

University of Hull

Decline, Growth and Amalgamation: An emerging picture in relation to the provision of post-primary education in Ireland with specific reference to five towns in West Cork and the enrolment trends between Catholic and State-sector schools therein

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by

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**To my wife, Mary Jo, and our children,
Catherine and Michael.**

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ABSTRACT.

Summary of thesis submitted for EdD degree by Kevin M Healy.

Decline, Growth and Amalgamation: An emerging picture in relation to the provision of post-primary education in Ireland with specific reference to five towns in West Cork and the enrolment trends between Catholic and State-sector schools therein.

This thesis traces the origin and development of post-primary education in Ireland with specific reference to the different forms of post-primary school. It examines recent and current trends in relation to the number of, and enrolment in, these school types. This analysis, at national level, points towards a change in post-primary enrolment patterns. The implications of this change for Catholic schools is examined, as is the implications for the various Vocational Education Committees. Consequent to this changing enrolment trend, the process towards amalgamation and the consequences thereof are also investigated.

Specifically, the five main towns in West Cork, that are serviced by more than one form of post-primary school, are examined and the educational provision in these towns is assessed in relation to viability and future educational provision.

These towns are Bantry, Dunmanway, Clonakilty, Skibbereen and Bandon

The enrolment trends in each of these towns are examined and compared with both the national trend and the trend in the other four towns. This examination is achieved through an identification of the 'feeder' primary schools for each of these towns, the current transfer pattern of students in these schools to the various post-primary schools and an examination of current enrolment within the various year groupings of these primary schools. From this examination, a projection is made of future enrolment in each of the post-primary schools within the five towns. This, in turn, leads to an identification of future possible amalgamations and a justification of amalgamations already proposed by the Department of Education and Science.

The thesis concludes by making several recommendations which would safeguard the ethos of Catholic schools in the light of a declining secondary school enrolment, a growth in amalgamations and an increasingly significant role for the VECs in the provision of post-primary education. These recommendations would also ease the process of amalgamations in schools that are not viable, either economically or in terms of curricular provision.

Information is correct as of 1st. February 2003.

CHAPTER ONE: THE ORIGIN AND NATURE OF POST-PRIMARY EDUCATION IN IRELAND.

1.1 Introduction.

The Irish post-primary education system is unique. In most countries, the privately owned or 'voluntary' secondary school is the exception; in Ireland, it is the norm. This situation is the legacy of history.¹ In Ireland, until the 1960's, a post-primary education was the exception rather than the rule. The secondary schools that were in operation were privately owned, funded and operated. These schools were Religious schools in that they were owned and operated by either a Diocese or Religious order.

With the introduction of free post-primary education for all students in 1967,² the post-primary school system had to be expanded. It was at this juncture that the State involved itself in post-primary school provision and operation. The late sixties and the seventies saw a happy co-existence between the State post-primary schools and the Catholic secondary schools. Traditional enrolment patterns and curriculum choice ensured that such schools were not in direct competition for enrolment. However, in the recent past, there are signs that this 'peaceful co-existence' is in jeopardy. State sector schools, particularly community schools and colleges, have adopted subjects from the 'academic' syllabus of the secondary schools and, in many cases, there are now no obvious curricular differences between such schools. This convergence in curriculum has contributed towards a decline of the traditional secondary school.

An emerging 'pluralism' or the ascendancy of 'non-denominationalism' has put further strain on the Catholic secondary school. A corresponding factor has been

¹ Council of Management of Catholic Secondary Schools. (1999) *A Manual for Boards of Management of Catholic Secondary Schools (Revised Ed)*. Dublin: CMCSS. p 3.

² Logan, John. (1999) (a) 'All the children: The Vocational School and Education Reform 1930-1990' in *Teachers' Union. The TUI and its forerunners 1899-1994*. (ed Logan) Dublin: Farmer. p 289.

the sharp decline in the numbers of Religious available to staff and manage such schools. Indications are that the existent post-primary educational landscape is on the verge of dramatic change. State sector schools are becoming more dominant in relation to post-primary education provision. This dominance is strengthened by the closure of secondary schools and the amalgamation of others into state sector schools. As Raymond Walsh observes, 'rationalisation has come to form a major part of the strategy of both Church and State in response to change'.³

This thesis traces the origin and development of post-primary education in Ireland. It examines recent and current trends in relation to the number of, and enrolment in, the various school types. The implications for Catholic schools are examined, as is the process towards amalgamation and the consequences thereof.

The five main towns in West Cork are examined and the educational provision in these towns is assessed in relation to viability and future educational provision.

The question 'What is the future of post-primary education in West Cork?' is the critical question that this thesis is concerned with. The question is answered by an assessment of the post-primary situation in Bantry, Skibbereen, Bandon, Clonakilty and Dunmanway. However, in answering this question, a number of subsidiary questions arise:

- What is the future of Catholic post-primary education in West Cork?
- What are the current post-primary enrolment trends in each of the towns?
- What numbers will be available for post-primary enrolment over the coming years?
- What factors point towards an amalgamated post-primary education structure in West Cork?
- How will school trustees react to the prospect of amalgamation and/or closure?
- In an amalgamated structure, what is the likely role of the local Vocational Education Committee?

³ Walsh, Raymond. (1999) 'The issue of rationalisation in Irish post-primary education, 1963-96: The perspectives of the Catholic Church.' in *Oideas*, No. 46 (Autumn) (ed. O'Conchubhair, Pdraig) Dublin: Government Publications Office. p 22.

The emerging picture is of a single system, centrally managed by either a Vocational Education Committee or by the Department of Education and Science itself. The implications of such a development are also assessed.

1.2 Historic outline of the structure of Irish post-primary education.

1.2.1 Irish post-primary education pre-1930.

The Republic of Ireland, with a population of approximately three and a half million people of which a nominal 92% belong to the Catholic church⁴, has a well developed and comprehensive education system. The vast majority of schools are denominational in character, four hundred and forty five out of a total number of seven hundred and sixty eight post-primary schools, and are operated under the Catholic ethos⁵. However, given the origins of post-primary education in Ireland, this is not surprising.

Under the provisions of the *Catholic Relief Act 1782*, Catholics were permitted to teach and conduct schools without fear of prosecution. This development was significant in that it de-criminalised Catholic involvement in education, a legacy from the Penal Laws. Catholic education had been proscribed by an *Act to Restrain Foreign Education 1695* and Catholic teachers were prohibited by law from teaching or running a school.⁶ However, during that period, infrequent classes were provided secretly for poorer Catholics by travelling teachers. It was from this practice that the ignominious title of 'hedge-schools' arose. During the penal period, while Catholic education was prohibited in Ireland, wealthy Catholics were educated on the continent. This trend was regarded as undesirable by the English

⁴ The figure of 92% was cited by Professor Aine Hyland, UCC, in a paper to a Congregational Educational Assembly organised by CoRI (Conference of Religious, Ireland) in 1996 and subsequently published in 1997.

Hyland, Aine. (1997) 'Critique' in *The Future of Trusteeship: A review of some options for the way forward.* (ed CoRI) Dublin: CoRI. p 30.

⁵ Fehene, Matthew. (1995). 'The future of Catholic second-level schools in Ireland' in *Education and the Family* (Ed. Fehene). Dublin: Veritas. pp 203-204

⁶ Glendenning, Dymrna. (1999) *Education and the Law.* Dublin: Butterworths. p 14.

authorities as Europe was, at that time, a nursery of revolutions and nationalistic ideals.⁷ Indeed, the foundation of Maynooth College in 1795, by the English, had as its primary purpose not so much the education of papist clergy but, rather, the elimination of the necessity for Irish seminarians to travel abroad for training. The fear was that these students would become influenced by European revolutionary and nationalistic ideals and would return with such thoughts and inspire the Irish to rebel. It is of note that the first professors in the newly established Maynooth College came from the Sorbonne in Paris, fleeing the French Revolution.⁸

Between 1800-1869, the Established Church in Ireland, the Church of Ireland, had a monopoly of State funds in education. This situation arose not so much by law but because Catholics precluded themselves from such schools as conscience would not allow them to partake in State funded education. Furthermore, Catholics had a suspicion that such state schools were proselytising.⁹ After Catholic Emancipation (1829), this system continued to operate. However, around this time the religious teaching orders had begun to establish a network of denominational schools nationwide without the financial assistance of the State.

These Religious bodies are crucial to the history of Catholic education in Ireland in that they provided the opportunity for many Catholics to avail of primary and post-primary education. The small number of secondary schools in Ireland did not receive State funding until 1878.¹⁰ Having experienced almost fifty years of Church-State tensions in the national schools, the State reluctantly agreed to fund second-level denominational education through the *Intermediate Education (Ireland) Act, 1878*. The *Disestablishment Act 1869* made available the required

⁷ The obvious example is the French Revolution with the corresponding emphasis on *liberte, egalite et fraternite*- liberty, equality and fraternity.

⁸ Corish, Patrick (1995) *Maynooth College 1795-1995*. Dublin: Gill and Macmillan. pp 61-62.

⁹ Glendenning, D. (1999) *op cit.*, p14.

¹⁰ Fehenev, Matthew. (1998)(a) 'Introduction' in *From Ideal to Action*. (Ed. Fehenev) Dublin: Veritas. p 5.

finance to fund this initiative through the disestablishment of the Protestant Church in Ireland.¹¹ This State funding was dependent on the ‘Results System’ with grants being awarded in direct proportion to the schools success in the Intermediate examinations.¹² This 1878 Act was later amended by the *Intermediate Education Amendment Act 1900*, allowing for operational changes within secondary education, which subsequently led to the mandatory registration of all secondary teachers under the *Intermediate Education (Ireland) Act 1914*.¹³ Following independence, the Free State government changed little in the education system it adopted except for the ‘Gaelicisation’ of the curriculum. Throughout the 1920’s, total enrolment in secondary schools never exceeded thirty thousand, a figure which represented only ten per cent of all children between the ages of thirteen and eighteen.¹⁴ Post-primary education was also catering for a much higher proportion of males, with sixty per cent more boys than girls enrolled throughout the 1920’s. From a funding viewpoint, these schools received little by way of state financial aid until the *Intermediate Education (Amendment) Act, 1924*, which provided for the payment of capitation grants as well as incremental salaries to teachers.¹⁵

Technical education, a system distinctive from both primary and secondary education, was initially provided for under the *Agriculture and Technical Instruction (Ireland) Act 1899*. It is noteworthy that technical education was placed under the control of the the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction. This situation continued until the Department of Education was established under the *Ministers and Secretaries Act, 1924*, when technical instruction came under the remit of the Department of Education. During this

¹¹ Glendenning, D. (1999) *op cit.*, pp 23-24.

¹² Feheny, M. (1998)(a) *op cit.*, p 5. *ad passim* Glendenning, D. (1999) *op cit.*, p 24.

¹³ Glendenning, D. (1999) *op cit.*, p 25.

¹⁴ Logan, John. (1999)(a) *op cit.*, p 277.

¹⁵ Feheny, M. (1998)(a) *op cit.*, p 5.

period, this system of technical or vocational education flourished with seventy-seven technical schools being established before the introduction of the *Vocational Education Act 1930* which paved the way for the formation of an alternative system of post-primary education to the secondary school in Ireland and the establishment of vocational education committees.¹⁶ The *Vocational Education Act, 1930* also made legislative provision for the devolution of authority for technical instruction to the vocational education committees.¹⁷

The educational debate that preceded the 1930 Act, mirrored the current debate in Irish educational circles regarding Church control of the post-primary education system in the face of rationalisations, amalgamations and closures. The secular nature of the 1930 Act was condemned by many at the time who feared that the new co-educational and multi-denominational schools ‘could create danger to the religion and morals of the pupils’.¹⁸ This debate was fueled by outbursts from, amongst others, the editor of the *Irish Rosary*, who believed the then Vocational Education Bill¹⁹ to be ‘a menace to religious education’ and which would provide a host of new jobs for a hoard of job-seekers at the public expense.²⁰ This charge was refuted by the then Minister for Education, John Marcus O’Sullivan, who, after the Bill was passed, in a letter to the Irish Catholic hierarchy, asserted that the ‘continuation and technical education provided for by the Act remained essentially vocational and that vocational schools were distinctly not schools for general education.’²¹ In general terms, it could be asserted that the concerns of the Catholic Church regarding the 1930 Vocational Education Act were not so much with the provision of vocational or continuation education *per se*, but rather with

¹⁶ Logan, J. (1999)(a) *op cit.*, p 277.

¹⁷ Farry, Michael. (1998) *Vocational Teachers and the Law*. Dublin: Blackhall Publishing. p10.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p 14.

¹⁹ In terms of legislative progression, a piece of legislation is introduced to the Dail as a Bill.

When the Bill is passed and signed into law it becomes an Act. Hence at the time of this debate, the Vocational Education Act of 1930 was the Vocational Education Bill.

²⁰ Farry, M. (1998) *op cit.*, p 14.

²¹ *Ibid.*

the introduction of a system of 'co-educational and multi-denominational' education which, it was feared, would be detrimental to the then post-primary model which was Catholic controlled and had separate schools for both boys and girls.²² These fears were addressed at that time by the Minister who reassured the Dail that the 'separate spheres of secondary and vocational education' would be maintained.²³

1.2.2 Vocational education.

Until recently, vocational education was regulated by the *Vocational Education Act 1930* and the *Vocational Education Amendment Act, 1944*, along with various other amendments, memo's and circular letters issued by the Department of Education from time to time.²⁴ The 1930 Act did not define vocational education, but dealt with the concepts of technical education and continuation education. Section seven of the *Vocational Education Act 1930* states that 'there shall be a committee in and for every Vocational Education area to fulfill in respect of such area the duties assigned to vocational education committees by this act'.²⁵ Farry also indicates that there are currently thirty eight of these Vocational Education Committees in existence, twenty seven county committees, four city committees and seven town committees. It seems likely that this number will be reduced as a working group, The Commission on School Accommodation, is currently looking at ways to rationalise the workings and the number of Vocational Education Committees. That discussion is ongoing and, given the

²² Drudy, Sheelagh & Lynch, Kathleen. (1993) *Schools and Society in Ireland*. Dublin: Gill and Macmillan. p 189

²³ Logan, John. (1999) (a) *op cit.*, p 282.

²⁴ However, this changed during the lifetime of the last Government. The *Vocational Education (Amendment) Bill, 2000* passed committee stage on 29 May 2001 and was referred back to the Dail for further consideration, recommendations and amendments. This Act was finally passed the following July and became the *Vocational Education (Amendment) Act, 2001*. See Irish Vocational Education Association (2001) 'VEC Bill at Report Stage' in *IVEA News*, June 2001. Dublin: IVEA. p 1.

²⁵ Farry, Michael. (1998) *op cit.*, p 17.

political nature of the various VEC's, will take some time to implement.

Section thirty of the *Vocational Education Act 1930* specified the duties of a Vocational Education Committee as establishing and maintaining a suitable system of continuation education and to supply or aid the supply of technical education in its area.²⁶ Clearly, it was envisaged that the main emphasis would be on continuation education, defined in section three of the act as meaning

...education to continue and supplement education provided in elementary schools and includes general and practical training in preparation for employment in trades, manufacture, agriculture, commerce and other industrial pursuits. and also general and practical training for improvement of young persons in the early stages of such employment.²⁷

Continuation education therefore, sought to provide students with manual skills accompanied by basic skills in literacy and numeracy. Its objective was to educate students in the skills required in manufacturing, technical and agriculture and in clerical and service employment for girls in the age group fourteen to sixteen.²⁸ This stated aim was distinct to the purpose of secondary education which 'aimed to provide advanced skills which could be applied in administration or business or which might provide a basis for further training in a university'.²⁹

While the two 'separate spheres' of education co-existed between the 1930's and 1960's, it also appears that enrolment in this bipartite system of second level education reflected the class structure of Irish society at that time. The secondary school operated to educate pupils with perceived intellectual ability in the skills and values necessary for administration, management and the professions. Many of the religious orders established secondary schools with a view to providing a secondary education for pupils from poorer backgrounds who showed intellectual

²⁶ Ibid., p 20.

²⁷ Ibid., p 12.

²⁸ Hannan, Damian & Boyle, Maura. (1987) *Schooling Decisions: The origins and consequences of selection and streaming in Irish post-primary schools. Paper No. 136.* Dublin: The Economic and Social Research Institute. p 22.

²⁹ Logan, John. (1999)(a) *op cit.*, p 282.

ability. Many of these schools had the policy of administering 'entrance examinations' to establish which students were 'capable'. Indeed, some operated both a secondary school and a technical school within the one complex. Entrance to either was dependent on the results achieved in the 'entrance examination'.³⁰

In contrast, the vocational school was created to teach manual and technical skills to the children of manual workers and small farmers in order to fulfill local economic needs. Continuation education became the central focus and activity of the vocational schools, which provided cheap accessible courses to children, many of whom may not have otherwise received second level schooling.³¹

1.2.3 The need for change.

For over thirty years the vocational sector was severely restricted in its operation, as it was compelled to operate in a 'separate sphere' to the secondary school. The 1960's represented a major turning point in the development of our current education system. Up to this time, as alluded to previously, post-primary education was operated on a bipartite system. From the 1960's onwards, however, economists were beginning to see education more in terms of an economic investment rather than public service.³² The view was being developed that the prosperity of a modern technological society depended, to a large extent, on the availability of an educated work force. This view culminated in the emergence of yet another form of post-primary education, the comprehensive school, the curriculum and philosophy of which was a combination of the secondary and vocational schools, though controlled and operated by Boards of Management consisting of representatives of the schools trustees.

³⁰ The North Monastery C.B.S. in Cork is a case in point. The school complex contained a secondary school and a technical school, both operated by the Christian Brothers.

³¹ Logan, John. (1999)(a) *op cit.*, p 299

³² Coolahan, John. (1981) *Irish Education, History and Structure*. Dublin: Institute of Public Administration. p 131

In earlier decades the Department of Education was primarily an administrative body, but since the 1960s it exercises a much greater role in research and policy making. 'The mid to late sixties witnessed a number of major and far reaching educational reforms which had a major impact on the scope and scale of post-primary education'.³³ Following the results of the investment in education report in the 1960's, notable developments occurred: the proposal to introduce comprehensive schools in 1963 (Patrick Hillery, Minister for Education), the opening of the first comprehensive schools in 1966 (Cootehill, Carraroe and Shannon), the introduction of a common Intermediate and Leaving Certificate in January 1966 (George Colley, Minister for Education) and the availability of free post-primary education to all from the academic year 1967-1968 onwards (Donogh O'Malley, Minister for Education).³⁴ The establishment of the Regional Technical Colleges and other non-university third level centres, the extension of the Leaving Certificate Cycle to all vocational schools and the introduction of a higher education grant scheme, all of which date to this time, provided an eighty-five per cent increase in enrolment at post-primary level and a hundred and forty per cent increase at third level. Between 1966 and 1969, the number of pupils in voluntary secondary schools rose from 104,000 to 144,000.³⁵ This dramatic increase in enrolment placed tremendous pressure on the voluntary secondary schools and compelled the State to take a more active role in the provision of post-primary education. The introduction of comprehensive schools in 1966 was an attempt by the State to provide extra post-primary places for students. Indeed, the introduction of free post-primary education would ultimately lead to

³³ Mulvey, K. (1990) *Tomorrow's Schools. Education in Ireland, For what and for whom? - Proceedings of the Patrick Magill Summer school, 1989* (Ed. Mulholland, J. & Keogh, D.) Dublin: Hibernian University Press. p96.

³⁴ Logan, John. (1999)(b) 'The Making of a Modern Union: The Vocational Teachers' Association 1954-1973' in *Teachers' Union, The TUI and its forerunners 1899-1994*. (Ed. Logan) Dublin:Farmer. pp167-168. and Logan, John. (1999) (a) *op cit.*,pp 288-289.

³⁵ Lee. J.J. (1989) *Ireland 1912-1985. Politics and Society*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p 362.

the need for the introduction of community schools and colleges. Initially, 'in the three years to 1970, 50,000 new places were provided in 100 existing secondary schools, in a total of 2,000 rooms including specialist facilities'.³⁶

In the immediate aftermath of the introduction of free post-primary education, the percentage increases in those sitting the Intermediate and Leaving Certificate examinations were approximately one hundred per cent and three hundred per cent respectively.³⁷ In that regard, this period in Irish education history shaped the educational landscape that currently exists in Ireland.

This process of development and educational reform continued in the 1970's with the introduction of community schools, a progression from the comprehensive school, a further step towards equality of educational opportunity and a means of eliminating the bipartite system of secondary and vocational schools.

The combination of an increasing demand for second-level places and a need for a systematic approach to provision was acutely felt by the state, the churches and the vocational sector and it soon resulted in a proposal to radically expand provision through community schools, formed either by amalgamating existing schools or as completely new foundations.³⁸

A Vocational Education (Amendment) Act was passed in 1970 which facilitated Vocational Education Committees co-operating with other agencies in the provision of schools.³⁹ This Act was crucial in terms of modern Irish post-primary provision in that it allowed the local VEC's to co-operate with Religious orders and the various Dioceses for the provision of community colleges.⁴⁰ However, this act does not apply to the provision of 'green-field' schools.

In October 1979, the Department of Education issued a document on community

³⁶ O'Buachalla, S. 1988. *Education Policy in twentieth century Ireland*. Dublin: Wolfhound Press. p 286.

³⁷ Mulvey, K. (1990) *op cit.*, pp 96-97.

³⁸ Logan, John. (1999)(b) *op cit.*, pp 193-194

³⁹ Girvan, Brian. (1999) 'The State and Vocational Education' in *Teachers' Union, The TUI and its forerunners 1899-1994*. (Ed. Logan) Dublin:Farmer. p 89.

⁴⁰ Glendenning, Dympna. (1999) *op cit.*, p 36.

schools. Criteria set out by this document included directives on such matters as enrolment; schools were to have between four hundred and eight hundred pupils, broad ranging curricula, school facilities to be available to voluntary organisations during out of school hours and these schools were to be governed by Boards of Management.

As a result of the aforementioned reforms and educational developments

from 1970 onwards, an increasing number of vocational pupils obtained places in university and substantially greater numbers were admitted to the technological colleges. However, a disproportionate amount of vocational school pupils would continue to find their way into poorly rewarded, low-skilled occupations. The vocational school had quickly demonstrated a capacity to prepare pupils for higher education.⁴¹

While the ability of the vocational school to perform at a high level is undisputed, middle class parents generally tend to see the vocational school as inferior, 'but despite reforms which have sought to eliminate the cleavages that have long characterised Irish society and its schools, it remains, in some respects, a less esteemed sector in second level education'.⁴²

As a possible consequence over the period 1963 to 1980, the increased growth in pupils attending second level education 'has been almost exclusively catered for by the expansion of the privately-owned (voluntary) secondary school sector which provides a much more academically directed education than either of the other school types'.⁴³ The figures cited in chapter two and elsewhere illustrate a significant change in that enrolment trend in the period since then.

⁴¹ Logan, John. (1999)(a) *op cit.*, p 300.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p 301.

⁴³ Hannan, Damian & Boyle, Maura. (1987) *op cit.*, p 28.

1.2.4 Comprehensive schools.

In 1963, Dr. Patrick Hillery, the then Minister for Education, proposed to introduce comprehensive schools and a 'Technical schools Leaving Certificate' to achieve a technical education standard comparable in esteem, but different in kind from that available in the secondary school. Technical Education is defined by section four of the *Vocational Act 1930* as

education pertaining to trades, manufactures, commerce and other industrial pursuits (including the occupations of girls and women connected with the household) and in subjects bearing thereon or relating thereto and includes education in science and art (including, in the county boroughs of Dublin and Cork, music) and also includes physical training.⁴⁴

The State's goal of a broader comprehensive curriculum and its growing perception of education as an economic investment found its clearest expression in the sixteen comprehensive schools established between 1966 and 1973. The first of these was opened in 1966 by George Colley, the then Minister for Education. This type of school was to serve as a prototype for a reformed second level system in which 'the characteristic elements of the vocational manual curriculum and the secondary literary curriculum might be fused'.⁴⁵ Comprehensive schools were to be co-educational schools open to all classes and levels of ability, offering a wide curriculum to match the aptitudes of their pupils and were not planned on a nationwide scale. Rather, they were to be situated in regions where there was a lack of post-primary schools. By 1995, there were sixteen comprehensive and sixty one community schools in existence in Ireland.⁴⁶ Of these sixteen comprehensive schools, eleven were under Catholic control and five were under Protestant control.⁴⁷ These schools are built and maintained totally

⁴⁴ Farry, Michael. (1998) *op cit.*, p 13.

⁴⁵ Logan, John. (1999)(b) *op cit.*, pp 167-168.

⁴⁶ Feheny, Matthew. (1998)(b) 'The future of the Catholic School - An Irish Perspective' in *From Ideal to Action*. (Ed. Feheny) Dublin, Veritas. p 203

⁴⁷ Drudy, S. & Lynch K. (1993) *op cit.*, p13.

out of state funds. While they are vested in the State in fee simple, they are leased to trustees under a deed of trust for educational purposes. It is for this reason that such schools are attractive to Protestant Churches which are without the financial or personnel backing of the Catholic Religious orders.⁴⁸ Most of the comprehensive schools are managed by committees, the members of which represent the diocesan religious authority, the vocational education committee of the area and the Minister for Education.⁴⁹ The policy of creating comprehensive schools did not last long as their objective of providing a wide-ranging or 'comprehensive' curriculum to serve the whole second level system did not succeed as most of these schools retained characteristics of either the vocational or secondary school types that they emerged from. The last comprehensive school built in Ireland was opened in 1973, and from then new schools that were being created were designated as community schools. By 1999, as illustrated in appendix ii, 8,406 students or 2.37% of the total student population were enrolled in comprehensive schools.

1.2.5 Community schools

The community school concept was a development of the comprehensive school philosophy and was to provide free schooling of the comprehensive type to all in the catchment area without pupil selection procedures. The schools were described as a further step towards equality of educational opportunity, the reduction of overlapping of resources, and the elimination of the bipartite pattern of vocational and secondary schools.⁵⁰

One of the aims of the community school is to foster the development of community consciousness and their curricula are intended to reflect the needs and

⁴⁸ Glendenning, Dympna. (1999) *op cit.*, p 36

⁴⁹ Coolahan, John (1981) *op cit.*, p 218.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p 195.

traditions of their surrounding areas.⁵¹ This is clarified further in the Articles of Management of such schools where the purpose of the community school is defined in terms of providing

a comprehensive system of post-primary education open to all children of the community, combining instruction in academic and practical subjects and, ongoing education for persons living in the area in which the college is located and generally for the purpose of contributing towards the spiritual, moral, mental and physical wellbeing and development of the said community.⁵²

The first three community schools (Carraroe, Shannon and Cootehill) were opened in 1972. Since then many have evolved from an amalgamation of existing vocational and secondary schools. Others have been established by the Department of Education in rapidly expanding urban areas as an alternative to providing separate secondary and vocational schools. The fact that the religious orders that initially staffed many of these secondary schools are now facing closures of their own means that few, if any, new voluntary secondary schools will be created. This has further aided the success and growth of the community school.

Where the community school resulted from an amalgamation of existing schools, a contribution towards the cost of building was required from the existing school authorities. This contribution was generally dispensed with in the case of green field developments or new schools.⁵³

Community schools do allow a high degree of Church influence and, to that extent, are partially denominational due to the involvement of Religious at management level.⁵⁴ The payment, by the State, of salaries to denominational chaplains is further evidence of the denominalisation of the community school.

⁵¹ Ibid., p 219

⁵² Archdiocese of Dublin.(undated) *Community Schools in the Archdiocese of Dublin*. Dublin: Archdiocesan Education Secretariat. p 17

⁵³ Glendenning, Dympna. (1999) *op cit.*, p 38.

⁵⁴ Drudy, S. & Lynch K. (1993) *op cit.*, pp 14-15

The Instruments and Articles of Management of such schools give guarantees to Church authorities regarding membership of Management Boards and the curricular provision for 'religious instruction'.⁵⁵

Significantly, these articles led to a recent court interpretation that these 'non-denominational' schools were, in fact, *de facto* Catholic schools. In that case, taken by the Campaign for the Separation of Church and State against the payment of salaries to chaplains in community schools, Mr. Justice Declan Costello ruled that community schools were Catholic schools.⁵⁶

With the growth of community schools, what emerged was a Catholic post-primary school where the Church authorities had obtained what was legally a minority interest, but as the schools were to be almost exclusively used by Catholic children, the bishops could claim that they were Catholic schools and could demand and get reserved places, conditions safeguarding religion, and paid Catholic chaplains for at most a five percent contribution to the initial building cost.⁵⁷

By 1999, community schools accounted for 12.32% of the total post-primary school enrolment. This represented an enrolment of 43,585 students in community schools. These figures are to be found in appendix i and ii respectively.

1.2.6 Community colleges.

With the involvement of the Department of Education in the provision of an alternative system of education to the secondary school which was nominally

⁵⁵ Archdiocese of Dublin. (undated) *Community Schools in the Archdiocese of Dublin*. Dublin: Archdiocesan Education Secretariat. p 13 & p 23.

While these provisions pertain to the Archdiocese of Dublin, they are identical for all dioceses in Ireland.

⁵⁶ Walshe, John. (1999) *A new partnership in education*. Dublin: Institute of Public Administration. p 171.

⁵⁷ O'Flaherty, L. (1992) *Management and Control in Irish Education: The Post-Primary Experience*. Dublin: Drumcondra Teachers Centre. p 73

non-denominational, the vocational education committees became concerned at the impact that such a move would have on their future role in post-primary education. A compromise was reached whereby a number of new schools, community colleges, would be set up under the control of the VEC's but run on similar lines to community schools.⁵⁸

Since 1978 some VEC's have established schools which they have termed community colleges rather than vocational schools. These are second level and similar in conception to community schools but with a different management structure under the aegis of the VEC's.⁵⁹

The development of community colleges, therefore, has since evolved as a Vocational Education Committee parallel to the Department of Education's community schools. A community college is managed by a sub-committee of the VEC, with a view to providing

a comprehensive system of post-primary education open to all children of the community, combining instruction in academic and practical subjects and, ongoing education for persons living in the area in which the college is located and generally for the purpose of contributing towards the spiritual, moral, mental and physical wellbeing and development of the said community.⁶⁰

This statement of intent is identical to the definition of community schools above. The community college has a management structure identical to the community school, the only difference being that the former is owned by the Vocational Education Committee and not the Department of Education. On the Boards of Management of both community schools and community colleges, the Church, ie. the diocese, or religious order in the case of amalgamations, has three

⁵⁸ Glendenning, Dympna. (1999) *op cit.*, p 38.

⁵⁹ Coolahan, John (1981) *op cit.*, pp 220-221.

⁶⁰ Archdiocese of Dublin. (undated) *Community colleges in the Archdiocese of Dublin*. Dublin: Archdiocesan Education Secretariat. p 5.

representatives.⁶¹ Charting the growth of community colleges is difficult as some vocational schools, without curricular or management change, have adopted the title also.⁶² Drudy calculated that there were some twenty two community colleges in 1993 that had resulted from mergers between existing secondary and vocational schools.⁶³ More recent figures are given in chapter four.

Model Agreements have been agreed between religious managerial bodies and Vocational Education Committees in several counties. These documents offer legal safeguards to both the religious party and the Vocational Education Committee in the new or amalgamated school. The best known of these is the provision which assures religious instruction and religious worship for all pupils in the school despite the school being non-denominational and not operated by religious. The Agreements also make provision for membership of the Board of Management. These Agreements have been applied in all community colleges within the remit of the County Cork Vocational Education Committee, Coachford College with the Diocese of Cloyne and Glanmire Community college and Maria Immaculata Community College, Dunmanway with the Diocese of

⁶¹ The total composition of Boards on Management in these schools varies from school to school and from VEC to VEC. For example, in the Archdiocese of Dublin, community schools have ten members, three nominated by the Archdiocese, three by the VEC, two parent representatives and two teacher representatives. Community Colleges in Dublin have a similar composition though, sometimes, an eleventh member represents the minority religion. In the Diocese of Cork and Ross, the Boards of Management of community schools, such as Carrigaline Community School, have ten members, three nominated by the VEC, three nominated by the Diocese, two teacher representatives and two parent representatives. Boards of Management of community colleges are sub-committees of the local VEC and, while they must have ten representatives as above, can have up to twelve members: three nominees of the Diocese, three nominees of the VEC, two parents representatives, two representatives of teachers and, depending on local circumstances, one representative of the minority religion and one agreed representative from the local community. This arrangement exists in relation to Schull Community College. However, variations exist locally due to individual model agreements for each school. In all cases, the principal is an additional, *ex officio*, non-voting member of the board.

By way of comparison, Boards of Management in secondary schools and vocational schools have eight members. Four members are nominated by the trustees, two are elected by teachers and two are elected by parents. Again, the principal is an *ex-officio*, non-voting member.

⁶² This situation is often clarified, as in County Cork VEC, where the term 'designated community college' is used to describe community colleges that are operated by a Board of Management and have a model agreement.

⁶³ Drudy, S. & Lynch K. (1993) *op cit.*, p 13.

Cork and Ross being recent cases in point.

As in the case of community schools, above, these model agreements allow community colleges, co-managed by the VEC and the local diocese, religious order or congregation, to be termed *de facto* Catholic schools.

In determining enrolment figures and percentages for community colleges, a difficulty arises. In terms of statistics issued by the Department of Education and Science, community colleges and vocational schools are grouped together, both being operated by a Vocational Education Committee. However, enrolment in Vocational Education Committee schools, by 1999, was 98,451 students or 27.82% of the total post-primary pupil population.⁶⁴

1.3 The influence of Religious on post-primary education in Ireland.

As already mentioned, post-primary education in Ireland, from its inception, relied heavily on religious orders of brothers and sisters. These orders were founded with a particular teaching apostolate; the Mercy sisters, founded by Catherine McAuley and the Presentation sisters founded by Nano Nagle are the most obvious. Catering for boys were the Christian and Presentation brothers founded by Blessed Edmund Rice. While Rice founded the Christian Brothers in 1802, they did not obtain Papal approval until 1821 and did not adopt their Rule until 1829.⁶⁵ These teaching orders, which were not a uniquely Irish phenomenon, were established solely to educate catholic youth⁶⁶ and funded their own schools for that purpose.

In general terms, these schools sought to respond to urgent social needs that were not being addressed by others: to promote Gospel values and to ensure that those

⁶⁴ These figures are contained in appendix ii.

⁶⁵ Daly, Cathal B. (1995) 'The legacy of Edmund Rice' in *Education and the Family*. (ed. Feheney) Dublin:Veritas. p 9.

⁶⁶ St. John Bosco (1815-1888), patron saint of youth from Piedmonte in Italy is a case in point. John Bosco founded the Salesians in 1859 for the education of catholic boys.

who were marginalised would find a central role in society and a sense of belonging. In that regard, the Religious orders that established such schools did so in the belief that education could empower those who were poor, marginalised and excluded in Irish society.⁶⁷

It is for that reason that Catholic secondary schools are regarded as being private schools, even though they are grant-aided and salaries are paid by the Department of Education and Science.

These orders initially concerned themselves with the moral and social instruction of the young. The fact that they were founded for such a purpose was indicative of a need for education at that time. This system of education operated by religious was largely the only system of education available until the advent of vocational education in the 1930s.

Initially, and probably due to the religious orientation of these schools, the schools were by and large, single sex schools. This situation changed with the passage of time, often as a result of a decline in pupil numbers, so that by 1981, it was reported that 'about eighty per cent of the state-supported primary schools are mixed male and female pupil clientele, and almost half of the post-primary schools are gender mixed'.⁶⁸

A natural consequence of the denominational origin of these post-primary schools is the issue of Church control in post-primary education. The control of the Irish education system is notable in that it has a unique pattern of ownership and management. 'The dominant pattern is one of Church ownership and management but with the state responsible for the bulk of both capital and costs and with the state also having central control of curriculum and assessment'.⁶⁹ Furthermore,

⁶⁷ Conference of Religious of Ireland (2001) *Religious Congregations in Irish Education, A Role for the Future? Summary and Guide to the text*. Dublin: Conference of Religious of Ireland. p 12.

⁶⁸ Coolahan, John. (1981). *op cit.*, p.141

⁶⁹ Drudy, Shelia & Lynch, Kathleen. (1993) *op cit.*, p 6.

the Irish education system is state aided and highly centralised, although the *White Paper in Education* published in 1995, did make an effort to devolve some of this authority to Regional Education Boards.⁷⁰ This was one of the most controversial aspects of the *Education Bill 1997* and, following a change in Government in June 1997, it was not surprising that this attempt at decentralisation was abandoned for political and financial reasons.

1.3.1 Voluntary Catholic secondary education.

The oldest institution of second level education in Ireland is the voluntary secondary school, being the sole provider of post-primary education *per se* in Ireland until the introduction of free post-primary education. The 'parallel' system of vocational education was more concerned with the separate spheres of technical and continuation education as indicated above. By 1980 it was estimated that this form of post-primary education catered for 70% of post-primary students.⁷¹ However, as appendix ii indicates, this had fallen to 66.11% by 1988 and to 57.49% by 1999.

In Irish second-level education, secondary education has been the most popular. 'In 1990-1991 there were 792 second-level schools in the system aided by the Department of Education; some 60 per cent (476) of these were secondary schools'.⁷² An interesting breakdown of these 476 secondary schools is also given,

253 are owned by female religious orders and 136 by male religious orders, with 7 amalgamated schools run by more than one religious order. A further 28 are owned by diocesan authorities. Protestant denominations own 22 secondary schools. There is one Jewish secondary school, a German school, and 28 schools owned by lay Catholics.⁷³

⁷⁰ Department of Education. (1995) *Charting our Education future - White paper on Education*. Dublin: Government Publications Office. p 167.

⁷¹ Coolahan, John. (1981) *op cit.*, p 142.

⁷² Drudy, Shelia & Lynch, Kathleen. (1993) *op cit.*, p 6.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p.7

However, in figures released to the writer, under the Freedom of Information Act, the Department of Education and Science revealed that there were 474 secondary schools in operation in 1990-1991 and not 476, as indicated by Drudy and Lynch. These Department of Education and Science figures are included in appendix i.

As can be seen from Drudy and Lynch's analysis, secondary schools are denominational schools founded to provide a denominational, usually Catholic, education for their pupils. The diocese or the religious orders owned the sites and, up to the mid-sixties, built the schools at their own expense. 'No state funds were expended on the building and contents of these schools until 1964'. However, with such state funding, the *quid pro quo* was a surrendering of some control to the State, though school ownership and the appointment of teachers remained with school authorities.⁷⁴ Prior to this development, it would not have been unusual to have the salaries of Religious teaching in these schools paying for either extensions that were being built or for other schools of the particular congregation elsewhere. The Dioceses and religious orders invested both personnel and capital in these schools. This situation was essentially mirrored in the voluntary health care system.⁷⁵ Over the years the state has assumed an increasing responsibility for the provision of second level education, grants are now paid by the state for the maintenance of the school itself, towards the tuition fees of the pupils, towards the cost of materials and equipment and towards the building of new schools. The introduction of free education in 1967 by the then Minister for Education, Donogh O'Malley, T.D., impacted significantly on the enrolment of secondary schools. This development resulted not only in a dramatic increase in numbers attending secondary schools but consequently subject choices widened and staff levels increased in line with the growing needs

⁷⁴ Glendenning, Dympna (1999) *op cit.*, p 34.

⁷⁵ O'Brien, John. (1994) *Seeds of a new church*. Dublin: Columba. p. 18

of the school.

The alternative to joining in the free scheme for many schools was closure and so they reluctantly signed up, though for some schools in the city this meant financial loss and, it was feared, a diminution of standards due to the influx of extra children of uncertain ability.⁷⁶

Initially, the curriculum which emerged in secondary education in the 1930's and 1940's, and which continued to dominate official thinking until the 1960's, was one in which the literary and academic subjects occupied a central role. The various subjects were seen as the basic units of the curriculum and progress in the curriculum was measured largely by performance in the public exams. Certain core subjects were required of all pupils and only by following this kind of programme could the purpose of the secondary school, the provision of a general education, be obtained.

In Ireland, so many schools are Catholic that it becomes difficult to separate the term 'secondary education' from 'Catholic education'. A Catholic education aims to be an all round education passing on a set of values on the one hand, and preparation for certificate examinations on the other.⁷⁷ In the 1970s, a manager was appointed in such schools, separate from the principal, to be legally responsible for the administration of the school. Usually, this manager was the superior of the religious order that operated the school or was one of the local clergy. It was the principal who was ultimately responsible for the execution of the manager's decisions in the day to day running of the school. Latterly, the practice has been to replace this 'manager' with a combination of appointed and elected people on a 'Board of Management'.⁷⁸ While these Boards of Management are representative,

⁷⁶ Rooney, Brendan. (1998) 'Shooting the Rapids, Rationalisation and Secondary Schools' in *Issues in Education* (Ed. Farrell) Vol 3, 9-16. Dublin: ASTI Publications. p 11.

⁷⁷ Council of Managers of Catholic Secondary Schools. (1991) *A Manual for Boards of Management of Catholic Secondary Schools*. Dublin: CMCSS. p 12.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

these Boards of Management have the responsibility of ensuring that the curriculum of the school is in accordance with the religious and educational criteria enunciated by the trustees.⁷⁹ Since 1985, there has been a movement towards management structures more akin to those in Community schools. Up to 1985 secondary schools could, subject to academic regulations laid down by the Department of Education, appoint whoever they wished as teachers. In 1985 an agreement was reached between the managers of Catholic secondary schools and the Association of Secondary Teachers, Ireland (ASTI) regarding the establishment of Boards of Management in Catholic secondary schools. The articles of management agreed in June 1985 stated that each secondary school was to have a Board of Management consisting of eight persons; four nominees of the trustees, two elected representatives of the parents and two elected representatives of teachers. This provision was copper-fastened by the Education Act 1998 when it spoke of membership which is 'agreed between patrons of schools, national associations of parents, recognised school management organisations, recognised trade unions and staff associations representing teachers and the Minister'.⁸⁰

The Principal of the school is the non-voting Secretary to the Board and the trustees appoint the Chairperson of the Board, who, if necessary, has a casting vote. The introduction of Boards of Management represented a new awareness of the partnership in education between school and community, involving parents, teachers, pupils and management. The Board of Management is now 'the manager'.⁸¹ However, it needs to be pointed out that the process is on-going, that not all Catholic voluntary secondary schools have Boards of Management yet, though with the publication of the *Education Act 1998* those without such boards represent a very small percentage. Thus, even though Catholic secondary

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Department of Education and Science (1999)(a) *The Education Act, 1998*. Dublin: Stationery Office. p 18. section 14.

⁸¹ Council of Managers of Catholic Secondary Schools. (1991) *op cit.*, p 4.

schools are increasingly lay-administered institutions, both in their management and teaching staff, and though almost all their capital is provided by the State, they are ultimately subject to the control of the trustees, normally the religious body which operates the school. However, it seems likely that in the future, these Boards will also exercise some responsibility towards the Department of Education and Science.

To an increasing extent it is likely that Boards will be accountable to the state in relation to meeting the needs of students through appropriate curriculum and assessment, as well as being accountable to their trustees in relation to protecting and promoting the ethos of the school. In other words, Boards will increasingly have 'a dual mandate' - from the State as well as from their trustees.⁸²

In the early years, the teachers in Catholic secondary schools were almost all taken from the religious orders or the congregations managing these schools. Eventually, lay men and women became employed in small numbers.⁸³ After the Second Vatican Council and the beginning of the decline in religious vocations, the number of religious personnel decreased. At the same time, enrolment in almost all of these schools increased rapidly. This created new teaching appointments which, by and large, were filled by lay men and women. As the number of vocations continued to decline, so also did the number of religious personnel in second level schools.

In voluntary secondary schools it was down to fifty per cent in 1966, fell to thirty four per cent in 1971 and to ten per cent in 1993. At present (1997) the vast majority of teachers in voluntary secondary schools, and increasingly the principal, are lay people.⁸⁴

The decline in the number of Religious in such secondary schools was mirrored by a corresponding decline in the number enrolled in such schools and in the number of such schools in operation. Religious congregations continue to ensure,

⁸² Feheny, Matthew. (1998)(b) *op cit.*, p 154

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p 206.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p 207.

however, that by retaining a majority on the Board of Management, the founding ethos of the school will prevail. Rationalisation, amalgamation or the construction of a new community school, under the Department of Education and Science, or a community college, under the Vocational Education Committee, are becoming the alternatives for some secondary schools. The Deeds of Trust and Model Agreements of these community schools and colleges, agreed by both parties, safeguard and copper-fasten the founding philosophy of the secondary school. These legal documents are addressed in greater detail in chapter four. The future of Catholic schools and Catholic education is one of the critical areas that this thesis seeks to examine. In that regard, these deeds of trust are of crucial concern.

1.4 The significance of the 1998 Education Act.

The *Education Act, 1998*, was the culmination of almost ten years of policy development and consultation which modernised the Irish education system by placing it on a statutory basis. In 1992, the then Minister for Education, Seamus Brennan, published *Education for a Changing World*, a document which later became known as the 'Green Paper on Education'. This publication marked the beginning of a process of widespread consultation and discussion on how the education system should be reformed to meet modern challenges and the demands placed upon it. The Green Paper noted the unsatisfactory position that 'Ireland is probably unique among European countries in the degree to which it administers an educational system without a comprehensive and up to date legislative structure'.⁸⁵ It also noted a continuing concern about the lack of openness and the relatively minor role played by parents in the system. There has been widespread debate on these and other related matters since 1992. The Green Paper gave rise to

⁸⁵ Department of Education. (1992) *Education for a Changing World*. Dublin: Government Publications Office. p 31.

a series of consultations with the 'partners' in education, amongst whom were the unions, patrons, management associations, Vocational Education Committees and parents. This series of consultations culminated in the National Education Convention, which took place in Dublin Castle in October, 1993. The purpose of this convention was to

provide a forum for mature reflection and focussed debate by representatives of the many agencies involved. It set out to encourage participants to clarify viewpoints; to question, probe and analyse varying perspectives; to foster multi-lateral dialogue and improve mutual understanding between sectoral interests; to explore possibilities of new ways of doing things and to identify areas of actual or potential agreement between different interest groups.⁸⁶

The deliberations of this convention led to the publication, by the Department of Education in 1995, of *Charting our Education Future*, the White Paper on Education. The White Paper on Education was the origin of the first of the 1997 Education Bills. While the Education Bill 1997 enjoyed the support of the then Government, popularly called the 'Rainbow Coalition' due to the broad spectrum of political hues that it encapsulated, the Bill was vehemently objected to by opposition parties who committed themselves to abolishing some provisions of the Bill should they be returned to power. Foremost among these was the attempt to introduce Regional Education Boards. After the general election of June 1997, the Coalition Government fell; the 1997 Education Bill suffered the same fate.

The incoming Government, a coalition of Fianna Fail and the Progressive Democrats, with the support of a few Independents, published the Education (No. 2) Bill 1997 which retained some of the provisions of the previous Education Bill, such as the amended composition of Boards of Management of primary schools, and deleted other aspects such as the establishment of Regional

⁸⁶ Coolahan, John. (1994) (a) 'Introduction' in *Report on the National Education Convention*. (ed. Coolahan) Dublin: National Education Convention Secretariat. p 1.

Education Boards. Many amendments put forward by the teacher unions to the Education Bill 1997, were absorbed into the new Education (No. 2) Bill. These included a redefinition of schools, a new definition of centres for education, references to consultation and agreement with teacher unions, the placement of the NCCA on a statutory basis and, as expected, the removal of all references to Regional Education Boards.⁸⁷ The No. 2 Bill also contained new material set forward by the then Minister for Education, Micheal Martin. After the publication of The Education (No. 2) Bill, several amendments were proposed and debated by the Oireachtas. The culmination of these amendments and debates was the signing into law of the Education Act in December 1998.

This Act placed considerable emphasis on the principle of partnership in the management and operation of our educational system. This partnership principle finds its strongest expression in the provisions relating to Boards of Management of schools. This Act has introduced the current philosophy of openness, accountability and transparency to the Irish education system. Furthermore,

the new Act provides a statutory basis for Irish education for the first time since the foundation of the state. The terms of the Act will be implemented over a two year period which indicates the Minister's desire to put its provisions in place in a very short period of time.⁸⁸

The *Education Act 1998*, crucially addressed the role of several of the partners in Irish education. The Act clearly defines the role of the Minister and places an obligation on him to ensure that there is provision made for each person, including those with a disability, to obtain a level and quality of education appropriate to that persons needs and abilities.

The Act made provision for the establishment of Boards of Management in all

⁸⁷ Teachers Union Of Ireland. (1998) 'Education Bill 1997 (No.2)' in *TUI News*, February 1998 Vol.20 No.4. Dublin. p 5.

⁸⁸ Secretariat of Secondary Schools. (1999) 'Education Act' in *Newsletter*. February 1999. Vol xxv. No. 6., Dublin: Secretariat of Secondary Schools. p 1.

publicly funded schools, furthermore, it specified the representation on these Boards. As previously mentioned, this is of particular relevance to secondary schools, many of which, heretofore, did not have such boards. The Act also contained a number of other important provisions: it placed the Inspectorate of the Department of Education and Science on a statutory basis and defined its role and function; it provided a statutory framework for the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment and also the state's examinations system; it set out the function of both principal and teachers and it made provision for a mechanism for appeals and grievances as well as providing for bodies to advise the Minister on the teaching of Irish and on strategies to combat educational disadvantage.⁸⁹

One of the provisions of the Act which is pertinent to this thesis is the issue of school governance and the corresponding role of the Boards of Management. Section 14 (1) of the Act states 'It shall be the duty of a patron, for the purpose of ensuring that a recognised school is managed in a spirit of partnership, to appoint where practicable a Board of Management.'⁹⁰ While the Act envisages that schools would have a Board of Management in a 'spirit of partnership', the words 'where practicable' are significant, in that they indicate that the introduction of Boards is not mandatory.

The role of parents as partners has been recognised and enhanced through representation on Boards of Management and the establishment of Parent Associations.

There are problems, however, in some schools, where Boards of Management have not been established. It is to be regretted that the Education Bill only requires schools to establish Boards of Management 'where practicable'. This is hardly a democratic approach to school management as we enter the twenty first century.⁹¹

⁸⁹ Department of Education and Science (1999) (b) *The Education Act 1998, Explanation of*. Dublin: Department of Education and Science.

⁹⁰ Department of Education and Science (1999)(a) *op cit.*, p 18.

⁹¹ Fitzpatrick, Catherine. (1998) 'What must be done?' in *Issues in Education. Vol 3* (Ed. Farrell) Dublin: ASTI. p 77.

Boards of Management are required to be accountable to the patron on whose behalf it manages the school. Schools, through their Boards, are required to be accountable to the Minister in respect of financial matters and the day to day operation of the school in accordance with the Education Act and Circular Letters; the mechanism by which the Department of Education and Science advises and instructs the authorities of schools on policy and regulations. In general terms, the Act has constructed a framework within which each of the stakeholders has both duties and rights in relation to accountability.

There is a statutory recognition of school patrons who are obliged 'where practicable' to appoint Boards of Management which reflect the interests of all those who hold a stake in the school. The Board must encompass the interests and objectives of the various people involved. When making appointments to a Board,

the patron shall comply with directives given by the Minister in respect of an appropriate gender balance and the Minister,..... shall consult with patrons, national association of parents, recognised school management organisations and recognised trade unions and staff associations representing teachers.⁹²

In real terms, appointments are made to a Board by a patron in accordance with agreed compositional structures. Representative bodies such as parents and teachers elect representatives from their number.

Board composition has been one of the more contentious issues in educational reform as it is felt by the churches that the issue of their respective ethos should be reflected in the composition of the Board of Management. The duty of the Board as outlined in the Act is to manage the school on behalf of the patron and for the benefit of the students and their parents and to provide education for each student at the school for which the Board has responsibility. In so doing, the

⁹² Department of Education and Science (1999) (a) *op cit.*, p 19

Board shall

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 which inform and are characteristic of the objectives and conduct of the school...⁹³

This provision is significant, in that it reduces the issue of the school's ethos to a 'characteristic spirit' influenced by several considerations.

The importance of partnership and consultation in the establishment of Boards of Management of schools is very evident in this Act. Prescriptive provision, by the Department of Education, which limited the autonomy of schools and which relied on coercion rather than consensus has been avoided.

Micheal Martin, the then Minister for Education and Science, stated that a fundamental difference between this Act and the previous Bill was that the Department had deleted the element of compulsion and the power to take grants from schools if they fail to conform to a central uniform norm⁹⁴.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Minister Micheal Martin's speech to Seanad Eireann 18 November 1998.

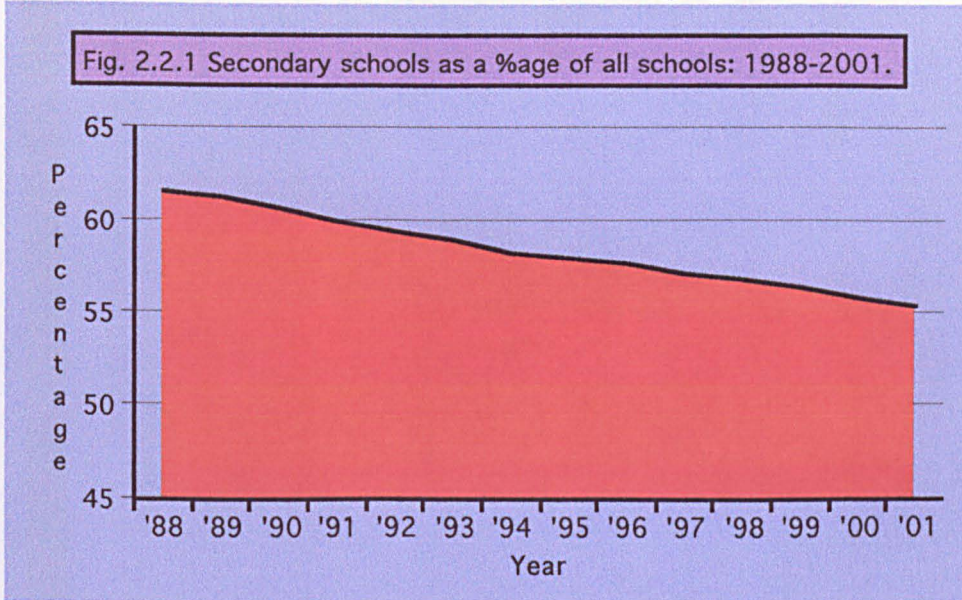
CHAPTER TWO: CURRENT AND EMERGING TRENDS IN IRISH POST-PRIMARY EDUCATION.

2.1 Current and emerging trends in the number of post-primary schools according to school type.

The period since the introduction of free post-primary education has seen a dramatic change in the educational landscape both in terms of school number and school enrolment. This change has been accentuated or accelerated in recent times. In the following sections, the number of each school type is depicted as a percentage of the total number of post-primary schools in operation in Ireland for that year. The figures were obtained from the Department of Education and Science in February 2001 and in July 2002 for 2000-2001 and 2001-2002. These figures and the subsequently calculated percentages by the writer, are included in appendix i. For consistency and accuracy, each of the figures use a range of 20%. A greater range would not illustrate some trends and would depict a straight line. This is particularly true in relation to the comprehensive schools where the range over the twelve years extends from 1.98% to 2.13% Each of the following sections also contains a figure relating to school enrolment. Again, these figures are given as a percentage of the total post-primary enrolment. These figures were also obtained by the writer from the Department of Education and Science in February 2001 and July 2002 under the Freedom of Information Act. These enrolment figures and the subsequently calculated percentages are contained in appendix ii.

2.2 The secondary school.

Figure 2.2.1 The secondary school as a percentage of all schools: 1988-2001.



There is evidence to suggest that, with the passage of time, the secondary school is losing popularity in terms of both number and enrolment.

The above figure illustrates a percentage decline in the number of secondary schools from 61.6% in 1988 to 55.5% in 2001. While this decline seems relatively small, it represents an actual decrease of 82 schools.⁹⁵ It is also noteworthy in that the secondary school is the only school type in Ireland in numerical decline.

Many writers have commented on this decline. There seems to be general acceptance that this trend is directly linked to the number of Religious available to teach in these schools, which were run by Religious, and to the corresponding withdrawal of Religious from education. Many such schools are now amalgamating with vocational schools and community schools and colleges. This trend is analysed later in chapter four.

Another point of note is that these secondary schools were established in various areas, by religious orders, to cater for a particular need. It could be argued that these schools have 'moved' from their original purpose and are now educational structures that maintain and support inequality. This issue is dealt with in greater

⁹⁵ See Appendix i

detail in chapter four.

The building of a local Christian community has clearly not been an objective of most Catholic secondary schools. Indeed, the local social class and ability divisions amongst pupils and parents in most multi-school catchment areas not only reinforces, but even aggravates, local social class/ status hierarchies.⁹⁶

New schools that are now established are either community schools, managed by the local Diocese and the Department of Education and Science, or community colleges, operated by the local Diocese, or religious congregations, and the Vocational Education Committee. While many secondary schools are closing, new schools are not opening or operating as secondary schools.⁹⁷ This also impacts negatively on the number of secondary schools, as it does on secondary school enrolment. These secondary school closures and community school/college openings are evident in documentation procured from the Department of Education and Science in 2001 and included in Appendix iii. In brief, during the period 1991 -2000, 19 secondary schools closed, 1 new secondary school was created *ab initio*, 5 secondary schools were created as a result of amalgamations and a further 39 secondary schools were subsumed into amalgamated community schools, community colleges and vocational schools. Chapter four addresses this trend in greater detail.

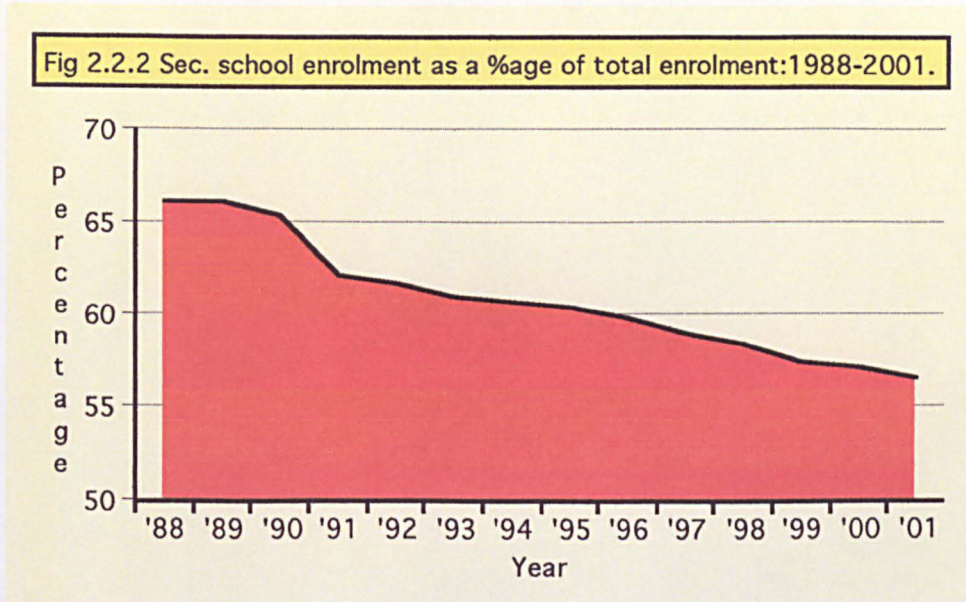
Such amalgamations are often welcomed by religious orders as they are often seen as the best way to safeguard the Catholic education system through agreed Articles of Management contained in the Deeds of Trust and Model Agreements for community schools and colleges.⁹⁸ This issue is dealt with in greater detail in Chapter four.

⁹⁶ Hannan, Damian. (1997) 'Critique' in *The Future of Trusteeship: A review of some options for the way forward*. (Ed CoRI) Dublin: CoRI. p 25.

⁹⁷ The exception to this principle occurs when two secondary schools amalgamate. However, for the reasons cited above, these situations are rare and are unlikely to become more common.

⁹⁸ Walsh, Raymond. (1999) *op cit.*, p 15.

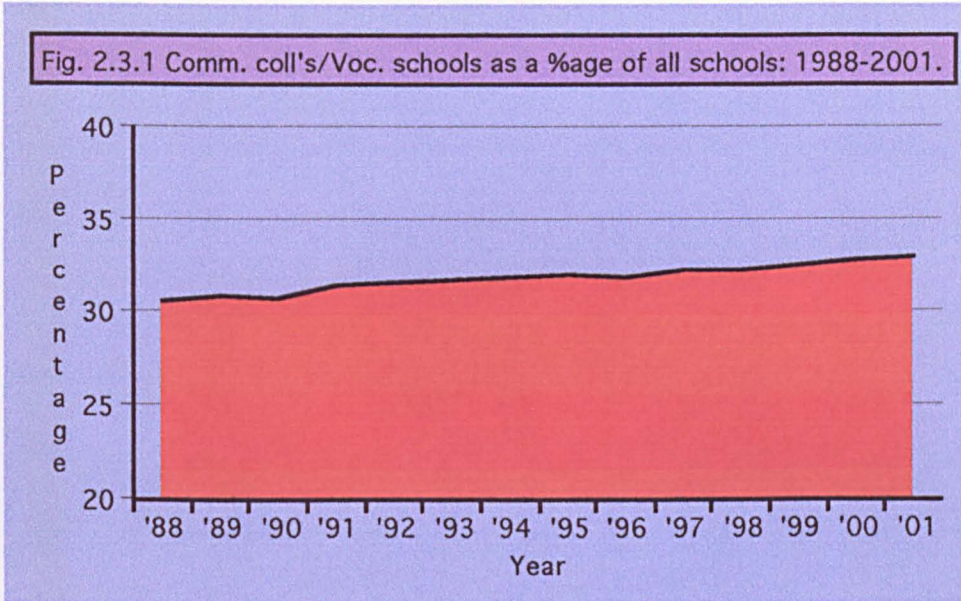
Figure 2.2.2 Secondary enrolment as a percentage of total enrolment: 1988-2001.



Given the decline in the number of secondary schools mentioned above, it is not surprising that there should be a corresponding decline in the enrolment figures and percentages in such schools. Again, while the above figure depicts a decline in secondary school enrolment as a percentage of total enrolment of 9.53% from 1998 (66.11%) to 2001 (56.58%), it needs to be remembered that this represents an actual decline of 18,220 pupils enrolled in secondary schools although the overall number of post-primary pupils available for enrolment rose by 21,384. The decline is sustained as the graph illustrates. Given the current trend to amalgamate secondary schools, this seems likely to continue. The figures relating to post-primary enrolment are included in appendix ii.

2.3 Community colleges / Vocational schools.

Figure 2.3.1 Community colleges / vocational schools as a percentage of all schools: 1988-2001.



The decline in the number of, and enrolment in, secondary schools has accounted for a corresponding growth in vocational schools/ community colleges as well as community schools.

Community colleges are largely a vocational education committee / Religious or Diocesan partnership. They have occurred both as 'greenfield' developments and from amalgamations of vocational schools and secondary schools.

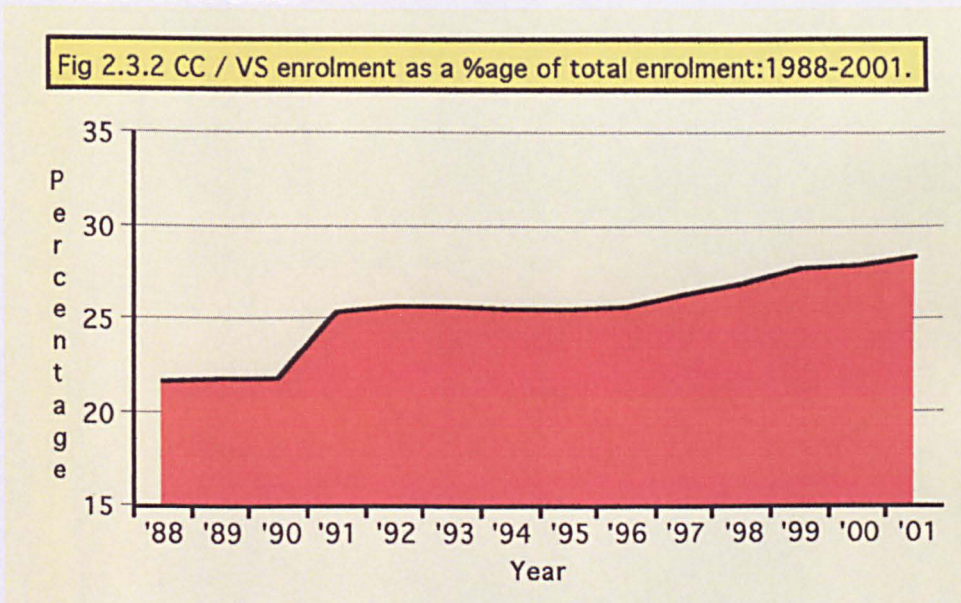
In terms of Department of Education and Science statistics, community colleges and vocational schools are grouped together, both being operated by the local VEC. However, there is evidence to suggest that the number of vocational schools is in decline and these schools are either becoming community colleges or amalgamating with secondary schools to form community colleges.

The depicted 2.4% increase of community colleges / vocational schools as a percentage of all schools, masks the fact that there were 247 vocational schools / community colleges in existence both in 1988 and in 2001. The percentage increase arises from a decrease of fifty-eight in the total number of post-primary schools

operating during the same period.

The actual 'total' decline may be accounted by the fact that many community colleges are formed as a result of an amalgamation of an existing vocational school with another school type. In such circumstances, though there would be a decline in the number of other schools, usually secondary schools, there would be no growth in the number of community colleges/ vocational schools. This is verified by figures in appendix iii.

Figure 2.3.2 Community college / vocational enrolment as a percentage of total enrolment: 1988-2001.

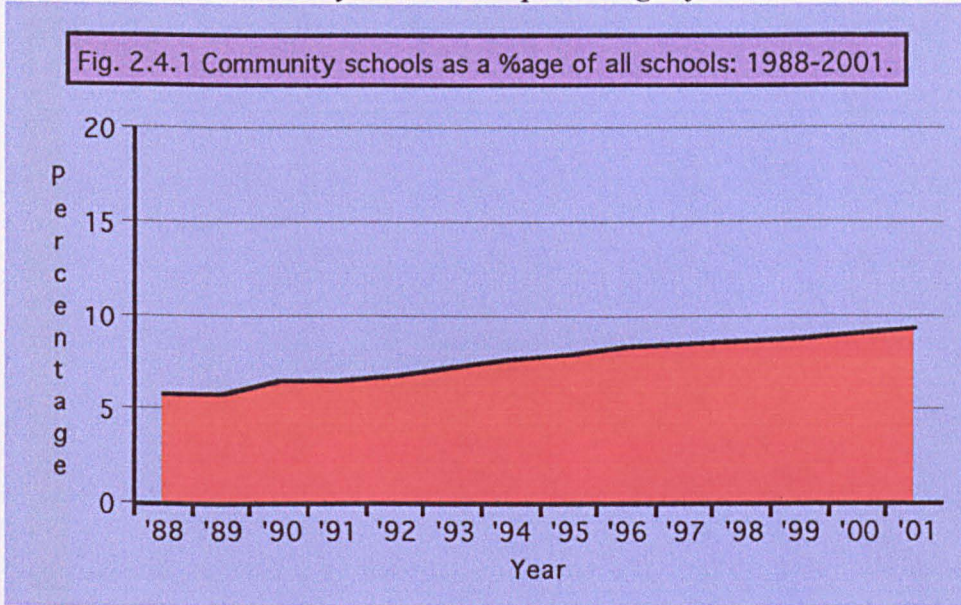


While the growth in the actual number of community colleges / vocational schools is negative, for reasons already cited, the increase in enrolment is substantial, a 6.59% growth in the period 1988 - 2001. This represents an actual growth of 27,030 students: from 69,437 students in 1988 to 96,467 students in 2001. This growth, as with the growth in enrolment in community schools, must be understood against an overall growth in post-primary enrolment of 21,384 during the period. The greater number of pupils, provided through an almost static number of schools, is further evidence of the impact of rationalisations and

amalgamations on community colleges. Amalgamations taking place between community colleges/ vocational schools and secondary schools to form community colleges, would explain the dramatic increase in enrolment while showing no increase in the actual number of community colleges/ vocational schools in operation.

2.4 Community schools.

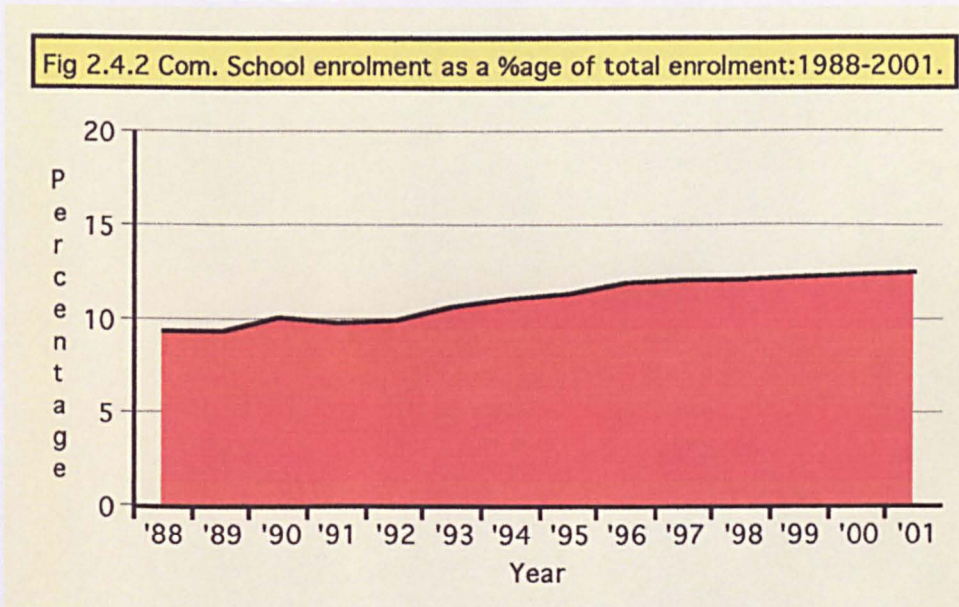
Figure 2.4.1 Community schools as a percentage of all schools: 1988-2001.



From the most cursory of glances, it is obvious that community schools and colleges are in the ascendancy at the expense of the secondary school. The above figure, pertaining to community schools, shows an increase in such schools of 3.65%. This figure is as a percentage of all post-primary schools and represents an actual increase of 24 such schools though the overall number of post-primary schools dropped by 58 during the same period. While many of these are 'greenfield' developments, some are also as a result of amalgamations with secondary schools. The growth could also be interpreted as indicating a more 'hands-on' approach by the Department of Education and Science to post-

primary education in the light of the withdrawal of Religious. Other than comprehensive schools, community schools are the only post-primary educational institutions which have direct involvement by the Department. Given the trend of amalgamation from secondary schools to either community schools or colleges, this figure also helps to account for the decline in the number of secondary schools in operation.

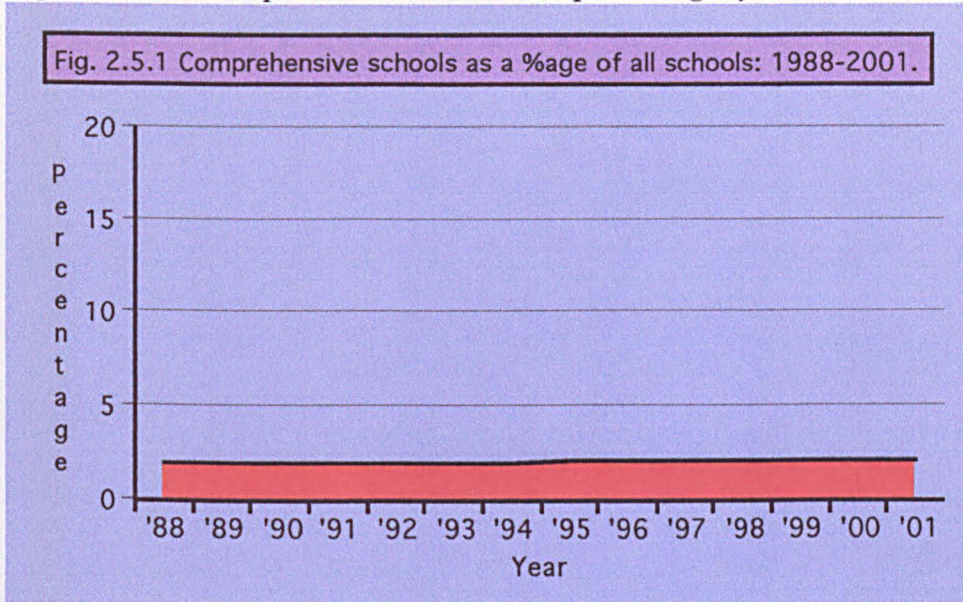
Figure 2.4.2 Community school enrolment as a percentage of total enrolment : 1988-2001.



As one might expect, there is a corresponding increase in the percentage of students enrolled in such schools: 9.47% in 1988 to 12.63% in 2001 - an increase of 3.16%. This reflects an actual growth of 12,769 students. Convincing evidence is emerging that the post-primary educational system of the future will have an enlarged role for community schools and colleges.

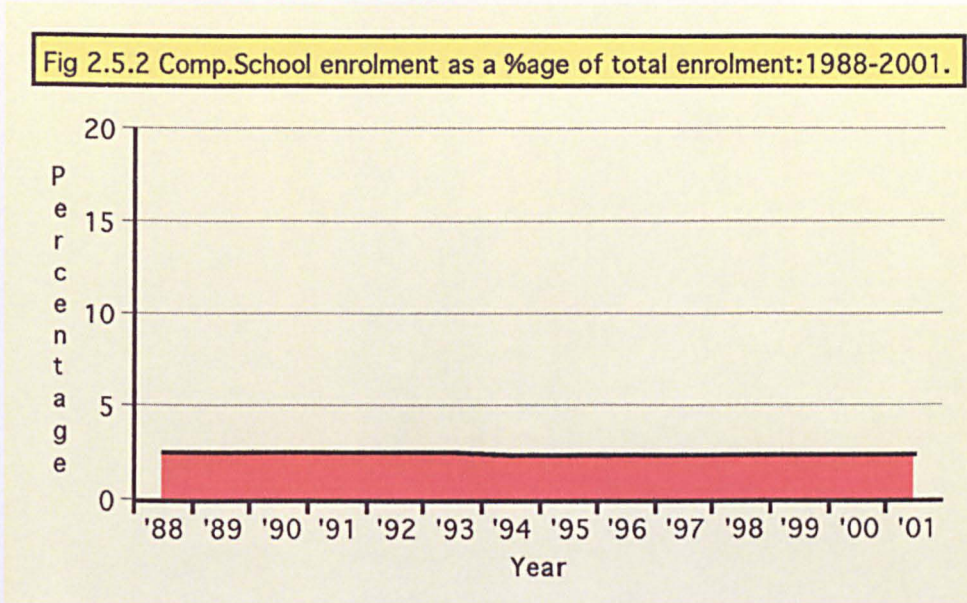
2.5 Comprehensive schools.

Figure 2.5.1 *Comprehensive schools as a percentage of all schools: 1988-2001.*



As illustrated above, the comprehensive school was a Department of Education undertaking that occurred between 1966 and 1973. They number sixteen and have not been subject to numerical growth or decline. However, they are no longer a school type option and, as such, do not impact significantly on this thesis. In time, these schools may come under pressure to amalgamate with other schools and, then, be subsumed into either the community college system or, more likely, the community school system as community schools are also operated by the Department of Education and Science.

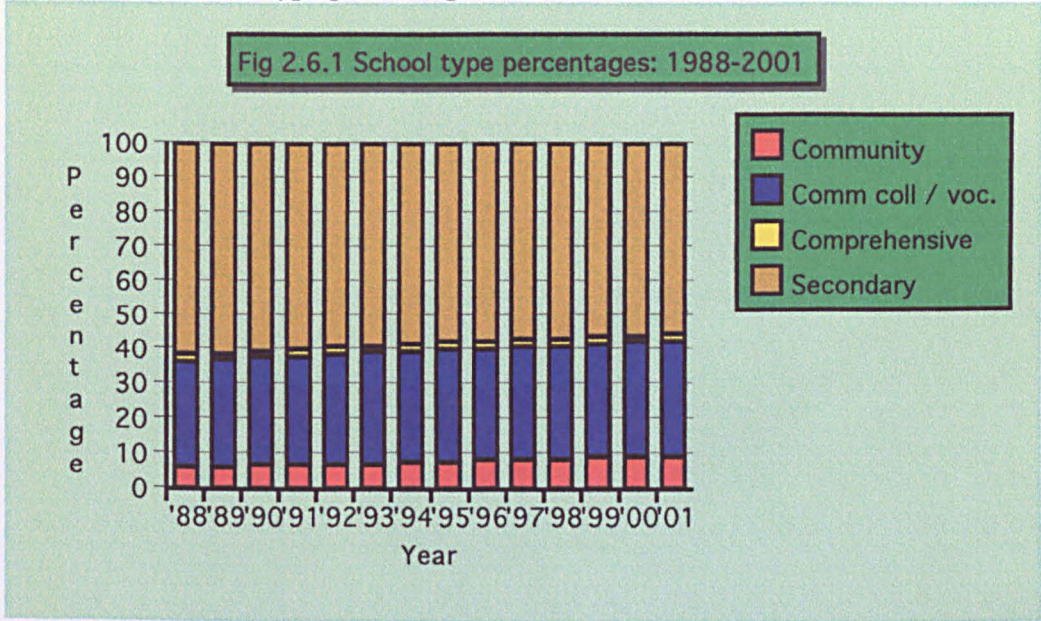
Figure 2.5.2 *Comprehensive school enrolment as a percentage of total enrolment: 1988-2001.*



Again, comprehensive schools cater for an almost static 2.5% of the total post-primary population. This figure is not expected to change, given that no further such schools will be opened. As indicated, any change will only occur if these schools amalgamate into community schools or colleges.

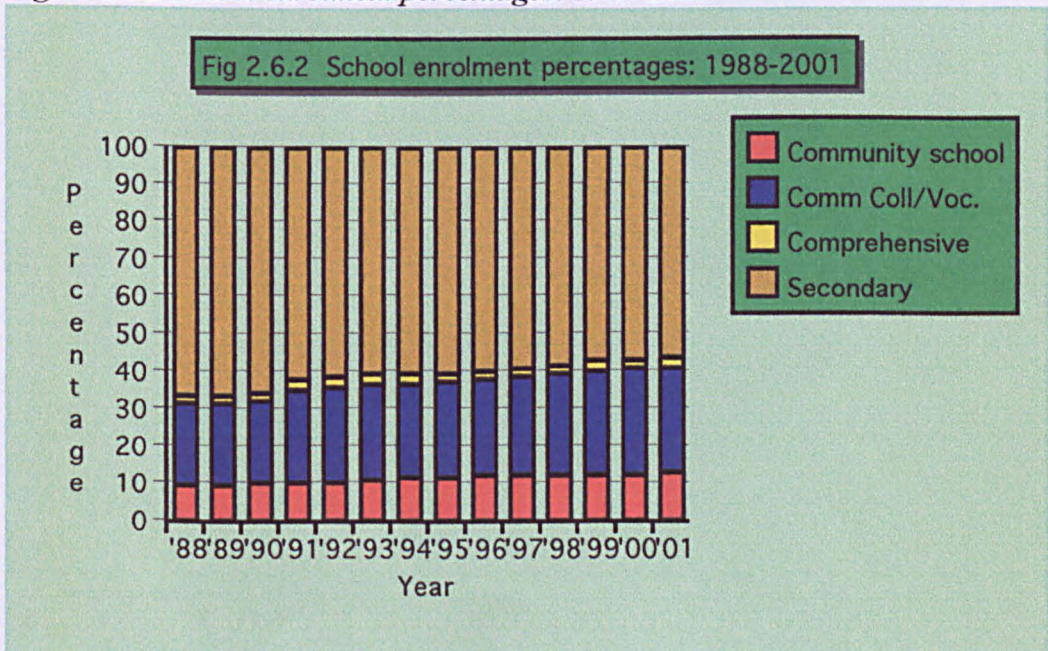
2.6 Overview of trends in school provision and school enrolment.

Figure 2.6.1 School type percentages: 1998-2001



The above figure plots the growth or decline of the number of all of the school types. It collates the information given for each school type above. The most cursory of glances will reveal that the growth in the community school and college sector has been at the expense of the secondary school. This suggests secondary school closures and amalgamations into either community schools or colleges.

Figure 2.6.2 School enrolment percentages: 1988-2001



Again, in terms of school enrolment figures, the above figure reveals an obvious and dramatic decline in secondary enrolment. The decline is not unexpected, given the above-mentioned school number decline. However, this figure clearly illustrates that this decline has been to the benefit of the community school and, more specifically, the community college.

What is of note is that the decline in enrolment in the secondary school is more dramatic than the actual decline in the number of such schools. This would seem to indicate that the secondary school has a smaller average enrolment than the other school types. This assertion echoes Drudy and Lynch's findings that, in general, the community school is larger than the secondary school. According to Drudy and Lynch, 70.6% of community schools have over 500 pupils as opposed to 40.1% of secondary schools.⁹⁹ This is significant in that viability is a crucial factor in deciding to either close or amalgamate. This issue of school viability, especially from a curricular viewpoint, is addressed in greater detail in chapter four.

There is compelling evidence to suggest that the Irish post-primary educational landscape is changing both in terms of school number and school enrolment. This change will have far-reaching consequences for Catholic education in Ireland, but also in relation to school choice for parents and pupils. When 'value for money' is becoming a critical political consideration in educational provision, small schools will find it difficult to survive and will be subsumed into larger educational units. These 'units' will be either operated or managed directly by the Department of Education and Science, as in the case of community schools, or will be operated by something akin to the Regional Education Boards mentioned in previous White Papers - an enlarged Vocational Education Committee structure that will manage, staff and finance post-primary education in a given area. This situation already

⁹⁹ Drudy, Shelia & Lynch, Kathleen. (1993) *op cit.*, p 14.

pertains to community colleges.

Central to this likely development is the issue of a decline in Catholic education (the voluntary secondary school) and school rationalisation or amalgamations.

These issues are addressed in chapters three and four respectively.

CHAPTER THREE: CATHOLIC POST-PRIMARY SCHOOLS - IRISH AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS.

3.1 The distinctiveness of Catholic schools and Catholic education.

While this thesis deals with Catholic education, and the trends therein, a distinction needs to be made between Catholic education and Catholic schools.

While the two terms are related, the relationship between them is not exclusive.

De jure Catholic schools are predominantly voluntary secondary schools, as mentioned in Chapter one, that are, generally speaking, aligned to either a religious order or a diocese. There are a few exceptions, such as Crescent Comprehensive school in Limerick which is also a Catholic school. A small number of voluntary secondary schools are operated by other faiths and a number, so small as to be insignificant, are privately owned. It is to be expected that the type of education in such institutions would be Catholic. However, other educational establishments operating within Ireland, while not being expressly Catholic, are *de facto* Catholic schools.

While chapter one has dealt with the origin and history of the community school and community college, it needs to be mentioned here that these schools are *de facto* Catholic schools as a result of their Deeds of Trust and Model Agreements.

While these documents are not widely available, the Archdiocese of Dublin has published them in booklet form under the titles of *Community colleges in the Archdiocese of Dublin*¹⁰⁰ and *Community schools in the Archdiocese of Dublin*.¹⁰¹

In the case of community colleges, the Catholic Church is guaranteed three representatives on a Board of Management which has a total membership of ten.¹⁰²

However, if the Board of Management of a community college is designated a

¹⁰⁰ Archdiocese of Dublin.(undated) *Community colleges in the Archdiocese of Dublin*. Dublin: Archdiocesan Education Secretariate.

¹⁰¹ Archdiocese of Dublin.(undated) *Community schools in the Archdiocese of Dublin*. Dublin: Archdiocesan Education Secretariate.

¹⁰² Archdiocese of Dublin. (undated) *Community colleges in the Archdiocese of Dublin*. Dublin: Archdiocesan Education Secretariate. pp 1-2

sub-committee of a VEC, under VEC legislation it can have - and some do have - up to twelve members.¹⁰³ More significantly, guarantees are given in relation to the amount of time allotted for religious instruction and in relation to ensuring the competence of the religion teacher.¹⁰⁴ Also,

the committee (VEC) will appoint a Chaplain nominated by the competent Religious Authority who shall be employed outside the normal quota of the school. He shall be a full time member of the staff and shall be paid a salary equivalent to that of a teacher in the school.¹⁰⁵

Community schools have similar provisions. Three members of the Board of Management, out of a total membership of ten, are to be appointed by the religious order, in the case of amalgamations, or by the diocese.¹⁰⁶ In relation to religious instruction, the rights of the Church are safe-guarded:

The religious worship attended by any pupil at the school and the religious instruction given to any pupil shall be in accordance with the rites, practice and teaching of the religious denomination to which the pupil belongs. Religious instruction as aforesaid of the order of two hours shall be given to all the pupils in the school (except those who are withdrawn from religious instruction in accordance with the provisions of sub-clause (i) of this clause) in each week during which the school is in session.¹⁰⁷

Similar provisions exist for the teaching of religious instruction in the articles of many community colleges. As will be seen later, 'religious instruction' is central to what the Vatican Documents define as a 'Catholic education'. The community school has an identical article guaranteeing the provision of a chaplain:

The Board of Management will appoint a Chaplain nominated by the competent Religious Authority who shall be employed outside the normal quota of the school. He shall be a full-time member of the staff and shall be paid a salary equivalent to that of a teacher in

¹⁰³ This matter was clarified further in footnote 61.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., pp 9-10

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p 11.

¹⁰⁶ Archdiocese of Dublin. Community schools in the Archdiocese of Dublin. Dublin: Archdiocesan Education Secretariate. p 13.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., p.23.

the school.¹⁰⁸

This provision was the basis of a court case brought by The Campaign to Separate Church and State Ltd. against the Minister for Education in 1996. The Campaign to Separate Church and State argued that the £1.2 million in payments made annually to such chaplains represented a breach of article 44.2.2 of the Constitution, which guarantees that the State would not endow any religion.¹⁰⁹ In rejecting the application, Mr. Justice Costello stated

it is clear that one of the important reasons why chaplains as well as teachers are appointed to the staff of community schools is for the purpose of assisting the religious formation of the children attending the school (assistance which, *inter alia*, is given by the celebration of Mass in the school). In effect, the State, by paying salaries for chaplains, is having regard to the rights of parents *vis-a-vis* the religious formation of their children and enabling them to exercise their constitutionally recognised rights. If this is the purpose and effect of the payment how can it be said to be unconstitutional?¹¹⁰

In listing the celebration of mass and the religious formation of students, Mr. Justice Costello was inadvertently referring to the characteristics of Catholic schools as indicated by several Vatican documents below. As a consequence of this decision Mr. Justice Costello ruled that

the payment of salaries of teachers of religion (including ministers of religion and members of religious orders) out of public funds is constitutionally permissible and does not constitute 'endowment of religion' as prohibited by Article 42.2.2 (of the Irish Constitution). Taking the matter one step further, the judge held that, if the payment of salaries of teachers of religion out of public funds does not constitute 'endowment of religion', then this must apply whether the teacher is in a denominationally managed school or in primary or secondary schools not so managed.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p 24.

¹⁰⁹ Pollak, Andy. (1998) 'Legal challenge to chaplains pay initiated in 1988' in *The Irish Times*, 26 March 1998. Dublin. p 5.

¹¹⁰ Griffin, Kieran. (1997) 'Whither the fourth R? A perspective on the future of Religion in the primary school' in *The Future of religion in Irish Education*. (ed. Hogan & Williams) Dublin: Veritas. p 78

¹¹¹ Glendenning, Dympna. (1999) *op cit.*, p 66

A further consequence of relevance to this thesis arising from the Costello judgment was the already mentioned definition of community schools as Catholic schools.¹¹² This definition arises from an interpretation of the contents of the Deeds of Trust of such schools as indicated above and allows community schools and, by the same principle, community colleges to be called *de facto* Catholic schools.

In January 1998, the Costello judgment was appealed to the Supreme Court to test its constitutionality. After a hearing, the Supreme Court delivered its verdict on Wednesday, March 25th. 1998. In the reserved judgment, Mr. Justice Barrington said that a religious denomination was ‘...not obliged to change the general atmosphere of its school merely to accommodate a child of a different religious persuasion who wishes to attend that school’.¹¹³ Mr. Justice Barrington did stipulate that the system of salaried chaplains was to be available to community schools of all denominations.

The judgment acknowledged that chaplains provided an extra dimension to religious education, ‘evidence has established that chaplains, besides looking after the pastoral needs of the children, helped them with counsel and advice about their day-to-day problems’.¹¹⁴

Ironically, while the action sought to remove the denominational nature of education within community schools and colleges, it actually copperfastened the denominational aspects of same, culminating in the defining of community schools as *de facto* Catholic schools.

¹¹² Walshe, John. (1999) *op cit.*, p 171.

¹¹³ Carolan, Mary. (1998) ‘State pay for school chaplains is legal, Court rules’ in *The Irish Times*, 26 March 1998. Dublin. p 5

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

3.1.1 Catholic schools.

While accepting that voluntary secondary schools are *de jure* Catholic schools and that community schools and colleges are *de facto* Catholic schools, a further issue emerges. What are the distinctive features of Catholic schools and what is Catholic education?

A Catholic education is the primary function of the Catholic school. Perhaps it is surprising that this view should be most forcibly held by a philosopher rather than a theologian! Prof. John Haldane¹¹⁵ states that

the primary function of Catholic schools, therefore, is to provide forms of education through which the essential doctrines and devotions of Catholicism are transmitted... the task is a non-negotiable one. It is a duty'.¹¹⁶

This viewpoint is confirmed in the *General Directory for Catechesis*, which states 'it is the special function of a Catholic school to... enable young people, while developing their own personality, to grow at the same time in that new life which has been given to them in baptism'¹¹⁷.

A Catholic school is at the heart of the Church's evangelical mission and, consequently, a Catholic education cannot ignore this 'catechetical' obligation.

Indeed, it could easily be argued that the very *raison d'être* of the Catholic school is to 'transmit the Catholic tradition of faith and life and to educate within it'.¹¹⁸

Again, Haldane emphasises this viewpoint when he states that it should be remembered that

a Catholic philosophy of education cannot limit itself to the claim that there are objective social goods. It must build an extensive structure

¹¹⁵ Professor John Haldane is Professor of Philosophy in the University of Saint Andrews and Director of the Centre for Philosophy and Public Affairs.

¹¹⁶ Haldane, John. (1996) 'Catholic Education and Catholic Identity' in *The Contemporary Catholic School*. (Ed. McLaughlin, O'Keefe & O'Keefe) London: Falmer Press. p 133

¹¹⁷ Congregation for the Clergy. (1998) *General Directory for Catechesis*. Dublin: Veritas. p.262.

¹¹⁸ McLaughlin, Terence H. (1999) 'Distinctiveness and the Catholic school: Balanced judgement and the temptations of commonality' in *Catholic Education: ~Inside-Out/Outside-In*. (ed. Conroy, James C) Dublin: Veritas. p 67.

around the simple yet unlimited claim that we exist for the sake of God's glory.¹¹⁹

This need and right to learn about higher truths and something 'more lasting' is stressed in *The General Directory for Catechesis*,

Students have the right to learn with truth and certainty the religion to which they belong. This right to know Christ, and the salvific message proclaimed by Him cannot be neglected.¹²⁰

Professor Haldane sees this as being the crucial issue in Catholic education, Salvation is the ultimate aim of Catholic religious education and, as discussed later, for Haldane, the aim of Catholic education itself. There is an obligation on Catholic schools to be places where the message of salvation can be taught. In many instances, it was for this purpose that these schools were originally founded by religious orders and dioceses. The evangelical activity within the curriculum of the Catholic school is the primary function of such schools.

The primary function of Catholic schools is to transmit Catholic truths and Catholic values. Everything else, no matter how important, is secondary to this.¹²¹

James Arthur maintains that Catholic schools need to commit themselves to the meanings, values and truths specific to the Catholic Church for without these, Catholic schools have no reason for existing.¹²² Indeed, since the Second Vatican Council, it has been held by the Catholic Church that it is the religious dimension of education that makes a school Catholic.¹²³

However, the vision or ethos of a Catholic school carries with it several practical implications for both teacher and pupil. In a Catholic school, for example, as Frank Steele opines, 'there would be a constant need for a vision

¹¹⁹ Haldane, John. (1996) *op cit.*, p 135.

¹²⁰ Congregation for the Clergy. (1998) *op cit.*, p 75.

¹²¹ Haldane, John. (1996) *op cit.*, p 135.

¹²² Arthur, James. (1995) *The ebbing tide. Policy and principles of Catholic Education*. Herefordshire: Gracewing / Fowler Wright Books. p 80.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p 54.

of humanity which saw Christ in everyone'.¹²⁴ Furthermore, such a school would not be about ideas or courses but about people; not about ideal, perfect or holy people but about people as they are in the here and now; not about some people, but about all people. If such a school were to be biased at all, it would be biased in favour of the weak, the poor, the marginalised and the lost.¹²⁵ It could be argued that many Catholic secondary schools did not live up to this vision. Indeed, chapter 4.1.3, dealing with intake inequalities between school types, illustrates that Catholic schools often, if not usually, enrolled the 'brightest students'. There is a large corpus of anecdotal evidence for suggesting that many Catholic secondary schools operated entrance examinations which determined whether a student would be enrolled or not. Those who were unsuccessful in obtaining a place in a secondary school enrolled in vocational schools or, latterly, in community schools and colleges. Schools are perfectly entitled to operate such a system of enrolling students as 'schools are free to compete with each other for local academic talent'.¹²⁶ However, while such 'streaming' was legally acceptable, it does raise the question, which had the 'Catholic vision'? In that regard, the *de facto* Catholic schools, the community schools and colleges, were more 'Catholic' than the *de jure* Catholic schools. This assertion is also strengthened by the fact that the vast majority of fee paying schools in the Republic are Catholic owned and operated, usually by Religious. Regardless, it is now accepted Departmental policy that schools in receipt of state funds cannot enroll on the basis of entrance examinations. While some schools do still retain these examinations, it is for the stated purpose of assessment and, in some cases, streaming students

¹²⁴ Steele, Frank. (1995) 'The Gospel School' in *Education and the Family*. (ed. Fehenehy) Dublin: Veritas. p 163.

¹²⁵ Ibid., p 162

¹²⁶ Hannan, Damian & Boyle, Maura. (1987) *op cit.*, p. 163

according to academic ability. *The Education Act (1998)* states that a school 'must establish and maintain an admissions policy which provides for maximum accessibility to the school'¹²⁷ Furthermore, the Act also stipulates that the Board of Management of a school must ensure that 'the right of parents to send their children to a school of the parents' choice is respected'.¹²⁸ Steele asserts that the Catholic school also has a significant contribution to make to society in general because such a school

would see its fundamental and definitive role as the formation, not even of citizens, but, primarily, of people, of people gifted by God and obligated by this giftedness to become, in Christ, their own most authentic selves, at the service of God and of their neighbour.¹²⁹

3.1.2 Catholic education.

Whereas the link between Catholic schools and Catholic education is strong, it is by no means exclusive. It is also important to stress that while Catholic schools are easily identifiable, the education within is not always Catholic! In attempting to define a Catholic education, it is both desirable and necessary to analyse some of the recent documents emanating from the Vatican, particularly from the Congregation for Catholic Education.

The Second Vatican Council addressed the issue of education in its Declaration on Christian Education, *Gravissimum Educationis*,¹³⁰ of 1965. Those who undergo a Christian education

should learn to adore God the Father in spirit and in truth. (Jn 4:23), especially through the liturgy. They should be trained to live their own lives in the new self, justified and sanctified through the truth (Eph. 4:22-24). Thus they should...make their contribution to the Mystical Body..... Accordingly the sacred

¹²⁷ Department of Education and Science. 1999(a). *op cit.*, p 13.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, p 20.

¹²⁹ Steele, Frank. (1995) *op cit.*, p 163

¹³⁰ Vatican II (1965) '*Gravissimum Educationis*' in *Vatican Council II, The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents Volume 1.* (ed. Flannery, A.) Collegeville: Liturgical Press. pp 725-737.

Synod directs the attention of pastors of souls to their very grave obligation to do all in their power to ensure that this Christian Education is enjoyed by all the faithful and especially by the young who are the hope of the church.¹³¹

This definition of Christian education is denominational, it nurtures faith. Catholic education, then, must support faith and it should celebrate faith. In that regard, it echoes what Haldane calls 'doctrines and devotions' as mentioned in page forty-nine above. In fact, according to many of the Vatican Documents, Catholic education is chiefly about learning and practising the Catholic faith. In that regard, the importance of Catholic Education for the Catholic Church is that it is about increasing and strengthening the membership of the Church. It involves not only Scripture and tradition but it also includes liturgy, putting faith into practice through prayer. Again, this would allow community schools and colleges to call themselves Catholic due to their aforementioned deeds of trust and model agreements and their safeguards for religious instruction. This matter is of critical importance in relation to amalgamations and rationalisations and the future of Catholic education in the light of the decline of the *de jure* Catholic school.

A further document in terms of Catholic education was *Malgre les declarations, Catholic Schools*¹³², a document published by the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education in 1977. This document stressed that the whole school environment was to be a place of catechesis. It also stated that the school has a duty to ensure that in the daily life of the school, students should come to realise that they are called to be living witnesses of God's love for all people and that they are part of salvation history that has Christ, the saviour of the world, as its goal.¹³³ In that regard, the sentiments expressed have been echoed by Professor John Haldane,

¹³¹ Ibid., p 728

¹³² Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education. (1977) 'Malgre les declarations, Catholic Schools': in *Vatican Council II*, More Post-Conciliar documents. (ed. Flannery, Austin. 1982) New York: Costello Publishing Co. pp 606 - 629.

¹³³ Ibid., p 617.

above. Furthermore, a school is Catholic when all the members of the school community share in the Christian vision.¹³⁴

McClelland takes up this idea of 'sharing in the vision' and 'educational environment' when he asserts that 'we need material reminders too'. Amongst these, he lists crucifixes, representations of saints and pious practices.¹³⁵ These material reminders contribute to the Catholic environment within the Catholic school and ultimately contribute to the spiritual development of the student.

These twin notions of 'practice' and 'Christian vision' are also significant in that they seem to be suggesting that Catholic schools should be staffed by Catholic teachers as the obligation to catechise does not belong exclusively to the religious instruction class, but becomes part of the school ethos and environment. Arthur supports such a contention by holding that merely teaching religious education does not make a school Catholic. Religion and religious values should be 'diffused into the entire curriculum, methods and organisation of the school'.¹³⁶ The employment equality laws of both Ireland and the European Union are unlikely to support such a contention. However, the Flynn case does have a bearing on this issue. In that case, the High Court in 1985 held that it was lawful for a Catholic secondary school operated by a religious order of sisters to dismiss a teacher who had 'by conduct in her private life openly rejected the norms of behaviour and the ideals which the school existed to promote.'¹³⁷ At the time, Flynn was living with, and had become pregnant by, an already married man. Prior to the pregnancy, Flynn had been

requested to end the relationship as the employing school authority (a religious order) stated that the parents of some of the students had submitted complaints about the plaintiff's (Flynn's)

¹³⁴ Ibid., p 614

¹³⁵ McClelland, V. Alan. (1995) (a) 'Parents, Church and School: Meeting the Educational needs of the Christian Family' in *Education and the Family*. (ed. Fehenev) Dublin: Veritas. p.23.

¹³⁶ Arthur, James. (1995) *op cit.*, p.55.

¹³⁷ Doolan, Brian. (1992) *Principles of Irish Law. (3rd. Ed)* Dublin: Gill and Macmillan. p 454.

lifestyle. The Employment Appeals Tribunal considered that the dismissal was not unfair.¹³⁸

In a subsequent appeal to the Supreme Court, the dismissal was again upheld.

The initial contribution of John Paul II to Catholic education, was the Apostolic Exhortation *Catechesi Tradendae*.¹³⁹ This document echoes the sentiments of *Malgre les declarations, Catholic Schools* in that it seems to suggest that, from a catechetical viewpoint, teachers of catechetics should be able to give witness to the faith by their own belief. The sentiments of both of these documents were echoed by the school in question, by the Employment Appeals tribunal and by the Courts in the aforementioned Flynn case. In that regard, there is a broad consensus that Catholic education and the ethos of Catholic schools are not confined to the religious education class, but permeate the whole atmosphere of the school.

The Congregation for Catholic Education issued 'Guidelines for reflection and renewal' in relation to education in Catholic schools under the title of *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School* in 1988. There are four distinct qualities to Catholic education: (a) the educational climate, (b) the personal development of each student, (c) the relationship established between culture and the Gospel, and (d) the illumination of all knowledge with the light of faith.¹⁴⁰ In essence, evangelisation is the primary preoccupation of Catholic education

The special character of the Catholic school and the underlying reasons for its existence, the reason why Catholic parents should prefer it, is precisely the quality of the religious instruction integrated into the overall education of the students.¹⁴¹

¹³⁸ Glendenning, Dympna. (1999) *op cit.*, p 430.

¹³⁹ John Paul II (1979) *Catechesi Tradendae: Apostolic Exhortation of John Paul II*. Boston: Pauline Books and Media.

¹⁴⁰ Congregation for Catholic Education (1988) *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School*. available from Vatican Website, http://www.vatican.va/roman_cur.../rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_19880407_catholic-school_en.html; Internet; accessed 22 February 2001. p 1

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p 15.

One of the more recent documents coming from the Vatican concerning religious education and Catholic schools has been *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium*.¹⁴² The primary purpose of Catholic schools is again reiterated: to evangelise, so that all people may receive the gift of salvation.¹⁴³ By its nature, the Catholic school is a place where young people are afforded the opportunity of Christian formation, in the Christian school there is no distinction, 'no separation between time for learning and time for formation.'¹⁴⁴ This view is crucial in that it refuses to distinguish between formation and learning and supports the presumption in earlier documents that Catholic schools should be staffed by Catholic teachers as formation in the Catholic faith does not just take place within the religious instruction class. *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium* confirms the views of John Haldane, who states that the function of a Catholic school is to make Jesus known and, ultimately, the salvation of the pupil. In that regard, the Catholic school is an integral part of the Church's evangelical mission.

In brief, the Church documents are explicit that Catholic schools are places of evangelisation, places where the entire message of salvation is promoted throughout the life of the school, but specifically in the religious education class. The syllabus for such a class must be Christ-centered and it must comprise of Sacred Scripture, doctrine, tradition and liturgy. A Catholic education, then, is not simply about personal preservation of spiritual integrity.

Rather, children are to be matured in such a way that by (*sic*) their individual commitment, their spiritual formation, their framework of belief and their desire to lead good lives, they will confront, challenge and change the world as they encounter it.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴² Congregation for Catholic Education (1998) *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, p36.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p43

¹⁴⁵ McClelland, V Alan. (1995) (b) 'Foreword' in Arthur, James. (1995) *The Ebbing Tide. Policy and principles of Catholic Education*. Herefordshire: Gracewing / Fowler Wright Books. p viii.

3.2 The consequences of the decline of Catholic post-primary schools in Ireland

There has been an undoubted and sustained decline in Catholic schools in Ireland, both in terms of number and enrolment. This national trend has been illustrated in chapter two and is further examined locally in chapter six. The consequent growth in state sector schools seems to indicate that this decline is attributable to more than demographic trends. There is evidence for suggesting that this decline is a direct consequence of the decline in the numbers of Religious available to teach in these schools. For example, Feheny reported that the number of Religious on staff in such schools was 50% in 1966, 34% in 1971 and, by 1993, it had fallen to 10%. Due to the reduction in vocations to the religious life and the even greater reduction in those opting for a teaching career within religious life, this trend seems unlikely to be reversed in the near future.¹⁴⁶ For example, CoRI¹⁴⁷ reported that, of the approximately one thousand religious working in secondary schools in 1992/1993, it was estimated that 36% were within ten years of compulsory retirement and just 6% were aged under thirty-five.¹⁴⁸ Regardless, it is clear that there will not be sufficient Religious to staff and manage such schools in the future. In brief, then, there is a real concern that the future of Catholic secondary education may be inextricably linked to the future of the Orders and Congregations that established them. As a result of this decline, and with a view to influencing positively the future of Catholic secondary schools, Religious Congregations involved in education are now faced with a number of options in relation to the management and operation of their schools. In general terms, these options can be categorised as (i) to amalgamate with other schools, either within or without the Catholic voluntary education sector, (ii) to close, (iii) to change their title and

¹⁴⁶ Feheny, Matthew. 1998.(b) *op cit.*, pp 206-207

¹⁴⁷ Conference of Religious of Ireland. A representative body of the leaders of over two hundred religious congregations working in Ireland.

¹⁴⁸ Conference of Religious of Ireland. (CoRI) (1996) *A handbook for the leaders of religious congregations*. Dublin: CoRI. p viii.

management structure to that of a community school or college or, (iv) to remain in operation as a voluntary secondary school. In arriving at a decision, religious orders will be mindful that it is a stated policy of CoRI that such orders should withdraw from educational management. This policy is as much founded on pragmatism as it is on any other factor. However, it must be noted that CoRI is merely a representative body of religious. It has no canonical or legal standing and cannot dictate policy for individual religious orders and congregations.

3.2.1 Amalgamations

In the case of (i) amalgamations with other schools, particularly other voluntary secondary schools, the inherent difficulty is that such an approach presumes that the congregation(s) and the schools involved will survive in the mid to long-term. In the case of Catholic secondary schools, many orders and dioceses are now embarking on this approach. Such a situation arose in December 2001 when the trustees of St. Finbarr's College, a diocesan Catholic secondary school, and the trustees of the North Monastery Christian Brothers' school, both situated in the northside of Cork city, decided to amalgamate and establish a new board of trustees to administer a new, amalgamated Catholic school. Perhaps this development is a feature of Catholic schools that has emerged, of necessity, in recent times. Br. Colm Keating, a former provincial of the Christian Brothers, commented that 'one of the significant signs of our times in moving forward is that collaboration not competition is now more acceptable among congregations'.¹⁴⁹ This situation will become more common as more Catholic secondary schools amalgamate. It is worth mentioning that the example cited created much

¹⁴⁹ Keating, Colm. (1989). 'Provincial's statement to the Provincial Chapter' cited in Walsh, Raymond (1999) 'The issue of Rationalisation in Irish Post-Primary Education 1963-'96: The perspectives of the Catholic Church and the State' in *Oideas* (ed. O'Conchubhair, Padraig) Dublin: Department of Education and Science. p 19.

opposition amongst the parents and staff in one of the schools, as evidenced in the local media, particularly the local radio station, 96FM, during the months of January and February 2002. Indeed, it is now by no means certain that the amalgamation will take place in the short term.

Amalgamations with other Catholic schools have also been common in the United States. Indeed, in the 1980's, when faced with a steady decline in enrolment, the number of Catholic schools declined each year by two to three percent. This decline in the number of such schools probably reflects 'an attempt on the part of bishops, pastors and other Catholic leaders to minimise the damage of school closings by careful planning and, where possible, the merger of two (or even three) costly schools into one that is more viable'.¹⁵⁰

Amalgamations with schools other than voluntary secondary schools are dealt with in depth in chapter 4.

3.2.2 Closures.

A situation may arise where a Catholic school is no longer viable due to a continued decline in enrolment. In this situation, the remaining students in the school transfer 'en bloc' to another school in the area. This growth will create teaching posts that will absorb the staff members from the school being closed. Either way, through the operation of the 'panel' system, teachers will not lose their jobs but will be redeployed in another secondary school within a set radius of their previous school.

CoRI have identified a number of steps that should be taken by religious orders in relation to school closures. In general terms, there should be active consultation with parents and collaboration between the remaining schools in relation to

¹⁵⁰ Cooper, Bruce S (1996) 'National Crisis, Catholic schools and the Common Good' in *The Contemporary Catholic school: Context, Identity and Diversity*. (Ed. McLaughlin, O'Keefe & O'Keefe) London, Falmer Press. p 47.

identifying and meeting the educational needs of the area. Where possible, there should be a choice of post-primary schools in the area and all schools would make provision for religious education.¹⁵¹ However, this situation, while it might be the ideal, is not always attainable! While it may be possible to retain an element of post-primary school choice in cities and large towns, the same does not pertain to small rural towns. In fact, in relation to this thesis and the educational provision of the towns examined therein, three of the five towns have only one Catholic secondary school. The other two, Bandon and Clonakilty, have two each. However, the element of choice does not exist as the two schools in both towns are a boys' school and a girls' school.

However, it should be said that the 'closure' option is not foreseen in relation to the towns in this survey. In fact, in national terms, closures are rare as amalgamations into either community schools or colleges are seen as a more acceptable option.

A further consideration is the fact that Catholic secondary schools are currently grant-aided to the amount of ninety percent of their running costs. While the grant does not cover the cost of the site, it pertains to the school building, extensions and any remedial work that may be undertaken. Before such schools can avail of grant-assistance for capital projects,

secondary school authorities are required to undertake to refund to the Department the unexpired value of the grant should the accommodation cease to be used for education purposes. The unexpired value is negotiated on the basis of the amount of grant-aid and the period of time elapsed from the date funding was provided.¹⁵²

¹⁵¹ Conference of Religious of Ireland. (CoRI) (1996) *op cit.*, Dublin: CoRI. p 3.

¹⁵² Comptroller and Auditor General. (1996) *Report on value for money examination: Department of Education, Planning of Second Level School Accommodation*. Dublin: Stationery Office. p 11.

Should such schools close in the future, the trustees would have to refund the Department for any capital funding before they could sell the site. This could be costly and could prove to be a deterrent for many Religious Orders.

3.2.3 Change of title.

In some cases, it might be advantageous for a religious order to transfer trusteeship of their school to a Vocational Education Committee or to invite the local Vocational Education Committee and the local diocese to become joint trustees of a community college. This situation would obtain if there was a growing demand for an alternative to denominational education in an area that was served solely by a Catholic school.¹⁵³ This view seems to regard community schools as not being Catholic schools. This is not so, has already been referred to in this chapter and goes against the Costello judgement of 1996, again already cited! The CoRI view of a Catholic school seems to be restricted to voluntary Catholic secondary school! In relation to this option, it should be stressed that CoRI is 'only aware of a very small number of instances where either of these changes has been implemented'.¹⁵⁴

3.2.4 Remaining in operation.

Undoubtedly, many Catholic secondary schools are extremely successful and have an excess of applications for enrolment. It is obvious that these schools would continue in existence for the foreseeable future. However, as to whether these schools are successful as schools or are successful as Catholic schools is a matter of perception. Nevertheless, the problem remains. The decline in religious and the withdrawal of religious from education will necessitate innovations in such

¹⁵³ Conference of Religious of Ireland (1997)(b) *The Future of Trusteeship. A review of some options for the way forward.* Dublin:CoRI. p 5

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p 7

schools in order to perpetuate the Catholic ethos of these schools. One solution is to transfer ownership and trusteeship over to the local diocese. A case in point. Ardscoil Phobal Bheantraí, one of the schools involved in the survey in Chapter six, was a co-educational secondary school under the joint management of the Sisters of Mercy and the Diocese of Cork and Ross. The Sisters of Mercy withdrew from trusteeship in 1995 and the school is now under the sole trusteeship of the Diocese of Cork and Ross. Similarly, in the late 1990's, the De La Salle order of Brothers withdrew from management of St. Fachtna's De La Salle secondary school in Skibbereen, another school involved in the survey. A lay principal was appointed and the trusteeship of the school was transferred to the Cork and Ross Diocesan trustees. However, this policy, insofar as it is a policy, is unlikely to be successful in the long term as research by CoRI has indicated that many dioceses 'appear to be unwilling to go down this route and many congregations have reservations about going this route.'¹⁵⁵ Professor Damian Hannon of the ESRI¹⁵⁶ also throws cold water on this 'solution'. How many dioceses actually want this responsibility? How effective would they be? How would they share the vision of the founding religious order? How effective would they be in overcoming special interest, be it trade unions or 'middle class parents trying to push schools in particular directions'?¹⁵⁷ Gearoid O' Tuathaigh¹⁵⁸ is more disdainful of this option which he regards as 'simply handing over to the most reliable rock that looked likely to be around for the future'.¹⁵⁹

In terms of a Catholic school remaining in operation, the role of the Board of Management and the trustees becomes critical. Current agreement between the

¹⁵⁵ McCormack, Teresa & Archer, Peter. (1997) 'The Future of Trusteeship' in *The Future of Trusteeship: A review of some options for the way forward*. Dublin: CoRI. p 7.

¹⁵⁶ Economic and Social Research Institute.

¹⁵⁷ Hannan, Damian. (1997) *op cit.*, p 27.

¹⁵⁸ Gearoid O' Tuathaigh is Professor in the Department of History, National University of Ireland - Galway.

¹⁵⁹ O'Tuathaigh, Gearoid. (1997) 'Critique' in *The Future of Trusteeship: A review of some options for the way forward*. Dublin: CoRI. p 41.

Department of Education and Science, the AMCSS¹⁶⁰, the ASTI¹⁶¹ and the Parent's representative bodies stipulates the composition of Boards of Management for such schools: two teachers representatives, two parents representatives and four representatives of the trustees. One of the trustees representatives is the chairperson with a casting vote. The principal is a non-voting secretary to the board. These provisions are a direct result of *The Education Act, 1998* which prescribes that

It shall be the duty of a patron, for the purposes of ensuring that a recognised school is managed in a spirit of partnership, to appoint where practicable a board of management the composition of which is agreed between patrons of schools, national associations of parents, recognised school management organisations, recognised trade unions and staff associations representing teachers and the Minister.¹⁶²

However, on a variety of issues, the Board of Management is accountable to the trustees. In some decisions, such as in the case of a pupil suspension, an appeal can be made to the trustees. The trustees, then, retain a crucial role in preserving both the ethos of the school and the charism of the founding religious order. In that regard, the Education Commission of CoRI have devoted much time to the future and emerging role of trustees in Catholic secondary schools.

3.3 Safeguarding Catholic schools: The future role of trustees.

When religious congregations established both Catholic primary schools and voluntary secondary schools, they did so with a particular intention. The education mission or founding intention of these schools was specific - the school was to provide a Catholic education to the children of an area where parents

¹⁶⁰ AMCSS -The Association of Management of Catholic Secondary Schools. An umbrella body representing the interests of the various managers and Boards of Management of Catholic secondary schools.

¹⁶¹ Association of Secondary Teachers, Ireland - The teacher union for secondary schools. However, ASTI members also teach in community schools and, to a much lesser degree, in community colleges.

¹⁶² Department of Education and Science. (1999) *op cit.*, p 18.

wished to avail of it.¹⁶³ The religious congregation has the responsibility of ensuring that the school remains true to its mission. That mission has already been defined in the early part of this chapter. One of the more recent publications of CoRI is a document which takes a radical look at the future of trusteeship of Catholic schools.¹⁶⁴

As legal owner, the congregational leadership or its nominee(s) is obliged to hold the school property in 'trust' for the purposes (mission) to which the congregation is currently committed - hence the use of the term 'trustee'. Trustees have a fiduciary relationship towards other persons (beneficiaries) and are obliged to honour the trust.¹⁶⁵

On this basis, therefore, trustees have a dual responsibility regarding schools with which they are associated. McCormack¹⁶⁶ divided these responsibilities into two categories: those that relate to 'ensuring that the school in its ethos and otherwise is consistent with the founding intention' and those that relate to 'the legal and financial responsibilities associated with ownership of the land and buildings on which the school is situated'.¹⁶⁷ Indeed, Glendenning holds that 'a central feature of the trustee role is, therefore, the attempt to ensure that the school remains true to the intention for which it was founded'.¹⁶⁸ The religious congregation, therefore, has a responsibility, through the trusteeship of its schools, to try to ensure that their schools advance the Catholic vision of education. McCormack further holds that a definition of trusteeship of Catholic voluntary schools contains four distinct elements: The trust is primarily responsible for catholic education; it should ensure that the educational philosophy of the congregation is reflected in

¹⁶³ McCormack, Teresa. (1998) 'The changing roles of trustees and boards of management' in *From Ideal to Action. The inner nature of a Catholic school today*. (Ed. Fehenev) Dublin: Veritas. p 145.

¹⁶⁴ CoRI. (1996) *op cit*.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, part 1 page 5.

¹⁶⁶ Sr. Teresa McCormack is Director of the Education Office of CoRI.

¹⁶⁷ McCormack, Teresa. (1998) *op cit.*, p 148.

¹⁶⁸ Glendenning, Dympna. (1999) *op cit.*, p 95.

the ethos of the school; the legal basis for the trustees role' should be set forth clearly and, finally, it should establish the principle that decisions about the future of the school rest with the trustees, who should consult widely before arriving at any such decision.¹⁶⁹

In exercising the trust, trustees need to be able to:-

- (a) articulate clearly the principles and values of a distinctive educational philosophy consistent with the congregation's charism and with the founding intention of the school.
- (b) engage proactively with the school to promote that philosophy and monitor the extent to which it is being implemented, and
- (c) intervene in situations where there is a serious departure from that philosophy.¹⁷⁰

Until the mid nineteen-seventies, congregations had little difficulty in exercising their trusts in relation to school ethos as the congregations were able to staff such schools largely from their own numbers. From the mid nineteen-seventies, new ways of exercising trusteeship emerged 'in response to the call of Vatican II for greater lay involvement and to the fall in vocations to religious life, which made it difficult for congregations to supply personnel to occupy positions as principals and managers'.¹⁷¹ While McCormack indicates that Vatican II was a driving force in the introduction of Boards of Management and Trustee Boards and the shift from the Manager/Principal system that was in place, one cannot but suspect that the real motivation was more pragmatic: a decline in the numbers of religious, a movement by the remaining religious into areas removed from the traditional apostolates of teaching and nursing and, not insignificantly, a realisation that the orders needed to distance themselves from litigation and unpopular decisions.¹⁷²

Rooney also alludes to the change in direction of many religious and the

¹⁶⁹ McCormack, Teresa. (1998) *op cit.*, pp 148-149.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p 151

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p 150

¹⁷² For example, the number of religious dropped from an overall total of 29,149 in 1980 to 20,824 in 1996. Rooney, B.(1998) *op cit.*, p 15.

consequent 'disengagement from the classroom'.¹⁷³ The Board of Trustees was an effective means of achieving this while simultaneously maintaining the schools' ethos. One further point needs to be made. While McCormack indicates that the mid nineteen-seventies was the starting point for the introduction of Boards of Management and Trustee Boards, the reality is that these were introduced slowly. In fact, by 1998 and the Education Act of that year, a situation obtained where the Act stipulated that schools should have a Board of Management 'where practicable', a clear indication that not all schools had such a board!¹⁷⁴ Such Boards of Management operated the schools on the basis of Articles of Management agreed between the trustees.

In planning for the future of Catholic secondary schools, trustees need to take cognisance of the factors which will, inevitably, lead to the reduction in the number of their schools. Firstly, many of these schools will become 'candidates for rationalisation' due to demographic trends. This rationalisation will be addressed later in chapter four of this thesis.

A further option, already mentioned and discounted, is the transfer of the school to a diocese. In most cases, then, it seems better for the religious order to retain some input into the trusteeship of their schools and in the selection of the trustees themselves. Arising from this new and emerging scenario, two new options are becoming apparent for trustees of Catholic secondary schools: sharing trusteeship and delegating the exercise of trusteeship. These are what CoRI refers to as 'transitional arrangements' for trusteeship. It should be noted that CoRI also identified a third model: a potential leaseback arrangement with the regional education boards. However, since the regional education boards were a product of the 1997 Education Bill (a bill that never became law due to the collapse of the

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Department of Education and Science. (1999). *op cit.*, p 18.

then government), this option has become obsolete.

In the case of shared trusteeship, the religious order alters the legal position of the school so that trusteeship changes from an order or a congregation to a joint trusteeship made up of that congregation or order plus one or more other parties. The local diocese would be an example. In such a scenario, the ground is paved for a complete withdrawal from trusteeship at a later date. The future of the school as a Catholic voluntary secondary school is also secure in the medium term.¹⁷⁵

While this option is useful in terms of proposed amalgamations with other Catholic secondary schools or vocational schools, the long term value is questionable unless it is used to facilitate a gradual withdrawal from trusteeship by the order or congregation involved.

The second of these options is 'delegating the exercise of trusteeship'. This model involves the congregation retaining the legal ownership of the school(s) and retaining a number of forms of direct involvement. In this model, the congregation retains ownership, establishes a Board of Trustees, appoints all members of the Board of Trustees for a fixed term, enshrines its philosophy in a deed of trust and retains the right to declare that the trust has failed.¹⁷⁶ If a congregation decides on delegating trusteeship, a number of options are available for consideration. The obvious one is that the congregation would establish a separate trust for each of the schools that it operates. However, as it can be difficult to identify 'suitable' trustees, some congregations have established a single trust company which administers all the congregation's schools in an area or province.¹⁷⁷ A further issue arises: which is more preferable? Both Damian Hannan and Aine Hyland¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁵ McCormack, Teresa & Archer, Peter. (1997) *op cit.*, p 6.

¹⁷⁶ CoRI. (1996) 'Exploring new forms of trusteeship' in *A handbook for the leaders of religious congregations*. Dublin: CoRI pp 3-4

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p 5.

¹⁷⁸ Professor Damian Hannan is employed by the Economic and Social Research Institute. Professor Aine Hyland holds the Chair of Education in the National University of Ireland, Cork.

are of the opinion that local trustee boards for each individual school could be problematic from the perspective of equality and disadvantage. It might be difficult to achieve a separation of functions between the Board of Management and the Trustee Board.¹⁷⁹ This would be critical in the areas of enrolment and discipline policies.

As the numbers of Religious decline further, a scenario is possible, if not probable, where CoRI itself will establish a trust company to administer the schools of religious congregations in an area. Many religious congregations have already employed this model of trusteeship. The Mercy Sisters of the Southern Province in Ireland have a single trustee board for all the Mercy Sisters secondary schools.

Over a longer time scale, this option might facilitate the complete handing over of all property and responsibility to the trust.¹⁸⁰ This newer, emerging option has been called total transfer. A difficulty arises in ensuring the continuation of the Trustee Board. In some cases, existing trustees select and appoint replacements. In some cases, an individual (i.e. a bishop) and representatives of other groupings can nominate trustees and, as already mentioned, some congregations are exploring the possibility of establishing a trust company to act as trustees for all the Order's schools.¹⁸¹

CoRI, while outlining a possible approach to new forms of trusteeship in Catholic voluntary secondary schools, believe that any new structure, if it were to be worthwhile, would require seven characteristics:

1. A legal corporate identity.
2. The capacity for perpetual succession.
3. A distinctive, coherent and 'visionary' religious and educational philosophy.
4. The capacity to exercise the terms of the trust (educational, legal and financial).

¹⁷⁹ McCormack, Teresa & Archer, Peter. 1997. *op cit.*, p 13.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p 8.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p 5.

5. The capacity to foster a collective culture among all those involved.
6. The capacity to reinterpret the terms of the trust in the light of contemporary society.
7. Manageability in terms of the number and geographic spread of the schools involved.¹⁸²

In setting forth these guidelines, CoRI hope that the various congregations that it both represents and advises will adopt new ways of exercising trusteeship.¹⁸³ In so doing, religious orders are not abandoning Catholic schools but devising ways in which the ethos of a Catholic school will remain and the congregation's charism will continue, despite the absence of a physical presence.¹⁸⁴

However, at a practical and more recent level, this new model of trusteeship has a number of benefits for the religious orders concerned. If a Trust Company is established, comprised of various individuals who are both willing and competent to act as trustees, and if this company is vested with the legal ownership of the school, the religious order can distance itself legally from the school. Currently, there are a number of instances being highlighted where there was physical and sexual abuse within these Catholic schools. In some cases, criminal prosecutions have followed successfully. Many further instances are coming to prominence where there was alleged abuse. Regardless of the compensation fund that the government has established for such victims, it is certain that civil cases will shortly come before the courts with a view to obtaining compensation for the victims. Such cases have the potential to bankrupt many Orders. It is possible that by signing over ownership of schools to a trust company, whose members enjoy limited liability, such orders will avoid being sued for compensation. While it would be wrong to suggest that this is the motivation behind the formation of

¹⁸² CoRI. (1996) *op cit.*, p 9.

¹⁸³ It must be noted that CoRI is a 'consultative' rather than a 'directive' body. It may recommend, it may not compel.

¹⁸⁴ Fehenev, Matthew. (1998)(b) *op cit.*, pp 208-209.

such trust companies, it is, nevertheless, an important consideration for many religious orders. At this point in time, it is too early to assess the impact of such trust companies in the field of Catholic education. However, as religious orders decline, such trust companies do offer a means of continuing the ethos of the various Religious Orders and Congregations and of protecting them from litigation.

In summary, it is clear that while amalgamations, withdrawals and closures will continue to occur, many Religious are also currently exploring new models of trusteeship with a view to maintaining the Catholic dimension to the education that these schools offer and in attempting to ensure the continued existence of Catholic secondary schools. It is obvious that, in maintaining the Catholic ethos of these Catholic schools, CoRI, the various religious orders and congregations along with the several dioceses will have to rely more on the support of the laity, both parents and teachers, in furthering their mission.¹⁸⁵ In that sense, even within the continuation of such schools, there is already a major change.

3.4 The international decline in Catholic school enrolment.

Figure 2.2.1 above, which illustrates the decline in the percentage of Catholic schools in operation, is remarkable for two reasons. Not only was there a decline in the number of Catholic secondary schools, but there was a corresponding growth in the number of other school types in operation. Similarly, as indicated above, in fig. 2.3.1, this situation was paralleled in the sharp decline in the numbers enrolled in Catholic or denominational secondary schools while there was a significant growth in community college enrolment over the same period.

While the future of Catholic schools is discussed in relation to the decline in Religious and vocations above, it also seems that demand for a traditional

¹⁸⁵ Walsh, Raymond (1999) *op cit.*, p 21.

Catholic, secondary education in Ireland is changing and consumers, either pupils or parents, are availing of different educational models. There is some evidence for suggesting that this decline in demand for a Catholic education is not a uniquely Irish phenomenon as research points towards similar developments in both the United States and in England and Wales.

3.4.1 *Catholic schools in the United States.*

In the United States, Catholic schools grew rapidly in popularity between 1880 and the 1960s but have been in decline ever since. Enrolment peaked in 1964 at 5.66 million students in thirteen thousand Catholic schools. This figure represented eighty-seven per cent of non-public school enrolment.¹⁸⁶ However, the ensuing period witnessed the emergence of a view that Catholic schools were no longer central to the Church's survival.¹⁸⁷ This viewpoint may go some way towards explaining why the 1980's witnessed a 20% drop in enrolments to Catholic schools and an 8% drop in Catholic school numbers.¹⁸⁸ For example, 'by 1981-1982 the Catholic school population had declined to 3.1 million, accounting for 64 percent of nonpublic school enrollment' (sic).¹⁸⁹ The trend has since continued and in the four year period between September 1990 and June 1994, four hundred and thirty five Catholic schools closed in the United States.¹⁹⁰ This decline could also be explained by more Americans availing of 'school choice' and also by the fact that Catholic schools attend to mostly poorer areas and many of these 'merged' or amalgamated to become more viable.¹⁹¹ The decline in

¹⁸⁶ Francis, Leslie J & Egan, Josephine. (1997) 'The Catholic School as "Faith Community" - an Empirical Inquiry' in *Source Book for Modern Catechetics, Volume two* (Ed. Warren, Michael) Minnesota: St. Mary's Press. p 291

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., p 292

¹⁸⁸ Cooper, Bruce S (1996) *op cit.*, p 47.

¹⁸⁹ Francis, Leslie J & Egan, Josephine. (1997) *op cit.*, p 292.

¹⁹⁰ O'Keefe, Joseph. (1996) 'No Margin, No Mission' in *The Contemporary Catholic school: Context, Identity and Diversity*. (Ed. McLaughlin, O'Keefe & O'Keefe) London, Falmer Press. p 182.

¹⁹¹ Cooper, Bruce S. (1996) *op cit.*, p 47.

Catholic schools occurred despite a pronouncement entitled '*Catholic schools are indispensable*' by the American Bishops in 1967 and the pastoral letter, '*To Teach as Jesus Did*' in 1972. The bishops argued that 'only in the unique setting of a Catholic school could children and young people "experience learning and living fully integrated in the life of the faith" '.¹⁹² Throughout the Eighties and Nineties, many American documents continued to emphasise the distinctive nature of Catholic schools.

For example, Sullivan argues that Catholic schools offer parents an atmosphere in which 'home and school share a common and explicitly religious understanding of the meaning of life'; McBride identifies 'the most basic' challenge facing Catholic schools in the 1980's as 'keeping Catholic schools Catholic, institutionally, morally, and spiritually'; the *National Catechetical Directory*, issued by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops speaks in terms of the acceptance living of 'the Christian message' and the striving 'to instill a Christian spirit' in the students.¹⁹³

There is evidence to suggest that the decline in Catholic schools and the consequent trend to 'merge' or amalgamate, as evidenced in the United States, is beginning to develop in Ireland. Indeed, the amalgamation of Colaiste an Spiorad Naoimh in Bantry with St. Mary's Convent school in 1972 to form Ardscoil Phobal Bheanntrai is an example. It is worth noting also that this trend to 'merge' is not universally welcomed. As Joseph O'Keefe has argued:

¹⁹² Francis, Leslie J & Egan, Josephine. (1997) *op cit.*, p 292

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, p 292.

Francis and Egan refer, *ad passim*, to the following works as the source of their conclusions:

Sullivan, T.F. (1981) 'Catholic Schools in a changing Church' in *Religion and Morality in American Schooling* (Eds Hunt and Maxon) Washington DC: University of Washington Press' cited in Francis, Leslie J & Egan, Josephine. (1997) 'The Catholic School as "Faith Community" - an Empirical Inquiry' in *Source Book for Modern Catechetics, Volume two* (Ed. Warren, Michael) Minnesota, St. Mary's Press. p 292

McBride, A. (1982) 'Major Challenges facing Catholic Education in the 1980's' in *Momentum* 13 (Dec. 1982) cited in Francis, Leslie J & Egan, Josephine. (1997) 'The Catholic School as "Faith Community" - an Empirical Inquiry' in *Source Book for Modern Catechetics, Volume two* (Ed. Warren, Michael) Minnesota, St. Mary's Press. p 292

National Conference of Catholic Bishops. (1979) *Sharing the Light of Faith: National Catechetical Directory for Catholics in the United States*. Washington D.C.: United States Catholic Conference' cited in Francis, Leslie J & Egan, Josephine. (1997) 'The Catholic School as "Faith Community" - an Empirical Inquiry' in *Source Book for Modern Catechetics, Volume two* (Ed. Warren, Michael) Minnesota, St. Mary's Press. p 292

Mergers are not a solution to the financial crisis because social capital, the element that makes Catholic education so successful, grows out of familial relationships that thrive in smaller, non-bureaucratic, community based schools.¹⁹⁴

The definition of American Catholic schools in terms of 'community-based schools' differs from the Irish scenario. As many secondary schools in Ireland enrolled on the basis of ability as opposed to residence, they could not be termed 'community-based' schools. Indeed, this community ethos could be viewed as an extension of the sacramental or liturgical aspect to Catholicism.¹⁹⁵ However, the larger problem facing American Catholic schools is also the problem facing Irish Catholic educationalists, particularly the trustees of declining Catholic schools. In amalgamating, there may be a danger that the essence of a Catholic, pastoral education would be subsumed into a bureaucratic, impersonal system, and yet, there is no doubt that schools with larger enrolments are better equipped and staffed to offer better choice to their students. The findings of the Commission on School Accommodation mentioned in chapter four concurs with this.

The decline in enrolment in Catholic schools in the United States is similar to developments in England and Wales. However, research seems to indicate that Catholic schools in the United States differ significantly in terms of ideology from their counterparts in both Ireland and in England and Wales. For example, the National Catholic Education Association (NCEA) has published findings which illustrate that Catholic schools 'have a greater sense of community than their counterparts and provide a better educational environment for minorities'.¹⁹⁶ The same research indicated that students in Catholic schools come from more

¹⁹⁴ O'Keefe, Joseph. (1996) *op cit.*, p 182.

¹⁹⁵ Greeley, Andrew M. (1998) 'Catholic Schools at the Crossroads: An American Perspective' in *From Ideal to Action*. (Ed. Fehenev) Dublin: Veritas. p 188.

¹⁹⁶ O'Keefe, Joseph & O'Keefe, Bernadette. (1996) 'Directions for Research in Catholic Education in the USA and the UK' in *The Contemporary Catholic School*. (Ed. McLaughlin, O'Keefe & O'Keefe) London: Falmer Press. p 298.

advantaged backgrounds.¹⁹⁷ Interestingly, that research seems not to have indicated any findings in terms of ethos or religious instruction / the faith development of the student. However, by 1994 this issue was addressed when the NCEA gathered Catholic Educators and ‘Catholic identity and formational issues’ was given priority in terms of a future research agenda.¹⁹⁸

The issue of minorities in the Catholic school is interesting. According to O’Neill¹⁹⁹, the Catholic school is not impaired by students who do not share the Catholic faith. Indeed, O’Neill believes that the presence of such students may encourage Catholic students to develop their own faith. However, and of note, there remains a lack of empirical evidence about the impact of non-Catholic and non-practicing students in Catholic schools.²⁰⁰ In brief, then, American Catholic schools are in decline and the schools that remain extant seem to be catering for more than the strictly Catholic population. The effects of this development on the long term mission of the Catholic school remain to be assessed. However, it could be asserted that in catering for minority groupings, in becoming community-based schools and in becoming populated by students from more privileged backgrounds, American Catholic schools are not identical to Catholic schools in Ireland and, perhaps, are not typical of the vision of the Catholic school as portrayed in the Vatican documents already mentioned. Nevertheless, a contrary view is also expressed which indicates that Catholic schools in the United States ‘are making a unique contribution to the education of Americans, especially those from deprived backgrounds’.²⁰¹ In this regard Catholic schools have ‘transformed themselves from educational institutions into communities of learning and are

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., p 299.

¹⁹⁹ O’Neill, M. (1979) ‘Towards a modern concept of permeation’ in *Momentum* 10 (May 1979) cited in Francis, Leslie J & Egan, Josephine. (1997) ‘The Catholic School as “Faith Community” - an Empirical Inquiry’ in *Source Book for Modern Catechetics, Volume two* (Ed. Warren, Michael) Minnesota, St. Mary’s Press. p 293

²⁰⁰ Francis, Leslie J & Egan, Josephine. (1997) *op cit.*, p 293

²⁰¹ Fehenev, Matthew. 1998.(b) *op cit.*, p 209

utilising the internal dynamics of community groups to achieve their educational aims'.²⁰² Greeley also holds that such schools are not academically inferior, are not anti-intellectual, are not divisive and their success is strongest amongst disadvantaged students with academic, emotional, disciplinary and familial problems. The success of such schools does not depend on race, probably because Catholic schools in America, according to Greeley, were founded to serve poor immigrants.²⁰³

3.4.2 *Catholic schools in England and Wales.*

Catholic schools in England and Wales, as in Ireland, enjoy state funding. This scenario is different to that in the United States. As in the Irish context, such schools started as privately run and funded operations which attracted state funding later. In the case of Catholic schools in England and Wales, such funding, by way of grant, was obtained in 1847. 'The grant signified an important point in the history of Catholic schools as it implied a recognition that the Catholic schools sector was an integral part of the national provision of state maintained education'.²⁰⁴ This partnership of sorts between the government and the Catholic Church was further advanced by the 1944 Education Act, which, for the first time, brought both partners into a single publicly funded national education system. This act facilitated the express wishes of the Catholic bishops, 'to establish a network of schools, initially at primary level, but later at secondary level with a minimum of encroachment on the Church's autonomy'²⁰⁵. While the Catholic Church invested heavily in Catholic education, only 60% of Catholic children had

²⁰² Greeley, Andrew M. (1997) 'What use are Catholic schools in America?' in *Doctrine and Life*. Vol 47., No. 2 (Feb 1997) cited in Feheny, Matthew. (1998)(b) 'The Future of the Catholic School: An Irish perspective' in *From Ideal to Action*. (Ed. Feheny) Dublin: Veritas. p 210.

²⁰³ Greeley, Andrew M. (1998) *op cit.*, pp 181-183

²⁰⁴ McLaughlin, Terence H., O'Keefe, Joseph and O'Keefe, Bernadette. (1996) 'Setting the Scene: Current Realities and Historical Perspectives' in *The Contemporary Catholic School: Context, Identity and Diversity*. (ed's McLaughlin, O'Keefe and O'Keefe) London: Falmer Press. p 4.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p 5

access to Catholic schools by the mid 1960's.²⁰⁶ The 1988 Education Act provided a statutory basis for publicly financed schools to become Grant Maintained Schools. This legislation was to provide greater autonomy for schools, greater choice of schools for parents and a greater mix of schools within the publicly funded system. In England and Wales, schools can, if they wish, opt out of the LEA (Local Education Authority) funded and controlled system and be funded, controlled and administered directly by central government.²⁰⁷ Grant Maintained Schools remain part of the state system and receive a greater proportion of funding than they would under the LEA. Of particular interest is the ability of Catholic schools to opt out of the LEA system without prejudice to their Catholic character. There is an incentive for Catholic schools to leave the LEA system and become Grant Maintained in that Grant Maintained schools receive all running costs and all capital costs whereas LEA Catholic schools have all running costs but only 85% of capital costs covered.²⁰⁸ Grant Maintained and public sector schools account for 92% of all Catholic schools in England and Wales. The other 8% of Catholic schools are privately funded from endowments and school fees.²⁰⁹

The movement to being a Grant Maintained school is not without its price. By 1994, 128 Catholic schools were Grant Maintained. This movement from LEA funding caused some concern amongst Catholic bishops and educationalists, who feared a dilution of episcopal control over such institutions.²¹⁰

The decline in births, and the consequent fall in pupil numbers, has affected all schools in England and Wales, including Catholic schools, and has precipitated many school closures. Between 1978 and 1993, three hundred and eighty nine

²⁰⁶ Ibid., p 6.

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., p 12.

²¹⁰ Ibid., p 7.

Catholic schools were closed, 14.5% of the total 2,678 Catholic schools. Correspondingly, during that period, the number of pupils in such schools fell by 22.3% or 181,997 pupils.²¹¹

Hypher also points out that the number of non-Catholic students attending Catholic schools has been increasing, from 1.6% in 1974 to 10.2% in 1993.²¹² The situation in England and Wales then, is that the total number of pupils attending Catholic schools is in sharp decline, but of those who are attending, a significant number (10%) are not Catholic. This situation surely has implications for the ethos of these schools and the teaching of religion therein. Hypher believes that there may be a perception that these schools are 'good schools' with a 'caring ethos' and 'discipline'.²¹³

Hypher suggests that the aforementioned school closures were the obvious consequence of a view which saw Catholic schools as existing 'exclusively for the Catholic community'.²¹⁴ When there were insufficient Catholic pupils, due to either social mobility or a decline in the birth rate, the Catholic school closed and the Church effectively withdrew from the human and social agenda of whole areas of the United Kingdom.²¹⁵ In the light of declining enrolment, viability was the essential reason for Catholic school closures. This has an obvious parallel with the Irish situation.

In attempting to address the problem of a Church withdrawal from schools in certain localities in recent years, a newer model of the Catholic school has begun to emerge in multi-racial inner city areas. In these cases, the school, rather than being a Catholic school for the Catholic Community, sees itself as a Catholic and

²¹¹ Hypher, Paul A. (1996) 'Catholic Schools and Other Faiths' in *The Contemporary Catholic school: Context, Identity and Diversity*. (Ed. McLaughlin, O'Keefe & O'Keefe) London, Falmer Press. pp 222-223.

²¹² Ibid., p 223.

²¹³ Ibid., p 222.

²¹⁴ Ibid., p 224.

²¹⁵ Ibid.

Christian presence at the service of all members of the local community.²¹⁶ Such schools would still wish to be regarded as Catholic schools as well as being schools open to students of other denominations. In doing so, such schools would resist any suggestion that they are ecumenical schools or no longer denominational or Catholic schools.²¹⁷

In that context, this new emerging school type, which is growing in popularity, mirrors the growth of the Irish community college, which, though not expressly Catholic, is in fact so. This situation is so because the connection between the Vocational Education Committee and the local bishop is strong, the local diocese or bishop enjoying good representation on the Board of Management of such schools. Community colleges, then, while not *de jure* Catholic schools, have strong links with the Catholic Church.²¹⁸

It should be noted that there is a contradictory view to that expressed as regards Catholic education in England as outlined by the Hypher survey. The editor of *The Tablet*, an international Catholic weekly, John Wilkins, believes the opposite to be true. In an article on 4 December 1999, Wilkins wrote that in most areas of church life, there has been a sharp decline since the sixties. The exception to this scenario is in the area of Catholic schools.²¹⁹ Objectively, it is difficult to reconcile the contradictory views of both Wilkins and Hypher. Perhaps, the fact that some Catholic schools have a significant demand for places as a result of, amongst other factors, a high league table placing might account for the difference. This view is supported by O'Keefe and O'Keefe who assert that Catholic schools are 'amongst the most competitive institutions in society today'.²²⁰

However, it is difficult to subscribe to Wilkins view when, as mentioned above,

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ Feheny, Matthew. 1998.(b) *op cit.*, p 205.

²¹⁹ Wilkins, John. (1999) 'Waiting for Westminster's bishop' in *The Tablet*. 4 December 1999. London. p 1635.

²²⁰ O'Keefe, Joseph & O'Keefe, Bernadette. (1996) *op cit.*, p 306.

between 1978 and 1993, three hundred and eighty nine Catholic schools were closed or 14.5% of the total and the number of pupils in such schools fell by 22.3% or 181,997.²²¹

3.5 Overview.

It is established that, for a variety of reasons, Catholic schools and the enrolment therein are in decline. This situation is not uniquely Irish but finds a parallel in both England and Wales and in the United States. In the light of these developments, those responsible for both Catholic schools and Catholic Education are faced with a growing problem: How does one perpetuate Catholic education in Ireland?

Several solutions have been proffered and more are emerging. In cases where a school decides to remain in operation or where two or more *de jure* Catholic schools amalgamate, the situation is relatively straightforward provided the trustees are *au fait* and in agreement with the ethos and objectives of Catholic schools and with the founding spirit or ethos of the Diocese, Order or Congregation involved.

However, research has indicated that many Catholic voluntary secondary schools are amalgamating and forming community colleges and community schools, a factor explored further, though at a local level, in chapter six. Furthermore, the vast majority of greenfield developments and new schools being established are either community colleges, under the aegis of the local VEC, or community schools managed by the Board of Management and directly accountable to the Department of Education and Science. What of Catholic education then?

Specifically, in the context of the five towns examined in this thesis, amalgamation has already taken place in one town between a Catholic secondary school and a

²²¹ Hypher, Paul A. (1996) *op cit.*, pp 221-222

vocational school, discussions on a similar amalgamation are at an advanced stage in another town and, in a third town, two Catholic secondary schools are sharing resources and teachers to accommodate a wide subject choice.

Many Catholic schools, including some of those involved in the towns in this thesis, are faced with a stark choice in the context of their future. They can opt either to have the reality of amalgamation thrust upon themselves by a decline in the number of Religious, a decline in their enrolment and a curtailed subject choice or they can 'get initiatives for amalgamation underway' themselves.²²² This could well involve Religious trustees 'actively seeking educational partnerships with others who have the resources and commitment' to continue their work with the underprivileged and marginalised.²²³ Hogan also asserts that this would be a positive step in laying 'to rest the old allegation that what the Church stands for in education is privilege, prerogative and power'.²²⁴ It should also be noted that such educational work with the 'underprivileged and marginalised' represents the founding ethos and the *raison d'être* of most of these Congregations and Orders. It is in the context of these educational 'partnerships' that chapter four assesses the growth in amalgamations, the rationale behind such amalgamations and the importance of the model agreements in the context of safeguarding and perpetuating Catholic education in, what is essentially, an emerging state operated post-primary education system.

²²² Hogan, Padraig. (1997) 'Critique' in *The Future of Trusteeship: A review of some options for the way forward*. Dublin: CoRI. p 47.

²²³ Ibid., p 50.

²²⁴ Ibid.

CHAPTER FOUR: A CONVERGING EDUCATIONAL LANDSCAPE.

4.1 Factors which impinge on school viability.

While this thesis deals specifically with five named towns in West Cork, it must be noted that the enrolment trends within these towns are reflective of a larger, national picture. Chapter six will illustrate that at least one school in each town in the survey is experiencing a sharp decline in enrolment. In one town, this decline in enrolment and the corresponding curricular constraints within the school have led to an amalgamation. In another town, the process of amalgamation is at an advanced stage. This chapter examines the reasons for these amalgamations, the philosophy behind such rationalisations and the options for management in amalgamated schools. In this regard, the implications for Catholic education need to be examined as the trend in the majority of the five towns points to a decline in enrolment and questions the viability of such Catholic schools.

4.1.1 A declining student population.

According to Brendan Walsh,²²⁵ 'by the year 2006 the number of children of secondary school-going age is likely to be some thirty percent lower than it was in the mid-1990's.'²²⁶ This prediction has serious implications for enrolment in post-primary schools and, consequently, for the viability of some schools experiencing a reduced enrolment. The Irish birth rate has been variable over the past three decades. The number of births rose from 61,000 in 1968 to reach a peak of over 74,000 in 1980. During the depressed years of the 1980's the birth rate fell sharply. The low point was reached in 1994, when just short of 48,000 births were recorded.²²⁷ This decline will not impact fully on post-primary school

²²⁵ Brendan Walsh is professor of National Economics at University College, Dublin.

²²⁶ Walsh, Brendan. (1999) 'Demographic Change in the Twenty First Century: Challenges and Opportunities for Schools' in *Issues in Education* (Ed. O'Leary.) Vol 4, 35-40. Dublin: ASTI Publications. p 36.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, p 35.

enrolment until 2006, when the children born in 1994 will reach post-primary enrolment age. The percentage decline in Cork County, comparing 1986 birth rate figures to 1996 birth rate figures, was 17%, with a national average percentage change of -18%.²²⁸ Enrolment in second-level schools peaked in 1994-1995 and will continue to fall until near the year 2010.²²⁹ A more recent study (April 2000) prepared by FAS, the national training authority, asserts that the number of second-level students peaked in 1997/1998 with 383,000 students, but will fall to 345,000 by 2005/2006 and will fall further to just 320,000 by 2010/2011.²³⁰ However, it must be asserted that population projections are notoriously difficult to calculate with real precision. It is possible that the effect of demographic factors on enrolments will be modified by changes in the participation rate in post-primary education. Additionally, some schools have introduced Transition Year Programmes which extend the Post-Primary Senior Cycle from two to three years, thereby increasing a school's enrolment. The LCVP (Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme) and the LCA (Leaving Certificate Applied), while they do not actually increase the duration of the Senior Cycle, encourage students who might otherwise leave school at Junior Certificate level to remain in full time education. Furthermore, school completion programmes, like the Early School Leavers Initiative (ESLI)²³¹, have impacted positively on school enrolment by encouraging and supporting students to remain in full-time education. These programmes, then, have the effect of negating the effects of a reduced first year enrolment. Of particular importance to post-primary schools therefore, is the fact that the recent decline in enrolments is the beginning of a national trend that

²²⁸ Commission on School Accommodation(1998) *Criteria and Procedures for the Recognition of New Primary Schools, Report of the Technical Working Group*. Dublin: Stationery office. p 156

²²⁹ Walsh, Brendan. (1999) *op cit.*, p 36.

²³⁰ Walshe John. 2000. 'Plunging school rolls will lead to worker shortage' in *Irish Independent*. 25 April 2000. Dublin. p 1.

²³¹ Since 1st. September 2002, the Early School Leavers Initiative (ESLI) has been replaced by the School Completion Programme (SCP)

seems likely to continue for the foreseeable future. According to Central Statistics Office (CSO) projections of population of secondary school age, the 'school-aged' population by 2031 will be just 64% of its 1996 level.²³² However, it must be noted that in relation to the five towns with which this thesis is concerned, this decline may not be as severe as it might otherwise be due to (i) a return of emigrants, (ii) the influx of many foreign nationals, some of whom are refugees housed by the Department of Justice and others who are seeking alternative lifestyles, and (iii) a decline in 'immigration' to larger centres of population due to thriving local economies.²³³ However, these factors are arbitrary and it becomes difficult to predict their long-term or sustained impact.

However, given that population projection is not an exact science, and given that the Central Statistics Office has published six population projections based on different assumptions, it should be noted that any planning for future educational provision should not be dictated by an assumption of substantial population contraction.²³⁴

4.1.2 *The consequences of a declining enrolment.*

When two service providers are in competition, the winner is likely to be the consumer, provided that the two services are, and are seen to be, the same.

²³² Walsh, Brendan. 1999. *op cit.*, pp 37-38.

²³³ It is of note that many of the schools involved in the survey in Chapter six have enrolled a considerable number of refugees-St Goban's college had five as of January 2002. Furthermore, a large number of students in Colaiste Chairbre in Dunmanway were of foreign extraction living an alternative lifestyle in a region locally known as Cool Mountain. The impact of these students in the local education picture is evidenced by the fact that both St. Goban's in Bantry and Colaiste Chairbre in Dunmanway were part of the government funded ESLI (Early school leavers initiative) and SCP (School Completion Programme) schemes and that some of the local primary schools have received extra staff in order to accommodate these students. Togher NS in Dunmanway has an extra, ex-quota resource teacher and many other schools have qualified for 'disadvantaged schemes' such as 'Breaking the Cycle'. While these students are not solely responsible for these schools qualifying for these schemes, their presence has assured extra resources and finance for both the primary and post-primary schools that they are attending.

²³⁴ Lennon, Charlie. (1999) 'Investment in Education' in *Issues in Education* (Ed. O'Leary.) Vol 4, 41-44. Dublin: ASTI Publications. p 41.

Nevertheless, if schools are obliged to channel a substantial portion of their energies into competition and marketing, there is a distinct possibility that the education of their pupils may suffer. There are grounds for stating that this is the situation that obtains in many towns at present. The seeking of beneficial publicity is particularly noticeable in Bantry. In terms of public relations, readers of the 'Bantry Notes' section of a local newspaper, *The Southern Star*, are treated to a weekly diet of each school's relative achievements, no matter how insignificant, with the intention of winning the support of next year's pupils and their parents. As numbers decrease, this 'competition' will become more intense. This situation is unhealthy, occupies a disproportionate amount of time and may result in polarised positions, something that would not be beneficial to any proposed amalgamation. Increased competition, it can be argued, can damage goodwill between schools and even impinge on the education provision of good schools. The policy of the Department of Education and Science in this regard is to 'promote co-operation between schools through various mechanisms including common enrolment. However, in many cases, it has proved extremely difficult to secure co-operation because of local circumstances'.²³⁵ It must also be noted that some parents have articulated the opinion that increased competition is beneficial in that it forces schools to improve and to be innovative. In that sense, competition removes complacency.

Of course, the most obvious consequence of a decline in enrolment is a reduction in the range of subjects being offered to students due to a corresponding reduction on a school's teacher allocation. In terms of curricular or educational viability, a smaller school cannot offer the subject choices of a larger school. Equally important is the fact that a smaller school would not have the same ex-quota posts or hours allocation for career guidance teacher or counselling. Ultimately, a decline

²³⁵ Comptroller and Auditor General. (1996) *op cit.*, p 10.

in enrolment may result in some subjects having to be dropped from the curriculum. This will impinge significantly on the education on offer to students and will contradict the view of the ASTI, a post-primary teacher union, that 'every pupil should have access to the educational services which they require. Such access should neither be affected by their geographical location nor by the number of other students in their school'.²³⁶

4.1.3 *Traditional intake differences between school types.*

Given the way in which post-primary schooling developed in Ireland, it is not surprising that traditionally secondary schools catered particularly for the 'brighter' child, while less able students from poor family backgrounds tended to be concentrated in Vocational schools.²³⁷

One very notable feature of early Irish post-primary education was the extent to which children of different abilities and from different social backgrounds tended to find themselves grouped together for teaching purposes. Until the 1960's Government policy forced secondary schools to charge fees and to test entrants to ensure that they were capable of benefiting from the academic programme that was on offer. Side by side with this, a secondary education was seen as something of which only a few people could avail. Correspondingly, the *Vocational Education Act, 1930* provided only for continuation (apprentice) and technical education. This meant that vocational schools were not 'allowed to teach these academic subjects, nor prepare for those examinations which gave access to university and white-collar employment'.²³⁸ A further consequence of the 1930 Act was that the provision of technical classes which had been offered in some secondary schools, particularly those that catered for boys, was

²³⁶ Lennon, Charlie. (1999) *op cit.*, p 43.

²³⁷ Conference of Major Religious Superiors. (1989). *Inequality in Schooling in Ireland - the role of selective entry and placement*. Dublin: Education Commission, CMRS. p 1.

²³⁸ O'Buachalla, S. (1988) *op cit.*, p 64.

discontinued. However, there were exceptions to this general rule: there was a technical school in operation in the North Monastery CBS. until the 1960's. Subsequently, 'technical subjects' were taught to certain classes within this secondary school. However, the class a student enrolled in, and whether a student did 'technical subjects' or not, depended on an entrance examination that was used as a basis for streaming. The traditional bias remained, the 'weaker students' did the technical subjects. The resources that became available from the discontinuation of technical subjects in the secondary sector in the aftermath of the 1930 Act were diverted to the vocational sector .²³⁹

This thesis concerns vocational schools (both vocational schools in the strict sense of the term and community colleges which are also under the management of the local Vocational Education Committee) and secondary schools which co-exist in five named towns in West Cork. However, the national trend in relation to these school types is also examined. Both these school types had (and, to a lesser degree, have) different educational goals and geared themselves towards different career options. As a result, the academic record and the social background of the pupils entering each type of school were quite different. This fact was highlighted by the Investment in Education (1966) report.²⁴⁰

A study conducted in 1984 by Greaney and Kellaghan called *Equality of Opportunity in Irish schools* which was quoted by the Conference of Major Religious Superiors in their report *Inequality in schooling in Ireland* indicated that there were major differences between entrants to secondary and vocational schools. These differences, the survey found, centered in the areas of attainment and ability. It was found that secondary school entrants scored above the national average while vocational school entrants scored below the average. Interestingly,

²³⁹ Conference of Major Religious Superiors. (1989). *op cit.*, p 1.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p 2.

the survey also established that entrants to both secondary and vocational schools differed in relation to social class.²⁴¹

A study of schooling published by the Economic Social Research Institute (ESRI) and conducted by Hannan, Breen, Murray, Watson, Hardiman and O'Higgins on 5,788 Intermediate Certificate students revealed that

- (a) Vocational schools cater mainly for working class and small (less than thirty acre) farm pupils. Even given the disproportionate drop out of pupils from these backgrounds before the Intermediate Certificate, two out of three of their pupils come from these backgrounds. Secondary schools are dominantly middle class, particularly for boys, while the class distribution in the newer community and comprehensive schools is more balanced.
- (b) Social class distinctions among schools catering for boys are more marked than among those catering for girls; boys' Secondary schools being the most middle class of all school types.²⁴²

While this study is somewhat dated, there has been no recent update on this ESRI study of 1983 and of the study of 1991 mentioned below. In terms of reputability, these studies far surpass anything emanating from private research. Many of the schools of religious are attended by the children of middle and upper-income families rather than the children of poorer-income families, those for whom the schools were in many cases originally established. This is particularly true in the case of single sex voluntary secondary schools. Nearly fifty percent of the students in these schools are from middle to upper middle class backgrounds, compared to only twenty percent in vocational schools.²⁴³

The Hannan, Breen *et al* survey also revealed that two thirds of vocational school principals and half of community-comprehensive school principals reported that at least fifteen per cent of new entrants to their schools had serious difficulties

²⁴¹ Ibid.

²⁴² Hannan, D., Breen, R., Murray, B., Watson, D., Hardiman, N. & O'Higgins, K. (1983) *Schooling and Sex Roles: Sex difference and student choice in Irish Post-Primary schools. Paper No. 113.* Dublin: The Economic and Social Research Institute. p 90.

²⁴³ Conference of Religious of Ireland (CoRI) 1997(a). *Religious congregations in Irish Education, A role for the future? A reflection paper.* Dublin: Education Commission, CORI. p 30.

with reading, writing and arithmetic. Less than twenty five per cent of secondary school principals reported difficulties to the same extent. This is partially explained by the different social class characteristics of the pupil intake of the three school types. There is also a strongly held belief by vocational school principals and guidance counselors that strong competition exists between schools for the more academically able pupils and that they are affected detrimentally by such 'creaming off' practices by other school types. 96% of vocational school principals surveyed felt that there was 'serious' competition for pupils at enrolment and 65% (as compared with 5% of secondary principals) felt that their school 'suffered badly' from other schools 'creaming off' the more able pupils.²⁴⁴

Despite this rather bleak view, as expressed by the vocational principals and career guidance counselors, comfort could be taken from the earlier survey of Hannan and Shortall, which found that the most satisfied school leavers are those who had achieved most in education- particularly the successful third level educated - 'but those who had specialised in a Vocational-Technical track were almost equally as satisfied'.²⁴⁵ Clearly, there are aspects to a vocational education that are very positively evaluated by school leavers and that these positive judgements are not extended to any other school type, though 'the effect is rather modest'.²⁴⁶

It is worth noting also that there have been considerable differences in transfer rates to third level institutions from the different post-primary school types. Traditionally, there was a high transfer rate to university from the secondary schools with the lowest transfer rate from the vocational sector. However, with the advent of Regional Technical Colleges, latterly Institutes of Technology, there

²⁴⁴ Hannan, D., Breen, R., Murray, B., Watson, D., Hardiman, N. & O'Higgins, K. (1983) *op cit.*, pp 91-92.

²⁴⁵ Hannan, D.F. & Shortall, S. (1991) *The quality of their education, School Leavers' Views of Educational objectives and Outcomes*. Dublin: ESRI p 186.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

has been a dramatic increase in the uptake of third level places from vocational schools. In the case of St. Goban's College, Bantry, vocational education is a dated term. In fact, St. Goban's, like many other vocational schools, is now operating as a *de facto* community college. This assertion is confirmed by the answers to the questions posed to pupils of both the vocational and secondary schools in Bantry in previous research by the writer, 'I chose this school because it affords me the opportunity of going to university' or 'I chose this school because it affords me the opportunity of going to an Institute of Technology'.²⁴⁷ The results, while confirming that more secondary school pupils see themselves as having the opportunity of going to university, the margin is not as wide as one might have expected, and in the response to the option of attending an Institute of Technology- another form of third level education- there is no difference. In effect, due to the availability of extra and more varied third level courses, the changing nature of vocational education and the changing curricula in vocational schools, third level enrolment is no longer the unique preserve of the secondary school. A case can be made for suggesting that the decline of such secondary schools, as indicated in figures 2.2.1, 2.2.2 and elsewhere, may be as a consequence of the broadening of the base for third level entry.

However, in general terms, particularly in relation to university entrance, the traditional distinction still remains. To that end, evidence suggests that many students who show good academic aptitude at post-primary entry stage are still encouraged to attend a secondary school. In a previous study by the writer, 12.4% of students in St. Goban's College in Bantry, a vocational school, indicated that their parents told them to attend that school while 30% of students in the local

²⁴⁷ Healy, Kevin M. (2000) *Student perception and school choice: An investigation into changing enrolment trends and their likely consequences in both a vocational school and a secondary school in a west Cork town, 1997-1999*. (Unpublished M.Ed. dissertation, University of Hull) pp 106-108 & 114-116.

secondary school, Árdcoil Phobal Bheantraí, stated that they attended that school because their parents told them to.²⁴⁸ In such a scenario, vocational sector schools would be at an unfair disadvantage should examination results be the sole criterion for assessing a school's success. The publication of examination results and the formulation of a league table of examination results can also impact on school enrolment.

4.1.4 *Public perception and league tables.*

While the introduction of *The Freedom of Information Act, 1997* has been of immense benefit for researchers, and has been used extensively in the course of this thesis, it has instigated an educational debate on examination performance and the publication of a school's examination results. Such publication would, in turn, lead to a compilation of a 'league table' of schools. The fear was that parents would evaluate a school's academic performance before enrolling their child in a given school. As mentioned in chapter one, the secondary school system offered a more 'examination centered' or 'academic' education to its pupils. There is also evidence in many ESRI reports, as mentioned above, that many of the students that enroll in vocational sector schools are not geared towards third level entrance and, as such, often leave before completing their education. In a scenario where a secondary school and a vocational co-exist, such publication would impinge negatively on the vocational school and would take no cognisance of aptitude, background or ability. Interestingly, as will be illustrated in chapter 6, the opposite seems to be true at present.²⁴⁹ In the five towns in West Cork that form the focus of this thesis, vocational education is growing in four towns at the expense of the secondary school.

In Ireland, the initial decision by the Freedom of Information Commissioner,

²⁴⁸ Ibid., pp 95- 96

²⁴⁹ See also the current trends in both enrolment and in the number of schools that are in operation in Chapter two. There is a sustained decline in the secondary sector on both counts.

Kevin Murphy, to allow the publication of individual schools' examination results for the 1998 state examinations, following a request from a number of newspapers, caused alarm amongst teacher unions and parent organisations who were vehemently opposed to such publication. The Department of Education and Science opposed the release of such information on six grounds, including section 53 of the *Education Act 1998*, which authorises the Minister to refuse access for any information in a particular set of circumstances which would allow the compilation of the examination results of schools.²⁵⁰ This section of the act stipulates that:-

The Minister may refuse access to any information which would enable the compilation of information (that is not otherwise available to the general public) in relation to the comparative performance of schools in respect of the academic achievement of students enrolled therein.²⁵¹

The Commissioner decided that this section of the Act could not be applied retrospectively and denied the argument of the Minister for Education and Science that examination results of, and prior to, 1998 should not be published. 'The Department of Education and Science does not want league tables; neither do teachers' organisations nor the Parents' Council itself. All are united in their opposition to such a development'.²⁵² While such bodies were against the publication of league tables, they were of the opinion that whole school evaluation would provide all the information that would be needed about the entire school environment - a far 'greater yardstick than a league of results'.²⁵³

The approach of the Department and the Teacher Unions was not without

²⁵⁰ Byrne, Anne. (1999) "Leaving Cert tables allowed" in *The Irish Times, Education & Living supplement*. 12 October 1999. Dublin. p 13.

²⁵¹ Department of Education and Science. (1999)(a) *op cit.*, p 41.

²⁵² Fitzpatrick, Billy. (1999). 'League Tables would only make school comparisons spurious' in *The Examiner*. 3 November 1999. Cork: Examiner Publications. p 15.

²⁵³ McSweeney, Neans. (1999)(b) 'Parents, Teachers' unions oppose release of Leaving Cert student's exam results' in *The Examiner*. 3 November 1999. Cork: Examiner publications. p 15.

support. Dr. Emer Smyth, a research officer at the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI), commented in her book, *Do Schools Differ?*, that

analyses have indicated the redundancy of crude "league table" approaches to school evaluation. Ranking schools in terms of their aggregate exam score tells us little about the processes at work in a particular school or about how to enhance pupil outcomes within that context.²⁵⁴

A document published by the JMB (the Joint Managerial Body) in October 1999 and another, published in November 1999, under the title of *The publication of league tables of examination results, A briefing paper for schools* outlined the arguments against publication.²⁵⁵ Significantly, the latter document was published jointly by many and varied 'partners' in education. The arguments against publication, as contained in these documents, can be summarised as follows: education should value the dignity and uniqueness of each person, this principle is violated by the publication of selective information divorced from their context. If such simplistic and selective information is to be published, schools will feel under pressure to abolish those aspects of education which do not contribute to an improvement in their 'league position'. This development would have a negative impact on education by neglecting the pastoral, social, caring, cultural and physical dimensions to education. The publication of selective information such as league tables of examination results violates the principle of treating all students equally, in that one aspect of a student's ability is privileged above all others. There is also a danger that schools will privilege the work that contributes to examination results at the expense of working with students whose strengths lie elsewhere.

²⁵⁴ Smyth, Emer. (1999) *Do schools differ? Academic and Personal Development among Pupils in the Second-Level Sector*. Dublin: ESRI/Oak Tree Press. p 226.

²⁵⁵ The Association of Community and Comprehensive Schools (ACCS), The Association of Secondary Teachers, Ireland (ASTI), The Conference of Religious in Ireland (CORI), The Irish Vocational Education Association (IVEA), The Joint Managerial Body (JMB), The National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals (NAPD), The National Parents Council (Post-Primary) (NPCpp), The Teachers Union of Ireland (TUI) (1999) *The Publication of League Tables of Examination Results - A briefing paper for schools*. Dublin.

The publication of league tables would also impact on the enrolment of a school and, in that context, the issue is of particular relevance to this thesis. The publication of such tables could lead to invidious and unfair comparisons between schools and could result in undermining parents' confidence in a school even where the school would be regarded as highly successful if an appropriate evaluation of its achievements were undertaken.

Another corresponding concern is that such tables do not make allowance for the socio-economic background of the pupil or the education attainment of the student on post-primary entry. It follows then that schools which operate selective enrolment, particularly fee-paying schools, or base enrolment on 'entrance examinations', despite the provisions of the *Education Act, 1998*, will fare better in the league tables than those who operate a policy of open enrolment. This situation will exacerbate rather than alleviate the problem of educational disadvantage. The publication of such tables will seriously damage effective schools in disadvantaged areas. It seems reasonable to assert that a school's success or failure cannot be measured solely through the results that its students achieve in the state examinations.

Should publication of league tables occur there would be a demoralising effect on schools which are near the bottom of the table. There is a real concern that such schools would be labelled 'failures'. The morale of teachers in such schools would be low and where morale is low, there is likely to be a higher turnover of staff and a corresponding impact on student motivation. Parents will not send their children to such schools and ultimately, such schools will become polarised with regard to social class, economic background and motivation.

The key issue is that if a school is to be judged exclusively on the basis of its examination results, schools will become 'grind schools' and the true meaning of

education would be gravely distorted.

Ultimately, the document proposes that league tables are not an effective measure of school effectiveness and informed choices cannot be made on distorted information. League tables of examination results do not contribute to parental information as they are, by their very nature, selective and do not reflect the total performance of a school.

However, it must be noted that while the vast majority of opinion seemed to be against publication of league tables, there was also an opinion that they should be published. This viewpoint concentrated on the notion of accountability and openness. The Freedom of Information Commissioner, Kevin Murphy, in his thirty-seven page report to the Minister for Education and Science, expressed the view that parents would apply common sense and take a whole range of factors into concern when choosing a school for their children.²⁵⁶

The then Opposition spokesman on Education, Richard Bruton, (Fine Gael) called for the publication of the results as, he believed, people would use the information responsibly. Mr. Bruton would like to be able to compare 'like schools with like schools'. The publication of such material would act as a 'catalyst to debate' as to why some schools were achieving higher results than others. It would 'jolt' people out of their complacency about the problems faced by some schools. Challenging the argument that parents with greater resources would use the exam tables to avoid lower achieving schools, Mr. Bruton said there was 'already a thriving black market in this kind of information as we see with parents sending their children to grinds and special tutors'.²⁵⁷ A survey conducted by the MRBI on behalf of the Irish Times newspaper in April 2000 revealed that 'a clear

²⁵⁶ McSweeney, Neans. (1999)(a) "Bid to prevent publication of results may go to Court' in *The Examiner*. 9 October 1999. Cork: Examiner Publications. p 7.

²⁵⁷ Holland, Kitty. (1999) 'F.G. Education spokesman opposes publication of exam league tables' in *The Irish Times*. 27 October 1999. Dublin. p 9.

majority opposed the publication of school league-tables, in which the performance of one school could be compared to another': 51% were against publication, 39% for and 10% were without an opinion on the question.²⁵⁸

In any event, the Minister successfully appealed the decision by The Freedom of Information Commissioner to publish examination results for schools to the High Court. In granting the appeal, Mr. Justice Andrias O' Caoimh stated that

he was not commenting one way or another on the merits of league tables. However, he found that Section 53 was not retrospective but rather retroactive legislation. He ruled that the Minister for Education had the power to refuse to release the data.²⁵⁹

However, in reporting the ruling, the *Sunday Tribune's* quoting of 'parental outcry' in their title to the article was somewhat exaggerated; the Sunday Tribune was one of the three newspapers that initially applied for the information. As referred to above, the National Parent's Council, post-primary (NPCpp) was one of the bodies that expressed concern with the initial decision to publish such results! The ruling was predictably welcomed by the Teacher Unions.²⁶⁰ Given this ruling and given that there was no subsequent appeal to the Supreme Court, it seems that league tables will not appear in respect of post-primary schools in the Republic of Ireland for some time. Nevertheless, the arguments made against publication deserve mention as they contain an implicit viewpoint on the factors that impinge on school enrolment and the primacy of examination results amongst these factors. However, the ruling was recently (2002) circumvented in *The Sunday Times*, by the publication of a list of universities detailing, according to number, the post-primary schools from which their first year pupils transferred. This information was obtained using the Freedom of Information Act. Using

²⁵⁸ Flynn, Sean & Byrne, Anne. (2000) 'Public divided on 30% claim by secondary teachers' in *The Irish Times*. 25 April 2000. Dublin. p 1.

²⁵⁹ Wall, Martin and Rice, Eoghan. (2001) 'Parents renew calls for exam information' in *The Sunday Tribune*. 5 August 2001. Vol 22, No. 18 Dublin. p 10.

²⁶⁰ This was reported in an unsourced article in *The Examiner* of 2 August 2001, p 6.

other information in the public domain, it was possible to deduce the percentage of pupils in a given school who transferred to any, or a specific, university. Indeed, in January 2003, such information was published in relation to the Leaving Certificate class of 2002 in each post-primary school. Using the *Freedom of Information Act, 1997*, Mairead Lavery, a journalist with *The Farmers Journal*, published a list of each school in the country stating the percentage of leaving certificate students who enrolled in degree courses in the NUI colleges in October 2002.²⁶¹ Much comment followed, centering on the fact that transfer to an NUI college was an inappropriate way of judging a school's performance. Students who transferred to degree courses in non-NUI colleges or those who enrolled in degree courses outside the state were not included in the statistics. Similarly, students who pursued diploma or certificate courses were not included. Many of these courses, it must be noted, are particularly orientated towards the workplace. The findings could not take cognisance of individual student's financial means and their wish to attend third-level education. Furthermore, it is to be expected that students in and adjacent to towns such as Carlow and Tralee, where Institutes of Technology are located, would transfer to these institutions. These factors were not allowed for. The danger with such reporting is that the impression would be created that a school's primary purpose is to prepare students for university. This is not the case. Indeed, the reality is that many students wish to leave full time education after Leaving Certificate and, indeed, some before. The Department's School Completion Programme is proof of this. Many students do not have the ability for, or the interest in, pursuing a degree course in NUI colleges. A situation could develop where schools will not want to enroll these students as to do so would lower their position on performance

²⁶¹ Lavery, Mairead. (2003) Education: Location, location, location? in *The Farmers Journal* (2) . Vol 55, No. 4. January 25th. 2003. pp 15-27.

tables. Subsequent reporting made mention of 'Ireland's best schools' in relation to the schools where a high percentage transferred to NUI colleges.²⁶² Predictably, representatives of parent groupings and teacher unions condemned the publication. However, the issue is likely to continue as access to university admission records and the number enrolled in the leaving-certificate class in each school, through the *Freedom of Information Act, 1997*, provides a method of circumventing the ban on league tables of examination results.

By way of comparison, league tables were introduced in England in 1992, and schools there are required to provide a range of material which is published and can be used for comparison purposes. Predictably, most attention is focused on examination passes and the proportion of pupils obtaining five GCSE's with grades A to C.²⁶³ In a sense, the function of such tables is that they provide the consumers with a measure of good schooling, and the consumers then make their choice on the basis of this knowledge. While parents in the Woods, Bagley and Glatter survey consistently returned a low rating for league tables in relation to influencing choice, five, seven and six percent in the years 1993-1995, nevertheless, parents do place a high emphasis on examination results-28% of parents ranked it highly in 1985.²⁶⁴ Where else, other than league tables, do parents obtain this information? It seems likely, then, that while the parents may not be directly influenced by the league tables, parents do make use of the information that they contain. However, as indicated elsewhere, parents do not look 'exclusively' at either league tables or examination results. League tables, constructed in this way, do not 'reflect the values and preferences of parents'.²⁶⁵

That view is also echoed by the parent bodies and teacher unions in their

²⁶² Keane, Colette, O'Brien, Carl & Murray, Niall. (2003) 'Best schools for student success revealed in survey' in *Irish Examiner*. 23 January, 2003. Cork: Examiner Publications. p 1.

²⁶³ Woods, Philip A., Bagley, Carl., & Glatter, Ron. (1998) *School choice and competition: Markets in the Public Interest*. London: Routledge. p 194.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p 40.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p 195.

objections to the introduction of similar tables in Ireland.

4.2 The Viability of schools: The Commission on School Accommodation.

Until recently, information on a formal policy on amalgamation by the Department of Education and Science was scant. While it was only in the aftermath of the National Education Convention²⁶⁶ that the Department articulated its views on amalgamations, the Department was aware of the benefits of amalgamation much earlier. In the late eighties, the Department established a forum on rationalisation and saw the advantages of such a process in terms of preventing competition for pupils and resources between schools, providing each large town or area with one school, providing a comprehensive curriculum and a wider subject choice, and, in many cases, providing a better pupil / teacher ratio.²⁶⁷

In 1995, the then Department of Education, responding to a criticism expressed at the National Education Convention, outlined its policy on rationalisation in the White Paper, *Charting our Education Future*,²⁶⁸ a preliminary or discussion paper intended to lead to future legislation. Consequently, in 1996, the Commission on School Accommodation was established by the then Minister for Education, Niamh Bhreatnach. However, in spite of this, the subsequent *Education Act, 1998* made no reference to a Departmental policy on amalgamation/ rationalisation.

In practical terms, the function of the Commission is to 'facilitate the combination of specialist expertise with consultation, collaboration and consensus in formulating recommendations.'²⁶⁹ The Comptroller and Auditor General was more specific. He listed the Commission's functions in terms of undertaking comprehensive statistical and demographic analysis to assist in policy

²⁶⁶ The National Education Convention took place in Dublin in 1994 and laid the foundation for the subsequent Education Bills and the 1998 Education Act.

²⁶⁷ Mulvey, K. (1990) *op cit.*, p 100

²⁶⁸ Department of Education. (1995) *Charting our Education future - White paper on Education*. Dublin: Government Publications Office.

²⁶⁹ Commission on School Accommodation.(1998) *op cit.*, p 9.

formulation on rationalisation of accommodation; providing information on the current and projected position in relation to school provision and to recommend criteria and procedures for school provision and planning.²⁷⁰ Amongst the members of the Commission are teacher union representatives, parents association representatives, representatives of management bodies, representatives of the major Churches and government officials representing the Departments of Finance and Education and Science.²⁷¹ Currently, any policy on amalgamation / rationalisation remains within the remit of the Commission on School Accommodation. In general terms, the Commission sees such policy as 'being based on the premise that the education provided is going to be more effective for the majority of pupils'.²⁷² In general terms, the Department's policy could be explained in terms of providing second-level schools that;

are large enough to adequately meet the variety of curricular demands, to meet community education needs and to enhance the role of schools in vocational education and training and adult and continuing education... Rationalisation will seek to provide single-campus schools, but when that is not feasible, single multi-campus schools will be considered.²⁷³

In implementing any such policy, cognisance will also have to be taken of the projected decline in second-level enrolment as a result of the decline in the birth rate,²⁷⁴ a factor mentioned above. In September 2001, the Commission presented its report on the amalgamation of second level schools.²⁷⁵ This report is crucial insofar as it represents the first time that a formal document was issued by a body attached to the Department of Education and Science on amalgamations. The

²⁷⁰ Comptroller and Auditor General. (1996). *op cit.*, p 9.

²⁷¹ Conference of Major Religious Superiors. (1989). *op cit.*, p 67.

²⁷² The Chairman of the Commission, Frank Murray, in telephone conversation with the writer in February 2000.

²⁷³ Department of Education. (1995) *op cit.*, p 66.

²⁷⁴ Walsh, Raymond. (1999) *op cit.*, p 22.

²⁷⁵ Commission on School Accommodation. (2001) *Amalgamation of Second Level Schools*. Dublin: Stationery Office.

report 'presents a framework of key issues and recommends a detailed model for the amalgamation process together with other recommendations for the future'.²⁷⁶

With the aforementioned decline in the school-going population, the viability of second-level schools becomes a major issue. It has been suggested that schools of less than two hundred and fifty students, provided that they are operating according to their correct teacher quota, are necessarily limited in their curricular possibilities and may not offer good value for money in terms of day-to-day operational costs.²⁷⁷ Furthermore, such a view was echoed by the White Paper on Education, *Charting our Education Future*, which stated that:-

The breadth of curriculum required for those students is difficult to achieve in small schools because of the many options and activities which must be made available. At any rate, most small schools are within multi-school catchment areas and it is clearly inefficient to multiply costly additional curricular provision in schools which cater for the same community.²⁷⁸

The White Paper also noted that twenty per cent of second level schools have less than two hundred and fifty students. Furthermore, a report by the Comptroller and Auditor General indicated that an enrolment of eight hundred to a thousand students represents 'the optimum school size'.²⁷⁹ In that regard, the scope for rationalisation within the Irish post-primary education system is widespread. When one considers the decline in the school-going population, one begins to appreciate the significance of rationalisation and amalgamations in the future and the importance of The Commission on School Accommodation. However, the Commission on School Accommodation is anxious to assert that 'amalgamation is most definitely about proactivity, harmonisation and improvement -it is not about decline'.²⁸⁰ This view is important in relation to the success of any rationalisation

²⁷⁶ Ibid., p 5.

²⁷⁷ Coolahan, John. (1994)(b) 'School Rationalisation' in *Report on the National Education Convention*. (Ed. J Coolahan) Dublin:National Education Convention Secretariat. p 37.

²⁷⁸ Department of Education.(1995) *op cit.*, p 66.

²⁷⁹ Comptroller and Auditor General. (1996) *op cit.*, p 10.

²⁸⁰ Commission on School Accommodation. (2001) *op cit.*, p 5.

process or discussions thereof. The perception that amalgamation might be due to failure or decline would hinder any such proposals from the beginning.

4.3 Amalgamations in Ireland

4.3.1 Amalgamations: the cases for and against.

It must be noted that documentation on either the philosophy or process of school amalgamation in Ireland is scant. In a sense, this is necessarily so as amalgamations are often decided on a local level and on a case-by-case basis. In that regard, national policies can only be guidelines. While the Commission on School Accommodation has published some information²⁸¹ and CoRI has alluded to amalgamations in its handbook,²⁸² other partners, including the Teacher Unions, the Parents representative bodies and the management bodies have remained silent. This, of course, may indicate that the constituencies within these organisations may be divided and that there exists no agreement on amalgamations. However, since amalgamations are a relatively new phenomenon on the Irish educational landscape, it may also be true that these bodies have yet to formulate a definitive policy on the issue.

Accordingly, while the information cited in this section emanates almost exclusively from the Commission on School Accommodation, despite extensive enquiry by the writer, it is the only source available.

Given that the over-riding philosophy of the Commission on School Accommodation, as mentioned above, is about improvement, not about decline, the reasons for amalgamation - or the case for amalgamation- would include some of the following, depending on the local situation:-

- The enhancement of student learning
- The provision of an effective educational programme, particularly as it relates to school size
- Decline in the number of religious

²⁸¹ Ibid.

²⁸² CoRI. (1996) *op cit.*

- Demographic changes that resulted in decline in enrolments
- The desire for co-education
- Maintenance of a particular ethos / characteristic spirit
- Poor condition of school buildings
- Financial concerns
- Parental or teacher demand
- The objective of the Department of Education and Science to rationalise facilities.²⁸³

Furthermore, the Department's policy in relation to post-primary education is to provide 'schools of sufficient size to enable a curricular choice to be available to all students.'²⁸⁴ To that end, as already mentioned, 'an enrolment of 800-1000 pupils is seen as the optimum school size.'²⁸⁵ This represents a change of policy. In the early 1960's, The Commission on School Accommodation states that an enrolment of 150 was accepted to be the ideal size for a post-primary school. By 1966, when the first comprehensive school was opened, the ideal size for such schools was 400 pupils. However, in operational terms, for the school year 2000/2001, the average size of the post-primary school was 460, no doubt enrolment in some far short or in excess of the average.²⁸⁶ The concern is that when two or more schools operate within a town, neither may have a sufficient enrolment to provide 'an enhanced educational environment for the students with an efficient supply of resources'.²⁸⁷ When amalgamation occurs, the outcome frequently involves facilities for specialist areas of the curriculum and student access to a broader range of teacher skills. These benefits involve two key areas that are used by the Department and others to promote amalgamation: buildings and staffing. As outlined previously, the suggestion to amalgamate may arise from the application to update the facilities in a given school.

²⁸³ Commission on School Accommodation. (2001) *op cit.*, p 17.

²⁸⁴ Comptroller and Auditor General. (1996). *op cit.*, p 10.

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁶ Commission on School Accommodation. (2001) *op cit.*, p 21.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p 25.

As some schools, particularly small schools, have been poorly resourced over many years, the quality and quantity of accommodation can be well below the expectations of today. Many schools do not have, for example, the space for physical education or computer-assisted learning... Amalgamation of small schools into a larger unit can be one way of providing improved facilities for a larger number of students.²⁸⁸

When the possibility of amalgamation is raised, in terms of a protocol on accommodation, the patrons of the schools in question, along with the Department of Education and Science, establish whether refurbishment of one of the existing schools on its own site, or provision of a new school on a new site is the better option. In arriving at a decision, the implications for existing land, as well as the possibility of obtaining extra land, will be considered. The amount of capital will also be a factor as in which option represents better value and costs less.²⁸⁹

In terms of staffing, as already mentioned, amalgamation carries with it enhanced staffing provision, an increased number of posts of responsibility and the possibility of early retirement with 'added on' years for pension purposes.²⁹⁰ For example, the Commission on School Accommodation believes that a newly amalgamated school should have two extra assistant principal posts and two extra special duties posts for five years after amalgamation. Reduction to the normal quota should only come through 'natural attrition'.²⁹¹

However, the Commission acknowledges that there are reasons why amalgamation

²⁸⁸ Ibid. The importance of this quotation should not be underrated. An agency within the Department of Education and Science is now acknowledging that post-primary schools are underfunded and have been so for some time. This underfunding is leading to closures and the creation of larger schools. Is it possible that the Department is allowing schools, particularly secondary schools, to fall into disrepair with a view to encouraging amalgamations and the creation of larger, single schools in many towns? In the case of Bantry, the Department withheld funding for a sports hall from the Ardscoil for many years. Latterly, funding has been withheld pending investigation into the possibility of amalgamation. The Department seem to be using a failure on their behalf to achieve a desired outcome: amalgamated schools with the optimum pupil enrolment.

²⁸⁹ Ibid., pp 25-26.

²⁹⁰ Ibid., p 25.

²⁹¹ Ibid., p 54.

or rationalisations may not be feasible or desirable. Amalgamations may not be possible, or easily achieved, between schools with a very different ethos, where distance between the student's residence and the school becomes a factor, and an amalgamated school with a substantial enrolment may not be attractive from a pastoral viewpoint to prospective pupils and parents.²⁹² Anecdotal evidence in Bantry, where the two post-primary schools in the town are moving towards amalgamation, would indicate that many parents feel that the abolition of competition between schools might be detrimental to the overall education provision.²⁹³ In a sense, there is a fear that a single, large, amalgamated school in the town may promote complacency in the provision of education. Parents seem to believe that the current situation in such towns, where two or more schools are competing for enrolment, works to the student's advantage. Further impediments to amalgamation, from the viewpoint of the teachers, are the redeployment of teachers, the leave entitlements of teachers and the criteria for appointment to posts of responsibility.²⁹⁴ These differences are dealt with later in this chapter.

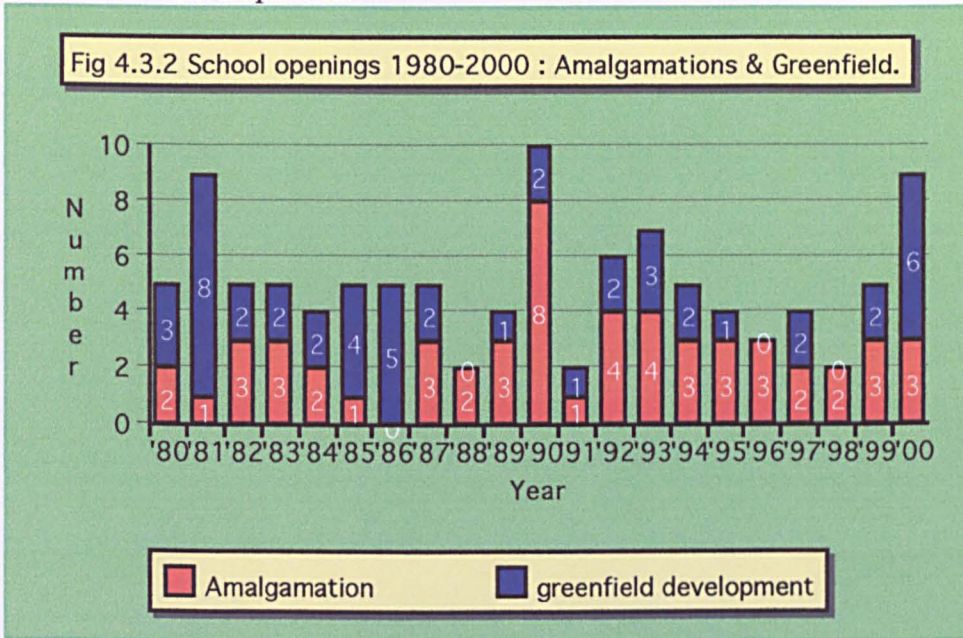
²⁹² *Ibid.*, p 23.

²⁹³ This viewpoint was articulated by a parents representative on the Board of Management of Ardscoil Phobal Bheantraí to the Patron, Bishop John Buckley, at a meeting between the Patron and the Board of Management, held on 3 February 2001, to discuss the school's future and the possibility of amalgamation.

²⁹⁴ Commission on School Accommodation (2001) *op cit.*, p 54.

4.3.2 *The growth in amalgamations in Ireland.*

Figure 4.3.2 School openings, 1980-2000: amalgamations and greenfield developments.



The above figure illustrates the trend of amalgamations in Ireland. However, there is some ambiguity in relation the distinction between ‘greenfield’ and amalgamated schools. Figures supplied by the Department and included in appendix iii, do not specify whether ‘greenfield’ schools are the result of amalgamation. Heretofore, ‘greenfield’ was used of wholly, new schools and would not be used of pre-existing schools moving to a new building or site. For example, in Dunmanway, one of the towns examined in this thesis, a new school opened in 2002, Maria Immaculata Community College, under the trusteeship of the Sisters of Charity of Saint Vincent de Paul and the Cork County VEC. While this is an amalgamated school, it was built as a greenfield development. It follows then that the above figures may not be accurate in that some ‘greenfield’ developments may also be amalgamated schools. However it is clear that a number of schools amalgamate each year. In that regard, amalgamations represent a continuing development in Irish post-primary education.

Amalgamations can occur for a variety of reasons. The initiative for such amalgamations may come from the patron, school management, the local community or from the Department of Education and Science, particularly in response to an application for a capital grant to extend or refurbish an existing school.²⁹⁵

While the above figure makes some attempt to chart the development of amalgamations in Ireland, the Commission on School Accommodation themselves readily acknowledge that amalgamations have 'been haphazard in occurrence and preparation, sometimes causing instability in schools because capital funds were not available to implement a decision for amalgamation'.²⁹⁶ Furthermore, it is also noted that the experience of amalgamation has varied from being a smooth, simple process to an experience that was difficult. By way of example, current indications are that the proposed amalgamation between St. Finbarr's College, Farranferris and North Monastery CBS in Cork city will be extremely difficult despite the consent of the trustees due to opposition from both parents and staff. In many of these cases, obstacles arose either before a decision was made to amalgamate or during the actual process of amalgamation.²⁹⁷ While the Commission is not forthcoming on what the actual difficulties and obstacles were, there is some anecdotal evidence for suggesting that one critical factor was the management structure of the new, amalgamated school. The question, 'community school or community college?' seems to be a major issue. Indeed, and specifically in relation to this thesis, the only issue for parents and teachers in Bantry in relation to amalgamation was this very issue.²⁹⁸

²⁹⁵ Ibid., p 12.

²⁹⁶ Ibid.

²⁹⁷ Ibid.

²⁹⁸ A community college is managed jointly by the VEC and the trustees of the original Catholic school, the Board of Management being a sub-committee of the VEC whereas a community school is managed by a Board of Management, an executive board, which deals with the Department directly. This matter is clarified in Commission on School Accommodation (2001) *op cit.*, p 63

In the Bantry situation, the parents and staff of St. Goban's college, a VEC school, were happy to form a community college under Cork County VEC. The staff of Ardscoil Phobal Bheantraí were initially in favour of a community school and the parents remain so. However, after intervention by the ASTI, the teacher union in the school, the staff now want a community college. The reason cited is that the ASTI find it easier to get concessions for their members from the VEC than from the Department of Education and Science. The parents have indicated that, while their preference is for a community school, they will not allow this issue become an obstacle to amalgamation. In an amalgamation, the issue of concessions for existing staff is significant. It can mean extra pension years for teachers who wish to retire early, permanency for existing part-time teachers and extra posts of responsibility for teachers within the school. Some of these posts carry reduced teaching hours as well as a significant, pensionable allowance.²⁹⁹ However, the Parent's Council in Ardscoil Phobal Bheantraí still would prefer a community school. There is a suspicion that this preference may be the result of a traditional bias against vocational education, as mentioned earlier, as a community college is operated under the aegis of the local Vocational Education Committee³⁰⁰ A synopsis of the critical differences between community schools, community colleges and secondary schools is mentioned below. However, regardless of those differences, it is also worth noting that 'the loss of school identity of the former schools has at times been a cause of grief for patrons, past students and local communities'.³⁰¹

²⁹⁹ For example, a Special Duties Teacher, (formerly a B post) carries an allowance of €2811 p.a. and an allowance of €6355 p.a. with a reduction of four hours teaching time per week accompanies the post of Assistant Principal (formerly A post). These allowances are subject to periodic increase and are correct as of October 2002.

³⁰⁰ This information was supplied to the writer by Rev. Dr. Tom Deenihan, Chairman, Board of Management Ardscoil Phobal Bheantraí during an interview on 8 May 2002.

³⁰¹ Commission on School Accommodation. (2001) *op cit.*, p 12.

4.3.3 *The significance of the Deeds of Trust of community schools and the Model Agreements of community colleges.*

Reference has been made to the Deeds of Trust of community schools and the Model Agreements of community colleges elsewhere in this thesis. In examining these documents, an appreciation of the origin of these schools is essential. This issue is examined in chapter one. However, briefly, community schools were to be a fusion of the private denominational education sector, the voluntary secondary school, with the public non-denominational sector, the vocational school. Such a fusion was fraught with difficulty, particularly in the areas of control and ownership. It is in this context that the 'Deed of Trust' emerged as a significant legal document. As mentioned elsewhere, the community school became a *de facto* Catholic school where the bishops, and by extension any religious order involved, could claim reserved places for religious staff, conditions safeguarding religious instruction and salaried Catholic ex-quota chaplains for a nominal five percent of the initial building cost.³⁰² These Deeds of Trust enjoy legal enforceability in that case law has established them as a 'legal binding instrument which sets up a public charity for education'.³⁰³ The Deed of Trust in such schools vests management of the school in the Board of Management which operate under the Articles of Management. As mentioned, the Archdiocese of Dublin has published these articles. While they grant significant rights to the religious order, congregation or diocese, the primary concessions relate to religious instruction and management. The religious authority has two nominees on an interview board for teacher appointments, religious instruction is guaranteed to the amount of two hours per week 'in accordance with the rites, practice and teaching of the religious denomination to which the student belongs', and the Church also

³⁰² O'Flaherty L. (1992) *op cit.*, p 73.

³⁰³ Glendenning, Dymphna (1999) *op cit.*, p 37.

In making this assertion, Glendenning cites the unreported case *O h-Uallachain v Burke* in The High Court, 7 August 1987.

has nominees on the Board of Management.³⁰⁴ In general terms, while there was some initial variation and debate on the various deeds of trust for community schools, a 'model' deed of trust emerged in 1981. The reality was that such deeds of trust were 'very favourable to the religious authorities'³⁰⁵ and may have contributed to the growth of such schools. The success of the resulting partnership may have a direct bearing on the current willingness of religious orders, congregations and dioceses to amalgamate their schools into community schools and colleges. Representatives of the Education Commission of the then Conference of Major Religious Superiors and representatives of the Irish Episcopal Conference met with representatives of the Department of Education on March 21st. 1984 and stated their acceptance of school rationalisation but stressed the need for 'firm, clear and published criteria'.³⁰⁶ In effect, the deeds of trust agreed previously represent these criteria and the Church authorities were signalling their satisfaction with them.

With the emergence of the community school, the VEC's became concerned as to their future role in post-primary education. What emerged was the community college, a VEC response to the community school. While many new and amalgamated schools were established as community colleges, a few existing vocational schools re-designated as community colleges. However, it must be noted that many more vocational schools changed their name to colleges, without changing their legal status.³⁰⁷ These are not *community* colleges. As in the case of

³⁰⁴ Archdiocese of Dublin. (undated) Community schools in the Archdiocese of Dublin. Dublin: Archdiocesan Education Secretariat. p 20 & 27.

³⁰⁵ Walsh, Raymond. 1999. *op cit.*, p 13.

³⁰⁶ Conference of Major Religious Superiors (1984) Notes on meeting between representatives of the Department of Education and representatives of the Episcopal and C.M.R.S. Education Commissions. (21st March 1984) Cited in Walsh, Raymond. 1999. 'The issue of rationalisation in Irish post-primary education, 1963-96: The perspectives of the Catholic Church and the State.' in *Oideas* No. 46 (Autumn) (ed. O'Conchubhair, Padraig) pp 7-25. Dublin: Government publications Office. p 19.

³⁰⁷ Amongst these, and by way of example, are St. Brogan's College, Bandon, St. Goban's College, Bantry and McEgan College, Macroom.

the community school, the instruments of management contained in the Model Agreements of community colleges afford the diocese or religious orders legal protection in terms of representation on interview boards and boards of management as well as safeguarding the place of denominational religious instruction on the curriculum.³⁰⁸

In the context of this thesis, these deeds of trust are of immediate significance in that they provide a mechanism to religious orders and the various dioceses by which the aims of Catholic education can be perpetuated despite the dramatic decline in the number of religious prepared and available to teach in these schools.

Another factor, of no little significance, is that in safeguarding the future of Catholic education, they provide a mechanism that removes the various dioceses and religious orders from trusteeship. Anecdotal evidence would suggest that this aspect is becoming more attractive to the trustees of Catholic schools. It is widely established and much promulgated that the Diocese of Cork and Ross, the diocese in which the schools surveyed in chapter six operate, is extremely happy with previous amalgamations and its relationship with Cork County VEC. In that regard, the diocese advocates community colleges as the favoured result of amalgamation and seems to be embarking on a route that removes itself from post-primary trusteeship.³⁰⁹ In fact, there is a general consensus amongst many

Catholic educationalists that rationalisation and amalgamation of their schools into community schools and colleges is 'no longer a threat to the Catholic school

³⁰⁸ Archdiocese of Dublin. (undated) Community colleges in the Archdiocese of Dublin. Dublin: Archdiocesan Education Secretariat. pp 8-9.

³⁰⁹ Interview with Rev. Dr. Tom Deenihan (8 May 2002) This assertion can be substantiated by the fact that the diocese of Cork and Ross currently has three post-primary schools under its trusteeship. It has recently proposed an amalgamation for Farranferris, the diocesan seminary, with an adjoining Christian Brothers school, North Monastery CBS, it has proposed an amalgamation between Ardscoil Phobal Bheanntrai and St. Goban's College, Bantry into a community college and, as of May 2002, has begun discussions regarding the future amalgamation of St. Fachtna's College, Skibbereen with Mercy Heights and Rossa College in the same town. When these proposals and discussions reach fruition, the diocese will not be the sole trustees of any school. What will remain will be, essentially, a state education system that will have made significant and legally binding concessions to the Catholic Church that will allow a *de facto* Catholic education to be offered in a *de jure* non-denominational school!

system' but, ironically, a means of ensuring its survival.³¹⁰ Again, this view is a reflection on the significance of the guarantees afforded to Church bodies in the deeds of trust and model agreements of such schools.

A former CEO of County Cork VEC, in a position paper, outlined the relationship between the diocese of Cork and Ross and County Cork VEC. This is crucial to this thesis as the five towns studied are within the Diocese of Cork and Ross and are also within the remit of County Cork VEC.

In relation to community colleges, 'under the terms of the model agreement, the Vocational Education Committee has entered a joint partnership with the dioceses for the joint management of the colleges'.³¹¹ In the joint management, the VEC and the bishop of the diocese are equal partners. The agreement is legally executed and 'can be legally empowered'. The VEC (County Cork) used the provisions of the *Vocational Education (Amendment) Act, 1970* to provide the legal basis for this partnership.³¹²

However, a note of caution is sounded by Feheny in reviewing the movement away from voluntary Catholic secondary schools. Feheny acknowledges that many of the community schools and colleges are *de facto* Catholic schools in that the majority of the pupils and staff are Catholic, the school has a Catholic chaplain, religious education / instruction is an integral part of the school curriculum and the 'ethos of the school is virtually, if not expressly Catholic'.³¹³ However, these schools are built to cater for children of all denominations in their area. As such, should the population in an area change in terms of its religious affiliation, so would the schools. Feheny warns that we must accept the possibility that 'some, or even many, of the present community, comprehensive

³¹⁰ Walsh, Raymond. (1999) *op cit.*, p 15.

³¹¹ Buckley, Bobby. (1999) *Unpublished Position Paper: The Implications of the establishment and growth of Community Colleges in the dioceses of Cork and Ross and Cloyne*. Dated 21 October 1999.

³¹² *Ibid.*

³¹³ Feheny, J Matthew.(1998)(b) *op cit.*, p 217.

and VEC (community colleges) schools becoming, in the future, what Arthur calls “pluralistic” schools’.³¹⁴ In the light of that danger, Fehenehy warns that ‘it is important to ensure that voluntary secondary schools survive, since, at some future date, they may be the only Catholic schools available’.³¹⁵ However, it should be asserted that some comprehensive schools are already denominational: Ashton Comprehensive in Cork city is Church of Ireland while Crescent Comprehensive in Limerick is Catholic, operated by the Jesuits. Furthermore, regardless of demographic trends, a community college will remain whatever denomination that its model agreement says it is. However, be it either for reasons of pragmatism, a belief that the management of post-primary schools is at variance with the mission of many religious congregations, the desire of many religious to be removed from ‘administration’ or lack of personnel, many dioceses and religious orders and congregations are still enthusiastically merging their schools into community schools and colleges.

The obvious lack of personnel, the ageing of existing personnel, the effects of burn-out, the low morale among many religious involved in education which is sometimes aggravated by the departure of colleagues to apostolates which are perceived to be more relevant; the increased unionisation of the teaching profession, the lack of leadership among lay staff, the progressive trauma of industrial relations, the growing difficulty of organising the school as an effective instrument of evangelisation in a more open and critical environment - all these factors are putting pressures on religious congregations to rationalise their schools.³¹⁶

This trend may also explain why the figures in chapter two regarding enrolment in voluntary secondary schools and the number of such schools illustrate a sustained decline. The danger for many, which is highlighted by Fehenehy, is that the decline

³¹⁴ Ibid., p 217.

³¹⁵ Ibid.

³¹⁶ Conference of Major Religious Superiors. (1996) ‘Report on Rationalisation’ cited in Walsh, Raymond. (1999) ‘The issue of rationalisation in Irish post-primary education, 1963-96: The perspectives of the Catholic Church and the State.’ in *Oideas* No. 46 (Autumn) (ed. O’Conchubhair, Padraig) pp 7-25. Dublin: Government publications Office. p 18.

may also be accounted for by a changing of the 'religious affiliation' or a decline in the religious practice of many families in an area and a consequent shift from *de jure* Catholic schools.

4.3.4 *Community schools Vs Community colleges: the central issues.*

As mentioned above, a crucial issue in any amalgamation is the designation of the new school, is it to be a community school or a community college? While differing views can be expressed by the various partners, it is useful to establish the points of convergence and the differences between the two school types. While a resume of both types of school is included in chapter one, the Commission on School Accommodation has tabulated the major differences between community schools and community colleges that are of relevance to amalgamations.³¹⁷ These are reproduced below.

As indicated in chapter one, community schools were first established in 1972 while community colleges were first established in 1976. Community colleges are governed by the Vocational Education Acts 1930 - 2000 and each college's model agreement. Community schools are governed by the deed of trust for Community Schools. These have already been addressed above.

The employer in community colleges is the local Vocational Education Committee whereas in the community school it is the school's Board of Management. The Patron or Trustee³¹⁸ of the community college is the local VEC whereas the patron of the community school is usually one or two religious orders or the diocese and the VEC.

There are differences, too, in relation to the standing of the Board of Management.

³¹⁷ Commission on School Accommodation. (2001) *op cit.*, pp 63-64.

³¹⁸ The Commission on School Accommodation indicates that the term 'patron' has been used for first level and the term 'trustees' for second level. In accordance with the Education Act 1998, the term 'patron' is also used for second level: (1) Trustees, (2) Board of Governors, (3) Owners in the absence of trustees or Board of Governors and (4) Vocational Education Committees. The term 'Trustees' is used only when the context requires it. The Commission on School Accommodation (2001) *op cit.*, p12.

In the community college, the Board of Management is a sub-committee of the local VEC whereas the Board of Management of the community school is an autonomous executive board.³¹⁹ The board structure itself is broadly similar in both structures. In community schools, the board is comprised of three nominees of either the diocese or religious order(s), three nominees of the VEC, two elected parents representatives and two elected teacher representatives. The composition of boards in community colleges is identical though there may be some variations in specific instances.³²⁰

A crucial issue, particularly in relation to 'greenfield' developments, is that of funding. Community colleges are funded by the local VEC whereas community schools are funded by the trustees. However, the trustees liability towards capital costs is 'capped' at £50, 000.³²¹ Given that many community schools and colleges are founded as the result of an amalgamation between schools that may have been operated by religious, it is not surprising that in community schools religious orders may be entitled to some reserved teaching posts. Generally, this concession does not apply to community colleges.

Teachers in a community college are regarded as being 'officers' of a particular VEC scheme. They also enjoy officer status under the VEC Act. This point is significant in that it could result in a teacher being transferred to another school within the scheme. It also means that teachers can seek a transfer to another VEC school within the scheme. Within the Cork County VEC scheme, in the case of designated community colleges, this necessitated the teacher attending for interview to determine suitability. Teachers in community schools are regarded as

³¹⁹ The *Education Act, 1998* stipulated that 'except in the case of a school established or maintained by the vocational education committee, each board shall be a body corporate with perpetual succession and power to sue and may be sued in its corporate name. (Department of Education and Science (1999) (a) *op cit.*, pp 18-19.

³²⁰ The issue of board of management composition for the various school types is explained in footnote 61, above.

³²¹ The amount cited by the Commission on School Accommodation is £50,000. This is the equivalent of €63,487.

being employees of the Board of Management of their school.

Appointment to posts of responsibility is identical in both sectors: appointment is based on interview, seniority and professional development. This contrasts with the voluntary secondary school system where the appointment is based on an interview but is somewhat constrained by the need to appoint the most senior suitable candidate.

The representative body for community colleges is the Irish Vocational Education Association (IVEA) though the Board of Management communicates with the Department of Education and Science through the local Vocational Education Committee. The representative body for community schools is the Association of Community and Comprehensive Schools (ACCS). Community and comprehensive schools deal directly with the Department of Education and Science through their own Board of Management.

In community colleges, teachers salaries are paid by the VEC from its grant from the Department. Each school within the scheme is allocated an amount from the VEC for non-salary items. Full-time, permanent community school teachers are paid by the Department of Education and Science. Part-time and substitute teachers are paid by the community school concerned who subsequently recoup the amount from the Department. The school is allocated a budget by the Department for operation costs.

Each VEC has its books audited by the Comptroller and Auditor General every year. The books of every community school are audited by the Department every other year and by the Comptroller and Auditor General every three to four years. Both kinds of school provide a comprehensive curriculum and are inclusive in that religious education is provided for all denominations. Furthermore, both school types enjoy the services of a salaried, ex-quota chaplain.

4.3.5 *The issue of staffing in an amalgamated school.*

While there are various concerns regarding amalgamations, one of the critical ones is the issue of staffing. Currently, the staffing arrangements in amalgamated schools are governed by Circular Letter 33/97.³²² This letter states that all A and B posts³²³ arising before the date of amalgamation would be filled in a permanent capacity. However, any principal or vice-principal³²⁴ posts that may arise within two years of the proposed date of amalgamation would be filled in an 'acting capacity' only. Any ordinary teaching posts that may arise within the two year period would be filled in a permanent capacity, though the successful candidate would have no automatic right to a position in the new, amalgamated school. Finally, that circular letter, which is the current policy, allows for the blocking of some posts of responsibility in the new school if former principals or deputy principals revert to normal teaching duties. In the case of one or two principals / deputy principals reverting to normal teaching duties, no posts are blocked. However, if three revert to normal duties, one post of responsibility is blocked, two posts are blocked if four or five revert to normal teaching duties and three posts are blocked if six or more principals or vice-principals revert to normal teaching positions. In an amalgamated situation, there is no guarantee that any of the existing principals or vice-principals would become the principal or vice-principal in the new school. However, they keep their existing allowance in a personal capacity.

The Commission on School Accommodation has proposed a number of changes to this practice. These recommendations have yet to be accepted by the Department of Education and Science and the other partners.

³²² Department of Education and Science. (1997) *Circular Letter 33/97. Arrangements for staffing and filling of posts of responsibility in the amalgamation of schools to form a community college or community school.* Dublin: Department of Education

³²³ These posts have since been 'up-graded' with a revision of responsibilities and are now referred to as Assistant Principal and Special Duties Teacher respectively.

³²⁴ Vice-principals are now referred to as Deputy Principals.

The Commission has proposed that any new amalgamated school should have two whole-time equivalent teachers extra to the normal quota for a transitional period of five years. Each new amalgamated school should also have two assistant principal posts and two special duties teacher posts above the normal quota that a school of its enrolment would be entitled to for a period of five years. These posts would only be lost to the school 'through natural attrition', when the holder retires or resigns. Furthermore, circular letter 33/97 should be amended in several regards to (i) remove the blocking of posts of responsibility by former principals and vice-principals and (ii) allow all permanent teachers in the existing schools to take up a permanent position in the amalgamated school. The Commission also propose the appointment of existing ancillary staff (caretakers, attendants and secretaries) to the new school.³²⁵

4.3.6 The issue of buildings and facilities in an amalgamated school.

The poor condition of existing school buildings and the facilities therein are two of the most significant reasons for amalgamations. Currently, many schools, particularly smaller schools of less than two hundred and fifty pupils, are both poorly resourced and lacking in accommodation and facilities.³²⁶ As of September 1996, the Department of Education had twenty five projects related to rationalisation involving a total of fifty nine schools. It is notable that thirty seven of these schools (63%) had enrolments of less than two hundred and fifty pupils.³²⁷ Amalgamation of smaller schools into a larger unit provides an obvious way in which the Department of Education and Science can improve the facilities for a larger number of students.³²⁸

³²⁵ Commission on School Accommodation. (2001) *op cit.*, pp 53-54.

³²⁶ *Ibid.*, p 25.

³²⁷ Comptroller and Auditor General. (1996) *op cit.*, p 10.

³²⁸ Commission on School Accommodation. (2001) *op cit.*, p 25.

In terms of providing an adequate building and facilities for a new, amalgamated school, early feasibility studies conducted between the trustees of the existing schools and the Department of Education and Science should determine whether refurbishment of one of the existing schools on its own site or a new building on the same or on another site is a better option. In arriving at this decision, architects and quantity surveyors have a critical role in that cost, or 'value for money', is the critical factor. A corresponding issue is the future of the existing school buildings. In many cases, these existing buildings can be either sold or redesignated for other educational use which would allow a saving to the Department of Education and Science against the capital cost of a new school. In this regard and by way of example, the CEO of Cork County VEC, Barry O'Brien has offered the existing school building at St. Goban's College, Bantry as a primary Gaelscoil and as a venue for the local Adult literacy scheme and the Youthreach programme on the basis that the Department of Education and Science would provide a greenfield site for the new amalgamated post-primary school in Bantry.³²⁹ This gesture would save the DES a considerable amount in providing a site and building for a Gaelscoil. This saving, it is hoped, could be offset against the capital cost of the new post-primary school.

A timeframe is also put in place as part of this feasibility study. In general terms, the Commission on School Accommodation recommends two years for projects that do not require large capital funding, usually extensions to existing schools, and four years where the amalgamation necessitates a new school on a new site.³³⁰

³²⁹ This information was provided to a meeting that the writer attended with the CEO in Bantry on May 28th. 2002.

³³⁰ Commission on School Accommodation. (2001) *op cit.*, pp 25-26.

4.3.7 *Public / Private Partnership. (PPP)*

One of the most significant developments in the area of the provision of school accommodation is the Public / Private Partnership. Currently, the Department of Education and Science is piloting this arrangement in a number of schools. In the case of Dunmanway, a town involved in the survey in chapter six, the new school building and facilities are a case in point. An extension to Colaiste Choilm in Ballincollig, a school operated by Cork County VEC, is also being built as a PPP. The Commission on School Accommodation devotes a mere paragraph to this development and states that the partnership 'may offer opportunities to support the amalgamation process in the future'.³³¹ In reality, political commentary suggests that the scheme has been piloted most successfully and represents the way forward in the provision of schools and perhaps hospitals and sports facilities.

A private consortium builds the building and furnishes it for the purpose intended. In the case of schools, the Department of Education and Science or the local Vocational Education Committee, leases the complex for a fixed period. During that period, repair, maintenance and management of the buildings is the responsibility of the consortium. A further feature is that the consortium can also lease parts of the building to other parties outside school hours. For example, the sports hall in the school could be leased to local sports clubs during the evenings and the classrooms for night and week-end classes. From the viewpoint of the Department of Education and Science, the move represents a way of obtaining up-to-date facilities without excessive capital costs. In that regard, several such schools can be commissioned without the Department of Education and Science overspending its capital budget. This factor is not insignificant in that the actual costs in the building industry have increased enormously in the last few years.

³³¹ Commission on School Accommodation. (2001) *op cit.*, p 29.

This increase is in tandem with the increase in the price of land. It is notable, in this regard, that the Department of Education and Science spent thirty eight million pounds in 1997 on funding for second level accommodation. This figure increased steadily to one hundred and twenty nine and a half million in 2001. An increase of 241% or ninety one and a half million pounds over five years.³³² In that context, the success and political appeal of the PPP is not surprising.

While the partnership has drawn criticism from some political quarters, it is a favoured option by the Fianna Fail / Progressive Democrat government. Given that this government were returned to power after the general election of May 2002, it seems likely that more Public Private Partnerships will be initiated over the life-time of the current government.³³³ In that regard, while the Commission of School Accommodation dedicates little space to the development in its latest (2001) publication, it is certain that PPP's will feature strongly in the provision of 'greenfield' schools, amalgamated and otherwise, in the immediate future.

³³² Commission on School Accommodation. (2001) *op cit.*, p 28.

³³³ The current government took up office in June 2002 and may, under the Constitution, remain in office until June 2007.

CHAPTER FIVE: METHODOLOGY.

5.1 Outline.

This thesis studies in detail the educational profile of five West Cork towns with their various arrangements in relation to post-primary education. In so doing, a number of issues are examined:

1. What is the future of post-primary education in these West Cork towns?
2. What is the future of Catholic post-primary education in the area?
3. What are the 'feeder' primary schools for each of the post-primary schools in the five towns?
4. How many students will each of these 'feeder' schools have for post-primary transfer for each of the six school years 2002-2007, inclusive?
5. What is the likely enrolment in each of the post-primary schools within the five towns for the next six school years 2002-2007, inclusive?
6. What factors indicate an amalgamation of existing post-primary schools in the five towns in West Cork?

In general terms, the five towns are served by thirteen post-primary schools. However, since one of these schools, Bandon Grammar School, is a Church of Ireland boarding school with the vast majority of its students coming from outside the catchment area, it is not examined in a detailed fashion in this thesis.

5.2 Objectives.

The objectives of the research were five-fold. Firstly, to establish the primary schools that provide pupils for enrolment in the twelve post-primary schools in the five towns analysed. Secondly, to establish what percentage of the pupils in these primary 'feeder' schools enrolled in each of the post-primary schools over the three school year periods 1999-2000, 2000-2001 and 2001-2002. These figures were combined into a three year figure and an average transfer percentage to each post-primary school was, thus, calculated. Thirdly, to establish what percentage of their first year enrolment each of these post-primary schools received from primary schools outside the general catchment area or from 'other'

sources. Fourthly, to ascertain how many pupils were in each year or 'class' of these primary 'feeder' schools as of September 2001. This information allows for a prediction of how many children will be available for post-primary enrolment for the next six years. Finally, by using the average transfer percentage from each primary school to the twelve post-primary schools and by making an allowance for 'other' sources, a prediction is made for enrolment in each post-primary school for the next six years.

5.3 Method.

In devising a methodology to address the above objectives, it was noted that the Department of Education and Science has a general methodology which it employs 'as the need arises' to predict future enrolment:

Enrolment projections for individual catchment areas are prepared by the Planning Section of the PBU (Planning and Building Unit) when accommodation proposals are being assessed. These take into account the number of children currently enrolled in primary schools in the catchment area and the pattern of transfer of children from those primary schools to each of the second level schools in the area where the building project is being proposed. They also take account of the pattern of transfer of children from outside the catchment area into these second level schools.³³⁴

However, it must be noted that 'projections of enrolment in each school catchment area are not produced'.³³⁵ In fact, such projections, as of September 2002, have only been prepared for Bantry. For reasons of accuracy it was decided to adhere to this methodology. This course of action had the further benefit of allowing for a comparison between the Department of Education and Science projections with the writer's findings in relation to Bantry as a test of reliability in chapter 6.8.

One of the major decisions of the research was taken at this point. What research

³³⁴ Comptroller and Auditor General. (1996) *op cit.*, p 14.

³³⁵ *Ibid.*

method would be employed? (A research method is simply a technique for collecting data.³³⁶) There were two methods identified by which the information required to address the research objectives and the research design could be obtained.

The most obvious one was the direct or 'primary source' approach. Each of the twelve post-primary schools in the five towns, along with the one hundred and thirteen primary 'feeder' schools could be visited. On this visit, questions could be asked of the school authorities, by way of structured interview, as to school enrolment over the past thirteen years in the case of each post-primary school and, in the case of each primary school, the number of students who transferred to post-primary education and the number that went to each post-primary school for each of the previous three years, along with the number currently enrolled in each class within the primary school.

There were a number of difficulties immediately obvious to this approach:-

- (1) The issue of time. Given the large number of schools involved, the opening hours of such schools and the fact that the writer is a full time teacher, this option was most unattractive, if not impossible. Furthermore, since many of the smaller primary schools do not have 'walking principals',³³⁷ a visit to these schools might be unwelcome due to other pressures on principal's time.
- (2) There was a considerable distance involved, compounded by the fact that some of the smaller country schools would be difficult to find.
- (3) It was essential that all schools would co-operate. A refusal to co-operate by a small number of schools could have a significant and detrimental effect on final enrolment predictions for the post-primary schools. This would be particularly so of primary or 'feeder' schools with a large enrolment.

³³⁶ Bryman, Alan. (2001) *Social Research methods*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p 29.

³³⁷ This term is used widely to designate principals of smaller schools who also teach a class as enrolment would not justify a non-teaching principal.

(4) Regardless of the desire to co-operate, not all schools would have such records or information readily accessible. In some cases, such information may have been destroyed or lost. If primary schools experienced a change of principal, this likelihood increased. Furthermore, such information may not be readily accessible in the school and may have been moved to the principal's house or the house of the Chairperson of the Board of Management for safekeeping.

(5) There were concerns about the reliability of school records, particularly as these records are kept 'manually' within the school.³³⁸

(6) The possibility of a postal enquiry was considered, but discounted due to concerns about the virtual impossibility of achieving a 100% response rate and the consequences on the prediction figures of not attaining such a response rate.

(7) A telephone survey was discounted for similar reasons.

However, a second approach or 'research method' was also possible. In attempting to satisfy the above objectives, the information required for analysis was already gathered by the Department of Education and Science, although in a different context and format. Each school, both at primary and post-primary level is obliged to furnish returns to the Department of Education and Science annually. These returns indicate the number of pupils in the school as of September 30th of that year, according to each year group and in total. Of particular benefit to this thesis, in the case of post-primary schools, is the fact that the returns must indicate which primary schools the students enrolled transferred from.

These annual returns being 'government or semi-government publications' conform to the broad category of 'secondary sources' of information for the purposes of this thesis.³³⁹

³³⁸ By this is meant that such records are kept not on computer but on paper, in filing cabinets or folders, thereby increasing the chances of incomplete or inaccurate records.

³³⁹ Kumar, Ranjit (1999) *Research Methodology, A step-by-step guide for beginners*. London: Sage Publications. pp 124-125.

Secondary analysis is the analysis of data by researchers, (*sic*) who will probably not have been involved in the collection of those data, (*sic*) for purposes that in all likelihood were not envisaged by those responsible for the data collection.³⁴⁰

While secondary sources can be difficult to access, the *Freedom of Information Act, 1997* is of immense benefit to the researcher in that it makes reliable and accurate information, gathered by Government Departments, readily available. Furthermore, 'secondary sources' can provide 'high-quality data sets' 'without having to go through the process of collecting the data yourself'. In that regard, 'secondary analysis presents few disadvantages'.³⁴¹

These annual school returns, while being 'secondary sources', can be regarded as accurate and reliable for several reasons. Both primary and post-primary education is funded by way of a 'capitation grant', whereby the Department of Education and Science pays each school a stated amount per pupil to assist in the general running costs of the school. This grant is paid in two installments, the second of which is paid only after the reception of the 'September returns'. The September returns are the official return by a school to the Department of Education and Science stating the number of students on the rolls at that date. It is in the schools best interests to furnish these returns promptly and accurately. These returns must be co-signed by the principal and the manager or the chairman of the Board of Management.³⁴² Furthermore, in recent times, these returns at post-primary level require a pupil number for each student. These numbers are allocated by the Department of Education and Science when a pupil enters the educational system. Many of the post-primary schools are now making these returns by way of returning a computer disk. These requirements have the

³⁴⁰ Bryman, Alan. (2001) *op cit.*, p 196.

The quotation, as cited in the source, does not contain the two commas.

³⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p.211.

³⁴² The manager is the Board of Management except in cases where there is no Board of Management. Then the manager is a person who manages the primary school on behalf the Patron or the secondary school on behalf of the trustees.

benefit to the researcher of making the returns more reliable.

The Freedom of Information Officer at the Department of Education and Science, Peter Pringle, was contacted with four requests which form the core of this research. These requests were subsequently dealt with by Declan Ryan and Stuart Healy of the Statistics Section at the Department of Education and Science.

Initially, contact was made with a view to establishing the number of, and enrolment in, secondary schools, community schools, comprehensive schools and community colleges / vocational schools for each year 1988-2001. The request was initially made in 2001 for the years 1988-1999. Two Government of Ireland publications, as suggested by the Freedom of Information Officer, *List of post-primary schools, 1999-2000* and *List of post-primary schools, 2000-2001*³⁴³, provided the information for the two school years concerned. A further, and chronologically final, request was made in July 2002, when the Officer was again contacted and the figures for 2001-2002 were provided. Chapter two of this thesis, being an analysis of the forms of post-primary schools in Ireland, contains the total enrolment and the percentage enrolment figures for each of these schools categories for each year of the fourteen year period 1988-2002. These figures are used to illustrate enrolment trends within the various school types. For reasons of accuracy, the graphs are based on variations on *percentage* enrolment as opposed to actual enrolment figures as there are variations in the student numbers available from one year to another. However, the total enrolment figures for each town are also given on a year-by-year basis as these are useful in highlighting demographic trends.

This information is also included in appendices i and ii: Appendix i contains the

³⁴³ Government of Ireland. (2000) *List of Post Primary Schools, 1999-2000*. Dublin: The Stationery Office.
Government of Ireland. (2001) *List of Post Primary Schools, 2000-2001*. Dublin: The Stationery Office.

actual number of each school type in operation from 1988 to 2002, as well as that school type as a percentage of all the post-primary schools in operation. Appendix ii gives the actual enrolment and the percentage enrolment within each of these school types for each year. As vocational schools and community colleges are both operated by the local VEC, the actual numbers of, and the enrolment within, these schools are combined by the Department of Education and Science. It is important that the percentage figures be given as the total number of schools in operation varies from year to year and has been in decline since 1989, despite a brief respite in 1991. Similarly, Ireland's post-primary enrolment has been in decline since 1997. Accordingly, the percentage of each school type in operation and the percentage enrolled in each such school type is a more accurate indicator of national enrolment trends.

In January 2002, a second request was made of the Freedom of Information Officer at the Department of Education and Science. This request was multi-faceted. Initially, the request was made for the names of the primary schools that each of the twelve post-primary schools enrolled students from. The actual number of students transferring from each of these primary schools was also requested. When this information was received, a list was compiled of the primary 'feeder' schools for each town. Some primary schools supplied just one or two students to all the post-primary schools over the three years. Due to the insignificant impact of these schools, which were few in number, these were classified as 'others' in the given tables. Similarly, some post-primary schools, most notably those in Bandon (due to conurbation) and Sacred Heart, Clonakilty (due to boarding) enrolled students from primary schools outside the general catchment area. These were also included as 'others' to preserve the accuracy of the prediction of future enrolment. The list of these primary 'feeder' schools

involved 88 schools.³⁴⁴

A third request was then made to the Department of Education and Science for the number of available students for post-primary transfer for each of the three years concerned from each of the listed primary schools. This information was essentially the number of pupils in the sixth (final) class in each primary school over the three years. This enabled a computation of the percentage of students from each primary school that enrolled in the post-primary school stated for each year. The combined number of students that enrolled over the three years in a given post-primary school from each primary school was then calculated as a percentage of the total number of students available for post-primary transfer over the three years from each primary school. This 'cumulative percentage' was later used to predict future enrolment.

The number of students that enrolled from these 'feeder' primary schools was then calculated as a percentage of the total enrolment in each post-primary school for each of the three years and for the three years combined. This confirmed that many of the schools enrolled students from outside the catchment area and provided the percentage of students from 'other' sources that enrolled in each post-primary school. This 'other' percentage must be factored into any prediction on future enrolment.

The Department of Education and Science was then contacted again and asked, under The Freedom of Information Act, to supply the number of pupils in each class in each of the primary schools. By virtue of the fact that students in the sixth class on September 2001 will be available for post-primary enrolment in September 2002, the fifth class in September 2003 and so on, it was possible to devise a table of the numbers available for post-primary transfer for the next six

³⁴⁴ A list of these schools, according to catchment area, is contained in Appendix v.

years.³⁴⁵ However, not all pupils transfer and the already calculated cumulative percentage that enrolled in a given post-primary school from each feeder school was then applied to the numbers enrolled in each class. This enabled a prediction of future post-primary transfer, for each post-primary school, based upon the trend of the previous three years. Since post-primary schools obtain some students from schools outside the catchment area, the already calculated percentage of students from 'other' schools was then calculated in terms of actual student numbers. This allowed for an accurate prediction of future enrolment. It should be noted that applying percentages to whole numbers usually results in fractions. For the sake of accuracy, these numbers were calculated to one decimal point within the relevant table.³⁴⁶ For the final prediction, these figures were 'rounded' to the nearest whole number. This is more accurate than allocating a percentage of 'total availability' to each post-primary school as some post-primary schools rely more on certain feeder schools. The enrolment within some of these schools could vary to a greater or lesser degree than the average and, thus, distort the predictions. This is the methodology that the Department of Education and Science employs as will be outlined in Chapter 6.8.

Much reference has been made to the decline in student population. Analysis will also be made in terms of the total number of students available for post-primary education in each town. A decline will indicate the desire for one post-primary education centre as opposed to two or three, bearing in mind the already mentioned documentation from the Commission on School Accommodation.³⁴⁷

Subsequent to this analysis, a number of comparisons were made. Most notably, a comparison of the enrolment trends in secondary schools both nationally and in

³⁴⁵ The predictions begin with the school year 2002-2003.

³⁴⁶ For example, if a given school transfers 66.67% of its students to a given post-primary school and has 10 students available for a given year, this is calculated as 6.7 students.

³⁴⁷ Comptroller and Auditor General (1996) *op cit.*, p 10.

the five towns collectively. These trends are based on the number of students enrolled as a percentage of those available over the fourteen years 1988-2002. A further analysis is not possible as there are no community or comprehensive schools within the area. A comparison of enrolment in community colleges / vocational schools both nationally and in the five towns collectively would not be reliable as (a) there is a more limited choice within the five towns and (b) there are no community colleges in the five towns as of the school year 2001-2002, the only VEC schools in operation within the area are vocational schools.³⁴⁸

5.4 Analysis.

For ease of analysis, chapter six is divided into eight sections. Section one provides a brief outline of the educational provision in the five towns in terms of school provision and provides the context of analysis. Each town is analysed separately in sections two to six. Section seven provides an overview of enrolment percentages within the different school types in the area for the fourteen years, 1988-2001 inclusive. It also makes a comparison between national and local trends in relation to Catholic secondary schools. A further analysis is made in relation to the transfer patterns of students from Church of Ireland primary schools.

As indicated, the Department of Education and Science has made predictions on future enrolment in the case of Bantry due to the advanced nature of the talks on amalgamation. In section eight, these figures are compared to the figures predicted by the writer in chapter 6.2 as a test of reliability and discrepancies are explained.

Analysis for each of the towns takes place under several headings:

1. Post-primary enrolment within the town for each year 1988-2001.

³⁴⁸ A new community college, Maria Immaculata Community College opened on 1 September 2002.

2. A comparison between enrolment within each school in 1988 and 2001.
3. Analysis is made of the sources of enrolment for each post-primary school for the three years 1999-2001 inclusive. This analysis provides the percentage of pupils from each primary school within the catchment area that transferred to each post-primary school. As well as providing the percentages for each year, the combined three year percentage is also calculated.
4. This combined percentage is multiplied by the number of students that will be available for post-primary transfer from each primary school within the catchment area to provide an estimate of future enrolment for each post-primary school for the years 2002-2007 inclusive.

5.5 Limitations.

In analysing the data accrued, there are some limitations that need to be considered. Primarily, when the returns of the twelve post-primary schools were analysed, the numbers enrolled from some primary schools actually exceeded the number available for post-primary transfer. In most cases, this was by a small number. This can be explained by several reasons.

Any student that enrolled in the sixth class in a primary school after September 30th would not be included in the number of students in that class according to the Department's records. In some areas, most notably Bandon, with a large and growing population, and the opening of many new housing developments, this almost certainly occurred.

Some students enroll in a post-primary school in September and, before the end of the month, transfer to another school. This may be due to the (in)availability of subjects or the influence and school choice of friends as well as other factors. In such circumstances, it can happen that both schools might record the enrolment of

such a student, particularly as teacher allocation and capitation grant are in proportion to enrolment. These 'double entries' are detected later by Department officials due to the presence of student ID numbers on the return.³⁴⁹

There may also be cases of human error on the part of administration in individual post-primary schools in identifying and recording the feeder primary school.

Collectively, these incidences, where the total enrolled in all post-primary schools exceeded the number available for post-primary transfer, are recorded in the tables with an asterisk. However, it should be noted that since some schools can act as feeder schools for three or four post-primary schools or for post-primary schools in more than one town, an error of just one student can result in three or four asterisks. In terms of making calculations, when such errors occur, the number stated for post-primary availability is both asterisked and increased to the stated combined number enrolled in the various post-primary schools.

A further error was noted regarding the returns of three schools to the Department of Education and Science:

18548B SN Meallán tSrutháin was cited as being a feeder school for Mercy Heights Secondary school, Skibbereen, providing 10 pupils over the three years. Department of Education and Science figures indicate that the school closed on 31 August 1992. A new school was built and the new roll number is not being used. These pupils are entered as coming from 'other' sources.

19801P Drimoleague NS. is cited as providing 2 students to Rossa College, Skibbereen over the three years. This school is a junior school (infants only) and, thus, could not provide students for post-primary enrolment. Most likely, the roll number should be that of the 'senior' primary school in Drimoleague,

³⁴⁹ An incidence of this kind is recorded in Bantry in the returns for both schools when a first year changed school in mid-September. While both schools recorded the student as being enrolled, subsequent Departmental investigation discovered the discrepancy and the reason for it.

Dromdhallagh NS. However, for the sake of accuracy, no such presumption is made and the enrolment is entered as 'others'.

14955R Bandon BNS is cited as providing 16 students to Hamilton High School, Bandon over the three years. Department of Education records indicate that this school closed on 31 August 1992 and amalgamated with 19977G Bandon Boys National School. Again, in this case the wrong roll number is, most likely, being used. In these three cases, for reasons of accuracy, presumptions are not made as to what the correct school might be. Rather, these pupils are entered in the tables as 'others' and are similarly included in the predictions of future enrolment.

The September 2001 returns for St. Goban's indicated that 11 students came from Mochomog NS. However, further information from the Freedom of Information Officer at the DES indicated that Mochomog NS had only 4 students for transfer, 2 to each post-primary school. This information was verified orally with the schools on March 14th. 2002. Accordingly, in the 2001-2002 column for St. Goban's, enrolment from Mochomog NS is recorded at 2, the remaining 9 are allocated to 'others'. In using this method to rectify the discrepancy, the overall enrolment remains at the true figure of 76.

A further limitation resides in the fact that in making enrolment predictions, the percentage enrolment figure used is based on the previous three years enrolment. For several reasons, a dramatic swing may occur, or the percentage figure used may have been calculated during a period of 'abnormal' enrolment. While these eventualities are impossible to predict, they do impinge on reliability. In practical terms, there is no precise or definite way of identifying what post-primary schools primary students will transfer to in the future. All one can do is examine previous transfer trends from these primary schools and use them to predict future enrolment.

5.6 Reliability

As previously indicated, it is not Department policy to make enrolment predictions for all areas and, in fact, only does so when the need arises.³⁵⁰ However, such predictions do exist in the case of Bantry due to the advanced nature of the talks on amalgamation. These predictions were made available to the trustees of both schools and were subsequently made available to the writer. Interestingly, these figures make no provision for enrolment from other sources, despite this being the Department's stated policy.³⁵¹

In section eight of the chapter six, these Departmental figures were compared to the figures predicted by the writer for Bantry as a test of reliability and discrepancies are explained. In that regard, while both research methods are similar, though not identical, as outlined later, the results were compared in a form of 'triangulation' to test their reliability. While triangulation usually involves more than one method, it can also be used when more than one source of data is used.³⁵² Cohen, Manion *et al* would use the term 'reliability as equivalence'. 'If an equivalent form of the test or instrument is devised and yields similar results, then the instrument can be said to demonstrate this form of reliability'.³⁵³ Any other form of reliability testing is difficult to conceive.

³⁵⁰ Comptroller and Auditor General. (1996) *op cit.*, p 14.

³⁵¹ *Ibid.*

³⁵² Bryman, Alan. (2001) *op cit.*, p 274.

³⁵³ Cohen, Louis, Manion Lawrence & Morrison, Keith. (2001) *Research Methods in Education*. (5th. Ed) London: RoutledgeFalmer. p 118.

CHAPTER SIX: RESEARCH FINDINGS

6.1 The changing enrolment trends in five West Cork towns.

This thesis concerns five towns, each of which has a different post-primary educational provision.

Bantry is served by two post-primary schools: one vocational school (St. Goban's College) and one Catholic secondary school (Ardcoil Phobal Bheanntraí). Both schools are co-educational and talks of amalgamation between both schools are at an advanced stage.

Dunmanway, until September 2002, was served by a vocational school, Colaiste Chairbre, and a Catholic secondary school, Maria Immaculata Secondary School. Both schools were co-educational and, as of September 2002, amalgamated into a new community college, Maria Immaculata Community College, the trustees of which being County Cork VEC and the Daughters of Charity of Saint Vincent de Paul.

Clonakilty has a community college and a Catholic secondary school, Sacred Heart Secondary School. The community college is co-educational but the actual enrolment is predominantly male. The secondary school is traditionally an all girls' school but, in recent years, a small number of boys have been admitted to the repeat Leaving Certificate Programme. The school also accommodates some female boarders but boarding is now being 'phased' out.

Skibbereen has three post-primary schools: one co-educational vocational school, Rossa College, one Boys' Catholic secondary school, St. Fachtna's, and one Girls' Catholic secondary school, Mercy Heights. As of September, 2002, preliminary discussions are taking place at trustee level about the possibility of a three-way amalgamation. However, these discussions are at a very early stage and have not yet involved either staff or parents.

Bandon, as already indicated, has one Church of Ireland boarding school, Bandon Grammar School, one girls' Catholic secondary school, Presentation Convent, and one privately owned boys' secondary school, Hamilton High School, and one co-educational vocational school, St. Brogan's College.

It should also be noted that there is a secondary school in Rosscarbery, located between Skibbereen and Clonakilty. However, since Rosscarbery has only one post-primary school and, consequently, does not offer a choice of school, it is not included in this thesis.³⁵⁴

While these towns, other than Rosscarbery, have different post-primary education provision, there is evidence of a change in such provision. The withdrawal of religious from education in Bantry and Dunmanway and their almost completed withdrawal in Skibbereen has instigated a debate on the future of Catholic secondary schools. Furthermore, the broadening of traditional vocational education, a decline, in some areas, in the numbers of pupils available to enroll and the consequent implications for educational provision and choice have precipitated a discussion on amalgamations and the future of post-primary education within the area. This chapter examines these issues in more detail on a town-by-town basis.

6.2 An analysis of post-primary enrolment in Bantry.

Bantry is served by two post-primary schools, Ardscoil Phobal Bheanntai and St. Goban's College, both of which are co-educational. Ardscoil Phobal Bheanntai is a Catholic secondary school under the trusteeship of the Diocese of Cork and Ross. Until 1995, trusteeship was vested in the Sisters of Mercy. However, due to a shortage of personnel, the Sisters withdrew from trusteeship. This situation

³⁵⁴ As of September 2000, there were 414 pupils enrolled in Mount St. Michael's secondary school, Rosscarbery. See Department of Education and Science. (2001) *op cit.*, p 5.

is by no means unique and is referred to elsewhere in this thesis in the section on trusteeship. St. Goban's College is a vocational school under the management of County Cork Vocational Education Committee. While the school is a *de jure* vocational school, it has extended its subject choice to include traditional secondary subjects like accounting and business studies.

Both schools applied for grant-aid from the Department of Education and Science for extensions and remedial works between 1998 and 1999. The applications were put on hold pending investigations regarding viability. The end result was a proposal to amalgamate the two schools which was received favourably by the trustees of both schools. Barry O'Brien, CEO of County Cork VEC informed staff at St. Goban's in May 2000 that the VEC, as trustees of St. Goban's, would assent to amalgamation, and in January 2002, Bishop John Buckley, Bishop of Cork and Ross, chairman of the trustees of Ardscoil Phobal Bheantraí, indicated by way of letter to the Department of Education and Science that he was also assenting.³⁵⁵

Currently then, uncertainty surrounds the future of post-primary education in Bantry though amalgamation seems likely. Enrolment, as can be seen in the following table and figures, has undergone a major shift. This has consequent implications for school viability and subject choice. While local opinion and the staff of both schools would wish for a new school site with new buildings, this is by no means certain and any new school may be the product of a public-private partnership.³⁵⁶

³⁵⁵ Information given to the writer by Rev. Dr. Tom Deenihan, Chairman of the Board of Management, Ardscoil Phobal Bheantraí on February 6th. 2002.

³⁵⁶ This information was given to the writer by the Minister for Education and Science on 20 November 2001. This view was also strengthened at a meeting of the Principals and Chairmen of the Boards of Management of each of the schools with the CEO of the VEC held on 3rd. December 2001 in Bantry. The writer as Chairman of the Board of Management of St. Goban's College was present.

6.2.1 *Bantry post-primary enrolment, 1988-2001.*

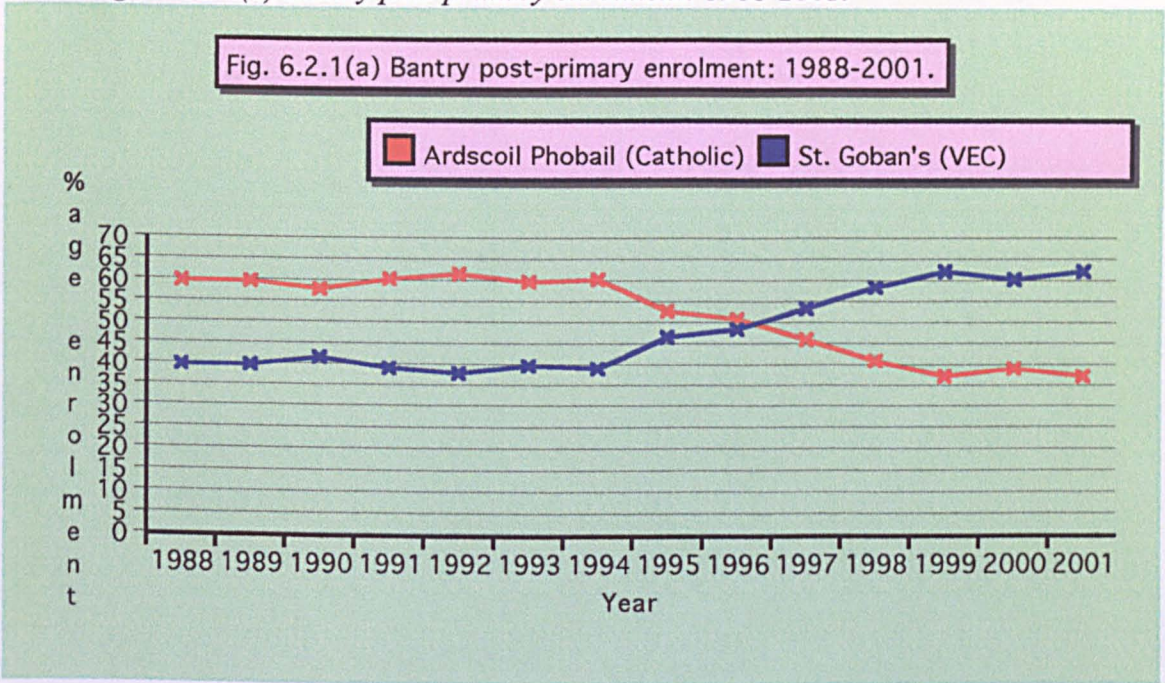
Table 6.2.1 *Bantry post-primary enrolment, 1988-2001.*

School Year	Ardcoil Phobal. (Catholic Secondary)		St. Goban's College. (VEC)		TOTALS
1988-1989	420	60.1%	279	39.9%	699
1989-1990	414	59.8%	278	40.2%	692
1990-1991	430	58.4%	306	41.6%	736
1991-1992	439	60.9%	282	39.1%	721
1992-1993	431	61.6%	269	38.4%	700
1993-1994	444	59.8%	298	40.2%	742
1994-1995	446	60.4%	292	39.6%	738
1995-1996	379	53.2%	333	46.8%	712
1996-1997	348	51.1%	333	48.9%	681
1997-1998	317	46.1%	370	53.9%	687
1998-1999	262	41.3%	373	58.7%	635
1999-2000	232	37.7%	384	62.3%	616
2000-2001	225	39.1%	350	60.9%	575
2001-2002	223	37.7%	368	62.3%	591
TOTALS	5010	52.6%	4515	47.4%	9525

The above table illustrates the extent of the enrolment swing in Bantry already alluded to. During the period of the survey, enrolment dropped in Ardcoil Phobal Bheantraí by 22.4%. What is also of note is that the student population available to both schools decreased from 699 to 591. Combined, these decreases pose serious questions for the continuing viability of Ardcoil Phobal and justify the proposal to amalgamate. Indeed, the total enrolment available to both schools in 2001-2002 was just 591. Even if this figure were to be divided equally between the two schools, neither could operate effectively and offer a full range of subject choices with 295 pupils and the corresponding allocation of teachers.³⁵⁷

³⁵⁷ The current pupil-teacher ratio is 18:1. (There are constant calls for this ratio to be reviewed downwards at teacher union AGM's, by parents groupings and, latterly, by social justice and voluntary agencies.)

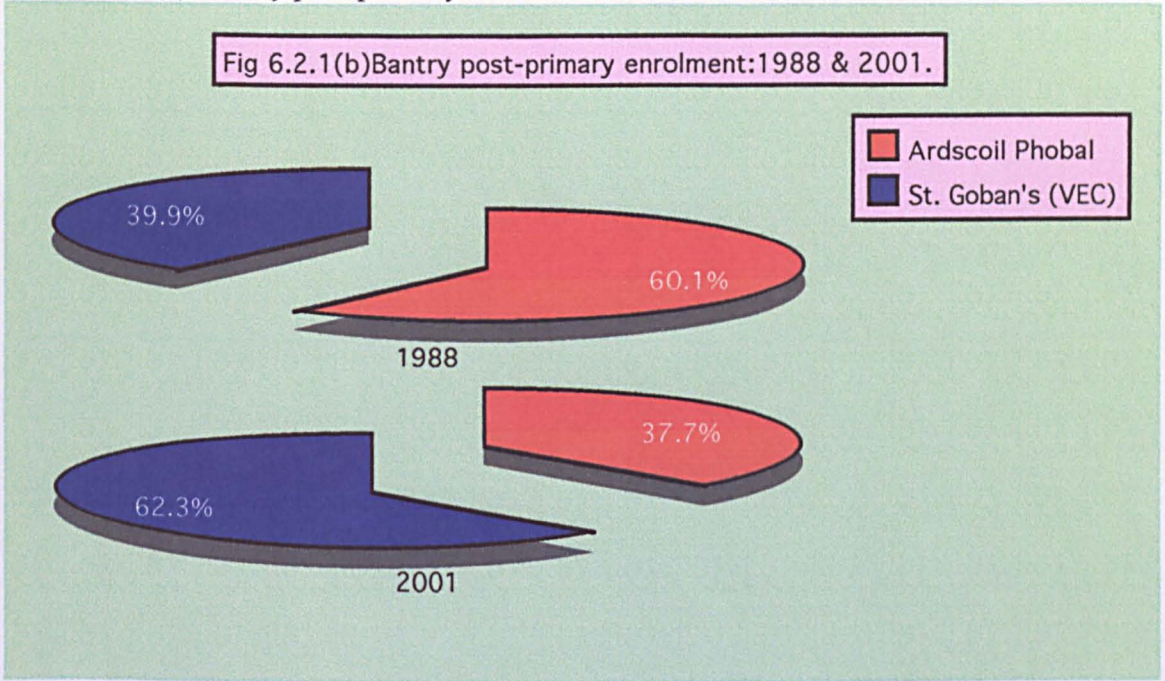
Figure 6.2.1(a) Bantry post-primary enrolment: 1988-2001.



The above figure illustrates that the shift in enrolment from the secondary school to the vocational school has been both gradual and sustained since 1994 and seems to be based on something more than a passing whim. Previous research by the writer indicated that such a shift was due to 'school uniform', 'school buildings', 'canteen facilities', 'range of practical subjects' and 'sports facilities'.³⁵⁸ Yet, despite efforts by the Ardscoil to address these issues, the trend has continued. What was also of note was that any perceived strengths of either school related to facilities rather than ideological differences. This raises a further question as to whether there is any perceived difference between vocational and secondary education in the town, particularly as there has been a convergence in the subjects offered in both schools. A negative answer to this question may well be the major factor that has led to a shift in enrolment away from the secondary school, not just in Bantry, but throughout the country, as evidenced in chapter 2.

³⁵⁸ Healy, Kevin M. (2000) *op cit.*, p 130.

Figure 6.2.1(b) Bantry post-primary enrolment: 1988 & 2001.



A comparison of the enrolment in both schools in both the first and last year of the survey shows a total reversal of enrolment percentages. Crucially, as already cited, there has been a decline of 22.4% in the secondary schools percentage of total enrolment. While this trend has obvious implications for Ardscoil Phobal Bheantraí, there are also serious implications for St. Goban's College not least of which are accommodation, facilities and the provision of teachers for the increased student body. The proposal to amalgamate seems justified and, as already cited, seems to have been favourably received by all 'partners'. Indeed, the staff and management of both schools have united, to some degree, in order to expedite the process.³⁵⁹

³⁵⁹ To that end, the writer was part of a delegation of principals and Chairmen of Management Boards from both schools in Bantry to the Minister for Education and Science which explored ways in which the amalgamation of both schools could be expedited. This meeting took place in Government Buildings, Dublin 2 on November 20th. 2001

6.2.2 Sources of enrolment for Bantry post-primary schools and an analysis of transfer trends.

Table 6.2.2(a) Ardscoil Phobal Bheanntrai first year enrolment, 1999-2001: An analysis of feeder schools and transfers.

FEEDER SCHOOL	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	Combined three year totals
07101R Inchiclough NS	Available 0 enrolled 0 0%	Available 3 enrolled 1 33.3%	Available 4 enrolled 1 25%	Available 7 enrolled 2 28.6%
09161W Convent of Mercy, Bantry.	Available 28 enrolled 13 46.4%	Available 21* (20) enrolled 18 85.7%	Available 22 enrolled 1 4.6%	Available 71 enrolled 32 45.1%
10548H St. Brendan's NS	Available 5 enrolled 0 0%	Available 6 enrolled 4 66.7%	Available 5 enrolled 2 40%	Available 16 enrolled 6 37.5%
13095L Dromore NS	Available 10 enrolled 2 20%	Available 5 enrolled 1 20%	Available 7 enrolled 1 14.3%	Available 22 enrolled 4 18.2%
14430E Derrycreeha NS	Available 8 enrolled 2 25%	Available 6 enrolled 3 50%	Available 2 enrolled 1 50%	Available 16 enrolled 6 37.5%
15135H Bantry BNS	Available 31 enrolled 12 38.7%	Available 20 enrolled 10 50%	Available 32* (30) enrolled 11 34.4%	Available 83 enrolled 33 39.8%
15410D Kilcrohane NS	Available 5 enrolled 0 0%	Available 5* (4) enrolled 1 20%	Available 1 enrolled 0 0%	Available 11 enrolled 1 9.1%
15646J Coomhola NS	Available 19 enrolled 4 21.1%	Available 6 enrolled 1 16.7%	Available 5 enrolled 1 20%	Available 30 enrolled 6 20%
16087E Kealkil NS	Available 9 enrolled 5 55.6%	Available 8 enrolled 4 50%	Available 18 enrolled 7 38.9%	Available 35 enrolled 16 45.7%
16246V Drumclough NS	Available 6 enrolled 2 33.3%	Available 3 enrolled 0 0%	Available 3 enrolled 0 0%	Available 12 enrolled 2 16.7%
16286K Carrigboy NS	Available 17 enrolled 2 11.8%	Available 12 enrolled 0 0%	Available 9 enrolled 1 11.1%	Available 38 enrolled 3 7.9%
17011W Mochomog NS	Available 2* (1) enrolled 0	Available 6 enrolled 0 0%	Available 4 enrolled 2 50%	Available 12 enrolled 2 16.7%
17050J SN Naomh Sheamuis	Available 1 enrolled 0 0%	Available 7 enrolled 0 0%	Available 5 enrolled 1 20%	Available 13 enrolled 1 7.7%
19420D SN Fhiachna	Available 9 enrolled 5 55.6%	Available 8 enrolled 5 62.5%	Available 12 enrolled 3 25%	Available 29 enrolled 13 44.8%
20001N Gaelscoil Bheanntrai	Available enrolled 0	Available enrolled 0	Available 8 enrolled 3 37.5%	Available 8 enrolled 3 37.5%
Feeder school total	47 100% of total	48 100% of total	35 100% of total	130 100% of total
Totals	Available 150 Enrolled 47 31.3%	Available 116 Enrolled 48 41.4%	Available 137 Enrolled 35 23.8%	Available 403 Enrolled 130 32.3%

Table 6.2.2(b) St. Goban's College first year enrolment, 1999-2001: An analysis of feeder schools and transfers.

FEEDER SCHOOL	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	Combined three year totals
07101R Inchiclough NS	Available 0 enrolled 0 0%	Available 3 enrolled 2 66.7%	Available 4 enrolled 3 75%	Available 7 enrolled 5 71.4%
09161W Convent of Mercy, Bantry.	Available 28 enrolled 12 42.9%	Available 21* (20) enrolled 3 14.3%	Available 22 enrolled 18 81.8%	Available 71 enrolled 33 46.5%
10548H St. Brendan's NS	Available 5 enrolled 4 80%	Available 6 enrolled 1 16.7%	Available 5 enrolled 1 20%	Available 16 enrolled 6 37.5%
13095L Dromore NS	Available 10 enrolled 1 10%	Available 5 enrolled 0 0%	Available 7 enrolled 0 0%	Available 22 enrolled 1 4.6%
14430E Derrycreha NS	Available 8 enrolled 6 75%	Available 6 enrolled 1 16.7%	Available 2 enrolled 1 50%	Available 16 enrolled 8 50%
15135H Bantry BNS	Available 31 enrolled 18 58.1%	Available 20 enrolled 10 50%	Available 32* (30) enrolled 21 65.6%	Available 83 enrolled 49 59%
15410D Kilcrohane NS	Available 5 enrolled 5 100%	Available 5* (4) enrolled 4 80%	Available 1 enrolled 1 100%	Available 11 enrolled 10 90.9%
15646J Coomhola NS	Available 19 enrolled 10 52.6%	Available 6 enrolled 5 83.3%	Available 5 enrolled 3 60%	Available 30 enrolled 18 60%
16087E Kealkil NS	Available 9 enrolled 1 11.1%	Available 8 enrolled 3 37.5%	Available 18 enrolled 2 11.1%	Available 35 enrolled 6 17.1%
16246V Drumclugh NS	Available 6 enrolled 4 66.7%	Available 3 enrolled 0 0%	Available 3 enrolled 3 100%	Available 12 enrolled 7 58.3%
16286K Carrigboy NS	Available 17 enrolled 6 35.3%	Available 12 enrolled 5 41.7%	Available 9 enrolled 3 33.3%	Available 38 enrolled 14 36.8%
17011W Mochomog NS	Available 2* (1) enrolled 2 100%	Available 6 enrolled 5 83.3%	Available 4 enrolled 2 50%	Available 12 enrolled 9 75%
17050J SN Naomh Sheamuis	Available 1 enrolled 0 0%	Available 7 enrolled 1 14.3%	Available 5 enrolled 0 0%	Available 13 enrolled 1 7.7%
19420D SN Fhiachna	Available 9 enrolled 4 44.4%	Available 8 enrolled 3 37.5%	Available 12 enrolled 8 66.7%	Available 29 enrolled 15 51.7%
20001N Gaelscoil Bheanntrai	Available 0 enrolled 0 0%	Available 0 enrolled 0 0%	Available 8 enrolled 1 12.5%	Available 8 enrolled 1 12.5%
Feeder school total	73 100% of total	43 97.7% of total	67 88.2% of total	183 94.8% of total
Others	0	1 2.3% of total	9 11.8% of total	10 5.2% of total
Totals	Available 150 Enrolled 73 48.7%	Available 116 Enrolled 44 37.9%	Available 137 Enrolled 76 55.5%	Available 403 Enrolled 193 47.9%

Earlier figures have illustrated the growth in enrolment at St. Goban's at the expense of Ardscoil Phobal. From a cursory glance at the above tables, it is clear that St. Goban's has achieved this growth through a more substantial three year

combined percentage enrolment from the two larger feeder schools, Convent of Mercy and Bantry BNS. Interestingly, these are also 'town schools'. Chapter four addressed the enrolment transfer bias of town schools in favour of secondary schools and of country schools enrolling in vocational schools. While this trend seems to have been arrested, it is also significant that St. Goban's retains an increased percentage in many of the country schools, Kilcrohane (90.9%), Mochmog (75%), Inchiclough (71.4%), Coomhola (60%) and Dromclugh (58.3%) being the most obvious. By comparison, the highest transfer percentages from any primary school to the Ardscoil are 45.7% from Kealkil NS. and 45.1% from the Convent primary school in Bantry. Historically, the convent primary school and the Ardscoil were linked, both sharing the same grounds and both operated by the Sisters of Mercy. However, St. Goban's is now enrolling a slightly higher 46.5% of students from the Convent primary school. This becomes more significant when one considers that St. Goban's is a vocational school where there would have been a traditionally higher enrolment of male students and the Convent primary school is an all girls' school. St. Goban's College can be said to have overcome the traditional bias against such schools by female pupils and by residents of urban areas. A *caveat* needs to be entered. There is a dramatic variance between the transfer numbers from the Convent school to either post-primary school from year to year. This may be indicative of peer pressure as a determinant in post-primary enrolment. In previous research by the writer into the factors that influenced post-primary choice in Bantry during the three period 1997-2000, peer-pressure or 'because my friends go to this school' was cited as a factor by 50% of girls in the vocational school and 60.9% of girls in the secondary school.³⁶⁰ While there is also a variance in transfer percentages from other primary schools to a given post-primary school, the

³⁶⁰ Healy, Kevin M (2000) *op cit.*, p 84.

smaller numbers enrolled in these primary schools would explain the higher percentages involved and the reduced impact of these primary schools on post-primary enrolment.

Dromore NS, though providing 18% of enrolment in the Ardscoil, is actually in the Skibbereen catchment area. However, there will always be borderline cases that will transfer elsewhere. This becomes more obvious later in this chapter in relation to the feeder schools for Dunmanway and Clonakilty, where there is a much larger overlap.

It is also obvious that only 80% of students within the catchment area actually transfer to post-primary schools in the town. This is readily explained by the presence of Schull Community College, which attracts a number of students from the town of Bantry, some 17 miles away, despite no public transport being provided for such students. Indeed, the parents of these children have hired private transport to take their children from Bantry to Schull each day. As one examines the transfer rates of primary schools in the Durrus area, which is nearer to Schull, the impact of Schull Community College is accentuated. For example, only 46.7% of students from Carrigboy NS and 15.4% of students at SN Naomh Sheamuis attend post-primary schools in Bantry. In August 2001, the parents of these children attempted to get the catchment areas redefined so that public transport would be made available to take their children to Schull Community College. The Boards of Management of both post-primary schools in Bantry refused to endorse the application.

An emerging factor which benefits St. Goban's is post-primary enrolment from Gaelscoil Bheanntai. This school had its first class available for post-primary enrolment in September 2001. 50% enrolled within the town, the significant number going to Ardscoil Phobal. Free boarding and education was available to

pupils who wished to continue their education through the medium of Irish at Colaiste Íde in Co. Kerry. This accounts for the relatively low transfer rate of just 50% to post-primary schools within the town. However, the boarding option was not successful, many of the students were 'homesick' and the parents of existing students within the Gaelscoil embarked upon a campaign to have post-primary education through the medium of Irish available locally. In September 2002, an 'Irish stream' was provided in St. Goban's College, which resulted in a 66.7% transfer rate of students to that school from the Gaelscoil. As this stream seems certain to continue within St. Goban's, the Gaelscoil would seem to be of more benefit to St. Goban's in terms of student transfer in the short to medium term.

It is also noteworthy that the only 'non-Catholic' school within the catchment area, St. Brendan's NS, a Church of Ireland school, sends an equal number of students to the Catholic Árdcoil and the multi-denominational St. Gobán's College.

6.2.3 Projected available enrolment for Bantry, 2002-2007.

Table 6.2.3(a) Ardscoil Phobal Bheantraí: A prediction of enrolment, 2002-2007, based on feeder school enrolment.

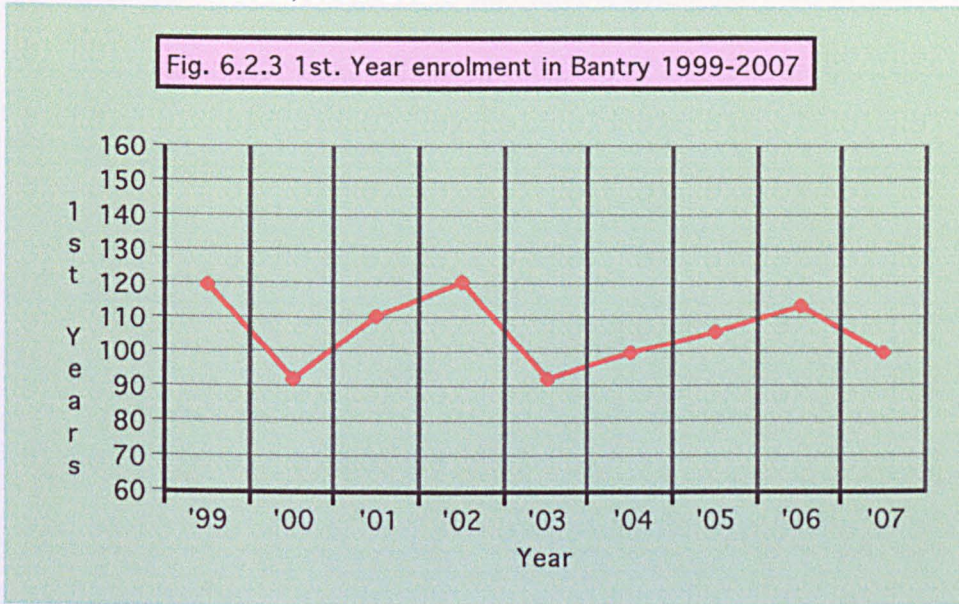
Feeder School	%	September 2002	September 2003	September 2004	September 2005	September 2006	September 2007
Inchiclough NS	<u>28.6</u>	<i>In Class 3</i> Est. 0.9	<i>In Class 2</i> Est. 0.6	<i>In Class 2</i> Est. 0.6	<i>In Class 1</i> Est. 0.3	<i>In Class 5</i> Est. 1.4	<i>In Class 3</i> Est. 0.9
Convent of Mercy	<u>45.1</u>	<i>In Class 23</i> Est. 10.4	<i>In Class 21</i> Est. 9.5	<i>In Class 25</i> Est. 11.3	<i>In Class 26</i> Est. 11.7	<i>In Class 16</i> Est. 7.2	<i>In Class 21</i> Est. 9.5
St. Brendan's	<u>37.7</u>	<i>In Class 5</i> Est. 1.9	<i>In Class 4</i> Est. 1.5	<i>In Class 1</i> Est. 0.4	<i>In Class 8</i> Est. 3	<i>In Class 0</i> Est. 0	<i>In Class 5</i> Est. 1.9
Dromore NS	<u>18.2</u>	<i>In Class 7</i> Est. 1.3	<i>In Class 4</i> Est. 0.7	<i>In Class 4</i> Est. 0.7	<i>In Class 6</i> Est. 1.1	<i>In Class 8</i> Est. 1.5	<i>In Class 5</i> Est. 0.9
Derrycreha NS	<u>37.5</u>	<i>In Class 10</i> Est. 3.8	<i>In Class 7</i> Est. 2.6	<i>In Class 7</i> Est. 2.6	<i>In Class 5</i> Est. 1.9	<i>In Class 13</i> Est. 4.9	<i>In Class 4</i> Est. 1.5
Bantry BNS	<u>39.8</u>	<i>In Class 25</i> Est. 10	<i>In Class 11</i> Est. 4.4	<i>In Class 16</i> Est. 6.4	<i>In Class 23</i> Est. 9.2	<i>In Class 23</i> Est. 9.2	<i>In Class 31</i> Est. 12.3
Kilcrohane NS	<u>9.1</u>	<i>In Class 6</i> Est. 0.5	<i>In Class 5</i> Est. 0.5	<i>In Class 2</i> Est. 0.2	<i>In Class 4</i> Est. 0.4	<i>In Class 7</i> Est. 0.6	<i>In Class 1</i> Est. 0.1
Coomhola NS	<u>20</u>	<i>In Class 10</i> Est. 2	<i>In Class 6</i> Est. 1.2	<i>In Class 10</i> Est. 2	<i>In Class 6</i> Est. 1.2	<i>In Class 12</i> Est. 2.4	<i>In Class 7</i> Est. 1.4
Kealkil NS	<u>45.7</u>	<i>In Class 8</i> Est. 3.7	<i>In Class 9</i> Est. 4.1	<i>In Class 9</i> Est. 4.1	<i>In Class 5</i> Est. 2.3	<i>In Class 13</i> Est. 5.9	<i>In Class 9</i> Est. 4.1
Drumclugh NS	<u>16.7</u>	<i>In Class 8</i> Est. 1.3	<i>In Class 5</i> Est. 0.8	<i>In Class 3</i> Est. 0.5	<i>In Class 7</i> Est. 1.2	<i>In Class 5</i> Est. 0.8	<i>In Class 2</i> Est. 0.3
Carrigboy NS	<u>7.9</u>	<i>In Class 17</i> Est. 1.3	<i>In Class 18</i> Est. 1.4	<i>In Class 14</i> Est. 1.1	<i>In Class 17</i> Est. 1.3	<i>In Class 11</i> Est. 0.9	<i>In Class 9</i> Est. 0.7
Mochmog NS	<u>16.7</u>	<i>In Class 3</i> Est. 0.5	<i>In Class 5</i> Est. 0.8	<i>In Class 2</i> Est. 0.3	<i>In Class 2</i> Est. 0.3	<i>In Class 4</i> Est. 0.7	<i>In Class 3</i> Est. 0.5
SN Naomh Sheamuis	<u>7.7</u>	<i>In Class 4</i> Est. 0.3	<i>In Class 4</i> Est. 0.3	<i>In Class 2</i> Est. 0.2	<i>In Class 6</i> Est. 0.5	<i>In Class 2</i> Est. 0.2	<i>In Class 3</i> Est. 0.2
SN Fhiachna	<u>44.8</u>	<i>In Class 10</i> Est. 4.5	<i>In Class 11</i> Est. 4.9	<i>In Class 8</i> Est. 3.6	<i>In Class 7</i> Est. 3.1	<i>In Class 8</i> Est. 3.6	<i>In Class 6</i> Est. 2.7
Gaelscoil Bheantraí	<u>37.5</u>	<i>In Class 17</i> Est. 6.4	<i>In Class 7</i> Est. 2.6	<i>In Class 26</i> Est. 9.8	<i>In Class 17</i> Est. 6.4	<i>In Class 20</i> Est. 7.5	<i>In Class 19</i> Est. 7.1
% from feeder schools	<u>100</u>	48.8	35.9	43.8	43.9	46.8	44.1
% from others	<u>0</u>						
Final Total	100	49	36	44	44	47	44

Table 6.2.3(b) St Goban's College Bantry: A prediction of enrolment, 2002-2007, based on feeder school enrolment.³⁶¹

Feeder School	%	September 2002	September 2003	September 2004	September 2005	September 2006	September 2007
Inchiclough NS	<u>71.4</u>	<i>In Class 3</i> Est. 2.1	<i>In Class 2</i> Est. 1.4	<i>In Class 2</i> Est. 1.4	<i>In Class 1</i> Est. 0.7	<i>In Class 5</i> Est. 3.6	<i>In Class 3</i> Est. 2.1
Convent of Mercy	<u>46.5</u>	<i>In Class 23</i> Est. 10.7	<i>In Class 21</i> Est. 9.8	<i>In Class 25</i> Est. 11.6	<i>In Class 26</i> Est. 12.1	<i>In Class 16</i> Est. 7.4	<i>In Class 21</i> Est. 9.8
St. Brendan's	<u>37.5</u>	<i>In Class 5</i> Est. 1.9	<i>In Class 4</i> Est. 1.5	<i>In Class 1</i> Est. 0.4	<i>In Class 8</i> Est. 3	<i>In Class 0</i> Est. 0	<i>In Class 5</i> Est. 1.9
Dromore NS	<u>4.6</u>	<i>In Class 7</i> Est. 0.3	<i>In Class 4</i> Est. 0.2	<i>In Class 4</i> Est. 0.2	<i>In Class 6</i> Est. 0.3	<i>In Class 8</i> Est. 0.4	<i>In Class 5</i> Est. 0.2
Derrycreha NS	<u>50</u>	<i>In Class 10</i> Est. 5	<i>In Class 7</i> Est. 3.5	<i>In Class 7</i> Est. 3.5	<i>In Class 5</i> Est. 2.5	<i>In Class 13</i> Est. 6.5	<i>In Class 4</i> Est. 2
Bantry BNS	<u>59</u>	<i>In Class 25</i> Est. 14.8	<i>In Class 11</i> Est. 6.5	<i>In Class 16</i> Est. 9.4	<i>In Class 23</i> Est. 13.6	<i>In Class 23</i> Est. 13.6	<i>In Class 31</i> Est. 18.3
Kilcrohane NS	<u>90.9</u>	<i>In Class 6</i> Est. 5.5	<i>In Class 5</i> Est. 4.5	<i>In Class 2</i> Est. 1.8	<i>In Class 4</i> Est. 3.6	<i>In Class 7</i> Est. 6.3	<i>In Class 1</i> Est. 0.9
Coomhola NS	<u>60</u>	<i>In Class 10</i> Est. 6	<i>In Class 6</i> Est. 3.6	<i>In Class 10</i> Est. 6	<i>In Class 6</i> Est. 3.6	<i>In Class 12</i> Est. 7.2	<i>In Class 7</i> Est. 4.2
Kealkil NS	<u>17.1</u>	<i>In Class 8</i> Est. 1.4	<i>In Class 9</i> Est. 1.5	<i>In Class 9</i> Est. 1.5	<i>In Class 5</i> Est. 0.9	<i>In Class 13</i> Est. 2.2	<i>In Class 9</i> Est. 1.5
Drumclugh NS	<u>58.3</u>	<i>In Class 8</i> Est. 4.7	<i>In Class 5</i> Est. 2.9	<i>In Class 3</i> Est. 1.7	<i>In Class 7</i> Est. 4.1	<i>In Class 5</i> Est. 2.9	<i>In Class 2</i> Est. 1.2
Carrigboy NS	<u>36.8</u>	<i>In Class 17</i> Est. 6.3	<i>In Class 18</i> Est. 6.6	<i>In Class 14</i> Est. 5.2	<i>In Class 17</i> Est. 6.3	<i>In Class 11</i> Est. 4	<i>In Class 9</i> Est. 3.3
Mochmog NS	<u>75</u>	<i>In Class 3</i> Est. 2.3	<i>In Class 5</i> Est. 3.8	<i>In Class 2</i> Est. 1.5	<i>In Class 2</i> Est. 11.5	<i>In Class 4</i> Est. 3	<i>In Class 3</i> Est. 2.3
SN Naomh Sheamuis	<u>7.7</u>	<i>In Class 4</i> Est. 0.5	<i>In Class 4</i> Est. 0.5	<i>In Class 2</i> Est. 0.2	<i>In Class 6</i> Est. 0.5	<i>In Class 2</i> Est. 0.2	<i>In Class 3</i> Est. 0.2
SN Fhiachna	<u>51.7</u>	<i>In Class 10</i> Est. 5.2	<i>In Class 11</i> Est. 5.7	<i>In Class 8</i> Est. 4.1	<i>In Class 7</i> Est. 3.6	<i>In Class 8</i> Est. 4.1	<i>In Class 6</i> Est. 3.1
Gaelscoil Bheantraí	<u>12.5</u>	<i>In Class 17</i> Est. 2.1	<i>In Class 7</i> Est. 0.9	<i>In Class 26</i> Est. 3.3	<i>In Class 17</i> Est. 2.1	<i>In Class 20</i> Est. 2.5	<i>In Class 19</i> Est. 2.4
% from feeder schools	<u>94.8</u>	68.8	52.9	52.8	58.4	63.9	53.4
% from others	<u>5.2</u>	3.6	2.9	2.9	3.2	3.5	2.9
Final Total	<u>100</u>	72	56	56	62	67	56

³⁶¹ In the above tables, it should be noted that the Convent of Mercy acts as a Junior school for Bantry BNS. Accordingly, the available figure for 2007 in the Convent of Mercy, is the girls in 1st class as at September 2001. Similarly, the available figure for Bantry BNS is the number of boys enrolled in the first class in the Convent of Mercy as at September 2001.

Figure 6.2.3 Actual and projected 1st. year enrolment for Bantry post-primary schools, 1999-2007.



The above figure, from the above tables relating to actual and projected 1st year enrolment in both post-primary schools in Bantry, illustrates a sharp increase in availability for the 2002- 2003 school year. However, thereafter, the numbers are much lower. It also illustrates that there are not enough 1st year pupils to ensure the viability of both schools in the town. The year 2003 will be particularly bad with an available enrolment of just 92 pupils. This projected figure includes 3 pupils from outside the catchment area for St. Goban's. Over the five years 2003 to 2007, there is an average of 102 students available for first year enrolment for each year between both schools. For the Ardscoil, the prospects are much bleaker.³⁶² An enrolment of between 36 and 44 is predicted, too big for one class and barely enough for two. Issues of viability will obviously arise. The need for rationalisation is obvious and it is clear why the Department of Education and Science would wish to see an amalgamation between both schools.

³⁶² Table 6.2.3(a)

6.3 An analysis of post-primary enrolment in Dunmanway.

As in the case of Bantry, Dunmanway is also served by two post-primary schools - a Catholic secondary school, Maria Immaculata, and a vocational school, Colaiste Chairbre. Both schools are co-educational. However, unlike Bantry, amalgamation has taken place. The position of principal of the new school was advertised in February 2002, duly filled, and the successful candidate took up duty in March.³⁶³ The school opened in September 2002, using the two existing school buildings, but with the new principal in place. In December 2002, the two school premises closed and the students and staff moved to the new 'greenfield' school. The new school encapsulates some of the spirit of both of the original schools. The new school is called Maria Immaculata Community College and is under the trusteeship of Cork County VEC and the Daughters of Charity, the religious order that operated Maria Immaculata secondary school. However, being a community college, students of the school are regarded as being VEC students in Department of Education and Science statistics. This point is consequently significant in that the amalgamation represents a decline in the number of 'secondary school' students and a corresponding growth in the number of 'VEC students'.

³⁶³ The advertisement, on behalf of Cork County VEC, appeared in the *Irish Examiner*, February 6th. 2002.

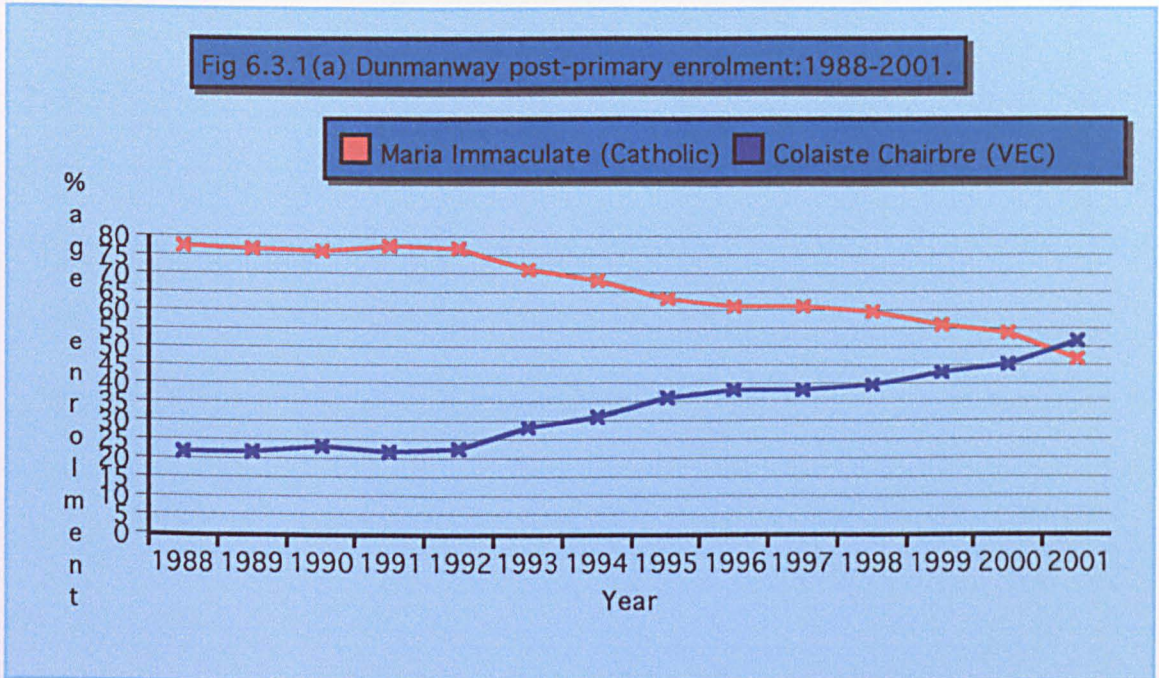
6.3.1 *Dunmanway post-primary enrolment, 1988-2001.*

Table 6.3.1 *Dunmanway post-primary enrolment, 1988-2001.*

School Year	Maria Immaculata. (Catholic secondary)		Colaiste Chairbre. (VEC)		TOTALS
1988-1989	512	78.2%	143	21.8%	655
1989-1990	489	77.5%	142	22.5%	631
1990-1991	462	76.5%	142	23.5%	604
1991-1992	468	78%	132	22%	600
1992-1993	505	77.2%	149	22.8%	654
1993-1994	472	71.5%	188	28.5%	660
1994-1995	459	68.8%	208	31.2%	667
1995-1996	437	63.5%	251	36.5%	688
1996-1997	420	61.7%	261	38.3%	681
1997-1998	420	61.2%	266	38.8%	686
1998-1999	400	60%	266	40%	666
1999-2000	373	56.1%	292	43.9%	665
2000-2001	350	54.3%	294	45.7%	644
2001-2002	309	47.5%	341	52.5%	650
TOTALS	6076	66.4%	3075	33.6%	9151

There are two factors in the above table which must have been central to the decision to amalgamate: the sharp decline in enrolment in Maria Immaculata secondary school (a decline of 30.7% of the school enrolment available) and the fact that the total number of students available to both schools remained in the six hundreds. In that case, even if both schools secure an enrolment of 50% of the students available, issues of viability would still arise. The above figures are insufficient to sustain two schools, an issue already dealt with in the section on school viability and by the Commission on School Accommodation.

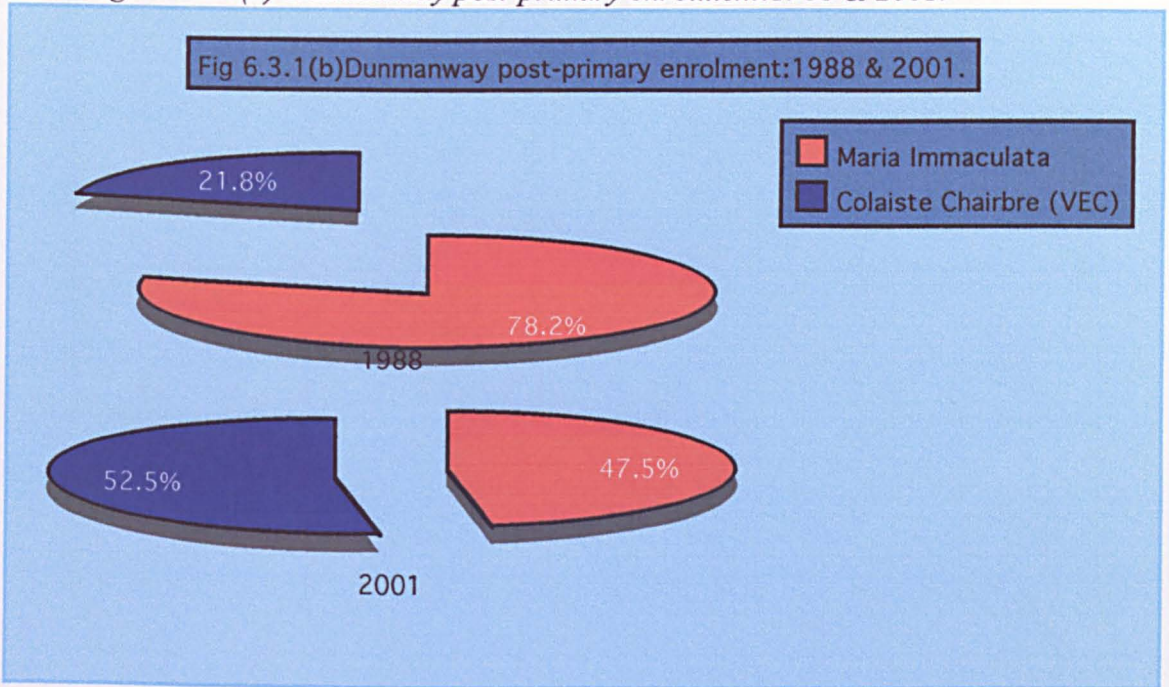
Figure 6.3.1(a) Dunmanway post-primary enrolment: 1988-2001.



The above figure illustrated why amalgamation took place. Since 1993, there has been a constant trend away from the secondary school. While current enrolment is almost equal between the two schools, questions have been raised on future viability, especially as departing senior classes in the secondary school are being replaced by smaller first year classes.³⁶⁴

³⁶⁴ See table 6.3.2(a) below.

Figure 6.3.1(b) Dunmanway post-primary enrolment: 1988 & 2001.



A comparison between the first and last years of the enrolment survey reveals a decline of 30.7% in the percentage enrolment in Maria Immaculata secondary school. Interestingly, this mirrors the 22.4% decline in secondary school enrolment in Bantry.

6.3.2 Sources of enrolment for Dunmanway post-primary schools and an analysis of transfer trends.

Table 6.3.2(a) Maria Immaculata first year enrolment, 1999- 2001: An analysis of feeder schools and transfers.

Feeder school	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	Combined three year totals
01687U Dromleigh NS	Available 5 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 9 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 11 Enrolled 1 9.1%	Available 25 Enrolled 1 4%
05636A Dunmanway Model	Available 9 Enrolled 1 11.1%	Available 13 Enrolled 2 15.4%	Available 3 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 25 Enrolled 3 12%
10739O Ballinacarriga NS	Available 9 Enrolled 5 55.6%	Available 8 Enrolled 4 50%	Available 10 Enrolled 8 80%	Available 27 Enrolled 17 63%
13193L Kilhanna NS	Available 3 Enrolled 1 33.3%	Available 3 Enrolled 1 33.3%	Available 6 Enrolled 4 66.7%	Available 12 Enrolled 6 50%
13543M Derrinacahera NS	Available 7 Enrolled 1 14.3%	Available 7 Enrolled 2 28.6%	Available 2 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 16 Enrolled 3 18.8%
13661S Dunmanway Convent	Available 25 Enrolled 10 40%	Available 13 Enrolled 8 61.5%	Available 19* (18) Enrolled 9 47.4%	Available 57 Enrolled 27 47.4%
14059M Behagh NS	Available 5 Enrolled 3 60%	Available 9* (3) Enrolled 0 0%	Available 7 Enrolled 4 57.1%	Available 21 Enrolled 7 33.3%
14784Q Dunmanway BNS	Available 19* (16) Enrolled 10 52.6%	Available 12* (10) Enrolled 0 0%	Available 35 Enrolled 6 17.1%	Available 66 Enrolled 16 24.2%
16254U SN Cill na dTor	Available 4* (1) Enrolled 1 25%	Available 5 Enrolled 4 80%	Available 2 Enrolled 1 50%	Available 11 Enrolled 6 54.5%
16876I SN Caipin	Available 7* (6) Enrolled 2 28.6%	Available 5 Enrolled 1 20%	Available 8 Enrolled 2 25%	Available 20 Enrolled 5 25%
17281F Toher NS	Available 5 Enrolled 2 40%	Available 8 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 13 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 26 Enrolled 2 7.7%
18246I SN Baile Muine	Available 2* (0) Enrolled 2 100%	Available 10 (2) Enrolled 8 80%	Available 3 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 15 Enrolled 10 66.7%
18296A Dromdhallagh NS	Available 20* (15) Enrolled 3 15%	Available 15 Enrolled 1 6.7%	Available 17 Enrolled 1 5.9%	Available 52 Enrolled 5 9.6%
18468D Scoil Mhuire	Available 7 Enrolled 2 28.6%	Available 5 Enrolled 1 20%	Available 7 Enrolled 1 14.3%	Available 19 Enrolled 4 21%
19224D SN Cillmin	Available 7 Enrolled 1 14.3%	Available 9* (5) Enrolled 0 0%	Available 8 Enrolled 1 12.5%	Available 24 Enrolled 2 8.3%
19595P St. Mary's Central	Available 22 Enrolled 1 4.5%	Available 22 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 32 Enrolled 4 12.5%	Available 76 Enrolled 5 6.6%
19918N Drinagh NS	Available 8* (4) Enrolled 3 37.5%	Available 3 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 9 Enrolled 7 77.8%	Available 20 Enrolled 10 50%
Feeder school total	48 94.1% of total	32 97% of total	49 98% of total	129 96.3% of total
Others	3 5.9% of total	1 3% of total	1 2% of total	5 3.7% of total
Totals	Available 164 Enrolled 51 31.1%	Available 156 Enrolled 33 21.2%	Available 192 Enrolled 50 26%	Available 512 Enrolled 134 26.2%

Table 6.3.2(b) Colaiste Chairbre first year enrolment, 1999-2001: An analysis of feeder schools and transfers.

Feeder school	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	Combined 3yr totals
01687U Dromleigh NS	Available 5 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 9 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 11 Enrolled 4 36.4%	Available 25 Enrolled 4 16%
05636A Dunmanway Model	Available 9 Enrolled 4 44.4%	Available 13 Enrolled 4 30.8%	Available 3 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 25 Enrolled 8 32%
10739O Ballinacarriga NS	Available 9 Enrolled 4 44.4%	Available 8 Enrolled 4 50%	Available 10 Enrolled 2 20%	Available 27 Enrolled 10 37%
13191L Kilhanna NS	Available 3 Enrolled 2 66.7%	Available 3 Enrolled 2 66.7%	Available 6 Enrolled 2 33.3%	Available 12 Enrolled 6 50%
13543M Derrinacahera NS	Available 7 Enrolled 6 85.7%	Available 7 Enrolled 5 71.4%	Available 2 Enrolled 2 100%	Available 16 Enrolled 13 81.3%
13661S Dunmanway Convent	Available 25 Enrolled 14 56%	Available 13 Enrolled 4 30.8%	Available 19* (18) Enrolled 10 52.6%	Available 57 Enrolled 28 49.1%
14059M Behagh NS	Available 5 Enrolled 2 40%	Available 9* (3) Enrolled 2 22.2%	Available 7 Enrolled 3 42.9%	Available 21 Enrolled 7 33.3%
14784Q Dunmanway BNS	Available 19* (16) Enrolled 6 31.6%	Available 12* (10) Enrolled 10 83.3%	Available 35 Enrolled 29 82.9%	Available 66 Enrolled 45 68.2%
16254U SN Cill na dTor	Available 4* (1) Enrolled 3 75%	Available 5 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 2 Enrolled 1 50%	Available 11 Enrolled 4 36.4%
16876I SN Caipin	Available 7* (6) Enrolled 3 42.9%	Available 5 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 8 Enrolled 2 25%	Available 20 Enrolled 5 25%
17281F Togher NS	Available 5 Enrolled 1 20%	Available 8 Enrolled 8 100%	Available 13 Enrolled 12 92.3%	Available 26 Enrolled 21 80.8%
18296A Dromdhallagh NS	Available 20* (15) Enrolled 4 20%	Available 15 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 17 Enrolled 2 11.8%	Available 52 Enrolled 6 11.5%
18468D Scoil Mhuire	Available 7 Enrolled 3 42.9%	Available 5 Enrolled 2 40%	Available 7 Enrolled 1 14.3%	Available 19 Enrolled 6 31.6%
19224D SN Cillmin	Available 7 Enrolled 4 57.1%	Available 9* (5) Enrolled 6 66.7%	Available 8 Enrolled 4 50%	Available 24 Enrolled 14 58.3%
19595P St. Mary's Central	Available 22 Enrolled 6 27.3%	Available 22 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 32 Enrolled 8 25%	Available 76 Enrolled 14 18.4%
19918N Drinagh NS	Available 8* (4) Enrolled 1 12.5%	Available 3 Enrolled 1 33.3%	Available 9 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 20 Enrolled 2 10%
Feeder school total	63 98.4% of total	48 96% of total	82 98.8% of total	193 98% of total
Others	1 1.6% of total	2 4% of total	1 1.2% of total	4 2% of total
Totals	Available 162 Enrolled 64 39.5%	Available 146 Enrolled 50 34.2%	Available 189 Enrolled 83 43.92%	Available 497 Enrolled 197 39.6%

One of the predominant features of the post-primary enrolment tables for Dunmanway is the large number of altered entries (*), though some of these alterations are small, such as Caipin and Dunmanway Convent. Indeed, many

schools in the Dunmanway area cater for students that come from a transient, new-age type population that inhabit parts of the catchment area. There is also a significant overlap between schools within the Clonakilty, Skibbereen and Dunmanway catchment areas. This explains the relatively low combined transfer percentages from primary schools to both post-primary schools in the town.

As in the case of Bantry, the convent girls' school is a marginally better source of enrolment for Colaiste Chairbre than it is for the convent secondary school, 49.1% and 47.4% respectively. Again, as in Bantry, the Boys National School is a much greater source of pupils for the vocational school than the secondary school, 68.2% as opposed to 24.2% respectively.

Dunmanway Model School, though situated within the town, has a relatively low combined transfer percentage to both schools in the town, 44%. However, since this school is a Church of Ireland school³⁶⁵ most of the students transfer to Bandon Grammar School, a Church of Ireland post-primary school. Baile Muine is also a Church of Ireland school though 66.7% of its students over the three year period transferred to the Catholic Maria Immaculata post-primary school operated by the Daughters of Charity Congregation. Baile Muine is situated outside Dunmanway and is nearer to Bandon than Dunmanway Model school which is situated in the town of Dunmanway. In that scenario, one would expect a greater number of students from Baile Muine to transfer to the Church of Ireland Bandon Grammar School.

There is no clear distinction between the transfer patterns of urban and rural schools. While allowing for the fact that many of the rural primary schools send pupils to post-primary schools in different towns, each of the post-primary

³⁶⁵ Wilfred Baker, Church of Ireland Education Office, Cork, Cloyne and Ross, communicated to the writer on June 17th, 2002 a list of all the Church of Ireland primary schools in the Diocese of Cork, Cloyne and Ross.

schools achieve their highest percentage enrolment transfer from rural schools. Colaiste Chairbre obtains 81.3% of the students available from Derrinacahera NS. The Catholic secondary school obtains its highest enrolment transfer percentage (66.7%) from Baile Muine NS, a Church of Ireland school as previously mentioned. This finding raises questions as to the perceived 'Catholicity' of the Catholic secondary school. The question of the future identity of the Catholic school is addressed in chapter 7.

An examination of the schools that transfer more than 70% to the post-primary schools in Dunmanway indicates that Derrinacahera, Dunmanway BNS and Togher NS transfer in favour of Colaiste Chairbre with a combined enrolment in the three schools over the three years of 108. Ballinacarriga and Cill na dTor transfer predominantly in favour of Maria Immaculata with a combined available enrolment in both schools of 38. There lies the reason for the increase in enrolment in Colaiste Chairbre. The other schools with a transfer rate in excess of 70%, Kilhanna NS and Dunmanway Convent transfer almost evenly.

6.3.3 Projected available enrolment for Dunmanway, 2002-2007.

Table 6.3.3(a) Maria Immaculata, Dunmanway: A prediction of enrolment, 2002-2007, based on feeder school enrolment.

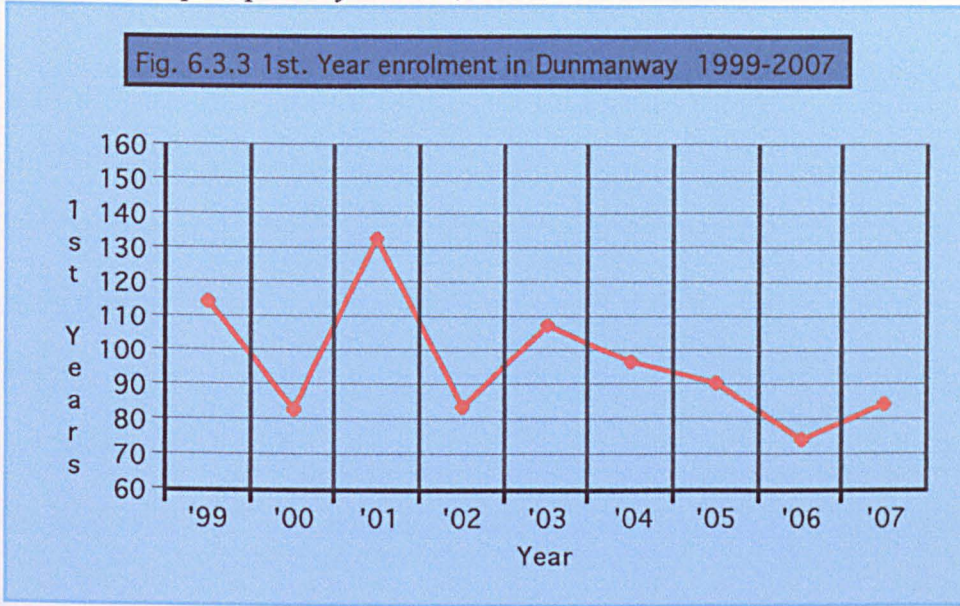
Feeder School	%	September 2002	September 2003	September 2004	September 2005	September 2006	September 2007
Dromleigh NS	4	<i>In class 5</i> Est. 0.2	<i>In class 3</i> Est. 0.1	<i>In class 8</i> Est. 0.3	<i>In class 8</i> Est. 0.3	<i>In class 4</i> Est. 0.2	<i>In class 4</i> Est. 0.2
Dunmanway Model	12	<i>In class 9</i> Est. 1.1	<i>In class 10</i> Est. 1.2	<i>In class 4</i> Est. 0.5	<i>In class 16</i> Est. 1.9	<i>In class 12</i> Est. 1.4	<i>In class 5</i> Est. 0.6
Ballinacarriga NS	63	<i>In class 3</i> Est. 1.9	<i>In class 4</i> Est. 2.5	<i>In class 5</i> Est. 3.2	<i>In class 3</i> Est. 1.9	<i>In class 2</i> Est. 1.3	<i>In class 2</i> Est. 1.3
Kilhanna NS	50	<i>In class 3</i> Est. 1.5	<i>In class 3</i> Est. 1.5	<i>In class 2</i> Est. 1	<i>In class 2</i> Est. 1	<i>In class 1</i> Est. 0.5	<i>In class 1</i> Est. 0.5
Derrinacahera NS	18.8	<i>In class 4</i> Est. 0.8	<i>In class 5</i> Est. 0.9	<i>In class 6</i> Est. 1.1	<i>In class 4</i> Est. 0.8	<i>In class 10</i> Est. 1.9	<i>In class 4</i> Est. 0.8
Dunmanway Convent	47.4	<i>In class 20</i> Est. 9.5	<i>In class 32</i> Est. 15.2	<i>In class 18</i> Est. 8.5	<i>In class 18</i> Est. 8.5	<i>In class 17</i> Est. 8.1	<i>In class*13</i> Est. 6.2
Behagh NS	33.3	<i>In class 4</i> Est. 1.3	<i>In class 4</i> Est. 1.3	<i>In class 1</i> Est. 0.3	<i>In class 2</i> Est. 0.7	<i>In class 0</i> Est. 0	<i>In class 4</i> Est. 1.3
Dunmanway BNS	24.2	<i>In class 13</i> Est. 3.1	<i>In class 24</i> Est. 5.8	<i>In class 19</i> Est. 4.6	<i>In class 14</i> Est. 3.4	<i>In class 12</i> Est. 2.9	<i>In class 19</i> Est. 4.6
SN Cill na dTor	54.5	<i>In class 7</i> Est. 3.8	<i>In class 2</i> Est. 1.1	<i>In class 4</i> Est. 2.2	<i>In class 9</i> Est. 4.9	<i>In class 3</i> Est. 1.6	<i>In class 4</i> Est. 2.2
SN Caipin	25	<i>In class 4</i> Est. 1	<i>In class 5</i> Est. 1.3	<i>In class 6</i> Est. 1.5	<i>In class 4</i> Est. 1	<i>In class 1</i> Est. 0.3	<i>In class 10</i> Est. 2.5
Togher NS	7.7	<i>In class 7</i> Est. 0.5	<i>In class 3</i> Est. 0.2	<i>In class 3</i> Est. 0.2	<i>In class 6</i> Est. 0.5	<i>In class 3</i> Est. 0.2	<i>In class 6</i> Est. 0.5
SN Baile Muine	66.7	<i>In class 3</i> Est. 2	<i>In class 2</i> Est. 1.3	<i>In class 2</i> Est. 1.3	<i>In class 3</i> Est. 2	<i>In class 1</i> Est. 0.7	<i>In class 4</i> Est. 2.7
Dromdhallaigh NS	9.6	<i>In class 11</i> Est. 1.1	<i>In class 19</i> Est. 1.8	<i>In class 8</i> Est. 0.8	<i>In class 12</i> Est. 1.2	<i>In class 13</i> Est. 1.2	<i>In class 18</i> Est. 1.7
Scoil Mhuire	21	<i>In class 3</i> Est. 0.6	<i>In class 4</i> Est. 0.8	<i>In class 5</i> Est. 1.1	<i>In class 5</i> Est. 1.1	<i>In class 2</i> Est. 0.4	<i>In class 5</i> Est. 1.1
SN Cillmin	8.3	<i>In class 5</i> Est. 0.4	<i>In class 11</i> Est. 0.9	<i>In class 19</i> Est. 1.6	<i>In class 13</i> Est. 1.1	<i>In class 13</i> Est. 1.1	<i>In class 9</i> Est. 0.7
St. Mary's Central	6.6	<i>In class 24</i> Est. 1.6	<i>In class 25</i> Est. 1.7	<i>In class 26</i> Est. 1.7	<i>In class 20</i> Est. 1.3	<i>In class 15</i> Est. 1	<i>In class 30</i> Est. 2
Drinagh NS	50	<i>In class 24</i> Est. 1.6	<i>In class 25</i> Est. 1.7	<i>In class 26</i> Est. 1.7	<i>In class 20</i> Est. 1.3	<i>In class 15</i> Est. 1	<i>In class 30</i> Est. 2
% from feeder school	96.3	32.4	41.1	36.9	33.6	26.3	31.9
% from others	3.7	1.3	1.6	1.4	1.3	1	1.2
Totals	100	34	43	38	35	27	33

Table 6.3.3(b) Colaiste Chairbre, Dunmanway: A prediction of enrolment, 2002-2007, based on feeder school enrolment.³⁶⁶

Feeder school	%	September 2002	September 2003	September 2004	September 2005	September 2006	September 2007
Dromleigh NS	<u>16</u>	In Class 5 Est. 0.8	In Class 3 Est. 0.5	In Class 8 Est. 1.3	In Class 8 Est. 1.3	In Class 4 Est. 0.6	In Class 4 Est. 0.6
Dunmanway Model	<u>32</u>	In Class 9 Est. 2.9	In Class 10 Est. 3.2	In Class 4 Est. 1.3	In Class 16 Est. 5.1	In Class 12 Est. 3.8	In Class 5 Est. 1.6
Ballinacarriga NS	<u>37</u>	In Class 3 Est. 1.1	In Class 4 Est. 1.5	In Class 5 Est. 1.9	In Class 3 Est. 1.1	In Class 2 Est. 0.7	In Class 2 Est. 0.7
Kilhanna NS	<u>50</u>	In Class 3 Est. 1.5	In Class 3 Est. 1.5	In Class 2 Est. 1	In Class 2 Est. 1	In Class 1 Est. 0.5	In Class 1 Est. 0.5
Derrinacahera NS	<u>81.3</u>	In Class 4 Est. 3.3	In Class 5 Est. 4.1	In Class 6 Est. 4.9	In Class 4 Est. 3.3	In Class 10 Est. 8.1	In Class 4 Est. 3.3
Dunmanway Convent	<u>49.1</u>	In Class 20 Est. 9.8	In Class 32 Est. 15.7	In Class 18 Est. 8.8	In Class 18 Est. 8.8	In Class 17 Est. 8.3	In Class 13 Est. 6.4
Behagh NS	<u>33.3</u>	In Class 4 Est. 1.3	In Class 4 Est. 1.3	In Class 1 Est. 0.3	In Class 2 Est. 0.7	In Class 0 Est. 0	In Class 4 Est. 1.3
Dunmanway BNS	<u>68.2</u>	In Class 13 Est. 8.9	In Class 24 Est. 16.4	In Class 19 Est. 13	In Class 14 Est. 9.5	In Class 12 Est. 8.2	In Class 19 Est. 13
SN Cill na dTor	<u>36.4</u>	In Class 7 Est. 2.5	In Class 2 Est. 0.7	In Class 4 Est. 1.5	In Class 9 Est. 3.3	In Class 3 Est. 1.1	In Class 4 Est. 1.5
SN Caipin	<u>25</u>	In Class 4 Est. 1	In Class 5 Est. 1.3	In Class 6 Est. 1.5	In Class 4 Est. 1	In Class 1 Est. 0.3	In Class 10 Est. 2.5
Togher NS	<u>80.8</u>	In Class 7 Est. 5.7	In Class 3 Est. 2.4	In Class 3 Est. 2.4	In Class 6 Est. 4.8	In Class 3 Est. 2.4	In Class 6 Est. 4.8
Dromdhallagh NS	<u>11.5</u>	In Class 11 Est. 1.3	In Class 19 Est. 2.2	In Class 8 Est. 0.9	In Class 12 Est. 1.4	In Class 13 Est. 1.5	In Class 18 Est. 2.1
Scoil Mhuire NS	<u>31.6</u>	In Class 3 Est. 0.9	In Class 4 Est. 1.3	In Class 5 Est. 1.6	In Class 5 Est. 1.6	In Class 2 Est. 0.6	In Class 5 Est. 1.6
SN Cillmin	<u>58.3</u>	In Class 5 Est. 2.9	In Class 11 Est. 6.4	In Class 19 Est. 11.1	In Class 13 Est. 7.6	In Class 13 Est. 7.6	In Class 9 Est. 5.2
St. Mary's central	<u>18.4</u>	In Class 24 Est. 4.4	In Class 25 Est. 4.6	In Class 26 Est. 4.8	In Class 20 Est. 3.7	In Class 15 Est. 2.8	In Class 30 Est. 5.5
Drinagh NS	<u>10</u>	In Class 4 Est. 0.4	In Class 7 Est. 0.7	In Class 14 Est. 1.4	In Class 4 Est. 0.4	In Class 7 Est. 0.7	In Class 6 Est. 0.6
% from feeder schools	<u>98</u>	48.7	63.8	57.7	54.6	47.2	51.2
% from others	<u>2</u>	1	1.3	1.2	1.1	1	1
Total	<u>100</u>	50	65	59	56	48	52

³⁶⁶ Two primary schools within the above table are 'senior schools'. Dunmanway Convent also has an infant school from which pupils transfer at second class stage. Accordingly, the 2007 available figures for Dunmanway Convent NS are the students in first class in Dunmanway Convent Infants school. Similarly, the figures for 2006 and 2007 in Dromdhallagh NS are the figures for the first and second classes in Drimoleague National school, the pupils of which transfer to Dromdhallagh after second class. A 'senior' primary school is a primary school that does not have infant classes.

Figure 6.3.3 Actual and projected 1st. year enrolment for Dunmanway post-primary schools, 1999-2007.



Of the post-primary enrolment in the five towns analysed in this thesis, Dunmanway is the only one in which amalgamation has been completed. The above figure illustrates the pending decline in first year enrolment and the need for rationalisation. While there is a general decrease, tables 6.3.3(a) and (b) predict that this would affect Maria Immaculata Secondary school more.

However, since amalgamation has taken place, the above tables are somewhat less relevant, though they do illustrate the decline in student availability.

6.4 An analysis of post-primary enrolment in Clonakilty.

Again, as in the previous two towns, Clonakilty is served by two post-primary schools. Clonakilty Community College, a co-educational school, operated by a Board of Management under County Cork VEC, and the Sacred Heart Secondary School, operated by the Sisters of Mercy. Traditionally, the secondary school was an all girls school. This situation has remained though there are some boys in the repeat Leaving Certificate class. In September 2000, out of a total enrolment of 539, 9 were boys and 530 were girls.³⁶⁷ The situation in the community college is different. Historically, the community college is an amalgamation of the local vocational school and a local, privately owned boys' secondary school. However, the school has managed to extend its appeal beyond a male enrolment and, in September 2000, of its 544 students, 85 were girls and 459 were boys.³⁶⁸

Traditionally, the Sacred Heart secondary school boosted its enrolment by accommodating a number of boarders. This number is declining which contributes to the decline in the school's overall enrolment. It is of note that in communication to all Mercy Convents in the Southern Province in July 2002, the Central Leadership Team indicated that boarding in the Sacred Heart Secondary School, a school under the trusteeship of the Sisters of Mercy, was to be phased out - a trend that is becoming common in secondary schools with a boarding option. This development is understandable given the decline in the numbers of religious available to operate such schools, a decline in demand for boarding and an increase in operating costs, in many cases due to modernisation and health and safety legislation.

The elimination of boarding may well impinge negatively on future enrolment in

³⁶⁷ This information was included in documentation sent to the writer by Declan Ryan, Statistics Section, Department of Education and Science, in relation to enrolment according to class in each post-primary school in Clonakilty for the school year 2000-2001.

³⁶⁸ Ibid.

the school and may lead to a further increase in the difference in enrolment between the community college and the secondary school. Table 6.4.1, below, illustrates that enrolment in the community college exceeded that in the Secondary school for the first time in 2000.

6.4.1 Clonakilty post-primary enrolment, 1988-2001.

Table 6.4.1 Clonakilty post-primary enrolment, 1988-2001.

School Year	Sacred Heart. (Catholic Secondary) All girls except a small no. of boys in repeat Leaving Certificate Class since 1996. School also has a small no. of boarders.		Clonakilty Community College. (VEC)		TOTALS
1988-1989	515	53.7%	444	46.3%	959
1989-1990	528	55.3%	427	44.7%	955
1990-1991	525	54.4%	440	45.6%	965
1991-1992	544	57.4%	403	42.6%	947
1992-1993	577	59.2%	397	40.8%	974
1993-1994	609	54.9%	501	45.1%	1110
1994-1995	620	57.2%	463	42.8%	1083
1995-1996	601	55.6%	480	44.4%	1081
1996-1997	597	53.4%	521	46.6%	1118
1997-1998	587	51.4%	554	48.6%	1141
1998-1999	569	50.8%	552	49.2%	1121
1999-2000	565	50.4%	556	49.6%	1121
2000-2001	539	49.8%	544	50.2%	1083
2001-2002	501	46.4%	579	53.6%	1080
TOTALS	7877	53.4%	6861	46.6%	14738

Whereas the enrolment in the community college has risen from 46.3% of post-primary enrolment in the town in 1988 to 53.6% in 2001, it is of greater significance that the growth has been from 40.8% in 1992, the community college's lowest percentage enrolment. In that regard, the increase in enrolment in the community college has been greatest in the recent past. Should this trend continue, the implications will be grave for the secondary school. However, the difference between Clonakilty and either Dunmanway or Bantry, is the number of students available for enrolment: 1080 in 2001. That figure is almost 400 greater than the previous two towns and is the safety net for the continued survival of both schools. This issue will be examined later in this chapter in relation to the number of students available for future enrolment.

Figure 6.4.1(a) Clonakilty post-primary enrolment: 1988-2001.

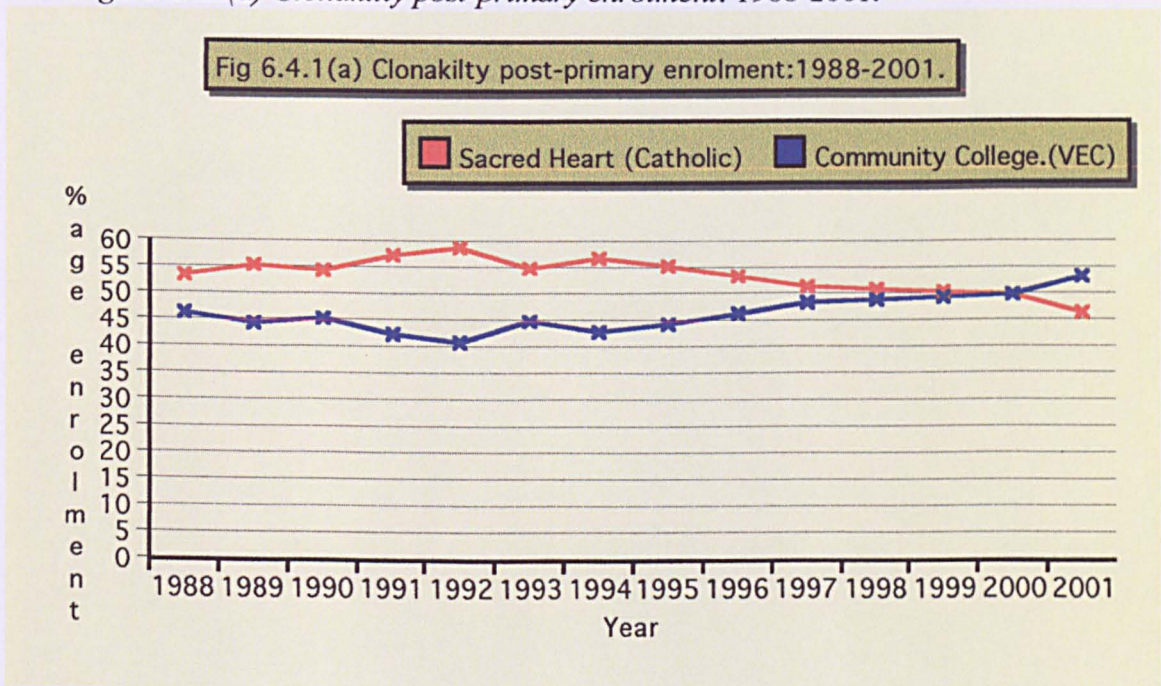
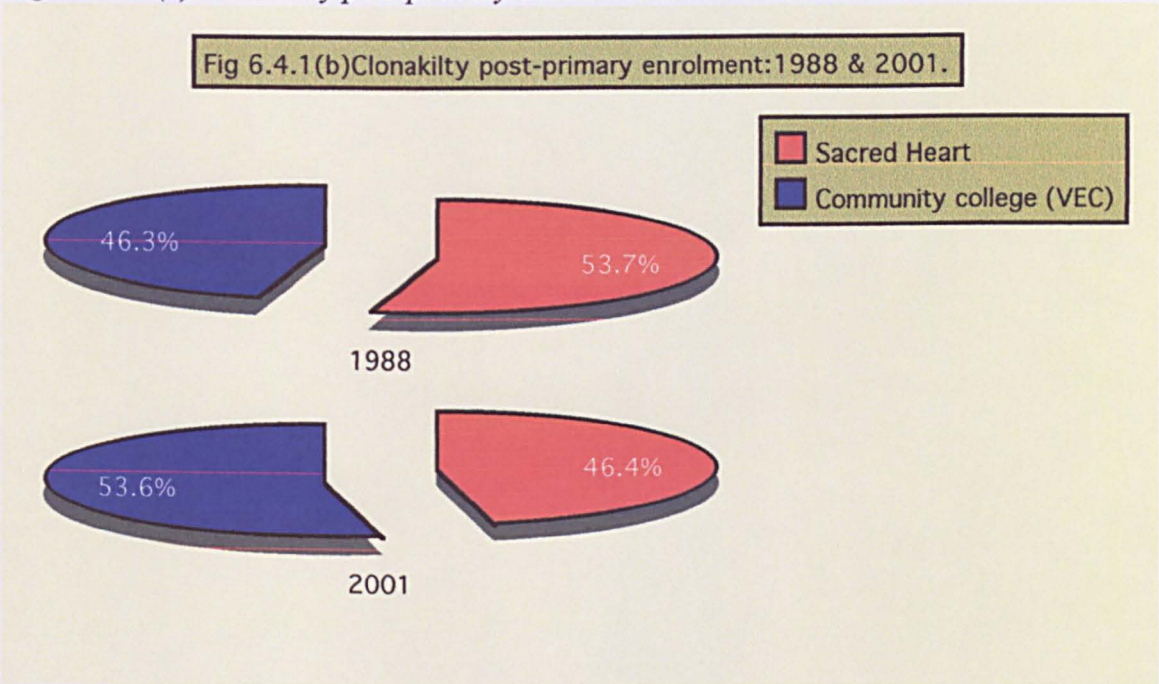


Figure 6.4.1(a) illustrates clearly the findings of the above table. What is most obvious is that within the past two years, enrolment in the community college has exceeded that in the Sacred Heart Secondary School, a situation that mirrors

developments in both Bantry and Dunmanway. This is of importance as it indicates that within the recent past, in these three towns, enrolment in Catholic secondary schools is not only in decline, but is now less than that of the Vocational Education Committee school in the same town. Should this be part of a greater trend, questions will be asked as to the future of the Catholic secondary school.

Figure 6.4.1(b) Clonakilty post-primary enrolment:1988 & 2001.



A cursory glance at the above figure illustrates a reversal of percentages. However, as already mentioned, if the comparison was between 1992 and 2001, the percentage difference would be more pronounced.

6.4.2 Sources of enrolment for Clonakilty post-primary schools and an analysis of transfer trends.

Table 6.4.2(a) Clonakilty Community College first year enrolment, 1999-2001: An analysis of feeder schools and transfers.

Feeder school	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	Combined 3yr total
07651G Convent of Mercy	Available 41* (36) enrolled 3 7.3%	Available 35* (32) enrolled 1 2.9%	Available 26 enrolled 6 23.1%	Available 102 enrolled 10 9.8%
10243I SN AchadhEochaille	Available 12 enrolled 3 25%	Available 6 enrolled 4 66.7%	Available 6 enrolled 0 0%	Available 24 enrolled 7 29.2%
10499U Kilgarriffe NS	Available 4 enrolled 1 25%	Available 3 enrolled 0 0%	Available 6 enrolled 2 33.3%	Available 13 enrolled 3 23.1%
12147W SN An Aird	Available 9 enrolled 2 22.2%	Available 10 enrolled 2 20%	Available 17 enrolled 9 52.9%	Available 36 enrolled 13 36.1%
12456M Timoleague NS	Available 10 enrolled 0 0%	Available 12 enrolled 0 0%	Available 12 enrolled 8 66.7%	Available 34 enrolled 8 23.5%
13125R Darrara NS	Available 8 enrolled 7 87.5%	Available 9 enrolled 7 77.8%	Available 8 enrolled 3 37.5%	Available 25 enrolled 17 68%
14059M Behagh NS	Available 5 enrolled 0 0%	Available 9* (3) enrolled 7 77.8%	Available 7 enrolled 0 0%	Available 21 enrolled 7 33.3%
16259H Kilcolman NS	Available 3 enrolled 2 66.7%	Available 1 enrolled 0 0%	Available 2 enrolled 0 0%	Available 6 enrolled 2 33.3%
17152R SN Cnoc na Sceagh	Available 14 enrolled 6 42.9%	Available 13 enrolled 7 53.8%	Available 9 enrolled 4 44.4%	Available 36 enrolled 17 47.2%
17715M SN Rath a Bharraigh	Available 2 enrolled 0 0%	Available 5 enrolled 1 20%	Available 2 enrolled 0 0%	Available 9 enrolled 1 11.1%
18246I SN Baile Muine	Available 2* (0) enrolled 0 0%	Available 10* (2) enrolled 1 10%	Available 3 enrolled 0 0%	Available 15 enrolled 1 6.7%
17888U SN Na Trionoide	Available 5 enrolled 2 40%	Available 4 enrolled 0 0%	Available 2 enrolled 2 100%	Available 11 enrolled 4 36.4%
18444M SN Clogagh	Available 15 enrolled 9 60%	Available 9 enrolled 2 22.2%	Available 10 enrolled 3 30%	Available 34 enrolled 14 41.2%
18659K Lisavaird NS	Available 10 enrolled 4 40%	Available 9 enrolled 2 22.2%	Available 7 enrolled 5 71.4%	Available 26 enrolled 11 42.3%
19224D SN Cillmin	Available 7 enrolled 2 28.6%	Available 9* (5) enrolled 1 11.1%	Available 8 enrolled 2 25%	Available 24 enrolled 5 20.8%
19249T Barryroe NS	Available 12 enrolled 6 50%	Available 16 enrolled 9 56.3%	Available 18 enrolled 13 72.2%	Available 46 enrolled 28 60.9%
20006A Gaelscoil Cloich na Coillte	Available 3 enrolled 1 33.3%	Available 7 enrolled 3 42.9%	Available 13 enrolled 11 84.6%	Available 23 enrolled 15 65.2%
20022V Scoil na mBuachailli	Available 28 enrolled 28 100%	Available 41* (37) enrolled 41 100%	Available 32 enrolled 29 90.6%	Available 101 enrolled 98 97%
Feeder school total	76 100% of total	88 98.9% of total	97 99% of total	261 99.2% of total
Others	0	1 1.1% of total	1 1% of total	2 0.8% of total
Totals	Available 190 enrolled 76 40%	Available 208 enrolled 89 42.8%	Available 188 enrolled 98 52.1%	Available 586 enrolled 263 44.9%

Table 6.4.2(b) Sacred Heart, Clonakilty first year enrolment, 1999-2001: An analysis of feeder schools and transfers.

Feeder school	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	Combined 3yr total
07651G Convent of Mercy	Available 41* (36) Enrolled 38 92.7%	Available 35* (32) Enrolled 34 97.1%	Available 26 Enrolled 20 76.9%	Available 102 Enrolled 92 90.2%
10243I SNAchadh Eochaille	Available 12 Enrolled 4 33.3%	Available 6 Enrolled 2 33.3%	Available 6 Enrolled 4 66.7%	Available 24 Enrolled 10 41.7%
10499U Kilgarriffe NS	Available 4 Enrolled 1 25%	Available 3 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 6 Enrolled 1 16.7%	Available 13 Enrolled 2 15.4%
12456N Timoleague NS	Available 10 Enrolled 6 60%	Available 12 Enrolled 5 41.7%	Available 12 Enrolled 3 25%	Available 34 Enrolled 14 41.2%
13125R Darrara NS	Available 8 Enrolled 1 12.5%	Available 9 Enrolled 2 22.2%	Available 8 Enrolled 4 50%	Available 25 Enrolled 7 28%
13483U SN Ath na Lionta	Available 2 Enrolled 2 100%	Available 7 Enrolled 7 100%	Available 7 Enrolled 5 71.4%	Available 16 Enrolled 14 87.5%
16259H Kilcolman NS	Available 3 Enrolled 1 33.3%	Available 1 Enrolled 1 100%	Available 2 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 6 Enrolled 2 33.3%
17152R SN Cnoc na Sceagh	Available 14 Enrolled 5 35.7%	Available 13 Enrolled 3 23.1%	Available 9 Enrolled 5 55.6%	Available 36 Enrolled 13 36.1%
17888U SN na Trionoide	Available 5 Enrolled 2 40%	Available 4 Enrolled 3 75%	Available 2 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 11 Enrolled 5 45.5%
18246I SN Baile Muine	Available 2* (0) Enrolled 0 0%	Available 10* (2) Enrolled 1 10%	Available 3 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 15 Enrolled 1 6.7%
18444M SN Clogagh	Available 15 Enrolled 2 13.3%	Available 9 Enrolled 6 66.7%	Available 10 Enrolled 5 50%	Available 34 Enrolled 13 38.2%
18659K Lisavaird NS	Available 10 Enrolled 2 20%	Available 9 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 7 Enrolled 1 14.3%	Available 26 Enrolled 3 11.5%
19224D SN Cillmin	Available 7 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 9* (5) Enrolled 2 22.2%	Available 8 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 24 Enrolled 2 8.3%
19249T Barryroe NS	Available 12 Enrolled 4 33.3%	Available 16 Enrolled 7 43.8%	Available 18 Enrolled 5 27.8%	Available 46 Enrolled 16 34.8%
19595P St Mary's Central	Available 22 Enrolled 2 9.1%	Available 22 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 32 Enrolled 1 3.1%	Available 76 Enrolled 3 3.9%
20006A Gaelscoil Cloich na Coillte	Available 3 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 7 Enrolled 2 28.6%	Available 13 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 23 Enrolled 2 8.7%
Feeder school total	70 93.4% of total	75 100% of total	54 94.8% of total	199 95.2% of total
Others	6 6.6% of total	0	4 5.2% of total	10 4.8% of total
Totals	Available 170 Enrolled 76 44.7%	Available 172 Enrolled 75 43.6%	Available 169 Enrolled 58 34.3%	Available 511 Enrolled 209 40.9%

As in the case of Dunmanway, a comprehensive analysis of transfer percentages is difficult as many of the schools transfer to post-primary schools in different towns. In general terms, there are two large feeder schools, Clonakilty BNS (101

pupils) and the Convent primary school (102 pupils). An analysis of the transfer percentages of the five 'significant' schools, schools that have more than 30 students available for post-primary transfer in the three year period and transfer in excess of 70% of their pupils to the post-primary schools in Clonakilty, illustrates that the Sacred Heart enrolls a higher percentage from one, 92 students from an available 102 in the convent primary school. The Community College enrolls a majority in the remaining four, 98 students from a possible 101 in Scoil na mBuachailli, 28 from a possible 46 in Barryroe NS, 17 from 36 in Cnoc na Sceagh NS and 14 from 34 in Clogagh NS.

Combined, from these 'significant' feeder schools, Clonakilty Community College enrolled 167 pupils from a possible 319 or 52.4% while Sacred Heart Secondary school enrolled 134 or 42%.³⁶⁹ There is no significant difference in transfer percentages from schools in urban and rural areas to the two post-primary schools.

As Sacred Heart Secondary School is currently a day and boarding school, some of the students, as boarders, come to the school from outside the catchment area. This may account for the difference in intake from 'others' or schools outside the catchment area between the two schools, 2 in Clonakilty Community College or 0.8% and 10 students in the Sacred Heart or 4.8% of total enrolment over the three years. However, the 'others' figure for Sacred Heart does not include the 14 students from Ath na Lionta, a primary school which is in Mallow, Co. Cork, some 50 miles away. These students are obviously boarders in Sacred Heart. In real terms then, 24 students enrol in Sacred Heart from outside the catchment area or 11.5% of its total first year enrolment. When boarding finishes in the school,

³⁶⁹ The figure of 42% or 134 students from the 319 available from the 'significant' schools includes the enrolment of 101 pupils in the Boys NS which is not available to the Sacred Heart Secondary school since it is an all girls school. If the the Boys NS enrolment was removed, Sacred Heart would have enrolled 134 from a possible 218 or 61.5%. However, this is a technicality since the school actually enrolled 42% of the pupils from the 'significant' schools.

these students will, most likely, enroll in post-primary schools nearer to home or in schools that retain a boarding option. Either way, such students will be lost to Sacred Heart.

There are two Church of Ireland schools in the general catchment area, Baile Muine, which also transfers students to Dunmanway, and Kilgarriffe NS. Baile Muine sent one student to each post-primary school in Clonakilty while Kilgarriffe sent 2 students to the Sacred Heart Catholic school and 3 to the Community College, no significant difference.

6.4.3 Projected available enrolment for Clonakilty, 2002-2007.

Table 6.4.3(a) Clonakilty Community College: A Prediction of enrolment, 2002-2007, based on feeder school enrolment.

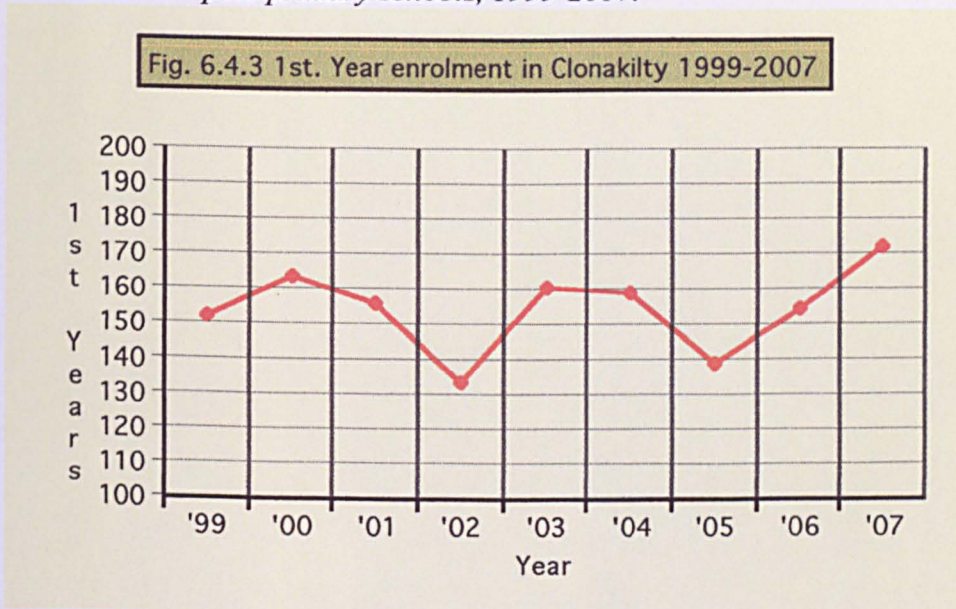
Feeder School	%	September 2002	September 2003	September 2004	September 2005	September 2006	September 2007
Convent of Mercy	<u>9.8</u>	<i>In Class 26</i> Est. 2.5	<i>In Class 32</i> Est. 3.1	<i>In Class 34</i> Est. 3.3	<i>In Class 24</i> Est. 2.4	<i>In Class 32</i> Est. 3.1	<i>In Class 27</i> Est. 2.6
SN Achadh Eochaille	<u>29.2</u>	<i>In Class 3</i> Est. 0.9	<i>In Class 6</i> Est. 1.8	<i>In Class 8</i> Est. 2.3	<i>In Class 7</i> Est. 2	<i>In Class 5</i> Est. 1.5	<i>In Class 5</i> Est. 1.5
Kilgarriffe NS	<u>23.1</u>	<i>In Class 4</i> Est. 0.9	<i>In Class 2</i> Est. 0.5	<i>In Class 6</i> Est. 1.4	<i>In Class 0</i> Est. 0	<i>In Class 4</i> Est. 0.9	<i>In Class 4</i> Est. 0.9
SN an Aird	<u>36.1</u>	<i>In Class 5</i> Est. 1.8	<i>In Class 14</i> Est. 5.1	<i>In Class 8</i> Est. 2.9	<i>In Class 5</i> Est. 1.8	<i>In Class 12</i> Est. 4.3	<i>In Class 7</i> Est. 2.5
Timo-league NS	<u>23.5</u>	<i>In Class 13</i> Est. 3.1	<i>In Class 11</i> Est. 2.6	<i>In Class 14</i> Est. 3.3	<i>In Class 13</i> Est. 3.1	<i>In Class 11</i> Est. 2.6	<i>In Class 12</i> Est. 2.8
Darrara NS	<u>73.9</u>	<i>In Class 10</i> Est. 7.4	<i>In Class 10</i> Est. 7.4	<i>In Class 7</i> Est. 5.2	<i>In Class 7</i> Est. 5.2	<i>In Class 0</i> Est. 0	<i>In Class 15</i> Est. 11.1
Behagh NS	<u>33.3</u>	<i>In Class 4</i> Est. 1.3	<i>In Class 4</i> Est. 1.3	<i>In Class 1</i> Est. 0.3	<i>In Class 2</i> Est. 0.7	<i>In Class 0</i> Est. 0	<i>In Class 4</i> Est. 1.3
Kilcolman NS	<u>33.3</u>	<i>In Class 2</i> Est. 0.7	<i>In Class 5</i> Est. 1.7	<i>In Class 4</i> Est. 1.3	<i>In Class 5</i> Est. 1.7	<i>In Class 5</i> Est. 1.7	<i>In Class 5</i> Est. 1.7
SN Cnoc na Sceagh	<u>47.2</u>	<i>In Class 8</i> Est. 3.8	<i>In Class 19</i> Est. 9	<i>In Class 17</i> Est. 8	<i>In Class 10</i> Est. 4.7	<i>In Class 11</i> Est. 5.2	<i>In Class 15</i> Est. 7.1
SN Rath a Bharraigh	<u>11.1</u>	<i>In Class 4</i> Est. 0.4	<i>In Class 0</i> Est. 0	<i>In Class 1</i> Est. 0.1	<i>In Class 9</i> Est. 1	<i>In Class 2</i> Est. 0.2	<i>In Class 2</i> Est. 0.2
SN Baile Mhuine	<u>6.7</u>	<i>In Class 3</i> Est. 0.2	<i>In Class 2</i> Est. 0.1	<i>In Class 2</i> Est. 0.1	<i>In Class 3</i> Est. 0.2	<i>In Class 1</i> Est. 0.1	<i>In Class 4</i> Est. 0.3
SN Na Trionoide	<u>36.4</u>	<i>In Class 5</i> Est. 1.8	<i>In Class 3</i> Est. 1.1	<i>In Class 3</i> Est. 1.1	<i>In Class 6</i> Est. 2.2	<i>In Class 5</i> Est. 1.8	<i>In Class 4</i> Est. 1.5
SN Clogagh	<u>41.2</u>	<i>In Class 9</i> Est. 3.7	<i>In Class 9</i> Est. 3.7	<i>In Class 8</i> Est. 3.3	<i>In Class 9</i> Est. 3.7	<i>In Class 11</i> Est. 4.5	<i>In Class 7</i> Est. 2.9
Lisavaird NS	<u>42.3</u>	<i>In Class 7</i> Est. 3	<i>In Class 8</i> Est. 3.4	<i>In Class 5</i> Est. 2.1	<i>In Class 6</i> Est. 2.5	<i>In Class 10</i> Est. 4.2	<i>In Class 6</i> Est. 2.5
SN Cillmin	<u>20.8</u>	<i>In Class 5</i> Est. 1	<i>In Class 11</i> Est. 2.3	<i>In Class 19</i> Est. 4	<i>In Class 13</i> Est. 2.7	<i>In Class 13</i> Est. 2.7	<i>In Class 9</i> Est. 1.9
Barryroe NS	<u>60.9</u>	<i>In Class 13</i> Est. 7.9	<i>In Class 12</i> Est. 7.3	<i>In Class 17</i> Est. 10.4	<i>In Class 9</i> Est. 5.5	<i>In Class 18</i> Est. 11	<i>In Class 16</i> Est. 9.7
Gaelscoil Cloich na Coillte	<u>65.2</u>	<i>In Class 8</i> Est. 5.2	<i>In Class 17</i> Est. 11.1	<i>In Class 21</i> Est. 13.7	<i>In Class 22</i> Est. 14.3	<i>In Class 30</i> Est. 19.6	<i>In Class 47</i> Est. 30.6
SN na Buachailli	<u>97</u>	<i>In Class 31</i> Est. 30.1	<i>In Class 31</i> Est. 30.1	<i>In Class 24</i> Est. 23.3	<i>In Class 25</i> Est. 24.3	<i>In Class 27</i> Est. 26.2	<i>In Class 27</i> Est. 26.2
% from feeder school	<u>99.2</u>	75.7	91.6	86.1	78	89.6	107.3
% from others	<u>0.8</u>	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.6	0.7	0.9
Total	<u>100</u>	76	92	87	79	90	108

Table 6.4.3(b) Sacred Heart, Clonakilty: A prediction of enrolment, 2002-2007, based on feeder school enrolment.

Feeder school	%	September 2002	September 2003	September 2004	September 2005	September 2006	September 2007
Convent of Mercy	<u>90.2</u>	<i>In Class</i> 26 Est. 23.5	<i>In Class</i> 32 Est. 28.9	<i>In Class</i> 34 Est. 30.7	<i>In Class</i> 24 Est. 21.6	<i>In Class</i> 32 Est. 28.9	<i>In Class</i> 27 Est. 24.4
SN Achadh Eochaille	<u>41.7</u>	<i>In Class</i> 3 Est. 1.3	<i>In Class</i> 6 Est. 2.5	<i>In Class</i> 8 Est. 3.3	<i>In Class</i> 7 Est. 2.9	<i>In Class</i> 5 Est. 2.1	<i>In Class</i> 5 Est. 2.1
Kilgarriffe NS	<u>15.4</u>	<i>In Class</i> 4 Est. 0.6	<i>In Class</i> 2 Est. 0.3	<i>In Class</i> 6 Est. 0.9	<i>In Class</i> 0 Est. 0	<i>In Class</i> 4 Est. 0.6	<i>In Class</i> 4 Est. 0.6
Timoleague NS	<u>41.2</u>	<i>In Class</i> 13 Est. 5.4	<i>In Class</i> 11 Est. 4.5	<i>In Class</i> 14 Est. 5.8	<i>In Class</i> 13 Est. 5.4	<i>In Class</i> 11 Est. 4.5	<i>In Class</i> 12 Est. 4.9
Darrara NS	<u>28</u>	<i>In Class</i> 10 Est. 2.8	<i>In Class</i> 10 Est. 2.8	<i>In Class</i> 7 Est. 2	<i>In Class</i> 7 Est. 2	<i>In Class</i> 0 Est. 0	<i>In Class</i> 15 Est. 4.2
SN Ath na Lionta	<u>87.5</u>	<i>In Class</i> 5 Est. 4.4	<i>In Class</i> 5 Est. 4.4	<i>In Class</i> 5 Est. 4.4	<i>In Class</i> 7 Est. 6.1	<i>In Class</i> 2 Est. 1.8	<i>In Class</i> 1 Est. 0.9
Kilcolman NS	<u>33.3</u>	<i>In Class</i> 2 Est. 0.7	<i>In Class</i> 5 Est. 1.7	<i>In Class</i> 4 Est. 1.3	<i>In Class</i> 5 Est. 1.7	<i>In Class</i> 5 Est. 1.7	<i>In Class</i> 5 Est. 1.7
SN Cnoc na Sceagh	<u>36.1</u>	<i>In Class</i> 8 Est. 2.9	<i>In Class</i> 19 Est. 6.9	<i>In Class</i> 17 Est. 6.1	<i>In Class</i> 10 Est. 3.6	<i>In Class</i> 11 Est. 4	<i>In Class</i> 15 Est. 5.4
SN na Trionoide	<u>45.5</u>	<i>In Class</i> 5 Est. 2.3	<i>In Class</i> 3 Est. 1.4	<i>In Class</i> 3 Est. 1.4	<i>In Class</i> 6 Est. 2.7	<i>In Class</i> 5 Est. 2.3	<i>In Class</i> 4 Est. 1.8
SN Baile Muine	<u>6.7</u>	<i>In Class</i> 3 Est. 0.2	<i>In Class</i> 2 Est. 0.1	<i>In Class</i> 2 Est. 0.1	<i>In Class</i> 3 Est. 0.2	<i>In Class</i> 1 Est. 0.1	<i>In Class</i> 4 Est. 0.3
SN Clogagh	<u>38.2</u>	<i>In Class</i> 9 Est. 3.4	<i>In Class</i> 9 Est. 3.4	<i>In Class</i> 8 Est. 3.1	<i>In Class</i> 9 Est. 3.4	<i>In Class</i> 11 Est. 4.2	<i>In Class</i> 7 Est. 2.7
Lisavaird NS	<u>11.5</u>	<i>In Class</i> 7 Est. 0.8	<i>In Class</i> 8 Est. 0.9	<i>In Class</i> 5 Est. 0.6	<i>In Class</i> 6 Est. 0.7	<i>In Class</i> 10 Est. 1.2	<i>In Class</i> 6 Est. 0.7
SN Cillmin	<u>8.3</u>	<i>In Class</i> 5 Est. 0.4	<i>In Class</i> 11 Est. 0.9	<i>In Class</i> 19 Est. 1.6	<i>In Class</i> 13 Est. 1.1	<i>In Class</i> 13 Est. 1.1	<i>In Class</i> 9 Est. 0.7
Barryroe NS	<u>34.8</u>	<i>In Class</i> 13 Est. 4.5	<i>In Class</i> 12 Est. 4.2	<i>In Class</i> 17 Est. 5.9	<i>In Class</i> 9 Est. 3.1	<i>In Class</i> 18 Est. 16.3	<i>In Class</i> 16 Est. 5.6
St. Mary's Central	<u>3.9</u>	<i>In Class</i> 24 Est. 0.9	<i>In Class</i> 25 Est. 1	<i>In Class</i> 26 Est. 1	<i>In Class</i> 20 Est. 0.8	<i>In Class</i> 15 Est. 0.6	<i>In Class</i> 30 Est. 1.2
Gaelscoil Cloich na Coillte	<u>8.7</u>	<i>In Class</i> 8 Est. 0.7	<i>In Class</i> 17 Est. 1.5	<i>In Class</i> 21 Est. 1.8	<i>In Class</i> 22 Est. 1.9	<i>In Class</i> 30 Est. 2.6	<i>In Class</i> 47 Est. 4.1
% from feeder school	<u>95.2</u>	54.8	65.4	70	57.2	62	61.3
% from Others	<u>4.8</u>	2.8	3.3	2.1	2.9	3.1	3.1
Total	<u>100</u>	58	69	72	60	65	64

It is noticeable, from the above tables, that the future of both post-primary schools is secure due to an expected increase in the numbers available for post-primary transfer within the catchment area in the next few years. That increase is depicted in the following figure.

Figure 6.4.3 Actual and projected 1st. year enrolment for Clonakilty post-primary schools, 1999-2007.



For the six years, 2002 -2007 inclusive, the number of students available for post-primary enrolment ranges from 134 to 172 annually. This is sufficient to sustain two post-primary schools. However, table 6.4.1 illustrates that the community college is growing at the expense of the Sacred Heart Secondary School in terms of first year enrolment. Should that prediction prove true, coupled with the phasing-out of boarding within that school, Sacred Heart may become less viable in terms of teacher allocation and curricular choice. Should this occur, questions will, undoubtedly, be asked as to the need for two post-primary schools within Clonakilty. However, should an amalgamation take place, it is likely that the new school would attract an even higher transfer percentage from the primary schools within the catchment area. This, combined with transition year programmes, which the schools in Clonakilty offer, and Post-Leaving Certificate

courses, which are available in the community college, would lead to an enrolment in a single school of almost 1,000. This may be too large for a country town and would create its own difficulties in terms of infrastructure and pastoral care.

6.5 An analysis of post-primary enrolment in Skibbereen.

Unlike in the previous towns mentioned, post-primary education in Skibbereen is served by three centres: St. Fachtna's De La Salle Secondary School for boys; Mercy Heights Secondary School for girls and Rossa College, a vocational school that caters for both boys and girls. Another feature that distinguishes Skibbereen is the introduction, since 1983, of another school, Schull Community College, within the catchment area, though some eighteen miles from Skibbereen town. Traditionally, Skibbereen would have served Baltimore, Leap, Glandore, Aughadown, Ballydehob, Schull and Goleen. The introduction of a 'green-field' community college in Schull has impinged upon enrolment in Skibbereen, particularly in relation to students coming from Schull itself, Goleen and Ballydehob. The enormity of this influence can be understood when one realises that enrolment in Schull community college was 414 in September 1999³⁷⁰ and 457 in September 2000.³⁷¹ For this reason, the decline in the enrolment in the schools in Skibbereen in the above table need not be reflective of a decline in population but may be indicative of the appeal of Schull Community College.

³⁷⁰ Government of Ireland. (2000) *op cit.*, p 6.

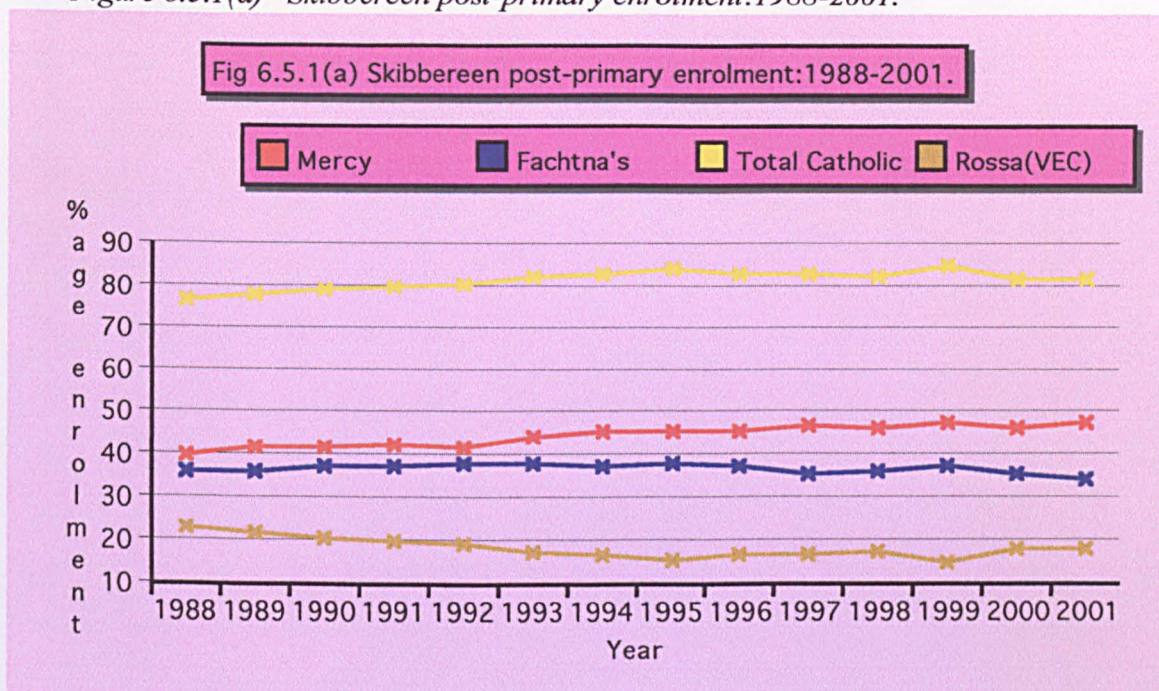
³⁷¹ Government of Ireland. (2001) *op cit.*, p 6.

6.5.1 Skibbereen post-primary enrolment, 1988-2001.

Table 6.5.1 Skibbereen post-primary enrolment, 1988-2001.

Year	Mercy Heights. (Catholic Secondary) All girls.	St. Fachtna's (Catholic Secondary) All boys.	Combined Catholic School enrolment	Rossa College. (VEC)	TOTALS
1988-1989	394 40.3%	356 36.4%	750 76.7%	227 23.3%	977
1989-1990	422 41.7%	370 36.5%	792 78.2%	221 21.8%	1013
1990-1991	428 41.8%	387 37.8%	815 79.6%	207 20.4%	1022
1991-1992	430 42.4%	382 37.6%	812 80%	203 20%	1015
1992-1993	431 42.1%	392 38.4%	823 80.5%	199 19.5%	1022
1993-1994	452 44.4%	387 37.9%	839 82.3%	180 17.7%	1019
1994-1995	454 45.8%	373 37.6%	827 83.4%	165 16.6%	992
1995-1996	452 45.9%	377 38.3%	829 84.2%	156 15.8%	985
1996-1997	464 45.9%	378 37.5%	842 83.4%	168 16.6%	1010
1997-1998	472 47.1%	359 35.8%	831 82.9%	171 17.1%	1002
1998-1999	437 46.2%	343 36.3%	780 82.5%	165 17.5%	945
1999-2000	442 47.4%	350 37.6%	792 85%	140 15%	932
2000-2001	427 46.4%	326 35.4%	753 81.8%	168 18.2%	921
2001-2002	422 47.3%	307 34.3%	729 81.6%	164 18.4%	893
TOTALS	6127 44.6%	5087 37%	11214 81.6%	2534 18.4%	13748

Figure 6.5.1(a) Skibbereen post-primary enrolment:1988-2001.



For ease of analysis, there are four trends illustrated in the above figure: enrolment in Mercy Heights, St. Fachtna's and Rossa College but also a Catholic enrolment consisting of the combined enrolment in the two Catholic schools: St. Fachtna's and Mercy Heights. Enrolment in St. Fachtna's is in decline. Interestingly, this decline coincides with the withdrawal of the De La Salle Order from the school and the appointment of the first lay principal in 1998. This development was followed by a period of internal difficulty which involved, among other things, pickets by pupils, parents and teachers. This unfortunate situation obviously impacted negatively on enrolment. In 2001, the situation was resolved and a new permanent principal was appointed. It remains to be seen if this development will arrest the decline in enrolment in the medium term. Otherwise, there seems to be little change in the percentage allocation between Catholic and non-Catholic schools. However, when one considers the impact of Schull Community College, there may be a 'hidden' shift to community college or state sector educational institutions from Catholic secondary schools, notwithstanding that the Catholic

bishop of Cork and Ross is a co-manager of Schull Community College. In some regards, such community colleges are as Catholic as Catholic secondary schools. For example, Schull Community College has the services of a state-salaried, Catholic chaplain. Secondary schools do not, though this may change in the future.³⁷²

Figure 6.5.1(b) Skibbereen post-primary enrolment: 1988 & 2001.

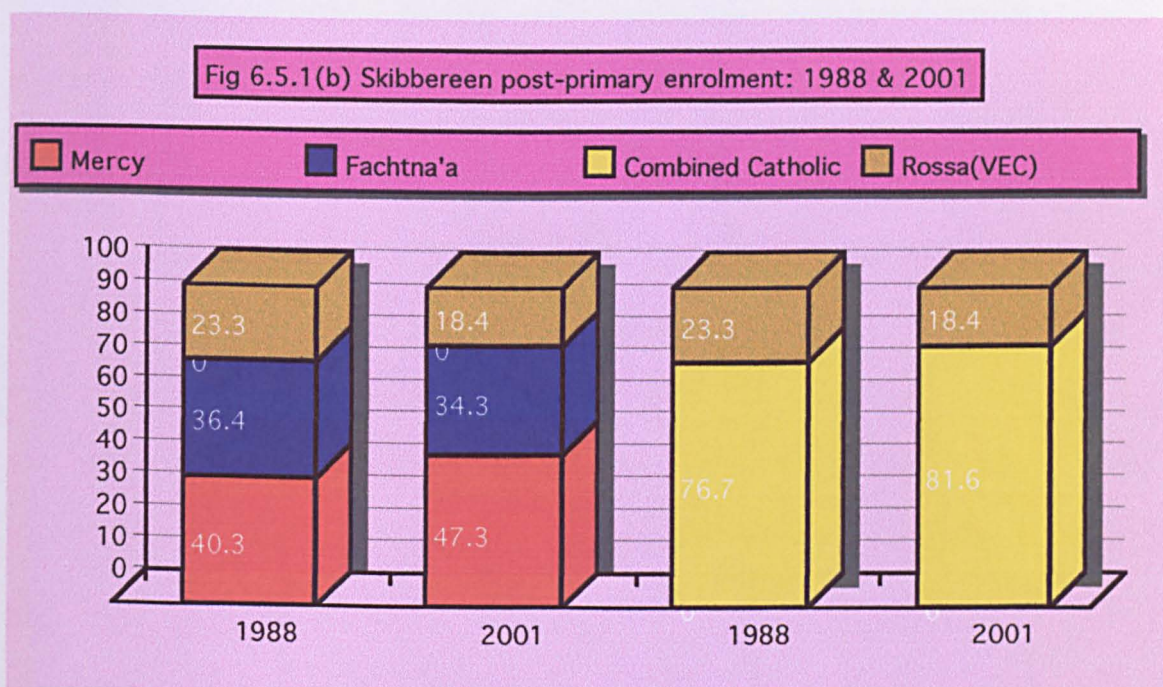


Figure 6.5.1(b) illustrates a decline in enrolment in the vocational sector in Skibbereen. However, no assumptions in relation to enrolment trends can be deduced from this finding due to the introduction of another VEC sector school within the catchment area and the substantial enrolment therein.

³⁷² Deenihan, Thomas. (2002) (b) 'Religious Education and Catechesis' in *The Furrow*, Vol LIII, No. 5, May 2002. p 299.

6.5.2 Sources of enrolment for Skibbereen post-primary schools and an analysis of transfer trends.

Table 6.5.2(a) Mercy Heights, Skibbereen first year enrolment, 1999-2001: An analysis of feeder schools and transfers.

Feeder school	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	Combined 3yr total
08430S Convent of Mercy	Available 18 Enrolled 17 94.4%	Available 20 Enrolled 19 95%	Available 20* (18) Enrolled 19 95%	Available 58 Enrolled 55 94.8%
11245R SN Cill mhic Abhaidh	Available 16 Enrolled 1 6.3%	Available 13 Enrolled 1 7.7%	Available 8 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 37 Enrolled 2 5.4%
11931L SN Ioseph	Available 6 Enrolled 4 66.7%	Available 7 Enrolled 3 42.9%	Available 5 Enrolled 2 40%	Available 18 Enrolled 9 50%
12383L Union Hall NS	Available 16 Enrolled 4 25%	Available 11 Enrolled 3 27.3%	Available 9 Enrolled 5 55.6%	Available 36 Enrolled 12 33.3%
13095L SN an Droma Mhoir	Available 10 Enrolled 4 40%	Available 5 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 7 Enrolled 2 28.6%	Available 22 Enrolled 6 27.3%
13728B Castletownsend NS	Available 12 Enrolled 6 50%	Available 11 Enrolled 2 18.2%	Available 7 Enrolled 2 28.6%	Available 30 Enrolled 10 33.3%
13976U Ballydehob 2 NS	Available 7 Enrolled 2 28.6%	Available 11 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 4 Enrolled 3 75%	Available 22 Enrolled 5 22.7%
14225D Scoil Bhríde	Available 14 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 13 Enrolled 1 7.7%	Available 18 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 45 Enrolled 1 2.2%
14227H Kilcoyne NS	Available 16 Enrolled 7 43.8%	Available 11 Enrolled 2 18.2%	Available 11 Enrolled 2 18.2%	Available 38 Enrolled 11 28.9%
14433K Abbeystrewry NS	Available 13 Enrolled 8 61.5%	Available 4 Enrolled 2 50%	Available 5 Enrolled 1 20%	Available 22 Enrolled 11 50%
15563F Lisheen NS	Available 2 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 4 Enrolled 1 25%	Available 1 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 7 Enrolled 1 14.3%
18296A Dromdhallagh NS	Available 20* (15) Enrolled 6 30%	Available 15 Enrolled 7 46.7%	Available 17 Enrolled 12 70.6%	Available 52 Enrolled 25 48.1%
18461M SN Muire na Doirí	Available 4 Enrolled 1 25%	Available 10 Enrolled 6 60%	Available 5 Enrolled 1 20%	Available 19 Enrolled 8 42.1%
18548B** SN Meallan tSruthain	Available Enrolled (3)	Available Enrolled (2)	Available Enrolled (5)	Available Enrolled (10)
19381T Rathmore NS	Available 14 Enrolled 2 14.3%	Available 20 Enrolled 3 15%	Available 17 Enrolled 8 47.1%	Available 51 Enrolled 13 25.5%
19557H Caheragh NS	Available 21 Enrolled 10 47.6%	Available 15 Enrolled 5 33.3%	Available 16* (15) Enrolled 5 31.3%	Available 52 Enrolled 20 38.5%
19918N Drinagh Ns	Available 8* (4) Enrolled 1 12.5%	Available 3 Enrolled 2 66.7%	Available 9 Enrolled 2 22.2%	Available 20 Enrolled 5 25%
Feeder school total	73 94.8% of total	57 95% of total	64 92.8% of total	194 94.2% of total
Others	4 5.2% of total	3 5% of total	5 7.2% of total	12 5.8% of total
Totals	Available 201 Enrolled 77 38.3%	Available 176 Enrolled 60 34.1%	Available 164 Enrolled 69 42.1%	Available 541 Enrolled 206 38.1%

Table 6.5.2(b) St. Fachtna's, Skibbereen first year enrolment, 1999-2001: An analysis of feeder schools and transfers.

Feeder school	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	Combined 3yr totals
01272O SN Chuan Doir	Available 5* (3) Enrolled 5 100%	Available 4 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 4 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 13 Enrolled 5 38.5%
09161W Convent of Mercy Bantry **	Available (28) Enrolled (1)	Available (21) Enrolled (0)	Available (22) Enrolled (1)	Available (71) Enrolled (2)
11245 SN Cill Mhic Abhaidh	Available 16 Enrolled 1 6.3%	Available 13 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 8 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 37 Enrolled 1 2.7%
11931L SN Ioseph	Available 6 Enrolled 2 33.3%	Available 7 Enrolled 22 8.6%	Available 5 Enrolled 1 20%	Available 18 Enrolled 5 27.8%
12383L Union Hall NS	Available 16 Enrolled 9 56.3%	Available 11 Enrolled 5 45.5%	Available 9 Enrolled 4 44.4%	Available 36 Enrolled 18 50%
13095L SN an Droma Mhoir	Available 10 Enrolled 2 20%	Available 5 Enrolled 1 20%	Available 7 Enrolled 5 71.4%	Available 22 Enrolled 8 36.4%
13728B Castletownsend	Available 12 Enrolled 5 41.7%	Available 11 Enrolled 3 27.3%	Available 7 Enrolled 2 28.6%	Available 30 Enrolled 10 33.3%
14225D Scoil Bhríde	Available 14 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 13 Enrolled 1 7.7%	Available 18 Enrolled 1 5.6%	Available 45 Enrolled 2 4.4%
14227H Kilcoyne NS	Available 16 Enrolled 1 6.3%	Available 11 Enrolled 2 18.2%	Available 11 Enrolled 4 36.4%	Available 38 Enrolled 7 18.4%
14227H Abbeystrewry NS	Available 13 Enrolled 3 23%	Available 4 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 5 Enrolled 2 40%	Available 22 Enrolled 5 22.7%
16900C SN Pdraig Naofa	Available 26 Enrolled 19 73.1%	Available 28 Enrolled 21 75%	Available 19 Enrolled 13 68.4%	Available 73 Enrolled 53 72.6%
18296A Dromdhallagh NS	Available 20* (15) Enrolled 7 35%	Available 15 Enrolled 6 40%	Available 17 Enrolled 9 52.9%	Available 52 Enrolled 22 42.3%
18461M SN Mhuire na Doirini	Available 4 Enrolled 3 75%	Available 10 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 5 Enrolled 4 80%	Available 19 Enrolled 7 36.8%
19381T Rathmore NS	Available 14 Enrolled 10 71.5%	Available 20 Enrolled 3 15%	Available 17 Enrolled 3 17.7%	Available 51 Enrolled 16 31.4%
19557H Caheragh NS	Available 21 Enrolled 1 4.8%	Available 15 Enrolled 3 33.3%	Available 16* (15) Enrolled 4 25%	Available 52 Enrolled 8 15.4%
19918N Drinagh NS	Available 8* (4) Enrolled 3 37.5%	Available 3 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 9 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 20 Enrolled 3 15%
19978I Maulatrahane Central	Available 8 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 4 Enrolled 2 50%	Available 10 Enrolled 2 20%	Available 22 Enrolled 4 18.2%
Feeder school total	71 98.6% of total	49 100% of total	54 98.2% of total	174 98.9% of total
Others	1 1.4% of total	0	1 1.8% of total	2 1.1% of total
Totals	Available 209 Enrolled 72 34.4%	Available 174 Enrolled 49 28.2%	Available 167 Enrolled 55 32.9%	Available 550 Enrolled 176 32%

Table 6.5.2(c) Rossa College, Skibbereen first year enrolment, 1999-2001: An analysis of feeder schools and transfers.

Feeder school	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	Combined 3yr totals
08430S Convent of Mercy	Available 18 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 20 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 20* (18) Enrolled 1 5%	Available 58 Enrolled 1 1.7%
11245R SN Cill mhic Abhaidh	Available 16 Enrolled 1 6.3%	Available 13 Enrolled 1 7.7%	Available 8 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 37 Enrolled 2 5.4%
11931L SN Ioseph	Available 6 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 7 Enrolled 1 14.3%	Available 5 Enrolled 1 20%	Available 18 Enrolled 2 11.1%
12383L Union Hall NS	Available 16 Enrolled 1 6.3%	Available 11 Enrolled 1 9.1%	Available 9 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 36 Enrolled 2 5.6%
13095L SN an Droma Mhoir	Available 10 Enrolled 1 10%	Available 5 Enrolled 3 60%	Available 7 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 22 Enrolled 4 18.2%
13728B Castletownsend NS	Available 12 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 11 Enrolled 4 36.4%	Available 7 Enrolled 2 28.6%	Available 30 Enrolled 6 20%
14227H Kilcoyne NS	Available 16 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 11 Enrolled 1 9.1%	Available 11 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 38 Enrolled 1 2.6%
14433K Abbeystrewry NS	Available 13 Enrolled 1 7.7%	Available 4 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 5 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 22 Enrolled 1 4.5%
14784Q Dunmanway BNS	Available 19* (16) Enrolled 3 15.8%	Available 12* (10) Enrolled 2 16.7%	Available 35 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 66 Enrolled 5 7.6%
15563F Lisheen NS	Available 2 Enrolled 1 50%	Available 4 Enrolled 2 50%	Available 1 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 7 Enrolled 3 42.9%
16900C SN Padraig Naofa	Available 26 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 28 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 19 Enrolled 4 21.1%	Available 73 Enrolled 4 5.5%
18461M SN Muire na Doirini	Available 4 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 10 Enrolled 3 30%	Available 5 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 19 Enrolled 3 15.8%
19381T Rathmore NS	Available 14 Enrolled 2 14.3%	Available 20 Enrolled 9 45%	Available 17 Enrolled 2 11.6%	Available 51 Enrolled 13 25.5%
19557H Caheragh NS	Available 21 Enrolled 9 42.9%	Available 15 Enrolled 6 40%	Available 16* (15) Enrolled 7 43.8%	Available 52 Enrolled 22 42.3%
19801P** Drimoleague NS	Available Enrolled (0)	Available Enrolled (2)	Available Enrolled (0)	Available Enrolled (2)
Feeder school total	19 95% of total	33 91.7% of total	17 100% of total	69 94.5% of total
Others	1 5% of total	3 8.3% of total		4 5.5% of total
Totals	Available 193 Enrolled 20 10.4%	Available 171 Enrolled 36 21.1%	Available 165 Enrolled 17 10.3%	Available 529 Enrolled 73 13.8%

Again, as in previous centres, a comprehensive analysis of enrolment patterns is difficult given the tendency of students in some primary schools to enrol in post-primary schools in more than one town. However, a cursory glance illustrates that

Skibbereen is remarkable in that the enrolment percentages in the two Catholic schools seem to be holding despite the presence of Schull Community College, which is also growing and has managed to secure a significant percentage of the students from primary schools in the area between Schull and Skibbereen. For example, Ballydehob, with two national schools, would previously have sent its primary students to Skibbereen for post-primary education. The above tables illustrate that the three post-primary schools in Skibbereen over the three years enrolled only 8 of the 67 students available for enrolment (11.9%) from the two Ballydehob schools over the same period.

An analysis of the enrolment patterns of the 'significant schools', these schools with more than 30 students available for post-primary enrolment and who enroll in excess of 70% of their students in post-primary schools in Skibbereen, illustrates the continuing popularity of both Catholic Secondary schools. It is also of note that these are single sex schools. These 'significant feeder schools' are Scoil Padraig Naofa (73 students), Convent of Mercy (58 students), Dromdallagh NS (52 students), Caheragh NS (52 students), Rathmore NS (51 students), Union Hall NS (36 students) and Castletownsend NS (30 students) From these schools, with a combined 352 students available for post-primary transfer over the three years, St. Fachtna's enrolled 127 or 36.1% and Mercy Heights enrolled 135 students or 38.4%.³⁷³ Rossa College enrolled 48 or 13.6%. This inability of Rossa College to attract a larger percentage from the 'significant schools' accounts for its low enrolment.

³⁷³ These figures could be argued to be larger as the number available contains the enrolment of single sex primary schools, Scoil Padraig Naofa (male) and Convent of Mercy (female) that would not be able to enroll in the two secondary schools. Nevertheless, the figures are given for accuracy and to enable a comparison with a co-educational school, Rossa College.

Interestingly, the schools from which Rossa College enrolled a larger percentage of students are in more rural areas. For example, Rossa's biggest feeder schools are Caheragh (22 students from the 73 (30%) that Rossa enrolled over the three years) and Rathmore NS (13 students over the three years or 17.8% of Rossa's enrolment). Similarly, the feeder schools that transfer the majority of their students to Rossa College are country schools, Caheragh NS (42.3%), Lisheen NS. (42.9%) and Rathmore NS (25.5%). This situation contrasts with vocational schools in the other towns examined, particularly Bandon, where a vocational school co-exists with two, single sex secondary schools and has increased its share of the urban intake.

As in previous centres, the two Church of Ireland schools in the area, Ballydehob 2 NS and Abbeystrewry NS, enrol more of their students in Catholic secondary schools. The two Church of Ireland schools had 44 students available for post-primary transfer in the three years. Of these, 22 or 50% enrolled in schools in Skibbereen. This relatively low local enrolment figure can be explained by the popularity of Schull Community College in the case of Ballydehob 2 NS, located just six miles away, and of Bandon Grammar School, a Church of Ireland post-primary school, in the case of Abbeystrewry NS.

6.5.3 Projected available enrolment for Skibbereen, 2002-2007.

Table 6.5.3(a) Mercy Heights, Skibbereen: A prediction of enrolment, 2002-2007, based on feeder school enrolment.

Feeder School	%	September 2002	September 2003	September 2004	September 2005	September 2006	September 2007
Convent of Mercy	<u>94.8</u>	<i>In class 28</i> Est. 26.5	<i>In class 17</i> Est. 16.1	<i>In class 32</i> Est. 30.3	<i>In class 21</i> Est. 19.9	<i>In class 17</i> Est. 16.1	<i>In class 23</i> Est. 21.8
Cill Mhic Abhaidh	<u>5.4</u>	<i>In class 8</i> Est. 0.4	<i>In class 16</i> Est. 0.9	<i>In class 8</i> Est. 0.4	<i>In class 12</i> Est. 0.6	<i>In class 12</i> Est. 0.6	<i>In class 12</i> Est. 0.6
SN Ioseph	<u>50</u>	<i>In class 4</i> Est. 2	<i>In class 4</i> Est. 2	<i>In class 3</i> Est. 1.5	<i>In class 6</i> Est. 3	<i>In class 5</i> Est. 2.5	<i>In class 4</i> Est. 2
Union Hall NS	<u>33.3</u>	<i>In class 13</i> Est. 4.3	<i>In class 8</i> Est. 2.7	<i>In class 7</i> Est. 2.3	<i>In class 19</i> Est. 6.3	<i>In class 9</i> Est. 3	<i>In class 14</i> Est. 4.7
SN Droma Mhoir	<u>27.3</u>	<i>In class 7</i> Est. 1.9	<i>In class 4</i> Est. 1.1	<i>In class 4</i> Est. 1.1	<i>In class 6</i> Est. 1.6	<i>In class 8</i> Est. 2.2	<i>In class 5</i> Est. 1.4
Castletown send NS	<u>33.3</u>	<i>In class 12</i> Est. 4	<i>In class 5</i> Est. 1.7	<i>In class 5</i> Est. 1.7	<i>In class 6</i> Est. 2	<i>In class 8</i> Est. 2.7	<i>In class 5</i> Est. 1.7
Ballydehob 2 NS	<u>22.7</u>	<i>In class 4</i> Est. 0.9	<i>In class 2</i> Est. 0.5	<i>In class 3</i> Est. 0.7	<i>In class 7</i> Est. 1.6	<i>In class 10</i> Est. 2.3	<i>In class 4</i> Est. 0.9
Scoil Bhríde	<u>2.2</u>	<i>In class 14</i> Est. 0.3	<i>In class 14</i> Est. 0.3	<i>In class 15</i> Est. 0.3	<i>In class 7</i> Est. 0.2	<i>In class 17</i> Est. 0.4	<i>In class 12</i> Est. 0.3
Kilcoyne NS	<u>28.9</u>	<i>In class 11</i> Est. 3.2	<i>In class 12</i> Est. 3.5	<i>In class 8</i> Est. 2.3	<i>In class 7</i> Est. 2	<i>In class 10</i> Est. 2.9	<i>In class 7</i> Est. 2
Abbeystrewry NS	<u>50</u>	<i>In class 7</i> Est. 3.5	<i>In class 8</i> Est. 4	<i>In class 6</i> Est. 3	<i>In class 13</i> Est. 6.5	<i>In class 4</i> Est. 2	<i>In class 7</i> Est. 3.5
Lisheen NS	<u>14.3</u>	<i>In class 8</i> Est. 1.1	<i>In class 3</i> Est. 0.4	<i>In class 3</i> Est. 0.4	<i>In class 9</i> Est. 1.3	<i>In class 8</i> Est. 1.1	<i>In class 3</i> Est. 0.4
Dromdhalagh NS	<u>48.1</u>	<i>In class 11</i> Est. 5.3	<i>In class 19</i> Est. 9.1	<i>In class 8</i> Est. 3.8	<i>In class 12</i> Est. 5.8	<i>In class 13</i> Est. 6.3	<i>In class 18</i> Est. 8.7
SN Muire na Doirini	<u>42.1</u>	<i>In class 4</i> Est. 1.7	<i>In class 6</i> Est. 2.5	<i>In class 4</i> Est. 1.7	<i>In class 4</i> Est. 1.7	<i>In class 0</i> Est. 0	<i>In class 3</i> Est. 1.3
SN Meall an tSruathain	<u>n/a</u>	<i>In class</i> Est. n/a	<i>In class</i> Est. n/a	<i>In class</i> Est. n/a	<i>In class</i> Est. n/a	<i>In class</i> Est. n/a	<i>In class</i> Est. n/a
Rathmore NS	<u>25.5</u>	<i>In class 17</i> Est. 4.3	<i>In class 14</i> Est. 3.6	<i>In class 15</i> Est. 3.8	<i>In class 13</i> Est. 3.3	<i>In class 8</i> Est. 2	<i>In class 19</i> Est. 4.8
Caheragh NS	<u>38.5</u>	<i>In class 11</i> Est. 4.2	<i>In class 17</i> Est. 6.5	<i>In class 11</i> Est. 4.2	<i>In class 12</i> Est. 4.6	<i>In class 10</i> Est. 3.9	<i>In class 9</i> Est. 3.5
Drinagh NS	<u>25</u>	<i>In class 4</i> Est. 1	<i>In class 7</i> Est. 1.8	<i>In class 14</i> Est. 3.5	<i>In class 4</i> Est. 1	<i>In class 7</i> Est. 1.8	<i>In class 6</i> Est. 1.5
% from feeder schools	<u>94.2</u>	64.6	56.7	61	61.4	49.8	59.1
% from Others	<u>5.8</u>	4	3.5	3.8	3.8	3.1	3.6
Total	<u>100</u>	69	60	65	65	53	63

Table 6.5.3(b) St. Fachtna's, Skibbereen: A prediction of enrolment, 2002-2007, based on feeder school enrolment.

Feeder school	%	September 2002	September 2003	September 2004	September 2005	September 2006	September 2007
SN Chuan Doir	<u>38.5</u>	<i>In Class 5</i> Est. 1.9	<i>In Class 3</i> Est. 1.2	<i>In Class 8</i> Est. 3.1	<i>In Class 8</i> Est. 3.1	<i>In Class 4</i> Est. 1.5	<i>In Class 4</i> Est. 1.5
Mercy, Bantry	<u>n/a</u>	<i>In Class</i> Est. n/a	<i>In Class</i> Est. n/a	<i>In Class</i> Est. n/a	<i>In Class</i> Est. n/a	<i>In Class</i> Est. n/a	<i>In Class</i> Est. n/a
Cill Mhic Abhaidh	<u>2.7</u>	<i>In Class 8</i> Est. 0.2	<i>In Class 16</i> Est. 0.4	<i>In Class 8</i> Est. 0.2	<i>In Class 12</i> Est. 0.3	<i>In Class 12</i> Est. 0.3	<i>In Class 12</i> Est. 0.3
SN Ioseph	<u>27.8</u>	<i>In Class 4</i> Est. 1.1	<i>In Class 4</i> Est. 1.1	<i>In Class 3</i> Est. 0.8	<i>In Class 6</i> Est. 1.7	<i>In Class 5</i> Est. 1.4	<i>In Class 4</i> Est. 1.1
Union Hall NS	<u>50</u>	<i>In Class 13</i> Est. 6.5	<i>In Class 8</i> Est. 4	<i>In Class 7</i> Est. 3.5	<i>In Class 19</i> Est. 9.5	<i>In Class 9</i> Est. 4.5	<i>In Class 14</i> Est. 7
SN Droma Mhoir	<u>36.4</u>	<i>In Class 7</i> Est. 2.5	<i>In Class 4</i> Est. 1.5	<i>In Class 4</i> Est. 1.5	<i>In Class 6</i> Est. 2.2	<i>In Class 8</i> Est. 2.9	<i>In Class 5</i> Est. 1.8
Castletownsend NS	<u>33.3</u>	<i>In Class 12</i> Est. 4	<i>In Class 5</i> Est. 1.7	<i>In Class 5</i> Est. 1.7	<i>In Class 6</i> Est. 2	<i>In Class 8</i> Est. 2.7	<i>In Class 5</i> Est. 1.7
Scoil Bhride	<u>4.4</u>	<i>In Class 14</i> Est. 0.6	<i>In Class 14</i> Est. 0.6	<i>In Class 15</i> Est. 0.7	<i>In Class 7</i> Est. 0.3	<i>In Class 17</i> Est. 0.7	<i>In Class 12</i> Est. 0.5
Kilcoyne NS	<u>18.4</u>	<i>In Class 11</i> Est. 2	<i>In Class 12</i> Est. 2.2	<i>In Class 8</i> Est. 1.5	<i>In Class 7</i> Est. 1.3	<i>In Class 10</i> Est. 1.8	<i>In Class 7</i> Est. 1.3
Abbeystrewy NS	<u>22.7</u>	<i>In Class 7</i> Est. 1.6	<i>In Class 8</i> Est. 1.8	<i>In Class 6</i> Est. 1.4	<i>In Class 13</i> Est. 3	<i>In Class 4</i> Est. 0.9	<i>In Class 7</i> Est. 1.6
SN Padraig Naofa	<u>72.6</u>	<i>In Class 16</i> Est. 11.6	<i>In Class 18</i> Est. 13.1	<i>In Class 18</i> Est. 13.1	<i>In Class 8</i> Est. 5.8	<i>In Class 18</i> Est. 13.1	<i>In Class 14</i> Est. 10.2
Dromdhallogh NS	<u>42.3</u>	<i>In Class 11</i> Est. 4.7	<i>In Class 19</i> Est. 8	<i>In Class 8</i> Est. 3.4	<i>In Class 12</i> Est. 5.1	<i>In Class 13*</i> Est. 5.5	<i>In Class 18*</i> Est. 7.6
Muire na Doirini	<u>36.8</u>	<i>In Class 4</i> Est. 1.5	<i>In Class 6</i> Est. 2.2	<i>In Class 4</i> Est. 1.5	<i>In Class 4</i> Est. 1.5	<i>In Class 0</i> Est. 0	<i>In Class 3</i> Est. 1.1
Rathmore NS	<u>31.4</u>	<i>In Class 17</i> Est. 5.3	<i>In Class 14</i> Est. 4.4	<i>In Class 15</i> Est. 4.7	<i>In Class 13</i> Est. 4.1	<i>In Class 8</i> Est. 2.5	<i>In Class 19</i> Est. 6
Caheragh NS	<u>15.4</u>	<i>In Class 11</i> Est. 1.7	<i>In Class 17</i> Est. 2.6	<i>In Class 11</i> Est. 1.7	<i>In Class 12</i> Est. 1.8	<i>In Class 10</i> Est. 1.5	<i>In Class 9</i> Est. 1.4
Drinagh NS	<u>15</u>	<i>In Class 4</i> Est. 0.6	<i>In Class 7</i> Est. 1.1	<i>In Class 14</i> Est. 2.1	<i>In Class 4</i> Est. 0.6	<i>In Class 7</i> Est. 1.1	<i>In Class 6</i> Est. 0.9
Moulatrahane Central	<u>18.2</u>	<i>In Class 7</i> Est. 1.3	<i>In Class 5</i> Est. 0.9	<i>In Class 4</i> Est. 0.7	<i>In Class 8</i> Est. 1.5	<i>In Class 13</i> Est. 2.4	<i>In Class 10</i> Est. 1.8
% from feeder school	<u>98.9</u>	47.1	46.8	41.6	41.1	42.8	45.8
% from others	<u>1.1</u>	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
Totals	<u>100</u>	48	47	42	42	43	46

Table 6.5.3(c) Rossa College, Skibbereen: A prediction of enrolment, 2002-2007, based on feeder school enrolment.

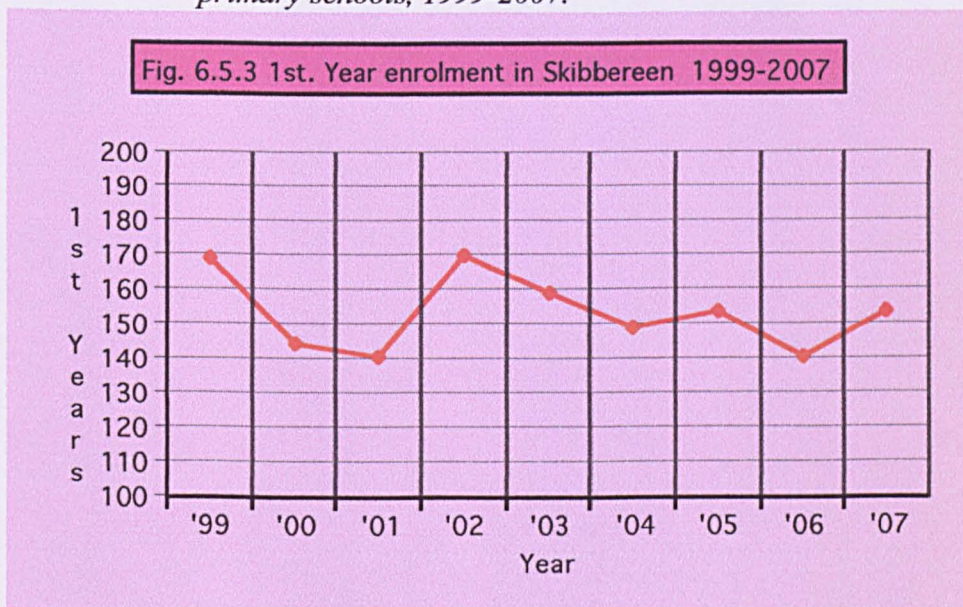
Feeder School	%	September 2002	September 2003	September 2004	September 2005	September 2006	September 2007
Convent of Mercy	<u>1.7</u>	<i>In Class 28</i> Est. 0.5	<i>In Class 17</i> Est. 0.3	<i>In Class 32</i> Est. 0.5	<i>In Class 21</i> Est. 0.4	<i>In Class 17</i> Est. 0.3	<i>In Class 23</i> Est. 0.4
Cill Mhic Abhaidh	<u>5.4</u>	<i>In Class 8</i> Est. 0.4	<i>In Class 16</i> Est. 0.9	<i>In Class 8</i> Est. 0.4	<i>In Class 12</i> Est. 0.6	<i>In Class 12</i> Est. 0.6	<i>In Class 12</i> Est. 0.6
SN Ioseph	<u>11.1</u>	<i>In Class 4</i> Est. 0.4	<i>In Class 4</i> Est. 0.4	<i>In Class 3</i> Est. 0.3	<i>In Class 6</i> Est. 0.7	<i>In Class 5</i> Est. 0.6	<i>In Class 4</i> Est. 0.4
Union Hall NS	<u>5.6</u>	<i>In Class 13</i> Est. 0.7	<i>In Class 8</i> Est. 0.4	<i>In Class 7</i> Est. 0.4	<i>In Class 19</i> Est. 1.1	<i>In Class 9</i> Est. 0.5	<i>In Class 14</i> Est. 0.8
SN Droma Mhoir	<u>18.2</u>	<i>In Class 7</i> Est. 1.3	<i>In Class 4</i> Est. 0.7	<i>In Class 4</i> Est. 0.7	<i>In Class 6</i> Est. 1.1	<i>In Class 8</i> Est. 1.5	<i>In Class 5</i> Est. 0.9
Castletownsend NS	<u>20</u>	<i>In Class 12</i> Est. 2.4	<i>In Class 5</i> Est. 1	<i>In Class 5</i> Est. 1	<i>In Class 6</i> Est. 1.2	<i>In Class 8</i> Est. 1.6	<i>In Class 5</i> Est. 1
Kilcoyne NS	<u>2.6</u>	<i>In Class 11</i> Est. 0.3	<i>In Class 12</i> Est. 0.3	<i>In Class 8</i> Est. 0.2	<i>In Class 7</i> Est. 0.2	<i>In Class 10</i> Est. 0.3	<i>In Class 7</i> Est. 0.2
Abbeystrewry NS	<u>4.5</u>	<i>In Class 7</i> Est. 0.3	<i>In Class 8</i> Est. 0.4	<i>In Class 6</i> Est. 0.3	<i>In Class 13</i> Est. 0.6	<i>In Class 4</i> Est. 0.2	<i>In Class 7</i> Est. 0.3
Dunmanway BNS	<u>7.6</u>	<i>In Class 13</i> Est. 1	<i>In Class 24</i> Est. 1.8	<i>In Class 19</i> Est. 1.4	<i>In Class 14</i> Est. 1.1	<i>In Class 12</i> Est. 0.9	<i>In Class 19</i> Est. 1.4
Lisheen NS	<u>42.9</u>	<i>In Class 8</i> Est. 3.4	<i>In Class 3</i> Est. 1.3	<i>In Class 3</i> Est. 1.3	<i>In Class 9</i> Est. 3.9	<i>In Class 8</i> Est. 3.4	<i>In Class 3</i> Est. 1.3
SN Padraig Naofa	<u>5.5</u>	<i>In Class 16</i> Est. 0.8	<i>In Class 18</i> Est. 1	<i>In Class 18</i> Est. 1	<i>In Class 8</i> Est. 0.4	<i>In Class 18</i> Est. 1	<i>In Class 14</i> Est. 0.8
SN Muire na Doirini	<u>15.8</u>	<i>In Class 4</i> Est. 0.6	<i>In Class 6</i> Est. 0.9	<i>In Class 4</i> Est. 0.6	<i>In Class 4</i> Est. 0.6	<i>In Class 0</i> Est. 0	<i>In Class 3</i> Est. 0.5
Rathmore NS	<u>25.5</u>	<i>In Class 17</i> Est. 4.3	<i>In Class 14</i> Est. 3.6	<i>In Class 15</i> Est. 3.8	<i>In Class 13</i> Est. 3.3	<i>In Class 8</i> Est. 2	<i>In Class 19</i> Est. 4.8
Caheragh NS	<u>42.3</u>	<i>In Class 11</i> Est. 4.7	<i>In Class 17</i> Est. 7.2	<i>In Class 11</i> Est. 4.7	<i>In Class 12</i> Est. 5.1	<i>In Class 10</i> Est. 4.2	<i>In Class 9</i> Est. 3.8
Drimoleague NS	<u>n/a</u>	<i>In Class</i> Est. n/a	<i>In Class</i> Est. n/a	<i>In Class</i> Est. n/a	<i>In Class</i> Est. n/a	<i>In Class</i> Est. n/a	<i>In Class</i> Est. n/a
% from feeder schools	<u>94.5</u>	21.1	20.2	16.6	20.3	17.1	17.2
% from others	<u>5.5</u>	1.2	1.2	1.0	1.2	1.0	1.0
Total	<u>100</u>	22	21	18	22	18	18

A difficulty arises with the above tables insofar as they do not take cognisance of the impact of the Gaelscoil on post-primary enrolment in Skibbereen. Such inclusion was not possible as there was no previous transfer trend to make a prediction from. The Gaelscoil did not have students available for post-primary

transfer until September 2002. However, they had 31 available in 2002 and will have 31, 24, 25 27 and 27 students available for each of the subsequent years. The following figure presumes a 100% transfer of pupils in the Gaelscoil to post-primary schools within Skibbereen town. This is almost certainly unattainable as Clonakilty Community College has opened an *Ionad Lan Gaeilge*³⁷⁴ to cater for students who wish to pursue their post-primary education through the medium of Irish within the general area.

While the future of Rossa College seems particularly tenuous, given the predicted future enrolment as outlined in the above table, the position of Fachtna's is not secure either. Questions need to be asked as to the future viability of the three schools in the town. The following figure supports that contention.

Fig. 6.5.3 Actual and projected 1st. year enrolment for Skibbereen post-primary schools, 1999-2007.



The graph illustrates a dramatic predicted decline in the first year enrolment between 2002 and 2006, even if all students from the Gaelscoil transfer to post-primary schools in the town. Of particular significance is the predicted 1st. year

³⁷⁴ An all -Irish centre within the school, where students could take all subjects through the medium of Irish

enrolment in Rossa college, varying between 17 and 22 students annually for the seven years 2001-2007 inclusive.³⁷⁵ Clearly, this is a major problem as it would lead to a total school enrolment of approximately 100 pupils over a five year period as the school operates a five year programme to leaving certificate. Therein lies the reason why amalgamation is being considered in the town. Due to the relatively weak position of the VEC school, Rossa College, a community school seems a more likely option to a community college at this stage, should such talks progress to a successful amalgamation. An amalgamation of the two voluntary secondary schools, Mercy Heights and St. Fachtna's, into a single, new amalgamated voluntary secondary school seems unlikely as the trustees of both these schools have already entered into discussions with County Cork VEC with a view to forming either a community school or a community college.

³⁷⁵ It must be noted that the predicted intake does not include any students from the Gaelscoil.

6.6 An analysis of post-primary enrolment in Bandon.

Bandon is served by four post-primary schools: Hamilton High school, a privately owned boys' secondary school, Presentation Convent Secondary School for girls, St. Brogan's College, a vocational school, and Bandon Grammar school, a Church of Ireland day and boarding school. While the enrolment figures for Bandon Grammar school are included below, they are not included in the percentages or in the total column as the majority of the students are boarders, hence the school has an insignificant effect on local enrolment. Hamilton High School opened in 1940 with a view to providing a secondary education for boys as this need was not being served by a religious order.³⁷⁶

As the following table also illustrates, the number of students available for enrolment has risen sharply during the period of the survey, though not in the recent past. This increase is due to Bandon's geographical position. It has become more of a satellite town to Cork city than a large country town. Planned development in Innishannon, some five miles away, could secure the existing educational provision in the town for some time, despite a change in enrolment patterns. No doubt, the development of Innishannon will initiate calls for the development of a post-primary school in the town. At this stage, such a request seems likely to fail due to the existence of three post-primary schools in Bandon with adequate accommodation and the reduction in the capital budget to the Department of Education and Science. While much new school provision is being provided under the PPP scheme, Bantry and Skibbereen would be given priority, plans for school rationalisation in these towns being at a more advanced stage. Any government would find it difficult to justify the granting of three new post-primary schools in West Cork when other areas are also requesting funding.

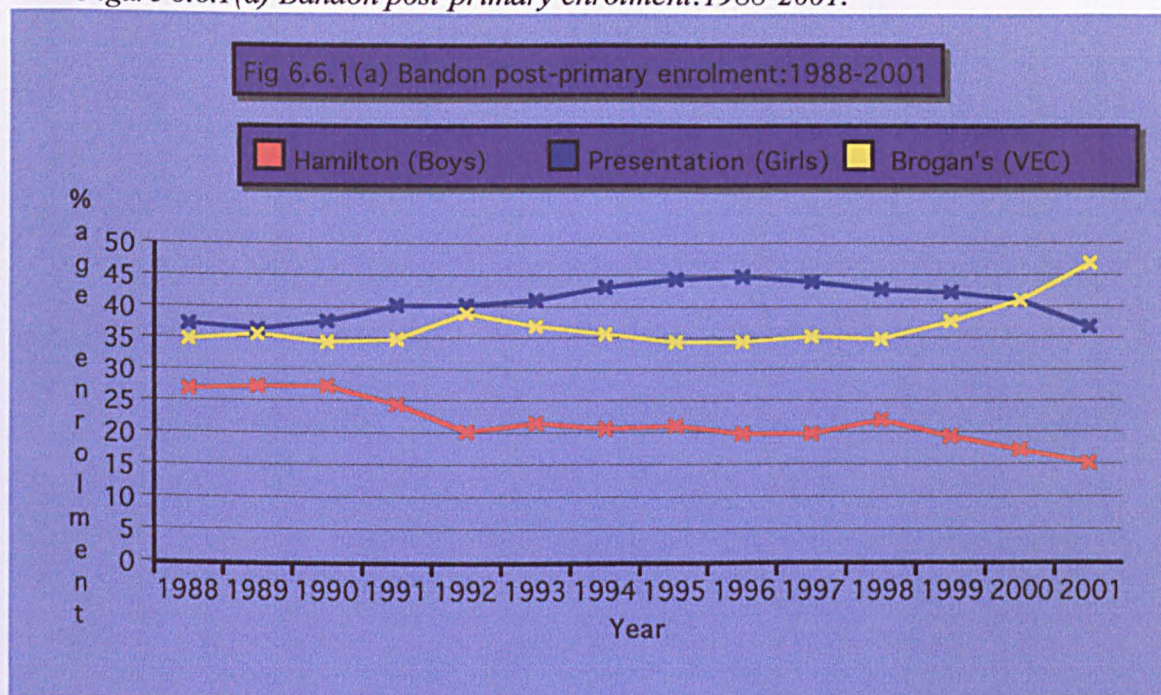
³⁷⁶ Doyle, Eileen. (2000) *Leading the Way. Managing Voluntary Secondary Schools*. Dublin: Secretariat of Secondary Schools. p 23.

6.6.1 Bandon post-primary enrolment, 1988-2001.

Table 6.6.1 Bandon post-primary enrolment, 1988-2001.

Year	Bandon Grammer School. Church of Ireland day and boarding school. All pupils pay fees.	Hamilton High school. (Privately operated secondary school) All boys.	Presentation Convent. (Catholic secondary school) All girls.	St. Brogan's College. (VEC)	TOTALS
1988-1989	355	346 27.2%	479 37.6%	448 35.2%	1273
1989-1990	371	357 27.6%	472 36.5%	464 35.9%	1293
1990-1991	362	358 27.5%	496 38.1%	447 34.4%	1301
1991-1992	359	328 24.7%	537 40.4%	465 34.9%	1330
1992-1993	373	295 20.5%	585 40.5%	563 39%	1443
1993-1994	388	330 21.8%	624 41.1%	563 37.1%	1517
1994-1995	380	329 20.8%	686 43.3%	568 35.9%	1583
1995-1996	376	346 21.2%	723 44.4%	560 34.4%	1629
1996-1997	377	341 20.2%	761 45.1%	586 34.7%	1688
1997-1998	362	342 20.2%	749 44.3%	601 35.5%	1692
1998-1999	366	376 22%	736 43%	600 35%	1712
1999-2000	374	328 19.7%	705 42.4%	630 37.9%	1663
2000-2001	399	290 17.6%	675 41.1%	678 41.3%	1643
2001-2002	412	253 15.6%	602 37.2%	763 47.2%	1618
TOTALS	5254	4619 21.6%	8830 41.3%	7936 37.1%	21385

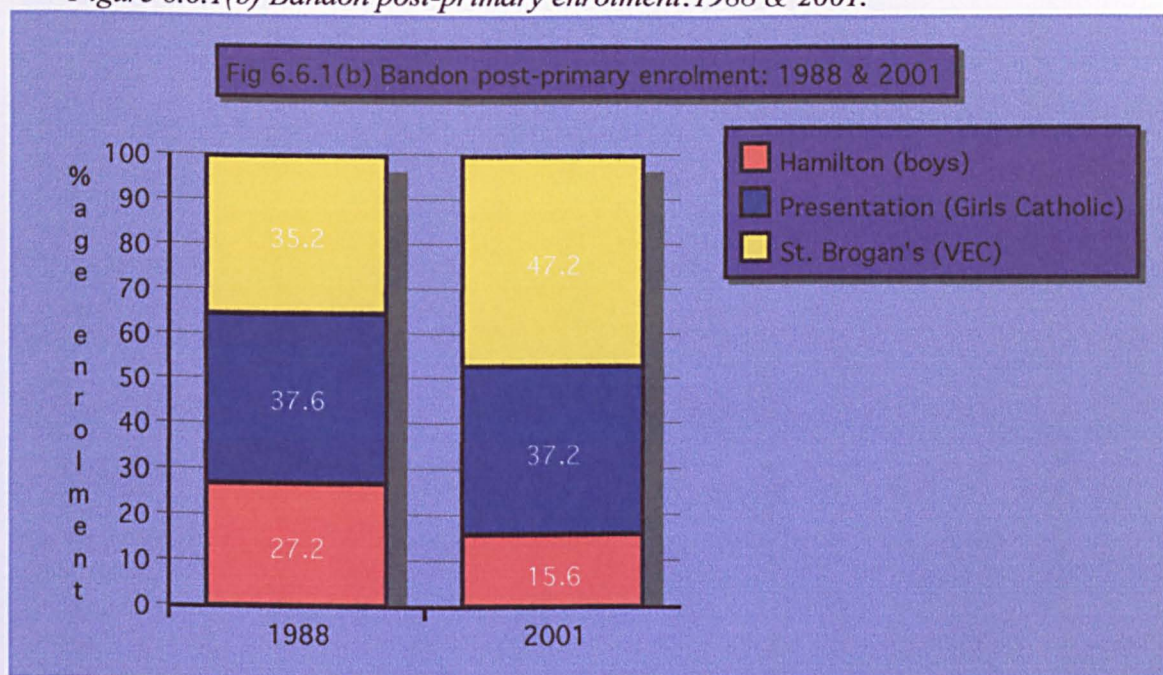
Figure 6.6.1(a) Bandon post-primary enrolment:1988-2001.



The most obvious finding in the above figure is the recent and sharp increase in enrolment in St. Brogan's College. What is also notable is that this development is at the expense of Hamilton boys school and, more recently, Presentation girls' school. St. Brogan's, despite being a vocational school, has extended its appeal to both male and female pupils. This may be due to the extension of the curriculum in that school to accommodate traditional secondary school subjects. The decline in enrolment in Hamilton High School is not insignificant. In 1988 it had an enrolment of 346 students. By 2001, this had been reduced to 253. A continuation of this trend would cause questions of viability to be raised in relation to the school. In that regard, the growth in St. Brogan's has had most impact on Hamilton High School.

Regardless of percentages, and significantly in terms of enrolment, table 6.6.1 also indicates that over the fourteen years of the survey, the number of post-primary students enrolled in Bandon rose by 345 to 1618 students.

Figure 6.6.1(b) Bandon post-primary enrolment: 1988 & 2001.



The above figure illustrates no real change in the percentage enrolment in the Presentation Convent, while the growth in St. Brogan's has been at the expense of Hamilton High School. In that regard, it is of note that St. Brogan's is the only other school in the town that enrolls boys. The increase in the number of students available, as already mentioned, has minimised this decline for Hamilton in terms of actual numbers enrolled. Though, while the total number of students available for post-primary enrolment rose by 345 during the fourteen year period, Hamilton's actual enrolment fell by 93 students during the same period. Hamilton's inability to retain its percentage appeal will be a major concern should the number available for post-primary enrolment decrease. Figure 6.6.3(a), below, indicates that such a decrease will occur in the short term.

6.6.2 Sources of enrolment for Bandon post-primary schools and an analysis of transfer trends

Table 6.6.2(a) Hamilton High School, Bandon first year enrolment, 1999-2001:
An analysis of feeder schools and transfers.

Feeder school	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	Combined 3yr total
04152T SN Cnoc an Bhaile	Available 11 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 10 Enrolled 2 20%	Available 10 Enrolled 1 10%	Available 31 Enrolled 3 9.7%
05477G Laragh NS	Available 9 Enrolled 4 44.4%	Available 10 Enrolled 1 10%	Available 8 Enrolled 2 25%	Available 27 Enrolled 7 25.9%
08972I Castlealack NS	Available 5 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 4 Enrolled 2 50%	Available 4* (2) Enrolled 0 0%	Available 13 Enrolled 2 15.4%
09537S Ballinadee NS	Available 9 Enrolled 1 11.1%	Available 6 Enrolled 1 16.7%	Available 7* (6) Enrolled 0 0%	Available 22 Enrolled 2 9.1%
10243I SN Achadh Eochaille	Available 12 Enrolled 1 8.3%	Available 6 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 6 Enrolled 1 16.7%	Available 24 Enrolled 2 8.3%
12263B Goggin's Hill NS	Available 16 Enrolled 1 6.3%	Available 26 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 18 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 60 Enrolled 1 1.7%
13375R Crossmahon NS	Available 18 Enrolled 2 11.1%	Available 20 Enrolled 7 35%	Available 18* (13) Enrolled 2 11.1%	Available 56 Enrolled 11 19.6%
14116V Kilbrittan NS	Available 19 Enrolled 4 21.1%	Available Enrolled 0 0%	Available 18 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 56 Enrolled 4 7.1%
14955R Bandon BNS	Available Enrolled (5)	Available Enrolled (4)	Available Enrolled (7)	Available Enrolled (16)
15550T Ballyheeda NS	Available 25 Enrolled 1 4%	Available Enrolled 0 0%	Available 20 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 59 Enrolled 1 1.7%
16876I SN Caipin	Available 7* (6) Enrolled 2 28.6%	Available 5 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 8 Enrolled 2 25%	Available 20 Enrolled 4 20%
17168J SN Inis Eoghanain	Available 23 Enrolled 5 21.7%	Available 30 Enrolled 8 26.7%	Available 25 Enrolled 2 8%	Available 78 Enrolled 15 19.2%
18020F SN an Gharrain	Available 10 Enrolled 1 10%	Available 11 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 7 Enrolled 1 14.3%	Available 28 Enrolled 2 7.1%
18431D SN Droichead na Bandan	Available 21 Enrolled 1 4.2%	Available 20 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 20 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 64 Enrolled 1 1.6%
19348V Newcestown NS	Available 19 Enrolled 1 5.3%	Available 19 Enrolled 3 15.8%	Available 16 Enrolled 2 12.5%	Available 54 Enrolled 6 11.1%
19595P St. Mary's Central	Available 22 Enrolled 2 9.1%	Available 22 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 32 Enrolled 6 18.8%	Available 76 Enrolled 8 10.5%
20025E Gaelscoil Droichead na Bandan	Available 12 Enrolled 2 16.7%	Available 13 Enrolled 3 23.1%	Available 25 Enrolled 5 20%	Available 50 Enrolled 10 20%
Feeder school total	28 80% of total	27 81.8% of total	24 70.6% of total	79 77.5% of total
Others	7 20% of total	6 18.2% of total	10 29.4% of total	23 22.5% of total
Totals	Available 241 Enrolled 35 14.5%	Available 235 Enrolled 33 14%	Available 242 Enrolled 34 14%	Available 718 Enrolled 102 14.2%

Table 6.6.2(b) Presentation Convent, Bandon first year enrolment, 1999-2001: An analysis of feeder schools and transfers.

Feeder School	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	Combined 3 yr totals
04152T SN Cnoc an Bhaile	Available 11 Enrolled 5 45.5%	Available 10 Enrolled 3 30%	Available 10 Enrolled 3 30%	Available 31 Enrolled 11 35.5%
05257P Pres Convent	Available 50* (41) Enrolled 39 78%	Available 42* (34) Enrolled 29 69%	Available 33* (23) Enrolled 20 60.6%	Available 125 Enrolled 88 70.4%
05477G Laragh NS	Available 9 Enrolled 2 22.2%	Available 10 Enrolled 4 40%	Available 8 Enrolled 2 25%	Available 27 Enrolled 8 29.6%
08972I Castlealack NS	Available 5 Enrolled 2 40%	Available 4 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 4* (2) Enrolled 2 50%	Available 13 Enrolled 4 30.8%
09537S Ballinadee NS	Available 9 Enrolled 4 44.4%	Available 6 Enrolled 3 50%	Available 7* (6) Enrolled 3 42.9%	Available 22 Enrolled 10 45.5%
10243I Achadh Eochaille	Available 12 Enrolled 1 8.3%	Available 6 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 6 Enrolled 1 16.7%	Available 24 Enrolled 2 8.3%
12263B Goggins Hill NS	Available 16 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 26 Enrolled 3 11.5%	Available 18 Enrolled 1 5.6%	Available 60 Enrolled 4 6.7%
13375R Crossmahon NS	Available 18 Enrolled 10 55.6%	Available 20 Enrolled 5 25%	Available 18* (13) Enrolled 7 38.9%	Available 56 Enrolled 22 39.3%
14116V Kilbrittan NS	Available 19 Enrolled 6 31.6%	Available 19 Enrolled 8 42.1%	Available 18 Enrolled 4 22.2%	Available 56 Enrolled 18 32.1%
15550T Ballyheeda NS	Available 25 Enrolled 4 16%	Available 14 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 20 Enrolled 8 40%	Available 59 Enrolled 12 20.3%
16863W Desertserges NS	Available 2 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 2 Enrolled 2 100%	Available 5 Enrolled 1 20%	Available 9 Enrolled 3 33.3%
16876I SN Caipin	Available 7* (6) Enrolled 0 0%	Available 5 Enrolled 3 60%	Available 8 Enrolled 2 25%	Available 20 Enrolled 5 25%
17168J SN Inis Eoghanain	Available 23 Enrolled 8 34.8%	Available 30 Enrolled 16 53.3%	Available 25 Enrolled 12 48%	Available 78 Enrolled 36 46.2%
17972J SN Cill Mhuire B	Available 25 Enrolled 2 8%	Available 26 Enrolled 6 23.1%	Available 24 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 75 Enrolled 8 10.7%
18020F SN an Gharrain	Available 10 Enrolled 2 20%	Available 11 Enrolled 5 45.5%	Available 7 Enrolled 3 42.9%	Available 28 Enrolled 10 35.7%
18444M SN Clogagh	Available 15 Enrolled 1 6.7%	Available 9 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 10 Enrolled 1 10%	Available 34 Enrolled 2 5.9%
18491V SN Garran an Easaigh	Available 2 Enrolled 1 50%	Available 2 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 3 Enrolled 2 66.7%	Available 7 Enrolled 3 42.9%
19348V Newcestown NS	Available 19 Enrolled 7 36.8%	Available 19 Enrolled 5 26.3%	Available 16 Enrolled 6 37.5%	Available 54 Enrolled 18 33.3%
19595P St. Marys Central	Available 22 Enrolled 8 36.4%	Available 22 Enrolled 7 31.8%	Available 32 Enrolled 6 18.8%	Available 76 Enrolled 21 27.7%
20025E Gaelscoil Droichead na Bandan	Available 12 Enrolled 4 33.3%	Available 13 Enrolled 4 30.8%	Available 25 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 50 Enrolled 8 16%
Feeder school total	106 94.6% of total	103 93.6% of total	84 96.6% of total	293 94.8% of total
Others	6 5.4% of total	7 6.4% of total	3 3.4% of total	16 5.2% of total
Totals	Available 311 Enrolled 112 36%	Available 296 Enrolled 110 37.2%	Available 297 Enrolled 87 29.3%	Available 904 Enrolled 309 34.2%

Table 6.6.2(c) *St. Brogan's College, Bandon first year enrolment, 1999-2001: An analysis of feeder schools and transfers.*

Feeder schools	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	Combined 3 yr
04152T SN Cnoc an Bhaile	Available 11 Enrolled 6 54.5%	Available 10 Enrolled 3 30%	Available 10 Enrolled 5 50%	Available 31 Enrolled 14 45.1%
05257P Pres Convent	Available 50* (41) Enrolled 11 22%	Available 42* (34) Enrolled 13 31%	Available 33* (23) Enrolled 13 39.4%	Available 125 Enrolled 37 26.9%
05477G Laragh NS	Available 9 Enrolled 4 44.4%	Available 10 Enrolled 4 40%	Available 8 Enrolled 2 25%	Available 27 Enrolled 10 37%
08972I Castlealack	Available 5 Enrolled 2 40%	Available 4 Enrolled 1 25%	Available 4* (2) Enrolled 0 0%	Available 13 Enrolled 3 23.1%
09537S Ballinadee NS	Available 9 Enrolled 4 44.4%	Available 6 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 7* (6) Enrolled 3 42.9%	Available 22 Enrolled 7 31.8%
12263B Goggin's Hill NS	Available 16 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 26 Enrolled 1 3.8%	Available 18 Enrolled 2 11.1%	Available 60 Enrolled 3 5%
13375R Crossmahon NS	Available 18 Enrolled 3 16.7%	Available 20 Enrolled 5 25%	Available 18* (13) Enrolled 4 22.2%	Available 56 Enrolled 12 21.4%
14116V Kilbrittan NS	Available 19 Enrolled 7 36.8%	Available 19 Enrolled 10 52.6%	Available 18 Enrolled 13 72.2%	Available 56 Enrolled 30 53.6%
15550T Ballyheeda NS	Available 25 Enrolled 5 20%	Available 14 Enrolled 3 21.4%	Available 20 Enrolled 5 25%	Available 59 Enrolled 13 22%
16863W Desertserges NS	Available 2 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 2 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 5 Enrolled 2 40%	Available 9 Enrolled 2 22.2%
16876I SN Caipin	Available 7* (6) Enrolled 0 0%	Available 5 Enrolled 1 20%	Available 8 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 20 Enrolled 1 5%
17168J SN Inis Eoghain	Available 23 Enrolled 3 13%	Available 30 Enrolled 3 10%	Available 25 Enrolled 4 16%	Available 78 Enrolled 10 12.8%
17972J SN Cill Mhuire B	Available 25 Enrolled 2 8%	Available 26 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 24 Enrolled 3 12.5%	Available 75 Enrolled 5 6.7%
18020F SN an Gharraín	Available 10 Enrolled 4 40%	Available 11 Enrolled 4 36.4%	Available 7 Enrolled 1 14.3%	Available 28 Enrolled 9 32.1%
18431D Droichead na Bandan	Available 24 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 20 Enrolled 2 10%	Available 20 Enrolled 2 10%	Available 64 Enrolled 4 6.3%
18444M SN Clogagh	Available 15 Enrolled 2 13.3%	Available 9 Enrolled 1 11.1%	Available 10 Enrolled 1 10%	Available 34 Enrolled 4 11.8%
18491V Garran an Easaigh	Available 2 Enrolled 1 50%	Available 2 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 3 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 7 Enrolled 1 14.3%
19348V Newcestown NS	Available 19 Enrolled 8 42.1%	Available 19 Enrolled 11 57.9%	Available 16 Enrolled 7 43.8%	Available 54 Enrolled 26 48.1%
19595P St. Mary's Central	Available 22 Enrolled 3 13.6%	Available 22 Enrolled 1 4.5%	Available 32 Enrolled 7 21.9%	Available 76 Enrolled 11 14.5%
19977G Bandon Boys NS	Available 39 Enrolled 33 84.6%	Available 27 Enrolled 25 92.6%	Available 24 Enrolled 12 50%	Available 90 Enrolled 70 77.8%
20025E Gaelscoil Droichead na Bandan	Available 12 Enrolled 0 0%	Available 13 Enrolled 2 15.4%	Available 25 Enrolled 12 48%	Available 50 Enrolled 14 28%
Feeder school total	98 97% of total	3 3.2% of total	98 97% of total	286 97% of total
Others	3 3% of total	90 96.8% of total	3 3% of total	9 3% of total
Totals	Available 362 Enrolled 101 27.9%	Available 337 Enrolled 93 27.6%	Available 335 Enrolled 101 30.2%	Available 1034 Enrolled 295 28.5%

As has been the case in the other towns examined, the vocational school, St. Brogan's College, experienced phenomenal growth over the three year period 1999-2002. Unlike Skibbereen, the appeal of Brogan's extends to schools within and outside the town. As table 6.6.2(c) illustrates, Brogan's major feeder schools are Bandon BNS and Presentation Convent, from the town itself, and Kilbrittan and Newcestown, two rural schools. It is also interesting that the Presentation Convent primary school should be a major feeder school for the vocational school in that the Secondary school, Presentation Convent, is a natural extension of the Presentation Convent Primary school, both being operated under the *aegis* of the Presentation Sisters. It also indicates the growing appeal of the vocational school to girls within the town of Bandon.

Enrolment at Hamilton High School is clearly in decline (table 6.6.1), further evidence of the growing appeal and broadening curriculum of St. Brogan's College. While the population of the area is growing and the students in the post-primary schools come from many primary schools, seven feeder schools could be termed 'significant feeder schools'.³⁷⁷ These schools are Presentation Convent (125 pupils), Bandon BNS (90 pupils), Inis Eoghanain (78 pupils), Crossmahon and Kilbrittan National Schools (56 pupils each), Newcestown NS (54 pupils) and Cnoc an Bhaile (31 pupils) From these 'significant' schools with an available enrolment of 490 pupils, Brogan's enrolled 199 or 40.6%, Presentation Convent enrolled 193 or 39.4% and Hamilton enrolled just 39 or 8%.³⁷⁸

In terms of transfer rates from Church of Ireland schools, there are two such schools within the general catchment area, Desertserges and Droichead na Bandan.

³⁷⁷ As indicated previously, significant schools are schools with more than 30 students available for post-primary transfer over the three years and who transfer at least 70% of their pupils to post-primary schools in the area, in this case Bandon.

³⁷⁸ These figures do not take cognisance of the fact that Hamilton and Presentation are single sex schools and, as such, not all students would be available for enrolment. Despite this constraint, there is a vast difference between the percentages of the two single sex schools, Hamilton (8%) and Presentation Convent(39.4%)

These schools have a combined 73 students for post-primary transfer. 6 (8.2%) went to Brogan's, 3 (4.1%) to Presentation Convent and 4 (5.5%) to Hamilton High School. While these figures are at variance with the figures already cited for the other towns in the survey, they are readily explained by the presence of a Church of Ireland post-primary school within the town.

6.6.3 Projected available enrolment for Bandon, 2002-2007.

Table 6.6.3(a) Hamilton High School, Bandon: A prediction of enrolment, 2002-2007, based on feeder school enrolment.

Feeder School	%	September 2002	September 2003	September 2004	September 2005	September 2006	September 2007
SN Cnoc an Bhaile	<u>9.7</u>	<i>In class 5</i> Est. 0.5	<i>In class 9</i> Est. 0.9	<i>In class 7</i> Est. 0.7	<i>In class 6</i> Est. 0.6	<i>In class 11</i> Est. 1.1	<i>In class 13</i> Est. 1.3
Laragh NS	<u>25.9</u>	<i>In class 17</i> Est. 4.4	<i>In class 12</i> Est. 3.1	<i>In class 8</i> Est. 2.1	<i>In class 7</i> Est. 1.8	<i>In class 16</i> Est. 4.1	<i>In class 8</i> Est. 2.1
Castlealack NS	<u>15.4</u>	<i>In class 3</i> Est. 0.5	<i>In class 3</i> Est. 0.5	<i>In class 2</i> Est. 0.3	<i>In class 5</i> Est. 0.8	<i>In class 3</i> Est. 0.5	<i>In class 5</i> Est. 0.8
Ballinadee NS	<u>9.1</u>	<i>In class 19</i> Est. 1.7	<i>In class 3</i> Est. 0.3	<i>In class 14</i> Est. 1.3	<i>In class 13</i> Est. 1.2	<i>In class 11</i> Est. 1	<i>In class 8</i> Est. 0.7
Achadh Eochaille	<u>8.3</u>	<i>In class 3</i> Est. 0.2	<i>In class 6</i> Est. 0.5	<i>In class 8</i> Est. 0.7	<i>In class 7</i> Est. 0.6	<i>In class 5</i> Est. 0.4	<i>In class 5</i> Est. 0.4
Goggin's Hill NS	<u>1.7</u>	<i>In class 21</i> Est. 0.4	<i>In class 23</i> Est. 0.4	<i>In class 19</i> Est. 0.3	<i>In class 15</i> Est. 0.3	<i>In class 18</i> Est. 0.3	<i>In class 13</i> Est. 0.2
Crossmahon NS	<u>19.6</u>	<i>In class 15</i> Est. 2.9	<i>In class 11</i> Est. 2.2	<i>In class 19</i> Est. 3.7	<i>In class 12</i> Est. 2.4	<i>In class 21</i> Est. 4.1	<i>In class 15</i> Est. 2.9
Kilbrittan NS	<u>7.1</u>	<i>In class 14</i> Est. 1	<i>In class 18</i> Est. 1.3	<i>In class 20</i> Est. 1.4	<i>In class 23</i> Est. 1.6	<i>In class 24</i> Est. 1.7	<i>In class 21</i> Est. 1.5
Bandon BNS	<u>n/a</u>	<i>In class</i> Est. n/a	<i>In class</i> Est. n/a	<i>In class</i> Est. n/a	<i>In class</i> Est. n/a	<i>In class</i> Est. n/a	<i>In class</i> Est. n/a
Ballyheeda NS	<u>1.7</u>	<i>In class 15</i> Est. 0.3	<i>In class 25</i> Est. 0.4	<i>In class 19</i> Est. 0.3	<i>In class 14</i> Est. 0.2	<i>In class 12</i> Est. 0.2	<i>In class 17</i> Est. 0.3
SN Caipin	<u>20</u>	<i>In class 4</i> Est. 0.8	<i>In class 5</i> Est. 1	<i>In class 6</i> Est. 1.2	<i>In class 4</i> Est. 0.8	<i>In class 1</i> Est. 0.2	<i>In class 10</i> Est. 2
SN Inis Eoghanain	<u>19.2</u>	<i>In class 30</i> Est. 5.8	<i>In class 34</i> Est. 6.5	<i>In class 34</i> Est. 6.5	<i>In class 36</i> Est. 6.9	<i>In class 37</i> Est. 7.1	<i>In class 29</i> Est. 5.6
SN An Gharrain	<u>7.1</u>	<i>In class 8</i> Est. 0.6	<i>In class 7</i> Est. 0.5	<i>In class 9</i> Est. 0.6	<i>In class 6</i> Est. 0.4	<i>In class 9</i> Est. 0.6	<i>In class 3</i> Est. 0.2
Droichead na Bandan	<u>1.6</u>	<i>In class 26</i> Est. 0.4	<i>In class 21</i> Est. 0.3	<i>In class 25</i> Est. 0.4	<i>In class 15</i> Est. 0.2	<i>In class 23</i> Est. 0.4	<i>In class 21</i> Est. 0.3
Newcestown NS	<u>11.1</u>	<i>In class 21</i> Est. 2.3	<i>In class 25</i> Est. 2.8	<i>In class 12</i> Est. 1.3	<i>In class 26</i> Est. 2.9	<i>In class 16</i> Est. 1.8	<i>In class 20</i> Est. 2.2
St Mary's Central	<u>10.5</u>	<i>In class 24</i> Est. 2.5	<i>In class 25</i> Est. 2.6	<i>In class 26</i> Est. 2.7	<i>In class 20</i> Est. 2.1	<i>In class 15</i> Est. 1.6	<i>In class 30</i> Est. 3.1
Gaelscoil Droichead na Bandan	<u>20</u>	<i>In class 14</i> Est. 2.8	<i>In class 18</i> Est. 3.6	<i>In class 27</i> Est. 5.4	<i>In class 21</i> Est. 4.2	<i>In class 24</i> Est. 4.8	<i>In class 32</i> Est. 6.4
% from feeder schools	<u>77.5</u>	27.1	26.9	28.9	27	29.9	30
% from Others	<u>22.5</u>	7.8	7.8	8.4	7.8	8.7	8.7
Totals	<u>100</u>	35	35	37	35	39	39

Table 6.6.3(b) Presentation Convent, Bandon: A prediction of enrolment, 2002-2007, based on feeder school enrolment.

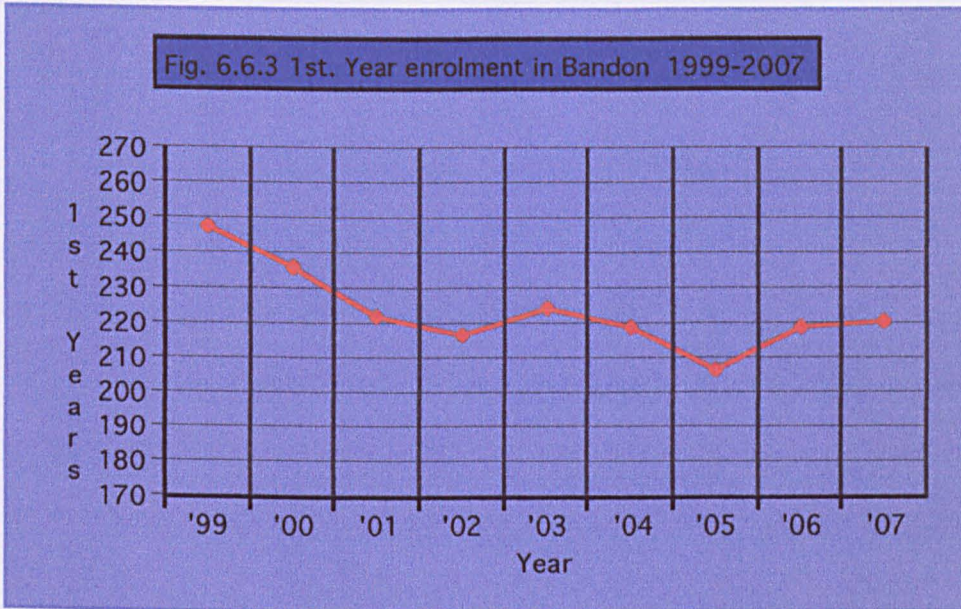
Feeder school	%	September 2002	September 2003	September 2004	September 2005	September 2006	September 2007
SN Cnoc an Bhaile	<u>35.5</u>	<i>In Class</i> 5 Est. 1.8	<i>In Class</i> 9 Est. 3.2	<i>In Class</i> 7 Est. 2.5	<i>In Class</i> 6 Est. 2.1	<i>In Class</i> 11 Est. 3.9	<i>In Class</i> 13 Est. 4.6
Presentation Convent	<u>70.4</u>	<i>In Class</i> 28 Est. 19.7	<i>In Class</i> 28 Est. 19.7	<i>In Class</i> 22 Est. 15.5	<i>In Class</i> 23 Est. 16.2	<i>In Class</i> 23 Est. 16.2	<i>In Class</i> 20 Est. 14.1
Laragh NS	<u>29.6</u>	<i>In Class</i> 17 Est. 5	<i>In Class</i> 12 Est. 3.6	<i>In Class</i> 8 Est. 2.4	<i>In Class</i> 7 Est. 2.1	<i>In Class</i> 16 Est. 4.7	<i>In Class</i> 8 Est. 2.4
Castlealack NS	<u>30.8</u>	<i>In Class</i> 3 Est. 0.9	<i>In Class</i> 3 Est. 0.9	<i>In Class</i> 2 Est. 0.6	<i>In Class</i> 5 Est. 1.5	<i>In Class</i> 3 Est. 0.9	<i>In Class</i> 5 Est. 1.5
Ballinadee NS	<u>45.5</u>	<i>In Class</i> 19 Est. 8.6	<i>In Class</i> 3 Est. 1.4	<i>In Class</i> 14 Est. 6.4	<i>In Class</i> 13 Est. 5.9	<i>In Class</i> 11 Est. 5	<i>In Class</i> 8 Est. 3.6
Achadh Eochaille	<u>8.3</u>	<i>In Class</i> 3 Est. 0.2	<i>In Class</i> 6 Est. 0.5	<i>In Class</i> 8 Est. 5.3	<i>In Class</i> 7 Est. 0.6	<i>In Class</i> 5 Est. 0.4	<i>In Class</i> 5 Est. 0.4
Goggin's Hill NS	<u>6.7</u>	<i>In Class</i> 21 Est. 1.4	<i>In Class</i> 23 Est. 1.5	<i>In Class</i> 19 Est. 1.3	<i>In Class</i> 15 Est. 1	<i>In Class</i> 18 Est. 1.2	<i>In Class</i> 13 Est. 0.9
Crossmahon NS	<u>39.3</u>	<i>In Class</i> 15 Est. 5.9	<i>In Class</i> 11 Est. 4.3	<i>In Class</i> 19 Est. 7.5	<i>In Class</i> 12 Est. 4.7	<i>In Class</i> 21 Est. 8.3	<i>In Class</i> 15 Est. 5.9
Kilbrittan NS	<u>32.1</u>	<i>In Class</i> 14 Est. 4.5	<i>In Class</i> 18 Est. 5.8	<i>In Class</i> 20 Est. 6.4	<i>In Class</i> 23 Est. 7.4	<i>In Class</i> 24 Est. 7.7	<i>In Class</i> 21 Est. 6.7
Ballyheeda NS	<u>20.3</u>	<i>In Class</i> 15 Est. 3	<i>In Class</i> 25 Est. 5.1	<i>In Class</i> 19 Est. 3.9	<i>In Class</i> 14 Est. 2.9	<i>In Class</i> 12 Est. 2.4	<i>In Class</i> 17 Est. 3.5
Desertserges NS	<u>33.3</u>	<i>In Class</i> 1 Est. 0.3	<i>In Class</i> 3 Est. 1	<i>In Class</i> 3 Est. 1	<i>In Class</i> 4 Est. 1.3	<i>In Class</i> 1 Est. 0.3	<i>In Class</i> 3 Est. 1
SN Caipin	<u>25</u>	<i>In Class</i> 4 Est. 1	<i>In Class</i> 5 Est. 1.3	<i>In Class</i> 6 Est. 1.5	<i>In Class</i> 4 Est. 1	<i>In Class</i> 1 Est. 0.3	<i>In Class</i> 10 Est. 2.5
SN Inis Eoghanain	<u>46.2</u>	<i>In Class</i> 30 Est. 13.9	<i>In Class</i> 34 Est. 15.7	<i>In Class</i> 34 Est. 15.7	<i>In Class</i> 36 Est. 16.6	<i>In Class</i> 37 Est. 17.1	<i>In Class</i> 29 Est. 13.4
SN Cill Mhuire B	<u>10.7</u>	<i>In Class</i> 24 Est. 2.6	<i>In Class</i> 18 Est. 1.9	<i>In Class</i> 19 Est. 2	<i>In Class</i> 16 Est. 1.7	<i>In Class</i> 16 Est. 1.7	<i>In Class</i> 18 Est. 1.9
SN An Gharrain	<u>35.7</u>	<i>In Class</i> 8 Est. 2.9	<i>In Class</i> 7 Est. 2.5	<i>In Class</i> 9 Est. 3.2	<i>In Class</i> 6 Est. 2.1	<i>In Class</i> 9 Est. 3.2	<i>In Class</i> 3 Est. 1.1
SN Clogagh	<u>5.9</u>	<i>In Class</i> 9 Est. 0.5	<i>In Class</i> 9 Est. 0.5	<i>In Class</i> 8 Est. 0.5	<i>In Class</i> 9 Est. 0.5	<i>In Class</i> 11 Est. 0.6	<i>In Class</i> 7 Est. 0.4
SN Gearran an Easaigh	<u>42.9</u>	<i>In Class</i> 8 Est. 3.4	<i>In Class</i> 6 Est. 2.6	<i>In Class</i> 5 Est. 2.1	<i>In Class</i> 3 Est. 1.3	<i>In Class</i> 5 Est. 2.1	<i>In Class</i> 6 Est. 2.6
Newcestown NS	<u>33.3</u>	<i>In Class</i> 21 Est. 7	<i>In Class</i> 25 Est. 8.3	<i>In Class</i> 12 Est. 4	<i>In Class</i> 26 Est. 8.7	<i>In Class</i> 16 Est. 5.3	<i>In Class</i> 20 Est. 6.7
St. Mary's Central NS	<u>27.7</u>	<i>In Class</i> 24 Est. 6.6	<i>In Class</i> 25 Est. 6.9	<i>In Class</i> 26 Est. 7.2	<i>In Class</i> 20 Est. 5.5	<i>In Class</i> 15 Est. 4.2	<i>In Class</i> 30 Est. 8.3
Gaelscoil Droichead na Bandan	<u>16</u>	<i>In Class</i> 14 Est. 2.2	<i>In Class</i> 18 Est. 2.9	<i>In Class</i> 27 Est. 4.3	<i>In Class</i> 21 Est. 3.4	<i>In Class</i> 24 Est. 3.8	<i>In Class</i> 32 Est. 5.1
Feeder school %	<u>94.8</u>	91.4	89.6	93.3	86.5	89.3	86.6
% from others	<u>5.2</u>	5	4.9	5.1	4.7	4.9	4.8
Total	<u>100</u>	96	95	98	91	94	91

Table 6.6.3(c) St. Brogan's College, Bandon: A prediction of enrolment, 2002-2007, based on feeder school enrolment.

Feeder School	%	September 2002	September 2003	September 2004	September 2005	September 2006	September 2007
SN Cnoc an Bhaile	<u>45.1</u>	In Class 5 Est 2.3	In Class 9 Est 4.1	In Class 7 Est 3.2	In Class 6 Est 2.7	In Class 11 Est 5	In Class 13 Est 5.9
Presentation Convent	<u>26.9</u>	In Class 28 Est 7.5	In Class 28 Est 7.5	In Class 22 Est 5.9	In Class 23 Est 6.2	In Class 23 Est 6.2	In Class 20 Est 5.4
Laragh NS	<u>37</u>	In Class 17 Est 6.3	In Class 12 Est 4.4	In Class 8 Est 3	In Class 7 Est 2.6	In Class 16 Est 5.9	In Class 8 Est 3
Castlealack NS	<u>23.1</u>	In Class 3 Est 0.7	In Class 3 Est 0.7	In Class 2 Est 0.5	In Class 5 Est 1.2	In Class 3 Est 0.7	In Class 5 Est 1.2
Ballinadee NS	<u>31.8</u>	In Class 19 Est 6	In Class 3 Est 1	In Class 14 Est 4.5	In Class 13 Est 4.1	In Class 11 Est 3.5	In Class 8 Est 2.5
Goggin's Hill NS	<u>5</u>	In Class 21 Est 1.1	In Class 23 Est 1.2	In Class 19 Est 1	In Class 15 Est 0.8	In Class 18 Est 0.9	In Class 13 Est 0.7
Crossmahon NS	<u>21.4</u>	In Class 15 Est 3.2	In Class 11 Est 2.4	In Class 19 Est 4.1	In Class 12 Est 2.6	In Class 21 Est 4.5	In Class 15 Est 3.2
Kilbrittan NS	<u>53.6</u>	In Class 14 Est 7.5	In Class 18 Est 9.6	In Class 20 Est 10.7	In Class 23 Est 12.3	In Class 24 Est 12.9	In Class 21 Est 11.3
Ballyheeda NS	<u>22</u>	In Class 15 Est 3.3	In Class 25 Est 5.5	In Class 19 Est 4.2	In Class 14 Est 3.1	In Class 12 Est 2.6	In Class 17 Est 3.7
Desertserges NS	<u>22.2</u>	In Class 1 Est 0.2	In Class 3 Est 0.7	In Class 3 Est 0.7	In Class 4 Est 0.9	In Class 1 Est 0.2	In Class 3 Est 0.7
SN Caipin	<u>5</u>	In Class 4 Est 0.2	In Class 5 Est 0.3	In Class 6 Est 0.3	In Class 4 Est 0.2	In Class 1 Est 0.1	In Class 10 Est 0.5
SN Inis Eoghain	<u>12.8</u>	In Class 30 Est 3.8	In Class 34 Est 4.4	In Class 34 Est 4.4	In Class 36 Est 4.6	In Class 37 Est 4.7	In Class 29 Est 3.7
SN Cill Mhuire B	<u>6.7</u>	In Class 24 Est 1.6	In Class 18 Est 1.2	In Class 19 Est 1.3	In Class 16 Est 1.1	In Class 16 Est 1.1	In Class 18 Est 1.2
SN An Garrain	<u>32.1</u>	In Class 8 Est 2.6	In Class 7 Est 2.2	In Class 9 Est 2.9	In Class 6 Est 1.9	In Class 9 Est 2.9	In Class 3 Est 1
Droichead na Bandon	<u>6.3</u>	In Class 26 Est 1.6	In Class 21 Est 1.3	In Class 25 Est 1.6	In Class 15 Est 0.9	In Class 23 Est 1.4	In Class 21 Est 1.3
SN Clogagh	<u>11.8</u>	In Class 9 Est 1.1	In Class 9 Est 1.1	In Class 8 Est 0.9	In Class 9 Est 1.1	In Class 11 Est 1.3	In Class 7 Est 0.8
Garran an Easaigh	<u>14.3</u>	In Class 8 Est 1.1	In Class 6 Est 0.9	In Class 5 Est 0.7	In Class 3 Est 0.4	In Class 5 Est 0.7	In Class 6 Est 0.9
Newcestown NS	<u>48.1</u>	In Class 21 Est 10.1	In Class 25 Est 12	In Class 12 Est 5.8	In Class 26 Est 12.5	In Class 16 Est 7.7	In Class 20 Est 9.6
St. Mary's Central	<u>14.5</u>	In Class 24 Est 3.5	In Class 25 Est 3.6	In Class 26 Est 3.8	In Class 20 Est 2.9	In Class 15 Est 2.2	In Class 30 Est 4.4
Bandon Boys NS	<u>77.8</u>	In Class 20 Est 15.6	In Class 29 Est 22.6	In Class 19 Est 14.8	In Class 13 Est 10.1	In Class 16 Est 12.4	In Class 24 Est 18.7
Gaelscoil Droichead na Bandon	<u>28</u>	In Class 14 Est 3.9	In Class 18 Est 5	In Class 27 Est 7.6	In Class 21 Est 5.9	In Class 24 Est 6.7	In Class 32 Est 9
Feeder school %	<u>97</u>	83.2	91.7	81.9	78.1	83.6	88.7
Others %	<u>3</u>	2.6	2.8	2.5	2.4	2.6	2.7
Total	<u>100</u>	86	95	84	81	86	91

In analysing the above tables, there is an inordinately high percentage of enrolment from 'others' for Hamilton High School. This is due, as explained in chapter 5.5, to the presence of 14955R Bandon BNS which should most likely be 19977G Bandon Boys NS. School 14955R closed in August 1992 and amalgamated with school 19977G.

Fig. 6.6.3 Actual and projected 1st. year enrolment for Bandon post-primary schools, 1999-2007.



The above figure shows a decline in first year student availability between 1999 and 2007. However, the decline is not sustained, and the development of planned housing estates, particularly in the Innishannon area, will impact positively on future enrolment in the area. The annual first-year post-primary intake of between 210 and 250 is sufficient to sustain three schools. However, the actual enrolment in Hamilton High School, between 33 and 39 during the period, must cast a question mark over the school's continued viability. This school, as already mentioned, is under private trusteeship. This may be a barrier to amalgamation with the larger St. Brogan's. Other than a merger of those two schools, the position of the Catholic Presentation Convent Secondary school seems quite secure for the foreseeable future.

6.7 An analysis of combined post-primary school enrolment in the five West Cork towns.

Having analysed the post-primary enrolment trends for each of the five towns, this section examines the post primary enrolment collectively, on an annual basis and according to school type , and, where possible, examines these in the context of the national trend as already identified in chapter two. It also looks more closely at the transfer percentages from Church of Ireland primary schools with a view to describing an overall picture in relation to post-primary education in West Cork.

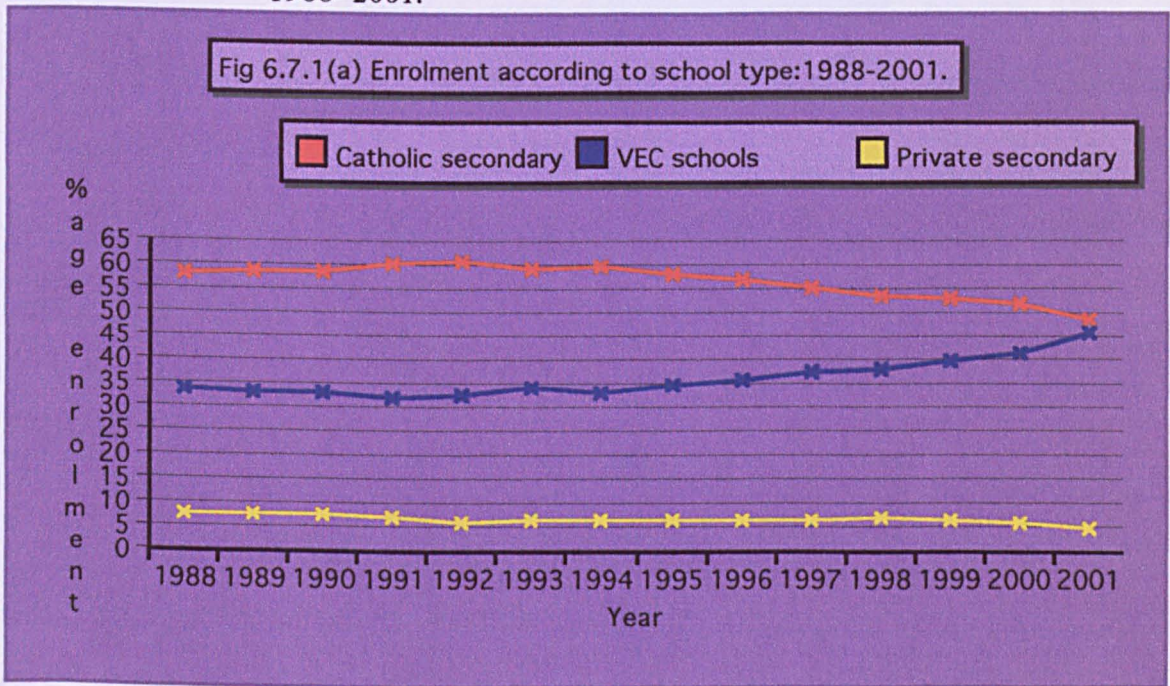
6.7.1 Total enrolment in the post-primary schools in the five towns, 1988-2002.

Table 6.7.1 West Cork cumulative percentages and enrolment according to school type, 1988-2002.

Year	Catholic Secondary schools.	VEC schools. (Vocational schools and community colleges)	Privately owned secondary school. (Hamilton High School, Bandon)	Total enrolment for the Year.
1988-1989	2676 58.6%	1541 33.8%	346 7.6%	4563
1989-1990	2695 58.8%	1532 33.4%	357 7.8%	4584
1990-1991	2728 58.9%	1542 33.3%	358 7.8%	4628
1991-1992	2800 60.7%	1485 32.2%	328 7.1%	4613
1992-1993	2921 60.9%	1577 32.9%	295 6.2%	4793
1993-1994	2988 59.2%	1730 34.3%	330 6.5%	5048
1994-1995	3038 60%	1696 33.5%	329 6.5%	5063
1995-1996	2969 58.3%	1780 34.9%	346 6.8%	5095
1996-1997	2968 57.3%	1869 36.1%	341 6.6%	5178
1997-1998	2904 55.8%	1962 37.7%	342 6.5%	5208
1998-1999	2747 54.1%	1956 38.5%	376 7.4%	5079
1999-2000	2667 53.4%	2002 40%	328 6.6%	4997
2000-2001	2542 52.2%	2034 41.8%	290 6%	4866
2001-2002	2364 48.9%	2215 45.9%	253 5.2%	4832
TOTALS	39007 56.9%	24921 36.4%	4619 6.7%	68547

The above table has a number of significant features. The table itself is derived from a combination of the previous tables in this chapter relating to the individual towns. In that context, as is expected, there is a substantial decline in enrolment in Catholic secondary schools, a decline of 9.7% of the total enrolment during the period 1988-2002 or 312 students. This is more noteworthy when one considers that the enrolment in the various school types increased by 269 during the same period. There is a corresponding increase in enrolment in the VEC schools, an increase of 11.9%. The privately owned Hamilton High school in Bandon has also suffered a decline in percentage enrolment, from 7.6% to 5.2%.

Figure 6.7.1(a) Enrolment according to school type in the five West Cork towns: 1988- 2001.



The above figure is a graphic translation of table 6.1.6. What is most noticeable is the approaching convergence between the enrolment percentages in both Catholic secondary schools and vocational education committee schools. It is also of note that this trend has become more pronounced since 1995 in four towns, Dunmanway, Bandon, Clonakilty and Bantry.

The exception to this trend is Skibbereen, where Catholic schools are enrolling more than the vocational school. However, as already indicated, this trend may be distorted due to the presence of Schull Community College outside the town. It is reasonable to assume that if Schull was not in operation, many of its students would attend the other VEC school in the area, Rossa College, Skibbereen. This assumption can be supported by research. Table 6.5.1 indicates that, since 1988, Mercy Heights has increased its actual enrolment, St. Fachtna's has varied within a small range but Rossa College has declined consistently from 227 in 1988 to 164 in 2002. Figure 6.5.1(a) depicts the percentage enrolment for each post-primary school in Skibbereen. Rossa College is the only school showing a decline. This may be a reflection of the school's inability to broaden its curriculum and 'compete' for enrolment with the two secondary schools in the town. The school is perceived locally as offering a 'traditional' vocational education. Ironically, as numbers decline and as the teacher allocation declines, a school is less able to broaden its curriculum and, thence, increase its appeal. In that sense, this may be the biggest challenge for Rossa College.

While issues of space do not allow for a sociological analysis of the possible reasons for this, it is possibly linked to the growing secularisation of Irish society and the decline of the influence of the Catholic Church in Ireland. Commentators have alluded to the significance of the withdrawal of Religious from secondary schools and the corresponding laicisation of the staff but the above trend may also indicate a growing preference for a broader based education than the education that secondary schools traditionally provided. This issue has already been addressed in chapter one. Linked to this would be the growth in the availability of the types of employment that vocational education prepares students for but also the growing popularity of the Institutes of Technology over traditional

universities as a form of third level education. However, the trend of Church of Ireland primary schools to transfer to Catholic secondary schools, as documented below, might cause questioning on the perceived Catholicity of Catholic secondary schools. Indeed, one wonders as to the extent that 'religious ethos' is a determinant in school choice by either pupils or parents. If parents and pupils perceive no difference in ethos, then vocational schools and community colleges will have an advantage in many instances, including those in the five towns studied, in that they have newer buildings and better facilities. Specifically, the presence of an ex-quota priest chaplain on the staff of Clonakilty Community College, the presence of part-time priest-teachers on the staff of St. Goban's, Bantry and St. Brogan's, Bandon and the presence of visiting priests in both Maria Immaculata Community College, Dunmanway and Rossa College, Skibbereen coupled with the withdrawal of Religious from the Catholic secondary schools in these towns may have impinged on the perceived Catholic ethos of the Secondary schools. In that regard, it could be claimed that Cork County VEC schools in general, and the community colleges in particular, have converged with the secondary school in terms of curriculum and, through the provision of salaried chaplains, in terms of religious ethos. Since the community colleges are managed jointly by the VEC and the local Diocese, this is not improper or unexpected. However, these community colleges and the other colleges, which are re-named vocational schools,³⁷⁹ provide an education that is far removed from traditional vocational or technical education.

What is clear from the above table is that enrolment in secondary education in the five towns in West Cork is in serious decline since 1997. The figures and percentages for 2002, as evidenced in table 6.7.1 above, illustrate that this down-

³⁷⁹ Note, for example, that Bantry Vocational School is now St. Goban's College and Skibbereen Vocational School is now Rossa College.

turn is both continuing and accelerating. Should that decline continue, the future of secondary education in West Cork will have to be questioned. In this regard, it is understandable that the Diocese of Cork and Ross would advocate the amalgamation of Ardscoil Phobal Bheanntrai with St. Goban's College to form a community college under the VEC. In such a scenario, the issue of the model agreements between the Catholic dioceses and the various VEC's becomes significant. This issue is addressed elsewhere.

Figure 6.7.1(b) Enrolment according to school type in the five West Cork towns: 1988 & 2001.

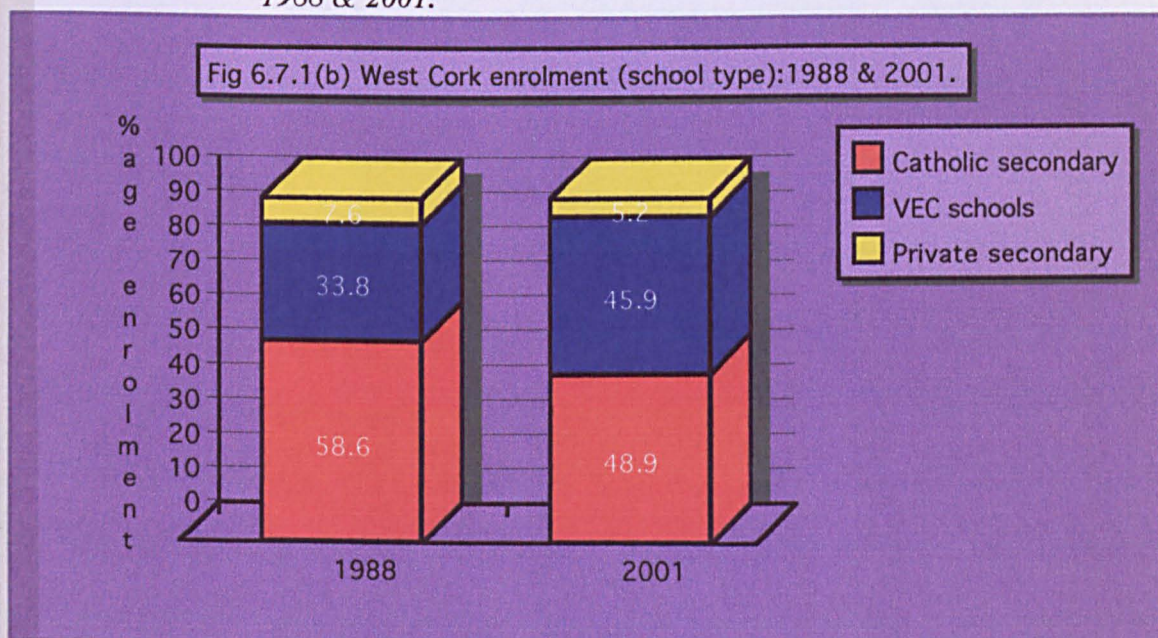
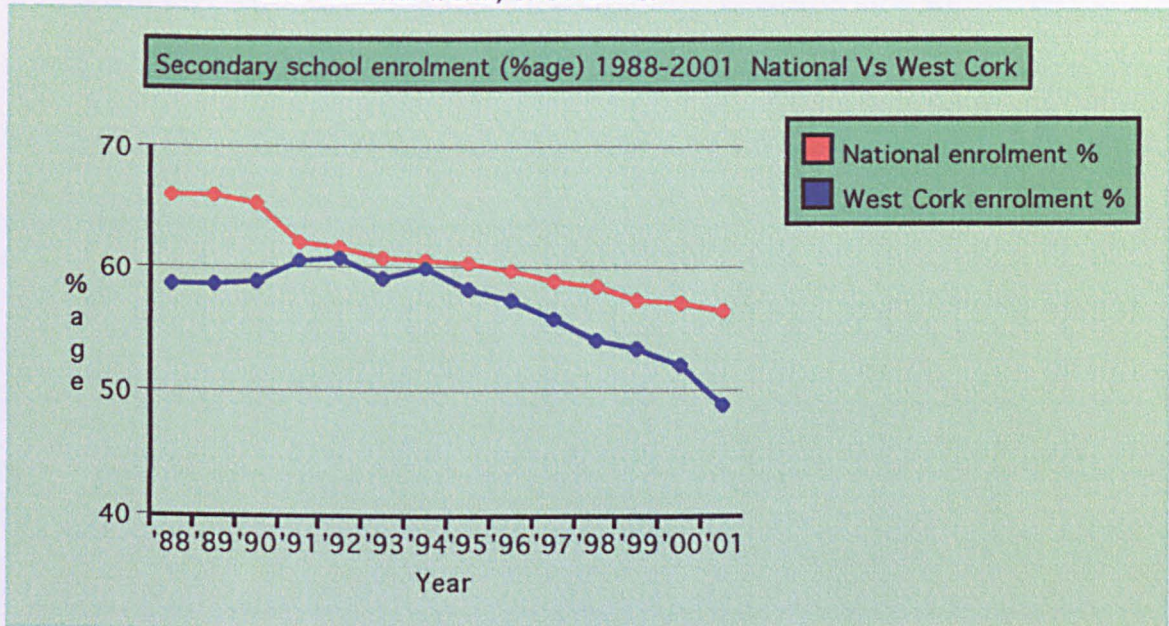


Figure 6.7.1(b) illustrates clearly the growth in enrolment in VEC controlled schools at the expense largely of the Catholic secondary school. However, it must be noted that the closure of Maria Immaculata Secondary School in September, 2002 and the subsequent transfer of its students to the VEC operated Maria Immaculata Community College, now gives a higher combined percentage of enrolment to VEC sector schools, within the five towns, for the first time.³⁸⁰

³⁸⁰ For the purpose of this thesis, due to the availability of Department statistics, enrolment in the various towns is examined up to, and including, the school year 2001-2002. Figures for 2002-2003 will not be available until mid-2003.

6.7.2 *A comparison between local and national enrolment trends in Catholic secondary schools.*

Figure 6.7.2 *Percentage secondary school enrolment: a comparison of the local and national trend, 1988-2001.*



The above figure confirms that the decline in secondary school enrolment in the towns in West Cork broadly reflects a national decline in the same schools. However, the situation becomes more serious when one considers that there are no community/comprehensive schools in the West Cork area examined.³⁸¹ In this regard, should there be a greater choice of school type, the decline in secondary school enrolment may be more dramatic in the West Cork area.

An amalgamation has taken place in Dunmanway, there is one planned for Bantry and talks have commenced about the possibility of an amalgamation in Skibbereen. Should these come to fruition, the role of the secondary school and the decline in its influence would be accentuated further in West Cork. In that regard, the national decline in the secondary school enrolment may be connected to the trend of religious and dioceses amalgamating their schools as evidenced in chapters three and four, into community schools and colleges.

³⁸¹ A community school is in operation in Castletownbere, some thirty miles west of Bantry. However, since no other school operates in the town, Castletownbere was not examined in this thesis. It should also be noted that while Castletownbere is in county Cork, it is in the Diocese of Kerry.

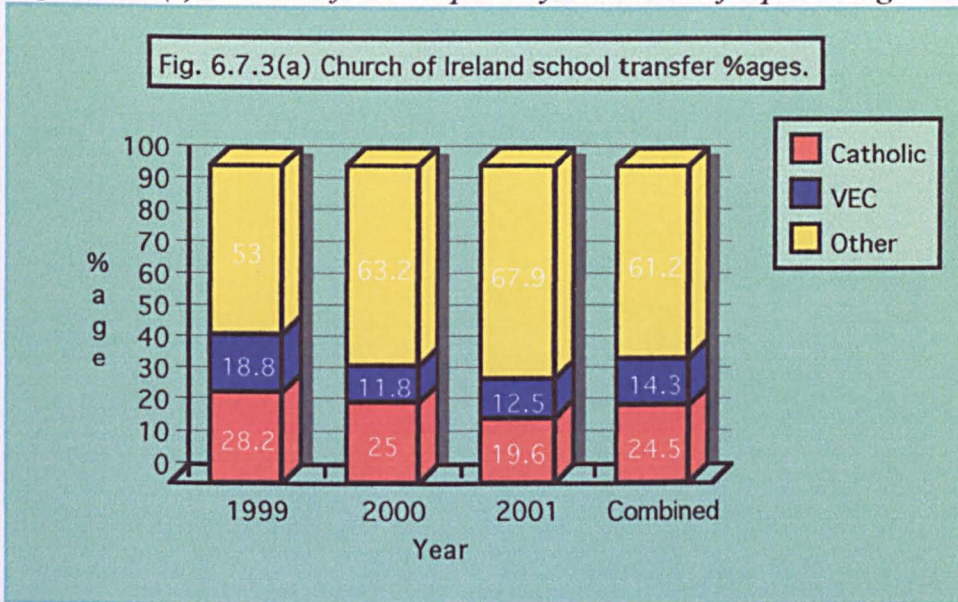
6.7.3 *An analysis of transfer trends from Church of Ireland primary schools within the five towns.*

There are nine Church of Ireland primary schools operating within the catchment areas of the five towns:- Abbeystrewry NS, Ballydehob No. 2 NS., Baile Muine NS, Droichead na Bandon NS, St. Brendan's NS., Bantry, Desertserges NS, Dunmanway Model NS, Naomh Sheamuis NS and Kilgariffe NS. An analysis of transfer patterns from these schools is difficult for two reasons. Firstly, many of these students attend the Church of Ireland operated Bandon Grammar School, either as day or boarding pupils. A bursary is available for boarding fees for Church of Ireland students who may wish to attend the school but are residing some distance from the school. Secondly, some of the pupils of these schools transfer to Schull Community College.³⁸² Accordingly, the percentage that enroll in VEC schools may be distorted in the following figures as cognissance cannot be made of these factors in making calculations.

Furthermore, any figures will be distorted by the large enrolment in Droichead na Bandan and that school's proximity to Bandon Grammar School. For comparison, two figures are devised, one including the pupils of Droichead na Bandan NS, the other, excluding them. Just one student transferred from a Church of Ireland school, Droichead na Bandan, to Hamilton High School, a private secondary school, over the three years. This pupil represents 1.6% of the 1999 figure and 0.5% of the total three year figure. For ease of analysis, this student is included in the Catholic secondary school figures.

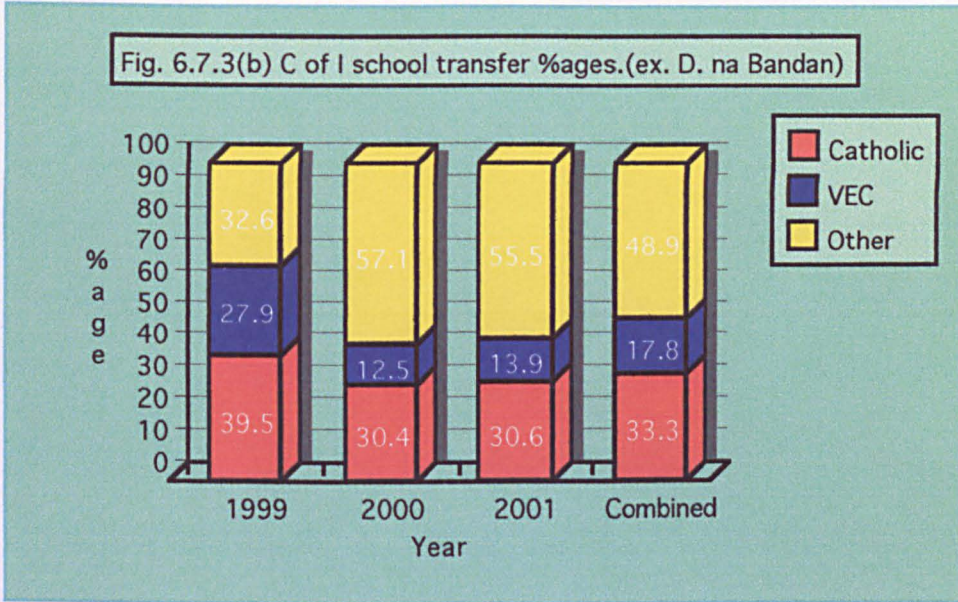
³⁸² This is particularly true of Ballydehob 2, St. Brendan's, Bantry and Naomh Sheamuis, Durrus. However, since the local rector of the Church of Ireland is on the Board of Management of Schull Community College, it should not be surprising that the Church of Ireland community would 'identify' with the school. As previously mentioned, Boards of Management of designated community colleges can, and in the case of Schull do, allow for a representative of the 'minority religion' to be a member of the Board of Management.

Figure 6.7.3(a) Church of Ireland primary school transfer percentages.



The significant 'other' percentage, to a large extent, represents Bandon Grammar School and Schull Community College. However, one might be surprised that more children from Church of Ireland primary schools in the area are attending Catholic secondary schools than multi-denominational vocational schools and community colleges. When one considers that many of these VEC schools have an arrangement in place whereby the local rector is paid to take religious instruction classes for the Church of Ireland pupils attending, this finding is even more surprising. It may also lead to the conclusion that many secondary schools are not being perceived as Catholic by the wider community. Of course, it may also reflect a traditional bias in favour of the secondary school curriculum by members of the Church of Ireland community.

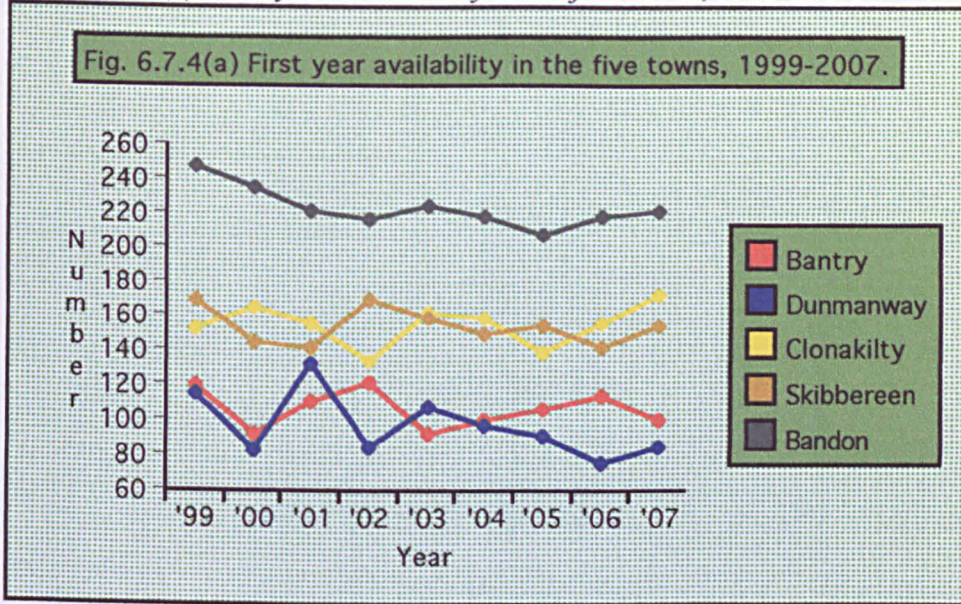
Figure 6.7.3(b) Church of Ireland primary school transfer percentages excluding Droichead na Bandan NS.



The presence of Droichead na Bandan NS within the town of Bandon, the large enrolment in that school and the school's proximity to Bandon Grammar School gives a distorted transfer picture compared to the other schools which are not adjacent to a Church of Ireland post-primary school. The above figure removes the influence of the pupils in Droichead na Bandan NS on post-primary transfer. As in the previous figure, it is immediately evident that Catholic schools are more popular with Church of Ireland pupils than are multi or non denominational schools.

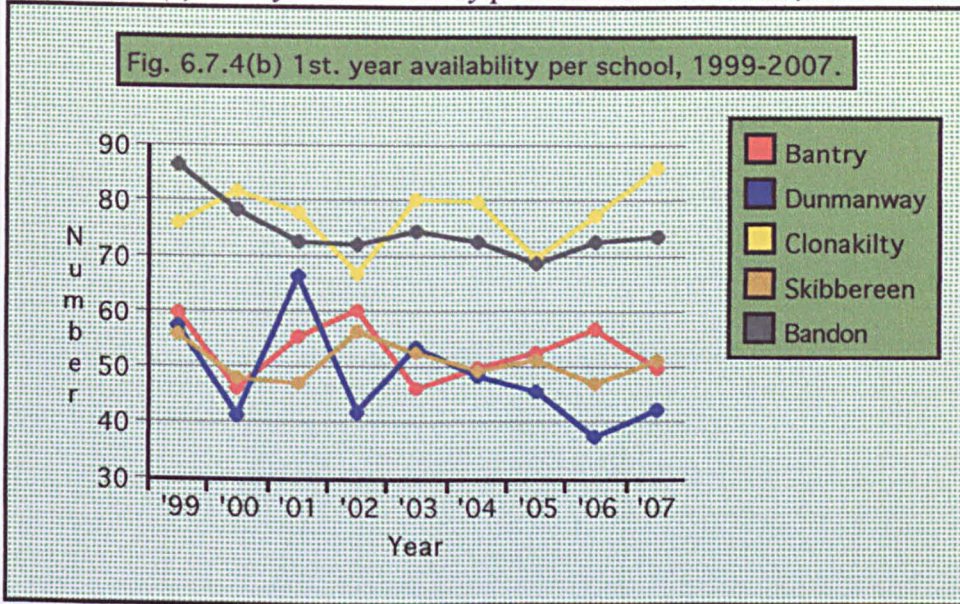
6.7.4 Future amalgamations.

Figure 6.7.4(a) First year availability in the five towns, 1999-2007.



One of the practical interpretations that can be made from this thesis is the location and urgency of future amalgamations within the five towns. The above figure plots the number of students that will be available for each town. Actual enrolment figures are used for the three years 1999, 2000 and 2001, the figures for the remaining years are derived from the prediction tables for each town, above. From this interpretation, Bandon, Skibbereen and Clonakilty have the most number of students available for post-primary enrolment. However, a difficulty arises. Skibbereen and Bandon have three post-primary schools, the remaining towns have just two. The above figure merely depicts the available enrolment for each town.

Figure 6.7.4(b) First year availability per school in each town, 1999-2007.



Of more importance is the above figure. In devising this figure, the available enrolment for each town was divided by the number of post-primary schools in that town. The result differs with figure 6.7.4(a), above. Two groupings emerge, Clonakilty is the least likely to amalgamate followed by Bandon. A clear gap emerges with Dunmanway, Bantry and Skibbereen with Dunmanway being most at risk - amalgamation has already taken place here. Skibbereen and Bantry fluctuate, on a year-to-year basis, for the lowest average enrolment. As already indicated, the Department of Education and Science has instigated talks on amalgamation in these towns recently. The above figure highlights the need for such a development. However, this presumes an equal enrolment in each school within each town which is not likely. However, as one school will usually enroll more than another, the case for amalgamation in any town can be strengthened regardless of the above figures- Hamilton High School in Bandon being the obvious example. Despite the high enrolment in Bandon in 2001 of 1618 pupils, Hamilton High School enrolled just 15.6% or 253 pupils.³⁸³

³⁸³ See Table 6.6.1, above

6.8 A comparison with Department of Education and Science predictions for post-primary enrolment in Bantry.

While the information available to the Department of Education and Science and to the writer is identical, a difference occurs in analysis which, in turn, results in a variation in predicted enrolment.

Table 6.8.1. A comparison of projected enrolment figures for both post-primary schools in Bantry.

Year	DES predictions for Ardscoil	Writers' predictions for Ardscoil	DES predictions for St. Goban's	Writers' predictions for St. Goban's
2002-2003	48	49	85	72
2003-2004	38	36	66	56
2004-2005	44	44	69	56
2005-2006	46	44	74	62
2006-2007	45	47	75	67
2007-2008	40	44	68	56

While the Department of Education and Science's and the writer's predicted enrolment figures for the Ardscoil are remarkably similar, there is a noted difference between the figures for St. Goban's. This difference can be explained, to some extent, by 'rounding' numbers to the nearest whole number. However, the impact of such a strategy is minimal. More significant is the difference in methodology.

The Department calculates the percentages of boys and girls within the catchment area that transfer to post-primary schools in Bantry. For the four years 1998 - 2001 inclusive, this 'combined' percentage was 79% of boys. In predicting future trends the Department allows for an 82% transfer rate from boys in primary schools within the catchment area to either of the post-primary schools in Bantry. The Department then assumes, based on previous trends, that 70% of these boys

will attend St. Goban's and 30% will attend the Ardscoil. In real terms, the Department assumes that 57% of the boys in all the primary schools will transfer to St. Goban's and 25% to the Ardscoil. The remaining 18% will transfer to schools outside the catchment area, most notably Schull Community College. Similarly, 83% of girls transferred to post-primary schools in Bantry. The Department does not change this figure. However, of these girls, it is assumed that 55% will attend St. Goban's and 45% will attend the Ardscoil. The Department thus assumes that 46% of the girls in the primary schools in the catchment area will transfer to St. Goban's and 37% to the Ardscoil with the remaining 17% transferring elsewhere. It is notable that in making predictions on future enrolment, the Department increases the percentage in the case of boys. Since more boys enroll in St. Goban's than in the Ardscoil, (70% and 30% respectively), this unexplainable increase will result in a higher enrolment for St. Goban's than the writer allows for.

The Department's methodology differs from that employed in this thesis, where the exact transfer percentage to post-primary schools in Bantry from each primary school is used to predict future transfer.

There are a number of risks to the Department approach, one of which is the failure to make allowances for local circumstances. As mentioned elsewhere, the presence of Schull Community College is a factor in post-primary transfer. Given the wide catchment area for Bantry, it is only reasonable to assume that the impact of Schull would be more significant on transfer rates from primary schools nearer to Schull Community College. For example, from tables 6.2.3(a) and (b) above, Carrigboy transfers just 44.7% to post-primary schools in Bantry. Similarly, Dromore NS, situated between Skibbereen, Dunmanway and Bantry, transfers 18.2% of its students to the Ardscoil and just 4.6% to St. Goban's, a

combined 22.8% transfer to Bantry. However, Departmental figures assume that both will transfer 82% of their boys and 83% girls of their girls to post-primary schools in Bantry. The lower transfer rates from these schools is, of course, compensated for by higher transfer rates from other schools. However, that compensation may not be equitable in future years. It is notable, for example, that Carrigboy has a larger sixth class size for the coming years.³⁸⁴ Other rural schools are in the same position. In terms of a corresponding compensation for this combined increase, Bantry BNS will experience a decrease in sixth class size. This school had an average class size of 27.7³⁸⁵ over the last three years. However, over the next three year, the average class size is 17.3, ten pupils fewer, and an average class size of 21 over the next six years.³⁸⁶ The difficulty lies in the transfer patterns from individual schools. Bantry BNS transfers 98.8%³⁸⁷ of its pupils, all boys, to schools in Bantry, Carrigboy NS only transfers 44.7% of its pupils to Bantry post-primary schools. In that regard, the increase in the number of boys in some primary schools cannot compensate for the decrease in the number of boys in the other, as these schools have different post-primary transfer percentages. The Department's use of an overall boys and girls transfer percentage, which it applies to the total number of boys and girls available for post-primary transfer, does not make allowances for these variations

In general terms, the fundamental flaw with the Department projections is that their methodology does not consider that some primary schools will transfer more than the average to one post-primary school. If these schools, in future years, have a larger or smaller number of students available for post-primary transfer, then variations in class size in these primary schools could impact

³⁸⁴ For the three years 1999-2001, the average 6th class size was 12.7, tables 6.2.2(a). The average size for the next 3 years is 16.3, table 6.2.2(b)

³⁸⁵ Table 6.2.2(a) a combined availability of 83 over three years.

³⁸⁶ Table 6.2.3(a) a combined availability of 52 over the next three years or 129 over the next six years.

³⁸⁷ 59% to St. Goban's and 39.8% to Ardscoil, see tables 6.2.2(a) and (b)

significantly on the Department's predicted enrolment. This could account, in part, for the consistently smaller enrolment for St. Goban's in the writer's predictions.

Surprisingly, there is a variation in the schools considered to be in the catchment area itself. These Departmental projections do not consider Scoil Naomh Sheamuis, which transfers a combined 15.4% of its pupils to post-primary schools in Bantry, and Mochomog NS, which transfers a more significant 91.7%, to be within the catchment area and, consequently, does not make allowances for them in the prediction tables.³⁸⁸

12685E Rushnacahera NS and 18468D Scoil Mhuire NS, Castledonovan, Drimoleague are considered to be part of the Bantry catchment area and are consequently factored into predicted enrolment figures. Scoil Mhuire is in the Dunmanway catchment area to which it transferred 52.6% of its pupils for the three years, 1999-2001, inclusive.³⁸⁹ Over the past three years, these schools enrolled no student in either of the post-primary schools in Bantry. Yet, Department figures predict that 82% of boys and 83% of girls will transfer from these schools to schools in Bantry. These schools have a combined 15 boys and 23 girls available for enrolment over the next six years. The writer's predictions do not consider these students due to the current transfer patterns in these schools. This fact alone could explain why the Department figures are higher than the writer's.

In the case of the Gaelscoil in Bantry, only 12.5% of students transferred to Goban's for the year 2001-2002, the only year for which it had students available for post-primary transfer. However, Department figures assume a transfer rate of between 82% and 83%. In effect, though the transfer rate of this school is

³⁸⁸ These figures are calculated from tables 6.2.3(a) and 6.2.3(b)

³⁸⁹ See tables 6.3.2(a) and 6.3.2(b)

relatively untested as it has had only one class available for transfer as of June 2002, the Department presumes that this new factor will conform to the same pattern as existing schools. It should also be remembered that Departmental projections can be made to facilitate Departmental policies and plans for the area. Combined, these factors account for the differences in predicted enrolment in both schools.

Also of interest is the combined number of students available for post-primary transfer. Again, due to a difference in methodology, differences arise.

Table 6.8.2. Departmental and writer's available enrolment predictions: 2002-2007.

Year	DES Predicted availability	Writers predicted availability
2002-2003	133	121
2003-2004	104	92
2004-2005	113	100
2005-2006	120	106
2006-2007	120	114
2007-2008	108	100

As indicated above, the variation can easily be explained by the Department's assumption that 82% of all boys and 83% of all girls in the catchment area will transfer to post-primary schools in Bantry. The writer, given the trends in individual schools over the past three years, calculates the post-primary transfer trends on a primary school by primary school basis. Hence the difference. The difference is also accounted for by variations in what constitutes the 'catchment area'.

However, regardless of which set of figures one uses, the next few years indicate an available enrolment that will not sustain two post-primary schools. A further benefit of amalgamation is that a new school within Bantry could increase the percentage transfer from 82% to 83% to between 90% and 95%. In that regard,

the Department of Education and Science has also prepared projections for a single school in Bantry based on a primary school transfer at first year stage of both 90% and 95%. While there are sufficient students in the above table to sustain a large single school, an increased enrolment would provide extra facilities, resources and subjects.

CHAPTER SEVEN: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION.

7.1 An analysis of post-primary education in the five towns.

Chapter six illustrated the enrolment trends in post-primary education within the five towns examined. However, in any analysis, account must be made of Department of Education and Science plans for post-primary education in those towns. In that regard, the findings in chapter six are corroborated by proposed amalgamations in Bantry and Skibbereen and an amalgamated school in Dunmanway. It is clear that the provision of, and enrolment in, post-primary schools in the five towns ten years from now will be radically different. Central to this change is the decline, in both number and enrolment, of Catholic secondary schools. However, a hidden change is also occurring. Vocational schools are also closing and amalgamating into community colleges. Since both of these institutions are operated by the VEC, the enrolled number in VEC schools is not declining.

While general trends have been identified, particularly in relation to Catholic schools, specific and local factors impinge upon each town. What follows is a synopsis of the findings in relation to each of these towns and an analysis of trends within each school type.

7.1.1 An analysis of post-primary education in Bantry.

Currently there are two post-primary schools in Bantry. The Department of Education and Science and the trustees of both schools wish an amalgamation to take place. There has been no real opposition to such a proposal at local level. The wisdom of an amalgamation is obvious. There has been a reversal of enrolment percentages between the two schools. However, currently, the combined enrolment of both schools is just 591. This is not sufficient to sustain two schools.³⁹⁰ Furthermore, there seems to be little hope of an increase in first

³⁹⁰ Table 6.2.1.

year enrolment for the foreseeable future.³⁹¹ Indeed, as larger ‘departing’ classes are replaced by smaller first year classes, overall numbers will continue to decline. This will have an effect on subject choice. It is worth noting that the Ardscoil removed Building Construction as a subject from the curriculum in the school in September 2002 and will only be able to offer it every other year. This is due to falling numbers and a decreased teacher allocation.³⁹²

The situation here is also interesting in that there has been a considerable decline in the numbers enrolled in the Catholic school. Over the fourteen years, 1988-2001, there has been a reversal of enrolment percentages, 60.3% in the Ardscoil in 1988 and 39.7% in St. Goban’s compared to 37.7% in the Ardscoil in 2001 and 62.3% in St. Goban’s.³⁹³ This conforms to a national decline in Catholic secondary school enrolment.³⁹⁴ These trends justify the proposal to amalgamate both schools. It seems certain that post-primary education in Bantry will be provided in a single school, most likely a community college operated as a partnership between the Diocese of Cork and Ross and County Cork Vocational Education Committee. However, as of January 2003, progress is at a standstill. The site initially identified at a location known locally as ‘The Ropewalk’ was found to be unsuitable after inspection by the Department’s engineers.³⁹⁵ A further site, owned by Cork County Council, has now been identified. This site is located in Seskin, an area nearer to the town and generally more suitable. Cork County Council have indicated to the CEO of the VEC that they would require €600,000 for the site. In that regard, County Cork VEC are currently awaiting permission from the Department of Education and Science to enter into negotiations to

³⁹¹ Figure 6.2.3(a).

³⁹² Writer in conversation with Rev. Dr. Deenihan, Chairman, Board of Management, Ardscoil Phobal Bheanntai, September 12th. 2002.

³⁹³ Figure 6.2.1(b).

³⁹⁴ Figure 6.7.2.

³⁹⁵ This information was given to the writer, as Chairman of the Board of Management of St. Goban’s College, on 20 January 2003.

purchase this site. Hence, it seems certain that it will be some time before a new, amalgamated school is operational given the current financial constraints which the Department is working under, particularly in relation to building projects.

7.1.2 An analysis of post-primary education in Dunmanway.

In many regards, any discussion on the Dunmanway situation is rendered 'academic' by the amalgamation between the two schools in September 2002. While the vocational school increased its percentage enrolment from 21.8% in 1988 to 52.5% in 2001, the combined number enrolled in the town of 650 pupils in 2001 was not sufficient to sustain two schools.³⁹⁶ More importantly, predicted future first year classes will be much smaller, resulting in an even smaller school enrolment in both cases.³⁹⁷ Furthermore, it is predicted that the percentage enrolled in Maria Immaculata would have continued to decline.³⁹⁸ However, while the amalgamation may have been of benefit to the students of both schools, particularly in terms of a new building, improved facilities, a greater subject choice and dedicated classes for all streams within a particular subject, in real terms the amalgamation represents a further decline in the number of *de jure* Catholic schools in operation and a further decrease of 309 students enrolled therein.³⁹⁹ The amalgamation was prompted by the withdrawal of the Daughters of Charity (the congregation that managed Maria Immaculata Secondary School) from education in the town due to a decline in numbers, although there was clearly a falling percentage enrolment in that school. Whatever the reason, as of September 2002, post-primary education in Dunmanway is being provided in a single school under the aegis of County Cork VEC and the Daughters of Charity.

³⁹⁶ Table 6.3.1.

³⁹⁷ This finding is supported dramatically by figure 6.3.3(a) which shows a total first year enrolment of 75 in 2006.

³⁹⁸ Tables 6.3.3(a) and 6.3.3(b).

³⁹⁹ Table 6.3.1.

7.1.3 An analysis of post-primary education in Clonakilty.

Like the previous two centres, Clonakilty is also served by two post-primary schools, a Catholic secondary school and a VEC school - in this instance a community college. Again, like the previous centres, enrolment in the Catholic school has been in decline, from 53.7% in 1988 to 46.4% in 2001.⁴⁰⁰ Amalgamation has not been mentioned due, no doubt, to the large numbers enrolled between both schools - 1080 in 2001.⁴⁰¹ However, this enrolment is boosted by some students boarding in the Catholic school. Boarding is now being 'phased out', a move which will decrease the numbers enrolled in the Sacred Heart Secondary School. Notwithstanding this development, an increased first year enrolment is predicted for the short term.⁴⁰² The increased enrolment in the feeder schools will sustain both schools in Clonakilty for the foreseeable future. It should also be noted that, should an amalgamation take place, the new school would have an enrolment of over 1000 pupils, a figure which may be too large.⁴⁰³ The growth in enrolment in the community college seems to be an indication of its ability to attract girls to the school. While the community college will continue to grow and the secondary enrolment will decline further, regardless of the end of boarding,⁴⁰⁴ it seems certain that post-primary education in Clonakilty will be provided by both a Catholic secondary school and a community college.

7.1.4 An analysis of post-primary education in Skibbereen.

Amalgamation has been 'suggested' by the trustees of St. Fachtna's (the Diocese of Cork and Ross), Mercy Heights (the Sisters of Mercy), and Rossa College (County Cork VEC), the three post-primary schools in operation within the town.

⁴⁰⁰ Table 6.4.1.

⁴⁰¹ Ibid.

⁴⁰² Table 6.4.3(a).

⁴⁰³ Table 6.4.1.

⁴⁰⁴ Tables 6.4.3(a) & (b).

While discussions have not commenced, anecdotal evidence suggests that such a proposal will not have the approval of staff. Skibbereen is remarkable in that another VEC school - Schull Community College -has opened within the catchment area. This has impacted most negatively on the other VEC school - Rossa College. Three factors suggest an amalgamation: (1) the decline in the numbers enrolled in the three schools from 1010 in 1996 to 893 in 2001,⁴⁰⁵ (2) a continued decline is predicted in the numbers that will enroll in the schools in the town for the immediate future⁴⁰⁶ and (3) a particularly low enrolment in one school, Rossa College of 164,⁴⁰⁷ which makes it extremely difficult for that school to operate effectively.

Difficulties in the amalgamation process will arise given the relatively high enrolment of 422 in Mercy Heights and 307 in St. Fachtna's. The percentage enrolment in these schools has almost remained constant. There may be a perception that amalgamation is the consequence of, or the 'punishment' for, an 'unsuccessful' school. Should such an amalgamation take place, as of 2001 figures, 729 students would be lost to *de jure* Catholic schools and there would be a corresponding reduction of 2 Catholic schools in operation. Given the relatively small percentage enrolled in the vocational school, 18.4%, it seems likely that any such amalgamation would result in a community school instead of a community college. However, even this is not certain as the ASTI has recommended amalgamations into community colleges in the past.⁴⁰⁸

⁴⁰⁵ Table 6.5.1.

⁴⁰⁶ Figure 6.5.3(a).

⁴⁰⁷ Table 6.5.1.

⁴⁰⁸ Bernard Moynihan of the ASTI informed staff of Ardscoil Bheanntai in May 2001 that, in the event of an amalgamation, the ASTI could negotiate a better deal for their members in a community college under County Cork VEC than they could with the Department of Education and Science in a community school. The ASTI is the teacher union in both St. Fachtna's and Mercy Heights.

7.1.5 An analysis of post-primary education in Bandon.

While Bandon and Skibbereen are both served by three post-primary schools, the resemblance seems to end there. The vocational school in Bandon has the highest enrolment, 763 or 47.2% of the students within the town, the Catholic school has 602 students or 37.2% and the privately owned secondary school, Hamilton High School, has just 253 students or 15.6% of the total enrolment.⁴⁰⁹ While the numbers in Hamilton are below what one might expect in a viable school, the overall numbers in the town, 1618, make an amalgamation unlikely. As in the other centres, there has been a movement in the enrolment percentages. Over the fourteen years 1988-2001, the vocational school has increased its percentage by 12%, the Catholic school has decreased its enrolment by just 0.4%, while the privately owned secondary school has suffered a decrease of 11.6%.⁴¹⁰ In that regard, it should be noted that the Catholic school is an all-girls school. Bandon is ideally situated to benefit from the growth of Cork city and the planned expansion of the satellite town of Innishannon, a town within the catchment area. For that reason, despite the decline in current feeder-school enrolment, the future of the three schools seems secure. However, it is possible that moves may be made to amalgamate the all-boys Hamilton High School with St. Brogan's College. Regardless, there is little possibility of a single post-primary school in Bandon.

7.2 An analysis of Catholic post-primary education in West Cork.

As of June 2001, there were six Catholic post-primary schools in the five towns, Ardscoil Phobal in Bantry, Maria Immaculata in Dunmanway, Sacred Heart in Clonakilty, St. Fachtna's and Mercy Heights in Skibbereen and Presentation Convent in Bandon. As of September that was reduced to five, with the closure of

⁴⁰⁹ Table 6.6.1.

⁴¹⁰ Table 6.6.1.

Maria Immaculata due to amalgamation. Should the proposed amalgamations take place in Bantry and Skibbereen, that figure would be reduced to just two schools. Even without this possible, if not probable, decline, Catholic school enrolment has been in decline in the five towns over the past fourteen years, from 58.6% of enrolment in 1988 to 48.9% in 2001. During that time, VEC enrolment rose from 33.8% to 45.9%. The opening of Maria Immaculata Community College in September 2002, and the consequent enrolling of Maria Immaculata's students as students of a VEC school, will increase the VEC percentage at the expense of the secondary Catholic school percentage.

It is notable that the two 'safest' secondary schools, Presentation Convent, Bandon and Sacred Heart, Clonakilty, are all-girls schools.⁴¹¹ The two schools in Skibbereen maintained their percentage enrolment within a range of a few percent; these schools are also single sex schools. The Catholic schools that suffered a significant decline in their percentage enrolment were Ardscoil Phobal in Bantry and Maria Immaculata in Dunmanway. These were the only co-educational secondary schools in the five towns. In that regard, certain conclusions may be drawn. Secondary schools, in order to compete with vocational schools, introduced many traditional vocational subjects to their curriculum such as woodwork and metalwork. This move may have been counter-productive as it blurred the traditional distinction between secondary and vocational education.⁴¹² However, such curricular changes can be said to have been a feature of all sectors in post-primary education. Furthermore, most secondary schools are older buildings, having been established by religious orders and congregations generations ago. Funding for expansion and renovation in these schools is provided by the Department of Education and Science, a process that is lengthy, difficult

⁴¹¹ Note, as previously mentioned, that a small number of boys, 9 in total, are in the Repeat Leaving Certificate Class in Sacred Heart, as of September 2000.

⁴¹² This issue is addressed in chapter one.

and with no guarantee of success. The proposal to amalgamate in Bantry came in the context of a refusal of such funding for the Ardscoil. By contrast, many of the vocational schools are newer, in better condition and, consequently, have better facilities. Funding for these schools is provided by the VEC, a process which seems to be more effective than dealing with the Department directly. In that regard, secondary schools cannot compete with VEC schools. The only schools that have so competed are those that have retained their traditional single-sex enrolment policy. The numerical decline of Religious and their withdrawal from schools has obviously had no negative impact on VEC schools, but has impacted greatly on secondary schools. This decline and withdrawal has also contributed to a 'loss of identity' for the secondary school. This contention is supported by the fact that there has been no religious on the staff of Ardscoil Phobal Bheanntai since 1998 and there has been a lay principal on staff for some fourteen years. By contrast, the most 'successful' secondary schools in terms of retaining percentage enrolment are single-sex girls schools, Sacred Heart, Clonakilty, where a Sister of Mercy is principal, and Presentation Convent, Bandon, where a Presentation Sister was principal until 2001. However, other factors may also be operating in these towns, though it must be noted that none of the three schools are fee-paying.

7.3 An analysis of VEC post-primary education in West Cork.

It is clear that the number of pupils enrolled in VEC post-primary schools in the five towns in West Cork is increasing. In 1988, such schools had 1,541 pupils or 33.8% of the available enrolment. By 2001, these schools had 2,215 pupils or 45.9% of the available enrolment.⁴¹³ This period, while experiencing enrolment growth within the sector, saw no change in the number of schools in operation.

⁴¹³ Table 6.7.1.

As previously recorded, amalgamation has taken place in Dunmanway between a vocational school and a secondary school into a VEC school - a community college. A similar development is imminent in Bantry. This will further, and dramatically, increase the enrolment percentages within VEC schools. Since a further amalgamation is being proposed for Skibbereen, the growing prominence of the VEC sector seems assured. This trend corresponds to the national trend.⁴¹⁴ As outlined in chapter one, the secondary school was a development that was established to answer a specific need in Irish society at the time - the provision of a Catholic post-primary education. That education is now available from other sources, many of which are better funded and more conveniently located, in that they were specifically build to address the educational needs of newer communities. Foremost among these are the schools operated by the Vocational Education Committees. In that regard, there is compelling evidence for asserting that the educational landscape of the future will be dominated by VEC schools and community schools operated, in many cases, in partnership with a religious order/ congregation or diocese. This development is interesting in that it mirrors, in some ways, what was proposed in the White Paper on Education, *Charting our Education Future*.⁴¹⁵

That document outlined what the functions of a proposed Regional Education Board would be.⁴¹⁶ Foremost amongst these were the promotion of 'equality of access to participation in and benefit from education', the enhancement of the quality of education, and the provision of a partnership between the Department, the providers of education, the parents and local community interests.⁴¹⁷ In a

⁴¹⁴ Figure 6.7.2.

⁴¹⁵ Department of Education. (1995) *op cit.*

⁴¹⁶ As previously mentioned, with a change of Government, policy changed and the Regional Education Boards (REB's) were never introduced.

⁴¹⁷ Department of Education. (1995) *op cit.*, p 166.

sense, it could be argued that the *Vocational Education (Amendment) Act, 2001*⁴¹⁸ attempts to fulfill some of these provisions through the composition of vocational education committees, though, as outlined below, this is by no means adequate from a Church perspective.

However, while the VECs generally, and, in the context of this thesis County Cork VEC specifically, are expected to become a more significant player in the area of post-primary education through the growth of community colleges, concerns have been raised as to the ability of the VECs to undertake such a role. Drudy and Lynch believed VECs to be a 'highly politicised' force in second-level education as they are largely controlled by representatives of local authorities.⁴¹⁹ While this composition can be a strength, in that it ensures that the VECs are accountable locally to democratically elected public representatives, it has also had a detrimental effect on the public image of VECs in that it has allowed suggestions of local bias at interview stage, politicisation of appointments and the canvassing of, and by, members. However, this pertains to times past and, in recent times, the influence of the elected members of the VEC over appointments is negligible as these appointments are made by interview boards, members of which are trained for the role they perform. In that regard, the current VEC is a professional body that, given the results of this writer's analysis, operates post-primary schools that are enjoying unprecedented success in terms of enrolment.

7.4 An emerging picture of Catholic second level education.

This thesis has plotted a remarkable and dramatic convergence between the secondary school and the vocational school. Earlier chapters have described the difference in origin, curriculum and traditional intake of these schools, a diversity

⁴¹⁸ Department of Education and Science. (2001) *Vocational Education (Amendment) Act, 2001*. Dublin: Stationery Office.

⁴¹⁹ Drudy and Lynch. (1993) *op cit.*, pp 125-126.

that cannot be overemphasised and has been much commented upon. Ireland, a relatively short time ago, was served by a divisive system of second level education:

Intelligent children continued from primary or national school into a secondary school if their parents could afford the fees, or if the particular religious order waived them and the children passed the entrance examination. Often the less academic and those who could not pay fees attended the vocational school or 'the tech' as it was called colloquially. An eminent educationalist, bemoaning the divisiveness of the system, described the latter as 'dead end kids' who were forced to attend 'educational dustbins.'⁴²⁰

This system of education was not alone divisive, but, at its worst, was the antithesis of the intentions of the founders of the congregations that managed many of the secondary schools. It should also be remembered that within the religious secondary schools there were divisions also.

Orders like the Ursulines, the Sacred Heart, the Dominican, the Loreto, St. Louis, the Jesuits, the Benedictines attracted parents who could afford higher fees. Families with less disposable income might be able to pay the lower fees charged by the Presentation, Mercy, Holy Faith, Brigidine, Marist sisters and the De La Salle, Marist and Christian Brothers.⁴²¹

To be fair, for a long time, many in Church circles have been voicing concern at the direction secondary or Catholic education was taking, as, given the way education was organised, the Church had 'almost complete direction of secondary education'.⁴²² A visiting professor, Eoin Mac Tiarnain, addressed the Conference of Convent Secondary Schools in 1960 and had 'the courage or the temerity' to ask the assembled female religious 'whether or not (their) schools contributed positively to Irish society'.⁴²³ As far back as 1963, a change in the secondary

⁴²⁰ Doyle, Eileen. (2000) *op cit.*, p 32.

⁴²¹ *Ibid.*, p 31.

⁴²² Dr. Peter Birch, Professor of Education at Maynooth and, later, Bishop of Ossory, at an address to the AGM of the CCSS (Conference of Convent Secondary Schools), 25 June 1957. cited in Doyle, Eileen.(2000) *op cit.*, p 280

⁴²³ Doyle, Eileen.(2000) *op cit.*, pp 32 & 280 Doyle refers to pages 32-35 of the Report of the 1960 Annual General Meeting of the CCSS.

school system was advocated, involving a corresponding change, by religious, towards local and community based education.⁴²⁴ However, Birch, who proposed the change, seems not to have enjoyed unanimous approval for reform amongst his colleagues on the Episcopal Conference. Archbishop Ryan of Dublin expressed an impatience with sisters who placed an ‘emphasis on teaching the poor’. In an address to sisters in 1972, he reminded them that ‘the well-heeled also have souls’.⁴²⁵

The change Birch advocated did not immediately happen and secondary education continued as before. However, the ‘local and community based’ education models could be said to have arrived with the introduction of community schools and colleges in 1972 and 1978, respectively.⁴²⁶ In many regards, the shift from secondary schools to VEC schools that this thesis has outlined at both a local and national level, is a move to these local and community based education models, though it might be uncharitable to suggest that this move has ‘been forced on the religious authorities by their declining numbers’.⁴²⁷

Another significant question that was posed in chapter one related to the future of Catholic schools. Given that almost all secondary schools are Catholic schools, one must address concerns as to the future of Catholic post-primary education given the decline of the secondary school. This thesis has endeavoured to illustrate that the deeds of trust and model agreements of community schools and colleges adequately address the concerns of the Catholic parties. It has also been noted that these agreements are not just theoretical and abstract but are working. It has been commented that teachers are ‘bringing the message of Jesus

⁴²⁴ This change in direction was advocated by Bishop Birch and is referred to in Doyle, Eileen. (2000) *op cit.*, p 280

⁴²⁵ An address by Archbishop Ryan to religious sisters at the Mater Dei Institute of Religious Education, Dublin, 21 September 1972. cited in Doyle, Eileen. (2000) *op cit.*, p 279.

⁴²⁶ This matter is dealt with in detail in chapter one.

⁴²⁷ Rooney, Brendan (1998) *op cit.*, pp 14-15.

to young people in state, especially VEC, schools throughout the country.⁴²⁸

Furthermore, Feheny asks :

Would it not be ironic if the teachers in these schools surpassed their colleagues in Catholic second-level schools in their efforts to foster an ethos, which though perhaps not as overtly Catholic, was, nevertheless, effective in upholding gospel values.⁴²⁹

As already mentioned, due to discrepancies in funding and the payment of ex-quota, salaried chaplains to Catholic secondary schools, this scenario is likely.⁴³⁰

While much of the opposition to a single system of post-primary education has been voiced in relation to choice, the uncertain future enrolment of schools and the ethos of the surrounding communities have also been identified as obstacles to a policy of single school areas. Feheny, while acknowledging the contribution of state sector schools in 'fostering a Catholic ethos', later warns that such state sector schools could become 'pluralistic' in the future should the local community change and, if so, secondary schools would be the only Catholic schools available.⁴³¹ However, this view fails to take note of the role of the trustees of the *de facto* Catholic schools, the community schools and colleges. Furthermore, Feheny does not seem to accept the possibility that *de jure* Catholic secondary schools may, with the passage of time, become *de facto* pluralistic, if not secular. A further question arises, 'what kind of school, should the Catholic school be?' In many regards, Steele refers to the ideal Catholic school as 'The Gospel School'. Such a school would be about people, 'and not about ideal people or about perfect people or about holy people, but about these people, as they are, right here and now'. Such a school would be 'open, inclusive and, if biased at all, would ... be

⁴²⁸ Feheny, Matthew. (1995) *op cit.*, pp 61-62

⁴²⁹ *Ibid.*, p 62.

⁴³⁰ The issue of funding in Catholic secondary schools is addressed in the recommendations, below.

⁴³¹ Feheny, Matthew. 1998.(b) *op cit.*, p 217.

biased towards the poor, the powerless, the marginalised, the lost'.⁴³² Crucially, such a gospel school would be about community and integration.⁴³³ Essentially, such a school would be about equality.

There is a view that many of the *de jure* Catholic schools were not actually serving this need. Granted, many of the Catholic secondary schools were doing admirable work and had excellent pastoral care initiatives in place. However, there is also a corresponding view that many of these schools charged, and still charge, high fees and select students on the basis of academic ability. Fehene, in defending the role of the Catholic secondary school, acknowledges that many of these schools did place an exaggerated emphasis on examination and sporting success to illustrate that they were as good as the boarding, private and diocesan colleges.⁴³⁴ However, the argument may be circular in that most of these other colleges were also Catholic! In contrast, the community schools and colleges, the *de facto* Catholic schools,⁴³⁵ were community based and, in terms of enrolment policies and curriculum, catered for a broader range of students. Hence, the term 'gospel school' could be more easily applied to the community schools and colleges than it could be to many of the Catholic secondary schools.

While the traditional Catholic post-primary school is undoubtedly in numerical and enrolment decline, Catholic education is not necessarily so. Furthermore, the influence of the Catholic Church and the various orders and congregations is safeguarded in the new forms of Catholic post-primary school, the community school and colleges. However, Catholic co-trustees in these schools must take their role seriously and must be prepared to participate fully in the management of such schools. The amalgamation of a Catholic secondary school into either a

⁴³² Steele, Frank. (1995) *op cit.*, pp 162-163

⁴³³ *Ibid.* p 163

⁴³⁴ Fehene, J. M. (1998) (b) *op cit.*, p 215.

⁴³⁵ This matter is discussed in chapter one. In brief, this designation comes from the significance of the deeds of trust and the model agreements. See O' Flaherty, L. (1992) *op cit.*, p 73. the matter is also addressed in Fehene, (1998)(b) *op cit.*, p 216.

community school or college cannot be an opportunity for the withdrawal of religious from involvement in post-primary education but, rather, signifies a new way in which trusteeship can be exercised for the good of the community and in a manner which, frequently, allows the order or congregation to involve itself in education in a manner that is more in keeping with the intentions of their founders.

CoRI also expresses that view when it states that:

the transfer of trusteeship of schools does not mean that congregations believe that they have no further contribution to make to education. On the contrary, transfer of trusteeship enables religious to concentrate on seeking new ways of bringing their distinctive perspectives to bear on the educational landscape.⁴³⁶

Furthermore, CoRI have asked of themselves specific questions, 'are we working with the poor and the marginalised groups more than we were...?'⁴³⁷, 'are religious meeting the needs of poor people?', 'do religious provide a counter-cultural voice?' and 'is the current educational system consistent with gospel values'⁴³⁸ In that regard, paradoxically, the decline of the *de jure* Catholic school and the corresponding growth in *de facto* Catholic post-primary schools may contribute to a better and more up-to-date realisation of the intentions of the founders of Catholic secondary schools and an emergence of what Steele calls 'The Gospel School'. Should that occur, the future of Catholic education and Catholic schools is secure.

7.5 Recommendations.

7.5.1 A greater attention to partnerships between Catholic schools and VECs.

Arising from the general analysis of enrolment trends within the different school types in operation and, more specifically, from the detailed analysis of enrolment

⁴³⁶ CoRI (Education Commission) (2001) *op cit.*, p 7.

⁴³⁷ *Ibid.*, p 5.

⁴³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp 15 & 17.

trends in relation to post-primary schools in West Cork, a number of recommendations must be made. In so doing, mention must be made of a particular difficulty. There seems to be a confusion amongst those responsible for Catholic post-primary schools as to which way forward offers the best chance of a continuance of the principles of a Catholic education and a preservation of the ethos of Catholic secondary schools in the event of their amalgamation.

The five towns analysed in this thesis are in the Diocese of Cork and Ross. That diocese has a stated preference of amalgamating secondary schools with vocational schools to form community colleges.⁴³⁹ As outlined in chapter three, various options are outlined by CoRI as to how the ethos of Catholic schools is best safeguarded. These include a trust company administering all the schools of a congregation, the signing of trusteeship of a secondary school over to diocesan authorities, the amalgamation of secondary schools to form a larger secondary school, the formation of a community school and outright closure. However, the issue of amalgamating into a community college is not mentioned at all!⁴⁴⁰ There seems to be a hesitancy on the part of Catholic educationalists to enter into partnership with VECs, the obvious exception being the Diocese of Cork and Ross. This general hesitancy is all the more surprising given that there is no contribution due from the trustees of a secondary school in the event of an amalgamation into a community college, the VEC in such instances provides the local funding, whereas in the event of an amalgamation into a community school, the trustees of the new school must provide a contribution capped at £50,000.⁴⁴¹

⁴³⁹ An exception to this general principle might be the aforementioned proposal to amalgamate the Diocesan College, St. Finbarr's, Farranferris with another secondary school, North Monastery CBS, into a larger secondary school. However, this case is unusual in terms of the diocese in that it represents an amalgamation of two secondary schools.

⁴⁴⁰ See, for example, CoRI (1997) *op cit.*, pp 6-10. In this document various strategies for the future of trusteeship are mentioned. Community Colleges, managed jointly by the local VEC and the Diocese / religious congregation are not.

⁴⁴¹ Commission on School Accommodation. (2001) *op cit.*, p.63. It should be noted that the figure of £50,000 relates to 2001, before the introduction of the Euro. This amount would be the equivalent of €63,487

In attempting to explain difference in approach in relation to amalgamations into community colleges, due regard must be paid to the excellent working relationship between the former Bishop of Cork and Ross, the late Dr. Michael Murphy⁴⁴² and the former CEO of County Cork VEC, Mr. Bobby Buckley. Indeed, evidence of this good working relationship can be found in the correspondence of Mr. Buckley cited in 7.5.2, below. In effect, the VEC used the provisions of the *Vocational Education (Amendment) Act, 1970* to provide the legal basis for a partnership between the Bishop of the Diocese and itself for the joint management of community colleges. In this management, the VEC and the Diocese are joint partners. According to Buckley, the partnership is 'legally executed and can be legally empowered'.⁴⁴³

Though Bishop Murphy has since died and Mr. Buckley retired, the success of their 'partnership' continues in that community colleges continue to be the preferred option in amalgamations in the diocese.⁴⁴⁴ With such safeguards contained in the model agreements, greater attention should be paid, by CoRI, to the possibility of amalgamation into community colleges or VEC sector schools. Indeed, the Irish Vocational Education Association has stated that 'in any amalgamation (of a Catholic secondary school) with vocational schools, the VECs guarantee the ethos of the old schools are continued'.⁴⁴⁵

⁴⁴² It is of note that Bishop Murphy was a former President of St. Finbarr's, Farranferris and, as such, had a deep interest in education.

⁴⁴³ Buckley, Bobby. (1999) *Unpublished Position Paper: The Implications of the establishment and growth of Community Colleges in the dioceses of Cork and Ross and Cloyne*. Dated 21 October 1999.

⁴⁴⁴ As previously outlined, in the context of this thesis, the new school in Bantry seems certain to be a community college and community colleges already operate in both Dunmanway and Clonakilty.

⁴⁴⁵ Murray, Niall. (2002) 'Free Catholic education at risk claims group' in *The Irish Examiner*, 13 November 2002. Cork:Examiner Publications. p.11.

7.5.2 *Church representation on vocational education committees.*

It is clear from both previous and current practice that the trend of secondary schools amalgamating into community colleges will continue for the foreseeable future in the Diocese of Cork and Ross, regardless of whether this trend extends to a wider area. While these schools are managed jointly by the diocese /religious order and the VEC, the relationship between the diocese and the VEC must be assessed in the light of the emerging partnership between the two bodies in regard to the provision of post-primary education. The diocese should have statutory representation on vocational education committee's for two reasons: (i) as a gesture of recognition to the dioceses / religious orders for their contribution and assistance to the VECs in the provision of post-primary schools and (ii) to ensure that the interests of the diocese / religious order are represented at the highest possible decision making level. While the model agreements safeguard the rights of the Catholic partners in relation to representation at management and interview boards, the place of religious instruction on the curriculum and, in some cases, the reservation of places on staff for members of the religious orders involved in the amalgamation, such boards are sub-committees of the VEC.

The means of obtaining representation for religious orders and dioceses on the VECs was mentioned by *The Vocational Education (Amendment) Act, 2001*. In addressing the 'composition of vocational education committees' in section seven, the Act stipulated that nine members shall be elected by the council of the council borough for which the committee is the vocational education committee or, if the vocational education committee is the committee for a county, the council of the county elects nine members. Where the county vocational education area contains one or more urban districts but not more than four districts, each district elects two members. In cases where there are more than four districts, each district

elects one member. In both of these cases, the member of the VEC elected need not be a member of the electing urban district council. Paragraph (c) of section seven provides for two members to be elected by the staff of the committee. Similarly, paragraph (b) of the same section allows for the parents of students, who are under eighteen, of recognised schools and centres of education operated by the committee, to elect two members also. Four further members are appointed by the council of the county borough, after consultation with the other elected members, from the following groupings, (i) students, (ii) 'any class of trustees of community colleges maintained by the vocational education committee concerned', (iii) 'members of the staff of the vocational education committee (other than members of staff belonging to the same class of members of staff as either of the members elected under paragraph (c))', (iv) voluntary organisations, community organisations and Irish language interests and (v) persons within the area who are involved in 'trades, professions or commercial and industrial activities'.⁴⁴⁶

While the 2001 amendment does allow for the appointment of representatives of dioceses and religious orders to the VECs, it is extremely arbitrary and puts such bodies on par with students, voluntary organisations and local industries, limiting the total representation from this grouping to four members. It is also of note that such representation for Religious was not part of the original bill and was only introduced to the Act as 'amendments' as the bill, as it then was, was progressing through the house.⁴⁴⁷ In that regard, representation for Religious was not seen as an important provision within the bill by the Department of Education and Science. Given the increasingly likely scenario of more community colleges being formed as the result of amalgamations, greater and obligatory representation

⁴⁴⁶ Department of Education and Science. (2001) *op cit.*, pp 8-9.

⁴⁴⁷ Teachers' Union of Ireland. (2001) 'Vocational Education (Amendment) Act' in *TUI News*. Vol 24, No.1 Sept. 2001. Dublin: Teachers' Union of Ireland., p 5.

should be demanded by, and afforded to, Church trustees of community colleges. This is necessary to (i) safeguard the vital interests of these groupings, notwithstanding the provisions of the model agreements, (ii) to enable the VEC itself to be truly representative of the local community and the investors/ stake holders in the colleges maintained by the VEC and (iii) to avoid any semblance of a de-Catholicisation of post-primary education in the advent of an increased number of amalgamations by Catholic secondary schools into community colleges. It is also notable that the trustees of community colleges may be of denominations other than Catholic. Nevertheless, there are only a total of four places available for such trustees, representatives of students, non-teaching staff, community groupings and other professional, industrial and commercial interests. Members of County and Urban District Councils elect up to seventeen members. In that sense, the Act represents a lost opportunity to recognise and place on a statutory framework the partnership between the VEC and various dioceses and religious orders / congregations in the provision of post-primary education in VEC maintained schools. The current difficulty in obtaining statutory representation for dioceses, religious orders and congregations lies in the fact that the composition of VEC boards can only be altered by a further Act of the Oireachtas. Given the short period that has elapsed since the *Vocational Education (Amendment) Act, 2001*, that seems unlikely in the short term. However, evidence suggests that the Catholic education authorities are not at all convinced of the benefit and need for such representation. In that regard, an unpublished series of correspondence between Mr. Bobby Buckley,⁴⁴⁸ the Dioceses of Cork and Ross and the Education Commission of the Irish Episcopal Conference indicated, for whatever reason, no great interest on the part of the Catholic Church in obtaining

⁴⁴⁸ Bobby Buckley is a former CEO of County Cork VEC.

statutory representation on VECs.⁴⁴⁹ O' Connor's letter of 16 February 2000, cited below, stated that the Episcopal Commission would 'find it difficult at this time' to negotiate for statutory representation.⁴⁵⁰ In a letter to the Episcopal Vicar for Education in the Dioceses of Cork and Ross,⁴⁵¹ Buckley recommended that 'statutory provision should be sought for the inclusion of the bishops of the dioceses on the Vocational Education Committees.'⁴⁵² It appears that this matter was forwarded to the Education Commission of the Irish Episcopal Conference by the Bishop of the Cork and Ross, John Buckley, as, on 16 February 2000, Fr. Dan O'Connor, Secretary to the Commission replied that:-

The Education Commission would find it difficult at this time to negotiate for statutory representation on VEC committees. The important point is that the local Bishop has representation on a statutory basis on the Boards of Management of Community Colleges and Schools and also has representation on a statutory basis for the interview panels for the appointment of staff to these schools and colleges.

The circular letter 7/79 gives the local Bishop representation on the interview panels for the appointment of Catechists to Vocational Schools and only Catechists who receive a Certificate of Suitability from the local Bishop can teach in Vocational Schools and Colleges. The Episcopal Commission is of the opinion that these statutory rights are sufficient.⁴⁵³

It is significant that O'Connor should indicate that it would be difficult to negotiate for Church representation on VECs. It may be the case that the Episcopal Commission were fearful of initiating a debate on the role of the Catholic Church in post-primary education, particularly in state- sector schools. Furthermore, O'Connor stated, that 'it has been and is within the gift of the VECs to invite Diocesan representatives on VECs'. However, in the past, some dioceses

⁴⁴⁹ That correspondence is quoted here with the permission of Mr. Buckley.

⁴⁵⁰ O'Connor, Dan. *Letter to Fr. Declan Mansfield* dated 16 February 2000.

⁴⁵¹ This position was held at that time by Fr. Declan Mansfield.

⁴⁵² Buckley, Bobby. *Letter to Fr. Declan Mansfield*, Episcopal Vicar for Education of the Dioceses of Cork & Ross, dated 21st. October, 1999.

⁴⁵³ O'Connor, Dan. *Letter to Fr. Declan Mansfield* dated 16 February 2000.

have turned down such invitations.⁴⁵⁴ Given the growing significance of the VECs in the realm of post-primary education and the amalgamation of a large number of secondary schools into community colleges, one might have expected the Education Commission to be more enthusiastic about Church representation on VECs.

O'Connor's letter was passed on to Buckley by the Diocese of Cork and Ross and Buckley readily identified flaws in O'Connor's response in a letter to Fr. Declan Mansfield, dated 26 February 2000. Firstly, the VECs neither have nor can invite dioceses to nominate members. Such invitations can only be made by the County or City Council. However, Buckley did identify a change in policy towards Church representatives. Prior to the already mentioned provisions regarding VEC composition in the 2001 Act, County Cork VEC was comprised of eight County Councillors, nine Urban District Councillors and six others. Of that six, traditionally, the Catholic bishop of Cork and Ross was asked to nominate two members, the Catholic bishops of Cloyne and Kerry⁴⁵⁵ one each, the Church of Ireland bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross was asked to nominate one and one place remained for another. By 2000, that Church representation had changed to one nominee of the Catholic bishops of Cloyne and Cork and Ross and a representative of the Church of Ireland bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross.⁴⁵⁶ In effect, the number of Church representatives had decreased from five to three. Significantly, these arrangements applied when the 'diocese has no direct participation in the organisation and management of schools / colleges in the VEC system.' Given that the diocese is now involved with the VEC in Clonakilty,

⁴⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁵ The Diocesan boundaries do not follow the boundaries of the county boroughs, therefore a number of the post-primary schools maintained by County Cork VEC are within the diocese of Kerry.

⁴⁵⁶ Some Urban District Councils (UDCs), eg Kinsale, adopted the practice of nominating the local priest as their representative on the VEC. Other UDCs nominated one of their own members.

Dunmanway, Schull, St. Aidan's, Dublin Hill, Glanmire, Colaiste Choilm, Ballincollig and Gaelcolaiste Choilm with a combined enrolment of about 3,500, this representation should be updated.⁴⁵⁷ Despite Buckley's compelling argument, the Education Commission refused to take the matter on board. Buckley wrote to Fr. Dan O'Connor again and outlined that while the 1970 Vocational (Amendment) Act was progressing through the Dail, the Minister for Education stated that 'joint management of schools is a new venture in this country and for that reason the more flexible we have it the more likely we are to make progress in relation to the whole matter'.⁴⁵⁸

While O'Connor did not reply until one year later,⁴⁵⁹ events progressed and on 14th. February 2001, County Cork VEC passed a motion, for the consideration of the IVEA, requesting the Minister to provide statutory representation for the Dioceses on VECs.⁴⁶⁰ Five days later, the Education Commission indicated that the Irish Episcopal Conference decided that

if approaches were made to the dioceses to have representation on local V.E.C.s (sic) that the diocese would be encouraged by the Conference to take up the offer of places on the V.E.C.s.(sic) To actively seek places for the Catholic Church on V.E.C.s (sic) was seen by the Education Consultative Group and the Education Commission to be counter productive.⁴⁶¹

This series of communication is significant in that it is surprising that the issue of statutory representation for dioceses on VECs should have come from a retired CEO of a VEC and not from the dioceses themselves! In that regard, it is even more surprising that the Education Commission would have actually cautioned against 'actively seeking' such representation. While the Education Commission did not rule out the possibility of accepting representation, if offered, the episode

⁴⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁸ Buckley, Bobby. *Letter to Fr. Dan O'Connor*, dated 28th. February 2000.

⁴⁵⁹ O'Connor, Dan. *Letter to Bobby Buckley*, dated 19 February 2001.

⁴⁶⁰ Buckley, Bobby. *Letter to Rt. Rev. Msgr. Denis O'Callaghan*, Chairman County Cork VEC, dated 15th. February 2001

⁴⁶¹ O'Connor, Dan. *Letter to Bobby Buckley* dated 19 February 2001.

indicates that the Commission has little appetite for controversy or initiating a debate on the role of the Catholic Church in post-primary education. Accordingly, one wonders, then, how the various dioceses see their role as co-trustees of community colleges and how this role might address the question of their continued involvement in post-primary education.

What is pertinent to this thesis is the fact that the relationship between County Cork VEC and the Diocese of Cork and Ross has been extremely successful and some colleges have responsibility for the overall post-primary education provision in the catchment area.⁴⁶² In that regard, the voice of the Diocese or the religious order needs to be heard at VEC level. Everything possible should be done to ensure this representation. Indeed, as noted above, County Cork VEC proposed a motion to the IVEA to that effect. Clearly, the goodwill exists within the IVEA for such representation. The onus, therefore, is now on Church bodies to pursue, by whatever means are most appropriate, such representation in the interests of Catholic post-primary education.

7.5.3 *Equality of funding for Catholic secondary schools.*

A previous study by the writer indicated that over a three year period, 43.75% of students in a vocational school, St. Goban's College, Bantry, stated that school facilities was a deciding factor in their choice of school. Correspondingly, only 5.9% of students in the Catholic secondary school, Ardscoil Phobal Bheanntai stated that school facilities were a determinant.⁴⁶³ This survey clearly illustrated a decline in secondary school enrolment both at a local, regional and national level. Furthermore, a decline in the number of Catholic secondary schools in operation

⁴⁶² Buckley, Bobby. (1999) *Unpublished Position Paper: The Implications of the establishment and growth of Community Colleges in the dioceses of Cork and Ross and Cloyne*. Dated 21 October 1999.

⁴⁶³ Healy, Kevin M. (2000) *op cit.*, p 69.

was also identified. While there is no evidence to suggest that funding is the cause of such a trend, the management authorities of such schools are campaigning for equality of funding. In their pre budget submission of 2002, the JMB⁴⁶⁴ outlined that government spending on education had fallen from 5.5% of GDP in 1994 to 3.9% of GDP in 2001. By way of comparison, the OECD⁴⁶⁵ average spending was 4.8%. More pertinent, was the fact that capitation grants to secondary schools have not kept pace with inflation. In that regard, using figures supplied by the Central Statistics Office, it is estimated that the amount of money provided to secondary schools in 2001 was 26% less than the amount spent in 1967.⁴⁶⁶ More specifically, 'the Blackstock Report'⁴⁶⁷ has pointed to the serious discrimination at the heart of the funding of second level education - other post-primary schools are paid as much as 25% more than Voluntary Secondary Schools for doing the same work.⁴⁶⁸

The JMB has identified three crucial areas that need to be addressed in relation to parity of funding:-

- (1) Payment of grants for insurance to all voluntary secondary schools to put them on the same footing as other second-level schools.
- (2) Payment of grants for secretaries and caretakers in all secondary schools on the same basis as in Community and Comprehensive Schools.
- (3) Payment of grants for cleaning and repairs in voluntary secondary schools on the same basis as is available to Community and Comprehensive schools.⁴⁶⁹

Furthermore, given the high transfer rates from Church of Ireland primary schools to Catholic secondary schools, a question was raised in chapter six as to the

⁴⁶⁴ The JMB, the Joint Managerial Body, represents the interests of all voluntary secondary schools of all denominations in the country.

⁴⁶⁵ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

⁴⁶⁶ JMB (2002) *Pre-Budget Submission 2002-2003*. Dublin: Secretariat of secondary schools. p.3 .

⁴⁶⁷ The Report of the Steering Group on the Funding of Second-Level Schools.

⁴⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p 4.

⁴⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p.5

perceived Catholicity of secondary schools. In that regard, the JMB has also identified the already mentioned inequality in relation to the funding of a state salaried chaplain for post-primary schools as an issue that needs attention.

The JMB is concerned that the anomaly that exists with regard to the appointment of chaplains to some schools should be removed. The High Court decision in 1998 stated that there was no barrier to the provision of state paid chaplains in post-primary schools. The JMB is requesting that the Department of Education and Science to (sic) appoint chaplains to all voluntary secondary schools.⁴⁷⁰

Currently, community colleges, as well as comprehensive and community schools, have the benefit of a state salaried chaplain. This anomaly, it is contended, places Catholic secondary schools at an unfair disadvantage. Two findings of previous research are useful in this regard. In a survey of schools in the first phase of the introduction of Religious Education as an examination subject, Deenihan reported that 10.4% of teachers of religious education in secondary schools were religious or clerical, while this category represented a surprisingly high 6% of teachers in community schools and colleges.⁴⁷¹ Deenihan also reported that a slightly higher percentage of teachers of Religious Education in state-sector schools had a degree qualification for teaching religion than respondents in secondary schools.⁴⁷² This can be understood in the context of the withdrawal of religious from secondary schools, as outlined in chapter three, but also in the context of the payment of salaries to qualified chaplains in state-sector schools, many of whom are religious or clerical.⁴⁷³ He has also indicated

⁴⁷⁰ Ibid., p 13.

⁴⁷¹ Deenihan, Thomas. (2001) *Religious Education and Religious Instruction in the Irish Post-Primary curriculum in the aftermath of the introduction of an examinable, non-denominational syllabus for Religious Education*. Unpublished EdD thesis, University of Hull. p 146

⁴⁷² Ibid., p 155

⁴⁷³ It should be noted that while Deenihan uses the term 'state-sector' schools in his research to designate community and comprehensive schools, community colleges and vocational schools, vocational schools do not have the services of a state-salaried chaplain. However, under the terms of Memo V.7. and CL73/74 such schools have a teacher of religion nominated for appointment by the local bishop. Invariably, such nominees have usually been clerical and have had qualifications in theology.

elsewhere that there is evidence for suggesting that all teachers who were Catholic were presumed to be qualified to teach Religious Instruction. In that regard, 'teachers who had not reached their allocation of twenty-two hours teaching in a week were given a class of religious instruction to fill their time-table.'⁴⁷⁴ Ironically, this situation may have made the teaching of religious instruction more secure in state sector schools where it has the benefit of a salaried chaplain as well as a guarantee, contained in the model agreements for community colleges and in the instruments of management for community schools, of two hours per week on the timetable. Furthermore, for appointment in these schools, Department of Education and Science regulations stipulate that candidates must be qualified to degree level. It should also be noted that chaplains do not necessarily teach Religious Education or teach much Religious Education. In fact, many chaplains object strongly to a teaching role within the school.

The issue of funding for the Catholic secondary school sector was also raised by the Catholic Secondary Parents Association (CSPA) who stated that 'the State discriminates against pupils who attend Catholic secondary schools' due to a lower rate of 'per-capita' funding than is granted to other post-primary schools.⁴⁷⁵ Barbara Johnson, the PRO of the CSPA, is of the opinion that 'Catholic second level schools were suffering because the government is prioritising funding for comprehensive and community schools'.⁴⁷⁶ Catholic schools receive €100 less per student in capitation fees than other schools.⁴⁷⁷ Secondary schools deserve parity of funding and parity of resources with schools in the state-sector. It could be contended that such inequality may have contributed to the decline of the

⁴⁷⁴ Deenihan Thomas (2002) (1) Religious Education and Religious Instruction in *The Furrow*. Vol 53, No. 2, February 2002. p 79.

⁴⁷⁵ Kelly, Hermann. (2002) 'Catholic Schools treated unfairly' in *The Irish Catholic*, 7 November 2002. Dublin. p 1.

⁴⁷⁶ Cooke Nicola (2002) 'Parents' lobby says State starves Catholic schools' in *The Irish Examiner*, 13 November 2002. Cork:Examiner Publications. p 11

⁴⁷⁷ Ibid.

secondary school, particularly given the above evidence of ‘school facilities’ as an important determinant in school choice.

7.5.4 An early identification of schools likely to amalgamate.

One of the critical issues in the process of amalgamation is the reaction to the proposal by the ‘partners in education’. In that regard, amalgamation should be the end of a process of consultation and consensus amongst parents and staff particularly. Two cases are worthy of mention in this regard. As previously mentioned, on 6th December 2001, Bishop John Buckley, as sole Trustee, announced the amalgamation of St. Finbarr’s College, Farranferris with North Monastery CBS. It has been reported in the local press that the staff at the college were unaware of the proposal. Indeed, such was their discontent with the decision, that an action committee was formed comprising of parents, teachers and past pupils to reverse the decision. While it is by no means certain that they will succeed, the ensuing exchanges, often acrimonious, between teachers, parents and the diocese in the local radio and print media has ensured that the process, if it takes place, will be much longer and more difficult than first imagined. In such a highly ‘charged’ and emotive atmosphere, it becomes difficult to gauge real support or opposition for amalgamation.

In the context of Bantry, amalgamation was suggested by the Department of Education and Science in the context of deferring necessary grants to both schools. The process was discussed locally, the Board of Management of Ardscoil Phobal Bheanntrai was met by Bishop Buckley, as Chairman of the Board of Trustees, the Unions were invited to become part of the process and the CEO of the VEC met with staff in St. Goban’s College. The result was a consensus amongst all involved that amalgamation represented the best way forward. A similar process

was followed in Dunmanway, where amalgamation has now taken place.

It is clear that the issue of amalgamation is an emotive one, ties of loyalty to one's school cannot be underestimated. Furthermore, it is suggested that self-interest, fear for jobs and posts of responsibility as well as snobbery can play a major role in local discussions on amalgamations, particularly if two teacher unions are involved. The decision to close a school is always difficult and any semblance of a consequent amalgamation being the result of a 'failure' is unhelpful. The process should not be rushed and, to that end, early identification of future amalgamations are useful. In that regard, this thesis has identified a number of schools where amalgamation might be necessary within the short term. While the process of amalgamation in Dunmanway was justified in the findings, the need for amalgamation in Bantry was also identified. In terms of future developments, it is difficult to see how Rossa College, Skibbreen and Hamilton High School, Bandon can continue in their present form and, thus, seem likely prospects for amalgamation.

While it is true that these centres have been identified as possible centres for amalgamation due to falling enrolment and projected enrolment trends, on a wider scale, other factors may also dictate amalgamation. These include curriculum developments and the possibility that a school may be too small to offer an adequate educational programme, the need for improvement in site, buildings or resources, an application for major capital funding and a change in the trustees circumstances.⁴⁷⁸ However, in order to facilitate as smooth a process to amalgamation as possible, the strength of ties between a school and the community, past-pupils, families and teachers cannot be underestimated and, to that end, early and open discussions with parents, staff and the wider community seem to be essential. There is evidence that this has not always been the case.

⁴⁷⁸ Commission on School Accommodation. (2001) *op cit.*, p 33.

7.5.5 *The recommendations of the Commission on School Accommodation.*

The Commission on School Accommodation is a group comprised of officials from the Department of Education and Science and representatives of the 'partners in education'. Their work, *Amalgamation of Second Level Schools*, represents a major landmark in policy in relation to school amalgamations.⁴⁷⁹

That body made a number of recommendations that have yet to be accepted by the Department of Education and Science. This writer feels that, as this Commission was representative of teacher unions, parents, religious, management and the Department itself, its recommendations should be immediately adopted as the manner in which future amalgamations would occur. While these recommendations are included in appendix vi, in general, they relate to:

- (i) a decision on what type of school the newly amalgamated school will be.
- (ii) the timeframe for amalgamation.
- (iii) capital funding for amalgamations.
- (iv) research on school provision that would identify schools for amalgamation.

This research would be based on a number of considerations.

- (v) staffing arrangements in amalgamated schools. The provision of extra posts in amalgamated schools has already been mentioned in chapter four.
- (vi) an evaluation of the process should take place in each case five years after the process has been completed.
- (vii) The Department of Education and Science should take a proactive role in 'initiating and supporting amalgamations where the location, enrolments, accommodation and school plans of the schools concerned indicate that

⁴⁷⁹ It is of note that the Catholic and other Churches as well as religious orders and congregations were well represented on the steering committee. See Commission on School Accommodation (2001) *op cit.*, p 67.

such a course of action is appropriate'.⁴⁸⁰

These recommendations provide a comprehensive and widely agreed framework within which amalgamations should take place. It is in the Department's own interest that such recommendations be adopted as policy and enthusiastically followed.

7.5.6 An increased awareness of the ethos and purpose of Catholic schools amongst Church appointed trustees and Board members of second level schools.

Mention has been made in 7.4, above of the role of trustees in safeguarding the interests of the Church in post-primary education. Two scenarios emerge. Firstly, as the numbers of religious decreases, and as mentioned previously, greater numbers of trustees of Catholic secondary schools will be members of the laity. It is imperative that these people should be familiar and in agreement with the purposes of Catholic education and the ethos of the individual school. In the cases of Church appointed members of the Board of Management to community schools and colleges, it is not sufficient that these appointees should be respectable, upright and religious citizens. They should also be competent, articulate, informed and trained for their role. CoRI themselves acknowledge that the trustees need to be in a position to:-

- (a) articulate clearly the principles and values of a distinctive educational philosophy consistent with the congregation's charism and with the founding intentions of the school;
- (b) engage proactively with the school to promote that philosophy and monitor the extent to which it is being implemented and
- (c) intervene in situations where there is a serious departure from that philosophy.⁴⁸¹

This has not always been the case. In an emerging scenario, where post-primary schools will be co-managed by either the state or the local VEC and the diocese or

⁴⁸⁰ Commission on School Accommodation. (2001) *op cit.*, 51-55.

⁴⁸¹ McCormack, Teresa and Archer, Peter. (1997) *op cit.*, p 3.

congregation, the Church appointees to either the Board of Management or the trustee board are often the only voice and defender of the Church view and the Catholic ethos. It is imperative that greater attention, training and resources be allocated to this area. The AMCSS⁴⁸² 'wishes to facilitate discussion of the ethos of Catholic schools, initially at Board of Management level and subsequently amongst the wider school community.'⁴⁸³ Concern has been expressed by parents that Boards of Management and Trustee Boards must 'continue to run the schools with the Catholic ethos'.⁴⁸⁴ Parents are also concerned that such schools might not be able to find people willing to serve on such boards, an eventuality that might alter the nature of the Catholic secondary school in the years to come.⁴⁸⁵ This concern needs to be taken on board by each diocese, order and congregation as a priority. Failure to do so runs the risk of seriously undermining the legal safeguards the Church enjoys in community schools and colleges through the deeds of trust and the model agreements.

7.6 Conclusion.

This thesis began by asking a fundamental question, 'what is the future of post-primary education in West Cork?' This question has been answered by an in-depth assessment of the post-primary situation in Bantry, Skibbereen, Bandon, Clonakilty and Dunmanway. The emerging picture is of a single post-primary education system, the result of a decline in secondary school enrolment, a growth in VEC sector popularity and amalgamations between the two for reasons of viability, economics, curriculum choice, capital funding and also due to the decline in the numbers of Religious.

⁴⁸² The Association of Management of Catholic Secondary Schools.

⁴⁸³ AMCSS (2001) *The AMCSS and the Catholic School*. (privately circulated position paper) Dublin: AMCSS. (unpaginated)

⁴⁸⁴ Murray, Niall. (2002) *op cit.*, p. 11

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid.

While the future of secondary schools seems more secure in larger, urban areas, it seems certain that the educational future of rural towns lies in single post-primary schools. That development has happened in Dunmanway, is planned in Bantry and is currently being discussed in Skibbereen. Although the provisions in The White Paper, *Charting our Education Future*, were never enacted, the provisions in relation to the rationalisation of second-level schooling seem to have become a reality:-

The policy objective will be to provide second-level schools that are large enough to adequately meet the variety of curricular demands, to meet community education needs and to enhance the role of schools in vocational education and training and adult and continuing education. The rationalisation of second-level facilities will continue to involve consultation with all the interests concerned. Rationalisation will seek to provide single campus schools...⁴⁸⁶

While there has been some opposition to such a policy of rationalisation into community-based, single schools, particularly on the grounds of differences of ethos / characteristic spirit, transport and the amalgamated school being too large,⁴⁸⁷ such difficulties are easily overcome when one considers the enhanced curriculum, staffing and facilities in a new school.

The argument that the decline of the secondary school represents a de-Catholicisation of post-primary education is tenuous as the Church interests are safe-guarded legally in the emerging community schools and colleges and these schools have Church nominees on Boards of Management and interview boards. These schools also have the services of publicly funded chaplains that 'may be religious or priests'⁴⁸⁸ and this provision has been copperfastened by a Supreme

⁴⁸⁶ Department of Education. (1995) *op cit.*, p 66

⁴⁸⁷ Commission on School Accommodation. (2001) *op cit.*, p 23.

⁴⁸⁸ Mr. Justice Costello ruling in *The Campaign to Separate Church and State Ltd v The Minister for Education (The High Court)* cited in Glendenning, D (1999) *op cit.* pp 63-66 stated that the school chaplain, though salaried by the State could be a minister of religion or a member of a religious order. In practice, such chaplains are often members of the laity though the term 'chaplain' pertains to members of the clergy.

Court ruling.⁴⁸⁹ Furthermore, it could be argued that the community schools and colleges are more ‘Catholic’ in orientation than many of the Catholic secondary schools themselves. In that regard, note must be made of the similarities between *de jure* and *de facto* Catholic schools and of the distinction between Catholic schools and Catholic education. While the Irish post-primary education system was pioneered by the religious orders and congregations,⁴⁹⁰ the intervention by the state in the provision of post-primary education has reduced the need for the secondary school. Furthermore, the decline in the numbers of religious available to teach in these schools and the shift in enrolment away from these schools has placed further doubt on the ability of many of these schools to survive.

The Irish post-primary landscape has changed utterly in terms of access, funding, curriculum and provision. In the light of a declining student population, a decline in the numbers of Religious, a corresponding questioning by the remaining Religious as to their purpose in education and an emerging partnership between Church and State in the provision of education, ‘rationalisation has come to form a major part of the strategy of both Church and State in response to change’.⁴⁹¹

In that regard, the emerging picture in relation to post-primary provision is of a single school that addresses local and community needs and offers a broad curriculum to its students. Such a school will be managed as an equal partnership and will thereby ensure a continuing voice for Religious in the shaping, provision and management of second-level education in Ireland.

⁴⁸⁹ The Campaign to Separate Church and State Ltd v The Minister for Education (The Supreme Court) Ruling of Mr. Justice R Keane, delivered 25 March 1998 and cited in Glendenning, D (1999) *op cit.* pp 67 - 68. Since the appeal was rejected by the Supreme Court, the issue cannot be appealed in the Irish Courts again.

⁴⁹⁰ A brief history of Irish post-primary education is given in chapter one.

⁴⁹¹ Walsh, Raymond. (1999) *op cit.*, p 22

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Appendix i

No. of second level schools in Ireland, 1988-2002.

(Vocational school includes community colleges)

Year	Secondary	Vocational	Community	Comprehensive	Total
1988	498	247	47	16	808
1989	493	248	47	16	804
1990	478	242	52	16	788
1991	474	249	52	16	791
1992	467	248	54	16	785
1993	461	248	57	16	782
1994	452	247	60	16	775
1995	445	246	61	16	768
1996	440	243	64	16	763
1997	435	246	65	16	762
1998	432	245	66	16	759
1999	424	245	67	16	752
2000	419	247	69	16	751
2001	416	247	71	16	750

Second level schools: School type percentages.

(Vocational school includes community colleges)

Year	Secondary	Vocational	Community	Comprehensive
1988	61.63%	30.57%	5.82%	1.98%
1989	61.32%	30.84%	5.85%	1.99%
1990	60.66%	30.71%	6.60%	2.03%
1991	59.93%	31.48%	6.57%	2.02%
1992	59.49%	31.59%	6.88%	2.04%
1993	58.95%	31.72%	7.29%	2.04%
1994	58.32%	31.87%	7.74%	2.07%
1995	57.94%	32.03%	7.95%	2.08%
1996	57.67%	31.85%	8.39%	2.09%
1997	57.09%	32.28%	8.53%	2.10%
1998	56.92%	32.29%	8.69%	2.10%
1999	56.38%	32.58%	8.91%	2.13%
2000	55.79%	32.89%	9.19%	2.13%
2001	55.47%	32.93%	9.47%	2.13%

Appendix ii

Enrolment in second level schools in Ireland, 1988-2002.

(Vocational school includes community colleges)

Year	Secondary	Vocational	Community	Comprehensive	Total
1988	210,656	69,437	30,182	8,419	318,694
1989	210,848	69,467	29,894	8,392	318,601
1990	210,296	70,045	32,636	8,479	321,456
1991	216,740	88,655	34,546	8,976	348,917
1992	221,167	92,003	35,959	9,218	358,347
1993	224,035	94,760	39,487	9,363	367,645
1994	225,490	94,907	41,541	9,292	371,230
1995	223,605	94,809	42,324	9,127	369,865
1996	222,139	95,517	44,541	8,987	371,184
1997	217,303	97,309	44,755	8,793	368,160
1998	211,369	97,998	44,152	8,532	362,051
1999	203,418	98,451	43,585	8,406	353,860
2000	197,376	96,842	42,908	8,258	345,384
2001	192,436	96,467	42,951	8,224	340,078

Second level schools: School enrolment percentages.

(Vocational school includes community colleges)

Year	Secondary	Vocational	Community	Comprehensive
1988	66.11%	21.78%	9.47%	2.64%
1989	66.19%	21.80%	9.38%	2.63%
1990	65.42%	21.79%	10.15%	2.64%
1991	62.11%	25.42%	9.90%	2.57%
1992	61.72%	25.68%	10.03%	2.57%
1993	60.94%	25.77%	10.74%	2.55%
1994	60.74%	25.57%	11.19%	2.50%
1995	60.46%	25.63%	11.44%	2.47%
1996	59.85%	25.73%	12.00%	2.42%
1997	59.02%	26.43%	12.16%	2.39%
1998	58.38%	27.07%	12.19%	2.36%
1999	57.49%	27.82%	12.32%	2.37%
2000	57.15%	28.04%	12.42%	2.39%
2001	56.58%	28.37%	12.63%	2.42%

Appendix iii

School openings, closures and amalgamations, 1980- 2000

The following table was compiled using information which was supplied to the writer by the Department of Education and Science under the Freedom of Information Act (1997) in February 2001.

The following points need to be considered:-

*When one or more school close to facilitate an amalgamation, they are not included in the 'school closures' column.

*Information on school closures up to 1995 was not available.

*Greenfield developments are schools that are build on a new or 'green field' site.

Year	School closures	School openings	through amlgamation	through greenfield development
1980	n/a	5	2	3
1981	n/a	9	1	8
1982	n/a	5	3	2
1983	n/a	5	3	2
1984	n/a	4	2	2
1985	n/a	5	1	4
1986	n/a	5	0	5
1987	n/a	5	3	2
1988	n/a	2	2	0
1989	n/a	4	3	1
1990	n/a	10	8	2
1991	n/a	2	1	1
1992	n/a	6	4	2
1993	n/a	7	4	3
1994	n/a	5	3	2
1995	3	4	3	1
1996	2	3	3	0
1997	1	4	2	2
1998	1	2	2	0
1999	2	5	3	2
2000	2	9	3	6

Appendix iv

List of primary schools within each of the catchment areas.

BANTRY CATCHMENT AREA.

07101R	Inchiclough NS.
09161W	Convent of Mercy, Bantry.
10548H	St. Brendan's NS.
13095L	Dromore NS.
14430E	Derrycreeha NS
15135H	Bantry BNS.
15410D	Kilcrohane NS
15646 J	Coomhola NS.
16087E	Kealkil NS
16246V	Drumclugh NS
16286K	Carrigboy NS
17011W	Mochomog NS
17050J	SN Naomh Sheamuis
19420D	SN Fhiachna
20001N	Gaelscoil Bheanntai.

DUNMANWAY CATCHMENT AREA.

01687U	Dromleigh NS
05636A	Dunmanway Model NS
10739O	Ballincarriga NS
13193L	Kilhanna NS
13543M	Derrinacahara NS
13661S	Dunmanway Convent NS
14059M	Behagh NS
14784Q	Dunmanway BNS
16254U	SN Cill na dTor,
16876I	SN Caipin
17281F	Toher NS
18246I	SN Baile Muine
18296A	Dromdhallagh NS
18468D	Scoil Mhuire
19224D	SN Cillmin
19595P	St. Mary's Central School.
19918N	Drinagh NS.

CLONAKILTY CATCHMENT AREA

07651G	Convent of Mercy
10243I	SN Achadh Eochaille
10499U	Kilgarriffe NS
12147W	SN An Aird
12456M	Timoleague NS
13125R	Darrara NS
13483U	SN Ath na Lionta
16259H	Kilcolman NS
17152R	S N Cnoc Na Sceagh
17715M	SN Rath a Bharraigh
17888U	SN na Trionoide
18444M	SN Clogagh
18659K	Lisavaird NS
19249T	Barryroe NS
20006A	Gaelscoil Cloich na Coillte
20022V	Scoil na mBuachailli, Cloich na Choilte

SKIBBEREEN CATCHMENT AREA

08430S	Convent of Mercy
01272O	SN Chuan Doir
09161W	Convent of Mercy
11245R	SN Cill Mhic Abhaidh
11931L	SN Ioseph
12383L	Union Hall NS
13095L	SN an Droma Mhoir
13728B	Castletownsend NS
13976U	Ballydehob 2 NS
14225D	Scoil Bhríde
14227H	Kilcoyne NS
14433K	Abbeystrewry NS
15563F	Lisheen NS
16900C	SN Padraid Naofa
18461M	SN Muire na Doirini
18548B	SN Meallan tSruthain
19381T	Rathmore NS
19557H	Caheragh NS
19801P	Drimoleague NS
19978I	Maulatrahane Central school

BANDON CATCHMENT AREA

04152T	SN Cnoc an Bhaile
05257P	Presentation Convent
05477G	Laragh NS
08972II	Castlealack NS
09537S	Ballinadee NS
12263B	Goggins Hill NS
13375R	Crossmahon NS
14116V	Kilbrittan NS
14955R	Bandon BNS
15550T	Ballyheeda NS
16863W	Desertserges NS
17168J	SN Inis Eoghanain
17972J	SN Cill Mhuire B
18020F	SN an Gharrain
18431D	SN Droichead na Bandan
18444M	SN Clogagh
18491V	SN Garran an Easaigh
19348V	Newcestown NS.
19977G	Bandon BNS
20025E	Gaelscoil Droichead na Bandan

Appendix v

Recommendations of the Commission on School

Accommodation.¹

The Steering Group of the Commission makes the following recommendations as a group of interdependent recommendations that should be considered as a total unit.

Model for the amalgamation process

1. The model for the process aims to:

ensure the best outcome for the students

respect the authority and interests of all the partners

promote harmony and support for the educational endeavour.

The model, including its timeframe for the process, should be implemented for all amalgamations.

School type for the new school

2. (a) The decision on the type of school for the newly amalgamated school should be informed by a range of considerations, including the outcomes of local consultation.
- (b) If the patrons agree on the school type of the newly amalgamated school, the Minister for Education and Science should ratify the patron position.
- (c) If the patrons agree in principle on an amalgamation but can not agree on the school type of the newly amalgamated school, the patrons should agree to refer the decision to the Minister for Education and Science on the basis that they will accept the Minister's decision.

¹ These recommendations are cited in Commission on School Accommodation. (2001) *Amalgamation of Second Level Schools*. Dublin: Stationery Office. pp 51-55. It is anticipated that these recommendations will form the basis of future discussions between the teacher unions, the Department of Education and Science and the management bodies in relation to forthcoming amalgamations. If adopted, these recommendations should make the process easier in that they have been devised in consultation with the 'partners' in education.

Timeframe for amalgamation

3. (a) If the amalgamation does not require significant funding for capital works, then the maximum period from the announcement of the amalgamation to the opening of the new school should be two academic years.
- (b) In arriving at a decision to amalgamate, the patrons should seek assurance from the Department of Education and Science that capital funding will be made available to enable any necessary building project to be completed within four academic years of the announcement of the amalgamation.
- (c) The steering committee and its chairperson should be appointed by the new patrons at least two years before the intended opening of the new school.
- (d) The new board of management should be appointed at least one year before the intended opening of the new school.
- (e) The principal of the new school should be appointed in time to take up the position full time on the 1 st January of the calendar year in which the school will open.

Capital funding

4. (a) The capital budget for Education should be allocated on a multi-annual basis of at least three years.
- (b) Within the capital allocation of the Education budget there should be funding dedicated to amalgamations.
- (c) In the event of an application for major capital funding which may be considered by the Department of Education and Science as a catalyst for amalgamation, such application should be evaluated by the Department in light of :
 - the School Plan
 - the review of the educational programme

projected enrolments

co-operation and complementarity with neighbouring schools

the number of students who will have access to the accommodation

the rate of occupancy of the accommodation.

- (d) While monitoring the pilot project of the Public/Private Partnerships (PPP) in the provision, maintenance and management of school accommodation, the Department of Education and Science should consider further use of the PPP for future amalgamations.

Research

5. Proactive planning of school provision requires research on school size in order to facilitate decisions on school amalgamations. Furthermore, such research would provide insight into the ways in which small schools need support and resourcing. The Commission on School Accommodation should conduct research on school size at second level that considers:

adequate educational provision, given the increased retention of students to senior cycle and the particular needs of disadvantaged students

geographic location

comprehensive and specialist curriculum

socialisation needs of students

pastoral care of students

school organisation, including student access to subjects

staffing allocation

staff issues related to school size

teaching/learning methodology

school effectiveness

developments in the educational use of technology

schools in areas of high/low population density
characteristic spirit of the school
level of financial support
resourcing
costs.

6. The Department of Education and Science should commission research to document the outcomes of amalgamation where it has occurred in the past ten years. Research should document the results of the amalgamation in terms of:
- educational provision
 - level of integration/identity with the new school of both students and staff
 - school type
 - suitability of accommodation provided
 - implications for staff
 - provision and use of resources, both staff and facilities.

Staffing arrangements in amalgamation

7. The following provisions should apply as a package of measures to encourage amalgamation where it is desirable to meet the needs of students. These recommendations should be fully addressed in the appropriate fora.
- (a) In harmonising, designing and allocating the educational programme for the new school, teacher qualifications, teaching experience and expertise should be respected.
- (b) The In-Career Development Unit of the Department of Education and Science should arrange for:
- the training of the new board of management

the preparation of teachers for an amalgamation.

This arrangement should include both:

information on the differences in characteristic spirit, management structure and terms of employment that teachers will experience in the new situation

professional development courses for teachers in areas such as school organisation, school policy development, methodology, curriculum.

(c) For a transitional period of five years after an amalgamation, a new school should receive an additional allocation per year of two whole-time equivalent teachers to the approved staffing allocation, exclusive of any former principals and deputy principals on the staff of the newly amalgamated school.

(d) The 1997 circular, C.L.33/97 (attachment C) should be amended to remove the blocking of posts of responsibility by former principals and deputy principals on the staff of the newly amalgamated school.

(e) The 1997 circular, C.L.33/97 should be amended to recognise the right of all permanent teachers to be assimilated into the new school.

(f) Other provisions of C.L.33/97 should be retained. These other provisions address:

filling of posts of responsibility in schools preparing for amalgamation

filling of posts of principal and deputy principal within two years of the proposed date of amalgamation.

(g) All teachers in a post of responsibility in existing schools retain their posts of responsibility. For five years after its commencement, the newly amalgamated school should have the following posts of responsibility in addition to the approved allocation:

two assistant principal posts

two special duties teacher posts.

After five years, the number of posts of responsibility should revert to the entitled allocation through natural attrition.

(h) As per current practice, former principals and deputy principals assimilated into the staff of the newly amalgamated school maintain their allowance on a personal basis at the rate of the allowance received in their former posts, subject to either:

18 hours teaching and appropriate duties; or

22 hours teaching.

(i) At the time of an amalgamation, teachers, principals or deputy principals who have at least five years of actual pensionable service (Circular 41/00 on Early Retirement Scheme for Teachers) may apply for early retirement under strand 3, which provides for surplus to requirements. Plans for the new school should be consulted in order to assess whether existing positions will be surplus in the new school.

(j) Authorised ancillary staff (such as caretaker, clerical officer, attendants) should be assimilated/appointed to the newly amalgamated school.

(k) The rights of non-permanent staff will be in accordance with:

current employment legislation

national collective agreements.

(l) All existing agreements relating to staffing arrangements in amalgamation, except for the changes specifically recommended above, should be maintained and honoured.

Impediments to amalgamation

8. The following sectoral differences are impediments to amalgamation and should be addressed in appropriate fora:

redeployment of teachers

leave entitlements of teachers

criteria for appointment to posts of responsibility.

Review of amalgamation

9. Five years after a school is established as a result of amalgamation, the board of management should arrange for an evaluation of the process and outcomes of the amalgamation in order to inform the process of school planning, locally and nationally. Evaluation reports should be communicated to the patron, staff and the Department of Education and Science. This evaluation process should be supported by a grant from the Department.

Department of Education and Science

10. The Department of Education and Science should adopt a proactive role in initiating and supporting amalgamations where the location, enrolments, accommodation and School Plans of the schools concerned indicate that such a course of action is appropriate.
11. Taking account of the provisions of the Cromien Report, the Department of Education and Science should analyse and address the resource and organisational implications of adopting a proactive and supportive role in amalgamation.
12. The Department of Education and Science should brief union, management and parent bodies on school amalgamations. Such briefings should include only the cases where amalgamation has been agreed in principle by the patrons.