

LEADING THROUGH INFLUENCE

CORPORATE PLAN 2003-2006

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Foreword

The preparation of the Council's Corporate Plan comes at a time of continuing change influenced by social, educational and political developments and this Plan, which forms part of the wider Education Service strategy, articulates the Council's vision and outlines its strategy over the next 3 years.

The Plan builds upon the growing influence of the Council and the significant achievements of the Catholic Maintained Sector over the last 10 years and outlines a strategic framework within which its ambitious and challenging programme can be taken forward.

The contribution which Faith schools and denominational education make to the Common Good and the process of reconciliation is now widely recognised; The Northern Bishops through their publication "Building Peace - Shaping the Future", have further challenged the Council, Catholic schools and others as they continue to embrace and realise the core values of social justice, reconciliation and respect for the dignity of each person.

The Council's policy on Selection sets the backcloth for planning for all within the Catholic Maintained Sector and places an onus on everyone to build consensus on the development and implementation of new post-primary structures and education pathways which will promote excellence, equality of access and choice.

The introduction of the Reform and Re-investment Initiative, designed to address a prolonged backlog of capital development and investment, offers a unique opportunity for the Catholic Maintained Sector to provide and enhance learning environments for all our children and their teachers.

Consistent with its understanding that teachers form the bedrock in our drive for excellence, the Council looks upon the Review of Teachers' Terms and Conditions of Service as an excellent opportunity for employers and Trade Unions to develop a creative and dynamic partnership to harness the goodwill and professionalism of teachers.

The realisation of this Plan not only requires diligence and commitment on the part of Council and its Officers but also the co-operation of Trustees, governors and principals, empowered to fulfil their respective roles. The Council, as a body which manages through influence, will proactively engage with its partners within the wider Education Service in the realisation of the goals outlined within this Plan.

Philosophy of Catholic Education

The Philosophy of Catholic education underpins and informs much of the work which the Council undertakes on behalf of the Catholic Maintained Sector and serves as a benchmark against which it can be judged. In co-operation with other interests, the Council seeks to promote within Catholic Maintained schools Catholic education and its distinctive values as articulated within such seminal documents as 'Proclaiming the Mission', 'Life to the Full', 'Building Peace, Shaping the Future' and 'Partnership for Quality'

Proclaiming the

"Education must aim at excellence We aim to form Christian people of competence and conscience, people who can play a full role in society with a Christian vision and value system, and a concern for their fellow humans".

Life to the Full

"The curriculum in a Catholic school communicates more than mere facts. It promotes the appreciation of human dignity and the acquisition of values such as truth, beauty, justice and love".

Building Peace, Shaping the Future

"Catholic schools, fulfil a public role, for their presence guarantees cultural and educational pluralism and, above all, the freedom and right of families to see that their children receive the kind of education they wish for them".

Partnership for Quality

"It is important to remind ourselves that in our endeavours in education we seek not only to transmit the skills required for life within a modern economic system, but also the values necessary for Christian living".

Mission Statement

The Council for Catholic Maintained schools, in promoting a culture of excellence in education, will provide strategic leadership, support and guidance to the Catholic Maintained Sector in developing its distinctive and positive contribution to Northern Ireland

Aims

- ↪ ***To develop and promote quality Catholic education and recognise its distinctive contribution to the Common Good***
- ↪ ***To articulate and represent the needs of the Catholic Maintained Sector***
- ↪ ***To promote a culture of excellence in the Council and within Catholic Maintained schools***
- ↪ ***To provide strategic leadership and co-ordination in the promotion of Catholic education, embracing appropriate innovation and good practice***
- ↪ ***To develop and promote relevant partnerships with a view to effecting positive change in education***
- ↪ ***To promote the principles of equality, inclusiveness, social justice and reconciliation***
- ↪ ***To secure and develop appropriate infrastructures, within the Council and Catholic Maintained schools, to ensure effective and efficient services***

Values and Culture of CCMS

In keeping with the developmental and inclusive thrust of its Mission Statement, the Council is committed to the concept of service, inspired by the following:

- ✦ ***QUALITY;***
- ✦ ***INTEGRITY AND RESPECT;*** and
- ✦ ***SOCIAL JUSTICE AND RECONCILIATION***

QUALITY

In its pursuit of the above, the Council will provide services:

- ✦ which facilitate Trustees, Boards of Governors and principals of Catholic Maintained schools in the discharge of their responsibilities towards the staff, parents and young people entrusted to their care;
- ✦ which reflect the needs of its schools, the Council and other partners;
- ✦ to standards which are both measured and quality assured; and
- ✦ which are delivered in a courteous and professional manner by competent staff.

INTEGRITY AND RESPECT

In seeking to exemplify the above, the Council is committed to:

- ✦ openness, transparency and honesty in its operations and dealings;
- ✦ consulting with others on issues or concerns in which the Council has an interest; and
- ✦ adherence to the fact and spirit of laws and regulations.

SOCIAL JUSTICE AND RECONCILIATION

In pursuit of the above, the Council is committed to:

- ✦ the continued promotion of good working practices which promote equality of opportunity and foster the welfare, development and empowerment of staff; and
- ✦ the continued promotion of a working atmosphere based on clear communication, team work, consultation and meaningful delegation.

Statutory Responsibilities and Core Activities

Established under the auspices of 1989 Education Reform (Northern Ireland) Order, the Council's primary purpose is the provision of an upper tier of management for the Catholic Maintained Sector with the primary objective of raising standards in Catholic Maintained schools.

At the time of publication, the Council services the needs of some 530 schools with an enrolment in excess of 134,000 pupils. The Council employs over 8,500 teachers, making it the largest employer within the Northern Ireland Education Service.

The statutory activities of the Council are primarily set out in Articles 142-146 and Schedule 8 of the 1989 Education Reform (NI) Order and are as follows:

- ↪ to advise the Department or a board on such matters relating to Catholic Maintained schools as the Department or board may refer to the Council or as the Council may see fit;
- ↪ to promote and co-ordinate, in consultation with the Trustees of Catholic Maintained schools, the planning of the effective provision of such schools;
- ↪ to promote the effective management and control of Catholic Maintained schools by the Boards of Governors of such schools;
- ↪ to provide or secure, with the approval of the Department, the provision of such advice and information to the Trustees, Boards of Governors, principals and staff of Catholic Maintained schools as appears to the Council to be appropriate in connection with the Council's duty;
- ↪ to employ all such teachers as are required on the staffs of Catholic Maintained schools; and
- ↪ to exercise such other functions as are conferred on it by the Education Orders.

Corporate Objectives

In developing its Corporate Objectives, the Council has taken account of its statutory responsibilities, the planning context and the Programme for Government and associated targets (see Appendix 1).

1. In recognition of the rich tradition underpinning Catholic education and its positive contribution to the common good, the Council, working in partnership with the Trustees and others, will continue to articulate and promote the vision of Catholic education, its ethos and values.
2. The Council will act as an advocate for the Catholic Maintained Sector as well as contributing to the wider education system. In its strategic role, the Council will, through the development of policy and dialogue, contribute to an effective education system which embraces a culture of partnership, empowerment and respect for diversity.
3. In keeping with the philosophy of Catholic education, the Council, through its practices and policies, will seek to promote inclusion, equality, respect for diversity, social justice and reconciliation.
4. The Council will continue to raise standards through proactive involvement in the development of strategies and initiatives that seek to raise the standards of achievement within Catholic Maintained schools and by promoting a culture of empowerment by developing governors and school leaders with a vision for, and a commitment to, Catholic education.
5. The Council will continue to work to secure appropriate access for children to a conducive learning environment through the delivery and provision of an appropriate network of Catholic Maintained schools capable of providing for their education needs from pre-school to post-16.
6. In the context of the Post Primary Review, the Council, in consultation with Trustees, will seek to develop partnerships and build consensus in bringing forward innovative proposals acceptable to parish/local communities.
7. The Council, as a major employer of teachers, will work in partnership with other bodies to promote strategies and operational mechanisms to pro-actively address key issues affecting recruitment, retention, development, performance, welfare and working conditions of teachers, thereby developing a workforce capable of fostering the philosophy of Catholic education and meeting the spiritual, pastoral and educational needs of children.
8. The Council will promote a culture of continuous improvement within the organisation and seek to secure and effectively manage appropriate human, physical and financial resources.

Underpinning Strategic Themes

In pursuing its Corporate Objectives, the Council has embraced the underpinning themes which will continue to inform each of the Corporate Objectives over the next three years as follows:

1. Excellence

The Council in its pursuit of excellence will seek to create a culture of continuous improvement in the Council and within the Catholic Maintained Sector.

2. Leadership

The Council will give leadership in the identification of the developmental needs of the Catholic Maintained Sector in all aspects of its work and continue to pursue its role as a significant influence on education policy. It will promote quality leadership and management in the Catholic Maintained Sector and continually develop and review policies, procedures and guidance to meet the needs of teachers, schools and Boards of Governors.

3. Partnership

The Council will continue to promote the concept of partnership between parents, parish and school and maintain and strengthen links with the Council's key stakeholders and the wider public sector.

4. Equality, Inclusiveness, Social Justice and Reconciliation

The Council, through its policies and strategies, will seek to promote equality, inclusiveness, social justice and reconciliation.

Planning Context

Education is clearly concerned with the preparation of young people for their futures. As such, the Council must continue to look toward that future. The increasing complexity of modern society is reflected in the intricacies of the world of education. Therefore, as part of its corporate planning, the Council has noted the likely impact of several external factors.

THE PROGRAMME FOR GOVERNMENT AND EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

The return of devolved government provided a focus on local issues and has identified new priorities such as tolerance, inclusion, equality, diversity, social justice and reconciliation. Within the Programme for Government and legislation there are key issues which will influence the work of the Council during the lifetime of this corporate plan, namely:

- Curriculum Review
- Raising Standards
- Review of Post Primary Education
- Review of Local Government Structures
- Funding of Schools
- Reform and Re-investment Initiative
- Section 75 Statutory Equality Obligation of the Northern Ireland Act 1998
- Human Rights Act 1988
- Introduction of a Single Equality Bill
- New Targeting of Social Need
- Teachers' Terms and Conditions of Service and Teacher Welfare

SOCIAL CHANGE

The Council recognises that the range and scope of social change will impact on the lives and lifestyles of adults and their children. Part of the Council's function is to prepare children to manage change in their lives and to deal with the changing shape of our society. In so doing, the Council is cognisant of the need to:

- Foster and promote a culture of diversity;
- Enhance and celebrate diversity;
- Inculcate in children the concept of the Common Good;
- Acknowledge and moderate national, European and global influences on society;
- Recognise a changing economic situation and manage its impact on the individual and society as a whole;
- Promote opportunity to all regardless of gender, disability, ethnicity, religion or culture;

- Recognise and address the increasing challenges to rural living with specific reference to educational provision;
- Accommodate in a sensitive manner the growing impact of new technologies on learning, social pursuits and employment; and
- Promote creativity, imagination and entrepreneurship.

DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

Demographic change continues to have implications for the work of the Council, not least in the areas of strategic planning and policy making. Factors include:

- A marked decline in compulsory school age pupil numbers, 4-16;
- A lower birth rate which continues to impact on numbers of school age children;
- Development of pre-school provision and the uptake of courses post-16;
- The impact of Selection allied with Open Enrolment;
- Access to and sustainability of appropriate post-14 curricula which seeks to provide for the evolving needs and aspirations of young people; and
- Education provision for rural parishes/communities.

The changes in the Catholic Maintained school population are illustrated below.

Catholic Maintained School Population 1997/8 and 2001/2

	1997/8		2001/02	
	Schools	Pupils	Schools	Pupils
Nursery	26	1431	29	1607
Nursery Units at Primary Schools	16	763	67	2985
Primary	431	87857 *	417	79687 *
Secondary	78	46165	76	45008
Special	2	250	2	247
Total	537 **	136466	524	129534

* *Primary schools pupil figure includes Reception children*

** *Total schools figure does not include nursery units*

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