

## Research reveals complexity and diversity of controlled education sector

The Controlled Schools' Support Council (CSSC) has today, Monday 18 September, launched its first baseline assessment of the controlled schools sector in Northern Ireland.

Controlled schools are non-denominational and firmly set within an ethos embedded in Christian values. They are open to pupils of all faiths or none, and account for 558 or 48% of all schools in Northern Ireland.

As this research demonstrates, the controlled education sector is complex and diverse. It is also the only education sector to comprise a full range of schools, with nursery, primary, special and non-selective post-primary schools sitting alongside grammar, integrated, Irish medium and Dickson Plan schools.

Chief executive Barry Mulholland explained the importance of this piece of research, saying, "We believe that this is the first time that such a detailed piece of work has been carried out that clearly demonstrates the size and complexity of the controlled education sector.

"The findings also seek to dispel many misconceptions about the controlled sector."

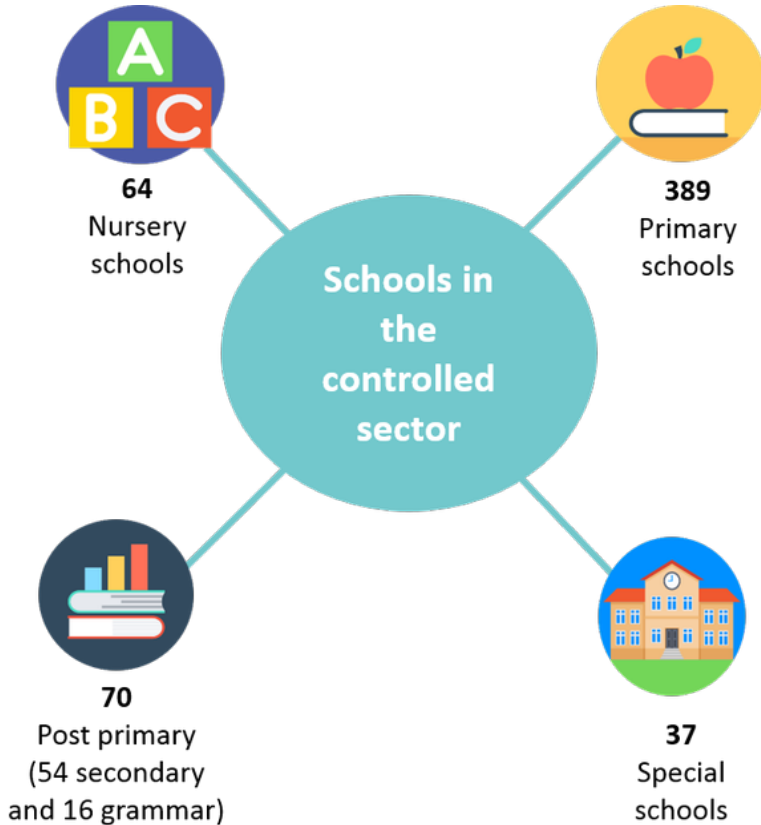
Some of the key findings from the research include:

- The controlled sector has over 140,600 pupils
- Over 8,500 teachers are employed in controlled schools
- The majority of nursery schools, primary schools and special schools in Northern Ireland are controlled
- 95% of all special schools belong to the controlled sector
- Over a third of newcomer pupils attend controlled schools
- 31% of all controlled pupils are entitled to free school meals
- Over 28,700 primary and post-primary pupils have special educational needs

In terms of religion:

- 66% of pupils are Protestant
- 10% of pupils are Catholic
- 5% of pupils are other Christian
- 1% of pupils are non-Christian
- 18% of pupils indicate no religion

“The religious breakdown of individual controlled schools often reflects their community,” Barry Mulholland added.









“For example, I know of some controlled schools that have an almost 50/50 religious balance and others that are over 90% Catholic. It is therefore misleading to describe the controlled schools as the ‘Protestant sector’.

“Indeed, controlled schools have greater religious diversity in comparison to other education sectors and, interestingly, provide

**The controlled sector is...**

**Diverse**

A range of school types	Plus a number of...
 <p>Nursery schools</p>  <p>Primary schools</p>  <p>Post primary (secondary and grammar)</p>  <p>Special schools</p>	 <p>Integrated schools</p>  <p>Irish medium schools</p> <p style="text-align: right; font-size: small;">Icons from FlatIcon</p>

education for more pupils of no religion than any other sector.”

CSSC, the advocacy body for the controlled sector, has been in operation for just one year, and has plans to use this research to tackle some of the challenges facing schools.

Barry Mulholland concluded: “It is essential that we have evidence to underpin our programme of work going forward and this baseline assessment is the first part of that.

“It is already leading to a better understanding of what controlled schools are, the diversity within the sector and the challenges that face teachers and pupils alike, particularly given the lack of funding for education right across the board.

“CSSC is proud to be the first advocacy body for controlled schools. Our dedicated and experienced team of staff will provide member schools with the support they need to enable their schools, teachers and pupils to thrive.”

## **New rector for Irvinestown and Castle Archdale**

The institution of the Revd Paul Thompson as Rector of the Grouped Parishes of Derryvullen North and Castle Archdale by the Bishop of Clogher, the Rt Revd John McDowell, took place on Friday, 15th September 2017 in Derryvullen North Parish Church, Irvinestown.

Mr Thompson, a native of Dungannon, grew up in Co Armagh and studied Hebrew, Biblical and

Theological Studies at Trinity College Dublin before attending the Church of Ireland Theological College. Following his ordination, he served first in the Diocese of Down and Dromore and then in the Diocese of Connor for almost 11 years before joining HM Prison Service in England where he has served as a Senior Chaplain for the past 17 years. While in the Prison Service he also trained as a therapeutic counsellor.

Revd Thompson and his wife, Lorraine have two grown up sons, Hugh and Oliver.

During the Service of Institution, the hymns were "Praise my soul, the King of Heaven," "As the deer pants for the water," "Be still, for the presence of the Lord," "I, the Lord of sea and sky," "Be thou my vision" and "Tell out my soul, the greatness of the Lord." The organist was Mrs. Florence Barrett.

Representatives from both parishes read the three readings. They were Mrs Sandra Cashel, Mrs Wendy Knox and Mr Samuel Johnston. Other parishioners took part in the Act of Institution.

The Rural Dean of Kesh, the Revd Alan Irwin, also took part in the service.

The sermon was preached by Revd Canon Walter Laverty.

The collection was taken up for the Clogher Ministry Fund which facilitates the development of lay and ordained ministry in the Diocese.

## **Recently ordained cleric begins ministry in Donegal**

A newly ordained priest, Rev Robert Wray, was introduced to parishioners of the Grouped Parishes of Ardara, Glencolumbkille, Glenties, Inniskeel and Lettermacaward on Friday evening as their new Bishop's Curate.

The Service of Introduction, in St Conal's Church in Portnoo, was led by the Rural Dean, Rev Canon Brian Russell, and presided over by the Bishop of Derry and Raphoe, Rt Rev Ken Good. The clergy who took part included colleagues from the CCCMSP Group of Parishes in Londonderry, where Rev Wray had served his Deacon Internship.

Among the congregation were a former President of the Methodist Church, four local Roman Catholic priests, a Donegal Person of the Year and a local Mayor.





The sermon was preached the Archdeacon of Raphoe, Ven David Huss, who welcomed Rev Wray and his wife Karen to the Diocese of Raphoe. Archdeacon Huss said it was “an exciting moment, a daunting moment,” as the new Bishop’s Curate was about to be “launched as it were into this moment of ministry”.

## **Church minister describes Grenfell inquiry 'upset'**

A church minister in west London says some people remain deeply unhappy that a public inquiry into the Grenfell Tower fire does not feature a local community member on its panel.



Rev Mike Long spoke after the first hearing in the investigation, chaired by retired judge Sir Martin Moore-Bick (pictured above), got underway last week.

Speaking with Premier News, he said: "Some people are significantly upset that the inquiry panel doesn't include someone from the local community... but I do think there's a range of emotions around this and, perhaps, it depends on how close people are to the situation".

Former Court of Appeal judge, Sir Martin was heckled during a meeting attended by survivors and bereaved families on Wednesday when he promised that his investigation would "provide answers".

Rev Mike Long at Notting Hill Methodist Church - a short distance away from the scene of the

deadly tragedy on 14th June which claimed at least 80 lives - said people are "relieved" the public inquiry has begun and are hoping for transparency.

Asked if he believes the probe will address the concerns of residents, the minister answered: "I think it will depend on how the inquiry proceeds, the line of questioning and the extent to which the inquiry really is trying to dig deep as to the causes of the fire - by that I don't just mean the technical aspect."

During Wednesday's 45 minute hearing, Sir Martin said he would not "shrink" from making conclusions that could affect criminal prosecutions or civil actions, if necessary.

Rev Long explained what would help the community through its grieving process, explaining: "Clearly, some common acceptance that truth is being done and is seen to be done will help significantly in that process.

"That's why the outcome of the public inquiry and the way's it's being conducted is so important here."

## **Catholic caucus for UK Labour Party at Brighton next week**

Catholic Labour MPs in Westminster are creating a new internal party organisation, Catholics for Labour, in a bid to reconnect with some of its traditional supporters.

For generations, British Catholics voted almost without doubt for the Labour Party in Westminster elections. This is partly because most of Britain's Catholics were of Irish stock and it is said, that the history of the Irish in Britain is the history of the British working class.

However, in recent years, as Labour has championed 'identity politics' focussed on sexuality, race and gender, the party has alienated many of its traditional supporters, who see it as less concerned with the social, and more concerned with the personal. The trend is similar to that in the US, where traditional Catholic support for the Democratic Party is no longer a sure thing.

In a bid to reverse this trend in UK politics and to re-forge the links between Catholic Social Teaching with the Labour Party's values, Mike Kane, MP for Wythenshawe and Sale East, is planning to establish the new organisation, Catholics for Labour, at the party's annual

conference, which takes place in Brighton next week.

Kane, who is the son of Irish emigrants who moved to Manchester in 1955, published an open letter this weekend, co-signed by eight other Catholic Labour MPs, setting out the aims of the new organisation, which he hopes will appeal to a wider party membership.

“There are 3.8 million Catholic voters in England and Wales,” he says. “And Labour will ignore them at its peril.”

Certainly, the English and Welsh Labour Party would do well to heed the experience of their Scottish colleagues: once 80% of Catholics in Scotland voted Labour, but that number has halved with Scottish Catholics increasingly voting for the SNP.

Without doubt, the Labour Party should try not to upset Catholics, but unfortunately their party leader Jeremy Corbyn did that earlier this month. He was accused of ‘disrespecting the Catholic faith’ after he took communion while attending the funeral Mass of trade union official Mary Turner at the Sacred Heart Church in London, despite the fact that he is a self-professed agnostic. Separately, in 1996, the late Cardinal Basil Hume wrote to the then Labour Party

leader Tony Blair, asking him to refrain from taking Communion when attending Mass with his wife Cherie, as the then future PM was not a member of the Catholic Church.

The Catholics for Labour initiative comes just a week after a senior Catholic Conservative MP Jacob Rees-Mogg made a public stand on his opposition to abortion in all circumstances and to gay marriage. Significantly, Rees-Mogg is seen as a possible successor to the current Tory party leader, Prime Minister Theresa May.

In the meantime, here in Ireland, there is little sign of a group of Irish Labour TDs or senators forming a group that openly identifies itself as Catholic in character.

## **Archbishop Welby joins UN Secretary-General's board on mediation**

The Archbishop of Canterbury has been asked by United Nations (UN) Secretary-General António Guterres to be a member of a new high-level advisory board on mediation.



Most Rev Justin Welby will join 17 other global leaders and experts to provide the Secretary-General with advice on mediation initiatives and back specific mediation efforts around the world.

Archbishop Welby said in a tweet that he was "honoured to join UN Secretary General's board on mediation".

The group, which includes the President of Chile, former President of Finland and former President of the Republic of Nigeria, bring together an extensive range of experience, skills, knowledge and contacts to assist the Secretary-General.

As announced by the Secretary-General on 13th September, the establishment of the board is part of the "surge in diplomacy for peace" he has advocated.

It is expected that the board will allow the UN to work more effectively with regional organizations, non-governmental groups and others involved in mediation around the world.

Welby has many years of experience in reconciliation and has identified reconciliation as one of the three priority areas for his ministry.

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