



An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

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RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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2.1 We stress that Religious Education (this term is preferred to Religious Instruction) is the foundation on which all aspects of the curriculum in the Catholic school are based. For that reason we must demand that Religious Education be given its rightful place before the other "foundation subjects" and, as a subject, it must be allocated the time necessary to cover the course as prescribed for each year in the textbooks currently in use in our schools. These texts, viz. the "Children of God" in primary schools and "The Christian Way" in secondary schools, have been produced and revised after much research by the Irish Catholic Bishops' Commission on Catechetics and are now being used not only in schools in Northern Ireland and in the Republic of Ireland but in many English speaking countries. The texts have a strong ecumenical dimension. Religious Education in Catholic schools is assessed by specialists trained for the purpose and appointed by the Diocesan authorities. This system of assessment should be continued.

IRISH

2.2 The opportunity for pupils to study the Irish Language has always been a feature of the curriculum in our schools. In many cases pupils study the Irish Language in addition to one or more European languages. Some pupils study the Irish Language as their only European language other than English. The proposals in the consultative document would penalize such pupils. This we find unacceptable. The area of study in question should be referred to as "a modern European language" rather than "a modern foreign language". We believe that the provision of courses in the Irish Language and in Irish Studies in schools of both traditions is an important element in the Education for Mutual Understanding programme and we would therefore expect that the Department of Education would encourage all schools to include an element of Irish Studies in the curriculum.