

**O'Flynn, Maura, 2012, *The Experience of being Chairperson of the Board of Management of a Catholic Primary School in the Diocese of Cork and Ross in the South West of Ireland.***

## **ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION**

This study examines the experience of chairpersons of the Board of Management of a Catholic primary school in the diocese of Cork and Ross. This diocese, one of twenty-eight in the country, has one hundred and seventy seven schools under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop. As the title states, the aim of the study is to record the experience of being chairperson of the Board of Management.

The researcher circulated questionnaires to all who are chairpersons in the diocese during the 2007 to 2011 board term. This was followed up with a number of random individual interviews. The study endeavours to record the experience of being chairperson of a board of management and looks at the necessary skills for the role and the issue of training and information. The researcher is a former chairperson of a board so therefore has experience of and interest in the role.

The study finds that the majority of chairpersons find the experience to be a positive one but finds that there is a lack of relevant preparation and training for the role. It found that Catholic ethos was seldom examined and both ethos and patronage were seldom if ever clarified or discussed at meetings. The study shows that the relationship between the chairperson and the principal is a key one. The majority of respondents agree that they learned much from the experience.

Two very clear recommendations arise from the study. The first is the need for training and induction for chairpersons about the role of chairperson in order to develop a clear understanding of what their role on the board means. The need for widespread debate and clarification around patronage and ethos is the other key recommendation. This of course is very topical in view of the current discussion about the plurality of patronage introduced by Minister for Education, Ruairi Quinn on the 16th April 2011.