

**Declining Catholic Populations: Maintaining  
the Distinctiveness of a Catholic Sixth Form  
College**

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## Abstract

The aim of this dissertation is to establish whether in the post Vatican II era is it still possible to maintain the distinctiveness of a Catholic Sixth Form College despite increasing numbers of students of other denominations and faiths.

A case study approach of a Catholic Sixth Form College was used.

A literature review was conducted to review and contrast ecclesiastical literature before and after the Second Vatican Council especially in relation to the education of those of different denominations and faiths. The review continued to critically explore the extent to which the Catholic Church's teachings encourages a mission of educational outreach to the poor and disadvantaged of our society. It defined Catholic distinctiveness and identified tensions which may exist for Sixth Form College leaders maintaining Catholic distinctiveness with a decreasing Catholic population.

Through a survey methodology, the practical reality of these leadership challenges, strategies currently employed and their effectiveness was investigated. There was a strong positive correlation between the views of the three principals interviewed and the students questioned.

From these findings it was concluded that it **was** possible to maintain the distinctiveness of a Catholic Sixth Form College despite increasing numbers of students of other denominations and faiths.

Recommendations for further improvement to current policies were suggested especially with respect to the incorporation of celebrations of different faiths within the Sixth Form College whilst at the same time proudly asserting the truth and distinctiveness of the Catholic faith.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

### 1.1 Aims and Objectives

“There is no difference between Jews and gentiles, between slaves and free men, between men and women; you are all one in union with Christ Jesus”  
(Galatians 3:28)

The aim of this dissertation is to establish whether in the post Vatican II era is it still possible to maintain the distinctiveness of a Catholic Sixth Form College despite increasing numbers of students of other denominations and faiths.

From a standpoint assuming that it is possible, despite falling numbers of Catholic students in Catholic Sixth Form Colleges, and using my current college as a case study I wish to achieve the following objectives:

- To review ecclesiastical literature before and after the Second Vatican Council in relation to education especially of those of different denominations and faiths.
- To critically explore to what extent the Catholic Church’s recent teachings and declarations encourages a mission of educational outreach to the poor and disadvantaged of our society despite denomination.
- To examine, through current literature, Catholic distinctiveness and identify any tensions which may exist for Sixth Form College leaders maintaining Catholic distinctiveness whilst being inclusive of students of other faiths.
- Research, through a survey methodology, the practical reality of these leadership challenges, elucidating any strategies currently employed and evaluating their effectiveness within the college.

- Compare and contrast the challenges of St Saviour's<sup>1</sup> College with those of another similar Catholic Sixth Form College
- From analysis of the research, reflect on how successful the college has been in maintaining its' Catholic distinctiveness and to make recommendations for the future.

## 1.2 Rationale for the Study

I have been very aware during my teaching career commencing some 25 years since the end of the second Vatican Council, of how Catholic education establishments are becoming more and more important in both the evangelising mission of the Church and for benefit of the world community.

Among all educational instruments the school has a special importance. It is designed not only to develop with special care the intellectual faculties but also to form the ability to judge rightly, to hand on the cultural legacy of previous generations, to foster a sense of values, to prepare for professional life. Between pupils of different talents and backgrounds it promotes friendly relations and fosters a spirit of mutual understanding; and it establishes as it were a centre whose work and progress must be shared together by families, teachers, associations of various types that foster cultural, civic, and religious life, as well as by civil society and the entire human community. (Vatican II 1965a:5)

In addition, after teaching in a wide range of Catholic Secondary schools, my most recent appointment in a Catholic Sixth Form College has caused me to reflect upon the contrast in the religious make-up of the student population in different schools. My current college has by far the largest ethnic and religious mix of all the schools I have taught in. In some ways this is not surprising. In common with all schools in England for nearly a decade cuts in funding have caused educational institutions to look at ways of balancing their financial books. James Kewin, deputy chief executive of the Sixth Form Colleges' Association, writing about current threats to all sixth form

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<sup>1</sup> For ethical reasons the name of the sixth form college has been changed



colleges, cites the ways in which Sixth Form Colleges have met not only the changing funding formulae but the continued imposition of VAT prompting changes in recruitment and provision, with staff redundancies and reductions in courses offered (Kewin 2014).

Growth in pupil numbers has been one strategy employed by the case study college. Whilst achieving its' primary aim of financial security, and unusually achieving this without staff redundancy, it has also resulted in a year on year percentage decrease in the number of Catholic students.

This leads me ask how a college, with an even greater number of students of other faiths and denominations is able to maintain a Catholic distinctiveness and does it still achieve the mandate of the Second Vatican Council

That through dialogue and collaboration with the followers of other religions, carried out with prudence and love and in witness to the Christian faith and life, they recognize, preserve and promote the good things, spiritual and moral, as well as the socio-cultural values found among these men. (Vatican II 1965b:2)

The 2007 OFSTED inspection of the college gives some indication of how it had been achieved in the past.

High quality liturgical celebrations and assemblies enhance personal and spiritual development and promote positive relationships amongst learners and teachers. There are informal opportunities for prayer and worship across the college; however, formal opportunities for learners are less frequent. Chaplaincy activities are effective in raising awareness of the local and global community and there is an extensive range of fundraising and charitable work during the college year. (OFSTED 2007:9).

Since that inspection the college has expanded and the student population has become more diverse. In many ways through this diversity I feel that the college has become richer and that in turn offers greater opportunities to enable students of a variety of backgrounds and experiences to study together in a caring Catholic environment and in sharing events on a daily basis gain a greater understanding and

respect for each other's views and beliefs. Pope Francis recently addressing leaders of other religions highlights the importance of multi-faith tolerance and understanding,

Deep down, we are all pilgrims on this earth, and on this pilgrim journey, as we yearn for truth and eternity, we do not live autonomous and self-sufficient individual lives; the same applies to religious, cultural and national communities. We need each other, and are entrusted to each other's care. Each religious tradition, from within, must be able to take account of others. (Pope Francis 2014)

Through my research I wish to elicit, whilst growing in numbers but decreasing in percentage Catholic population, what steps are currently being taken to maintain the Catholic distinctiveness of the college and to see how is it perceived by current students. From this work I hope to be able to put forward suggestions of what works well and present recommendations for strategies for the future.

### **1.3 Context of the Case Study**

St Saviour's<sup>2</sup> is a large Catholic Sixth Form College on the outskirts of Liverpool<sup>3</sup>. The college is a large and growing community with over 2067 students enrolled, supported by around 200 members of staff. The college, originally founded by a Catholic religious order, the Daughters of the Cross of Liège, has developed as a Sixth Form College on the site of the original convent since 1979 previously being a convent grammar school. It serves the wider Liverpool community with students from over 30 different feeder schools although drawing its Catholic population mainly from two voluntary aided Catholic Comprehensive schools.

The student body is religiously diverse. Some preference is given to entry for Catholic students but an equally large proportion of our entry is from non-Catholics with a significant number of Muslim students present within the college. In all 65% of

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<sup>2</sup> For ethical reasons the name of the sixth form college has been changed

<sup>3</sup> For ethical reasons the location of the sixth form college has been changed

students identify themselves as Christian, with just under half of these, 31%, being Catholic. 18% of students identify themselves as Muslim and nearly 12% state that they have no religious identity.

The ethnic diversity is equally significant. The vast majority of our students, 71%, are UK White with Pakistani Asian / Asian - British students making up the second largest ethnic sector (15%).

Since 2007 the college population has expanded from 1726 to 2067 with a corresponding decrease in the percentage of Catholic students from 42.2% to 30.8% respectively as numbers of students identifying themselves as Catholic fell from 739 to 627.

The college competes with a wide range of other educational establishments in the area, including independent grammar schools, sixth form colleges and HE colleges all within a 7 miles radius.

The current leadership structure for the Sixth Form College consists of a principal, deputy principal, three vice principals and two assistant principals. All curriculum subjects, with heads of subject, are divided into four subject areas led by an assistant senior manager. Each manager reports to one of the assistant principals. In addition each assistant senior manager has responsibility for a group of senior tutors. The senior tutors take on pastoral responsibility for approximately 100 students. The introduction of assistant senior managers is a relatively new innovation and has allowed a greater focus and monitoring of curriculum areas as well as more effective manner in delivering teaching learning and assessment innovation and the introduction of new whole school policies.

In March 2007 St Saviour's was graded outstanding by OFSTED

Learners' spiritual, moral and cultural development is outstanding. They recognise and respect the differing beliefs of others and display a striking capacity for mature spiritual reflection. (OFSTED 2007:8).

Another inspection is expected very soon.

Entry requirements to the college are some of the lowest in the area with a minimum entry requirement of 5 C's at GCSE level. To continue a subject on from GCSE for many subjects such as mathematics and the sciences requires a minimum of a B grade. This chimes with a deliberate policy of the college to fulfil its' mission statement to allow as many students as possible "the opportunity for each person to develop spiritually, morally and intellectually and we welcome students and staff of all faiths" (St Saviour's Mission Statement).

Results for the last nine years have been good with the college being "one the top 10 Colleges in England for A level results" (St Saviour's College Prospectus 2014) with 51.2% of students achieving A\*-B grades.

Catholic Sixth Form colleges are perfectly placed in the English educational system to offer high standard of education within a Catholic community setting for young men and women about to embark on either vocational careers or continue into higher education. At this incredibly formative point in their lives the distinctiveness and practice of the Catholic faith can be very influential. In today's economic environment, however, maintaining financial viability is an increasing challenge. Many high schools in the USA for example in recent years have been forced to close due to reducing Catholic numbers. (Coday 2010:12a) Increasing student numbers is a successful

approach to avoiding this but in the case study college has resulted in an increasing proportion of students of other faiths and none.

#### **1.4 Methodology**

To carry out the research necessary to critically evaluate the challenges, perceptions and practices of school leadership and students that establish a distinct Catholic ethos within a culturally diverse sixth form college I will employ a survey methodology. The aims of the research method, drawn from themes of the literature review, will be used to devise surveys in two Catholic sixth form colleges. I will use a quantitative survey approach for students from St Saviour's college and a qualitative interview approach with three college Principals, one from outside the case study college. Combining the evidence from research with the literature review will then allow recommendations for the leadership team of St Saviour's College to be made.

#### **1.5 Summary**

Having established the background to this dissertation, through a review of the literature I will now establish how such a low Catholic population is still compatible with both post Vatican II ecclesiology and the Church's teachings. I want to identify from literature what it is that should make the case study college distinctively Catholic especially in a sixth form context. Through research and interviews with selected senior leaders within the case study and other sixth form colleges I will ascertain how it is envisaged that this distinctiveness is manifest and maintained as well as assessing its effectiveness. Finally by analysing the results of the research I hope to be able to identify successful practices, valued by students which effectively promote Catholic

distinctiveness at this level of education and suggest recommendations for further developments within the case study college.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### 2.1 Introduction

The Second Vatican Council was a pivotal moment in the history of the Catholic Church, no more so than in the changing perceptions of the nature and purpose of Catholic education

“..the council was enormously successful in unleashing the currents of renewal in the Church. Within relatively few years Catholicism experienced sweeping changes in its liturgy and worship, its theology, its understanding of authority and ministry, its religious communities, its parish life even its popular culture” (Rausch 1998:277)

Through a literature review I will

- Summarise the position of the Catholic Church pre-Vatican II, its self-view and view of the world together with the prevailing attitudes of the time towards education and its' leadership.
- Establish how the Catholic Church redefined its' educational mission during Vatican II and in the succeeding years especially with respect to the inclusivity of educating people of other faiths and traditions, and how these changes are reflected in the Church's outlook for education today.
- Define what is meant by the distinctiveness of Catholic Schools and Colleges and how this can be achieved within a Sixth Form College
- Identify what is meant by a Catholic population and critically analyse the extent to which this impacts Catholic distinctiveness especially with regard to the inclusivity of students of other faiths.
- Provide examples of published ideas and strategies to address current concerns in this field

As a result I will be able to elucidate the key themes from literature in this field of Catholic education to inform the areas of focus for the research stage of the process. By analysis of the research findings in comparison with current literature I will be able to ascertain the extent of the leadership challenges currently faced by St Saviour's College in respect of Catholic Distinctiveness, how successfully employed strategies currently are and to offer further recommendations.

## 2.2 Pre Vatican II Ecclesiology

The first Vatican council was never finished, interrupted by war Pope Pius IX suspended the council indefinitely. At that time the Church felt under siege:

“Since the gates of hell trying, if they can, to overthrow the Church, make their assault with a hatred that increases day by day against its divinely laid foundation” (Pastor Aeternus, 1870)

It was this perception of a church, a fortress church, almost threatened by the changes which were going on around, that gave strength to the ecclesiology of church leadership for much of the period 1870 – 1962. Vatican I had laid out the apostolic primacy, power, character and teaching authority of the pontiff. The Church had established the cornerstone of its hierarchical nature with the Pope at the apex, the cardinals and bishops below, followed by priests, deacons and then the laity.

This reinforced the controlling, institutional nature of the Church. The Church for example expected Catholic authors to have their works approved by a bishop to obtain *imprimatur* and /or *nihil obstat* from a book censor. Published theology was encouraged only from the great works of previous approved Catholic theologians

“Let carefully selected teachers endeavour to implant the doctrine of Thomas Aquinas in the minds of students, and set forth clearly his solidity and excellence over others.” (Pope Leo XIII, 1879:31).



With the rise of a “modern” methods of analysis and treatment of biblical and historical investigation another threat to the Church’s doctrines was perceived and in 1907 Pope Pius X responded with an encyclical *Pascendi* and a decree of the Holy Office *Lamentabili*. As Rausch (1998:263) explained there followed “a long period of suspicion and repression. Bishops and seminary professors were required to take annually the oath against Modernism”.

The Catholic Church was very inward looking setting itself apart as the “one true church” (Rausch 1998:260). The Church for much of the pre Vatican time dismissed any virtue in other religions.

In 1943, as the world was changing Pope Pius XII, with the publication of two encyclicals, showed too that the Church was also undergoing its own review.

*Divino Afflante Spiritu* opened up study of the scriptures to allow Catholic academics and authors to apply the modern analysis of biblical criticism.

*Mystici Corporis* put forward the sacramental vision of the Church as the body of Christ. It explains the Church as being more than a physical manifestation, acknowledging a spiritual dimension and at the same time it recognised the equal worth of all the faithful, especially the laity and of those outside the church:

“We must accustom ourselves to see Christ Himself in the Church. For it is Christ who lives in His Church, and through her, teaches, governs, and sanctifies; it is Christ also who manifests Himself differently in different members of His society.” (Pope Pius XII 1943a:93)

In so doing Pope Pius XII was beginning to demonstrate a more outwardly looking view of the church, a breaking down of the division of roles between clergy and laity and stressing the importance of collectivity, a church as a community.

These showed some of the first “currents of renewal” (Rausch 1998:264) that were ultimately to act as bridge between pre and post Vatican II.

“Contemporary scholars are coming to a new appreciation of the extent to which this austere, patrician pope prepared the way for Vatican II” Rausch (1998:267)

### **2.3 Education in the pre Vatican II Church**

Pre Vatican II schools inevitably reflected the thinking of the Church itself, the mission of the church at that time as well as the social conditions.

Pre Vatican II there was a clear idea of the purpose of a Catholic school.

“It catered for the children of the parish and was staffed by teachers who lived in the parish: the whole complex was presided over by the Parish priest. There were no doubts about the purpose of this school: its aim was to produce good practising Catholics...A Catholic world was created...a world sheltered from alien influences” (Purnell 1995:119-120)

Places of learning described by Archbishop Richard Downey as “ a garden enclosed” (Naylor 2000:11) calling up an image of an inward looking Church concerned in creating an education for its’ own people disregarding those outside of the faith.

Catholic schools had a well-established hierarchy with authority, especially for primary schools, cascading from the Parish priest through the headteacher and on to the rest of the school there being no senior leadership team. Even in those days education of children in schools were deemed more important than the establishment of a church itself. At the synod of Westminster, 1852 the bishops stated that

“we should prefer the erection of a school, so as arranged to serve temporarily as a chapel, to that of a church without one...It is the good school that secures the virtuous and edifying congregation.” (Guy 1886:268 quoted in Gallagher 2001:51)

As Gallagher (2001:52-54) points out the idea that schools are the source of church congregations is no longer true today. In those days the population of the Catholic schools would be almost entirely Catholic pupils from traditional family backgrounds, staffed by Catholic teachers who had been brought up on traditional church values. This had the advantage of a shared vision and experience which was to be passed on to pupils. The bishops sought to sustain the Catholic beliefs and practices and at the same time help the young overcome the great poverty and hardships at that time.

The role of religious orders in schools in England reflected the changing nature of the Catholic church in the country with many schools set up to reflect the charisms of their founders lived out by the lives of their members. For example between 1900-1912 of the first fifteen Catholic secondary schools established in the Diocese of Salford, Religious Congregations were responsible for fourteen the other being a Diocesan foundation. (Lydon, 2001) After the 1944 Education act the De La Salle Brothers were able to increase their influence in Catholic schooling such that by the early 1960's they had 380 brothers in 41 establishments. (De La Salle 2015). Religious orders dominated much of the Catholic education at this time. Their focus serving the poor with particular priority to the Catholic poor of the parishes they served. The presence and visibility of so many religious in this area reinforced for themselves and those around them their mission and in particular their concern for the poor. As Lydon (2011) points out such an effect chimes well with the principle of “plausibility structures” put forward by Berger (1990)

“a pervading theme in the work of the sociologist Peter Berger. In essence Berger's claim is that what we find believable is closely connected to the

number of people who believe in it. It is easier, therefore, to be influenced by a religious charism if one is surrounded by those who are visibly religious. This teacher's description of the positive influence of the sisters reflects Berger's theory that, at the level of the individual, this means that one's acceptance of a belief system depends on participation in networks of individuals who share that belief system. In these networks or plausibility structures, the individual engages in conversation with significant others who confirm or reinforce his or her definitions of reality, ensuring that the definitions remain credible." (Lydon 2011:249)

Notwithstanding the sociological reasoning of Berger, it did result in numerous Catholic institutions being established, many of which continue to this day.

## 2.4 Ecclesiology and Education in the post Vatican II era

The new pope, Pope John XXIII, elected after the death of Pope Pius XII in 1958 felt that the Catholic church was ready for a breath of fresh air, an "aggiornamento" or updating.

Even in the announcement of the Second Vatican Council Pope John XXIII indicated something of the changes that were to follow. It was to be an ecumenical council which would make the Catholic Church look outwards and reflect upon the changing world.

As Rausch puts it

"The Dogmatic Constitution on the church *Lumen Gentium* represented an attempt to articulate a contemporary self-understanding of the Church that stands in marked contrast to the clerical and monarchical ecclesiology of nineteenth- and early twentieth century Catholicism often symbolised by a pyramid in which all authority descends from the top down" (Rausch 1998:272)

The second Vatican Council produced documents which gave directives for "renewal of thought, action, practices and moral virtue, of joy and hope, which was the very purpose of the council" (Pope Paul VI 1966:7-8)

The four constitutions, three declarations and nine decrees set out the guidelines for the future of the church. From the opening paragraph of *Lumen Gentium* it was clear that the church was prepared to undergo a shift in its' view of itself and of its perception by the wider world.

“Since the church is in Christ like a sacrament or as a sign and instrument both of a very closely knit union with God and of the unity of the whole human race, it desires now to unfold more fully to the faithful of the Church and to the whole world its own inner nature and universal mission.” (Vatican II 1964:1)

The church was taking on a sacramental perspective, showing itself to be Christ like in all that it does and in so doing revealing the presence of God.

In its content and structure the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium* (LG) introduced a new ecclesiology. Chapter 2 on the people of God is placed before the hierarchical structure of the church. The former pyramidal view of the church with the Pope at the pinnacle and all clergy subordinate to him with the laity at the bottom had been replaced with an almost flattened collaborative approach to ministry with all Catholics working “together according to their proper roles for the common good of the church and its mission” (McCarthy 1998:66).

There was a new theology of the laity:

“they are in their own way made sharers in the priestly, prophetic, and kingly functions of Christ; and they carry out for their own part the mission of the whole Christian people in the Church and in the world.” (Vatican II 1964:31)

By implication “The faith of all Christians rests on the Trinity” (Catechism of the Catholic Church:232) and so it can be argued that the essence of collaborative ministry is also inseparable to the mystery of the Trinity, “Trinitarian life is also our life” (BCEW 1995:20) by virtue of our baptism and confirmation. “Through their baptism and confirmation all are commissioned to that apostolate by the Lord Himself.”

(Vatican II 1964:33) So it is acknowledged that all of the faithful in their own particular roles are expected to contribute to the collaborative ministry of the Church.

There were of course many other themes that developed from the conciliar documents. McCarthy (1998:65-66) identified the ten most important principles endorsed by the council, but for Catholic educators the emergence of the church as the “Pilgrim People of God” is perhaps the most significant. The Church likened itself to being on a journey. A journey to be undertaken by all the faithful together, each with their own unique vocation including “sharing God’s word, building community, worshiping God and serving human welfare” (Groome 1998:324). The Catholic Church no longer saw itself as being “the Church of Christ” but recognised that the “Church of Christ” subsists inside and outside of the Catholic Church with the shared journey and mission requiring the proclamation and witness to the Gospel outside in the modern world.” The obligation of spreading the faith is imposed on every disciple of Christ, according to his state.” (Vatican II 1964:17) It was inevitable this would also necessitate a more outward view of Catholic education.

“imbu[ing] their students with the spirit of Christ, to strive to excel in pedagogy and the pursuit of knowledge in such a way that they not merely advance the internal renewal of the Church but preserve and enhance its beneficent influence upon today's world, especially the intellectual world.” (Vatican II 1965a: Conclusion)

Crucially the council declared in *Nostra Aetate*

“The Church, therefore, exhorts her sons, that through dialogue and collaboration with the followers of other religions, carried out with prudence and love and in witness to the Christian faith and life, they recognize, preserve and promote the good things, spiritual and moral, as well as the socio-cultural values found among these men.” (Vatican II 1965b:n2)

By doing so it formerly recognised the value or esteem in which it held other non-Christian religions. It opened up for clergy and laity the opportunities for a more fruitful dialogue and cooperation.

For educational leadership as well, the council documents required a sea change in terms of relationships within schools and within communities, from being the authoritative power to becoming a collaborative animator.

“The source of authority is its connection with the purpose of the whole body, the mission of Christ. Its primary power is power to enable, to call out gifts and to inspire mission” (BCEW 1995:22)

Reflecting Vatican II’s lead towards a sacramental perspective it became clear that the Catholic educational leadership should also portray itself as a sign of Christ’s presence here on earth - it should become a model of Christ serving the needs of the poor.

“... Christ was sent by the Father "to bring good news to the poor, to heal the contrite of heart", "to seek and to save what was lost"". (Vatican II 1964:8)  
 “... first and foremost the Church offers its educational service to the poor and ... especially in caring for the needs of those who are poor in the goods of this world or who are deprived of the assistance and affection of a family or who are strangers to the gift of faith.” (Vatican II 1965a:9)

The “poor” here specifically includes those outside of the faith. Since Vatican II it has led to the development of a preferential option for the poor to meet the needs of the contemporary “poor”.

Defined as “A response to the structural injustice that characterises our world.” (Dorr; 1983:5) the preferential option for the poor has continued to be a key theme in the Church’s social teaching since that time. More recently the 1996 statement the “Common Good” by the Bishops of England and Wales reinforces the idea that “poor and vulnerable have a special place in Catholic teaching” (BCEW 1996a:n.14) Furthermore it underlined that “the poor are not a burden; they are our brothers and sisters” that it requires us stand in “solidarity with our neighbour” and to “oppose all forms of discrimination and racism”. These needs were recognised by the Bishops as being more complex,

“those who have lost all sense of meaning in life and lack any type of inspiring ideal, those to whom no values are proposed and who do not know the beauty of faith, who come from families which are broken and incapable of love, often living in situations of material and spiritual poverty, slaves to the new idols of a society, which, not infrequently, promises them only a future of unemployment and marginalization.” (Congregation for Catholic Education 1997:n.15)

With the publication of *The Catholic School* the Congregation for Catholic Education described a new vision for Catholic education, opening new ways in which Catholic schools and college could and should operate. As Grace puts it

“they made it explicit that Catholic schools (subject to available places) were at the service of all who wished to enter” (Grace 2013:7)

In statements such as this the Church is redefining the obligations of service to the poor in light of our contemporary society and in doing so it stands shoulder to shoulder with those of other faiths, religions and those of none.

## **2.5 Distinctiveness of Catholic Schools and Colleges**

What makes Catholic schools and colleges distinctive continues to be the subject of great discussion and clarification within literature from pre Vatican II to the present day. Vatican council documents set out clear objectives for schools in general,

“Among all educational instruments the school has a special importance. It is designed not only to develop with special care the intellectual faculties but also to form the ability to judge rightly, to hand on the cultural legacy of previous generations, to foster a sense of values, to prepare for professional life. Between pupils of different talents and backgrounds it promotes friendly relations and fosters a spirit of mutual understanding; and it establishes as it were a centre whose work and progress must be shared together by families, teachers, associations of various types that foster cultural, civic, and religious life, as well as by civil society and the entire human community.” (Vatican II 1965a:5)

and Catholic schools in particular.

“No less than other schools does the Catholic school pursue cultural goals and the human formation of youth. But its proper function is to create for the school community a special atmosphere animated by the Gospel spirit of



freedom and charity, to help youth grow according to the new creatures they were made through baptism as they develop their own personalities, and finally to order the whole of human culture to the news of salvation so that the knowledge the students gradually acquire of the world, life and man is illumined by faith.” (Vatican II 1965a:8)

Within this document the bishops place Catholic schools within society not apart from it. Since this time putting these ideals into practice within Catholic education has been a focus of constant reflection by religious and laity alike.

The Congregation for Catholic Education followed up the Vatican II documents by identifying that

“Christ is the foundation of the whole educational enterprise in a Catholic school. His revelation gives new meaning to life and helps man to direct his thought, action and will according to the Gospel, making the beatitudes his norm of life. The fact that in their own individual ways all members of the school community share this Christian vision, makes the school "Catholic"; principles of the Gospel in this manner become the educational norms since the school then has them as its internal motivation and final goal.” (Congregation for Catholic Education 1977:n34)

How this is manifest and practically implemented is the “crucial question” (Grace 2013) for Catholic school leadership.

The church document “The Catholic Church on the Threshold of the Third Millennium” explored further the distinctiveness of a Catholic School or College

“The Catholic school sets out to be a school for the human person and of human persons. ‘The person of each individual human being, in his or her material and spiritual needs, is at the heart of Christ’s teaching: this is why the promotion of the human person is the goal of the Catholic school’”. (Congregation for Catholic Education 1997:n9)

This same document identifies strongly with the recurrent theme of concern for the poor and marginalized irrespective of faith and belief,

“To these new poor the Catholic school turns in a spirit of love. Spurred on by the aim of offering to all, and especially to the poor and marginalized, the opportunity of an education, of training for a job, of human and Christian

formation, it can and must find in the context of the old and new forms of poverty that original synthesis of ardour and fervent dedication which is a manifestation of Christ's love for the poor, the humble, the masses seeking for truth." (Congregation for Catholic Education 1997:n15)

The Bishops of England and Wales have carefully considered how this distinctiveness can be shown. In their 1996 and 2014 statements (Bishops Conference of England and Wales 1996b:3 and 2014a:3) they identified the promotion of five key elements as being the distinctive nature of Catholic education:

- The search for excellence, giving every student the opportunity to develop their talents to the full
- The uniqueness of the individual, valuing and respecting everyone
- The education of the whole person, both human and divine
- The education of all, including socially, academically, physically or emotionally disadvantaged
- Moral principles from a life in a community founded on gospel values

A more comprehensive almost checklist style guide to the self-analysis of the distinctiveness of a Catholic school was carried out by a working party for the Catholic Education Service (1999) examining all aspects of the Catholic school, its mission including leadership, the curriculum, pastoral care of pupils and care and development of staff. This document set up a series of reflective questions by which the extent of the Catholic distinctiveness of a school or college could be gauged and I will refer back to this in a later section of this review.

Later Stock (2005) also attempted to expand the ideas of Catholic distinctiveness into a series of thirteen specific identifiable characteristics with the overarching theme of

Christ being at the centre. Each characteristic is applicable irrespective of the student's personal belief.

"Catholic Schools are distinctive when they:

1. Manifest a Catholic ethos which is evident and open to experience by all who enter the school.
  2. Promote Gospel values and the teachings of the Catholic Church as an integral part of their mission.
  3. Follow policies that reflect and embody the teaching of Christ and the Catholic Church
  4. Model leadership inspired by the image of Christ
  5. Form an integral part of the communion of the local and universal Church
  6. Provide a religious education which comprehensively and systematically studies the mystery of God, the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, the teachings of His Church, the central beliefs that Catholics hold, the basis for them and the relationship between faith and life – all of which is integrated into every aspect of the curriculum and life of the school, and adapted to the age and ability of the pupils.
  7. Express the life of faith in acts of religion, through personal and liturgical prayer.
  8. Engender a culture of vocation
  9. Care for the spiritual needs of children and young people
  10. Care for the pastoral and special needs of children and young people in accordance with Gospel values and the teachings of the Catholic Church
  11. Model Gospel values and the teachings of the Catholic Church which unite society by promoting a citizenship rooted in a commitment to social justice and the common good.
  12. Promote conduct and behaviour rooted in Gospel values
  13. Uphold the dignity of the human person through the maintenance and care of school buildings and, through external and internal symbols and displays, manifest the centrality of Christ and the Catholic faith."
- (Stock 2005:6)

With a clear idea of how Catholic distinctiveness can be defined I now wish to explore how this is impacted by the presence or otherwise of students of other faiths and identify possible tensions that might arise.

## **2.6 Tensions between Catholic Population and Catholic Distinctiveness**

According to the Digest of 2014 Census Data for Catholic Schools and Colleges (Catholic Education Service 2014:14) in England the total number of students in maintained Sixth Form Colleges increased by 1585 students whilst the proportion of Catholic students in Sixth form Colleges nationally fell by 2.4% to 40.2% compared to 2013, with the case study college being even lower at 31%. The existence of Sixth Form Colleges with many students of other denominations and faiths is a reality today.

At this point it is important to emphasise, especially in the Sixth Form context, how “Catholicity” is defined. For the purposes of data systems it is simply the denomination expressed by students upon enrolment and no proof or evidence is demanded. This self-declaration is however, for the purposes of this study, the measure that will be used.

Within literature there is some debate as to whether a low Catholic population has any impact on Catholic distinctiveness.

Arthur would argue that an open admissions policy would seriously undermine Catholic distinctiveness.

“Catholic schools situated alongside multi-faith communities might come to the conclusion that the traditional view, emphasising the education of Catholic children by Catholic teachers, is no longer realistic, and seek instead to serve the wider community. They might see in this an opportunity to educate all pupils for a pluralist society, and even seek some form of partnership arrangement on admissions with other local faith communities.” (Arthur 1995:229)

Murray (1996) reports on the case study of one Catholic Sixth Form College in which with a low Catholic population the governing body felt a lack of confidence in their ability to provide an authentic Catholic education.

“The foundation governors ... argued that due to the low percentage of Catholics in the college they could no longer provide an education in accordance with the principles of the Roman Catholic faith” (Murray 1996:245)

These tensions precipitated a crisis which brought sharply into focus the problems of, maintaining the sacramental perspective, serving the poor, educating young people and reaching out to others whilst at the same time passing on the faith of the Church.

In contrast to the governors point of view the school was actually praised for its contribution to inter faith dialogue and as Murray emphasises,

“If, however, an active concern for social justice is not only something which the school prepares people for, but is at the very heart of the institutions mission and structures, then remaining in the inner city with its challenge of working for those most on the margins and the opportunity which often accompanies it by being enriched by the faiths often found there then these school will remain open and flourish” (Murray 1996:250)

Hypher (1996:224), too, points out there may not be any essential cause for anxiety for a Catholic school to have a minority Catholic population.

“The model of a Catholic school which consists largely of pupils and staff who are not Catholic has in fact always been common in so called ‘mission’ countries... Anxieties have been expressed about indifferentism and the undermining of faith in schools which have a high proportion of non-practising pupils or pupils of other faiths and denominations. Those who are anxious appear to feel that conscious acceptance of the values of other faiths in a positive way, or even the non-judgemental acceptance of the ‘lapsed’ can only lead to indifferentism. There is little evidence that this is or need be the case”. (Hypher 1996:224-5)

Where there is a more compelling argument for the tension between Catholic distinctiveness and the faith of the student population is the ability of a school or college to meet the requirements of being a distinctively Catholic school whilst respecting and valuing the uniqueness of all their students.

“A Catholic school is always, first of all, a school for Catholics. Of course, others who seek a place at the school are most welcome as long as space

permits. They are fully part of the school community and greatly treasured.”  
(Stock 2005:7)

This places demands on college leaders

“Specific measures are required to develop tolerance, respect and understanding between all the cultures and traditions represented not only in the school or college or its immediate environment but in the country as a whole” (CES 1999:61)

The Bishops Conference of England and Wales have also recognised the dilemmas facing Catholic school leaders in multi-faith communities

“These schools are inevitably confronted with demands arising from day to day contact with people of Other Faiths; sometimes they are subject to pressure that arises from the obligation to respect religious freedoms; sometimes the pressure comes from the need to be in solidarity with deprived communities that may also be the victims of racism” (BCEW 1997:6)

Changing UK and European laws regarding right of freedom of religion have also impacted the relationship between students and college leadership. More recently the Catholic Bishops issued guidance as to how this right of freedom of religion can be construed in the context of a Catholic school. Whilst maintaining that there is nothing in law to force Catholic schools to make provision for the religious requirements of pupils of other faiths the guidance reiterates that “respect for other faiths should be a mutual obligation in a Catholic school” (Bishops Conference of England and Wales 2014b:5). In short leadership must find a way to strike a balance.

Barnes (1996) also recognises these tensions between an open approach to those of other religions and faithfulness to our Catholic heritage. He raises the leadership question

“How is it possible to be faithful to the best traditions of the Church while respecting the demand of other people of faith that they be accepted for what they themselves claim to be?” (Barnes 1996: 233)

Barnes describes this as a “faithfulness-openness” (Barnes 1996:237) tension, seeing it as a challenge yet also as a positive in that it does in fact “reflect the two ways of

being church; teaching yet learning” (Barnes 1996:237) He goes on to assert that this reflects a Church which is constantly aware of its rich heritage and simultaneously aware of where the Spirit is leading it as well as people of all faith.

Sullivan too warns of the dangers of exclusively Catholic education. He recognises that inclusivity and distinctiveness need to go hand-in-hand but suggests that the solution may still be evolving.

“Catholic education needs to resolve the inbuilt tension between the claims to distinctiveness and inclusiveness. Perhaps this is a task that faces each generation, for which with any fresh interpretation of her distinctive identity, the church needs a constant re-evaluation of what inclusivity entails” (Sullivan 2000:30)

In this section I have used the literature review to establish that the existence of low Catholic populations within an educational environment is not in itself a cause for concern. The tension for Catholic school leadership is how, whilst maintaining the faithfulness to Catholic teaching and traditions, we can remain open to the needs of students of differing denomination and faiths, respecting their individuality and value as demanded of a distinctively Catholic college and develop the inclusivity that will enable them to serve the communities in which they are situated. The following section will now look for ways in which these tensions can be resolved.

## **2.7 Resolving the Tensions - Exemplar Ideas and Strategies**

Disappointingly there is little current literature which deals directly with the effects of a low Catholic population on Catholic distinctiveness especially within the unique settings of a Sixth Form in which students generally have much greater freedoms than would be experienced in a primary and secondary school. There is even less

centralised data concerning the faith or otherwise of the non-Catholic element of a school or college's profile nor is there data relating a correlation between ethnicity and Catholicity. Solutions to the tensions are not easy to identify.

It is, however clear that Catholic faith schools tend to do better than others at promoting social cohesion. Since 2006 promotion of community cohesion has been a required reporting aspect of OFSTED inspections. Morris (2014) in analysing published reports concluded that

“The evidence presented in this study strongly suggests that, in stark contrast to the proposition that faith schools in England are likely to have a detrimental impact on social harmony, Catholic schools are more effective in promoting community cohesion, as defined by government, than other educational institutions” (Morris 2014:86)

Community cohesion is a reflection of the inclusivity that is required in a distinctly Catholic school. It follows that by studying the good practice in successful Catholic schools, ideas and strategies to reduce the tensions previously described can be identified. Such a study has been completed by the Catholic Bishops of England and Wales. In response to some of the concerns of educationalists such as Barnes (1996:233) as well as the changing demography, the Bishops' conference produced a publication of practical guidelines for Catholic schools with pupils of other faiths,

In promoting community cohesion and in delivering education for human growth, all Catholic schools will take note of the different 'ecologies' (BCEW 2008:13)

In their guidance these 'ecologies' are of, “Daily living: Loving Tenderly”, “Justice: Acting Justly” and “Faith and Religious Experience: Walking Humbly, each was based on the recent “teachings of Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI which speak of integral human development in terms of the ‘ecology of human growth” (BCEW



2008:4) and were presented with a series of suggestions for incorporating examples of people and practices of other religions into the regular life of the school. Such a checklist could form a very practical way of measuring the extent to which Catholic distinctiveness is maintained alongside an openness to other faiths.

Many of the ideas suggested are easily applicable in a Sixth Form College setting. For example under the 'ecology' of loving tenderly are listed activities such as

- Fostering an appreciation of the dignity of the human person and the beauty of God's creation through the curriculum and extracurricular activities such as the promotion of health and well-being, physical exercise, good diet, team-building and conservation and responsible citizenship initiatives.
- Taking a full interest in the joys and sorrows, the hopes and fears of all school members and of all faith groups in the school community, so as to treat them with the dignity they deserve.

The idea of acting justly had suggestions built around the ideas of

- Finding ways in which students of all faiths engage with local community projects
- Inviting faith-based charities to share their commitment to creating a better world

The idea of walking humbly included

- Recognising special feast days of other religions
- Highlighting historical Christian figures who engaged with people of other faiths

All of the above are possible ideas or strategies designed to improve the cohesion of all students within a Catholic educational setting and if present would reinforce the

assumptions that a college with a diverse faith population can still be distinctly Catholic.

## **2.8 Summary**

From this literature review I have been able to briefly outline the changing outlook of the Church since Vatican II especially in respect of its' mission to the poor of all denominations, identified definitions of Catholic distinctiveness and recognised the tensions for Catholic school leaders in maintaining this distinctiveness with low numbers of Catholic students.

"It is precisely in the Gospel of Christ... that the Catholic school finds its definition as it comes to terms with the cultural conditions of the times"  
(Congregation of Catholic Education 1997:9)

## **Chapter 3: Methodology**

### **3.1 Introduction**

The aim of this dissertation is to establish whether in the post Vatican II era is it still possible to maintain the distinctiveness of a Catholic Sixth Form College despite increasing numbers of students of other denominations and faiths.

My literature review has surveyed the changing perception of the Catholic Church of itself throughout the time of the second Vatican Council to the present day identifying its sacramental perspective and continual service to the poor. The review has critically evaluated how this outward view of the Church with its shared sense of the faithful journeying together has endeavoured to balance the idea of a rich heritage of Catholic distinctiveness in its educational mission with a need for a more open and inclusive acceptance of other faiths and religions within the school and college setting.

Within my fieldwork, using the three themes of Catholic distinctiveness, openness to other faiths and inclusivity of all students within a Catholic Sixth Form, I intend to investigate current practices and strategies used by principals within the case study establishment as well as contrasting them with those of another Catholic Sixth Form. From the qualitative analysis of evidence gained from these interviews I wish to map the responses to a quantitative analysis of the views and opinions of a sample of students from the case study establishment and by comparison of answers reflect on how successful the college is at maintaining its Catholic distinctiveness with its current level of Catholic population and suggest recommendations that can help maintain and develop its distinctiveness further.

In this chapter therefore, a brief outline of the research methods available and the reasons for the selection of the chosen methods are given. The advantages and disadvantages of these research tools and the efforts made to mitigate their weaknesses will then be acknowledged. Finally an explanation for the sample taken, a discussion of the ethical implications of the study will be made before a more detailed analysis of the questions used and the rationale for them.

### **3.2 Choosing the Research Methodology**

In addition to the literature review, research methods considered included those suggested by Bell (2010: 6-22); the case study approach, action research, experimental research, ethnographical research, and surveys both qualitative and quantitative. As Bell advises

"The initial question is not 'Which methodology?' but 'What do I need to know and why?'" (Bell 2010:117)

With regard to the overall aims of the dissertation the most appropriate techniques must fit within the timespan available and take into account the need to establish the Catholic distinctiveness of the college as perceived by the senior leadership team as well as that experienced by the student population. A case study approach would not only be unsuitable for this aspect of a college's characteristic since Catholic distinctiveness is not an "event" but it would also necessarily involve a greater period of time than is currently available. Likewise, action research and experimental research are time limiting and may not allow access to the breadth of area for investigation that this thesis demands.

A survey methodology is however more time efficient and apposite. Both the quantitative survey and qualitative interview survey are an effective way of generating the type and quantity of data needed in this dissertation to provide valuable insight into the strategies employed to maintain the Catholic distinctiveness in a Sixth Form College setting highlighted in the literature review and to elicit the experiences and perceptions of the students themselves.

The premise of my methodological approach to use both quantitative and qualitative data to determine the extent of corroboration strategy and practice is very well supported,

“Methodological pluralism rather than affinity to a single paradigm is the order of the day ... as this enables errors in single approaches to be identified and rectified. It also enables meanings in data to be probed, corroboration and triangulation to be practised, rich(er) data to be gathered, and new modes of thinking to emerge where paradoxes between two individual data sources are found” (Johnson et al., 2007: 115-116)

Cohen et al (2010:333), whilst conscious of the limitations of a mixed-method approach as expressed by others, remains a strong advocate of the “triangulation” process believing

“The advantages of the mixed-method approach in social research are manifold ... whereas the single observation in fields such as medicine, chemistry and physics normally yields sufficient and unambiguous information on selected phenomena, it provides only a limited view of the complexity of human behaviour and of situations in which human beings interact ...further, the more the methods contrast with each other, the greater the researcher’s confidence” Cohen et al (2010:332-333)

With this in mind I intend to use the qualitative approach for the interviewing of the college principals and a quantitative approach as my research tool for the surveying of a section of the student body.

### 3.3 Research Instruments

Using a triangulation approach with both quantitative and qualitative methods I believe that these will be able to adequately challenge the initial hypothesis of the investigation that it is possible to maintain the distinctiveness of a Catholic Sixth Form College despite increasing numbers of students of other denominations and faiths. This chimes with the thoughts of Lydon

It could be argued, however, that there is a false dichotomy between the apparent objectivity implicit in quantitative research as opposed to the subjectivity claimed to be inherent in qualitative research. Richard Pring argues persuasively that the suggested polarity between quantitative and qualitative research in terms of objective findings is mistaken. (Lydon 2015:5)

in that both qualitative and quantitative approaches in educational research are equally important.

### 3.4 Qualitative Interview Method

As Patton puts it

“The purpose of interviewing is to find out what is in and on someone else’s mind ... to find out from them those things we cannot directly observe.”  
(Patton 1991:279)

Through the interviewing of the college principals I wish to be able to determine from their standpoint

- what do they see as the elements of a distinctively Catholic Sixth Form College
- what are the advantages and or disadvantages to a Catholic college with a low Catholic student population
- what are their perceived challenges both presently and in the future to a Sixth Form’s Catholic identity concomitant with a low Catholic student population

- what strategies currently, and might in the future be used to maintain the Catholic identity of the College

Cohen et al (2010:670-674) write extensively about the broad range of possible styles of interviews from the open freestyle interview to that consisting of a more structured approach. Patton (1991:280-287) puts forward similar ideas,

There are three basic approaches to collecting qualitative data through open-ended interviews. The three approaches involve different types of preparation, conceptualization and instrumentation. Each approach has strengths and weaknesses and each serves a somewhat different purpose. The three choices are these:

- (1) the informal conversational interview,
- (2) the general interview guide approach, and
- (3) the standardised open-ended interview. (Patton 1991:280)

Of those suggested by Patton the standardised open-ended interview would be most appropriate for this dissertation in that

- it has the advantage of allowing direct contrast to be made between a series of interviews making interpretation easier,
- fits in well with the limited time available with the principals of approximately thirty minutes, and
- it is highly focussed.

The weakness of such an approach as Patton (1991:286) points out is that it does not allow the interviewer to pursue in depth any unanticipated topics. Within the constraints of this thesis I feel this is not a significant problem and the open-endedness aspect inferred in some of the questions will allow the interviewees to include any pertinent trail of ideas as well as at the same time removing any unintended bias to the questions. The small number of interview surveys conducted by the same person also alleviates some of the concerns of this method raised by Cohen et al. (2010:451)

relating to the variation in the characteristics of the interviewer, the rapport established and the overall conduct of the interview.

### **3.5 Candidate Selection**

The natural choice in order to meet the aims of the dissertation and gain an insight into the senior leadership perspective into the perceived challenges that a low Catholic school population may have on the Catholic Distinctiveness of a Sixth Form College were the two most senior leaders at the College, the Principal and Deputy Principal. Whilst it was anticipated that they would supply similar answers to the questions posed I was interested in how those answers would be expressed and whether they would reveal a contrasting, contradictory or complimentary picture of the issues raised.

I also had the opportunity to interview the principal of another Catholic Sixth Form College which had a higher Catholic student population. With this interview I was hoping to see if the difference in Catholic population created a difference in attitude or strategy in relation to Catholic Distinctiveness between the two colleges or indeed perhaps allow identification of similarities which may have a universal applicability.

### **3.6 Interview Questions and their Rationale**

As described previously, after careful consideration of the literature available a standardised open-ended interview format was decided upon. Bell referring to this format as a “guided or focussed interview” recognised it as an excellent way to ensure that all key topics are covered but also “the respondent is allowed a considerable degree of latitude within the framework” Bell 2010:165) I felt this was important as it allowed the possibility for a fuller, more in depth insight to be recorded and due to the



responses originating from a common question, would also allow comparison between the interviewees.

After piloting these questions with peers not involved in the interviews it was recommended to reduce the questions down to seven with a slight rewording to avoid the duplication of themes across the questions asked.

*Question 1 How do you feel that XX College shows itself to be a distinctively Catholic Sixth form college?*

This question was chosen to allow the interviewee to articulate their own definition of what Catholic distinctiveness was, giving examples of it evident within their college. It was also asked in order to compare their answers with those suggested from literature especially by the Bishops Conference of England and Wales (1996b:3 and 2014a:3) and Stock (2005:6)

*Question 2 What do you see as the challenges faced by XX to maintain its distinctive Catholic nature with its current Catholic population?*

This open question was designed to verbalise just how the level of Catholic population in their college impacts the Catholic distinctiveness as articulated earlier, or not! This latter possibility was emphasised within the interview.

*Question 3 What specific management strategies will allow XX to meet the challenges posed by its current Catholic population?*

As a follow up question to question 2 this allowed the interview to relate the perceived threat or otherwise to specific management strategies, again an opportunity to identify

common themes across interviews that could form part of the recommendations or conclusions

*Question 4 To what extent do you feel that students are aware of the Catholic distinctiveness of the college?*

This question was set to directly link the responses of the principals to the experiences of the pupils, to compare the intended consequences of management strategies with the actual effect as perceived by the students.

*Question 5 In what ways do you feel the presence of students of other faiths influence the Catholic distinctiveness of the college?*

This question allows the idea of possible tensions between faiths in Catholic schools and colleges expressed by Barnes (1996:237) to be explored and developed. A similar aspect to this question is also incorporated into the student survey to compare and contrast the experiences of senior leadership with those of the student body.

*Question 6 How inclusive do you feel the college is to students of other faiths?*

Following on from question 5 and taking the themes raised in the literature review further, this question is designed to seek resolution to the challenge of Sullivan (2000:30) in evaluating how well the college succeeds in making students feel part of the college community. This important theme is expanded upon in the student survey.

*Question 7 In relation to changing Catholic college population what challenges does the future hold?*

This final question is intended to allow the subject to reflect on how anticipated changes in Catholic populations may impact the college in the future.

### 3.7 Quantitative Questionnaire Method

The questionnaire is a widely used and useful instrument for collecting survey information, providing structured, often numerical data, being able to be administered without the presence of the researcher, and often being comparatively straightforward to analyse. (Wilson and McLean 1994) in (Cohen 2007:317)

The use of a quantitative questionnaire for the analysis of the views and opinions of the student body has many attractions and advantages as listed by Cohen et al. (2010:426) quoting Morrison (1993: 38-40). Those most appropriate to my study include

- Is economical and efficient
- Generates numerical data
- Provides descriptive, inferential and explanatory information
- Manipulates key factors to derive frequencies
- Gathers standardised information
- Ascertains correlations
- Presents material uncluttered by specific contextual factors
- Supports or refutes hypotheses about the target population
- Gathers data that can be analysed statistically

There are inherent dangers in this method of research highlighted by many authors;

“These attractions have to be counter-balanced by the time taken to develop, pilot and refine the questionnaire” (Cohen et al. 2007:317)

“It is harder to produce really good questionnaires than might be imagined. They are fiendishly difficult to design...” (Bell 2010:140)

“For the questions we ask, the possible misunderstandings they provoke in the respondent, the choice or phrasing of the answers and the recording procedures all have influences on the final result ...” (Oppenheimer 1992:121)

Overall the major weaknesses relate to the thought and care put into the preparation; consideration of the audience, sampling technique as well as the generation of the questions in order to meet the purpose of the study.

It must also be recognised that the use of the questionnaire method in the context of this thesis has other inherent problems. Firstly, incorporating the type of responses such as a Likert scale can be limiting and restricts the feedback from the respondent, although to account for this a selection of more open ended comment boxes were also incorporated.

Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, this style of survey prevents an in-depth response from all those questioned. This disadvantage is I believe offset by the greater number and wider extent of the questions that was able to be posed. It should also be noted that those questions principally intended to be used to establish the extent of corroboration between the responses of the qualitative and quantitative surveys would not necessarily require such an in-depth answer anyway.

Despite the limitations acknowledged, therefore, the use of a carefully prepared questionnaire survey will be a valuable asset, providing essential information to meet the aims and objectives of the dissertation.

### **3.8 Questionnaire Rationale**

With the literature in mind, the final design of the questionnaire, consisted of one initial closed classification question followed by three sets of questions. Each set of questions consisted of six Likert rating scale questions followed by one additional open questions. The use of the Likert scale variation ranging from “strongly agree”, “agree” to “disagree” and “strongly disagree” allowed for a sense for a depth of feeling in the responses yet still facilitating a relatively easy quantitative analysis of results. The open-ended questions were designed to give respondents the opportunity to list their experiences and contribute ideas or suggestions to the issues posed in the earlier questions.

Piloting of this questionnaire on a small sample of students not involved in the final sample showed that questions were well understood and quickly answered although after peer review it was felt to reduce the original five point Likert scale to a four point scale removing the “neither agree or disagree” option to encourage students to give each question a little more thought and make a proactive decision rather than a neutral indecisive response. The same scale was used throughout the survey so as to be clear, consistent and reduce ambiguity.

The students chosen for the questionnaire were all lower sixth students who had just completed their first year at the Sixth Form College. They were chosen randomly set by set from one subject area of the college. Whilst the questionnaire was originally designed to be distributed via an on line survey website the availability of a large number of students within subject lessons and the efficiency of the questionnaire has meant it was able to be voluntarily completed within lesson time. This I believe

achieved a far higher response rate than would have otherwise been possible improving reliability of responses and by statistical means confirming the validity of the survey, so making it fit for purpose.

Each of the questionnaires in this survey was intended to link directly back to themes encountered in the literature review. The complete questionnaire is included in Appendix 2.

### Question 1

This question was included at the start of the questionnaire to assist respondents in understanding the context of the investigation but also to allow statistical comparison of the religious profile of the sample with that of the published profile for both the whole college as well as the subject area. In addition it would enable some important analysis of variations in response trend between faith groups.

### Questions 2-6 &18

These questions focussed on the aspects of a distinctively Catholic school as identified by Stock (2005) and were designed to evaluate how well in this regard the college could be judged as successful. These questions were also anticipated to be the examples of good practice mentions in interview by the principals.

#### Questions 9-13, 19&20

These questions flowed from the issues and ideas developed by the Bishops Conference of England and Wales (2008) of integral human development and how this can be expressed in Catholic schools with children of other faiths.

#### Questions 8, 11, 13-15,17, 21&22

Each of these questions were intended to directly duplicate, augment or supplement the questions posed to principals as part of their interview. It allows the opportunity to identify reinforcement or contradiction of the opinions of the principals.

The open nature of questions 15 and 21 was also an opportunity for students to express their own ideas and views.

#### Questions 7 & 19

These two questions, one a slight variation on the other, were both included to gain an insight into whether the Catholic nature of the college held any importance for the sampled sixth form students.

### 3.9 Ethical Considerations

The overall ethics of undertaking any type of educational or social research is underpinned by the aim to not harm either mentally, physically or socially the participants under investigation. Anonymity and confidentiality are thought to be essential requirements for this to happen.

“The essence of anonymity is that information provided by participants should in no way reveal their identity... confidentiality: not disclosing information from a participant in any way that might identify that individual or that might enable the individual to be traced. It can also mean not discussing that individual with anyone else” (Cohen et al 2011:178)

To this end my proposed research method, summarised in a completed ethical application form, was submitted to my supervisor and subsequently approved by the university ethics committee.

For the interview with the college principals each was given in advance of the interview a participant information sheet giving an outline of the dissertation. Each was asked for their informed consent at the start of the interview by signing a research participation pro forma making it clear that they were free to withdraw from the interview at any time. The anonymity and confidentiality of their replies was promised. Throughout this dissertation the principals will be referred to simply as Principal A, Principal B and Principal C the letters unrelated to name or position within college.

For the student questionnaire written permission was first sought from the principal of the college to allow a student survey to take place. Summaries of the research area and issues to be investigated were included on the front sheet as well as a promise of anonymity. They were encouraged to be as honest as possible but also assured that



their responses would only be used for the purposes of this survey and not fed back to any other member of college staff. Completion of some or all of the questionnaire was not compulsory and no personal data other than their declared religion was taken. The questionnaires were collected, rearranged into a random order and then numbered only for the purposes of collation of data within a spreadsheet. It is now impossible to relate even one data set of the compiled survey back to an individual student.

### **3.10 Summary**

In this chapter I have been able to carefully choose a survey methodology which will allow me to establish the extent to which Catholic distinctiveness can be maintained in a Sixth Form College with low Catholic populations. I have identified the type of methods which will prove most appropriate for this style of research within the given time frames. I have studied both the advantages and disadvantages of both the quantitative and qualitative methods and where possible tried to mitigate the weakness of the methods. I have devised and refined the questions posed to ensure that the relevant themes derived from the literature survey form the basis of the investigation and also ensured an ethical approach to the study. In the next chapter I will analyse the results, involving the categorisation of the results, comparison of the responses and the combining and interpreting of evidence from both methods.

## **Chapter 4: Analysis and Interpretation**

### **4.1 Introduction**

The purpose of this study is to ascertain whether it is possible to maintain a Catholic distinctiveness within a Sixth Form College despite a low Catholic population. The proposed survey methodology consisted of a series of interviews with the principal and deputy principal of one Sixth form College and the principal of one other as well as a questionnaire survey of students from one of the Sixth Form Colleges. I now wish to present the empirical evidence from these surveys, classified appropriately before comparing the data from both methods and interpreting the results in order to answer the following research questions:

- What are the challenges for Catholic college leaders to maintain the distinctively Catholic nature of the college with the current faith population?
- What management strategies can be employed to meet the challenge of the current faith population?
- To what extent do the presence of students of other faiths affect the college and how inclusive is the college to them?
- What current strategies could be adapted or new strategies introduced in the future?

### **4.2 Conducting the Interviews**

Each separate interview lasted about 30 minutes and standardisation was ensured with the seven identical questions posed. No additional questions or clarifications were

needed and each interviewee was free to interpret and respond to each question as they wished. Each key element of reply was recorded longhand in a prepared booklet with one A4 page allocated to each question.

### **4.3 Classification of Interview Questions**

As a result of the above procedure, I intend to present the results of the interviews classified by question summarising any similarities between principals and highlighting unique responses separately.

*Question 1 How do you feel that XX College shows itself to be a distinctively Catholic Sixth Form College?*

Principal A focussed on key ideas of compassion, reverence and respect for the individual. Whilst they admitted that these may not be unique to a Catholic college it is the principles underlying the idea of reverence that does make the Catholic college stand out. By recognising that we are all made in the image of God the reverence is shown in the way we treat people. They went on to explain that the presence of Christ in the midst of the college, recognising that he is Lord affects the behaviour of the senior leadership team.

Principal B again emphasised the treatment of individuals as a crucial part of the distinctiveness, with the depth of care genuinely deep-rooted in the heart of people, more than might be expected in another institution. Principal B went on to list many of the practical and visible symbols of the Catholic college; the 4C group<sup>4</sup>; assemblies; compulsory RE lessons, shared tutorials. In addition the principal mentioned the

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<sup>4</sup> College Charity, Campaigns and Community Student Group

mission statement as a sign of the distinctiveness of the college with the theme of Gospel values “threaded through the policies” to help for example the underprivileged. In agreement with Principal A encouraging respect was cited as being important allowing all students to reach their full potential which ultimately underpins academic success. The reason behind the many enrichment activities offered by the college was thought by Principal B to be important, and the collaborative learning process encouraged by the senior leadership team was also felt to reinforce the community spirit of the college.

Principal C felt that their college showed itself to be distinctly Catholic by its ability to show that it is “about God at work” This idea underpins all that the college is about. A college devoted to God making the invisible grace visible. God was at work through the staff and students both Catholics and those of other faiths. The recognition of God at work Principal C felt percolated down from the senior leadership group to all within the college. This in turn set the priorities for the college including the investment in dedicated, qualified and experienced RE teaching staff and chaplaincy team, through the RE programme of study, which is inclusive to all, allowing all to contribute. Principal C was equally firm that “Listening enables dialogue” and as expressed by Pope Francis this leads to an understanding which leads to respect for differences. The principal was also emphatic that this is not to tolerate others but reverence and respect them, again this echoes ideas expressed by the other interviewees. This reverence and respect is also reflected in the investment in the pastoral systems of the college which are intended to deliver faith in action. Principal C concluded by also listing some of the charitable commitments the college has made to homeless organisations, toy appeals and links with colleges in Africa.

*Question 2 What do you see as the challenges faced by XX to maintain its distinctive Catholic nature with its current Catholic population?*

Principal A did see a low Catholic population as a challenge. They felt that a 10% increase would make a difference. Current political changes, the change to academy status of schools and colleges and the changing economic climate all present potential problems for the college. Principal A noted that there was essentially a fixed Catholic population of 600-700 within the area but felt that it was possible to draw in more Catholic students. That, however, could damage other Catholic institutions in the wider area and that it is in the interests of Catholic education in the long term to work together and support each other.

Principal B questioned whether there was in fact any challenges. They knew of Catholic schools with nearly 100% Muslim populations. The principal felt that the challenge could well be political or lay in other people's perceptions; asking from the outside "How can it be Catholic?" They continued that the answer is to reverse the question "How can it not be Catholic?" if the school or college never bars anyone why should it not be open to students of other faiths as well as Catholics. Principal B felt that the fundamental belief and viewpoint of the leaders drives the intentions behind the college. Principal B also suggested that a low Catholic population may have superficial challenges in maintaining the importance and profile of RE lessons for example but these are easily counterbalanced by the richness of the background of students and their variety of philosophies.

Principal C also doubted whether any substantial challenge existed. They questioned whether we were deluding ourselves by placing great importance on the percentage figures of Catholics within a college. The principal had a firm personal conviction that *the* challenge was to be confident in the Catholic faith. Recognising that the college becomes Church, meeting people of whatever faith where they were, to do God's work and to see God in their lives. The principal related this back to the history of the founders of the college. They felt that the challenge was not to debate how the faith is presented but to explain it confidently; maintaining for example the 7 Masses at the start of each academic year, explaining the Mass through RE and tutorials, having a Mass at Christmas and throughout the year experiencing God's work through others. This Principal C felt would contrast with a "Govian" world in which the focus was purely on the academic leading to jobs and careers.

*Question 3 What specific management strategies will allow XX to meet the challenges posed by its current Catholic population?*

Principal A responded to this question relating it back to the tensions involved with a limited Catholic population within an area. Firstly, they felt that as a college we should be "Holding the door open to Catholics" especially those with problems or unusual circumstances. Secondly, good links should be fostered with local Catholic partner schools, even including those outside of traditional boundaries as well as joint Catholic/Anglican schools. Thirdly Sixth Form Colleges should be prepared to support Catholic schools in their own recruitment becoming perhaps involved in primary school visits.

Principal B, in answer to this question, suggested that in one sense no specific strategy relating directly to a change in the admissions policy was necessary. Strategies which could be useful related essentially to emphasising the heritage traditions and mission of the college left by the founders especially relating to the training and induction of new staff. The celebration of founder's day for example or emphasising the mission and ethos of the college was felt to be far more effective.

Principal C, in accord with the sentiments of Principal A felt that strategies involving even closer working with other Catholic schools was important making the college a "Sixth Form for Catholics". Other suggestions referred back to points made in question 1 in that the management strategies should be those which continued to place importance in the investment on RE, chaplaincy at the heart of the college. Continuing to invest in the pastoral support, especially for young people in need so as to fulfil the college mission to develop the whole person intellectually, socially and spiritually. The role of the learner voice was also raised as a strategy to allow discussion and exploration of the big issues in dialogue with students of other faiths.

*Question 4 To what extent do you feel that students are aware of the Catholic distinctiveness of the college?*

There was a unanimous opinion that all students of the respective colleges felt the Catholic distinctiveness.

Principal A was less certain that they all were aware of the deeper Christ in their midst feeling that that may depend upon their personal faith although the principal thought they would at least "sense something" a "special feeling".

Principal B agreed that the RE lessons and physical signs and symbols about the college would ensure they students knew that the college was Catholic but wondered if they were aware of the “underlying distinctiveness”.

Principal C was confident that with, for example, the image of a student “crucified” each year at Easter, all students would also be able to articulate ways in which the college was distinctly Catholic, but not necessarily using a Catholic context such as “awe and wonder”.

*Question 5 In what ways do you feel the presence of students of other faiths influence the Catholic distinctiveness of the college?*

All the principals agreed that the students of other faiths had a positive effect on the Catholic distinctiveness of their colleges.

Principal A felt that the presence of other Christians helped Catholics to be more open about Catholicism and even in the debates about the existence of God the presence of Muslim students greatly helped the “theists’ corner”. It allowed others to see Roman Catholics not as medieval or old fashioned but modern and capable of “fun”. The principal did warn however of a real danger of misunderstanding of the equality of religions; leading Catholics to not adhere as closely to their faith as they should, believing instead that there are “many ways up the mountain” or even to follow no road. The road needs to be internally consistent.

Principal B also recognised that the presence of students of other faiths helped students reflect on their own beliefs and for the majority who had been to Catholic



schools this will help them confirm their own belief. In turn this allows Roman Catholic students to demonstrate the Gospel values to those of other faiths, to show peace and love.

Principal C supported the idea that a “Rainbow College” is what our faith is all about; support, care and recognition of people of all faiths. The principal referred to biblical passages to support this view especially the story of the Tower of Babel as a warning about the pride of Man and implying the dangers of isolation that any faith could cause. The principal believed that the bringing together of people of different faiths, stimulates conversations about faith, which via a more unified language brings them all closer to God. The principal then gave examples of opportunities by which students of all faiths or none were allowed to reflect in the context of their own person. These included looking in a mirror and drawing what you saw, or relating a station of the cross to times when they felt low. “Pray as you can” is how the full time chaplain puts it.

*Question 6 How inclusive do you feel the college is to students of other faiths?*

This question was another answered with the unanimous opinion that the colleges were fully inclusive of students of other faiths.

Principal A added that they felt the college to be very open, welcoming and affirming. There was a clear emphasis on Christian worship, a Christian chapel incorporated into the college with Muslim students allowed to pray on site. It was felt however, especially in light of the government “Prevent” strategy, that it is not in the interests of Muslim students to have an isolated or dedicated prayer space.

Principal B as well as also mentioning the practice of prayer of other religions in the college highlighted assemblies and activities during one world week as opportunities to celebrate different faiths. Respect for those students were also demonstrated on a more practical level with understanding of special food requirements especially during times of fasting.

Principal C also mentioned the RE and chaplaincy rooms available to Muslim students as well as the inclusive RE programme and opportunities for charity work.

*Question 7 In relation to changing Catholic college population what challenges does the future hold?*

This questions allowed each principal to assess the future from three slightly different perspectives.

Principal A, reflecting on the variation in Catholic population trends within the local recruitment area, was optimistic. Historically, an influx of Roman Catholic Poles and Ukrainians have increased numbers and currently with full Catholic primary schools the 5 – 10 year recruitment future looks bright.

Principal B saw the major challenge for the future as being one in which we maintain our values, supporting the faith of Catholics who may lack the support at home. The Principal argued that traditional ways of working with young people may not work and that we need to think of creative ways to engage them such as encouraging charity based activities to enable them to express practically their own faith. Principal B went on to specifically mention the challenge of modern life in to maintain the teachings of

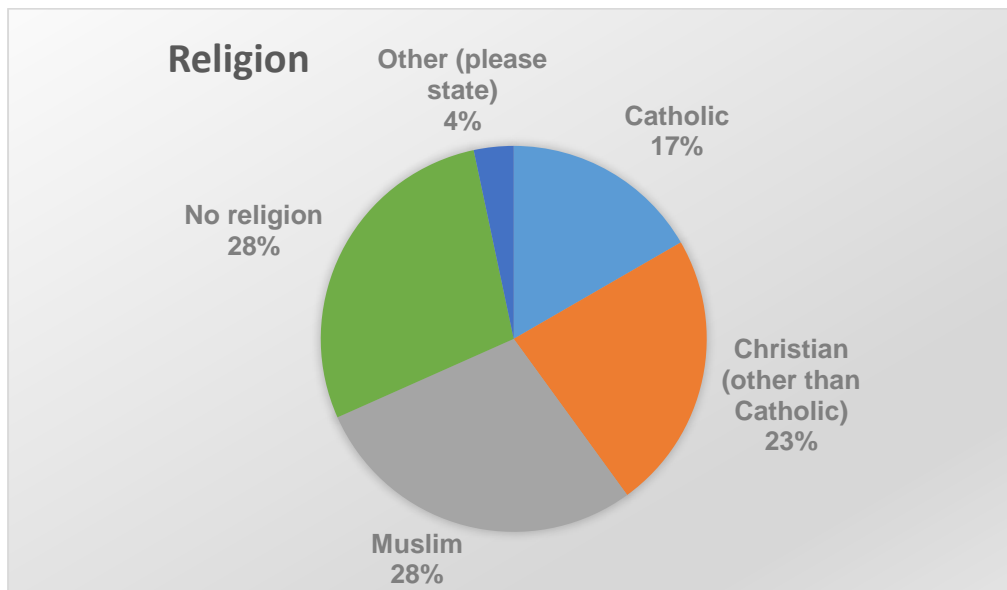
the Catholic Church despite the secular moves away. Getting the message right, not putting students off but maintaining what is right but doing it sensitively.

Principal C also identified the secular attitudes and approaches as a challenge to the future and asked what percentage do you need in a college? Principal C strongly believed that the solution is for Catholic colleges and their leaders to work even more closely together to prevent the possibility of being “picked off” one by one. It was suggested that since it was necessary to grow student numbers just to stand still there was a greater need for mutually supportive, collaborative groups, especially at Principal and Vice Principal leadership levels. In addition support for the recruitment and training for Catholic leaders of the future is also called for to maintain the distinctively Catholic leadership perspective for our Catholic colleges.

#### **4.4 Classification of Questionnaire Responses**

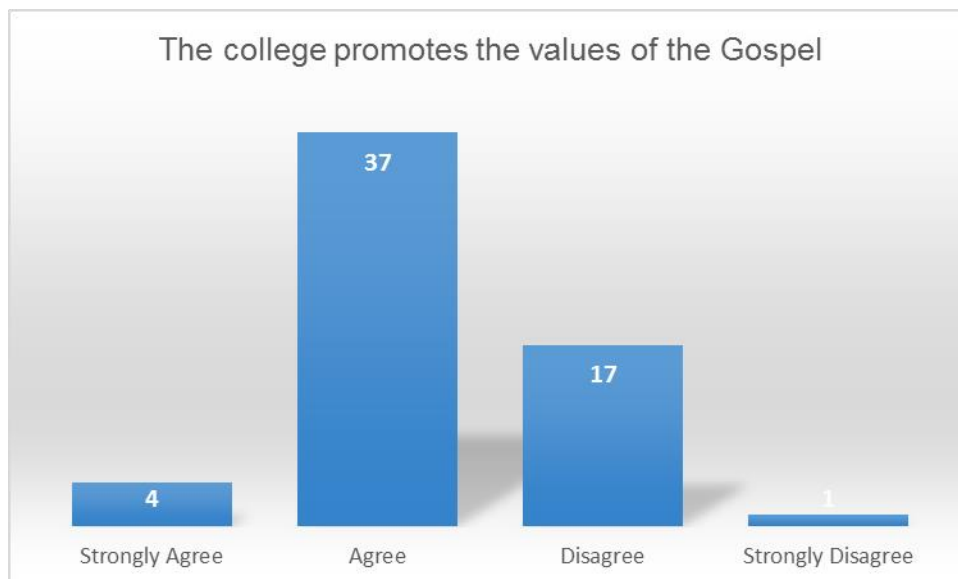
The raw data for each question is presented in percentage terms below together with a summarising comment. The department from which the students were sampled has a traditionally higher percentage of Muslim students and a lower percentage of Catholic students. The profile of the sampled students closely maps to the traditional profile for the department (See Appendix 5) and so it is with a high level of confidence that the trends in responses for the questionnaire would be typical of the college overall. Additional comment is however made where there is a noticeable variation between the responses of either the Catholic or Muslim faith groups and that of the overall trend.

## Question 1



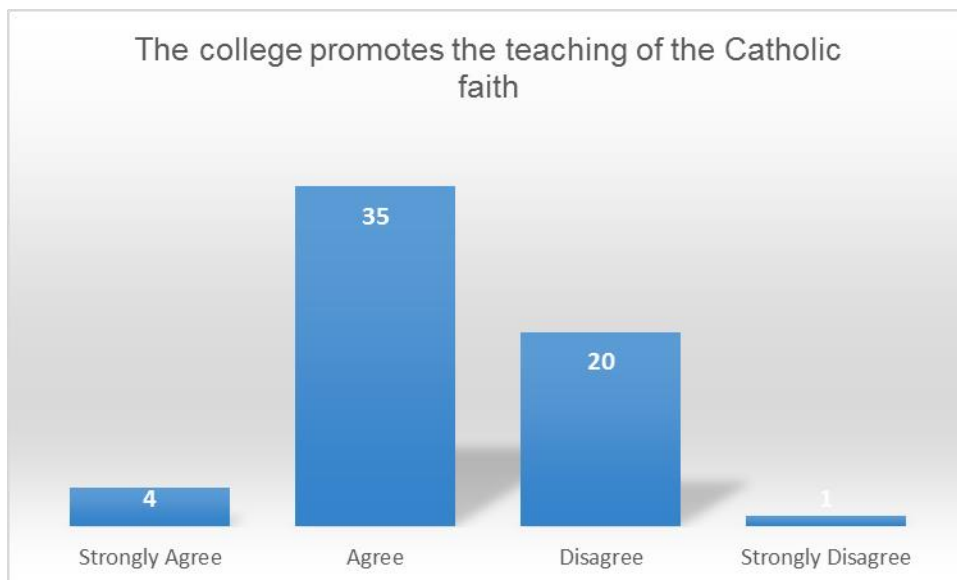
These figure closely reflect those for the department as a whole. The only significant variation is the 13% increase in those declaring “no religion” compared with the departmental data. This may reflect a genuine honesty in responses compared with enrolment documentation or an actual change in religious outlook during their first year in college.

## Question 2

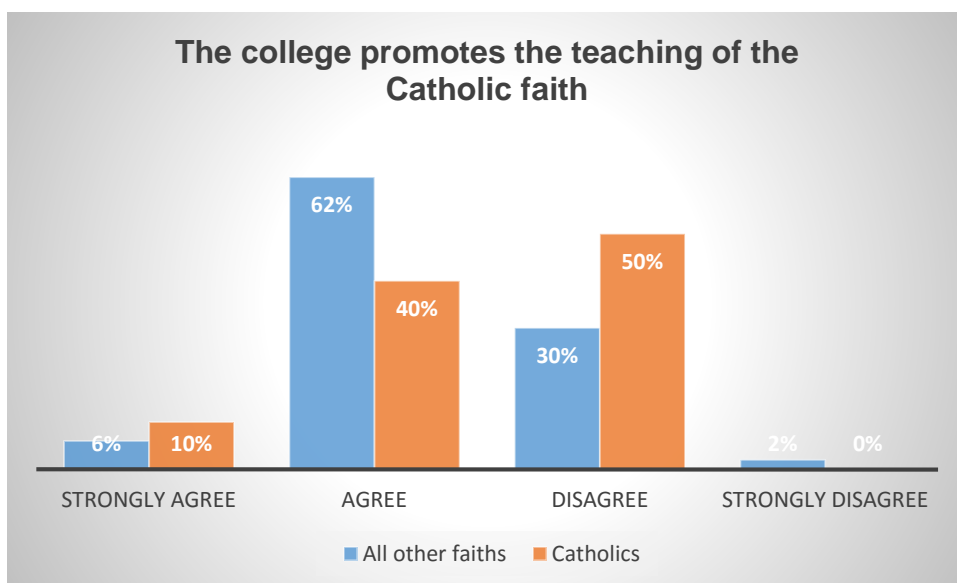


In this question 70% of students agreed or strongly agreed that the college promoted the values of the Gospel, with Catholic students feeling more strongly than others. See appendix 6

### Question 3

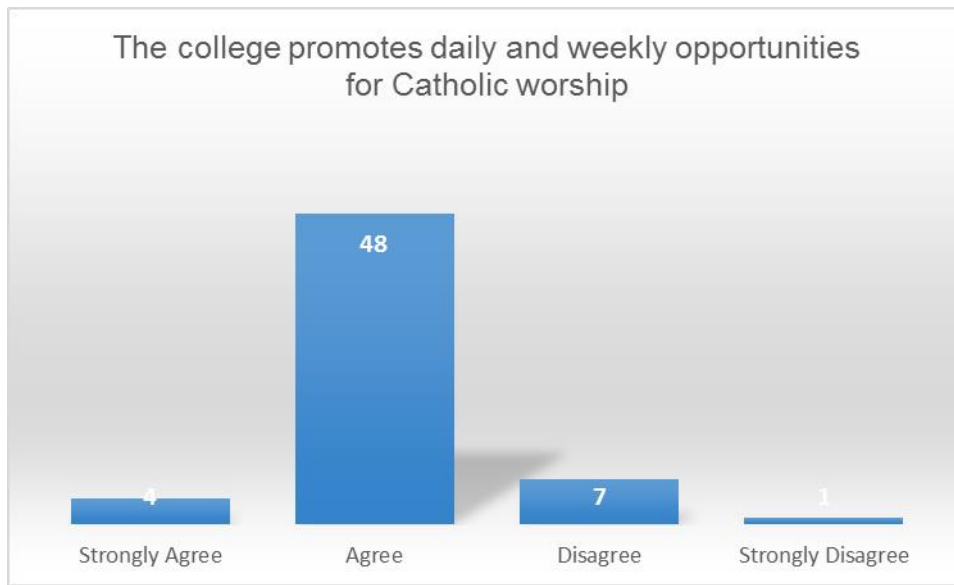


The majority of students 65% agreed to some extent that the college promoted the teaching of the Catholic faith whilst 35% disagreed or strongly disagreed.



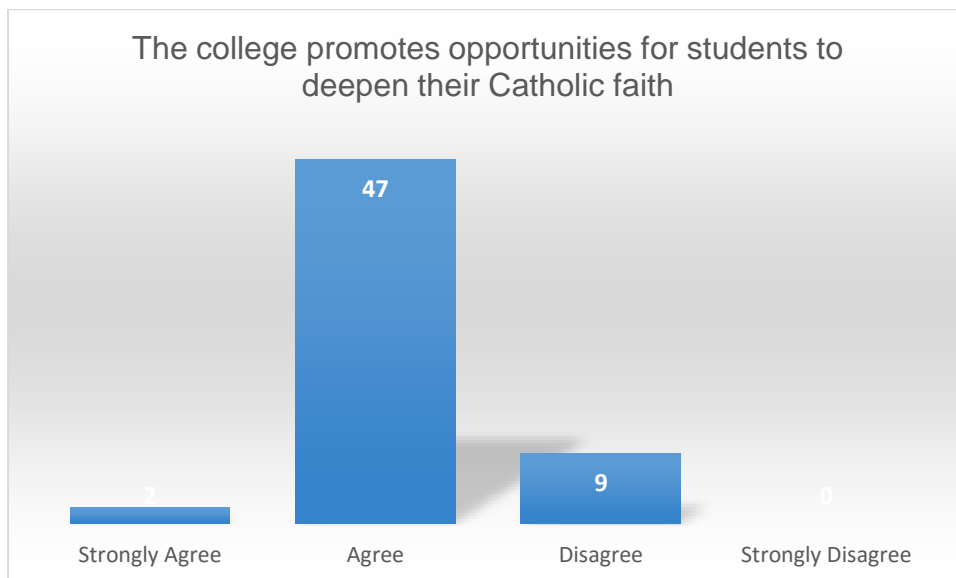
When analysed further, however there was a variation in faith group responses. The Catholic students were split with 1 strongly agreeing, 4 agreeing and 5 disagreeing that the college promoted their faith. The remaining faith groups were in greater agreement with a majority of 68% agreeing with the question and 32% disagreeing.

#### Question 4



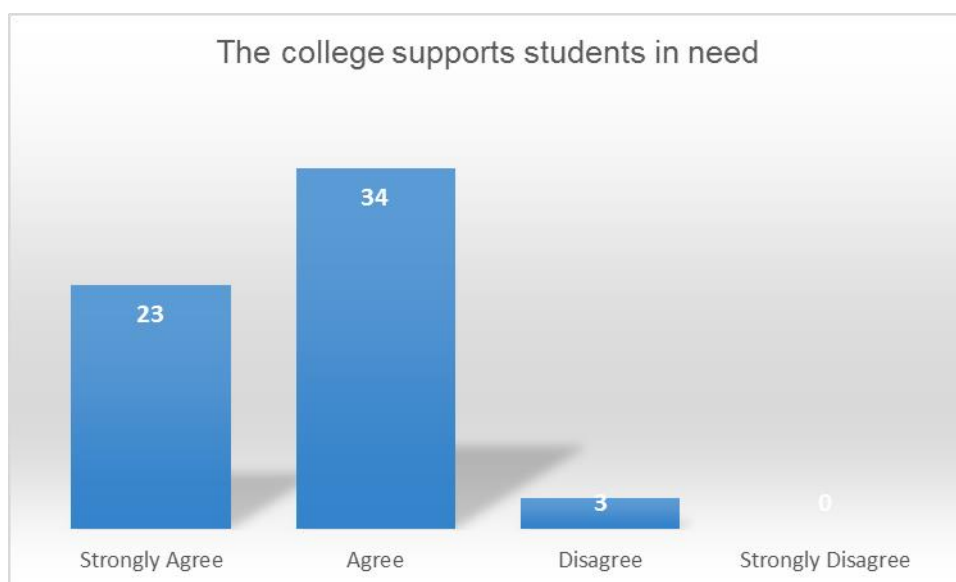
The large majority of students agreed that the college promotes daily and weekly Catholic worship opportunities; 7% strongly agreed, 80% agreed, 12% disagreed and 2% strongly disagreed.

## Question 5



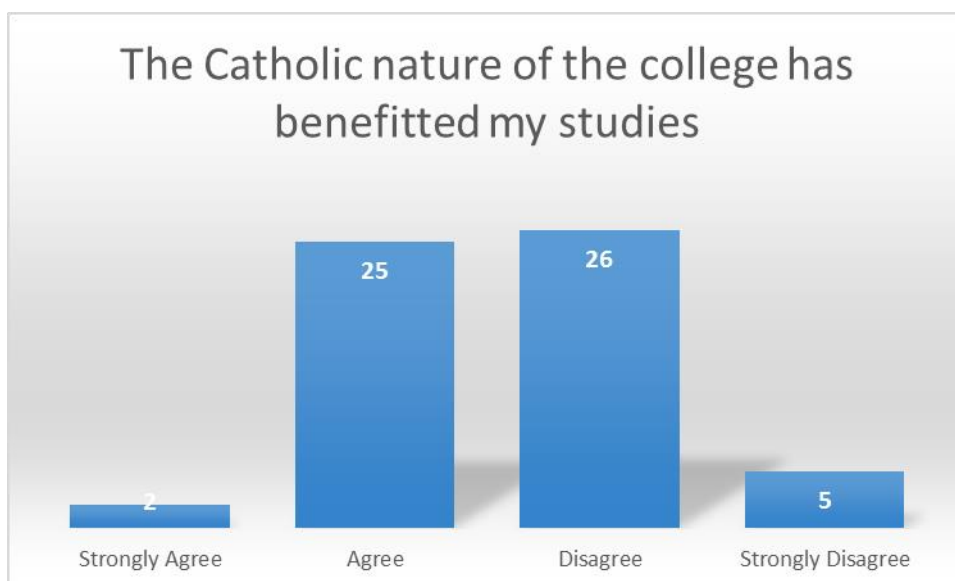
A large majority 84% of students believed the college promoted opportunities for students to deepen their Catholic faith, with 3% strongly agreeing, 81% agreeing and 16% disagreeing, none strongly.

## Question 6



A very large majority (95%) felt the college supported students in need. 38% strongly agreed (the highest percentage of strong agreement for any question in the survey) 57% agreed and 5% disagreed, none strongly.

## Question 7



This question generated mixed feelings. Overall more students disagreed than agreed that the Catholic nature of the college has benefitted their studies. 3% agreed strongly, 43% agreed, 45 % disagreed and 9% disagreed (the highest percentage of disagreement apart from the response to question 16). Both Catholic faith groups and Muslim faith groups having an almost identical profile.

## Question 8

***Please give any examples of opportunities offered by the college for students to develop their Catholic faith***

The church is always open

Open places of worship. Teachers support. Trips involving volunteering

Chapel Worship

Chapel

Chapel and RE lessons

Can go to the church. A place to pray at lunchtime



The support from the chaplain, the Lourdes trip. Prayer and worship in the chapel

Chapel services?

Using the chapel, conversations with chaplain, RE

RE lessons

You can go to the chapel for worship

RE lessons group worship

RE lessons

People can go to pray in the ##### building

RE lessons

There is the faith ambassadors where Jews Christians Muslims and Sikhs are allowed to share and develop knowledge of their faith

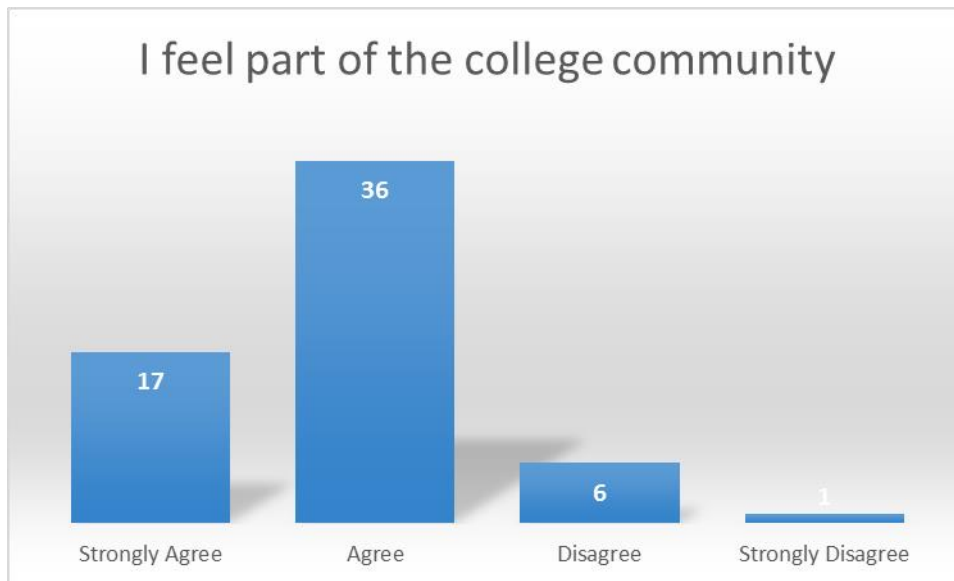
RE lessons

RE lessons. Catholic services in the choir

The chapel is open for everyone and there are speakers there on Tuesday

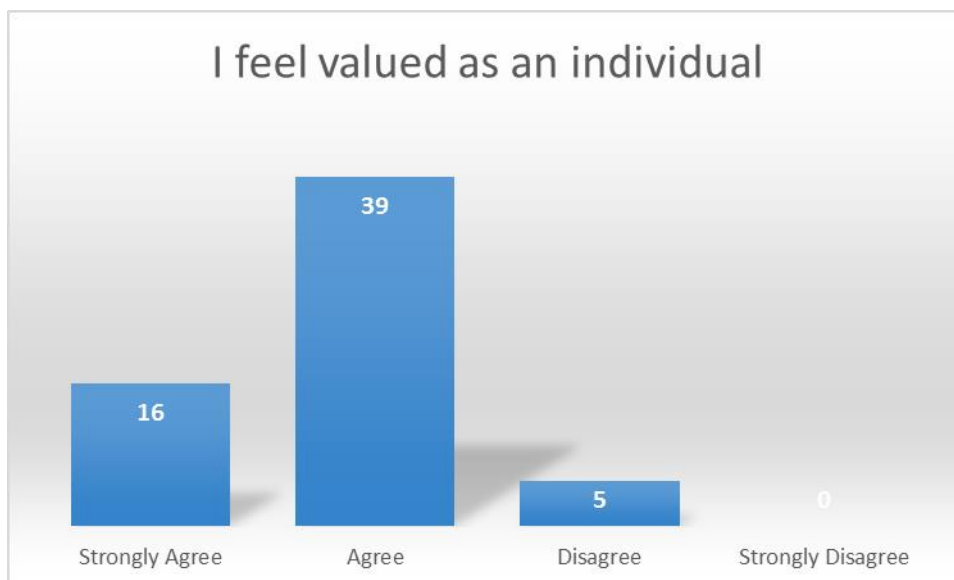
The chapel, trip to France

## Question 9



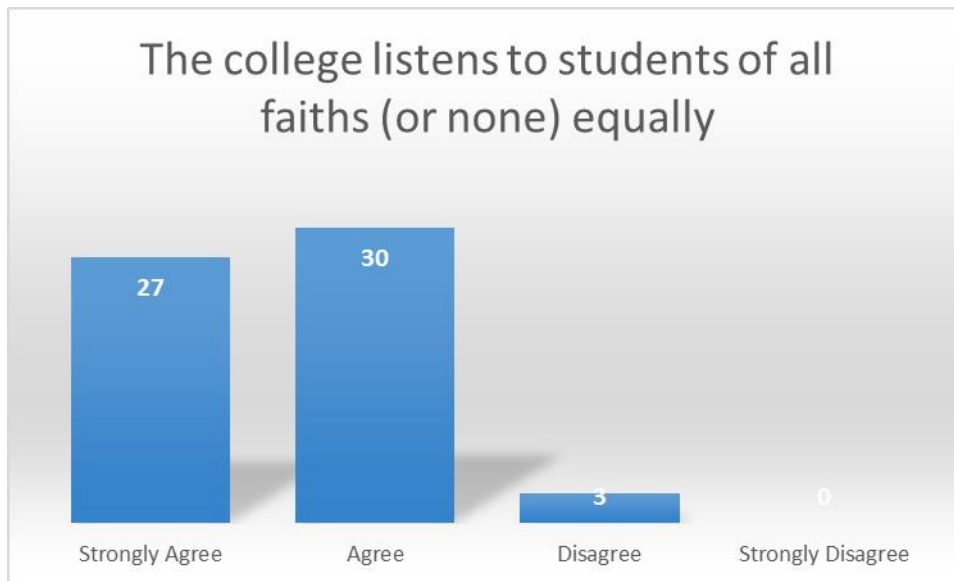
With 88% the majority of students agreed to some extent that they felt part of the college community, with 28% agreeing strongly, 60% agreeing, 10% disagreeing and 2% disagreeing strongly.

## Question 10



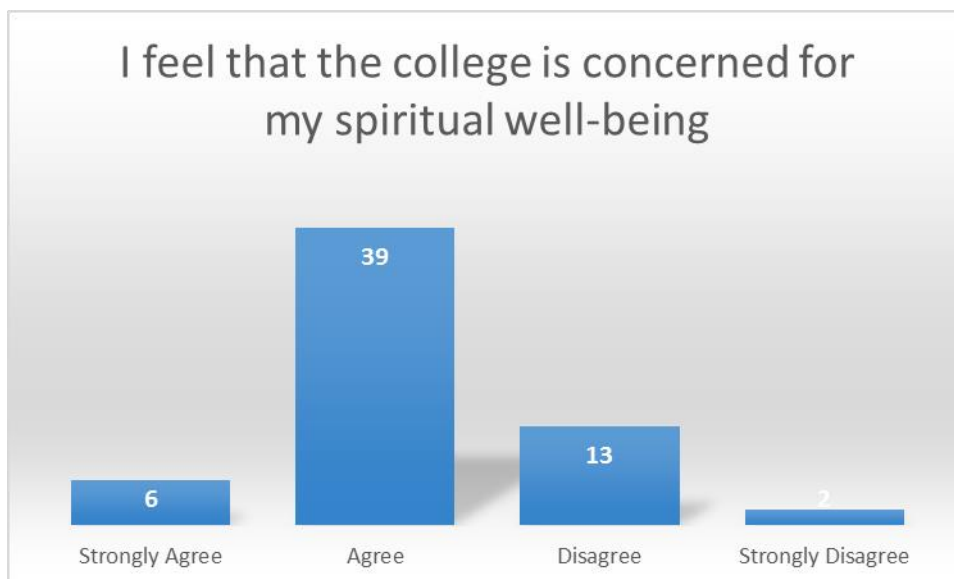
A large majority of the students felt valued as individuals, with 27% agreeing strongly, 65% agreeing, 8% disagreeing none strongly.

## Question 11



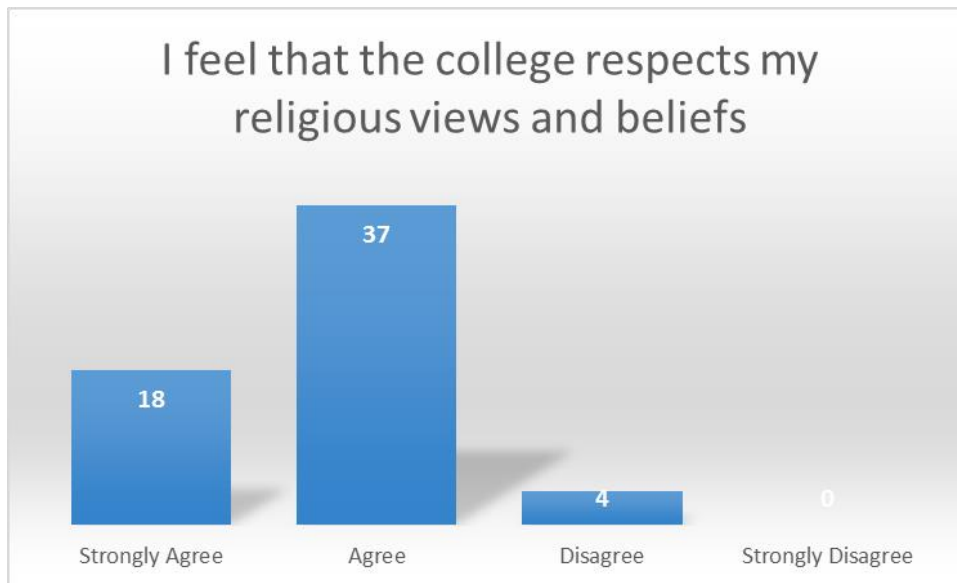
A large majority of students felt the college listens to students of all faiths, 45% agreeing strongly, 50% agreeing, 5% disagreeing, none strongly.

## Question 12



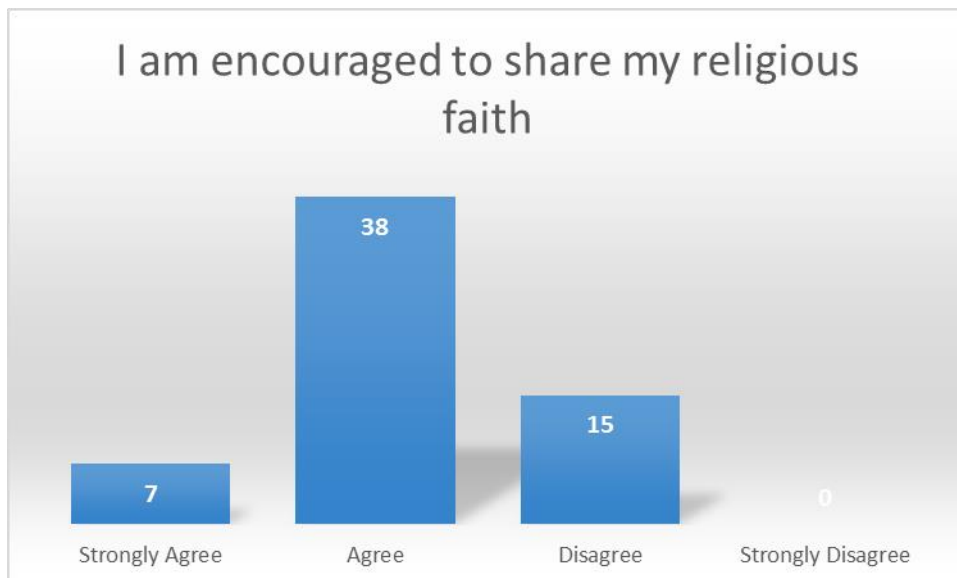
With 75% the majority of students agreed to some extent that their spiritual well-being was a concern for the college, with 10% agreeing strongly, 65% agreeing, 22% disagreeing and 3% disagreeing strongly. The strength of feeling was less than that for the preceding question.

## Question 13

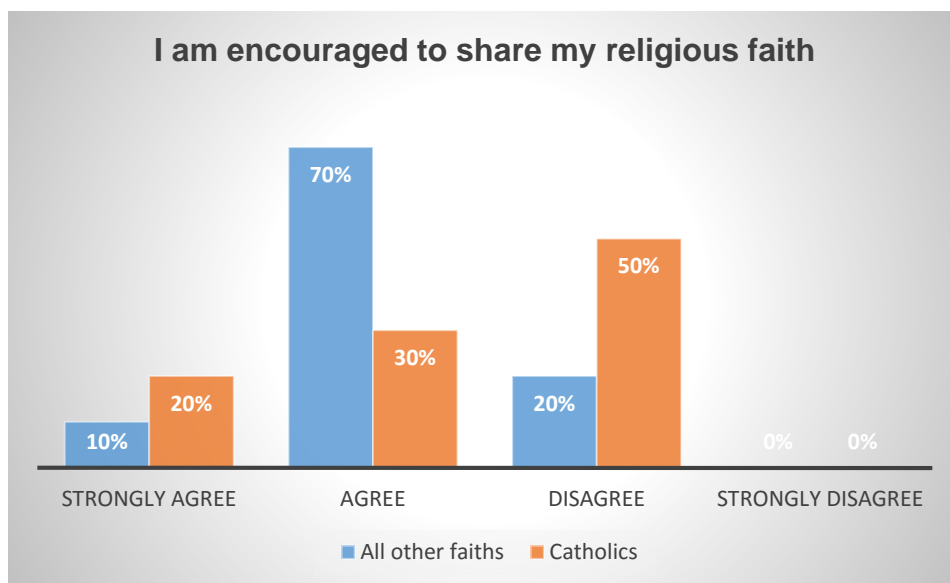


A large majority of students felt the college respected their religious views and beliefs, 31% agreeing strongly, 63% agreeing, 7% disagreeing, none strongly.

## Question 14



A slightly lower number of students than in the previous question but nonetheless a majority agreed that they were encouraged to share their religious faith, 12% agreeing strongly, 63% agreeing, 25% disagreeing, none strongly.



In contrast to the overall trend the Catholic faith was much more evenly split with only 2 agreeing strongly, 3 agreeing and 5 disagreeing, none strongly.

#### Question 15

***Please give any suggestions you may have about how the inclusivity of students of different faiths could be improved***

RE involves a lot of different opinions from different religions

Have discussions of varied personal belief in RE

Broader RE topics

Teach other religions in re not just Christian

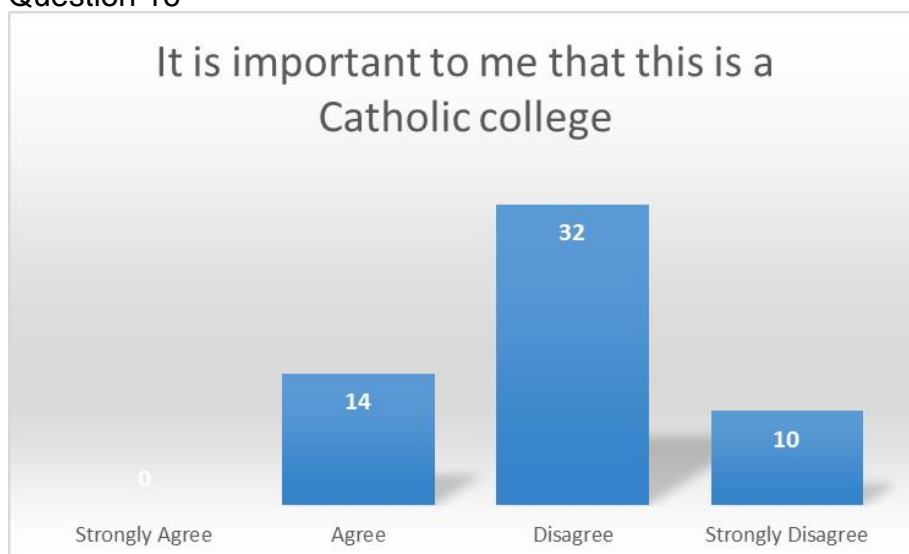
We learn about other faiths

There should be days which are celebrated through college such as divali

More knowledge and advertisement of events

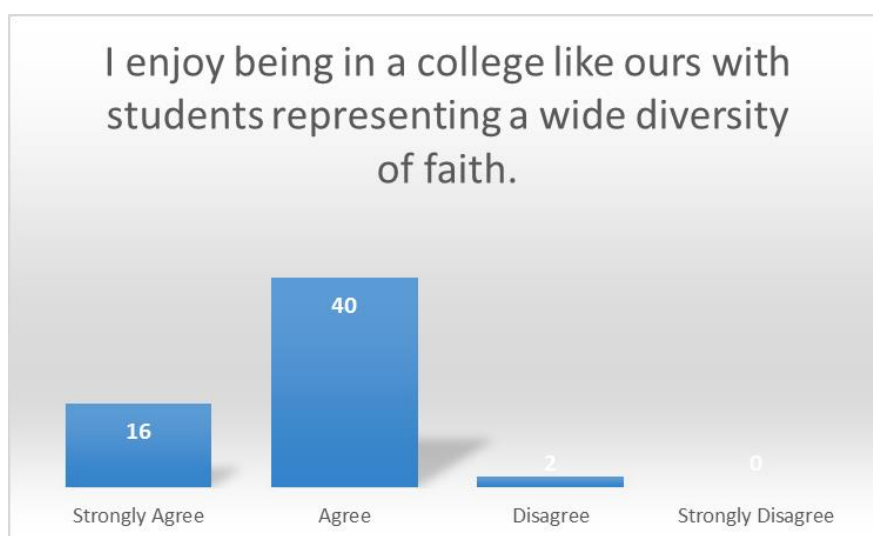
Learn more about Judaism (religions other than catholic and Islam)

## Question 16



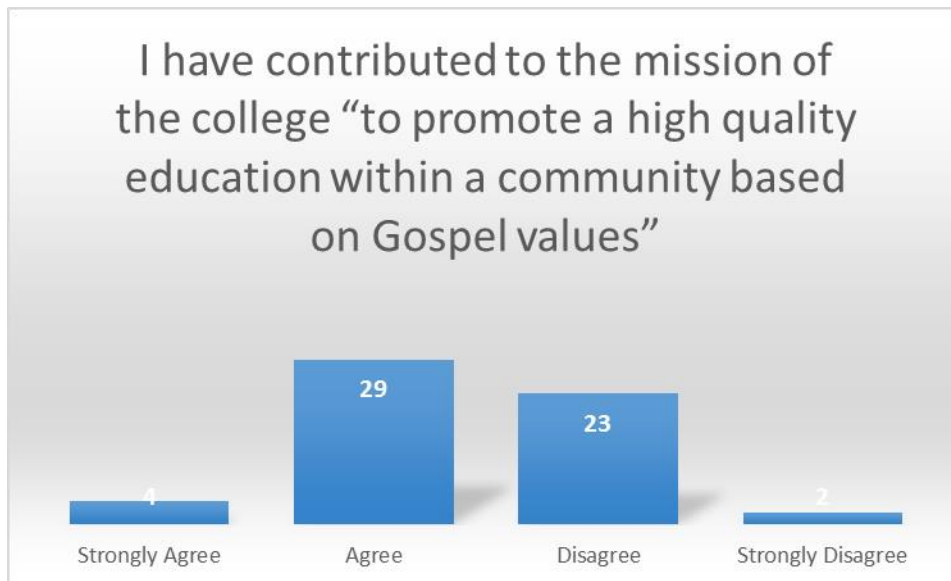
This question generated the most negative response of all the questions put with overall 75% in disagreement to some extent. Of the respondents none agreed strongly, 25% agreed, 57% disagreed, and 18% strongly disagreed. Whilst the extent of disagreement varied slightly, Catholics and Muslim faith groups had a similar profile.

## Question 17



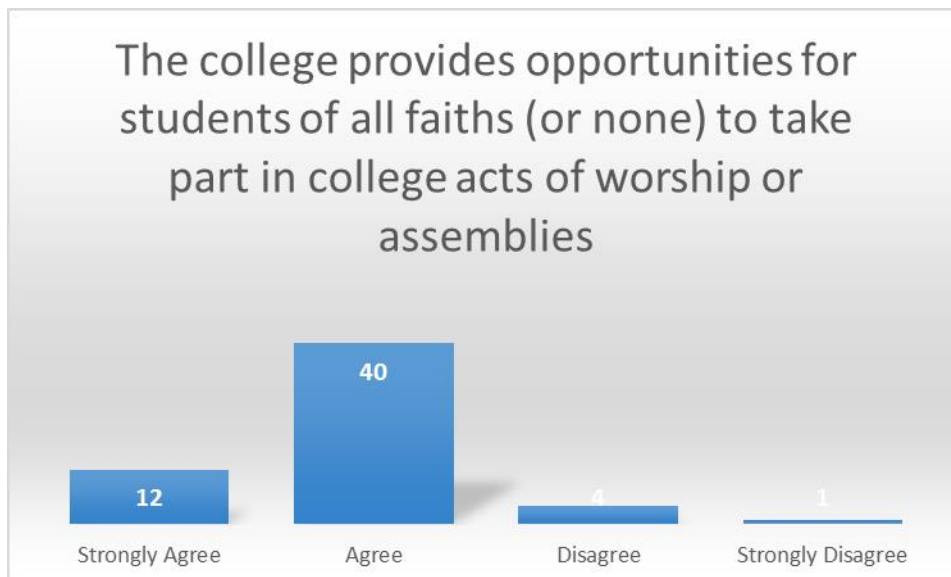
Enjoyment of a college with a wide diversity of faith generated the most positive of all responses within the survey with 28% agreeing strongly, 69% agreeing, 3% disagreeing, none strongly.

## Question 18



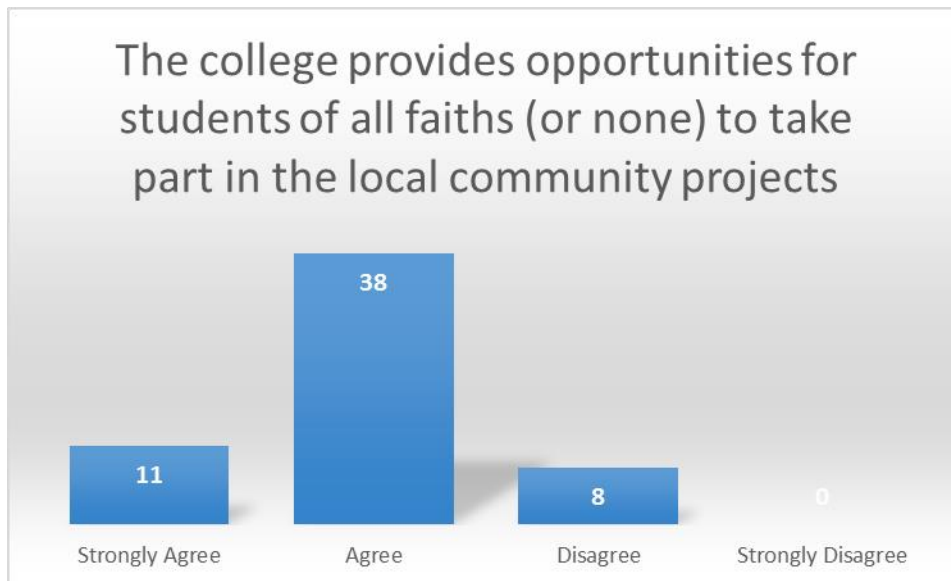
A small majority of students agreed that they had been able to contribute to the aspect of the college mission relating to high quality education within a Gospel based community, 7% agreeing strongly, 50% agreeing, 40% disagreeing, and 3% strongly disagreeing.

## Question 19



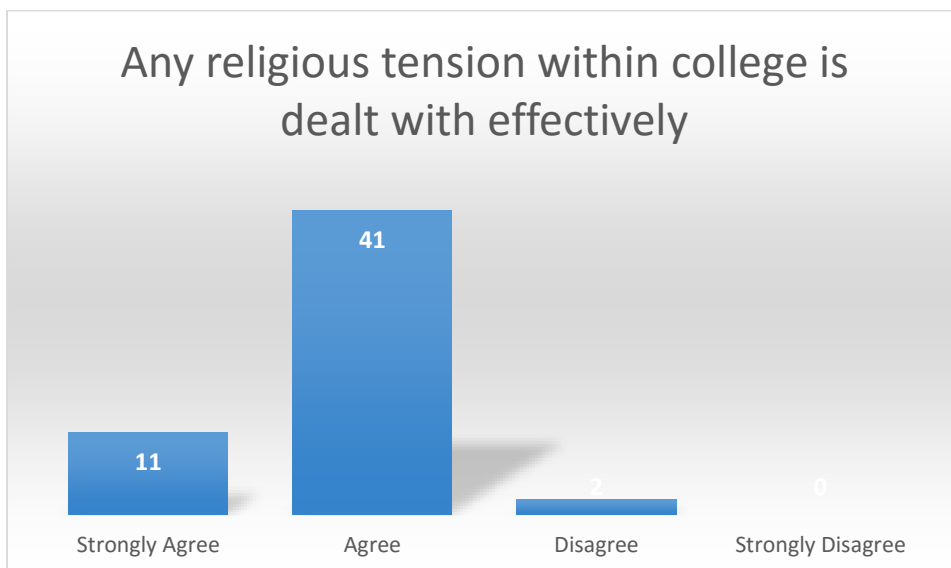
A very large majority of students agreed to some extent that the college allowed all faiths to be involved in the assemblies and acts of worship, 21% agreeing strongly, 70% agreeing, 7% disagreeing, and 2% strongly disagreeing.

## Question 20



A similar profile to the previous question was evident when students responded to the extent that all faiths were given opportunities to become involved in community projects, 19% agreeing strongly, 67% agreeing, 14% disagreeing, none strongly.

## Question 21



This question generated the second highest positive response from students with the overwhelming number of students agreeing that the college deals with religious tensions effectively, 20% agreeing strongly, 76% agreeing, 4% disagreeing and none strongly disagreeing. No member of the Muslim faith disagreed to this statement.



## Question 22

***Please give your views on any advantages or disadvantages of a college like ours with students representing a wide diversity of faith (if any).***

People become more understanding / tolerant of the views of others

Advantages: sense of community, shared views spirituality

Its nice to learn about other faiths

Can learn about other religions in the college community. Promotes a diverse community

Disadvantage is that some groups of people in the same religion stand against everyone else eg Asians against others

#### **4.5 Comparison and Interpretation of the Research in the light of the Literature Reviewed**

In this part of the analysis and interpretation I shall look at the responses to the interview questions for Principal A and Principal B compare their responses with those of the students surveyed and relate the ideas to those expressed in current literature, before drawing an overall conclusion.

Principal C was the head of a different Sixth Form college. Their college generally has a higher Catholic population than the case study college with approximately 50% of students being Catholic or coming from Catholic feeder schools or parishes. These responses will be used to contrast with those of Principal A and Principle B and will help to form the recommendations to the study.

The aim of this dissertation was to establish whether in the post Vatican II era is it still possible to maintain the distinctiveness of a Catholic Sixth Form College despite increasing numbers of students of other denominations and faiths.

By comparing and interpreting the responses from the surveys I hope to answer the research questions initially posed and so go some way in meeting the dissertation objectives.

- What are the challenges for Catholic college leaders to maintain the distinctively Catholic nature of the college with the current faith population?
- What management strategies can be employed to meet the challenge of the current faith population?
- To what extent do the presence of students of other faiths affect the college and how inclusive is the college to them?
- What current strategies could be adapted or new strategies introduced in the future?

### **What are the challenges for Catholic college leaders to maintain the distinctively Catholic nature of the college with the current faith population?**

Both principals were entirely comfortable in expressing the key features involved in Catholic distinctiveness. Principal A in mentioning the importance of the presence of Christ in the midst of the college reflects clearly the thinking of the post Vatican era with “Christ is the foundation of the whole educational enterprise in a Catholic school” (Congregation for Catholic Education 1977:n34). Both principals emphasised the deep care demanded of staff for each individual student, both mentioning respect for the

students and between them were able to verbalise nearly all of the characteristics identified by Stock (2005).

In addition the leaders were extremely confident their students would recognise a distinctively Catholic college although were sceptical as to how deep an understanding they would have. Their assumptions that the college did in fact portray itself as distinctively Catholic was very well supported by the student questionnaire. The students overwhelmingly agreed. All the responses to questions linked to aspects of a Catholic distinctiveness (Questions 2-6); promotion of the Gospel values, daily and weekly acts of worship, promotion of the Catholic faith, opportunities to deepen their Catholic faith and supporting students in need, reinforced the premise that they were present within the college. Reassuringly of these responses, the feeling amongst students that the college supported those in need had the strongest strength of opinion of any questions. Interestingly the promotion of the Catholic faith had the lowest strength of agreement amongst Catholic faith group. One interpretation of this is that they are more familiar with the deeper understanding and principles of Catholicism and so were in a better position to evaluate how evident they were within the college. The concern of the principals that students may not be aware of the impact of the Catholicity of the college was also borne out.

It was surprising that on the whole there was little agreement that the Catholic nature of the college had any impact upon their educational studies (Question 7) nor that it was especially important to the students even those within the Catholic faith group. (Questions 16). It could be argued that in fact the support care and dedication that student receive throughout their daily life at the college, including the teaching and

learning that accompanies their academic study is a direct result of the priority senior leadership places on Catholic distinctiveness and the resources allocated to such as the recruitment of dedicated expert teachers who see the characteristics of Catholic distinctiveness as important. Principal C was very adamant that the priority given to RE and Chaplaincy within their college underpins all aspects of the college. Such an outlook was not evident to the students in the case study college.

Those who responded to Question 8 concerning the opportunities to deepen Catholic faith across all faith groups showed awareness of the RE lessons and presence of the chapel and the opportunity to pray there but very few could give examples beyond that. Only one student mentioned the chaplain and two mentioned the Lourdes trip. One student mentioned the faith ambassadors who go out to primary schools to share their faith with some of the feeder schools for the local Catholic secondary schools. Other trips were cited as examples of way to deepen faith but no details were given. The college charity and campaigns “4C” group which is open to all students was not mentioned.

When reflecting on the challenges to Catholic distinctiveness within the college although two different aspects were identified, neither related directly to the number of Catholic students in the college. This would tend to support the ideas of Hypher (1996) and Sullivan (2000) that in and of itself low numbers of Catholic students is not a threat to the Catholicity of the college. This could also be corroborated from the evidence from the student survey which found an overwhelming majority of students were very happy to be in a college with a diverse group of students (Question17). What was perceived to be more threatening was the changing educational landscape with the

introduction of academies and new financial rules for Sixth Form Colleges. With a fixed number of Catholics in a given area this could create increased competition for Catholic students between neighbouring schools and Sixth Forms which in turn could jeopardise the existence of some schools if a premium was placed on increasing Catholic populations. This was considered by the principal to be self-destructive attitude to have and one that in the long term would not lead to success. This almost counter intuitive philosophy mirrors the ideas of the Congregation for Catholic Education for catholic schools to work together.

“Cooperation is between brothers and sisters in Christ. A policy of working for the common good is undertaken seriously as working for the building up of the kingdom of God... Society can take note from the Catholic school that it is possible to create true communities out of a common effort for the common good. (Congregation for Catholic Education 1977: 46-47)

This idea was also fervently put forward by Principal C, not only for the purposes of protecting admissions to Catholic schools but in many other aspects of recruitment and retention of students and staff.

Less serious threats to Catholic distinctiveness concerned the importance and profile of RE lessons.

### **What management strategies can be employed to meet the challenge of the current faith population?**

Several current management strategies were described for the maintenance or even increase in the number of Catholic students.

- An understanding admissions policy for Catholics with special needs or special circumstances, as Principal A put it “Holding the door open to Catholics” This would be fully in keeping with the post Vatican II mission of the church for the “poor”

- Fostering of good links with feeder Catholic schools and even schools further afield as well as joint Catholic/Anglican schools was thought to be an effective tool in Catholic recruitment.
- Visiting primary schools with students of all faiths helps with recruitment of Catholic feeder secondary schools and in time the recruitment of the Sixth Form College
- Emphasising the heritage and traditions of the founders was felt to be a way of raising the profile of Catholicism within the college via a founders day
- Increasing the profile of the college's mission and ethos statements was also thought to help. This is an approach that would be supported by the work of Grace (2002)

“Mission statements have many Catholic virtues. They constitute a principled and comprehensive charter of what a school claims to be its distinctive educational, spiritual moral and social purposes. Such statements characteristically specify a range of desired education outcomes and in their modern forms they are often the results of consultation exercises involving school boards, teachers and parents and, at their best, school students and members of the wider community. They are published to the community as a statement saying this is what the school is about and implicitly saying this is the basis upon which you can judge us.” (Grace 2002:7)

### **To what extent do the presence of students of other faiths affect the college and how inclusive is the college to them?**

All principals felt that the presence of students of other denominations or faiths enhanced the college. One felt that the sharing of a variety of faith standpoints, predominantly in the setting of the general RE groups not only enriched the debate but encouraged more students to feel comfortable about sharing their views and opinions in “theists corner”. They felt that it was better to have more students of any faith discussing and sharing than to have students with no faith to share, reflecting the views of Pope Francis.

“When we approach a person who professes his religion with conviction, his testimony and thoughts ask us and lead us to question our own spirituality. Dialogue, thus, begins with *encounter*. The first knowledge of the other is born from it. Indeed, if one begins from the premise of the common affiliation *in human nature*, one can go beyond prejudices and fallacies and begin to understand the other according to a new perspective.” (Pope Francis 2015)

Of those students responding to Question 14 in their questionnaire 75% indicated that they felt encouraged to share their faith. It was however interesting to note that this confidence was not necessarily shared with the Catholic faith group who were evenly split on the matter.

The advantages of working in a mixed faith environment were, however clearly understood and articulated by those students choosing to respond to Question 22. Students recognised how ideas of tolerance and understanding of others could be developed in such an environment, creating a sense of community with shared spiritual values. Learning about other religions was enjoyed although one student warned of the possible risk of formation of cliques along faith grounds.

Similarly Principals A and B agreed that the college was extremely inclusive to all students regardless of faith. They cited practical examples of how the prayer needs of the Muslim students were accommodated within existing classrooms in line with recommendations from documents of the Bishops Conference for England and Wales (2014b).

Other examples included the invitation of students of other faiths into outreach activities, community events, and various assemblies throughout the year as well as a practical understanding of food requirements during for instance times of fasting. Such considerations on a daily basis are intended to demonstrate a respect for the

faiths of all the students. These strategies do seem to be having a positive impact. All questions dealing with the respect and value of individual students (Questions 9 & 10) showed a substantial majority of students feeling respected. Students also felt with a similar strength of feeling that their faiths were also respected (Question 13) and that opportunities for participation in assemblies or community projects were available and open to all regardless of faith. (Questions 19 & 20). Question 11 demonstrated that the vast majority of students felt that all faiths were listened to. Such a response was made by Principal C as well as being in accord with Pope Francis views on interreligious dialogue

“In recent years, despite some misunderstandings and difficulties, progress has been made in interreligious dialogue, and also with the Islamic faithful. *Listening* is essential for this. It is not only a *necessary condition* in a process of mutual comprehension and peaceful coexistence, but is also a *pedagogical duty*” (Pope Francis: 2015)

With such a diverse faith population, as warned by one of the students in response to Question 22 there is a danger of tensions between social groups including faith groups, The strength of response to Question 21 would however suggest that this is not identified by the students as a cause for concern since in the second highest positive response to any question, they agreed that the college deals with such problems effectively.

### **What current strategies could be adapted or new strategies introduced in the future?**

There was less agreement to this final research question. Opinions among the principals varied. One principal felt that Catholic populations in the future would naturally increase due to the immigration of Catholics from Poland and the Ukraine and so over the next 5 – 10 years there will be less of a recruitment issue. By



implication it would be expected that the current strategies in place would remain effective in the medium to long term. From a different perspective another principal felt that the strength and commitment to faith of young people is changing, the idea of secularism rising and new, more inventive ways may be needed to be explored in order to engage the students and put across the teachings of the Catholic faith. The challenge in this respect was to put the message of the Church and that of the Gospels across clearly but sensitively in a non-threatening way. Principal C reiterated their thoughts that an even greater collaborative approach at all levels, but especially senior levels within the Catholic Sixth Form colleges would be essential to maintain the Catholic distinctiveness with recruitment and training for Catholic leaders called for.

Question 15 in the student survey requested ideas for improvements to the inclusive nature of the college. As might be expected these focussed mainly on their experiences within college. One suggestion involved the celebration of feasts such as Diwali throughout college and another called for better communication and advertisement of events in general. Within general RE lessons students suggested a wider range of RE topics. Some felt that the tenets of other religions in addition to Christian and Muslim beliefs, should also be taught such as Judaism. Many of these suggestions reflect some of the ideas examples of good practice referred to by the Bishops Conference of England and Wales (2008). What was clear through the student responses both for this question and Question 8 was the important role their general RE lessons played as part of the distinctiveness and inclusivity of the college. It was interesting to note the slightly changed profile of religious beliefs expressed by the student sample compared with that expected from college data. As was suggested in the classification section a noticeable increase in students expressing no religion was detected. This increase may be a facet of greater honesty in a non-threatening

questionnaire as opposed to the perceived consequences of another response on an enrolment form. It may however be linked to recent research by Woodhead (2014) who reported a rise in the “No religion” belief of young people especially in the 18-19 age bracket.

The nature, too, of general RE lessons could also be threatened after a further report following recent debates in the House of Lords by Clarke and Woodhead (2015) recommended that

- Schools should no longer be required to hold daily acts of Christian worship
- The RE curriculum should be broadened to reflect the reality of the contemporary pluralist society
- A Nationally Agreed Syllabus should be established by a national SACRE

Aspects of these could represent an even greater additional challenge for Catholic leaders in the future.

#### **4.6 Conclusion**

In this section I have presented, compared and interpreted the findings from the surveys undertaken. I have used the information gained to answer the chosen research questions.

- What are the challenges for Catholic college leaders to maintain the distinctively Catholic nature of the college with the current faith population?
- What management strategies can be employed to meet the challenge of the current faith population?
- To what extent do the presence of students of other faiths affect the college and how inclusive is the college to them?

- What current strategies could be adapted or new strategies introduced in the future?

In the next section I will draw all the findings of the study together and using key themes from the literature review answer the original proposition of the thesis. I will acknowledge any limitations to the work, propose areas for further research before making conclusions and putting forward recommendations as to how in the future leaders in a Catholic Sixth Form college can maintain and promote its Catholic distinctiveness.

## Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations

### 5.1 Introduction

It is essential that with a changing social demographic and the associated amalgam of faiths that Catholic educational leaders do not simply sit back, take the route of least resistance and ignore the potential problems or indeed the new opportunities which may result.

“The multiculturalism and multireligiosity of Catholic school students are a challenge for all people who have educational responsibilities. When schools’ identities are weakened, several problems arise, due to the inability to deal with new situations. The answer cannot be to seek shelter in indifference, nor to adopt a kind of Christian fundamentalism, nor – lastly – to define Catholic schools as schools that support “generic” values” (Congregation for Catholic Education 2014:i)

It was with some realisation of this changing profile of religious faiths and denominations within society and my Catholic Sixth Form College in particular that I set out to determine whether in colleges with relatively low Catholic populations it was still possible to maintain a Catholic distinctiveness.

I initially set out to answer this question by reviewing the literature. Starting with a study of the Catholic Church’s evolving ecclesiology I was able to see how, in a more outward looking approach since the second Vatican Council the Church has recognised its role in the education of all, even those “far from the faith”. Whilst accepting those of other faiths into their schools and colleges the Church has constantly reflected and attempted to define what exactly a distinctly Catholic school should be. I then looked at the demands and obligations that this imposes on the Catholic leadership of the school and examined how a fluctuating Catholic population might conflict with the leadership strategies. I finally surveyed literature for suggested strategies that may relieve any resulting tensions.

From the literature review I identified four research questions which would enable me to assess the perceived challenges to maintaining Catholic distinctiveness within a Sixth Form setting. By surveying principals and students in the case study college I was able to analyse the range of management strategies and evaluate their effectiveness with students. The interview with the principal of a neighbouring Sixth Form College with a slightly higher Catholic population gave me the opportunity to contrast views as well as providing a source of ideas for recommendations.

## 5.2 Main Findings

1. The original hypothesis of the dissertation stated that it **is** possible, despite a falling Catholic population, to maintain a distinctively Catholic Sixth Form College.

From my research I find that this hypothesis is true.

The Catholic Sixth Form College studied has a senior leadership team which is well acquainted with the principles of a distinctly Catholic college and they have a deep understanding of how this should be implemented in practice. Whilst in interview their own responses may have looked at different aspects of the issues around this subject, their views were entirely complementary and between them they were able to address all the elements identified as essential to Catholic distinctiveness within the literature review.

2. In addition, the aspect of respect for individuals within a college community and the need for inclusivity of a Catholic college to all of its students was well understood and many structures and strategies had been identified and put into place to ensure this is achieved.

This view was further reinforced by the results of the student survey, which to a very large extent, recognised and confirmed the success of these management objectives. Some areas which we less well recognised will form part of my recommendations.

3. It became further evident both from literature and the survey of students and principals that there is not necessarily any essential problem with a school or college having a low catholic population. Indeed there is a persuasive body of opinion in current literature and from the survey that Catholic schools that it is beneficial for them to have a significant number of students of other faiths. Others would argue that it is an obligation on the part of Catholic schools to maintain a presence even in areas with minority Catholic populations in order to fulfil the mission of the Church in those places.

“Catholic schools reflect the principles of ecumenism and interreligious dialogue from Vatican II and the establishment of schools in areas of Catholic minority is part of the Church’s mission to be “at the service of the wider community.”(Grace 2013:7)

4 The challenges to be faced in the future which will impact on Catholic nature of the college will not come as a result of decreasing Catholic populations. Rather the greatest dangers will come from political and financial interference of educational institutes by government. If current debates about the extent of religious belief and role of RE with schools within the country bring about their proposed recommendations then the national perception of the value of religious belief will continue to be eroded. This study has indicated that in order to generate a resilience to such changes it becomes imperative that Catholic institutions continue to work together.

### **5.3 Limitations**

It must be recognised that this was a relatively small number of students surveyed. When broken down into their individual faith groups these numbers become even smaller so variations between individual faith groups, while identifiable and worth recognising may not be statistically significant. The profile of the sample, whilst in line with the expected profile for the department is different from the overall profile of the college and so again variations within faith group responses may not be proportionate.

### **5.4 Opportunities for Further Research**

I feel this research could be extended in a number of different areas.

A larger sample of students would give greater clarity to the inferences within the research that different faith groups have different perceptions and strength of feelings concerning the questions asked.

The students in the college of Principal C were not surveyed. Such a survey, although more complex, would allow a degree of comparison to be made. It would first allow a better understanding of the other college's faith profile, which the college did not have, but also allow greater contrasts and assessments of the effectiveness of differing policies to be made.

## 5.5 Recommendations

It must be emphasised that these recommendations are improvements to what is already a positive situation.

- **Increase the emphasis of Catholic belief and worship within the college**

As was noted in the interpretation of the survey data there was a tendency for the Catholic faith based group to be more reluctant to share their faith and at the same time feel less strongly that their Catholic teachings are promoted. To encourage Catholic students to be proud of their faith a greater profile of the tenets of Catholicism could be made. This may simply be a greater number of key words and quotes from the bible or Catholic teaching. The introduction of compulsory Catholic Mass for all students is a more controversial extension of this recommendation but as has been reported that, with the correct preparation, it can be introduced to this type of Catholic Sixth Form setting.

- **Promote more visibly the distinctiveness of a Catholic college**

The surveys revealed that students saw little connection between a distinctively Catholic college and their daily studies. More emphasis needs to be made as to how the characteristics of Catholic education impacts the effectiveness of education around the college. Banners or posters such as “search for excellence” or “concern for the whole person” could help to make this link more explicit. Such a promotion may also include references to the mission statement of the college and serve a dual purpose of explaining the rationale and practice of both.



- **Re-visit and consider broadening the range of faiths explored in general RE and adopting a “Prayer for all – pray as you can” philosophy**

A recurring theme in the student survey was value they placed on learning about a range of religions discussed and as literature suggests the accompanying benefits gained with deeper understanding and respect. Re-evaluate the breadth of religions currently covered in the schemes of work and if not sufficient consider expanding them.

Whilst good provision is made for personal prayer throughout the day in the Chapel incorporating some techniques or opportunities for students of all faiths or none to reflect in the context of their own person. In not already present in the existing scheme this would create a greater sense of spiritual unity no matter what faith you were.

- **Recognise and celebrate feasts and celebrations of our and other faiths**

In order to increase further the number of students who feel able to share their religious faith greater emphasis could be made around the college of significant feast days from other religions. This could be left to those faith groups to decide how best to achieve it, but it could be as simple a different foods within the refectory. Feast days of other saints or that of the founder of the college could also be incorporated into the calendar. Digital screens around the college could also be used to great effect.

- **Faith- based learner voice**

The student survey gave a very interesting insight to the religious and spiritual “health” of the college a process that is not at present part of the student survey

cycle. A policy of including a similar survey would not only recognise the importance the college places on spiritual wellbeing, openness and inclusivity but over a long term act as an indicator of any negative issues. In a similar vein, small faith based focus groups could also provide an important insight into these issues.

Realistically, all of these recommendations could be achieved within a very short time frame. They share a common theme of the celebration of faith in all its manifestations and emphasise that in a Catholic Sixth Form College we should be especially proud to assert our Catholic faith.

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<sup>5</sup> For ethical reasons the name of the sixth form college has been changed.



## **Appendices**

### **Appendix 1: Questions to Principals**

1. How do you feel that XX College shows itself to be a distinctively Catholic Sixth form college?
2. What do you see as the challenges faced by XX to maintain its distinctive Catholic nature with its current Catholic population?
3. What specific management strategies will allow XX to meet the challenges posed by its current Catholic population?
4. To what extent do you feel that students are aware of the Catholic distinctiveness of the college?
5. In what ways do you feel the presence of students of other faiths influence the Catholic distinctiveness of the college?
6. How inclusive do you feel the college is to students of other faiths?
7. In relation to changing Catholic college population what challenges does the future hold?

## Appendix 2: Questionnaire to Students

# Catholic Distinctiveness – Diversity of Faith: Student Survey

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

This forms a part of the research for my MA in Catholic School Leadership at St Mary's University London

By completing this form you are agreeing to participate in this research. Please be assured that all your **responses are confidential** and that individuals will not identified in any way. The overall results findings will be published as part of the final dissertation anonymously.

Mr McGeough

## 1 Religion

I would best describe my religion to be (please tick 1 box)

- |                                 |                          |       |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|-------|
| Catholic                        | <input type="checkbox"/> |       |
| Christian (other than Catholic) | <input type="checkbox"/> |       |
| Muslim                          | <input type="checkbox"/> |       |
| Buddhist                        | <input type="checkbox"/> |       |
| Hindu                           | <input type="checkbox"/> |       |
| Jewish                          | <input type="checkbox"/> |       |
| No religion                     | <input type="checkbox"/> |       |
| Other (please state)            | <input type="checkbox"/> | ..... |

### Catholic Distinctiveness

For each of the following statements please tick to indicate to what extent you agree with each statement.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
2 The college promotes the values of the Gospel				
3 The college promotes the teaching of the Catholic faith				
4 The college promotes daily and weekly opportunities for Catholic worship				
5 The college promotes opportunities for students to deepen their Catholic faith				
6 The college supports students in need				
7 The Catholic nature of the college has benefitted my studies				

8 Please give any examples of opportunities offered by the college for students to develop their Catholic faith

Continue overleaf if necessary

### Inclusivity

For each of the following statements please tick to indicate to what extent you agree with each statement.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
9 I feel part of the college community				
10 I feel valued as an individual				
11 The college listens to students of all faiths (or none) equally				
12 I feel that the college is concerned for my spiritual well-being				
13 I feel that the college respects my religious views and beliefs				
14 I am encouraged to share my religious faith				

15 Please give any suggestions you may have about how the inclusivity of students of different faiths could be improved

Continue overleaf if necessary

### Diversity of Faiths

For each of the following statements please tick to indicate to what extent you agree with each statement.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
16 It is important to me that this is a Catholic college				
17 I enjoy being in a college like ours with students representing a wide diversity of faith.				
18 I have contributed to the mission of the college "to promote a high quality education within a community based on Gospel values"				
19 The college provides opportunities for students of all faiths (or none) to take part in college acts of worship or assemblies				
20 The college provides opportunities for students of all faiths (or none) to take part in the local community projects				
21 Any religious tension within college is dealt with effectively				

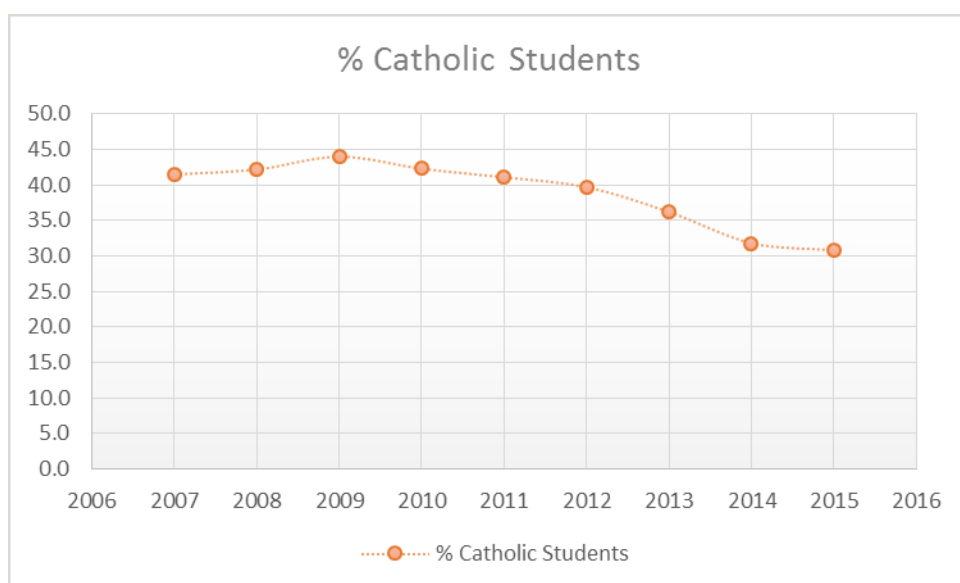
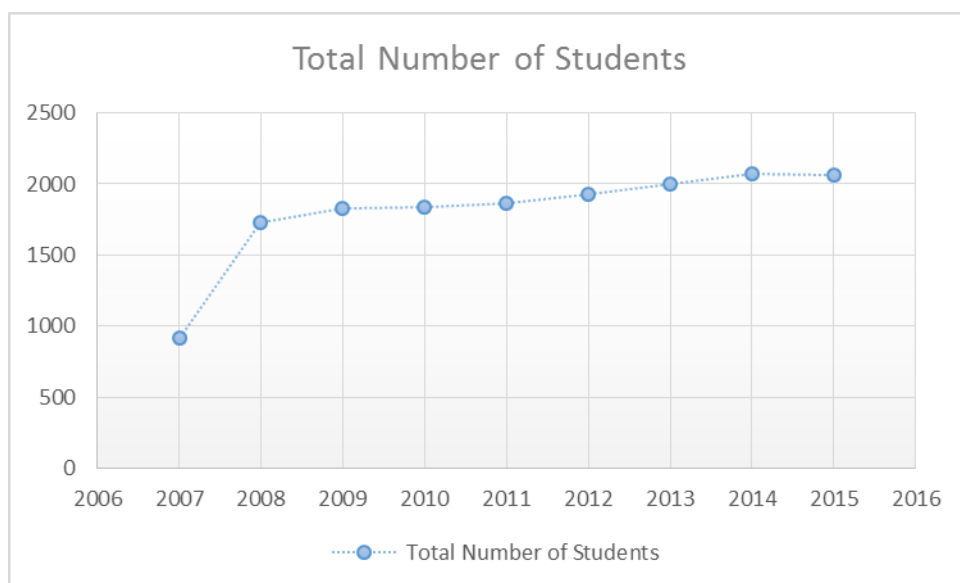
22 Please give your views on any advantages or disadvantages of a college like ours with students representing a wide diversity of faith (if any).

Continue overleaf if necessary

### Appendix 3: Student Questionnaire Raw Numeric Data

	Catholic	Christian (other than Catholic)	Muslim	Buddhist	Hindu	Jewish	No religion	Other (please state)
Question 1	10	14	17	0	0	0	17	2
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree				
Question 2	4	37	17	1				
Question 3	4	35	20	1				
Question 4	4	48	7	1				
Question 5	2	47	9	0				
Question 6	23	34	3	0				
Question 7	2	25	26	5				
Question 8								
Question 9	17	36	6	1				
Question 10	16	39	5	0				
Question 11	27	30	3	0				
Question 12	6	39	13	2				
Question 13	18	37	4	0				
Question 14	7	38	15	0				
Question 15								
Question 16	0	14	32	10				
Question 17	16	40	2	0				
Question 18	4	29	23	2				
Question 19	12	40	4	1				
Question 20	11	38	8	0				
Question 21	11	41	2	0				
Question 22								

## Appendix 4: Trends in St Saviour's<sup>6</sup> Student Populations



<sup>6</sup> For ethical reasons the name of the sixth form college has been changed.

## Appendix 5: St Saviour's<sup>7</sup> Religious Diversity Data 2015

	Catholic	Christian (other than Catholic)	Muslim	Buddhist	Hindu	Jewish	No religion	Other (please state)
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Overall College Data	30.82	34.93	17.95	0.05	0.29	0.87	12.09	2.66
College Data for Department from which Students were Surveyed	18.20	30.30	33.10	0.00	0.00	0.30	16.10	1.90
Data for Students Sampled	16.67	23.33	28.33	0.00	0.00	0.00	28.33	3.33

<sup>7</sup> For ethical reasons the name of the sixth form college has been changed.



## Appendix 6: Raw Data for Catholic Faith Group Responses vs All Other Faiths

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Question 2	All Other Faiths	4	30	14	1
	Catholics	0	7	3	0
Question 3	All Other Faiths	3	31	15	1
	Catholics	1	4	5	0
Question 4	All Other Faiths	3	41	6	0
	Catholics	1	7	1	1
Question 5	All Other Faiths	1	39	8	0
	Catholics	1	8	1	0
Question 6	All Other Faiths	19	30	1	0
	Catholics	4	4	2	0
Question 7	All Other Faiths	2	21	22	3
	Catholics	0	4	4	2
Question 9	All Other Faiths	15	30	5	0
	Catholics	2	6	1	1
Question 10	All Other Faiths	15	32	3	0
	Catholics	1	7	2	0
Question 11	All Other Faiths	23	25	2	0
	Catholics	4	5	1	0
Question 12	All Other Faiths	5	34	9	2
	Catholics	1	5	4	0
Question 13	All Other Faiths	16	31	3	0
	Catholics	2	6	1	0
Question 14	All Other Faiths	5	35	10	0
	Catholics	2	3	5	0
Question 16	All Other Faiths	0	12	26	9
	Catholics	0	2	6	1
Question 17	All Other Faiths	14	33	2	0
	Catholics	2	7	0	0
Question 18	All Other Faiths	4	26	17	2
	Catholics	0	3	6	0
Question 19	All Other Faiths	11	33	3	1
	Catholics	1	7	1	0
Question 20	All Other Faiths	10	31	7	0
	Catholics	1	7	1	0
Question 21	All Other Faiths	10	35	2	0
	Catholics	1	6	0	0

## Appendix 7: Raw Data for Muslim Faith Group Responses vs All Other Faiths

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Question 2	All Other Faiths	4	26	13	0
	Muslims	0	11	4	1
Question 3	All Other Faiths	4	22	16	1
	Muslims	0	13	4	0
Question 4	All Other Faiths	3	33	6	1
	Muslims	1	15	1	0
Question 5	All Other Faiths	2	32	7	0
	Muslims	0	15	2	0
Question 6	All Other Faiths	16	24	3	0
	Muslims	7	10	0	0
Question 7	All Other Faiths	2	18	17	4
	Muslims	0	7	9	1
Question 9	All Other Faiths	11	27	4	1
	Muslims	6	9	2	0
Question 10	All Other Faiths	10	29	4	0
	Muslims	6	10	1	0
Question 11	All Other Faiths	20	21	2	0
	Muslims	7	9	1	0
Question 12	All Other Faiths	5	28	9	1
	Muslims	1	11	4	1
Question 13	All Other Faiths	10	30	2	0
	Muslims	8	7	2	0
Question 14	All Other Faiths	5	27	11	0
	Muslims	2	11	4	0
Question 16	All Other Faiths	0	10	24	5
	Muslims	0	4	8	5
Question 17	All Other Faiths	11	29	1	0
	Muslims	5	11	1	0
Question 18	All Other Faiths	2	22	15	2
	Muslims	2	7	8	0
Question 19	All Other Faiths	9	26	4	1
	Muslims	3	14	0	0
Question 20	All Other Faiths	8	26	6	0
	Muslims	3	12	2	0
Question 21	All Other Faiths	9	26	2	0
	Muslims	2	15	0	0