
Males into Primary Teaching

Report of the Primary Education Committee

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Réamhrá

Ó Sheachtóidí an chéid seo caite, tháinig titim sheasmhach ar líon na bhfireannach ag dul isteach i ngairm na múinteoireachta in Éirinn, go háirithe ag leibhéal na bunscoile. Tá an cás amhlaidh i bhformhór na dtíortha forbartha. Sa bhliain 2003, chuir an tAire Oideachais agus Eolaíochta An Choiste Bunoideachais ar bun chun na ceisteanna a bhaineann leis an titim seo a scrúdú agus freisin chun straitéisí agus céimeanna a mholadh le líon na bhfireannach ag dul i ngairm na múinteoireachta a mhéadú.

Sa tuarascáil seo, tugtar torthaí an Choiste agus san áireamh tá moltaí chun feabhas a chur ar an scéal i dtuairim an Choiste.

Mar chathaoirleach, is mian liom fíorbhuíochas a ghabháil le baill an Choiste; roinn gach duine acu go fial a dtuiscint ghairmiúil maidir le gnéithe casta na ceiste seo. Tá buíochas ar leith ag dul do bhaill an ghrúpa a d'ullmhaigh an dréacht agus a chaith dua le himeachtaí an Choiste a ionramháil i dtéacs slachtmhar. Ba mhaith liom freisin buíochas a ghabháil leo siúd ar fad a thug toradh ar iarratais an Choiste eolas a sholáthar. Bhí a gcuidiú an-luachmhar agus tá buíochas mór ag dul dóibh ina leith.

Cuirtear an tuarascáil i láthair an Aire Oideachais agus Eolaíochta mar bhonn le polasaí a fhorbairt sa réimse tábhachtach seo

John Quinlan
Cathaoirleach

Foreword

Since the 1970s there has been a steady decline in the number of males entering the teaching profession in Ireland, particularly at primary level. This is a phenomenon in most developed countries. In 2003 the Minister for Education & Science established the Primary Education Committee to examine the issues surrounding this decline and to recommend strategies and initiatives to increase the number of males entering the profession.

This report sets out the findings of the Committee including recommendations which the Committee believes can have a beneficial effect on the situation.

As chairman, I would like to express my sincere thanks to the members of the Committee all of whom gave generously of their professional insight into the complexities associated with this issue. Particular thanks are due to the members of the drafting group who carefully crafted the deliberations of the Committee into a coherent text. I would also like to thank all those who responded to requests for information from the Committee. Their assistance was invaluable and very much appreciated.

The report is presented to the Minister for Education & Science as a basis for the development of policy in this important area.

John Quinlan
Chairman

Executive Summary

Background

In Ireland and in most other developed countries there are significantly more female than male teachers working in both first and second level schools. While this was not always the case, since the 1970s there has been a significant and continuous decline in the number of males entering the teaching profession, particularly at primary level.

In recognition of the feminisation of primary teaching, the Minister for Education and Science established the Primary Education Committee in 2003. The main task of the Committee is to make recommendations on strategies and initiatives to increase the number of males entering primary teaching.

The terms of reference of the Committee are: -

- To examine the study Gender Differences in Patterns of Entry to the Colleges of Education by Dr. Sheelagh Drudy et al and in particular its recommendations and other relevant studies.
- To advise the Minister on short term strategies and initiatives which might be undertaken by the Gender Equality Unit.
- To advise the Minister on the most appropriate long term strategies which might be taken to increase the number of males entering the primary teaching profession.
- To consult with both education and social partners.
- To consider sociological research on whether/why the absence of males from primary teaching is a problem.
- To make interim recommendations by Easter 2004 and a final report in Autumn 2004.

Outline of the Report

- **Chapter 1** of the report outlines the context and rationale for the establishment of the Primary Education Committee.
- **Chapter 2** details the work of the Primary Education Committee.
- **Chapter 3** gives a brief overview of primary teacher education in Ireland.
- **Chapters 4, 5 and 6** outline the wide range of factors and research examined by the Primary Education Committee.
- **Chapter 7** addresses the conclusions and recommendations made by the Committee.

Recommendations

The Committee makes the following recommendations in this report:

1. The Committee **recommends** that a coordinated promotion campaign, which would encourage boys as well as girls to enter primary teaching should be undertaken. The campaign should involve the Colleges of Education, the Department of Education and Science, the Teaching Council of Ireland, the INTO and guidance counsellors.
2. The Committee **recommends** that the Teaching Council of Ireland, when formally established, take the lead role in this campaign and that the Department of Education and Science provide a dedicated budget to the Council for this purpose.
3. The Committee **recommends** that in order to assist in achieving an increase in the number of males entering primary teaching that appropriate targets are set for increasing the numbers over the next five and ten years. The Committee also **recommends** that appropriate positive actions should be put in place in order to maximise the effectiveness in achieving the targets set.
4. The Committee **recommends** that the Colleges of Education should work together to enhance their public image, provide detailed information for potential students and highlight the diversity of life and work in the Colleges. The Colleges are engaged in a variety of programmes and innovative research that need to be more widely known.
5. The Committee **recommends** that the Graduate Diploma in Education (Primary Teaching) should be reviewed with a view to enhancing its appeal to male students. There is evidence that there is a slightly higher proportion of men enrolling on the Graduate Diploma compared to the B.Ed.
6. The Committee **recommends** that revisions and improvements be made to the second level Gaeilge syllabus and teaching methodologies in the context of males entering the primary teaching profession. The changes to the curriculum at primary level suggest the need to emphasise the importance of the spoken word and the ability of students to communicate effectively through Gaeilge.
7. The Committee **recommends** that the Department of Education and Science put in place measures to encourage more schools to take the Scrúdú Cainte at Junior Certificate Level Gaeilge.
8. In light of the necessity for students interested in teaching to remain at higher level Gaeilge, the Committee **recommends** that a scholarship scheme be established for boys and girls to attend Gaeltacht courses, or other courses in Gaeilge, early in the second level cycle.
9. The Committee **recommends** making guidance more widely available for students both at junior cycle, where it is currently limited, and senior cycle in schools. Parents and students need to be aware of the consequences of subject choice and subject levels early in the junior cycle of second level schooling in the context of career choice.

10. The Committee **recommends** that the Institute of Guidance Counsellors should address the perception and evidence that primary teaching is not being offered by all guidance counsellors for consideration. There is some evidence that guidance counsellors tend not to encourage high achieving boys to choose primary teaching as a career. This is particularly important in the context of single-sex boys' schools.
11. The Committee **recommends** that the Department of Education and Science should enhance awareness, among second level subject teachers, of the implications of subject level choice for career options.
12. The Committee **recommends** that further research is required and should be conducted on the following issues :
 - The impact of the presence / absence of males in the primary classroom.
 - To establish the extent to which the higher level Gaeilge requirement impacts on a student's decision to apply to the Colleges of Education.
 - To establish why a greater proportion of boys are not taking higher level Gaeilge in the Leaving Certificate.
 - To identify reasons why more high achieving boys do not apply for primary teaching.
 - In light of the Bologna Agreement, to investigate the number of people who are not eligible to enter primary teaching because they do not have the Gaeilge qualification.
 - To conduct a comparative analysis of the performance of male and female students in Irish and other languages.
 - To investigate attrition rates for males and females in primary teaching.
 - To establish whether teachers who enter the profession through the graduate diploma courses stay in the profession longer than those who enter the profession via the B.Ed course after finishing their second level education.
 - To investigate whether increasing the number of places on the post graduate courses would result in an increase in the overall proportion of males entering the profession relative to female entrants.

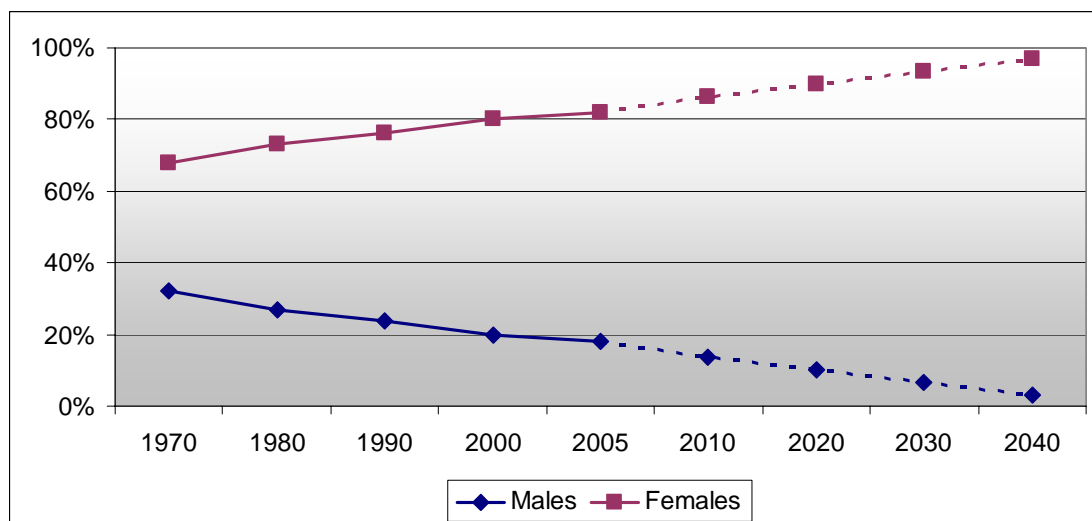
Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Context

In Ireland and in most other developed countries there are significantly more female than male teachers working in both first and second level schools. While this was not always the case, since the 1970s there has been a significant and continuous decline in the number of males entering the teaching profession, particularly at primary level. The statistics, with regard to the numbers of men entering teaching as a career, are unambiguous and, looking to the future, projections indicate a continuing reduction in the number of males in teaching positions in schools. Research conducted with regard to this state of affairs is very clear: *“Analysis of the figures on entry to primary teaching over the last twenty-five years indicates that the proportion of male entrants to the primary education colleges has been in continuous decline. Unless the pattern is reversed quite dramatically, the proportion of males in the primary teaching profession – also in steady decline during the period - looks likely to drop even further.”* (Drudy et al, 2002, p.191).

Figure 1 illustrates clearly the position in relation to the number of men teaching in Primary schools during the last thirty years and it also indicates a decreasing trend for the future. While there has been a considerable increase in the overall number of primary teachers, the ratio of males to females has steadily declined over the last thirty years. In the 1970s, approximately 30% of teachers were male, this reduced to 25% in the 1980s and has further reduced to approximately 18% in 2005.

Figure 1: Projected trend in the number of male and female primary teachers.



Source: Department of Education and Science

The issue of having a balanced gender representation on the teaching staffs of schools is a matter of concern to educationalists. It is considered essential by them that the teaching of children should not be seen as purely a feminine task but that pupils should experience both men and women working in classrooms. Teachers have also expressed concern about issues such as diversity within the profession and the status of a profession dominated by one gender. There is a lack of research on the consequences of gender imbalance in primary teaching and the Committee believes that this issue merits immediate consideration and appropriate action. The

Committee believes that a better gender balance among teachers in schools would allow both men and women to be seen as having important roles in teaching and in caring for children. In turn, this should reflect pupils' experiences at home and in the wider world. Furthermore, an appropriate gender balance among school staffs would reflect society in a more comprehensive way.

The general consensus among the partners in education is that the absence of male role models in primary education is a critical and increasing problem, because the primary school experience of both girls and boys requires a practical witnessing of gender roles. Children need to spend time with both men and women. Since half a child's day is spent in school, the school needs to reflect the social world in which both men and women play their parts. It is necessary, therefore, in the context of providing a full and appropriate curriculum to have male and female role models in primary schools.

When the students in one of the Colleges of Education focus groups were asked about primary school teaching in relation to men, 85% of them agreed that it is important for children to see men in caring roles; they also agreed that boys needed male role models (84%). "*Children need to relate to both male and females in their lives – now and in the future.*" (Comment made by student).

1.2 The Holistic Development of the Child

The holistic development of the child is a primary concern of the *Primary School Curriculum* which "*is designed to nurture the child in all dimensions of his or her life—spiritual, moral, cognitive, emotional, aesthetic, social and physical*" (*Primary School Curriculum*, 1999, p.6). The lack of male teachers and the disproportionate number of female teachers in the classroom suggests that teaching may be perceived as a primarily female profession and could have a limiting effect on children's understanding of gender roles and their comprehension of the choices and roles available to them in a wider societal context. It is therefore important and desirable that the primary classroom, as a microcosm and reflection of the wider world, should provide an inclusive environment which regards all its members as equal and valued. As the Curriculum states, "*the relationship between education and society is dynamic and interactive. Education not only reflects a society but is an influence on shaping its development.*" (*Primary School Curriculum*, 1999, p.6).

Primary school is one of the major places where children develop and acquire an understanding of themselves in terms of age, ability, gender and personality. The Social, Personal & Health Education (SPHE) Curriculum states that "*the school has a formative role to play in the child's social, personal and health education...It can also contribute to preparing the child for active and responsible citizenship in the widest sense and for being explicit about the values of a just and caring society*" (SPHE Teacher Guidelines, 1999, p.2). Therefore, young children's interaction with teachers who provide constructive and dynamic experiences which facilitate the development of each child's individual talents, will in turn provide them with a deeper and more reflective understanding of gender roles and the limitations imposed by gender role stereotyping in the wider social community.

Roles are often defined by expectations and norms, and sex roles by expectations attached to biological status. The term "*gender role*" refers to the cultural and social expectations which are attached to one's sex. However, research has consistently found that there are more differences between individuals of either sex than between the sexes and that conformity to sex role identity may limit the intellectual, social and

personal development of boys and girls and their preparedness for the many roles they will be likely to play in their future lives.

Many theorists have identified the ages of between five and ten years as one of the most influential times in developing an understanding of gender identity and sex roles. However, by the time young children come to school, they will have already developed a gender identity, which is often stereotyped, as a result of socialisation and in particular as a result of media influence. If schools therefore have only female teachers they will be perceived by many as feminine places and learning will be seen as a feminine activity. A school culture therefore where children experience male and female role models who promote learning and achievement as desirable, and where success is celebrated, is considered the best learning environment for both boys and girls.

Children's development and learning can be facilitated by both men and women throughout their education. *"Any school worth its salt should promote and reflect the outside world"* ("National Conference Report", 2004, p.20).

"Children also take teachers and other significant adults as role models....All children need to have heroes and heroines so as to be able to project their innate idealism and aspirations. That is why myths and stories play such an important part in a child's early life. In short, children learn what it is to be human, and male or female, from their earliest relationships." (Mauger, 2005, p.2).

1.3 Teaching as a Career

If a career is unduly dominated by one gender or another, it may limit the career aspirations and choices of individuals within that profession and of aspirants.

Within a teaching staff which is predominately female some male teachers may experience some degree of isolation in their daily work and vice versa. While recognising that it is not always possible to have a gender balance on school staff, particularly in small schools, diversity among staff can enrich social and cultural interaction between colleagues, promoting a more inclusive work environment.

The following tables illustrate the current gender composition of teaching staff in Irish primary schools. Table 1 shows that 36.57% of primary schools have female only teaching staff compared to 0.21% with male only teaching staff. It is also interesting to note from this table that in the 382 (11.6%) schools where there are six or more teachers on staff, there is no school with an all male teaching staff.

Table 2 shows that while there are few single-sex boys schools with male only teaching staff (6.39%), 88.67% of single-sex girls schools have female only teaching staff.

Table 1: Primary schools by gender category of teaching staff and size of school May, 2005.

Gender Category of Teaching Staff Size of School (Number of Teachers)	Female only staff	Male only staff	Male and Female Staff	Total Schools
2 or less	374 (65.61%)	6 (1.05%)	190 (33.34%)	570
3-5	447 (38.97%)	1 (0.09%)	699 (60.94%)	1147
6-8	114 (22.89%)	0 (0%)	384 (77.11%)	498
9-11	60 (21.05%)	0 (0%)	225 (78.95%)	285
12-14	61 (22.93%)	0 (0%)	205 (77.07%)	266
15 - 17	50 (31.65%)	0 (0%)	108 (68.35%)	158
18 - 20	35 (26.52%)	0 (0%)	97 (73.48%)	132
21 or more	62 (26.50%)	0 (0%)	172 (73.50%)	234
Totals	1203 (36.57%)	7 (0.21%)	2080 (63.22%)	3290 (100%)

Source: Department of Education and Science

Table 2: Primary schools by gender category of teaching staff and gender category of school May, 2005.

Gender Category of Teaching Staff Gender Category of School	Female only staff	Male only staff	Male and Female Staff	Total Schools
Girls only	133 (88.67%)	0 (0%)	17 (11.33%)	150
Boys only	17 (6.39%)	2 (0.75%)	247 (92.86%)	266
Mixed gender	1053 (36.64%)	5 (0.17%)	1816 (63.19%)	2874
Totals	1203	7	2080	3290

Source: Department of Education and Science

This current trend in the composition of teaching staff seems set to continue. Reports studied by the Committee indicate that parents generally do not recommend teaching as a career for their sons and furthermore there is evidence that some Guidance Counsellors do not highlight primary teaching as a career for high achieving boys. "...although all of the Guidance Counsellors suggested that primary teaching is equally suitable as a career for men and women, when pressed as to its appropriateness for high achievers just half felt it appropriate for high achiever boys, while 14 of the 16 felt it appropriate for high achieving girls. Reasons given related mainly to promotion prospects and presumed boredom in primary teaching on the part of high achieving males." (Drudy et al, 2002, p.185).

Drudy et al also note that *“Young men, undoubtedly perceive there would be relatively less support for them from significant others for a decision to go into primary teaching. A young woman, on the other hand, is likely to perceive herself as having the support of almost everyone”* (Drudy et al, 2002, p.197).

1.4 Resulting Issues

In light of the above, the Committee examined a wide range of factors and research, concerning such matters as:

- Access to teacher education
- Exam performance and entry standards
- Image of teaching
- Work conditions in primary teaching

These are discussed in more detail in the following sections of the report.

Chapter 2 Work of the Committee

2.1 Primary Education Committee

In recognition of the feminisation of primary teaching, the Minister for Education and Science established the Primary Education Committee in 2003. The main task of the Committee is to make recommendations on strategies and initiatives to increase the number of males entering primary teaching. This Committee is working under the auspices of the Gender Equality Unit. Membership of the Committee is listed in Appendix 1.

The terms of reference of the Committee are: -

- To examine the study Gender Differences in Patterns of Entry to the Colleges of Education by Dr. Sheelagh Drudy et al and in particular its recommendations and other relevant studies.
- To advise the Minister on short term strategies and initiatives which might be undertaken by the Gender Equality Unit of the Department of Education and Science.
- To advise the Minister on the most appropriate long term strategies which might be taken to increase the number of males entering the primary teaching profession.
- To consult with both education and social partners.
- To consider sociological research on whether/why the absence of males from primary teaching is a problem.
- To make interim recommendations by Easter 2004 and a final report in Autumn 2004.

2.2 Working Arrangements

The Committee first met on 14th October 2003 and has met a total of sixteen times.

The work of the Committee is underpinned by the detailed report Gender Differences in Patterns of Entry to the Colleges of Education (Unpublished) which Dr. Sheelagh Drudy et al completed in July 2002. This report was funded by the Department of Education and Science's Research and Development Committee.

The Committee also took into account the Irish National Teachers' Organisation (INTO) publication Gender Imbalance in Primary Teaching – A Discussion Document (2004).

Presentations have been made to the Committee by:

- Niall McElwee on *The Social Care Imbalance*.
- Caroline Renehan on *The Gender Debate and Initial Teacher Education*.
- Sheelagh Drudy, on the report *Gender differences in Patterns of Entry to the Colleges of Education*.
- Eileen Drew on *Gender Balance in Primary Education*.

Two focus group meetings were held for representatives of single-sex male post primary schools. These meetings were organised in response to the findings identified in the Drudy report that all-male post-primary schools have few, if any, students wanting to pursue a career as primary teachers. *“Boys’ single sex schools were particularly remarkable in relation to choice of primary teaching. Not a single pupil from this school type intended to put primary teaching as their first CAO preference. Indeed, the single-sex boys’ secondary schools produced the lowest percentage of all types of prospective teacher. The differences between school types were statistically significant on the question of whether students had “considered teaching”* (Drudy et al, 2002, p.102).

A meeting was held with guidance counsellors from the feeder schools for the Church of Ireland College of Education. Each of the other Colleges of Education carried out a survey and held focus group meetings with their students to explore students’ perceptions on primary teaching as a career.

In addition, various statistics were sought from the Central Applications Office, the State Examinations Commission and the Department of Education and Science (DES) in response to questions raised by the Committee.

The Committee commissioned research from Dr. Eileen Drew on male and female teachers’ attitudes to primary teaching as a career. Her report is entitled *“Facing Extinction: The Self-Fulfilling Prophecy of Men in the Primary Teaching Profession.”* As part of this research project, a survey of all male teachers and ten percent of female teachers, who had entered the profession in the last ten years, was carried out. The objective of the survey was to gather factual information on the experiences, attitudes towards and levels of satisfaction with the respondents chosen career.

A National Conference was held on the 14th October, 2004. All the partners in education were represented at the conference. The following series of presentations were given: -

- *“Males in Primary Teaching”* - Dr. Hugh Gash, St. Patrick’s College of Education, presented his paper about the effects of the absence of males in the profession.
- *“Gender Differences in Patterns of Entry to the Colleges of Education”* - Dr. Sheelagh Drudy, UCD.
- *“Gender Imbalance in Primary Teaching – The Demise of the Male Primary Teacher?”* – Noel Ward, INTO.
- *Findings of the focus groups and surveys held in the Colleges of Education* - Noreen Kavanagh and Tara Ní Fhionnagáin, Coláiste Mhuire Marino.
- *Survey of Male Teachers* - Dr. Eileen Drew, TCD, gave a presentation on the survey carried out as part of her research project.

The afternoon session consisted of three workshops and a plenary session. The workshops dealt with: -

- The issue of promotion and image of teaching.
- The significance of gender imbalance in teaching.
- The role of the education partners.

The report of the conference is available on the Department of Education and Science website at www.education.ie.

Chapter 3 Teacher Education in Ireland

School leavers and mature students can apply for the three-year full-time programme leading to a Bachelor in Education degree (B.Ed.) at one of the five Colleges of Education: Mary Immaculate College, Limerick; St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra; Coláiste Mhuire, Marino; Froebel College, Blackrock, and Church of Ireland College, Rathmines.

At Coláiste Mhuire, Froebel College and Church of Ireland College, an ordinary B. Ed degree is awarded at the end of three years. Suitably qualified candidates who wish to continue to study for an Honours B. Ed. degree can register for a fourth year of study with the University of Dublin. Students embarking on the fourth year of study may do so any time after the completion of the ordinary B. Ed course. Students may hold teaching posts while continuing this fourth year of study. In St. Patrick's College and Mary Immaculate College an honours B.Ed degree can be obtained in three years.

In the case of school-leavers, up to ten percent of the places in the Colleges of Education may be reserved for applicants from the Gaeltacht, i.e. applicants who reside in the officially designated Gaeltacht and the normal language of whose home is Irish. A similar number of places are reserved each year for mature students applying through the mature students' competition. A certain number of places are also reserved in the Colleges for students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The Colleges of Education (except the Church of Ireland College) also offer a full-time Postgraduate Diploma course in Primary Education which takes eighteen months to complete. This course is designed to give third level graduates the opportunity to qualify as primary teachers. All the Colleges of Education offer in-service courses to serving primary teachers.

All students in Colleges of Education are required to attend a three-week course in the Gaeltacht to facilitate their proficiency in Irish.

Since 2003, Hibernia College has offered a part-time diploma course for postgraduates who wish to qualify as primary teachers. The delivery of this programme combines on-site tutorials with online tuition.

Since the early 1990s the Colleges of Education have diversified their traditional teacher education role. Mary Immaculate College in Limerick and St Patrick's College Drumcondra in association with the University of Limerick and Dublin City University respectively have embarked on a variety of new degree programmes including BAs in Humanities and graduate programmes. Mary Immaculate College now offers a BA Degree in Early Childhood Care and Education, a Liberal Arts Degree and a new B.Ed degree specialising in Psychology. Both Colleges offer Master's degrees in a variety of areas including Education, History, Children's Literature, Liturgical Studies, Local History, Philosophy and Literature, Information and Communication Technologies, Special Education, Adult and Continuing Education and Early Childhood Education. Degrees are also offered at the doctoral level, these are usually PhDs though it is now possible to do an Ed.D.degree at St Patrick's College which is made up of both taught modules and a thesis. The Colleges' websites provide details on this diversification.

In addition to diversification in terms of degrees, the Colleges of Education have opened a number of centres that provide a focus in educational work in a number of areas, such as the Educational Research Centre at St Patrick's College. Also located on St Patrick's College campus are:

- The Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education
- The Educational Disadvantage Centre.

The Centre for the Study of Human Development is currently being developed.

In Mary Immaculate College there is a Curriculum Development Unit (CDU) which promotes and undertakes research into the curriculum and methodology of the primary school. The CDU also includes the Educational Disadvantage Research Centre (CEDR), which was set up as part of the Targeting Educational Disadvantage Programme (TED).

The B. Ed. degree and the Postgraduate Diploma in the Colleges of Education are integrated courses of study designed to equip student teachers with a range of knowledge and skills related to the profession of primary school teaching and the curriculum. These intensive and comprehensive programmes, with their complementary balance of theory and practice, seek to provide students with a sound basis for a life-long study of education and to foster dynamic and reflective practitioners. The courses encourage experiential learning and emphasise a “*hands-on*” and child-centred engagement with the range of subjects involved. Teaching practice with observation are a central focus of each academic year.

Foundation areas in the study of Education such as Philosophy, Psychology, Sociology, History of Education and Comparative Education are designed to encourage an awareness of the potential for the construction of knowledge, skills and understanding in order to develop the students' personal, intellectual and practical skills and in particular their capacity for creative and imaginative thinking in the primary classroom.

A strong emphasis is placed on an integrated and cross-curricular approach in relation to the core subjects of Irish, English, Mathematics and Religious Studies together with Social, Environmental and Scientific Education (SESE), Physical Education, Arts Education (Art, Music and Drama), SPHE, Inclusive Education including Special Education Needs, Educational Disadvantage and Intercultural Education and the use of digital technologies in the primary school.

The courses are designed to prepare student teachers to work with pupils from different cultural backgrounds, ages, abilities and interests, drawing upon a wide range of pedagogical styles. The courses also offer students a dynamic, stimulating and coherent learning experience and facilitate the students' academic, professional and personal development. This emphasis on the holistic development of the student teacher acknowledges the importance of providing socially aware and reflective practitioners who can create inclusive learning environments in which to foster the children's intellectual, social, and emotional development. The Committee considers that the teacher's role is equally suited to men and women. Therefore, in order to promote a respect for diversity and awareness of issues of equality, including gender equality, it would seem to be important that schools exhibit both male and female role models.

Chapter 4 Access to Primary Teacher Education

4.1 Overview of Issues

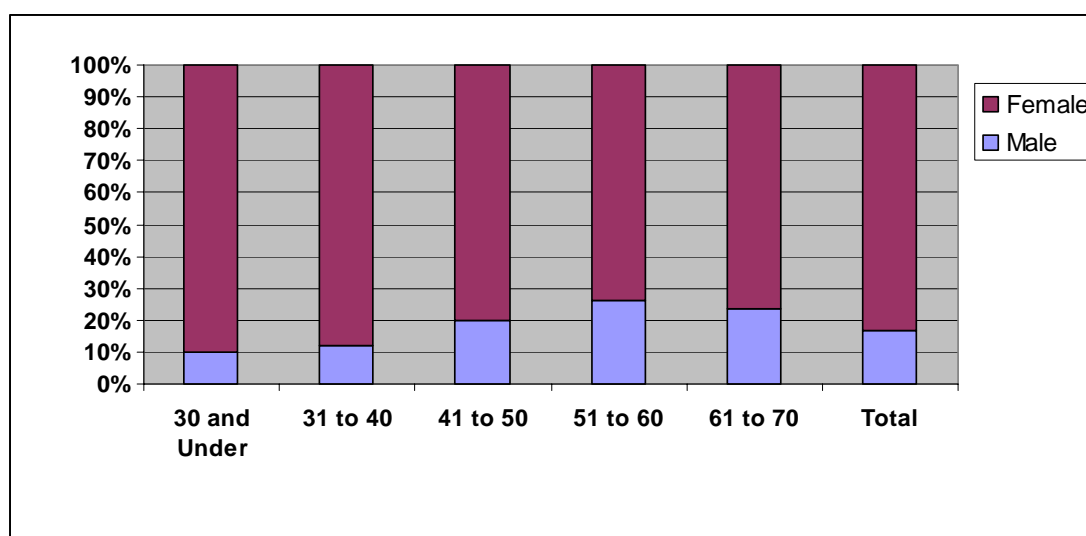
In the course of its work the Committee examined a number of issues in relation to the under representation of males in primary teaching. These are discussed in the next three chapters.

4.2 Number of males in primary teaching

While there is limited research available on the effects of the absence of men from classrooms, there would appear to be a general consensus among all groups consulted in the process of the Committee's work, that it is necessary to have a balance of male and female teachers, "*everyone believes that schools need both female and male energy for greater dynamism.*" ("Report of Church of Ireland meeting of guidance counsellors", 2004, p.2).

Overall, approximately 18% of primary teachers in the Republic of Ireland are male (as illustrated in Figure 2) and approximately 10% of current Bachelor of Education students are male.

Figure 2: Percentage of Male / Female Primary Teachers January 2005.



Source: Department of Education and Science

The trend in the current teaching cohort seems likely to continue. Table 3 below details the total student population in the Colleges of Education and in Hibernia College as of September, 2004.

Table 3: Total Student Teacher Population including Post Graduates 2004 / 2005.

College of Education	Students by Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
St Patrick's College	144 (11%)	1162 (89%)	1306
Mary Immaculate College	157 (12%)	1198 (88%)	1355
Coláiste Mhuire Marino	43 (12%)	327 (88%)	370
Froebel College of Education	21 (10%)	193 (90%)	214
Church of Ireland College of Education*	2 (2%)	91 (98%)	93
Hibernia College**	23 (11%)	186 (89%)	209
Totals	390 (11%)	3157 (89%)	3547

Source: Department of Education and Science and Hibernia College

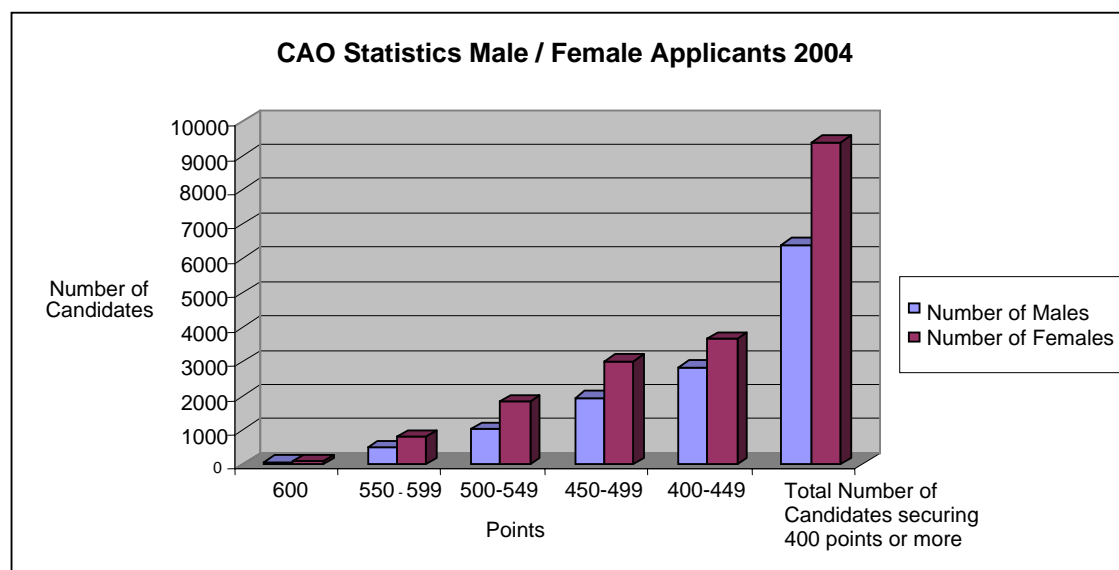
* The Church of Ireland College of Education does not have any Post Graduate Students.

** 2004/2005 enrolment relates to cohort from February 2004 to August 2005.

4.3 Exam Performance

According to various statistics produced by the Department of Education and Science girls' academic performance in the Leaving Certificate Examinations is significantly higher than that of boys. This is illustrated in Figure 3 for each bandwidth above 400 Central Applications Office (CAO) points in the Leaving Certificate Examination 2004.

Figure 3: Male/Female Applicants to the CAO who secured 400 points or higher in the Leaving Certificate Examination 2004. (Data listed in Appendix 3)



Source: Data supplied by the Central Applications Office

The chart above shows that over 9,000 girls achieved 400 points or more in the Leaving Certificate Examinations (2004) compared to approximately 6,500 boys. In 2004, the cut-off point for entry to St. Patrick's College of Education was 455 points and for Mary Immaculate College of Education, it was 465 points.

From the total eligible pool of applicants to the Colleges of Education, girls significantly outnumber boys.

Table 4 illustrates that overall the number of male applicants to Colleges of Education was 14% in 2004 compared to 18.% in 1994.

Table 4: Total number of CAO applicants to the Colleges of Education in 1994 and 2004 by gender.

College of Education	All Applicants 1994			All Applicants 2004		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
St. Patrick's College	2746	535 (19.48%)	2211 (80.52%)	2706	419 (15.48%)	2287 (84.52%)
Mary Immaculate College	2537	476 (18.76%)	2061 (81.24%)	2247	376 (16.73%)	1871 (83.27%)
Coláiste Mhuire Marino	1519	302 (19.88%)	1217 (80.12%)	1763	224 (12.71%)	1539 (87.29%)
Froebel College of Education	1618	209 (12.92%)	1409 (87.08%)	1605	175 (10.9%)	1430 (89.09%)
Church of Ireland College of Education	186	36 (19.35%)	150 (80.65%)	75	10 (13.33%)	65 (86.67%)
Totals	8606 (100%)	1558 (18.10%)	7048 (81.90%)	8396 (100%)	1204 (14.34%)	7192 (85.66%)

Source: Data supplied by the Central Applications Office

Similarly, Table 5 shows that in 2004 there was a drop in the number of male first preference applicants in all but one of the Colleges of Education compared to 1994. Overall, the number of male first preference applicants was 17% in 1994 compared to 14% in 2004.

Table 5: Number of first preference CAO applicants to the Colleges of Education in 1994 and 2004 by gender.

College of Education	1 st Preference Applicants 1994			1 st Preference Applicants 2004		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
St. Patrick's College	1141	194 (17%)	947 (83%)	970	133 (13.71%)	837 (86.29%)
Mary Immaculate	744	129 (17.34%)	615 (82.66%)	686	116 (16.9%)	570 (83.1%)
Colaiste Mhuire	81	22 (27.16%)	59 (72.84%)	165	17 (10.3%)	148 (89.70%)
Froebel	105	7 (6.67%)	98 (93.33%)	72	6 (8.33%)	66 (91.67%)
Church of Ireland	60	11 (18.33%)	49 (81.67%)	31	3 (9.68%)	28 (90.32%)
Totals	2131 (100%)	363 (17.03%)	1768 (82.97%)	1924 (100%)	275 (14.29%)	1649 (85.71%)

Source: Data supplied by the Central Applications Office

Statistics provided by the CAO show that in 2004, 1,618 males and 2,732 females achieved 500 CAO points or more in the Leaving Certificate Examination. Of these, 983 males and 2,234 females also achieved a Grade C or higher in higher level Gaeilge. In the same year, the number of first preference applicants to the Colleges of Education who achieved 501 points or more was 161. 141 (87.6%) of these were female whilst 20 (12.4%) of them were male. Therefore, out of a pool of 983 males only 2.03% placed primary teaching as a first preference compared to 6.31% of females.

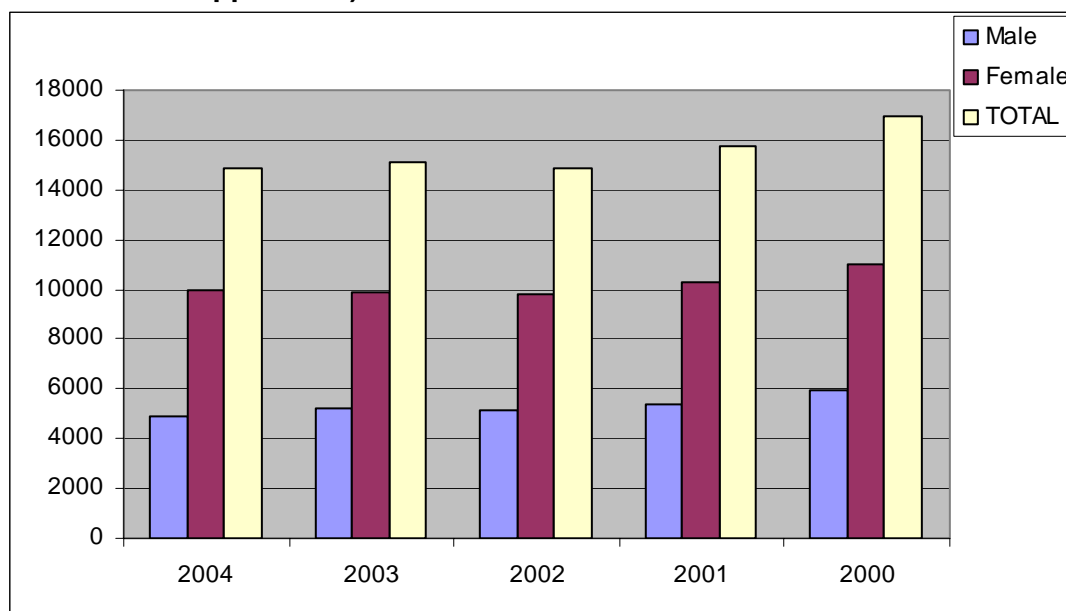
4.4 Gaeilge (Irish Language) Qualification

Drudy et al note that “Boys were significantly less likely than girls to take Higher Level Irish. Thus the pool of qualified male applicants is reduced even further.” (Drudy et al, 2002, p.194).

According to the INTO “The statistics indicate that the Gaeilge requirement serves in part as a gender-biased filter. Gaeilge is the only subject where intending teachers are required to take an honours paper – there is a wide disparity between minimum subject requirements in respect of different subjects for B.Ed. entry, which at present include C grade on Higher Course Gaeilge, C grade at Ordinary Course English and D grade at Ordinary Course Maths” (“Gender Imbalance in Primary Teaching – A Discussion Document”, 2004, p.8).

Figure 4 shows the number of male and female candidates taking higher level Gaeilge in the Leaving Certificate Examination over the last five years. In each case approximately twice as many females as males take higher level Gaeilge. Therefore the pool of eligible males has been proportionately lower consistently for this period than the pool of females.

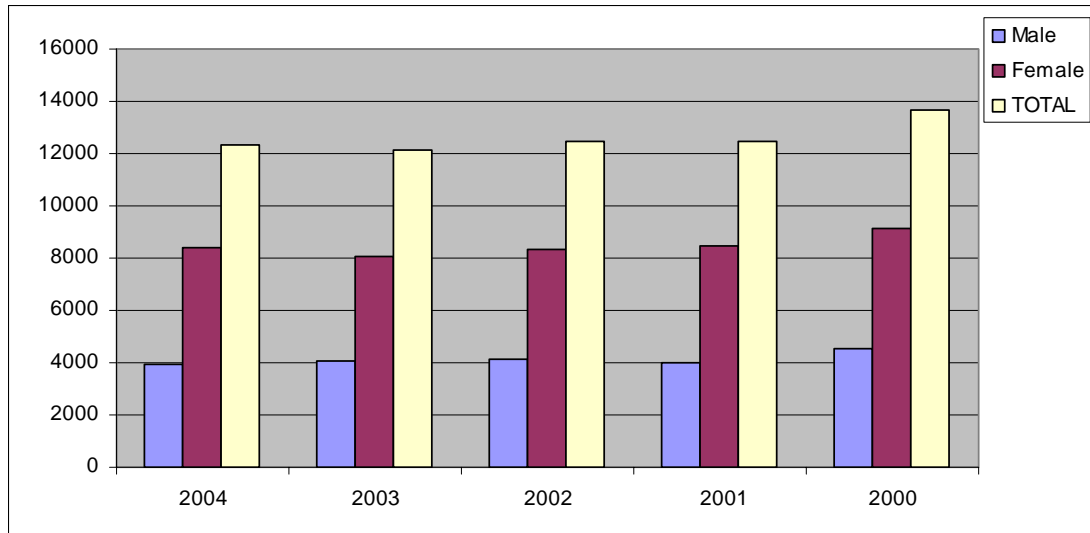
Figure 4: Number of Male / Female Candidates taking higher level Gaeilge in the Leaving Certificate Exams 2000 – 2004. (Data listed in Appendix 3)



Source: Data supplied by the State Examinations Commission

The chart below shows the number of students by gender, who secured a Grade C or higher in higher level Gaelige over the last five years.

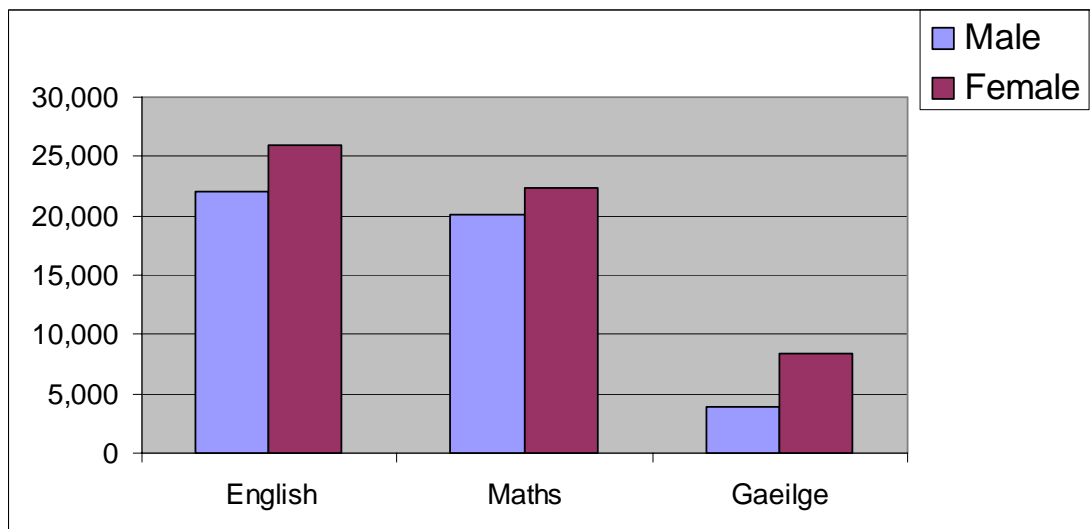
Figure 5: Number of Male and Female Candidates securing a Grade C or higher in higher level Gaelige Leaving Certificate Examinations 2000 – 2004. (Data listed in Appendix 3)



Source: Data supplied by the State Examinations Commission

The number of candidates securing a Grade C or higher in higher level Gaelige contrasts sharply with the number of candidates who meet the criteria for Maths and English for entry to the Colleges of Education, as illustrated in Figure 6:

Figure 6: Number of Males and Females achieving eligibility requirements for English, Gaelige and Maths in the Leaving Certificate Examinations 2004.



Source: Data supplied by the State Examinations Commission

As can be seen from the above charts, the Gaelige exam results have a proportionately greater impact on the number of males eligible to seek entry to the

Colleges of Education. Only a fifth of males, who would otherwise be eligible, met the Gaeilge requirement in 2004, while a third of females were eligible.

The Gaeilge requirement is unique to the Irish situation but the low number of males teaching at primary level is not. The number of male teachers in Irish primary schools reflects a trend which occurs across many Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, as illustrated in Table 6.

Table 6: Extract of Data from the OECD report ‘Education at a Glance 2004’. Gender distribution of teachers (2002).

OECD country	% of Female Teachers at Primary Level
Austria	90.5
Belgium	78.9
Belgium (Fl.)	76.3
Czech Republic	84.2
Denmark	65.3
Finland	74.2
France	78.7
Germany	82.4
Hungary	85.7
Iceland	78.1
Ireland	86.0
Italy	95.3
Japan	65.0
Korea	72.2
Mexico	65.7
Netherlands	80.1
New Zealand	86.5
Portugal	81.2
Slovak Republic	92.9
Spain	71.0
Sweden	80.2
United Kingdom	81.8
United States	88.2

Source: Data taken from Table D7.2 Gender Distribution of teachers (2002), Education at a Glance, 2004, OECD.

A major issue for debate by the Committee was the effect of the Gaeilge requirement on potential applicants to the Colleges of Education. The debate centred around whether the Gaeilge requirement was a significant barrier or disincentive for individuals considering primary teaching as a career. While the statistics cited above show that the pool of otherwise eligible candidates is narrowed by the Gaeilge requirement there is no direct evidence to suggest that changing the Gaeilge requirement would lead to the desired result of more male entrants to the Colleges and consequently increase the number of male primary teachers. Some Committee members contended that one possible result would be an increase in the number of female entrants to the Colleges.

The Committee also discussed whether the entry level requirement for Gaeilge could be lowered and the exit standard maintained. Some members of the Committee were strongly of the opinion that lowering the entry requirement would dilute the overall standard of the Gaeilge taught in the Colleges of Education and thereby lower

the level of the Gaeilge taught in schools. Other members of the Committee were of the opinion that lowering the entry requirement would not affect the exit standard of the Gaeilge and would not result in lowering the standard of the Gaeilge taught in schools.

Anecdotal evidence offered by some members of the Committee appears to suggest that some students, both male and female, who do not meet the Gaeilge requirement are going abroad for their teacher education. Teachers qualified outside the jurisdiction, whose qualifications are recognised by the DES, are granted provisional recognition and allowed to teach in primary schools. As a general rule, this cohort of teachers then have up to five years to pass the Scrúdú Cáilíochta sa Ghaeilge (SCG) in order to get full recognition. (In April 2004, the Minister for Education and Science announced that an additional extension of two years would be given to all those registered to sit the SCG at that time, giving them seven years to pass the exam). The gender composition of those who sat the SCG exam in March, 2005 is illustrated in the table below.

Table 7: SCG Exam March, 2005. Number of male and female candidates who presented for each module of the exam and the number of males and females who passed or failed each module.

Module	Number of males who sat exam	Number of females who sat exam	Total
Paper 1	38	270	308
Paper 2	31	264	295
Aural	35	285	320
Oral	26	253	279
	130	1072	1202

Source: Data supplied by Coláiste Mhuire Marino.

The Committee noted that while the SCG offered a flexible option for those who qualify abroad who wish to be a primary teacher in Ireland, no such flexibility exists for those who wish to pursue a career in primary teaching in Ireland without having to leave the jurisdiction to qualify.

The Committee, after much discussion and having considered all the available statistics and relevant reports, is of the view that research is required to establish the likely impact of the Gaeilge requirement on an individual's decision to consider primary teaching as a career. Research is also required to establish why more boys are not choosing higher level Gaeilge for the Leaving Certificate Examinations.

4.5 Influences on Career Selection by Students

The Drudy report found that parents were the principal influence on both the second and third level students even though guidance counsellors play an important role (Drudy et al, 2002, p.84 and p.143).

This fact was borne out by the survey group in one of the Colleges of Education, which showed the following:

Table 8: People who influence career choice.

	Mentioned*	Percent**
Mother	3	20.0
Father	4	26.7
Parents (no distinction indicated between mother or father)	2	13.3
Brother	1	6.7
Family (no indication of who)	1	6.7
Uncle	1	6.7
Teacher	5	33.3
Careers teacher***	4	26.7
Friends	4	26.7
Previous graduate diploma student	1	6.7
No information	2	13.3
Number of Respondents	15	

Source: Table reproduced from Mary Immaculate College Male Student Survey Results, 2004, p.4.

*Respondents could cite more than one influence.

**Percentages based on number of respondents rather than number of responses.

***The term career teachers should refer to guidance counsellors.

Interestingly, the Drudy survey of second level students highlighted the influence of the parent of the same sex as the student: "...students were more likely to be influenced by their parent of the same sex – 18 per cent of girls put 'mother' first, against 9 per cent of boys; while 16 per cent of boys put father first, as against 6 per cent of girls. Evidently, the advice of the same sex parent was influential for many students." (Drudy et al, 2002, p.84).

While the Drudy survey of second level students shows that 21% of boys and 15% of girls ranked guidance counsellor as most influential (p.85), less than 4% of student teachers surveyed chose guidance counsellor as most influential (p.143). However, the survey of student teachers also shows that over a quarter of the male student teachers found the category of 'teacher' to have had influence over their career choice (Drudy et al, 2002, p.143).

The Drudy survey of guidance counsellors showed that overall guidance counsellors in the sample schools were very positive about both primary and second level teaching as career choices but "only half thought primary teaching appropriate for high achieving boys" (Drudy et al, 2002, p.201).

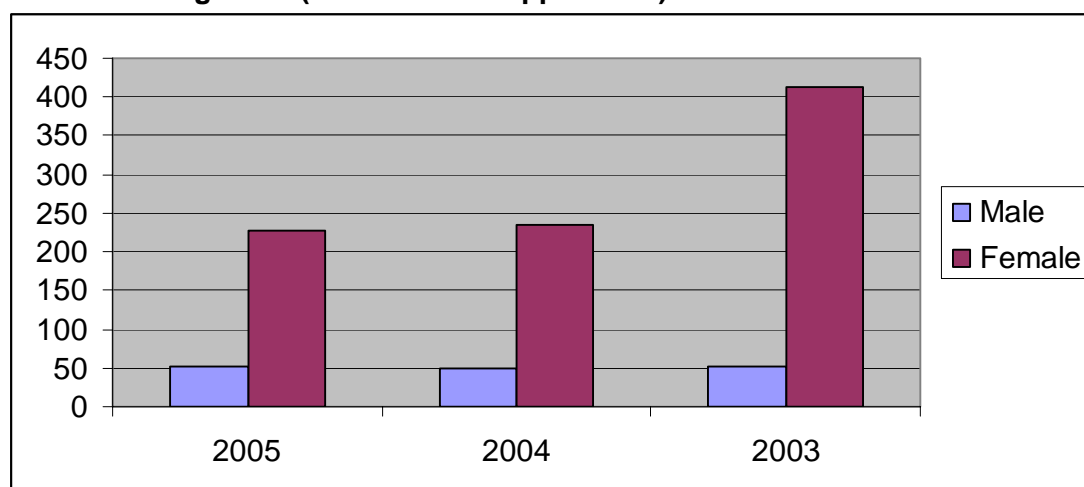
Some transition year students opt to take their work placements in primary schools. This issue was mentioned at the focus group meetings and perhaps there is scope for encouraging more work in primary classrooms by transition year students who express an interest in teaching.

4.6 Post Graduates

According to the representatives from the Colleges of Education, there is a slightly higher proportion of males in the Post-Graduate programmes compared to the B.Ed programmes. In general these males are older than the B.Ed students and some have work experience in other fields. Among the reasons cited for choosing primary teaching is that working with children would provide more job satisfaction.

The decision to take the Post Graduate Diploma in Education can be taken as a serious career decision on account of its financial implications: loss or deferral of earnings, and fees.

Figure 7: Graduate Diploma in Education (Primary Teaching) Enrolment by gender (Data listed in Appendix 3)



Source: Data supplied by the Colleges of Education

The view of the participants of workshop three at the National Conference was that the number of places for post-graduate students should be increased and advertised widely because those “*who enter Primary school teaching as graduates, tend to remain in the profession for longer than those who gain entry straight from Post-Primary school.*” (“National Conference Report”, 2004, p.13). The Committee is of the view that research is required to establish this assertion, namely that teachers who enter the profession as post graduates remain longer in the profession. Research is also required to establish whether any initiative to increase entry to the post graduate diploma would in turn increase the number of males entering the profession. The number of places offered on the post-graduate diploma course is primarily a matter for the Department of Education and Science, in consultation with the Colleges. It should be borne in mind that increasing places offered on the post graduate diploma courses may necessitate the decrease in the number of places offered on other courses.

The Committee considered a number of issues that effect a graduate’s decision to undertake the full-time eighteen month post graduate diploma. These issues included the duration of the course, timing of lectures, on-line availability of course material, part-time versus full-time courses, introduction of a modular system of education and the question of fees.

The Committee noted the Department of Education and Science report of the Committee on Savings and Loan Fund for Adult and Continuing Education (1999) which stated that savings and loan schemes are labour intensive and previous similar schemes had proved unsuccessful.

4.7 Image of Primary Teacher Education Courses

Colleges of Education, in their role as teacher educators, do not appear to have a positive image among some young people. Students are aware that the hours of study and lectures are long and the work is difficult. But students seem unaware that the Colleges of Education differ from other third level colleges in that they provide concurrent professional and theoretical academic training whereas most third level courses are not focused on professional practice.

The second workshop at the National Conference concluded that *“....boys tend not to be attracted by the colleges’ environment, particularly when many of their peers are doing courses with fewer hours and more time for social activities. In this regard, the colleges of education themselves must do more to promote a better image of teacher education.”* (“National Conference Report”, 2004, p10).

Primary teacher education is a professional course. Like other professional courses it is a blend of work, some of which is practical and some of which is more theoretical, and the hours of study are high like those in other professional courses. The course includes both lectures and work in small groups. It also provides students with opportunities for teaching children in schools. This variation in activities provides the student with a well rounded education, which equips them with sophisticated practical capabilities to work with adults and children which is valuable both personally and professionally.

It has been difficult for the Colleges to distance themselves from the traditional image of teacher training. This image is clearly present in the minds of the general public and is associated with both the old two year course and the valuable contribution made by the religious orders. In the recent past the colleges have diversified and offer a variety of educational programmes. Along with these changes there have been substantial changes in the ethos of the colleges. One way to help young people in schools to appreciate these changes would be for them to encounter pre-service student teachers.

Chapter 5 The Teaching Profession

5.1 Pay and Conditions

The reports of both Drudy et al (2002) and Drew (2005) indicate that, while many aspects of the teaching job and certain conditions of employment are viewed very favourably, teachers' pay and the long pay scale are not attractors into teaching.

Drudy et al (2002) reported that while second level students ranked primary teaching third of nine careers with respect to job satisfaction, it was clear that the same students did not perceive teaching as carrying great financial rewards. In terms of carrying prestige in the community, the students ranked primary teaching as fourth of the nine careers, and placed it third in terms of its benefit to society. In addition, they scored primary teaching in the top three for enjoyment. "*Job conditions*" formed the most popular reason which boys put for considering primary teaching although there was no specific option in relation to "*pay*" among the list. A high proportion of respondents tended to over-estimate the starting salary of a primary teacher which Drudy comments "*provides little support for the theory that it is the low level of pay that is the main reason for the lower proportion of boys entering primary teaching*" (Drudy et al, 2002, p.107). Nonetheless, "*low pay*" ranked joint-fourth of eleven reasons offered by school leavers to explain why so few males go into primary teaching. Drudy acknowledges that there may be a pay element in the "*attraction of other careers*", (Drudy et al, 2002, p.117) which was a high-ranked item.

Drew's work in surveying male primary teachers in the first ten years of their careers asked respondents about measures required to encourage more men into primary teaching. Of 283 responses, the most frequently mentioned item was "*more money*" (improved salary structure/financial rewards/promotion prospects) (Drew, 2005, p.40). After financial measures, the next most frequently mentioned measures were promotion of the teaching profession/improvement of the public image of the job and relaxation of the Gaeilge requirement.

Drew reports that almost half the respondents "*raised the issue of inadequate pay and the length of the salary scale making it difficult for many men to 'support a family' or obtain a mortgage*" (Drew, 2005, p.41). As regards level of satisfaction with their teaching situation, while 90% were either satisfied or very satisfied with security of employment and 92% with having interesting and stimulating work to do, just 49% were satisfied or very satisfied that the work was financially worthwhile/rewarding (with only 6% in the "*very satisfied*" range) (Drew, 2005, p.58).

As regards levels of satisfaction with conditions of employment, there were very high satisfaction scores for holidays, working hours and (to a lesser extent) contract, but salary – just 4% "*very satisfied*" – ranked lowest. (Drew, 2005, p.64).

In relation to her overall findings on conditions, Drew stated that teachers rated their strongest satisfaction as being with "*job security, then interesting work, pupils' development and flexible working*" (Drew, 2005, p.68). Among the recommendations put forward by Drew are the need to "*address salary issues by raising the starting point and reducing the number of increments*" (Drew, 2005, p.72).

At present (June 2005) the starting pay for a primary teacher with a pass degree is €31,082 (point 2 of a common scale plus primary degree pass allowance) and the starting pay for a primary teacher with an honours degree is €33,901 (point 2 of a common scale plus primary degree honours allowance). This may be thought favourable when compared to starting pay for many beginning workers in the IT and financial sectors. The cost of other third level courses and the length of the training required, for a doctor or barrister for example, should also be considered. By comparison with certain other graduate professions, the “Report of the Public Service Benchmarking Body” (2002) recommended the starting point of the common basic scale to be €25,095 for a teacher compared with €31,699 for a house officer (doctor), €26,169 for a graduate engineer, and €28,878 for an administrative officer in the Civil Service.

Entry Level Salaries for Graduates in selected Careers

Profession	Starting Salary
Administrative Officer	€30,593
Engineer Grade III	€29,717
Architect	€32,900

Source: Circular 15/2005: Revision of pay of Civil Servants

Profession	Starting Salary
Intern	€30,944
House Officer	€35,858

Source: Department of Health and Children, Consolidated Salary Scales Effective from 1st June, 2005

While starting salaries may be considered comparable, another factor that teachers often complain of relates to the length of their salary scale. The comprehensive work done by the Benchmarking Body allows for a comparison of length of scales. Within the many scales in the Benchmarking Report, the common basic scale for teachers (p.112) is uniquely lengthy in having 17 scale points over 25 years. This indicates that the pay issue may be related to incremental progression as much as starting salary.

Lack of opportunity for career advancement/promotion is a factor raised by primary teachers. Drudy et al, for example, refer to “*a perception of a poor career structure and a lack of mobility in primary teaching*” (Drudy, 2002, p.189). At the end of 2004, figures provided by the DES show that 13,587 of 26,387 primary teachers are in promoted positions. This is 51.5% of the teaching complement, and is somewhat weighted in favour of males who are disproportionately over-represented among principal teachers. While at first glance the fact that over half of the teaching complement are in promoted posts would indicate good opportunities for promotion, a very large proportion of the promoted posts are at the lowest level. Of the 13,587 promoted teachers, 48.5% are in special duties posts/B posts. These, at the beginning of 2005, attract an allowance of €3,336 per annum. In addition, the majority of the allowances paid to Deputy Principals are also at this level, so that an estimated 60% of promoted teachers are being paid the lowest promotional allowance.

The “Report of the Public Service Body” (2002) gave rise to a particular grievance among primary teachers in relation to promotion. While the posts of principal and deputy principal in schools of the same size at primary and post-primary level had been valued similarly prior to the Benchmarking Report, that Body introduced changes giving greater value to principalships and deputy principalships at post-

primary level. In relation to principalships, for example, posts in primary schools which have one to 35 teachers were placed in the same band as post-primary schools with one to 22 teachers (p.122 plus errata and p.144 of “Benchmarking Report”). A further band of payments for post-primary principals in schools from 23 to 30 teachers was introduced which has no equivalent at primary level. In addition, principals of primary schools of 36 teachers plus were capped at the minimum level of the 23-30 teacher post-primary band. Finally, two further bands were introduced for post-primary principals in schools with 31-40 teachers and with 41 teachers plus, and across all bands principals of larger schools received larger increases. Primary school principals, deputy principals and the INTO have complained that this change has tended to de-value work in primary education and continue to argue strongly that the principle of parity, as reflected in the common basic scale across the levels for teachers, should also be applied to the senior promoted posts.

In relation to other aspects of conditions of employment, overall conditions including job security, relatively favourable holidays and hours and a defined benefit pension scheme compare well with what is often the contractual nature and personal pension plans in large parts of private sector employment, including graduate employment.

Overall, it is clear that there is a high level of satisfaction among young male teachers with many aspects of their conditions of employment. There is, however, also a strong view that primary teaching is not financially rewarding, and this appears to be related in particular to the unusual length of the incremental salary scale.

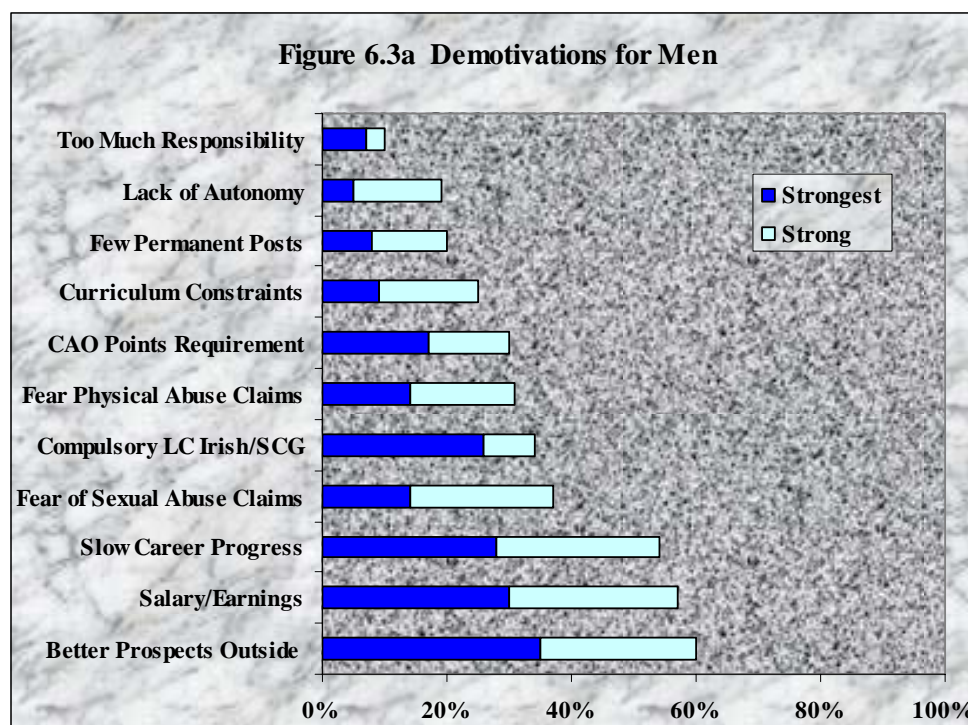
5.2 Career Mobility and Progression

There is a serious issue around the perceived career opportunities and mobility beyond the classroom for a primary teacher. It is a generally held view that there are only two grades: classroom teacher and school principal. While this perception was shared by the second level students in the Drudy report, the interviews with the second year students in the Colleges of Education showed a more realistic appreciation of the career opportunities in primary education. This was also shared by one of the focus groups in the Colleges of Education: *“The students recognise that there is the ability to move laterally within the profession – with positions as lecturers, researchers and cigirí all available to them. They also acknowledged that this potential for personal and professional development is not widely recognised and felt that it was something that needs to be highlighted to entice those people who would see principalship as the highest achievable goal.”*

The need to address the perception of teaching as a limiting profession is highlighted by findings that apparently better prospects in other careers deter potential male applicants. Drew states that *“career prospects outside teaching; salary level/earning potential; slow career progress; fear of false sexual abuse claims; and compulsory Irish/SCG are the five most important negative factors that may have discouraged or strongly discouraged them from primary teaching as a career.”* (Drew, 2005, p.39).

This point is illustrated in the following chart, reproduced from the Drew Report:

Figure 8: Demotivations for Men



Source: (Drew, 2005, Figure 6.3a, p.39)

5.3 Job Profile

It appears that, notwithstanding their positive view of the importance and challenging nature of teaching, male teachers find the associated tasks to support their teaching activities very unattractive. *“Would prefer if a teacher had just to teach, not be a psychologist, crowd controller, babysitter, banker, religious instructor and every other job we seem to have to do”* (Drew, 2005, p.30).

In their survey of third level students, Drudy et al found that the factors seen as *“most off-putting were after-school planning and correcting; having responsibility for managing and disciplining up to 30 pupils; upholding the school’s religious ethos by preparing children for church events”* (Drudy et al, 2002, p.200). This was corroborated by the focus groups in the Colleges of Education, which in addition also cited that

- catering for young children’s day-to-day needs,
- maintaining good relationships with parents,
- after school planning and correcting and
- the standard of Irish required for primary teaching

were issues they would consider would put males off primary teaching.

Drudy’s third-level study considered fifteen different aspects of teaching and in only one was there a significant gender difference. *“Females were significantly more inclined than males to view involvement with children’s day-to-day needs as attractive.”* (Drudy et al, 2002, p.200).

As noted in the table above, the possibility of false abuse claims was a significant demotivator cited by respondents to the Drew study of male teachers. Similarly,

54% of those who participated in a College of Education focus group agreed that male teachers are more likely to come up against false allegations of child abuse.

There should be a concerted effort by the partners in education, especially the DES, the Colleges of Education, the National Parents Councils and representative organisations to examine how the policies and procedures in place might be improved so that the relevant bodies, such as the Colleges of Education, schools, etc can provide adequate training and support to serving teachers and student teachers in relation to this issue.

Chapter 6 Primary Teaching as a Career

6.1 Image of Teaching

According to Drudy et al, primary teaching was ranked higher with respect to job satisfaction than secondary teaching by second level students (Drudy et al, 2002, p.92). Primary teaching was also ranked higher in relation to enjoyable careers, (Drudy et al, 2002, p.98), as illustrated below:

Table 9: Perceptions of different careers as “Always/Mostly” enjoyable. Second Level Student Survey.

Careers	Always/Mostly Enjoyable		
	Males %	Females %	All %
Engineer	81.1	78.2	79.4
Social Worker	51.3	70.5	63.1
Doctor	66.3	75.5	71.8
Primary teacher	71.1	85.0	79.4
TV producer	80.7	82.5	81.8
Computer programmer	70.7	65.5	67.6
Lawyer	62.4	71.8	68.1
Accountant	53.5	57.9	56.1
Secondary Teacher	47.6	61.0	55.6
Total number of respondents 1,049			

Source: Drudy et al, 2002, Table 4.16, p.98.

In the focus groups with the students of the Colleges of Education, they spoke of the more attractive opportunities provided by primary teaching rather than secondary teaching such as the varied curriculum and the greater potential to influence young children.

However, in the Drew survey of male teachers *“There was a strongly held view that respect for the profession is a lot less than they expected and that it is being steadily eroded through the media. This in turn reduced the respect from [the] general public or children.”* (Drew, 2005, p.32).

One of the workshops at the National Conference emphasised the need to address the image of the primary teacher among the wider public. The participants felt that generally, primary teaching is not perceived as having a dynamic and important role in Irish society (“National Conference Report”, 2004, p.6). While this presents a negative perception of the profession, both intending and current students in the Colleges of Education do not share this view of the status of their chosen career. *“Intending primary teachers were most likely to see their chosen career as the one of most social benefit...primary teaching appears to be a respected profession even among those not choosing it...primary teaching was ranked in the top three for enjoyment, only slightly behind TV producer and at the same level as engineer”* (Drudy et al, 2002, p.196).

Among student teachers there was greater agreement *“that primary teaching is a demanding and exhausting job but also that there is a lot of interest and variety in it.”* Student teachers also agreed that *“teachers perform a service of moral value to*

society, and that they are able to influence children for the good.” (Drudy et al, 2002, p.201).

6.2 Stereotyping

An issue that has arisen is the stereotyping of the primary teaching profession as a ‘woman’s job’. The teaching profession is seen as a caring profession and, as such, is seen as a feminine role. For example the Drudy survey of school leavers reported that 62% of males as against 36% of females thought that primary teaching was best suited to women; 38% of males and 63% of females thought it was suited to both genders equally (Drudy et al, 2002, p.112).

A factor that arises with the increasing feminisation of the profession is the isolation of the male teacher particularly in small, rural schools. This was particularly cited by the participants in the focus group on single-sex boys schools, which was held in Limerick in May, 2004. Equally workshop one of the National Conference refers to “*Other disincentives to Primary teaching for males were thought to be the sense of isolation in schools and the fact of working with mainly females.*” (“National Conference Report”, 2004, p.7).

Student teachers were less stereotyped in their attitude towards gender and primary teaching than were school leavers, “*This would suggest that their exposure to the professional demands of primary teaching and greater knowledge about it served to reduce the stereotyping.*” (Drudy et al, 2002, p.201).

This seems to suggest that teachers recognise the importance of a more inclusive team working environment in the primary school and the enrichment that diversity can offer.

6.3 Attractiveness of Primary Teaching

There are many positive aspects of primary teaching that are considered attractive by those already in the profession and by aspirants.

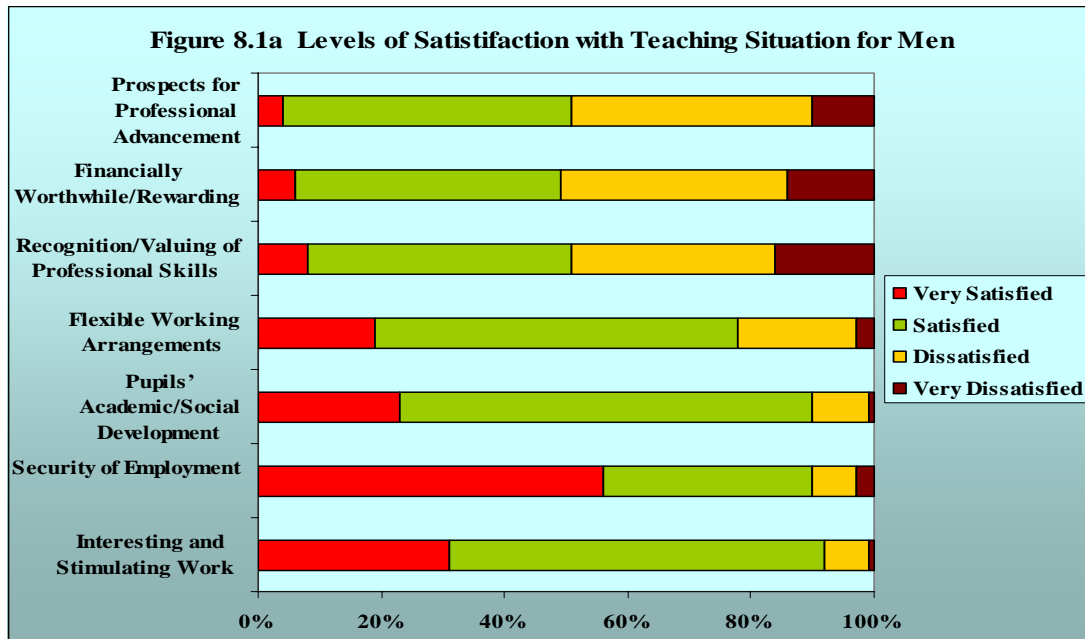
The male respondents in the Drew study identified the top three key motivational factors for entering primary school teaching as: -

1. work/life balance
2. contribution to society
3. job security

A survey of the male students in one of the Colleges of Education identified the following aspects of primary teaching as attractive: the hours, the holidays and the security associated with the job. A majority of students agreed that they were attracted to teaching by the availability of jobs and also the personal fulfilment they associate with working as a primary school teacher. Making a difference in young people’s lives and being a respected member of the community were also cited as a significant attraction for students. The other two primary aspects of the job that attracted the students were the opportunities for promotion and the classroom interaction.

The attitudes of the student teachers appear to have developed from their school experiences and to a great degree reflected the attitudes of the males who had been teaching for up to ten years, as the chart below shows:

Figure 9: Levels of Satisfaction with Teaching Situation for Men



Source: Chart reproduced from the Drew report , 2005, Figure 8,1a, p59

Chapter 7 Conclusions and Recommendations

Having considered all of the issues referred to in the previous chapters of this report and the available research, the Committee believes that no single action on its own can achieve an increase in the number of males entering primary teaching. The problem is multifaceted.

The Committee makes the following recommendations which it considers are necessary to address the problem.

7.1 Promoting Teaching as a Career for Males

There is a role for the partners in Education to work together to improve the image of primary teaching. A proactive and coordinated approach is required to better inform the public about the positive, stimulating and challenging aspects of a career in primary teaching. In any promotion, male role models should be highlighted.

The Committee **recommends** that a coordinated promotion campaign, which would encourage boys as well as girls to enter primary teaching should be undertaken. The campaign should involve the Colleges of Education, the Department of Education and Science, the Teaching Council of Ireland, the INTO and guidance counsellors.

The Committee **recommends** that the Teaching Council of Ireland, when formally established, take the lead role in this campaign and that the Department of Education and Science provide a dedicated budget to the Council for this purpose.

In the promotion of a positive image of teaching as a career, the following groups should be targeted:

- Primary Teachers
- Parents
- Students at both Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate level
- Mature Students (including those who might want to change career)
- Guidance Counsellors

In each of these categories particular focus should be given to encouraging males to consider positively the career of primary teaching.

The campaign should highlight the wide variety of skills that a primary teacher uses. The richness of the primary school curriculum facilitates teachers to draw on these and other skills. These skills include strong interpersonal and communication skills, organisation, planning and assessment, the ability to analyse and reflect and team work. It also allows teachers to draw on personal talents, interests and qualities and to bring previous experiences in the sciences, sport and the arts, for example, to the classroom.

The campaign should also promote the richness and rewards of being a teacher, such as

- the value to society,
- work/life balance,
- career satisfaction,

- diversity of skills,
- professional development,
- conditions of employment,
- job security.

The promotion campaign should include

- A dedicated website (examples of this are www.teachnz.govt.nz, www.teach.gov.uk or www.nursingcareers.ie) with links to the Colleges' of Education own websites.
- A brochure and posters should be designed in consultation with guidance counsellors, to be circulated to all second level schools, highlighting the positive aspects of primary teaching targeted at both Junior and Leaving Certificate male students.
- Radio, TV and press advertisements.

The advertising campaign should include male role models, such as male primary teachers who have an additional public profile, for example prominent sportsmen, artists, musicians and writers. In the UK, the Teacher Training Agency has run a very successful advertising campaign which includes newspaper advertisements in sports supplements and music supplements.

On an on-going basis, opportunities to promote primary teaching as a career at public events, such as the FAS Opportunities Career Exhibition and College of Education Open Days, should be planned and coordinated.

The partners should examine the feasibility and impact of hosting an annual awards ceremony which could include 'Teachers of the Year Awards' and awards for innovation and best practice in the primary teaching profession.

Such an award ceremony would create an opportunity to: -

- Celebrate the role of teachers in society
- Highlight the positive aspects of a teaching career
- Include male role models of effective teaching and
- Provide an annual opportunity to promote the positive aspects of teaching in the media.

7.2 Target Setting

The Committee **recommends** that in order to assist in achieving an increase in the number of males entering primary teaching that appropriate targets are set for increasing the numbers over the next five and ten years.

The Committee also **recommends** that appropriate positive actions should be put in place in order to maximise the effectiveness in achieving the targets set. These positive actions are included in many of the recommendations of this report.

Ten year targets should be established and reviewed on a regular basis having regard to the need to address the declining number of male primary teachers as a priority. The DES should establish, monitor and review the targets on an annual basis.

An issue which was given much consideration by the Committee was the proposal to recommend the introduction of quotas for entry to the Colleges of Education. The proposal, tabled by a member of the Committee, was that 25% of places in the Colleges be reserved for males. The quota system would operate over a period of ten years.

Concerns were raised by members of the Committee as to whether the introduction of quotas was in fact legal under the Equal Status Acts. After considerable debate the Committee agreed that the use of targets rather than quotas would be the best way to try to achieve an increase in the number of males entering primary teaching.

Legal advice was sought in relation to this issue. A summary of the legal advices received is set out in Appendix 1.

7.3 Image of Colleges of Education

The Committee **recommends** that the Colleges of Education should work together to enhance their public image, provide detailed information for potential students and highlight the diversity of life and work in the Colleges. The Colleges are engaged in a variety of programmes and innovative research that need to be more widely known.

7.4 Creative approaches to post graduate entry

The Committee **recommends** that the Graduate Diploma in Education (Primary Teaching) should be reviewed with a view to enhancing its appeal to male students. There is evidence that there is a slightly higher proportion of men enrolling on the Graduate Diploma compared to the B.Ed.

The review should examine the following issues: -

- Explore how more flexible approaches to delivering modules of the Graduate Diploma in Education (Primary Teaching) could be introduced in order to increase the attractiveness of the course for mature male students.
- Investigate the possibility of having scholarships for post graduates who wish to undertake the Graduate Diploma in Education (Primary Teaching).
- Examine the feasibility of having specific scholarships for male post graduates.

7.5 Second level Irish syllabus and teaching methodologies

The Committee **recommends** that revisions and improvements be made to the second level Gaeilge syllabus and teaching methodologies in the context of males entering the primary teaching profession. The changes to the curriculum at primary level suggest the need to emphasise the importance of the spoken word and the ability of students to communicate effectively through Gaeilge.

7.6 Scrúdú Cainte at Junior Certificate Level Gaeilge

The Committee **recommends** that the Department of Education and Science put in place measures to encourage more schools to take the Scrúdú Cainte at Junior Certificate Level Gaeilge.

This recommendation is linked to the emphasis on Gaeilge as a communicative language in the primary school curriculum.

7.7 Scholarships

In light of the necessity for students interested in teaching to remain at higher level Gaeilge, the Committee **recommends** that a scholarship scheme be established for boys and girls to attend Gaeltacht courses, or other courses in Gaeilge, early in the second level cycle.

7.8 Career Guidance

The Committee **recommends** making guidance more widely available for students both at junior cycle, where it is currently limited, and senior cycle in schools. Parents and students need to be aware of the consequences of subject choice and subject levels early in the junior cycle of second level schooling in the context of career choice.

The Committee **recommends** that the Institute of Guidance Counsellors should address the perception and evidence that primary teaching is not being offered by all guidance counsellors for consideration. There is some evidence that guidance counsellors tend not to encourage high achieving boys to choose primary teaching as a career. This is particularly important in the context of single-sex boys' schools.

The Committee **recommends** that the Department of Education and Science should enhance awareness, among second level subject teachers, of the implications of subject level choice for career options.

7.9 Future Research

The Committee **recommends** that further research is required and should be conducted on the following issues :

- The impact of the presence / absence of males in the primary classroom.
- To establish the extent to which the higher level Gaeilge requirement impacts on a student's decision to apply to the Colleges of Education.
- To establish why a greater proportion of boys are not taking higher level Gaeilge in the Leaving Certificate.
- To identify reasons why more high achieving boys do not apply for primary teaching.

- In light of the Bologna Agreement, to investigate the number of people who are not eligible to enter primary teaching because they do not have the Gaeilge qualification.
- To conduct a comparative analysis of the performance of male and female students in Irish and other languages.
- To investigate attrition rates for males and females in primary teaching.
- To establish whether teachers who enter the profession through the graduate diploma courses stay in the profession longer than those who enter the profession via the B.Ed course after finishing their second level education.
- To investigate whether increasing the number of places on the post graduate courses would result in an increase in the overall proportion of males entering the profession relative to female entrants.

Appendix 1: Legal Advice on Quotas

Summary of the legal advices received on the possible introduction of quotas for entry to the Colleges of Education.

Advice from Counsel was obtained as to the legality of imposing minimum levels of gender balance in enrolment in the Colleges of Education. Legal opinion was that, while the arrangement could be viewed as consistent with a literal reading of section 24(1) of the Employment Equality Act 1998 (as amended by the Equality Act 2004), doubt was expressed as to the permissibility of doing this having regard to Article 2(a) of the Equal Treatment Directive. The legal opinion was that a quota system could be open to challenge on the basis that it was inconsistent with the Directive and in breach of the principle of equal treatment. In order to mitigate this risk, the advice was that a quota system ought to incorporate a process of objective assessment which takes account of the personal circumstances of each of the candidates. In order to do this, the reasons for male under-representation in the teaching profession would need to be clearly identified and isolated.

Appendix 2: Members of the Committee

Maureen Bohan	Inspectorate, Department of Education & Science (DES)
Dr. Angela Canny	Mary Immaculate College from January, 2004
Michael Connolly	Inspectorate, (DES)
Dr. Hugh Gash	St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra
Noreen Kavanagh	Coláiste Mhuire Marino
Deirdre McDonnell	DES, from January, 2005
Rhona MacSweeney	DES
Breda Naughton	DES, from October 2003 to September 2004
Dr. Teresa O'Doherty	Mary Immaculate College from October to December 2003
John O'Dowd	Institute of Guidance Counsellors
Dr. Sean O'Dwyer	Church of Ireland College of Education
*John Quinlan	DES, from September 2004
Dr. Caroline Renehan	Mater Dei Institute of Education
Paul Ryan	DES
Brian Tubbert	Froebel College of Education
Noel Ward	Irish National Teachers' Organisation (INTO)

Alternates

Olivia Bree	St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra
Barry Conroy	DES
Dr. Leo Frost	Church of Ireland College of Education
Dr. Patricia Kennon	Froebel College of Education
Gene Mehigan	Coláiste Mhuire Marino
James Norman	Mater Dei Institute of Education, from October 2003 to February 2005
Neil Ó Conaill	Mary Immaculate College
Deirdre O'Connor	INTO
Carmel O'Doherty	DES

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Dr. Patricia Kennon	Froebel College of Education
**Deirdre McDonnell	DES
Rhona MacSweeney	DES
Noel Ward	INTO

*Current Chairperson of the Committee

**Chairperson of the Drafting Group

Appendix 3: Statistics

CAO Statistics Male/Female Applicants 2004				
Points	Number of Males	Male Cumulative	Number of Females	Female Cumulative
600	69 (0.3%)	69 (0.3%)	89 (0.3%)	89 (0.3%)
550 - 599	507 (1.9%)	576 (2.2%)	808 (2.8%)	897 (3.1%)
500 - 549	1,042 (4.0%)	1,618 (6.2%)	1,835 (6.4%)	2,732 (9.5%)
450 - 499	1,948 (7.4%)	3,566 (13.6%)	3,020 (10.5%)	5,752 (19.9%)
400 - 449	2,835 (10.8%)	6,401 (24.4%)	3,646 (12.6%)	9,398 (32.5%)
350 - 399	3,345 (12.7%)	9,746 (37.1%)	3,902 (13.5%)	13,300 (46.1%)
300 - 349	3,271 (12.5%)	13,017 (49.6%)	3,498 (12.1%)	16,798 (58.2%)
250 - 299	3,021 (11.5%)	16,038 (61.1%)	2,798 (9.7%)	19,596 (67.9%)
200 - 249	2,594 (9.9%)	18,632 (71.0%)	2,311 (8.0%)	21,907 (75.9%)
150 - 199	2,317 (8.8%)	20,949 (79.8%)	1,988 (6.9%)	23,895 (82.7%)
100 - 149	2,077 (7.9%)	23,026 (87.7%)	1,752 (6.1%)	25,647 (88.8%)
100	3,229 (12.3%)	26,255 (100.0%)	3,231 (11.2%)	28,878 (100.0%)

Number of Male / Female Candidates taking Higher Level Gaelge in the Leaving Certificate Exams.			
Year	Male	Female	Total
2004	4,932	9,946	14,878
2003	5,235	9,867	15,102
2002	5,120	9,781	14,901
2001	5,408	10,311	15,719
2000	5,923	11,035	16,958

Number of Male / Female Candidates securing a Grade C or higher in Higher Level Gaelge Leaving Certificate Examinations.			
Year	Male	Female	Total
2004	3,919	8,410	12,329
2003	4,079	8,064	12,143
2002	4,121	8,361	12,482
2001	4,000	8,435	12,435
2000	4,501	9,134	13,635

Post Graduate Entrants to Colleges of Education			
Year	Male	Female	Total
2005	51 (18.28%)	228 (81.72%)	279 (100%)
2004	50 (17.54%)	235 (82.46%)	285 (100%)
2003	53 (11.40%)	412 (88.60%)	465 (100%)

Appendix 4: Bibliography

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Appendix 5: Example from UK advertising campaign

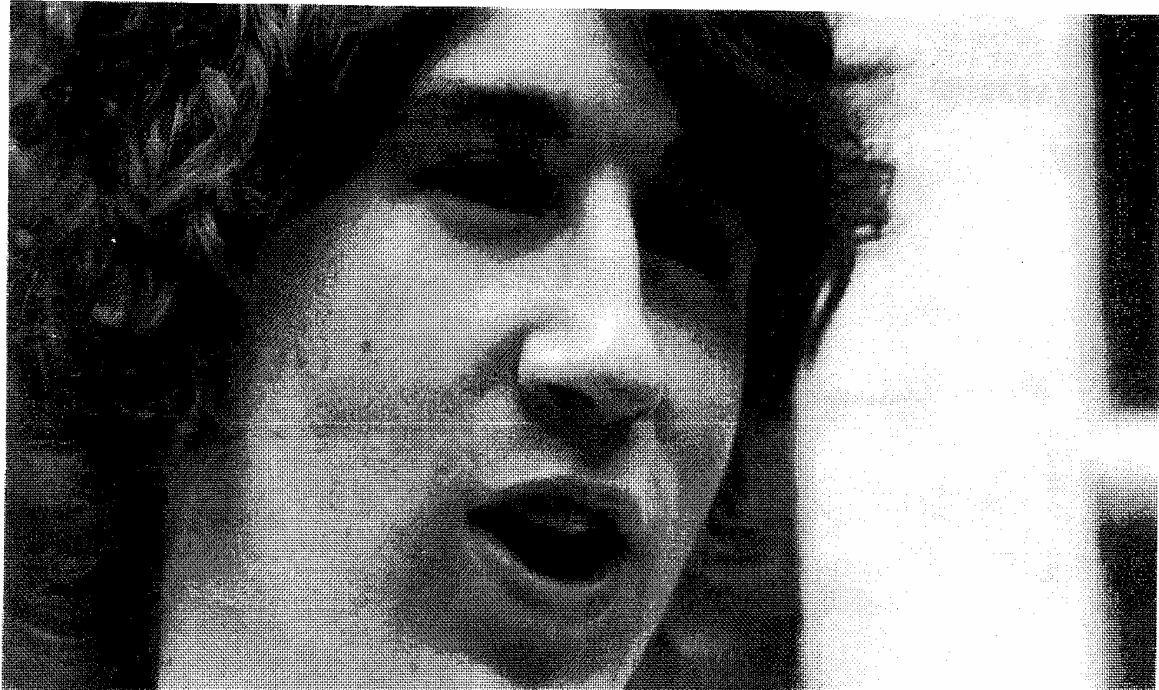
*The Observer Sports Monthly
January 2005*

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