

McKenna, Dan, 2007, *The Future of the Catholic Voluntary Secondary School- some Teacher Perceptions*

ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

This work was based on the views of the teachers of three Catholic Voluntary Secondary Schools in the Munster area. These schools, along with all other schools in the Voluntary sector, are facing particular challenges at this time. The Educational landscape in Ireland has changed dramatically since the time their founders identified the need for these Voluntary schools.

The research questions posed were: "What makes a school Catholic? what are the levels of Catholicity in these schools? How important are members of Religious congregations, Religious symbols and rituals in Catholic schools? Finally, what future is envisaged for these schools by the teachers?"

The research population consisted of the teaching staffs of the three schools. Sixty one respondents completed a research instrument - a twenty three item questionnaire. In addition to this, interviews were held with the principals of the three schools. It was found that the teachers of the schools had clear and consistent ideas on what makes a school Catholic. The Catholic nature of these schools was very evident to the teaching staffs. The contributions of Religious members of staff along with religious symbols and myths, were found to be highly valued. The research found that, in keeping with the educational landscape of the day, teachers of the schools are somewhat unsure of the future direction of their schools.

It was clear from the research that a determination exists to keep these schools Catholic and that the Catholic nature of the schools is highly valued amongst the teaching staffs.