehensive schools are much less likely to receive parental contributions than voluntary secondary schools. Over and above the impact of school sector, DEIS schools are much less likely to have parental contributions. In addition, a variable on whether the school is oversubscribed, that is, whether it receives more applications than it has available places, was included in the model. Oversubscribed schools are much more likely than other schools to receive parental voluntary contributions.

TABLE 6.4 Influence of School Sector on Receipt of Parental Voluntary Contributions

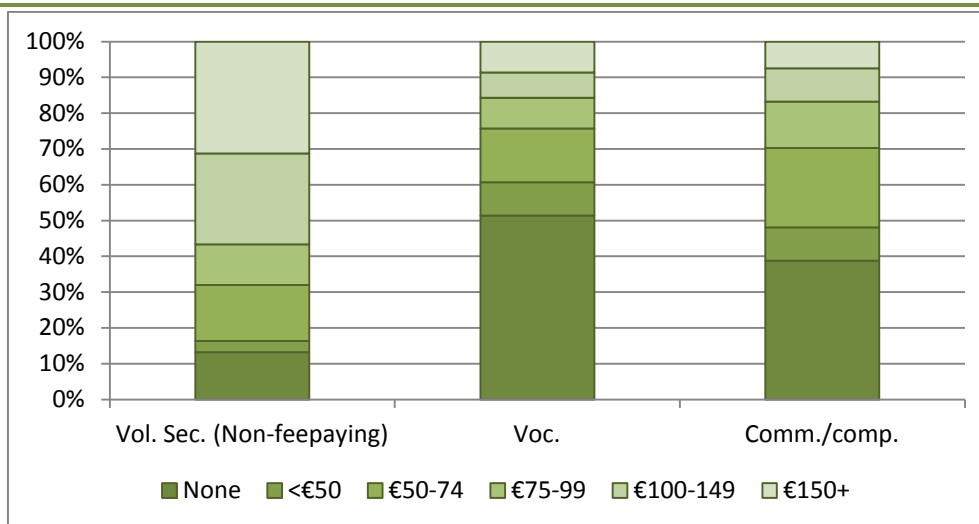
	Coefficient
Constant	1.792
<i>School sector:</i>	
Vocational	-1.575***
Community/comprehensive (Base: Voluntary secondary)	-1.237**
DEIS school (Base: Non-DEIS)	-0.874**
Oversubscribed school (Base: Not oversubscribed)	0.768*

Note: *** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$.

Information was collected on the level of parental voluntary contributions requested. Figure 6.9 combines information on whether the school receives parental voluntary contributions and the level of such contributions to give an overall picture of the reliance of different school types on this form of funding. There are stark differences between sectors in the level of contributions. Almost a third (31 per cent) of the non-fee paying voluntary secondary schools ask parents for €150 per year with a significant proportion – a fifth – asking for €200

or more a year. Fewer vocational and community/comprehensive schools receive such contributions and, when they do, the levels are much lower; the most frequent pattern for these sectors is €50-74 per year.

FIGURE 6.9 Amount of Parental Voluntary Contribution by School Sector



Source: Survey of second-level school principals.

The stakeholders noted that some parents may not be in a position to pay voluntary contributions to the school.

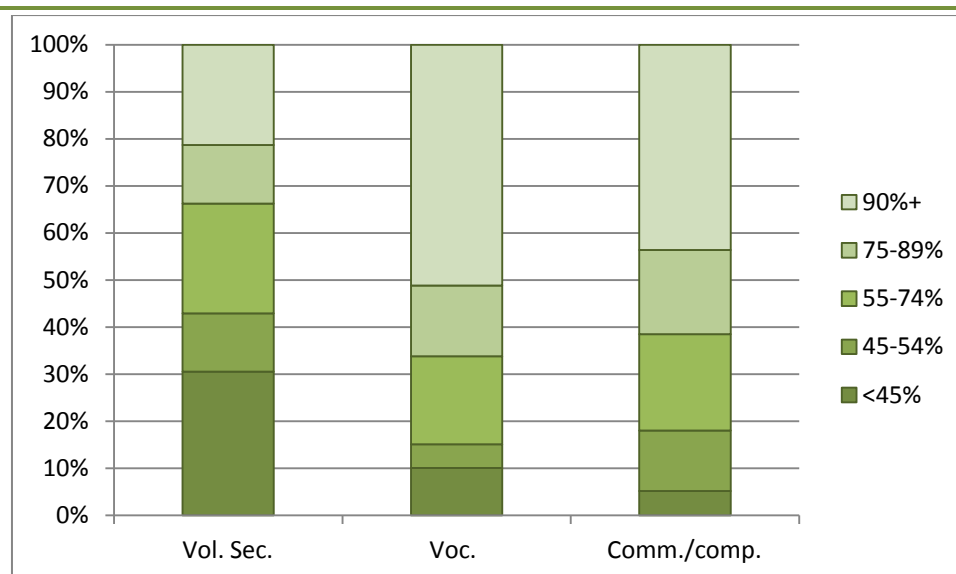
You'll have voluntary contributions from parents, but that has become more and more difficult as economic circumstances dictate. And in some cases it's almost non-existent schools in better off areas it would average around about two hundred /... / Over the summer ... fifty percent of parents haven't paid. [Trustee 2]

The following figure 6.10 shows that, where vocational and community/comprehensive schools are in receipt of a contribution, a higher proportion of parents pay the contribution than is the case for voluntary secondary schools. In two-thirds of vocational schools, more than 75 per cent of parents pay the charge while this is the case for only a third of voluntary secondary schools. In almost a third (31 per cent) of secondary schools, less than 45 per cent of parents pay the contribution. This pattern appears to reflect, at least in part, differences in the size of the contributions requested. Overall, a somewhat lower proportion of parents pay where the contribution levels are higher (with a modest correlation⁶³ of -0.13). DEIS secondary schools are less likely to ask for a voluntary contribution from parents but when they do so, they are much more likely to have low

⁶³ Correlations reflect the relationship between two variables, where 0 indicates no association and 1 indicates a perfect association. The size of this correlation means that fewer parents pay where the contribution requested is higher but that many other factors influence the proportion of parents paying the contribution.

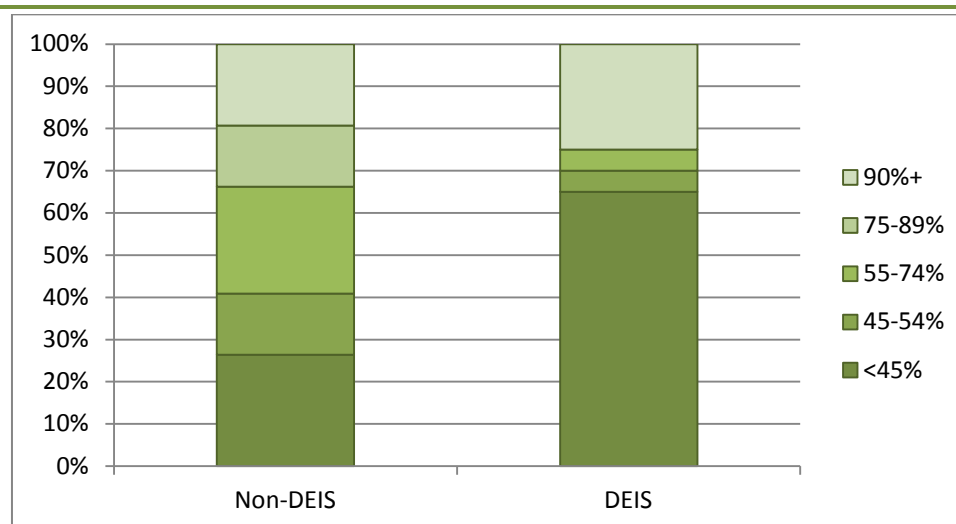
proportions of parents paying it (see Figure 6.11). In almost two-thirds of DEIS secondary schools, fewer than 45 per cent of parents pay the contribution compared with just over a quarter of non-DEIS secondary schools.

FIGURE 6.10 Proportion of Parents Paying the Contribution by School Sector (where the school receives a contribution)



Source: Survey of second-level school principals.

FIGURE 6.11 Proportion of Parents Paying the Contribution in DEIS and non-DEIS Secondary Schools (where the school receives a contribution)

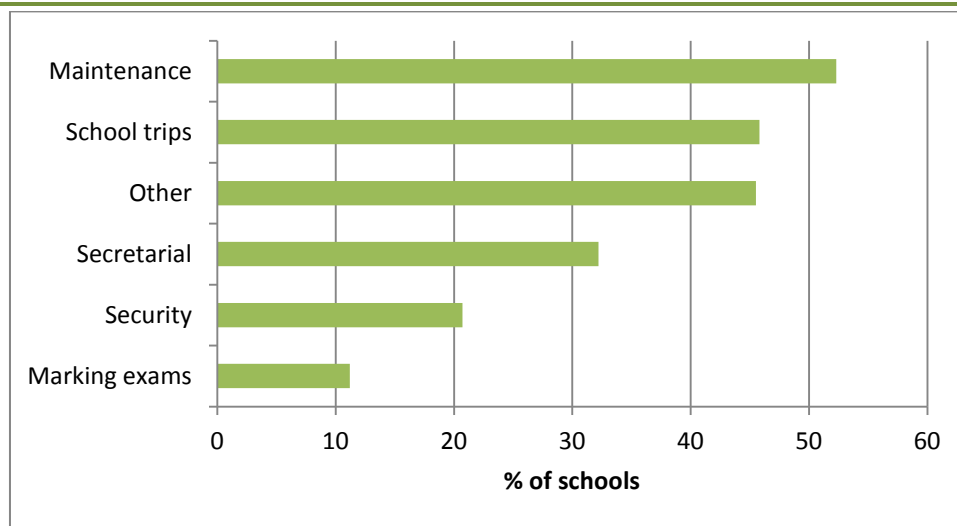


Source: Survey of second-level school principals.

Figure 6.12 shows that over half (52 per cent) of schools who receive parental contributions use that income to fund general building maintenance. A large proportion (45 per cent) use the contributions for school trips and for other functions. A third of schools rely on parental contributions to pay for secretarial

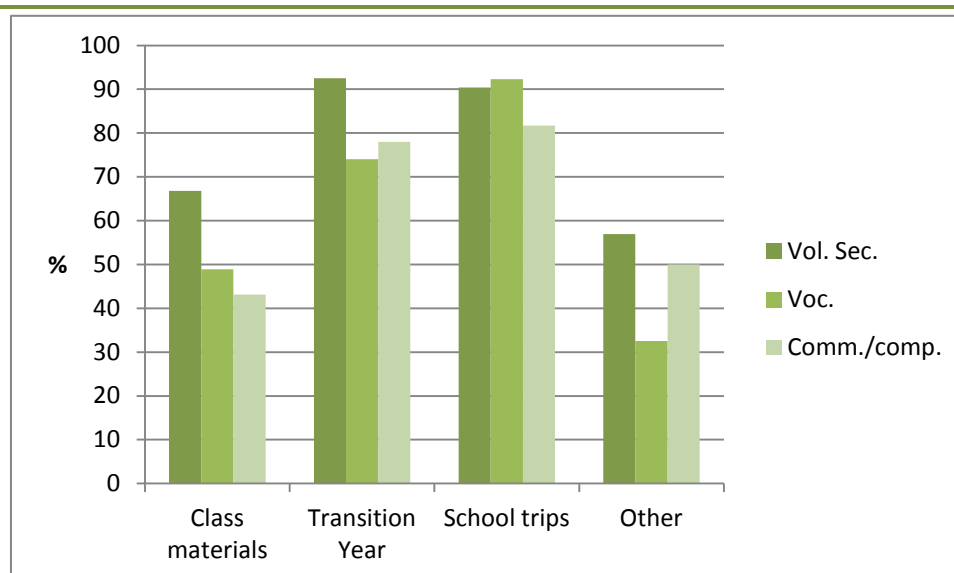
services while over a fifth use the contribution for security purposes. Voluntary secondary schools are much more likely to use the contribution for secretarial services (44 per cent compared with 16 per cent of vocational schools and 13% of community/comprehensive schools). They are also more likely to use the contribution for security (31 per cent compared with 5 per cent of vocational schools and 3 per cent of community/comprehensive schools). In contrast, the other school types are more likely to use the contribution for school trips; 70 per cent of vocational schools and 74 per cent of community/comprehensive schools do so compared with only 29 per cent of secondary schools.

FIGURE 6.12: Use of the Parental Voluntary Contribution



Source: Survey of second-level school principals.

In addition to the parental voluntary contribution, many schools ask families to pay for specific school activities (see Figure 6.13). Voluntary secondary schools are significantly more likely to charge for class materials (for example, for Art or for Home Economics) than other school types; two-thirds do so compared with just under a half of vocational schools and 43 per cent of community/comprehensive schools. The majority of all schools charge for Transition Year activities but voluntary secondary schools are much more likely to do so than other school sectors. There is little variation in the proportion of schools charging for school trips and exchanges, but community/comprehensive schools are somewhat less likely to do so. Voluntary secondary and community/comprehensive schools are more likely to charge for 'other' activities than vocational schools.

FIGURE 6.13 Proportion of Schools Charging for Activities by School Sector

Source: Survey of second-level school principals.

The presence and level of parental voluntary contributions were perceived by Trustee 6 as affecting parents' choice of school:

If a parent knows that the voluntary contribution in the school down the road is €400 but if they go to the VEC for free then [...] they might say I would have liked to have gone to school A but the VEC is going to cost me less money so, so I'll go there. [Trustee 6]

Some of the interviewees noted that receiving voluntary contributions from parents is even more important at the time of government cutbacks:

It cuts back on an awful lot of what you can do because [...] where else can you get funding if the amount you're getting from the Department is going down all the time ... If you're not getting voluntary donations from parents, you just don't have any leeway. [Educational stakeholder 1]

In addition to parental voluntary contributions and specific fees, many schools are also actively involved in fundraising. One Trustee highlighted the positive impact of fundraising on school morale:

Raising funds is not the easiest thing [...] raising funds has become part of schools; it has been part of schools for years and years and years [...]. Even schools with plenty of money are raising funds, it creates a spirit among the parents and that's why it's important to raise funds. [Trustee 12]

Fundraising is usually undertaken in order to generate resources for a specific purpose: provision of a hockey pitch or flood lights or tours abroad, buying a school bus. The interviewees felt that against the background of government cuts

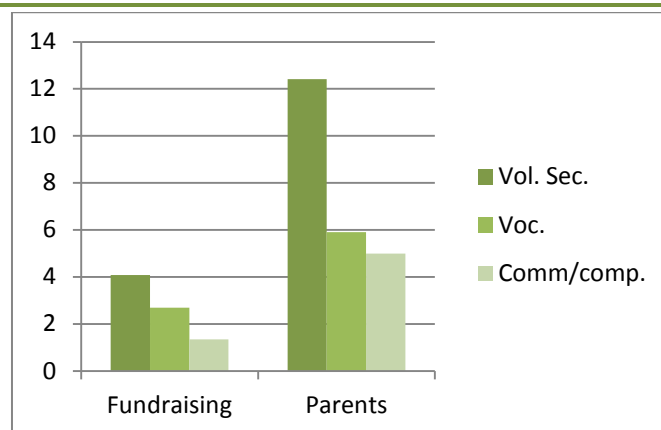
within the education sector, schools need to be more creative and proactive in generating additional funds:

We have to be creative and people like myself have to discover other sources of funding ... We wouldn't be able to balance our books without the money that's coming in. [Trustee 4]

Among the additional approaches used in generating additional funds, the interviewees mentioned fee income from overseas students who have come to Ireland to learn English; donations received from past pupils and hiring out premises/grounds.

Taking the percentage of total funding from fund-raising and the voluntary parental contribution together, Figure 6.14 clearly shows that voluntary secondary schools are much more dependent on these discretionary payments than other schools. Thus, an average of over 12 per cent of all income in voluntary secondary schools comes from parental contributions compared to 5 per cent in community/comprehensive schools. Although the proportion of income derived from fundraising is lower than that drawn from parental contributions, a similar disparity is evident between sectors. On average, 4 per cent of voluntary secondary school income is derived from fundraising compared with 1 per cent in community/comprehensive schools.

FIGURE 6.14 Average Percentage of Total Funding from Fund-Raising and Parental Contribution within Each School Sector



Source: Survey of second-level school principals.

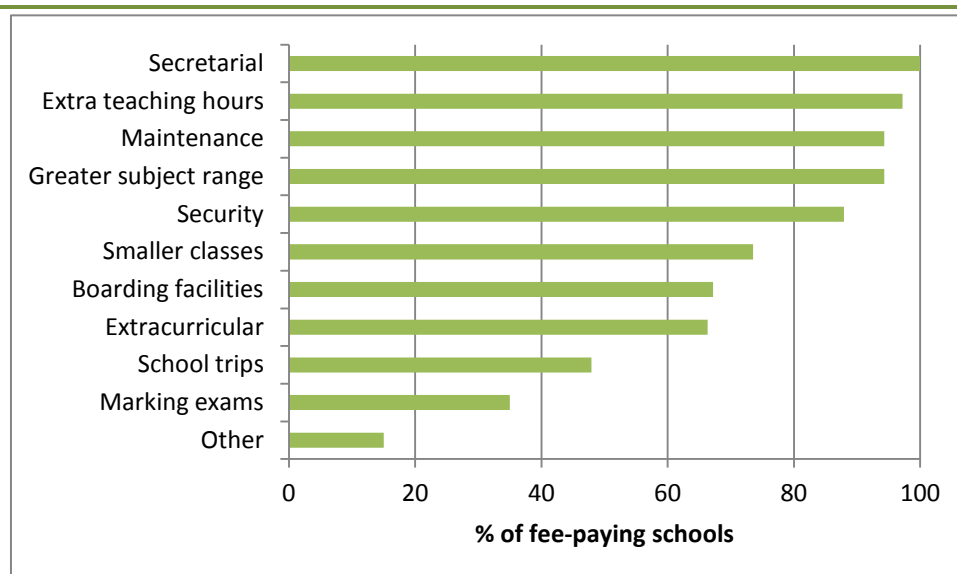
6.4.2 School Fees

At present, there are 55 fee-charging schools in Ireland, 32 of which are Catholic, 20 Protestant, two inter-denominational and one Jewish (DES, 2013). Current state funding covers teacher salaries. For the school year 2013/2014, the pupil-

teacher ratio for fee-paying schools has been increased to 23:1. Further changes may be on the horizon in the light of a recent report by the Department of Education and Skills (2013B) which focused on the funding of fee-paying schools⁶⁴.

There was a very large range of fees charged by the fee-paying schools in the sample, with almost two-thirds charging €5,000 or less per annum for day students. In almost half (49 per cent) of the cases, all students in the school paid fees. Almost a quarter (23 per cent) of the schools reporting that 90 per cent or fewer of the students paid fees. Fee-paying schools were asked about the use of their fee income. Schools used the income for a wide range of activities, including the day-to-day running of the school; this included secretarial services (100 per cent), general building maintenance (94 per cent) and security (89 per cent). However, the majority of fee-paying schools used this income to enhance teaching and learning in the school by paying for extra teaching hours (97 per cent), providing a greater range of subject (94 per cent) and having smaller class sizes (74 per cent). Some of the income was used for additional activities, such as school trips (48 per cent) and extracurricular provision (66 per cent). In keeping with these survey findings, Trustee 4 noted that fees from students help the schools to provide *...a wider curriculum or a very specialised co-curricular activity like a very extensive games programme or arts programme*.

FIGURE 6.15 Use of Fee Income Among Fee-paying Schools



Source: Survey of second-level school principals.

⁶⁴ Recent media reports indicate the intention of several fee-paying schools to enter the free educational scheme due to the recent cuts in the education sector, that also introduced the increase of teacher-student ratio in fee-paying schools.

The current debates on government funding for fee-paying schools have highlighted the cost incurring to the state should these schools enter into the free education scheme. This sentiment was echoed by one stakeholder from the fee-paying sector who also noted that some schools may need to change their status in the face of reduced financial support by the state:

I can see that somebody just looking and saying there's 100m that goes to pay all the teachers but the teachers are going to have to be paid. And there's no doubt, if the fee paying schools turned around tomorrow and said right we'll all go into the free school, the bill to the state would be enormous, much, much higher than they are now getting and I think the Minister knows that. So they are not going to rush in too quickly. I mean in some of the discussion we have with the Department they said would none of you think of going into the, becoming a comprehensive, nobody has yet gone for that but time may force some to. [Educational Stakeholder 6]

Being under pressure from two fronts, falling student numbers and reduced support from the state, some fee-paying schools have already made enquiries about joining the free scheme and two (Kilkenny College and Wilson's Hospital) have officially exited the fee-paying school sector while Monaghan Collegiate is currently in talks with the government about the move.⁶⁵ These developments are currently debated in the public media where it has been argued that should the students currently attending fee-paying schools transfer to Free Education schools, it will have implications for the state in terms of having to fund the capital costs for buildings and capitation grants for the running of schools in addition to the teacher salaries.

6.5 OVERALL SOURCES OF INCOME

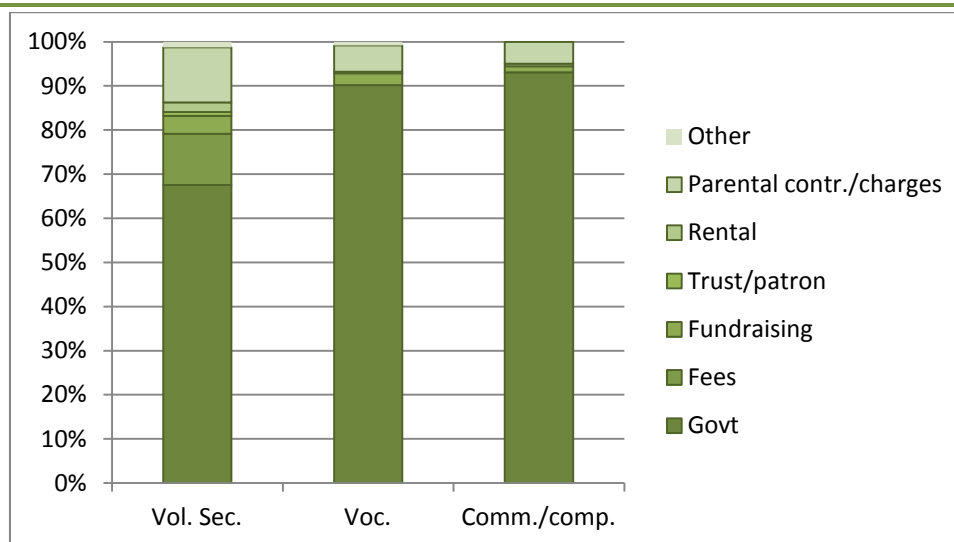
In order to provide a comprehensive picture of the funding of second-level schools, it is important to consider all of the income sources. Principals were asked to estimate the proportion of their total funding coming from different sources (see Figure 6.16). Clear differences are evident between the three school sectors; voluntary secondary schools receive an average of just over two-thirds of their funding from government sources while the proportion is much larger for the vocational and community/comprehensive schools (with an average of 90 per cent and 93 per cent respectively). As a result, voluntary secondary schools are more reliant on other sources of income, including fees, fundraising, renting out school premises and income from the Trust or other patron body. Striking differences are evident in relation to reliance on parental voluntary contributions,

⁶⁵ <http://www.independent.ie/lifestyle/education/flood-of-interest-in-free-education-scheme-from-fee-paying-schools-29166101.html>; <http://www.rte.ie/news/special-reports/2013/0222/369141-protestant-fee-paying-schools-eye-kilkenny-college-move/>, accessed 3 June 2013

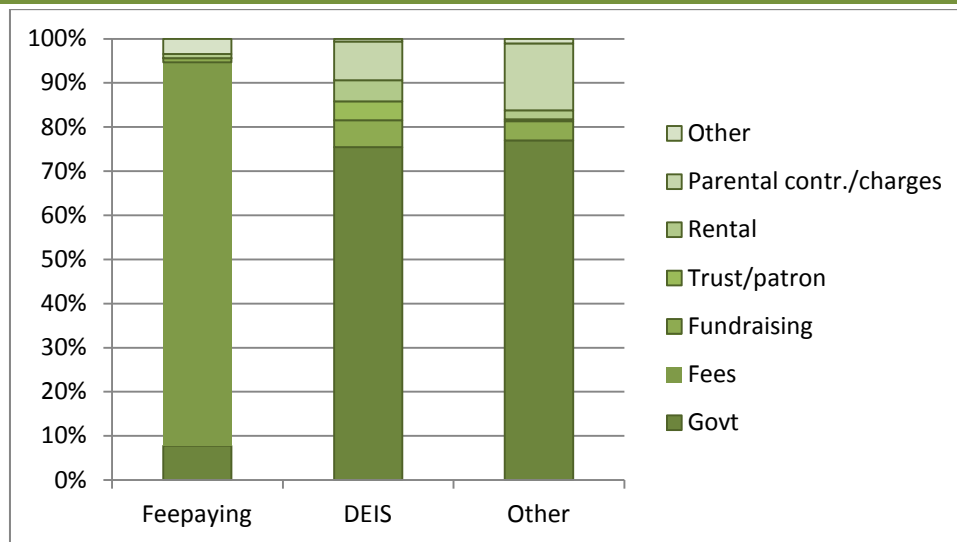
including charges to families for school activities. These contributions and charges make up an average of over 12 per cent of all income in voluntary secondary schools compared to an average of 6 per cent in vocational schools and 5 per cent in community/comprehensive schools.

There are, of course, important differences within the voluntary secondary sector. Figure 6.17 distinguishes between fee-paying, DEIS and other secondary schools in relation to their sources of income. The bulk (an average of 87 per cent) of income to fee-paying schools comes from fees, with a further 7.8 per cent coming from government sources. DEIS and non-DEIS schools have similar levels of reliance on state funding. However, non-DEIS schools have a greater reliance on parental contributions and charges – an average of 15.2 per cent of their income comes from this source compared with 8.7 per cent in DEIS schools. DEIS schools are more reliant on income from the Trust or patron body (4.3 per cent compared with 0.5 per cent), rental of the school premises (4.8 per cent compared with 2 per cent) and fundraising (6.1 per cent compared with 4.3 per cent).

FIGURE 6.16 Proportion of Funding from Different Sources by School Sector



Source: Survey of second-level school principals.

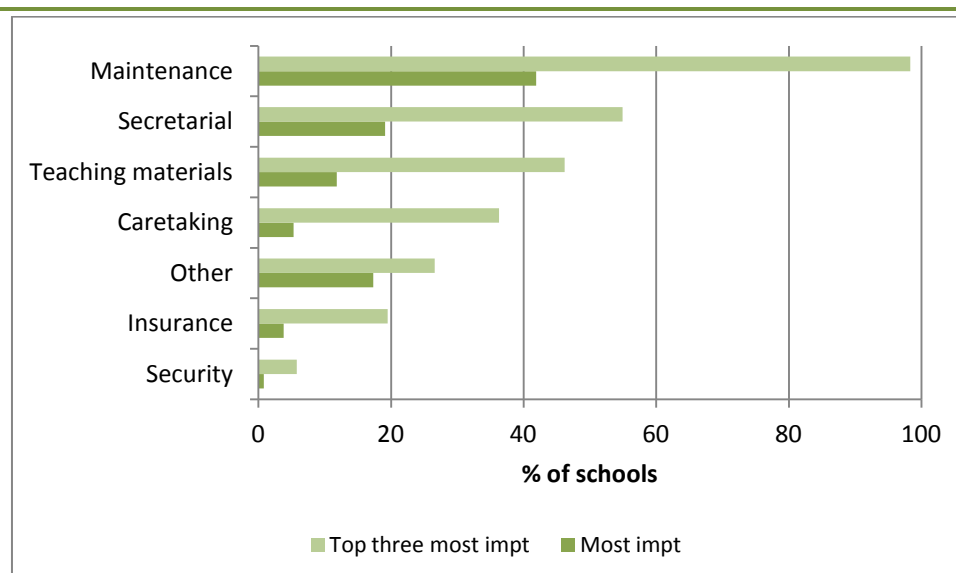
FIGURE 6.17 Proportion of Funding from Different Sources by School Characteristics, Voluntary Secondary Schools Only

Source: Survey of second-level school principals.

6.6 MAIN ITEMS OF EXPENDITURE IN SCHOOLS

School principals were asked to indicate the three most important items of expenditure in rank order from a specified list. Looking at the most important item, the largest single category, which was mentioned by 43 per cent of principals, was building maintenance (see Figure 6.18). Secretarial services were the most important item for almost a fifth (19 per cent) of schools. A similar pattern is evident when the three most important items of expenditure are analysed. Almost all (98 per cent) of schools mentioned building maintenance as one of the three most important items of expenditure. Secretarial services were mentioned by over half (54 per cent) of principals with teaching materials and caretaking also commonly included (46 per cent and 36 per cent respectively).

Clear differences in expenditure were evident by school sector. Voluntary secondary schools were more likely to cite secretarial services as the most important item of expenditure (29 per cent compared with 16 per cent of community/comprehensive schools and 4 per cent of vocational schools).

FIGURE 6.18 Most Important and Three Most Important Item(s) of Expenditure

Source: Survey of second-level school principals.

Voluntary secondary schools were much less likely to mention teaching materials than those in other sectors (4 per cent compared with 21 per cent). Vocational schools are more likely to mention building maintenance (49 per cent) compared with voluntary secondary or community/comprehensive schools (39 per cent). There were some differences evident among voluntary secondary schools, with DEIS schools more likely to mention insurance as the most important expenditure item while non-DEIS schools were more likely to mention building maintenance.

Educational stakeholder 7 commented on differences between voluntary secondary and vocational schools, noting that the former tend to be in older buildings that are expensive to maintain.

A lot of voluntary secondary schools are in old buildings, that are difficult to maintain and expensive to maintain /.../ So that in that sense there, there are probably outgoings that there mightn't be in a VEC school who've, I mean the first, well, the most schools were built in the 70s, you know, 70s up even though, because the old ones had been closed down obviously right, because they were very small operations. So in that sense you know and, and many of the non VEC schools were not purpose built as schools anyway, they were convents and monasteries that were converted.

Increases in general cost of living are also seen as impacting on schools:

You get your capitation grant but it just doesn't stretch, oil is going up, I mean look at the cost of petrol now, it's what, €1.69 or €1.70. Capitation grants have dropped but the oil tank is gone sky high. Gas heating is gone sky high, insurance premium are going up and yet the funding is dropping all the time. [Trustee 1]

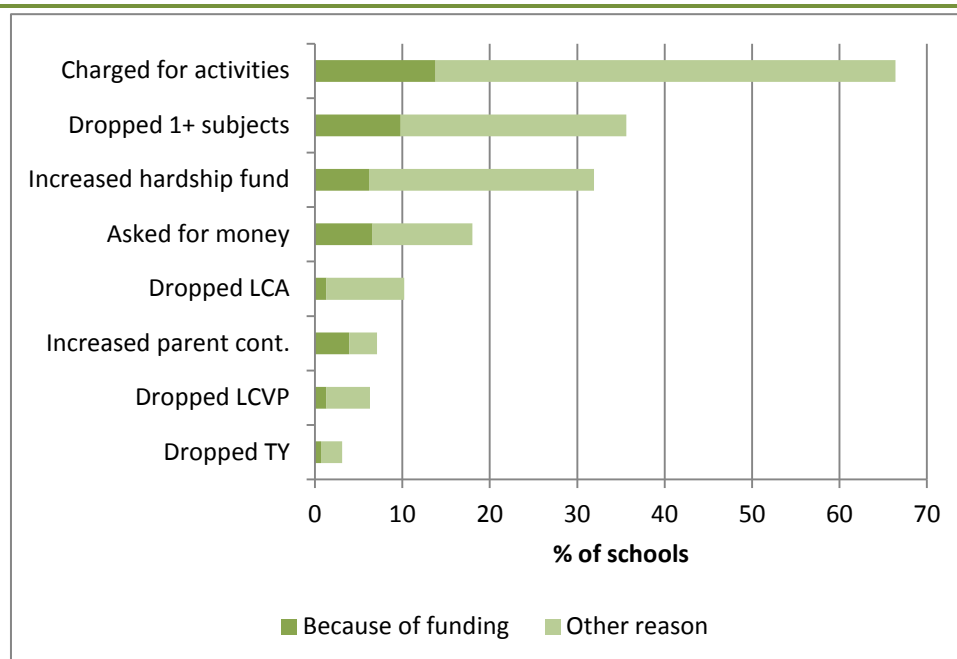
While voluntary secondary schools were able to pay some teachers from their own funds, this is no longer possible:

I think the voluntary secondary schools are hit harder because they relied on having a bit of income on their own from themselves maybe to pay a teacher a few extra hours, you know, to get in what we call a privately paid teacher for a few hours a week. [Trustee 6]

6.7 CHANGES IN SCHOOL PROVISION

Schools were asked about the extent to which they had changed aspects of their provision in the previous school year. The majority of schools (66 per cent) indicated that they had charged students for specific activities. Over a third (36 per cent) had dropped one or more subjects while a tenth had dropped the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) programme, 6 per cent had dropped Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) and 3 per cent had discontinued Transition Year. Almost a fifth (18 per cent) of principals had asked Trustees or another external body for money while 7 per cent had increased the parental voluntary contribution. Almost a third (32 per cent) of schools had increased their 'hardship fund'. Principals were asked whether these changes related to reduced funding or not; only a minority indicated that this was the case. However, it is unclear whether the decision was motivated by funding pressures rather than reduced funding.

FIGURE 6.19 Proportion of Schools who Changed Provision in the Previous Year, Distinguishing those who did so because of Reduced Funding and Other Reasons



Source: Survey of second-level school principals.

These patterns were broadly similar across sectors, although voluntary secondary schools were more likely to have increased their hardship fund. Community/comprehensive schools were more likely to have dropped one or more subjects (53 per cent) than vocational or voluntary secondary schools (33 per cent). Among voluntary secondary schools, DEIS schools were more likely to have dropped one or more subjects (52 per cent compared with 33 per cent of non-DEIS schools and 11 per cent of fee-paying schools).

There can be other, more general issues concerning provision in schools that are indirectly influenced by reduced funding. According to one stakeholder, reduced hours of staff members may result in reduced services, for example, in pastoral care:

So like all those kind of regulations that have come in at every angle is eating into that pastoral structure and that care system. If a kid is sick in school, who looks after her? There's nobody, like you'd hope in the past a year head might have been free between the six year heads, because they'd be on reduced hours they might, one of them might be free and they might look after. Now the year heads are on twenty-two hours so they're not on any reduced hours so there's nobody free and available in the staff room like you would have had before to look after them. So there's a lot of subtle kind of hidden effects that the overall funding situation is having. /.../ And in some ways it's hidden, you know, the principals know it and they know it very well, but sometimes it's hard for the public to understand that. [Trustee 6]

6.8 THE EQUALISATION AGENDA

In our study all Trustees from the voluntary secondary sector highlighted the challenges their school are facing in the face of continuing cuts in the education sector. According to the interviewees, some effort had been made in the past to narrow the funding gap between different types of second-level schools but the outcome to date has been seen as unsatisfactory.

Some of that gap was narrowed by enhancing funding to the voluntary secondary schools. [Educational Stakeholder 2]

'04 through to '07 we did get an additional Capitation grant usually a €5 or €10 per pupil in each of those budgets, certainly my first two years in '06 and '07 we got an additional grant on our capitation to compensate for the equalisation issue. Obviously they haven't recognised it since 2008 when there's been no further increases or further attempt to close the gap. [Educational stakeholder 3]

Between the sectors, between the voluntary sector and certainly the VEC and the community and comprehensive, there would be a differential, I think, somewhere in the order of 8-10 per cent. That's the kind of, a grievance going back a long while with the, with the voluntary sector, they would feel disadvantaged by comparison, with the VECs. [Trustee 4]

In general, it is difficult to get an overall picture because no comparable data are available due to the fact that VEC schools are funded via a block grant and local VECs have discretion in distributing these funds according to the needs of schools. However, this funding model reduces the transparency with regard to funding, already highlighted in the Blackstock report in 1999.

Not even the Department know that because basically they just give a, they give a, you know they give an agreed amount to the VEC and the VEC go away and do, including pay, I mean you know if you're looking for anything around pay from a VEC, the department don't know because they have to go to thirty two or thirty three individual VECs and find out. [Educational Stakeholder 1]

Greater transparency is evident in the case of the community/comprehensive school sector:

We [community schools] get money directly from the Department but we account for it directly back on an individual school basis /.../ And a monthly basis, each school would send their accounts back. [Educational Stakeholder 1]

6.9 CASE STUDY ON FUNDING OF THE DIFFERENT SECOND-LEVEL SECTORS

There has been a long-held belief that the three second-level sectors are not funded equally. It has been argued that voluntary secondary schools need to cover certain costs from the capitation grant while the same costs are directly funded by the state in the case of other types of schools. In order to shed light into the matter, a closer analysis was conducted of data collected from one VEC about the schools in their area.⁶⁶ This allows us to look at potential variation between schools within one VEC area.

Most of the case-study schools had DEIS status. The capitation grant equivalent (as not all sectors receive funding under this heading) was under €300 per student across the schools; there was some variation across schools reflecting differential numbers of second-level and further education students. When asked what the capitation grant was used for, the principals of vocational schools listed items such as security, teaching materials/resources, heating, general building maintenance, lighting, administrative expenses, phones, post, school trips. In most cases the principals also used the capitation grant for building-related expenses. Only one of the case-study schools received an additional grant for secretarial services and caretaking (€555). About half of the case-study schools (both DEIS and non-DEIS) had received a voluntary contribution from parents. The schools received approximately €80 per family per year, with only one school

⁶⁶ The number of schools in the VEC area has been withheld to protect anonymity of the VEC.

receiving more than €100. Most parents seemed to be able to pay the contribution, with only one school reporting that only 25 per cent of parents pay. Four schools had received a capital grant from the state in 2012/2013. This was used for major renovation of the school building or construction of a new school building. One school used the grant for purchasing iPads for the school.

While some principals indicated that 100 per cent of their funding comes from the government/VEC, others noted that while most of the funding is received from the government, the schools also generate additional funds by renting out buildings/grounds, parental voluntary contribution and fundraising. One school also mentioned Transition Year charges. In fact, all of the case-study schools charged for activities which included: class materials (e.g., Art, Home Economics), Transition Year activities, school trips/exchanges, journal, locker, insurance, buses for extra-curricular activities and book rental.

Funds from the parental voluntary contribution were used for secretarial services, marking exam papers, school trips, general building maintenance, insurance, lockers, photocopying, school trips, scholarships, sporting equipment and general day-to-day expenses.

6.10 SUMMARY

The Blackstock report (1999) highlighted a lack of transparency in the funding available to different types of second-level school. This chapter has presented new information on funding and expenditure among second-level schools. It is clear that voluntary secondary schools receive a significantly lower proportion of funding from the state and, as a result, are more reliant on voluntary contributions from parents and on general fund-raising. This reliance on discretionary funding is seen to pose challenges given lower levels of resources among some families, especially those with children attending DEIS schools, and means that funding sources are vulnerable to future changes in family income. Sectoral differences are also evident in the expenditure of schools, with voluntary secondary schools more likely to be required to cover from the capitation grant items paid centrally in case of the other sectors and, in addition, need to engage in substantial fund-raising and request voluntary contributions from parents to fund the basic day-to-day running of the school. The report findings highlight the need for greater transparency in the income allocated to, and costs incurred by, schools. Variation in costs may, in some cases, reflect the desire of the school to provide a greater range of subjects or a wider variety of extra-curricular activities. However, expenditure in schools in terms of capital costs, maintenance and heating is also driven by the age and condition of school buildings. In 1996 a

report by the Comptroller and Auditor General on planning of second-level school accommodation noted the lack of a comprehensive current inventory of the overall stock or condition of second-level school accommodation, despite recommendations by the interdepartmental committee in 1988 to compile such information.⁶⁷ Given the likely variation in stock and condition of school buildings, such information is crucial in facilitating greater transparency around school income and expenditure.

⁶⁷ In 2009 discussions of a survey of school accommodation were still taking place: <http://debates.oireachtas.ie/dail/2009/10/20/00052.asp>; the pilot survey was undertaken in 2012: <http://debates.oireachtas.ie/dail/2009/10/20/00052.asp>

Chapter 7

Conclusions and Policy Implications

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this report is to present a comprehensive picture of the governance of second-level schools in Ireland and to explore differences across the three school sectors (voluntary secondary schools, vocational schools and community/comprehensive schools) regarding income and expenditure. In so doing, the main focus is on voluntary secondary schools, the vast majority of which are denominational in character. This focus reflects recurring debates about a lack of transparency in school funding models in Ireland. The unpublished Blacktsock report (1999) highlighted disparities in government funding across and within school sectors, reflecting the findings of earlier research (see Sheehan and Nolan, 1982; Sheehan *et al.*, 1994). A further rationale for focusing on the voluntary secondary sector relates to the increasing challenges facing denominational schools in maintaining their specific religious ethos while operating in a context that is increasingly multicultural and pluralistic.

Ireland is not alone in encountering these tensions, with on-going debate in many countries about whether the state should fund denominational schooling and, if so, which faith groups should be allowed to establish schools. The report draws on detailed examples from four jurisdictions – the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Australia and Canada (Ontario) – to explore the ways in which these issues have been handled in different national contexts. In many cases, in order to avail of state funding, denominational schools have had to compromise by giving up some of their autonomy regarding ownership and control. Furthermore, funding to Catholic schools has generally been channelled through one central body (for example, the Catholic Education Commission in Australia) rather than through a multiplicity of religious orders/bodies.

While there is an expanding evidence base in international research, very few studies have explored the governance and funding of Irish second-level schools. This new study addresses the gap in research by exploring governance- and funding-related issues across the three second-level sectors. In doing so, it draws on available administrative data, a national survey of all second-level school principals and chairpersons of school boards of management, as well as a selection of in-depth interviews with key stakeholders across sectors (including both practitioners and policymakers). In order to place the findings in a wider

context, detailed information on state funding of schools has also been provided on four case-study jurisdictions, chosen to demonstrate the different approaches governments in these jurisdictions have taken to funding denominational schools. This study contributes to emerging debates on the patronage of Irish second-level schools. Within the broader context of the governance and funding of all Irish second-level schools, it aims to provide information to inform the development of new model(s) of funding of the trusteeship function for the voluntary secondary sector and to highlight the challenges faced by this sector in terms of governance and funding.

7.2 SECTORAL DIFFERENCES IN THE GOVERNANCE, OWNERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF SECOND-LEVEL SCHOOLS

The governance and management structures of second-level schools differ, with denominational voluntary secondary schools (mainly Catholic but also some Protestant) being privately owned and managed but receiving government funding for teachers' salaries and other costs. The land on which voluntary secondary schools are situated is mostly owned by dioceses, religious congregations or Trust Companies. Pre-1960s the patron/trustee used to contribute to the capital cost of the school building, thus creating a complex relationship between the Department of Education and the patron in terms of ownership of the building (Tuohy, 2013). The Joint Managerial Body (JMB) provides a range of advice and support services, in addition to negotiating on behalf of school management for almost four hundred voluntary secondary schools. In recent years attempts have been made to co-ordinate the Catholic education sector. Various organisations such as the Association of Trustees of Catholic Schools (ATCS) and the Catholic Schools Partnership (CSP) have been established in order to deal with the growing complexity and duplication of patron/trustee services. In addition, the role of the CSP is seen as supporting the roles of governance, trusteeship and management of Catholic schools and as providing a unified voice for Catholic Education. The establishment of the Catholic Education Service (CES)⁶⁸ mirrors developments in other jurisdictions that have set up similar organisations to support and promote Catholic education (e.g. Catholic Education Service in England and Wales; Catholic Education Commission in Australia; Ontario Catholic Schools Trustees Association among others). The diminishing number of religious personnel in schools has resulted in the involvement of many lay people in the governance and management of voluntary secondary schools. Increasingly, these schools have come under the trusteeship of independent Education Trust companies (see below). The day-to-day

⁶⁸ CES is the all-Ireland body set up by the Irish Bishops Conference and the Conference of Religious of Ireland to promote the Catholic education sector nationally.

management of the school is the responsibility of the principal and board of management of the school. The results of the study show that the responsibilities of principals in voluntary secondary schools are much broader than those in vocational schools, in the absence of a central office (as is the case in the Education and Training Board (ETB), formerly VECs) that provides human resources and financial management support to schools.

Vocational schools (and community colleges) are owned and managed by ETBs. These schools are funded (including the trusteeship function) by the state and run by local boards of management which are sub-committees of the VECs/ETBs. Community and comprehensive schools are also funded by the state and run by local boards of management that may include members of religious congregations. Although generally funded by the state, both sectors also receive additional income from other sources as discussed in Chapter 6 (see Figure 6.16).

The results of the study reveal that across a number of dimensions of governance, school principals were likely to have the most say in a number of areas, mostly regarding in-house management and hiring staff. There have been growing concerns that recent changes in the education system, coupled with reduced resources and a reduction in the number of middle management posts, are placing more demands on principals. Consistent with the requirements of the Education Act (1998), boards of management in schools are found to have most involvement in financial and administrative matters. For voluntary secondary schools, the Trust body or patron is seen as having a significant input into shaping the ethos of the school, religious education, and training for members of the board of management, as well as financial control and management over appropriate use of the property. Importantly, while the principals indicated that they are clear about the role and functions of boards of management and the Trustees, the analysis revealed some ambiguity regarding the respective roles of the key education partners. In voluntary secondary schools, principals describe boards of management as having control over property and finance, whereas these areas are entirely the domain of the Trustees. Of concern is that a significant proportion of principals and chairs of boards of management noted that lack of training is an issue, coupled by the respondents noting a 'lack of expertise' on boards of management. This was particularly the case with voluntary secondary schools that, in the absence of central offices to provide wide-ranging support to schools, do not have access to specialist legal and financial expertise. Lack of expertise among board of management members coupled with limited training is a cause of concern regarding the governance of second-level schools.

Denominational Voluntary Secondary Schools: Educational Trust Companies

In recent decades, voluntary secondary schools have faced increasing challenges, principally due to decreased vocations and the diminished direct role of religious personnel in schools. To respond to these challenges, after a lengthy consultation period, several orders have set up Education Trust Companies, transferring school ownership to these Trusts to ensure the continuation of the characteristic spirit within these schools (Madigan, 2012). To date, various Trust Companies have emerged, with CEIST, ERST, Des Places Education Association, the Presentation Schools Trust, Loreto Schools Trust and Le Chéile acting as the Trustees of more than 200 out of 376 voluntary secondary schools. Some orders, however, have decided not to set up Trusts. The study findings show that members of the Trust have a number of responsibilities which can broadly be divided into educational enterprise and property. The Trust members have a significant say in helping to develop school ethos/values and in providing training of members of boards of management (see above), but have a number of additional roles and responsibilities. All school budgets and plans for building and refurbishment must be approved by the Trustees who also monitor the accounts of schools under their care. To date, the operational costs of Trusts (their establishment on a legal footing and the functioning of education offices and some other personnel costs) have been covered by the religious orders or the Trusts themselves (from investment returns) while many services are provided free of charge. The situation has shifted over time from one where religious personnel provided services without pay (e.g. in Education Offices) to their replacement by paid personnel, funded by the congregations or Trusts. Funding the activities of the Education Trust Companies emerges from the research as a significant challenge for voluntary secondary schools. This is a matter of concern as the Education Act 1998 sets out the legal obligations and activities of the trustees for all schools, with the implication that funding to cover this service would be available across all second-level schools. However, while Education Training boards/VECS as school patrons are fully funded by the state, such funding is not provided for the trusteeship function in voluntary secondary schools, which make up over half (52 per cent) of second-level schools in Ireland. Education Trust Companies carry out a number of similar functions to ETBs/VECs, although without state funding, and thus adopt a broader role than the maintenance of the characteristic spirit/ethos of the school.

The current economic climate has had a significant impact on the Trusts, which are currently considering various trusteeship models for the future. International experience has shown that the trusteeship/governance and day-to-day running of many denominational schools are now funded by the state in many countries, generally through a central board charged with supporting Catholic education in a

local area or region. However, these processes have not taken place without tensions and certain trade-offs between funding and autonomy. Denominational schools under greater state control may have less say in appointing teachers or implementing admission policies and may be subject to more state inspections. Faith development in these schools is generally organised and supported by the religious congregations via foundations. In the Irish context, it may be timely to review the services provided by all the parties concerned to clearly define their functions and avoid possible duplication.

7.3 FUNDING OF SECOND-LEVEL SCHOOLS

The funding arrangements for the different school types at second level have evolved in a manner that reflects the historical structural differences between the voluntary secondary, comprehensive/community and VEC sectors (see above), resulting in a lack of uniformity and consistency.

At the core of funding arrangements at second level is reliance upon the capitation grant and other grants from the state. According to the per capita system, funding of teachers is based on student numbers, with a specific pupil-teacher ratio set by the Department of Education. While there is some flexibility in funding depending on the size of the school, there are also other factors driving the running costs of the school such as age of the building, insurance premiums, maintenance and refurbishment costs (Tuohy, 2013). Considering that many voluntary secondary schools are in older buildings, often not purpose-built, it is reasonable to suggest that the running costs are higher in these schools, although lack of comprehensive data on school buildings makes it difficult to assess the conditions of the schools and associated costs. Interestingly, building condition as well as security costs and/or other aspects is taken into account when allocating funding to community/comprehensive schools (based on budgetary arrangements).

There are some differences in the funding arrangements across the sectors. In the case of (privately managed) voluntary secondary schools in the free education scheme, the Department meets the cost of teacher salaries, and makes an annual *per capita* grant towards recurrent costs, including insurance (whereas the latter is covered by the state in state-owned schools). In addition, voluntary secondary schools may also be eligible for assistance under a range of other grants available under the scheme, including grants for the employment of secretaries and caretakers, Irish and bilingual grants, book grants and various programme grants. However, 44 per cent of voluntary secondary schools were found to use parental voluntary contributions to cover the cost of secretarial services (compared with

16 per cent of vocational schools and 13 per cent of community/comprehensive schools (see Chapter 6, p. 146). Voluntary secondary schools are also more likely than other school types to use capitation grant on security and insurance. VECs are provided with block funding to cover the costs of second-level vocational schools and community colleges in the area, but also to deliver a range of further and adult education programmes such as: Vocational Training Opportunity Schemes (VTOS), Back to Education Initiatives (BTEI), Youthreach, and Community Education Programmes. The block grant is issued to local VECs who retain funding for insurance and group purchases on behalf of the scheme. The rest of the money is divided between the schools in the area, based on their needs. The capitation grant for PLC students and second-level students differs, with the former receiving larger grants. VECs are given a high level of autonomy in the management and appropriation of their budgets in line with their individual priorities (OECD, 2007). In order to rationalise the system, the 33 VECs have now been replaced by 16 Education and Training boards that, similar to Local Education Authorities (LEAs) in the UK, will have the potential to cater for different types of schools in the area, not just vocational schools.

Several reports (e.g., Blacstock report 1999; Nolan and Burke, 1991; Sheehan *et al.*, 1994) have commented on funding differences across the second-level schools with voluntary secondary schools seen to receive less state funding compared to the other second-level schools. In filling the gap between received funding and needs, parental voluntary contributions and other means for generating funds are increasingly important (Tuohy, 2013). Equalisation measures were introduced to rectify historic inconsistencies in the funding arrangements for the voluntary secondary schools. The additional grants include provision for caretakers and school secretaries. However, the funding received may not cover the needs of the school which has to make up the deficit. While this report focuses on voluntary secondary school sector, the results of the study show that other school types also receive funding from private sources to cover possible deficit, although the rate of such funding is lower.

Our findings show that while all schools spend on insurance, lighting, security and secretarial services, voluntary secondary schools are more likely to spend capitation grant on such items. Differences between the sectors are also evident in the receipt of voluntary parental contributions, with voluntary secondary schools more likely to be receiving such contributions compared to the other school types⁶⁹. Over half of the schools that receive parental contributions use

⁶⁹ Voluntary secondary schools rely on one-third of their funding from voluntary donations.

this income for general school maintenance. Voluntary secondary schools are much more likely to use the contribution for secretarial services compared to other types of second-level schools. Voluntary secondary schools are significantly more likely to charge for class materials (for example, for Art or for Home Economics) than other school types. While it is difficult to disentangle the disparity of funding and expenditure across the sectors in terms of exact figures (as the available administrative data do not enable us to provide comparison across all sectors regarding per capita funding and spending), our analysis clearly demonstrates that despite the equalisation measures, voluntary secondary schools are more dependent on the capitation and other state grants for the general running of the school (lighting, heating and so on), and need to supplement that with funding from private sources (such as the parental contribution), which may not be sustainable in the long run. While it was not possible to establish the levels of per capita funding across the second-level schools due to different funding mechanisms, the findings of this study indicate that the voluntary secondary sector is more reliant on private sources in covering deficits in funding. The continuing recession is likely to have an impact on the ability of parents to make financial contributions to schools which voluntary secondary schools often use for subsidising the everyday running of the school.

7.4 IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Following the fiscal crisis, major expenditure cuts have been implemented in the education sector in Ireland. In 2012 and 2013 the funding for capitation and related grants to primary and second-level schools was reduced by 2 per cent, with a further 1 per cent reduction envisaged for 2014 and 2015. Fee-charging second-level schools have been subject to a range of cuts in recent years, resulting in an increased student-teacher ratio in these schools. As a result, some of these schools have decided to join the free education scheme, although it is yet to be seen if other such schools follow suit. Protestant schools have been subject to the same cuts introduced to other fee-paying schools, even though their student population is more dispersed, making it necessary to provide boarding facilities. In fact, the two schools that have joined the free scheme are Protestant schools, with falling parental incomes and rising taxes contributing towards their inability to pay fees.

The levels of expenditure in education are largely driven by enrolment levels in schools. The Central Statistics Office (CSO) projects a 31-34 per cent rise in enrolments at second-level by 2021, making further calls on scarce education resources (CSO, 2012). This impending population increase for second-level schools underscores the challenges awaiting this sector in the near future.

This study raises important issues for policy around the governance, patronage and funding of second-level schools. While guidelines have been drawn up by the Department of Education and Skills regarding the recognition of new second-level schools, including the need for applicants to demonstrate parental demand for a particular patron, many education stakeholders have pointed to a continued lack of transparency in the procedures used and how the final decisions are made. It would therefore appear that a broader consultation process, involving strong parental input (similar to the procedures in primary schools), should be explored in order to ensure that a new school (voluntary secondary, vocational, community/comprehensive or Educate Together) meets the needs of the community. Where schools with different patronage are to amalgamate, the awarding of patronage could be decided by the community in conjunction with other relevant parties. In addition, where amalgamation of two or more Catholic schools is seen as the best outcome, joint/single patronage by one of the patrons could be considered.

Lack of transparency in funding for the three school sectors has been highlighted in previous studies and reviews. The data currently compiled by the DES on different forms of funding do not enable easy comparison across the sectors under specific subheadings. Without access to the accounts of individual schools, it is impossible to say how the school sectors differ in income and expenditure *per student* as the schools differ across a number of dimensions. Whereas voluntary secondary schools receive per capita grants, the funding for community/comprehensive schools is negotiated with the DES based on the budget of each individual school. Vocational schools are funded from the block grant given to the ETBs/VECs for distribution among the schools within each area. This lack of transparency and no explicit formula consistently applied across the sectors is likely to fuel beliefs that school funding is inequitable. But is it the case? New data compiled for this study indeed indicate that voluntary secondary schools receive a lower proportion of their funding from the state and are, therefore, more reliant on parental voluntary contributions for the day-to-day running of the school, making them more vulnerable in a future that is likely to see further cuts in the education sector budgets at a time of growing student numbers. There is a lack of transparency not only in funding structures for the day-to-day running and management costs of schools but in the extent to which various aspects of the governance function are financed by central government. At least some elements of the trusteeship function of VECs (now ETBs) are funded through the block grant and the centralisation of specialist services and expertise at VEC level reduces the need for specialist legal and finance capacities at the school level. In contrast, the trusteeship function of voluntary secondary schools is paid for by religious orders or the Education Trust Companies, directly through providing support to schools and/or indirectly through the provision of specialist

expertise on a voluntary basis. Furthermore, a good deal of the management function falls on the school principal of the voluntary secondary school, functions that are taken care of by the Education Offices of ETBs/VECs (human resources, for example). There would appear to be some potential for ETBs to extend their support services to schools in other sectors, including voluntary secondary schools, and thus provide all schools with equal access to specialist legal and financial expertise.

The diminishing capacity of the religious orders to sustain their support of schools raises important questions for the sustainability of the Trusteeship in the future. Individuals who have provided services for free have had to be replaced by paid personnel. Similar issues have arisen in other countries. While the structures adopted to address sustainability have differed (in most cases, handing over property but maintaining different degrees of autonomy), in many cases there has been one Catholic Education Commission which operates, on the one hand, as a conduit of state funding and, on the other, as the provider of support to schools in maintaining their Catholic ethos. Interviews conducted for this study indicate a concern that there are currently too many Education Trust Companies. Greater collaboration between the Education Trust Companies and other organisations in establishing a strategy to continue providing denominational education in second-level schools would therefore appear overdue. A rationalisation of trusteeship, possibly bringing it under one or two overarching organisations, could provide a way forward in clarifying and consolidating the function of Trusteeship and in avoiding possible duplication of duties with other bodies such as the JMB. This would mirror arrangements in many other countries. It is important to note that all of these arrangements have involved significant trade-offs between funding and control. It is clear that there is no one 'best model' which can be adopted for the Irish situation. However, international experience raises a number of important questions to be considered in future developments. These questions centre on how the diversity of religious orders and their distinctive spirit can be balanced against the need for a comprehensive approach, and how to develop a clear vision of the function of trustees in supporting the specific ethos of religious schools. Aside from issues relating to maintaining Catholic ethos, it is crucial to determine how the governance responsibilities of patrons, as specified by the Education Act (1998), can be supported and funded in an equitable fashion.

This report highlights sectoral variations in funding and points to issues that have been outstanding since the Blackstock Report (1999). In doing so, the report provides a firm evidence base for maintaining that the funding and support

provided to second-level schools should reflect factors such as student need and building conditions rather than school sector per se.

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Appendix 1: Interview Guide (key stakeholders)

[Voluntary secondary schools, VECs etc. – questions will be slightly modified according to each profile]

1. What is the Trust you represent? How many schools does it cover? What religious orders are involved?
2. Could you tell me about the decision to set up the Trust? What were the reasons behind it? Were different groups involved in setting up the Trust?
3. What position do you hold in the Trust? What are your main responsibilities?
4. Could you tell me about the structure of the Trust? Are there different models of trusteeship? (e.g. ownership by Religious Congregation, owned and ran by Trusts or Trust Boards made up by wholly or partially by dedicated lay people ; If so, why do you think your group adopted this particular model?)
5. Has this number of schools under the Trusteeship changed over time? [fallen, remained stable] Why? Do you plan to open any new schools in the future?
6. What, in your view, are the role, function and responsibilities of Trusteeship in the second-level sector? Have these functions/responsibilities changed over time? Why?
7. What are the role and responsibilities of school boards of management? To what extent do they differ from those of the Trust? Are there areas where the activities may overlap? What areas could be improved? Where do the difficulties arise?
8. How often do you liaise with the boards of management of schools? Over what kinds of issues? Would you have contact with individual school principals?
9. How would you characterise the specific ethos of your schools within the education system? What makes your schools different to other voluntary secondary schools? Do you think there's a difference between your schools and VEC or community/comprehensive schools?
10. In what concrete ways do your schools seek to reinforce or maintain the ethos of the Trust? Could you provide an example how the Trust could help schools in developing the ethos/characteristic spirit?
11. Does the Trust you represent provide training for its members? What form does it take?
12. How do your schools cater for the growing diversity among the student body?
13. Over time some secondary schools have amalgamated with other local schools. Has this happened to any of your schools? In the case of amalgamation, what governance approach is adopted? What impact has the merging of schools had on the ethos of secondary schools?
14. What different elements make up the function of the Trusteeship? What services and supports does the Trust provide to its schools? Does the Trust ever provide direct financial support to its schools?
15. What do these various elements cost and how are they funded?
16. Apart from the DES funding of teachers' salaries does a percentage of school funding go on providing for extra teaching hours?
17. What are the annual costs of trusteeship? For how many students? How/where do you source the costs of trusteeship? Are Trustee reps./volunteers paid? Do they get expenses and at what rate?
18. How many times a year/month/whatever does the Trustee body meet? For how many hours in total per annum?

19. What is the extent of the direct state Capitation grant and Allowances received by your school(s) [per student to each school]? Are any of your schools included in the DEIS scheme? What does this mean in funding terms? Would your schools receive additional resources for having special classes or for having students with special educational needs? Have there been any changes in recent years with regard to the amount of government funding for schools?
20. What role would the Trust have in deciding how these funds are utilised? Role of BOM? Role of school principal? How are these funds utilised?
21. What is the extent of Capital grant received from the state? How is it utilised? Is there an additional grant for the cost of minor works [physical infrastructure of the school or on items of furniture and equipment for educational use including IT related equipment]?
22. To what extent does school size impact on the financial support received by the state?
23. What are the main items of expenditure of second-level schools? (Prompt: How are items such as building maintenance, insurance, security, caretaking, secretarial services and other day-to-day running of the school financed?) Has this changed in the last 10 years?
24. Who owns the school buildings and grounds?
25. Does a local body or patron contribute to the building costs of new schools? What is the extent of this contribution? Has this changed over time? [is it different for DEIS schools?]
26. To what extent does the local body/patron contribute to the cost of renovations? Has the extent of the contribution changed over time? [Is it different for DEIS schools?]
27. Are there any other sources of state funding that second-level schools can use?
28. What are the main challenges in funding schools in the future? What would this mean for how schools are run? What would this mean for practice at the school level? [Prompt: How can funding be structured to sustain the trusteeship of the voluntary school sector for the long term? Can you suggest a model?]
29. Should the existing model of Trusteeship be changed? Is a new model needed?
30. What part do parental contributions and fundraising play in funding second-level schools? [Fees, 'voluntary' contribution, extra-curricular activities, Gaeltacht scholarships and core issues such as transport, schools books, exam fees, correction of (mock) exam papers etc].
31. In schools with a parental voluntary contribution (as opposed to fees) what arrangements are made where families cannot afford the voluntary contribution? (This could also be asked about school fees.)
32. To what extent is the local community involved in the governance of secondary schools? Are there parent nominees on the boards of management? How are they appointed?
33. To what extent are the Religious order(s) involved in teaching? Has it changed over the last 10 years?
34. To what extent do the Religious order(s) get involved in funding? To what purpose?
35. Is the Trust you represent in any way involved in: admission policy, appointment of school boards? How?
36. How much autonomy do second-level schools have in deciding aspects of school practice, such as ability grouping, the mix of subjects provided, extra-curricular activities etc.? Who would be involved in making decisions about these aspects of the school?

Appendix 2: Quotes from the Open Question (Survey of Chairpersons)

The section provides a sample of quotes from the open questions in the survey: Is there any comment you would like to make about the funding and/or governance of second-level schools? While not representative, they convey the concerns chairpersons have regarding these areas.

- 'Capitation should be the same for all secondary schools';
- 'A perennial problem is the fact that voluntary sector schools are seriously underfunded when compared to VEC schools or Gaelscoil, this is so unfair';
- 'All second-level schools should receive same funding not 2-tier system. VEC get more;
- 'Funding totally inadequate. Not an equality with VEC /Community schools/colleges- budget cuts drastic';
- 'Government needs to look at the inequality between the sectors as regards funding. Three different levels of funding within the same sector is unacceptable and unnecessary';
- 'The disparity in funding between the voluntary secondary sector and community/ comprehensive is unjust';
- 'I feel they should have part of the funding with VEC schools and community schools and paid Chaplain as they have ex-quota';
- 'It amazes me that equalisation of payments to second level schools does not exist and that the difference is so big';
- 'Lack of funding for additional facilities. The same level of capitation funding between the VEC and religious sectors should be available';
- 'Schools should be funded on a par with what is allocated to VEC schools. Too much time bridging the gap with fundraising';
- 'It is difficult to understand why all second-level school are not treated in the same way regarding capitalisation. Also, we spend €10,000 on insurance, while others in the community [school] sector have this and similar invoices met directly by the Department of Education. Also, software packages (school management) should be provided by the Department of Education directly - and be state-of-the-art';
- 'That voluntary scheme schools have parity with schools in other sectors-regarding stated qualification';
- 'The inequality of funding for secondary schools is unjust. Accumulation of budget cuts un-sustainable';

- 'Voluntary secondary schools completely underfunded compared to VEC and community schools';

Forty five per cent commented on funding challenges facing schools.

- 'Funding necessary investment hasn't been made by successive governments in line with demographic growth- poor planning';
- 'Budgetary concerns are paramount at the moment. Paying for teacher and no money for it is very difficult. It is a continuing challenge to make ends meet';
- 'Cutbacks are making it very difficult to provide an appropriate education to all pupils in a non-fee paying school';
- 'Cut-backs are strangling the education system. Fee-paying schools are suffering the most'; 'Funding inadequate - in a school our size the principal and deputy principal have got to take on teaching duties which causes them to have to do their own work outside school hours'; 'Funding particularly for teacher provisions that are not being met at adequate levels'; 'Funding will be a problem, less people are paying voluntary contribution in time of recession';
- 'Funding, clearly inadequate level of tolerance required. Would require a degree of full time executive or support assistance for principal';
- 'I am concerned about the effects of cuts in educational funding and the fact that schools such as ours able to fundraise to a significant extent to provide for our students';
- 'I have serious concerns about cutting capitation and the discrepancy in funding between various sectors';
- 'Second-level schools are underfunded and are over dependent on voluntary contributions'; 'The current approach to distribute funds to schools will ultimately damage education in this county';
- 'The government has not fully calculated the cost it would incur if fee paying school close'; 'Very concerned about reduction in funding for career guidance'.

Appendix 3: Questionnaires of Second-Level School Principals and Chairpersons

Funding and governance of all second-level schools

PRINCIPAL'S QUESTIONNAIRE

School ID: _____

A. SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS AND ETHOS

1. Which of the following best describes the community in which this school is located? Please mark one choice.

Village or rural area (fewer than 3,000 people)	☐ ₁	City (100,000 to about 1 000 000 people)	☐ ₄
Small town (3,000 to about 15,000 people)	☐ ₂	Large city (with over 1,000,000 people)	☐ ₅
Large town (15,000 to about 100,000 people)	☐ ₃		

2. How many students are enrolled in the school? Boys _____ Girls _____ Total Pupils _____

3. How many *full-time* and *part-time* teachers work in this school? Please indicate how many are male and how many are female.

Teachers	Full-time	Part-time
Male		
Female		
Total		

4. Approximately how many staff does your school currently have in the following capacities? Please indicate the number employed on a *full-time* and *part-time* basis.

	Full-time	Part-time
Learning support / resource teachers		
Language support teachers		
Special needs assistants		
Chaplain		
Guidance Counsellor(s)		

5. (a) Over the past five years, has the number of pupils coming to this school....

Increased..... ☐₁ Decreased..... ☐₂ Remained fairly stable ☐₃

- (b) Over the next five years, would you expect the number of pupils coming to this school to:

Increase..... ☐₁ Decrease..... ☐₂ Remain fairly stable..... ☐₃

6. a) Are there any other local schools to which pupils in your school might go? Yes ☐₁ No ☐₂

b) If yes, are these schools? Tick all that apply:

Community/comprehensive school ☐₁ Community college ☐₃
 Vocational school ☐₂ Voluntary secondary school ☐₄

7. In general, do more pupils apply to come to this school than there are places available?

Yes ☐₁ No ☐₂

8. How often are the following factors considered when students are admitted to your school? Tick one box in each row.

	Never/rarely	Sometimes	Often/always
Residence in local area	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃
Student's record of academic performance	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃
Entrance examination	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃
Recommendation of feeder schools	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃
Parents' endorsement of the religious philosophy of the school	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃
Preference given to family members of current or former students	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃
Other, please specify.....			

9. How would you describe the ethos or characteristic spirit of your school?

.....

10. In what concrete ways does your school seek to develop or maintain its ethos or philosophy?
 Please describe.

.....

11. We are interested in the importance your school places on various educational goals. From the following 8 goals, which do you consider most important, the second most important, and the third most important? Please tick one box in each column.

	1 st	2 nd	3 rd
Building basic literacy skills (reading, math, writing, speaking)	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃
Encouraging academic excellence	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃
Promoting good work habits and self-discipline	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃
Promoting personal growth (self-esteem, self-knowledge, etc)	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃
Promoting social skills	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃
Promoting specific moral values	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃
Promoting multicultural awareness or understanding	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃
Fostering religious or spiritual development	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃

12. Below we have list of statements about students in your school. Please indicate if you feel each is true of nearly all, more than half, less than half, or only a few students in the school.

students, in general:	True of nearly all	True for more than half	True for less than half	True of only a few
a. Enjoy being at school	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄
b. Are well-behaved in class	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄
c. Show respect for their teachers	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄
d. Are rewarding to work with	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄
e. Are well behaved during break times	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄

13. Please indicate the extent to which you believe each of the following statements to be true of teachers in your school.

	True of nearly all	True for more than half	True for less than half	True of only a few
a. Teachers are positive about the school	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄
b. Teachers get a lot of help and support from colleagues	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄
c. Teachers are open to new developments and challenges	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄
d. Teachers are eager to take part in professional development	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄

B. SCHOOL GOVERNANCE [defined as school policies, procedures, management]

14. Is the school under the patronage of:

- Religious community ☐₁
 Trust ☐₂
 VEC ☐₃
 Individuals ☐₄
 State/Minister ☐₅
 Other ☐₆ _____

15. Does the school have a Board of management (BOM)? Yes ☐₁ No ☐₂

16. Do you have a Parent Council/ Parent-Teacher Association (PTA)? Yes ☐₁ No ☐₂

17. In general, what proportion of parents attend parent teacher meetings and other meetings organised by the school?

	Nearly All	More than half	Less than half	Only a few	Not Applicable
a. Parent-teacher meetings	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
b. Other meetings organised by the school	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅

18. Does your school have a Student Council? Yes ☐₁ No ☐₂

19. In your view, who has the most say in decisions about the following:

	Principal	Teachers	Parent-Teacher Association	Board of management	Trustees	Other (Specify)
Implementation of legislation relevant to second-level schools	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅	
Implementation of child protection (policies and legislation)	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅	
DES Circulars/correspondence	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅	
Evaluations/school planning	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅	
School policy development and drafting policies[e.g. admissions]	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅	
Financial management and planning	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅	
School buildings/extensions	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅	
Provision of teaching resources/equipment	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅	
Curriculum issues (policies, use of texts, etc.)	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅	
Training for members of BOM	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅	
School ethos/values	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅	
Religious education	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅	
Contract, payment, supervision of cleaners/caretaker	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅	
Employment/management of SNAs and others	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅	
Staffing structures/in-school management	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅	
Traveller Education	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅	
Migrant education/ language support	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅	
School budget	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅	
School fees (if applicable)	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅	
Fundraising	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅	

20. Please say whether you agree or disagree with the following statements on governance in your school

	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I'm clear about the purpose, duties and functions of the Board of management	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
I'm clear about the function of Trustees	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
In future governance structures in schools will require paid expertise available to them (e.g. financial, HR etc.)	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
All Board members should be entitled to recoup expenses incurred while engaged in the work of governance	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
There is sufficient training provided for members of BOM by Trustees	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
Members of BOM take the time to avail of training	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
There is sufficient training provided for members of BOM by the government	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
Board matters take up too much of my personal time	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
The Board has the necessary skills available to it to conduct all matters – legal, financial, employment etc. appropriately	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅

C. FUNDING ISSUES

21. Who owns the buildings and grounds of this school?

	Buildings	Grounds
State	☐ ₁	☐ ₁
Religious order	☐ ₂	☐ ₂
Other, please specify:	☐ ₃	☐ ₃

22. How much direct State Capitation grant did you receive per student this academic year (2012/3)? _____ €

23. What is the Capitation grant used for? Please tick all that apply and estimate the proportion spent on each item.

		% of the Capitation Grant			% of the Capitation Grant
Secretarial services	☐ ₁		Heating	☐ ₆	
Security	☐ ₃		General building maintenance	☐ ₇	
Marking exam papers	☐ ₃		Insurance	☐ ₈	
Teaching materials/ resources	☐ ₄		Lighting	☐ ₉	
School trips	☐ ₅		Other, please specify	☐ ₁₀	

24. a) Does the school receive a separate grant for caretaking and/or secretarial services? Yes ☐₁ No ☐₂

b) If yes, how much? _____ €

25. a) Does the school receive voluntary contributions from parents? Yes ☐₁ No ☐₂

b) If yes, how much is each family asked to give? _____ €

c) what proportion of parents pay? _____ %

26. If such contributions are received, what are they used for?

Secretarial services	☐ ₁	School trips	☐ ₄
Security	☐ ₂	General building maintenance	☐ ₅
Marking exam papers	☐ ₃	Other, please specify	☐ ₆

27. Other than voluntary contributions, are students/families asked to pay for any activities or services within school?

	Yes	No
Class materials (e.g. for Art, Home Ec.)	☐ ₁	☐ ₂
Transition Year activities	☐ ₁	☐ ₂
School trips/exchanges	☐ ₁	☐ ₂
Other (please specify)	☐ ₁	☐ ₂

28. a) Does the school charge fees from students? Yes ☐₁ No ☐₂

b) If yes, how much per year? _____ € (day pupil) _____ € (boarder)

c) What proportion of students pay fees? _____ %

29. If you receive student fees, what are they used for? Tick all that apply.

Secretarial services	☐ ₁	School trips	☐ ₇
Security	☐ ₂	General building maintenance	☐ ₈
Marking exam papers	☐ ₃	Providing boarding facilities	☐ ₉
Paying for extra teaching hours	☐ ₄	Extracurricular activities	☐ ₉
Smaller class sizes	☐ ₅	Other, please specify	☐ ₁₀
Greater range of subjects	☐ ₆		

30. a) Over the past three years, has the school received any Capital Grants from the state?

Yes ☐₁ No ☐₂

b) If yes, how much has been received? _____ €

c) What was it used for?

Construction of a new school building	☐ ₁
Major renovation of the school building	☐ ₂
Minor repairs to the school building	☐ ₃

31. a) Does your school have DEIS status Yes ☐₁ ... No ☐₂

b) If yes, how much additional funding did your receive this school year? _____ €

c) What effect does DEIS status have in attracting students to the school?

Positive effect ☐₁

Negative effect ☐₂

No effect ☐₃

This is not a DEIS school ☐₄

32. a) In this academic year has your school received additional funds for SEN students? Yes ☐₁ No ☐₂

b) If yes, how much? _____ €

33. Thinking about all of the costs incurred in your school, what would you say are the main items of expenditure in your school? Please mark the 1st, 2nd and 3rd most important.

Building maintenance		Caretaking	
Insurance		General building maintenance	
Security		Teaching materials	
Secretarial services/ administration		Other, please specify	

34. About what percentage of your total funding for a typical school year comes from the following sources?

Government/DES _____ %

Student fees _____ %

Fundraising _____ %

Trust/Patron body _____ %

Renting of buildings/grounds _____ %

Parental voluntary contributions _____ %

Other, please describe _____ %

_____ 100%

35. a) Does your school pay a Licence Fee to the Trust/Patron Body? Yes ☐₁ No ☐₂

b) If yes, how much per student does the school pay to the Trust/Patron Body per academic year?

1 -3 Euros
per student

☐₁

4-5 Euros
per student

☐₂

6-10 Euros
per student

☐₃

11-25 Euros
per student

☐₄

26-50
Euros

☐₅

51-100
Euros

☐₆

>100
Euros

☐₇

36. Did any of the options listed below apply in your school during the previous school year?

	Yes	No	If yes, was this due to reduced funding?
School has increased parents' voluntary contribution	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₁
School has asked Trustees/other external body for money	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₂
School has charged students for specific activities	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃
School has increased its 'hardship fund'	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₄
School has dropped Transition Year	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₅
School has dropped LCV	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₆
School has dropped LCA	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₇
School has dropped or is dropping at least one subject or programme	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₈

37. In general terms (a) how stressed do you feel by your job and (b) how satisfied do you feel with your job?

Very Fairly Not Very Not At All

a. How stressed do you feel by your job ☐₁ ☐₂ ☐₃ ☐₄

b. How satisfied do you feel with your job ☐₁ ☐₂ ☐₃ ☐₄

38. Are you male or female? Male ☐₁ Female ☐₂**39. For how many years have you been Principal:**

(a) in this school? _____ years (b) in other Second-Level Schools? _____ years

40. a) Compared with other second-level schools of your size would you say that the scale of day-to-day problems in running the schools are? [Please tick one box only]

Much greater than in other schools	Slightly greater than in other schools	About the same as in other schools	Slightly less than in other schools	Much less than in other schools
☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅

b) What makes you say that? [Please describe as fully as possible]

41. Is there any comment you would like to make about funding or governance of second-level schools? Please continue on a separate sheet if needed.

Thank you very much for participating in the study!

Please post the questionnaire to: **Amárach Research**, 11 Kingswood Business Centre, Kingswood Road, Citywest Business Campus, Dublin 24, Tel +353 1 410 200, Email: info@amarach.com

Funding and governance of second-level schools

BoM (Chairperson) QUESTIONNAIRE

School ID: _____

1. For how many years have you been on the board of management:

<1 year	1-2 years	3-4 years	5-6 years	7-8 years	>9 years
☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅	☐ ₆

2. What is your full-time occupation or profession? _____

3. How satisfied are you with the frequency of BoM meetings?

Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Not satisfied	Not sure
☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄

4. In your role as chairperson, how much time would you spend per week on school management/ governance issues?

1-2 hrs per week	3-4 hrs per week	5-6 hrs per week	7-8 hrs per week	9-10 hrs per week	11-15 hrs per week	>15 hrs per week
☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅	☐ ₆	☐ ₇

**5. Please indicate the extent to which the following topics are discussed at board meetings?
What were the top 3 issues discussed at the most recent BoM meeting?**

	1. Extent to which topics are discussed at Board meetings			2. Top 3 issues at recent meeting
	Regularly discussed	Occasionally discussed	Not discussed	
Implementation of legislation relevant to second-level schools	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐
Implementation of child protection (policies and legislation)	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐
DES Circulars/correspondence	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐
Evaluations/school planning	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐
School policy development and drafting policies	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐
Financial management and planning	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐
School buildings/extensions	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐
Provision of teaching resources/equipment	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐
Curriculum issues (policies, use of texts, etc.)	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐
Training for members of BOM	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐
School ethos/values/religious education	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐
Religious education	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐
Policy on pupil enrolment	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐
Professional underperformance of a member of staff	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐
Contract, payment, supervision of cleaners/caretaker	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐
Employment/management of SNAs and others	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐
Staffing structures/in-school management	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐
Traveller Education	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐
Migrant education/ language support	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐
School budget	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐
School fees (if applicable)	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐
Fundraising	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐
Other, please specify	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐

6. In the academic year 2011/12, did you avail of any training in the following areas in your capacity as chairperson of the BoM:

	Training provided by Trust	Training provided by Government	Training provided by other body (give example)	Have not availed of training
Maintenance of school ethos / characteristic spirit	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄
Personal Spirituality and Development	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄
School Policy Development	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄
Property	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄
Finance	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄
Insurance	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄
Board meetings	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄
Role of chairperson	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄
School management	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄
Legal responsibilities (school, students, parents, staff etc)	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄
Other, please specify	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄

7. How satisfied are you with the training you received?

Very satisfied

☐₁

Fairly satisfied

☐₂

Not satisfied

☐₃

Not sure

☐₄

8. Please say whether you agree or disagree with the following statements on governance in your school.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I'm clear about the purpose, duties and functions of the Board of management	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
I'm clear about the function of Trustees	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
In future governance structures in schools will require paid expertise available to them (e.g. financial, HR etc.)	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
All Board members should be entitled to recoup expenses incurred while engaged in the work of governance	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
There is sufficient training provided for members of BOM by Trustees	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
Members of BOM take the time to avail of training	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
There is sufficient training provided for members of BOM by the government	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
Board matters take up too much of my personal time	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
The Board has the necessary skills available to it to conduct all matters – legal, financial, employment etc. appropriately	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅

9. Are you paid in any way for your work as chairperson? Yes ☐₁ No ☐₂

10. Are you male or female? Male ☐₁ Female ☐₂

11. Is there any comment you would like to make about the funding and/or governance of second-level schools? Please continue on a separate sheet if needed.

Thank you very much for participating in the study!

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