

Shaping the future of Catholic Education

Lurgan and Lismore

A pre-consultation paper on the future of Post-Primary Education
in Lurgan and Lismore

February 2008

NORTHERN IRELAND

Commission for Catholic Education
Post-Primary Review

FOREWORD

by Monsignor Hamill



As Chair of the Project Board for Post Primary Review in the Lurgan and Lismore areas I would like to express my support and gratitude for the work currently being undertaken in the review of post-primary provision.

The schools involved have been challenged to review the delivery of post primary education and to design options and plans for the future. Catholic education, as you know, promotes the values of justice, peace, reconciliation, truth and understanding and it is vital that we continue to work together to provide academic excellence and competence, as

well as moral, social and spiritual development and empowerment for all our pupils.

The project must address the need to work collaboratively with other education providers in the area for the mutual benefit of all pupils and with the ultimate aim of improving choices for all parents and pupils who attend our schools.

We are now at a stage where decisions need to be made on a complex range of issues. The education of our young people affects us all, so it is very important that all options are considered. The options within this document represent a potential way forward but no decision has been made on a preferred option. Through this process we are keen to gather the views of the community on these options and to identify other options that can address the challenges we are facing. I would encourage you to consider these options carefully and have your say on this vital issue.

Monsignor A Hamill
Chairman of the Project Board

Background

On 20 June 2005 the Most Reverend Doctor John McAreevey, Bishop of Dromore, and Sister Chris Hegarty, Assistant Provincial Leader, Sisters of Mercy, Northern Province, launched a project to explore possibilities for the future provision of post-primary education in the Lurgan area. The project involved:

St Mary's High School, Lurgan

St Paul's Junior High School, Lurgan

St Michael's Grammar School, Lurgan

The project was initiated in response to various factors including demographic change, curriculum review, publication of the Costello report and Ministerial announcement on government policy to end selection.

Particular issues impacting on this review include:

- Government's commitment to abolish academic selection
- The proposed extension to curricular choice and learning pathways open to all young people
- The requirement that all post-primary schools guarantee access to a minimum of 24 subjects at Key Stage 4 and 27 subjects at post-16 (of which at least one third must be academic and one third vocational).

The Trustees of post-primary schools in Lurgan began a review of current provision to enable the implementation of a non-selective, inclusive system of post-primary education which provides access to all young people in the area to the 11-19 Entitlement Framework.

The key principle underlying the project is that the child should be at the centre of future post-primary provision.

In 2007 the Trustees decided to include **Lismore Comprehensive School** in the project in order to ensure that future provision of Post-Primary education in the Lurgan and Craigavon areas was fully reviewed and options developed.

Management of the Project

A Project Board - which provides the overall direction of the project and makes recommendations on the way forward to the senior Trustees.

- Mons. A Hamill, Chairman
- Sr Eleanor Murphy, Mercy Sisters
- Sr Bronagh McKeown, Mercy Sisters
- Fr. M McAlinden

A Working Group - made up of Principals and Senior Management of the schools involved. The role of this group is to examine all possible options in light of current information and education legislation, regulations, and policy as it emerges from the Department of Education.

A User Group - comprising the Principals and Chairs of Governors of the schools involved and the main feeder Primary schools. This group has responsibility for ensuring that the project is managed consistently, that options match agreed core principles and that final recommendations will meet the educational needs of all children in the community.

A Project Support Team - officers from the Post primary Review team and Entitlement to Succeed officers who provide support to the **Northern Ireland Commission for Catholic Education** and the Catholic managed schools sector.

What are we looking to achieve?

The Review Group has been assessing the impact of financial, demographic and curriculum change on the schools involved in the project and attempting to develop options for future provision which will deliver sustainable Catholic-managed schools with a strong Catholic ethos which can work with other sectors to deliver:

- An 11-19 framework of quality provision which guarantees access to a curriculum which will meet the needs of all pupils within the context of the Entitlement Curriculum
- an education framework which facilitates an effective education continuum from primary through post-primary to third level education and employment
- delivery of a framework which enjoys the full support of all key stakeholders

This work has involved research into different structures of delivery, study visits to other areas where similar challenges have been addressed, consultation with other education sectors and research into innovative delivery models.

Key Principles of Project

Catholic ethos – value system. Not just a school for Catholics.

- All schools, in keeping with the philosophy of catholic education, will work together in the interests of the 'Common Good'.
- Each school will contribute to the promotion of a culture of mutual respect, understanding and tolerance within and between communities – ethnic, economic and social. This culture shall be for the benefit of students, the wider community and society.
- All schools shall actively promote Catholic principles of social justice.

Competence based system which recognises the difference between academic and vocational streams, and which accommodates each

- Parity of esteem for all educational routes shall inform the new arrangements
- Students will have access to a curriculum which maximises their potential to achieve to the best of their ability.
- Students will have access to a curriculum which is relevant, flexible, and meets their changing needs and aspirations.
- The school system will enhance access for each student to further and higher education and employment opportunities.

Shared Future and Collaboration

- Schools will collaborate and cooperate with a network of appropriate partners to deliver proposals and promote a shared future.
- Schools will continue to build collaborative relationships in the interests of raising standards and promoting professional development of staff through an ethos of trust, openness, transparency, and mutual support.

Community and Extended School

As part of the community all schools will be recognised as playing a real and important role by:

- Providing a continuum of quality education
- Adopting a central role in coordinating and providing an enhanced range of support services for children and their families
- Creating opportunities for extended use of school facilities.

Community support and confidence

All schools will seek to develop confidence in the process and outworkings of the Lurgan and Lismore Project through:-

- Good communication
- Mutual respect
- Transparency
- Agreed protocols
- Clarity of roles and responsibilities

in order to ensure access for all to quality education.

Opinions for the Future

The development of two separate and distinct Post-Primary school units:

- one on the current Lismore site
- one in Lurgan using a single site or separate sites

Both developments to proceed in parallel to facilitate approximately 3000 pupils in total

A significant community dimension to be included in both sites where access to a wide range of appropriate educational and community support services is provided to all members of the school communities

The School on the Lismore site to be an all-ability, co-educational school in one building catering for children aged 11 to 19.

The school unit in Lurgan to be an all-ability, co-educational institution. This would result from amalgamation of St Mary's High School, St Michael's Grammar School and St Paul's Junior High School. The unit would be managed by one governing body. However, the potential exists for a variety of physical layouts and structures including:

- One 11-19 unit housed on one site where all children would progress from years 8 to year 14
- One 11-14 building and a separate 14-19 building on the one site or separate sites Children would have automatic right of access from the 11-14 unit to the 14-19 unit.

Key Points to note:

- At 11-14 (Key Stage 3) all pupils will have access to a common curriculum which will focus on developing learning and skills and identifying a pupil's strengths and areas for improvement.
- At the end of Key Stage 3, based on skills and learning developed in the previous 3 years, pupils, parents and teachers will take decisions on choices for 14-16 (Key Stage 4). Pupils will be offered access to a wide range of subjects in keeping with the Entitlement Framework and can opt for academic or vocational subjects or a mix of both. At Key Stage 4 all options will be delivered by the 14-19 college in collaboration with other sectors
- All post-16 pupils will be offered access to a wide range of subjects in keeping with the Entitlement Framework and can opt for academic or vocational subjects or a mix of both. Options will be delivered by the 14-19 college in collaboration with other sectors.

What will happen next?

The Project Board believes that the options detailed in this document will have the potential to deliver long term sustainable schools which will meet the many challenges facing the Catholic-managed post-primary sector in the area. This consultation process provides an opportunity for the community and other key stakeholders to influence the development of these options and to identify other options.

The Project Board will consider any alternative options which address the challenge of developing long-term, sustainable post-primary education which meets the needs of all children within the area. Alternative proposals must match the Core Principles detailed above. Any final decision on future structures will only be made after a further **formal consultation process** with parents, pupils and other key stakeholders within the community and in the context of clear direction from government on the future of post-primary education across Northern Ireland.

Greater detail on all aspects of the project can be found on www.pprce.org

How to give us your views

You can respond to this consultation in a number of ways:

- Complete the detachable sheet at the end of this leaflet and return it to this address

**Lurgan/Lismore Post-Post Primary Review,
Northern Ireland Commission for Catholic Education
FREEPOST
1 Killyman Road
Dungannon
BT71 6DE**

- E-mail to
- Go online to complete the form at www.pprce.org

Further copies of this document are available by phoning 028 8775 1500

Responses must be received by 31st May 2008

Please complete, detach and return to:

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BT71 6DE

In this **pre-consultation** stage we would like to have your views on the issues set out in this booklet. This is **NOT** a vote on options, but we will use your responses to shape the way forward for the consultation and ultimately any recommendations we make.

Are you responding to this consultation as a:

Parent / Teacher (Please cross out one)

Primary **Which school?** _____

Secondary **Which school?** _____

Please tick if you are

Governor **Which school?** _____

School Staff **Which school?** _____

Other (please specify) _____

Your postcode please: _____

