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**a. Executive Summary**

The study was undertaken during April to July, 2008. The sabbatical study focused on two primary and distinct areas:

- the use of interactive white boards (IWBs); and
- the maintenance of the special character in a number of schools in Ireland and England.

The opportunity was taken to present a paper “Catholic Schools – what’s ahead?” and facilitate a workshop at the 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Conference of Secondary School Principals in Galway, Ireland. The paper explored the opportunities that lie ahead in the short- and medium-term for Catholic secondary schools in New Zealand and compared and contrasted these opportunities with the evolving nature of Irish second level Catholic schooling.

All information was gathered in partnership with the schools, appropriate personnel and teachers with particular focus on student engagement with learning where IWBs were being used and staff and student participation in special character activities. Observations were made in classrooms and around the schools. Interviews were held with key management personnel, chaplains, teachers and students.

The gradual introduction of IWBs in secondary schools in England started over seven years ago. There is now a growing field of empirical studies, especially related to the effective use to enhance teaching and learning in foreign languages and mathematics. Observations in several schools indicate that where there is a planned and sustained approach in introducing IWBs, the use is likely to be more effective. The planning included the identification of teachers who are already literate and committed to the use of other technologies (e.g. laptops, data projectors, visualisers, digital video, etc.) in their classrooms. Ongoing professional development, reflective circles and peer modelling helped teachers build their expertise and confidence to integrate IWBs into their array of teaching tools.

The issues confronting Catholic secondary schools in Ireland and England are similar to those facing New Zealand schools. There appears to be in both overseas countries a higher involvement of the diocesan clergy in supporting the liturgical life of the school. Most of the schools observed employ a lay chaplain, who has a critical role in organising co-curricular religious activities, events and celebrations. Most schools indicate that there has been a planned and smooth transition from a religious chaplain to a lay chaplain. The question of how the position is funded (state or locally raised) the position is contentious in Irish schools.

**b. Purpose (as in the proposal)**

- i. How widespread and effective is the use of inter-active information and communication technology (IWB) in the classroom?
- ii. How do the Catholic (Marist Brother) Schools in Ireland and some schools in England (Birmingham and Manchester) maintain their Special Character charism, given that lay principals are leading the schools?

- iii. How has the Birmingham Secondary School Partnership evolved over the last 5 years?
- iv. How do the management structures and curriculum delivery support the high achievement ethos at a highly successful academic school?

The findings will be reported in terms of an evaluation of the use of inter-active ICT (e.g. whiteboards, data projectors, audio-visual equipment, laptops, etc) in classrooms and what direct links are the teachers making in terms of how this technology is assisting teaching and learning and improved student outcomes.

### **c. Background**

#### *Interactive White Boards*

Interactive White Boards (IWBs) are becoming a noticeable feature in many primary and secondary schools in New Zealand, and it is only now that locally based empirical evidence is becoming available to identify the effect of such technology on teaching and learning.

Overseas research has gathered momentum in the last five years, while it is very recent that academic papers are starting to appear in professional publications in New Zealand, rather than anecdotal descriptive stories. A research paper “Teaching and Learning with an interactive whiteboard: a teacher's journey” by Sue Hodge and Bill Anderson, is published in *Learning, Media and Technology*, 32:3, September 2007, pp 271-282. This uses a self-study methodology to explore the impact of introducing interactive whiteboard technology to a primary school classroom. Several key insights, described as 'nodal moments', provide the impetus for the teacher to review her practice, reconsider her students' learning approaches and explore the relationship between the introduction of a new technology and the teaching and learning that was occurring in her classroom. In particular, she considers the nature of engagement and the ways in which the technology initially moved her away from an active pedagogy.

The principal, as the professional and instructional leader in the school, would need to evaluate several imperatives when considering the introduction of new (and expensive) technologies into the school. The view held by some people that if School A has acquired IWBs, then School B must get them is not a valid criterion for decision making. The assumption that if School A has acquired IWBs and promotes itself with its community that teachers have the latest technology, then its teachers must be better teachers and students have become better learners does not necessarily follow. The same applies for claims that IWBs will improve teaching and learning. Owning a tool does not necessarily mean that the tool is being used effectively. On the other hand, appropriate teaching tools used appropriately should make teaching more effective and learning more engaging.

#### *Special Character*

Catholic Schools are bound by an Integration Agreement signed by their proprietor and the New Zealand government, where mutual undertakings are entered into. The “school is a Roman Catholic school in which the whole school community, through the general school programme and its Religious Instructions and observances exercises the right to live and teach the values of Jesus Christ. These values are expressed in the Scriptures and in the practices, worship and doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church, as determined from time to time by the Roman Catholic Bishop of the diocese.”

The New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference approves the definition of “Special Character” for Catholic Integrated Schools. As part of its responsibilities, the school is

required to review several dimensions relating to the special character, partly to ensure that it is fulfilling its obligations and adhering to integration agreement commitments. One dimension for review relates to ‘Catholic Community’ where the school evaluates the extent it is a Christian community, where gospel values are central, where faith is nourished, and where Christian celebration in the Catholic tradition is highly valued. This part of the evaluation focuses on spirituality, evangelisation, partnership, values, school culture, leadership, stewardship, worship, service and collaboration with parish.

Given that almost all Catholic secondary school principals in New Zealand are lay people; that religious institutes have withdrawn from schools; and that most chaplains are also lay people, new opportunities, responsibilities and challenges to maintain and enhance the special character abound. Catholic schools in England have gone through this development several decades ago and have developed and evolved models and practices, while Irish second level schools have been experiencing in more recent years the same situation as New Zealand schools. It was, therefore, appropriate to compare the Catholic special character is maintained and enhanced in several Irish and English schools with those in New Zealand.

#### **d. Activities undertaken (methodology)**

##### **SCHOOLS VISITED DURING SABBATICAL**

Name of school	Location
<b>Ireland</b>	
Marian College	Ballsbridge, Dublin, Ireland
Loreto College	Foxrock, Dublin, Ireland
Moyle Park College	Clondalkin, Dublin, Ireland
Our Lady’s Boys Primary School	Ballintier, Dublin, Ireland
Marist College	Athlone, Ireland
<b>England, Lancashire</b>	
Stonyhurst College	Clitheroe, Lancashire, England
St Mary’s Hall, Preparatory School	Clitheroe, Lancashire, England
<b>England, Birmingham</b>	
Cardinal Wiseman RC High School	Kingstanding, Birmingham, England
St Edmund Campion RC High School	Erdington, Birmingham, England
Bishop Walsh RC High School	Sutton Coldfield, Birmingham, England
St Paul’s Girls RC High School	Edgbaston, Birmingham, England
Archbishop Ilsley RC High School	Acocks Green, Birmingham, England
St Thomas Aquinas RC High School	Kings Norton, Birmingham, England
<b>England, Manchester</b>	
St John Vianney Special School	Stretford, Manchester, England
Loreto 6 <sup>th</sup> Form College	Hulme, Manchester, England
Loreto RC High School	Chorlton-cum-Hardy, Manchester, England
St Peter’s RC High School	Gorton, Manchester, England
St Matthew’s RC High School	Moston, Manchester, England
Xaverian 6 <sup>th</sup> Form College	Rusholme, Manchester, England

## **Other activities and meetings:**

### **Ireland**

21<sup>st</sup> Annual Secondary Schools Principals Conference

Galway, Ireland

Presentation of paper and facilitation of workshop on “Catholic Education – what’s ahead?”

The plan to go to Scotland to attend the Catholic Secondary School Principals conference had to be cancelled as the conference coincided with the Irish conference.

### **England, Birmingham**

Board meeting of Head teachers of the Birmingham Catholic Schools Partnership;

Meeting for ICT co-ordinators of Catholic Schools Partnership;

Meeting of in-school partnership co-ordinators of the Birmingham Catholic Partnership; and

Several informal meetings and discussions with the Partnership co-ordinator (CEO)

### **England, Manchester**

MANCEP (Manchester Catholic Education Partnership) Heads of Department of Religious Education; and

Several informal meetings and discussions with the Partnership co-ordinator (CEO)

### **Malta**

Meeting with Minister of Education to discuss methodology of review of schools and the use of interactive whiteboards and other information and communication technologies.

### *Information gathering*

All information was gathered in partnership with the schools, appropriate personnel and teachers with particular focus on student engagement with learning where interactive whiteboards were being used and staff and student participation in special character activities. Observations were made in classrooms and around the schools. Interviews were held with key management personnel, chaplains, teachers and students.

## **e. Findings**

### *Interactive whiteboards*

Hundred per cent of primary schools and 98% of secondary schools in England have introduced IWBs in their classrooms. All the schools visited in England had IWBs. Second level schools in Ireland have started to invest in IWBs with two of the 4 schools visited having two IWBs each. Two primary school teachers (one in Ireland and one in England) were observed and they were very versatile in using the equipment and engaging students to interact directly with the board. A teacher at a special needs high school in Manchester was also very effective in engaging the students, who participated with confidence in the lesson, receiving immediate feedback from a self-evaluating exercise they were asked to complete.

It is not clear in the schools why one brand was preferred over another. The two brands are Promethean and Smartboard, teachers indicating that each brand has its own special features that are more suitable for a particular subject (e.g. the Arts and Humanities or the Sciences and Mathematics). Primary schools have a preference for Smartboard, similarly the Arts and Humanities in secondary schools, while the Sciences and Mathematics appear to prefer Promethean.

Teachers who have participated in timely and ongoing professional development are more likely to be using interactive whiteboards effectively. Professional development beyond how to operate the IWB is conspicuous by its absence in most schools. Most of the teachers observed in the secondary schools use the IWB to project data onto the board and talk to the information projected on the board through their laptop computer. Very few interacted with the board and fewer teachers asked students to interact directly with the board.

Where teachers are confident, reflective, innovative and give personal time to trial and error sessions, they are effective in the use of the IWB and students participate in using the tools appropriately.

Other technologies are available in classrooms and, depending on the subject, the teachers participated in the decision to acquire those technologies, such as visualisers and voting pads.

Teacher training in the use of IWB focused mainly on:

- Writing and drawing on boards in various colours and shapes
- Using an infinite number of pages left or right
- Using an infinite number of pages top to bottom
- Teaching essay writing with RM Tutor, as well as the whiteboard
- Showing students how to do an exam/how not to
- Making movies of IWB based lessons/explanations
- Making notes on video clips to produce pdf handouts consisting of stills from the movies people watched, complete with the annotations the teacher added to those stills when the movie was paused.
- Lifting copy, graphics (including moving graphics) or text, from sources like the Net, to create teaching materials by click and drag, e.g. the teacher can (re)creat an article from a newspaper on the board and save it without any word processing text
- Adding movies, including flash movies, downloaded clips from YouTube, etc. straight into the whiteboard file
- Teaching innovatively using symbols, pictures, etc. as aide-memoires
- Saving the whole lesson of writing/drawing/other items:
  - As a Smartboard file (to deliver the same lesson again, share it with colleagues)
  - As a pdf (to export what is on the board as a pdf and put it in staff intranet Shared drive)
- Using content-specific materials from the board:
  - Graph paper
  - Shapes
  - Maps
  - Flash objects.

Such training sessions would invariably take one to two hours, sometimes in teacher non-contact time, e.g. lunch time or after school. Teachers comment that very little training is offered or available in or outside the school to assist them to learn how to integrate the IWB as a pedagogical tool into the lesson or how to plan or adapt lessons integrating IWB features.

### *Special Character*

All schools have a salaried full time chaplain with co-responsibility with a member from the senior management team for the Catholic life of the school in the schools visited in England. Lay chaplains are in 15 out of the 17 high schools or 6<sup>th</sup> Form colleges. Where there is a religious (Jesuit priest or Marist Brother), this person is supported by a part-time lay chaplain. In Ireland the employment of chaplains has become contentious as the Department of

Education will only pay the salary of chaplains employed in second level community (state-owned) schools. Currently the Church or religious institute owned schools have to either use their operational grant or locally raised funds.

The chaplain and senior management are very committed to and run the induction programme for new teachers and students to the school which mainly focuses on the charism and ethos of the particular school (e.g. Marist, Ignatian, etc.) in most schools. This one-day programme is identified as critical to the maintenance and enhancement of the Catholic character. In some schools, this is extended at appropriate times with further sessions to increase the awareness and understanding of Catholic rituals (mass, holy communion, etc.) and liturgical events (e.g. Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, etc.). Contribution by teachers to the Catholic life is also an integral part of performance management.

In England, diocesan priests are readily available to support the liturgical life of the school. Several of these priests play an active part on the chaplaincy team. Liturgical celebrations vary from school to school, but mainly these focus on regular school masses (mostly once a week at lunch time), with voluntary student attendance. Whole school masses are also celebrated on holy days of obligation (e.g. All Saints Day). While all schools have an inaugural mass (not necessarily for all students), most celebrate thanksgiving masses to mark the end of the year for senior students at the different levels. Several schools run programmes for the sacraments of initiation (baptism, confirmation and holy communion). The Catholic tradition of pilgrimage (e.g. travelling together to holy sites such as Lourdes as a sign of the student's faith and commitment) is encouraged in the English schools. Pilgrimage trips for senior students were an annual event in these schools.

Students at each year level participate in spiritual retreats and outreach programmes and charitable work are strong features of most schools. Depending on the socio-economic status of a particular school, these take the form of donations of books, uniforms, breakfast, and hands-on assistance in old people's homes, free lunches for senior citizens, and voluntary service in England or overseas (CAFOD). Groups of students participate enthusiastically in chaplaincy teams, helping to make Catholic life events appealing to their peers.

Where there is a vibrant chaplaincy team, regular private (in the chapel) and public (in classrooms) prayer is highly visible. Two schools have published a book with prayers composed by their students. Students and form classes are encouraged to pray for individuals and these prayers are noted on a card that is passed on to them.

Catholic life notices and events are mainly recorded in school newsletters and posted on websites. Some chaplaincy teams and Religious Departments have initiated their own newsletter celebrating and promoting events, such as retreats, meditation, outreach activities, traidcraft, peace gardens, religious drama, banner making, etc.

A strong feature in several schools is a concern for social justice and chaplains highlight contemporary world-wide issues (e.g. Myanmar, fair trade, child labour), challenging the students to take a stand. One school that caters for students from affluent families is noted for inviting people from academia, industry or politics to debate moral, philosophical and ethical issues.

## **f. Implications**

*Interactive whiteboards*

E-learning and virtual learning environments are becoming more and more an integral part of the everyday pedagogy in schools. Information and communication technologies are conspicuous by their exponential development. One technology arrives on the market and is very quickly superseded or complemented by a host of other technologies. It is critical that schools approach new technologies with informed awareness of their capability to transform, enhance or inhibit learning. There needs to be a participatory professional discussion among staff for the introduction, development and sustainability of such new technologies (as opposed to the acquisition of the new technology for its sake). While there may still be a place for luddites, e-literacy is a skill that teachers will find very useful for the New Zealand curriculum as this provides opportunities for co-construction of knowledge and reciprocal teacher-student learning.

#### *Special Character*

With the withdrawal of religious institutes from schools and fewer diocesan clergy, it is clear that lay people have taken up the crucial commitment to maintain and enhance the Catholic special character of schools. The roles of chaplain, director of religious studies, principal, and deputy principal (with the responsibility to assist in planning and organising courses and programmes at the school to ensure that they reflect the Special Character of the school) are pivotal. Opportunities for ongoing spiritual growth and professional development for these people would be one of the top priorities as they witness for and support the rest of the staff and students to answer the call to Catholic life.

### **g. Conclusions**

#### *Interactive whiteboards*

IWBs are a powerful and exciting tool to be added to the list of strategies effective teachers use to engage students in learning. IWBs may initially increase teacher work load when they are being integrated into unit and lesson planning. If IWBs were to be used successfully in classrooms, then ongoing professional development is required as teachers learn new strategies and embed these into their planning and delivery of effective lessons. Without time and ongoing development, the IWB may become a very expensive and under-utilised piece of technology used mainly as a sophisticated data projector. IWBs are another tool and the overuse of this technology could replace “death by power point” by “death by IWB”. The decision to introduce IWBs into classrooms would be an integral and well-thought out part of the school’s ICT strategic plan and that such a strategic decision would have been made after meaningful and professional considerations of all educational priorities.

#### *Special Character*

The maintenance and enhancement of the special character of Catholic integrated schools is very much tied up with the expression and witnessing of Catholic life. The Catholic special character review and development document, with its examples of indicators, provides a well-established blue print for self-review. Observations of Catholic life in a number of schools in Ireland and England reveal more similarities than differences with life in New Zealand schools. Catholic life is maintained and enhanced by the whole school community. It is critically essential that staff are totally committed to the charism and ethos of the school, through their witnessing and ‘living the Catholic life’.

### **h. References (where applicable)**

#### *Interactive whiteboards*

[www.becta.org.uk](http://www.becta.org.uk) British Educational Communications Technology Agency - is the UK Government's key partner in the strategic development and delivery of its information and

communications technology (ICT) and e-learning strategy. Becta leads the national drive to inspire and lead the effective and innovative use of technology throughout learning. It is Becta's ambition to create a more exciting, rewarding and successful experience for learners of all ages and abilities enabling them to achieve their potential. There are several resources available here providing advice and guides how to "get the most from your interactive whiteboard" for secondary and primary teachers.

For research into the use of IWBs in classrooms visit: [www.keele.ac.uk](http://www.keele.ac.uk) and [www.mmu.ac.uk](http://www.mmu.ac.uk) as two of the leading universities undertaking graduate research in ICT and pedagogy.

*Special character*

[www.cesew.org.uk](http://www.cesew.org.uk)

[www.sces.uk.com](http://www.sces.uk.com)

[www.catholicbishops.ie/education](http://www.catholicbishops.ie/education)

[www.nzceo.catholic.org.nz](http://www.nzceo.catholic.org.nz)

These sites link up to the Catholic Education services in England, Scotland, Ireland and New Zealand.