

**The extent to which it is possible to maintain the  
Salesian Charism in Salesian schools in a  
contemporary secular context in England.**

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# CONTENTS

Tables and Figures	8
Appendices	11
Abstract	12
CHAPTER 1 The Introduction	
1.1 Rationale	13
1.2 Literature	16
1.3 Background of the researcher	17
1.4 Historical and Contemporary Perspectives	19
A. The theology of Charism and spirit	19
B. The Salesian Charism, as revealed	20
C. Contemporary research on the practice of the Salesian Charism	22
D Religious and Lay People Working in Collaboration	23
1.5 Practitioner Research	24
1.6 Conclusion	26
CHAPTER 2 Historical Perspectives on the Pastoral Ministry of St. John Bosco	
2.1 Introduction	27
2.2 Mother as catechist	27
2.3 Vocational Discernment and Training	29
2.4 The Wider context and young people at risk – Turin of the nineteenth century	31
2.5 The Development of the Educational and Formative model of St. John Bosco	32
2.6 Response of Don Bosco to addressing identified needs	34
2.7 The Spiritual Life and Personal Discipline	37
2.8 Concluding Remarks	38
CHAPTER 3 The Salesian Charism	
3.1 Introduction	39
3.2 The Nature of Charism	39
3.3 The Charism of Don Bosco as Founder	42
3.4 The Salesian Charism	43
A. Reason	45
B. Religion	46
C. Loving concern / kindness (Amorevolezza)	50
D. Presence and Assistance	51
E. The Preventive System	57
F. Family Spirit	58
G. Self-Sacrifice and Temperance	59
H. Holistic Formation	61
3.5 The Salesian Charism: Self-Emptying Grace, Liberty and Healing	63
The Incarnational Dimension	
3.6 Concluding remarks	65

## CHAPTER 4 A Spirituality of Accompaniment

4.1 Background	66
4.1.1 An integral concept of the Human with space for spiritual meaning...	66
4.1.2 Preliminary Ideas: Spirituality and Accompaniment	67
4.1.3 Christian Maturity and Perfection	68
4.2 The Praxis of Bosco's Spiritual Accompaniment of the young	69
4.2.1 The Implementation of pastoral charity	69
4.2.2 Age Range	70
4.2.3 Spiritual Development of the young person	70
4.3 Characteristic Traits of the Spiritual Accompaniment of the Young	71
4.3.1 Awareness	73
4.3.2 Conversion	73
4.3.3 Discernment	74
4.3.4 Religious formation	75
4.3.5 Conditions to spiritually educate the child	76
4.3.6 Spirituality becomes stronger with guidance	76
4.3.7 Spirituality of Don Bosco	77
4.3.8 St. Joseph Cafasso: Don Bosco's spiritual director	78
4.3.9 The influence of Alphonsus Maria de Liguori	80
4.3.10 Formation for Pastoral Ministry: The Sacrament of Reconciliation	81
4.4 Characteristics of the Accompaniment of young people for Don Bosco	83
4.4.1 Addressing / Recognising Sin	83
4.4.2 Moral Education	84
4.4.3 Spiritual Friendship	85
4.4.4 Francis de Sales on Spiritual Friendship	85
4.4.5 Don Bosco and Spiritual Friendship	86
4.4.6 The Preventive System in a contemporary setting	86
4.4.7 Spiritual Accompaniment	87
4.4.8 Accompaniment as Christocentric	88
4.5 Don Bosco's personal Spiritual Experience	89
4.5.1 Mamma Margaret as John Bosco's first accompanier	89
4.5.2 Bosco's Personal Qualities	90
4.5.3 Spiritual Sensitivity	91
4.5.4 Encounter with Fr. Calosso	91
4.5.5 Particular Spiritual Friendships	92
A. Jonah	93
B. Louis Comollo	94
4.6 Holistic Education	96
4.7 Critique of aspects of Don Bosco's approach from a contemporary Salesian Perspective	97
4.8 Concluding Remarks	100

CHAPTER 5 Salesians and Lay People; An exercise in Collaborative Ministry	101
5.1 Transmission in a New Context	101
5.2 The Sacramental Perspective in the Vatican Documents on Schools	103
5.3 Vocation and Professionalism	105
5.4 Discipleship	109
5.4.1 Invitation and Inclusion	110
5.4.2 Respecting an individual's discernment	111
5.4.3 Calling people into partnership	111
5.4.4 Challenges	112
5.5 Ongoing Commitment to the Salesian Vision	112
5.5.1 Introduction	112
5.5.2 Handing on the baton	114
5.6 The Internationalisation of Religious communities: Project Europe	115
5.6.1 Guidance for the Salesian mission: General Chapter 27 Documents	118
5.7 Concluding Remarks	119
 CHAPTER 6 Competing Pressures	 119
6.1 Contemporary Culture Revisited	119
6.2 The Field of Education	121
6.3 Quality Assurance	123
6.4 Catholic Education	127
6.5 Adding Value	128
6.6 Justice	128
6.6.2 Shared Vision	130
6.7 Extra-Curricular Commitment	130
6.8 The Salesian Vision of Education Today	131
6.8.1 Educating and Pastoral Community	132
A. Inspiration from Gospel values and an invitation to faith	133
B. An efficient and a quality education	134
C. Incorporating Salesian Pedagogy	135
D. Social function and care for those most in need	135.
6.9 Conclusion	136
 CHAPTER 7 Research Methodology	 139
7.1 Introduction	139
7.2 The Research Question	140
7.3 Research Paradigms	140
7.3.1 Overview	140
7.3.2 Quantitative	142
7.3.3 Qualitative	143
7.3.4 Mixed Methods	145
7.4 Triangulation	149
7.5 Reliability and Validity in Conducting Research	150

7.5.1 Reliability	150
7.5.2 Validity	151
7.5.3 Validity in Mixed Methods	152
Internal validity	152
External validity	152
7.6 Dealing with Bias	153
7.7 Summary	154
 CHAPTER 8 Instruments of Measurement 1 – Semi structured interviews	 168
8.1 Introduction	168
8.2 Planning and Conducting Semi-Structured Interviews	157
8.3 Types of Interviews	157
8.4 Semi-structured Interviews	159
- Factors to consider in advance of conducting interviews	159
- Dealing with the presence of the interviewer	163
8.5 Construction of the questions used in semi-structured interviews	164
8.6 The sample	165
8.7 Ethical Considerations	166
8.8 Summary	167
 CHAPTER 9 Findings from Semi structured interviews	 168
9.1 Introduction	168
9.2 Background of Salesian Schools in England	168
9.3 Thematic Analysis (TA)	170
9.4 Themes and Coding	172
9.5 Classification of the Findings from the Semi-structured interviews	172
9.5.1 Method of analysis of themes and sub themes	173
9.6 Overall analysis of emerging Themes	175
9.6.1 Findings	175
9.6.2 Analysis	175
9.6.3 Discussion	183
9.7 Theme 1 Charism / Ethos (Analysis of responses to Q3, 4 & 6)	184
9.7.1 Findings	184
9.7.2 Analysis	184
9.7.3 Discussion	197
9.8 Theme 2 Accompaniment (Q5 & Q8)	199
9.8.1 Analysis	199
9.8.2 Findings	200
9.8.3 Discussion	209
9.9 Theme 3 Collaboration (Q7)	209
9.9.1 Findings	209
9.9.2 Analysis	210
9.9.3 Discussion	221

9.10 Theme 4 Pressures (Q2 & 9)	222
9.10.1 Findings	222
9.10.2 Analysis	210
9.10.3 Discussion	217
9.11 Priorities Identified by Headteacher	230
9.11.1 Findings	230
9.12 Analysis	231
9.13 Discussion	239
9.14 Conclusion	240
 CHAPTER 10 Instruments of Measurement (2) –Teacher Questionnaires	 244
10.1 Introduction	244
10.1.1 Instrument of Measurement - Questionnaires	244
10.1.2 Construction of the questionnaire	245
10.1.3 The Teacher Questionnaire	246
10.1.4 Questionnaire Statements	247
10.1.5 Analysis	248
10.2 Questionnaire Analysis	249
10.2.1 Analysis of the responses from All schools	249
A. Charism	251
B. Accompaniment	255
C. Collaboration	259
D. Pressures	263
10.3 Conclusions drawn from the analysis of Teacher questionnaires	267
A. Charism	268
B. Accompaniment	269
C. Collaboration	269
D. Pressures	271
10.4 Analysis of questionnaire responses by each School	272
10.4.1 School 1 Analysis	273
A. Charism	273
B. Accompaniment	274
C. Collaboration	276
D. Pressures	278
10.4.2 Discussion	279
10.5 School 2 Analysis	281
A. Charism	281
B. Accompaniment	283
C. Collaboration	285
D. Pressures	287
10.5.1 Discussion	289
10.6 School 3 Analysis	292
A. Charism	292
B. Accompaniment	294
C. Collaboration	296
D. Pressures	297

10.6.1 Discussion	299
10.7 School 4 Analysis	300
A. Charism	300
B. Accompaniment	303
C. Collaboration	305
D. Pressures	307
10.7.1 Discussion	309
10.8 School 5 Analysis	311
A. Charism	311
B. Accompaniment	313
C. Collaboration	315
D. Pressures	317
10.8.1 Discussion	318
10.9 School 6 Analysis	321
A. Charism	321
B. Accompaniment	323
C. Collaboration	325
D. Pressures	327
10.9.1 Discussion	328
10.10 Conclusion	330
 CHAPTER 11 Interpretation of Fieldwork Research	 332
11.1 Introduction	332
11.2 Headteacher Interviews – Summary Points	333
Charism	333
Formation	337
RUAH	339
Relationships	340
Presence / Encounter	341
Services / Disadvantaged	342
Inclusion / Belonging	342
Narrative / Distinctiveness	344
Connectivity / Interrelatedness	345
Leadership / Succession	346
Accountability	348
Standards	350
Recruitment	352
11.3 Teacher Questionnaires – Resonances and Dissonances	353
11.3.1 Resonances	354
A. Charism	354
B. Accompaniment	355
C. Collaboration	356
D. Pressures	357
11.3.2 Dissonances	359
A. Charism	359
B. Accompaniment	359
C. Collaboration	361
D. Pressures	362

11.3 Headteacher priorities and teacher questionnaire responses	363
11.4 Teacher Questionnaire responses	365
CHAPTER 12 Conclusions and Recommendations	367
12.1 Introduction	367
A. Charism	367
B. Accompaniment	368
C. Collaboration	368
D. Pressures	369
12.2 Key Drivers in maintaining Salesian Education in a secular environment	370
12.3 Recommendations	370
12.4 Concluding reflections	373
Bibliography	376
Appendices	385

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## Tables and Figures

### Tables

#### Chapter 9

Table 1 Categories of Salesian schools according to the percentage of free school meals	171
Table 2 Initial overall analysis of the total responses made in the semi structured interviews with headteachers	176
Table 3 Analysis of themes and sub themes from headteacher interviews relating to charism / ethos by the number and frequency of citations	185
Table 4 Analysis of themes and sub themes from headteacher interviews relating to Accompaniment.by the number and frequency citations	201
Table 5 Analysis of themes and sub themes from headteacher interviews relating to Collaboration by the number and frequency of citations	212
Table 6 Analysis of themes and sub themes from headteacher interviews relating to competing pressures by the number and frequency of citations	224
Table 7 Analysis of themes and sub themes relating to priorities identified by headteachers by citations and frequency	232

#### Chapter 10

Table 1 The results of the questionnaire to teachers summated for all schools	251
Table 2 Analysis of teacher responses from all schools regarding statements related to Charism	253
Table 3 Analysis of teacher responses from all schools for statements relating to Accompaniment	257
Table 4 Analysis of teacher responses from all schools for statements related to Collaboration	261
Table 5 Analysis of teacher responses for all schools for statements related to Pressures	265
Table 6 Analysis of respondents to statements 1 to 5 on Charism for School 1	275
Table 7 Analysis of respondents to statements 6 to 10 on Accompaniment for School 1	276
Table 8 Analysis of respondents to statements 11 to 16 on Collaboration for School 1	278
Table 9 Analysis of respondents to statements 16 to 20 on Pressures for School 1	280
Table 10 Analysis of respondents to statements 1 to 5 on Charism for School 2	283
Table 11 Analysis of respondents to statements 6 to 10 on Accompaniment for School 2	285
Table 12 Analysis of respondents to statements 11 to 15 on Collaboration for School 2	288
Table 13 Analysis of respondents to statements 16 to 20 on Pressures for School 2	290
Table 14 Analysis of respondents to statements 1 to 5 on Charism for School 3	294

Table 15 Analysis of respondents to statements 6 to 10 on Accompaniment for School 3	296
Table 16 Analysis of respondents to statements 11 to 15 on Collaboration for School 3	298
Table 17 Analysis of respondents to statements 16 to 20 on Pressures for School 3	299
Table 18 Analysis of respondents to statements 1 to 5 on Charism for School 4	302
Table 19 Analysis of respondents to statements 1 to 5 on Charism for School 4	305
Table 20 Analysis of respondents to statements 11 to 16 on Collaboration for School 4	307
Table 21 Analysis of respondents to statements 16 to 20 on Pressure for School 4	309
Table 22 Analysis of respondents to statements 1 to 5 on Charism for School 5	313
Table 23 Analysis of respondents to statements 6 to 10 on Accompaniment for School 5	315
Table 24 Analysis of respondents to statements 11 to 15 on Collaboration for School 5	317
Table 25 Analysis of respondents to statements 16 to 20 on Pressure for School 5	319
Table 26 Analysis of respondents to statements 1 to 5 on Charism for School 6	323
Table 27 Analysis of respondents to statements 6 to 10 on Accompaniment for School 6	325
Table 28 Analysis of respondents to statements 11 to 16 on Collaboration for School 6	327
Table 29 Analysis of respondents to statements 16 to 20 on Pressures for School 6	329

## Figures

### Chapter 9

Fig 1 Overall Analysis of Themes and Sub Themes by the number of citations and by the frequency of headteachers citing each theme.	178
Fig. 2 Overall analysis of the themes emerging from headteacher interview by the number of citations	182
Fig. 3 Overall analysis of headteacher interview themes by the frequency of citations	183
Fig 4 Analysis of the theme of Charism/ Ethos by the number of citations in headteacher interviews	188
Fig. 5 Bar chart of the analysis of Themes and Sub Themes relating to Charism by the number of citations	191
Fig. 6 Analysis of the themes and sub themes of Accompaniment by citations	203
Fig 7 Thematic bar chart analysis of Accompaniment by citations and frequency	205
Fig. 8 Analysis of themes and sub themes relating to Collaboration by Citations	215
Fig. 9 Analysis of the themes and sub themes related to collaboration by citations and percentage coverage.	222
Fig. 10 Analysis of the themes and subthemes relating to Competing Pressures by the number of citations	226

Fig. 11 Analysis of themes and sub themes relating to Competing Pressures by citations and frequency	229
Fig. 12 Analysis of Headteacher priorities by frequency of citation	235
Fig. 13 Analysis of Headteacher priorities by citation and frequency	238

## Chapter 10

Fig. 1 Pie chart of responses to statements 1 to 5 ranging from strongly disagree (inmost circle to strongly agree (outermost circle).	254
Fig 2 Bar chart of responses to statements 1 to 5	255
Fig 3 Pie chart of responses to statements 6 to 10 from strongly disagreeing (inner most circle) to strongly agreeing (outermost circle).	259
Fig 4 Bar chart of responses of statements 6 to 10 on Accompaniment	260
Fig 5 Pie chart of responses to statements 11 to 16 from strongly agree (innermost circle) to strongly disagree (outermost circle).	263
Fig 6 Bar chart of responses to statements 11 to 16	265
Fig 7 Pie chart of responses to statements 16 to 20 from strongly disagreeing (inner most circle) to strongly agreeing (outer most circle).	267
Fig 8 A bar chart of responses to statements 16 to 20 on Competing Pressures facing headteachers.	268

## **APPENDICES**

I	Transcript of a Semi Structured Interview with a Headteacher	387
II	Ethical Approval Letter	394
III	Ethical Research Participation Form	395
IV	Participant information sheet	396
V	Completed (Anonymised) Ethical Research Participation Form	398
VI	Headteacher Interview Questions	399
VII	Teacher Questionnaire Statements	400
VIII	Headteacher Interviews - Coded Analysis of Answers to 9 questions	401
IX	Comparison of results from the analysis of the Teacher Questionnaire returns for Schools 1 to 6	441

## **Abstract**

**Title: The extent to which it is possible to maintain the Salesian Charism in Salesian schools in a contemporary secular context in England.**

This study explores the key tenets of the Salesian charism, as initiated by St. John Bosco in nineteenth century Turin. The research question examines the extent to which it is possible for Salesian schools to maintain this charism in a contemporary secular context, alongside the school improvement agenda, which holds headteachers and teachers to account for pupil achievement and outcomes.

The literature begins by investigating historical perspectives on the pastoral ministry of St. John Bosco before retrieving ecclesial and scholarly literature around the nature of charism. Focusing specifically on the characteristics of the Salesian charism, the review proceeds to engage an in-depth consideration of current approaches to the spirituality of accompaniment, collaborative ministry between Salesians and lay-people committed to the maintenance of the Salesian charism and competing pressures, among which managerialism and the performativity agenda features prominently.

In terms of methodology, this study utilises a mixed methods approach to research employing both qualitative and quantitative methods, using both interpretivist and constructivist methodologies. The research employs semi-structured interviews to gather data from seven Salesian secondary school headteachers in England. Data was gathered from teachers using a questionnaire with twenty closed statements, each with a Likert-scale set of options to respond to. This was completed by 237 teachers employed in same schools as the headteachers.

The findings, framed against the core themes of charism, ethos, accompaniment, collaboration and pressures, suggest strongly that there is an openness to continuing to implement the Salesian charism in Salesian schools in England. Across the schools there is evidence that, while some key tenets of the Salesian charism are in place, not all are securely embedded in each school. There are also areas where leaders and teachers may differ in their interpretation of the extent to which key tenets of the Salesian charism are being implemented. In some instances, there is a lack of awareness of some of these tenets and how they can be utilised. There is also an acknowledgement, by headteachers and teacher respondents, of the need for effective modelling of the charism and of the importance of having authentic role models, including religious, involved in school, implementing the charism on a daily basis.

The thesis concludes with a series of practicable recommendations, centred around training in Salesian methodology and pedagogy for teachers and leaders, authentic modelling of the Salesian charism by Salesian religious and lay people and greater collaboration between Salesian schools, particularly in the context of the recruitment of future Salesian school leaders.

**Key words:** Salesian, school, charism, secular, accompaniment, collaboration, pressures, presence, preventive system, holistic, leadership.

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Rationale**

In setting out to examine the extent to which it is possible to maintain the Salesian Charism in Salesian schools in a contemporary context in the UK this study aims to examine five key elements:

1. The distinctive nature of the Salesian charism.
2. The decline in the numbers of religious currently working within the context of education and the new reality, recognised by Vatican documents, of the changing demographic of the deployment of religious into less mainstream and more liminal apostolates.
3. Salesians and lay people – an exercise in collaborative ministry.
4. The competing pressures under which headteachers are working within a contemporary education context (in particular performance management and assuring quality between inspections).
5. Fieldwork research exploring the extent to which it is possible to maintain the Salesian Charism in Salesian schools in a contemporary context in the UK

This study will begin with an exploration of the founder of the Salesian congregation, St. John Bosco, and his charism to work to educate young people at risk. It will explore his system of preventive education and what this means for educators and young people working in the field of education in a contemporary culture. It will review the context in which he developed his early mission. This will involve first an exploration of the ministry of St. John Bosco. It will examine characteristics such as his vocational discernment, his training, the wider context leading to the identification of young

people at risk in 19<sup>th</sup> century Turin, the response of Don Bosco to addressing identified needs and to fulfilling his vocational call, the development of his educational and formative model in equipping young people to make their way in society. In examining these facets it will be necessary to examine in detail the spirituality of accompaniment which underpinned Don Bosco's method of education.

This study will then go on to examine the role of Religious promoting mass education from the 18<sup>th</sup> century to Vatican II with a particular focus on the commitment to teaching as a vocation among professed members of Religious congregations. The impact of this process of formation will be examined in so far as it constitutes a framework for future development. It will also reflect on the numbers of religious currently available to be deployed and the concomitant responsibility of lay leadership in maintaining and developing the charism.

In addition, it will examine the changing demographic of the deployment of religious into more liminal and less mainstream apostolates. This will be examined through a review of current Vatican documents on schools and recent symposia on Catholic education.

Finally, this study will consider the competing pressures under which headteachers are working within a contemporary context including performance management and the self-evaluation required as quality assurance between inspections. Various strands of interpretation of faith and belief in the secular age will be considered including Boeve's theology of interruption and Davie's 'believing without belonging'<sup>1</sup> in so far as they describe a secular context. The analysis of commentators such as

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<sup>1</sup> Davie, G (1994) *Religion in Britain Since 1945: Believing Without Belonging*, London, Wiley.

Michael Paul Gallagher<sup>2</sup> and Dermot Lane<sup>3</sup> will be considered with regard to the work of Christian educators in meeting the challenges of secularisation.

While a detailed exploration of the concept 'secular' and its cognates is beyond the scope of this thesis, it is important to define the concept because of its significant impact on education in general and Catholic education in particular. While the term 'secular' derives from the Latin 'saeculorum', meaning simply 'of the age', James Arthur (2009)<sup>4</sup> points out that the term is "no longer either benign or neutral for it now becomes part of a broader process which encourages a belief that human beings ought to embrace their secular condition as ultimate. A secular mentality is slowly promoted which may comprehend a latent indifference or hostility toward religion and is understood as the transition from ultimate to proximate concerns." This latter point is especially significant in the context of maintaining a balance between school effectiveness and Catholic distinctiveness which will be explored subsequently.

In terms of 'secularisation', Charles Taylor (2007:19-20)<sup>5</sup> attributes the process to three causes:

- (1) public spaces being 'emptied of God or, of any reference to ultimate reality',
- (2) falling-off of religious practice, people no longer attending Church,
- (3) the growth of societies where 'belief in God is no longer axiomatic

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<sup>2</sup> Gallagher Michael Paul, (2008) " Charles Taylor's Critique of 'Secularisation'", in *Theological Studies*, volume 97, number 388, pp. 433-444.

<sup>3</sup> Lane Dermot, (2011), *Stepping Stones to Other Religions: A Christian Theology of Inter-Religious Dialogue*, New York, Mary Knoll, Orbis Books.

<sup>4</sup> Arthur, J, (2009), *Secularisation, secularism and Catholic education: understanding the challenges in international Studies in Catholic Education* Vol. 1, No. 2, October 2009, Taylor & Francis,

<sup>5</sup> Taylor, C, (2007), *A Secular Age*, Cambridge MA, Harvard University Press



The second is of particular significance in terms of the nourishing of Catholic distinctiveness, reflected in the concept of 'believing without belonging' which will also be explored subsequently.

## 1.2 Literature

An exploration of current literature analysing the impact of a contemporary (secular age) reveals a growing concern with individualism and the pre-eminence of the individual. Boeve expresses this differently referring to it as individualisation as opposed to individualism. Nevertheless, he still sees it focusing on the need to establish identity, something he sees as reflexive. Taylor<sup>6</sup> points to three malaises within a contemporary culture the first of which is individualism. This may be seen as modernity's greatest achievement; it has also however, in Taylor's estimation, come at a cost. People used to see themselves as part of a larger order where human beings had their proper place along with angels' heavenly bodies and earthly creatures. People were often locked into structures.

While these structures may have had apparently limited freedom, they also gave meaning to the world and to social activity. Taylor states that a wider consequence of this loss of order is that people no longer have a sense of a higher order, of something to die for. This lack of a deeper cause is cited by other authors as a reason in some instances for a dearth of faith commitment.

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<sup>6</sup> Taylor Charles, "Three Malaises" excerpted from *The Malaise of Modernity*, CBC Massey Lecture Series, The House of Anansi Press Inc., Toronto, (2007), pp1-29.

The second area of significant disenchantment for Taylor is the focus on instrumental reason which he cites as finding the most economical means to a given end. Seeking maximum efficiency and the best cost – output ratio are the new ideals. The third area of concern for Taylor is that he sees the combination of Individualism and instrumental reason as reducing the ability of individuals and groups to be receptive to language such as that of religious experience. These ideas and their potential impact on current educational thinking will be discussed further in later chapters.

Dermot Lane<sup>7</sup> in his analysis of Charles Taylor, amongst others, comes to the conclusion that we can summarise the effects of secularisation as afflicting three cultural or spiritual wounds on society. This impacts collective memory, belonging and imagination. Lane concludes that the impact of secularisation is pre-religious in the sense that it creates a culture which contributes to the deadening or even the switching off of receptors in areas where people are either open or closed to the 'surprise of revelation'. According to Lane the more radical crisis is 'one of sensibility rather than one of behaviour, of un-hope rather than unfaith'.

He goes on to add further detail using the analysis of the French sociologist Danièle Hervieu-Léger who holds that the decline of faith today is due to a collapse of collective memory rather than due to the impact of enlightenment thinking. He also states that for a true sense of belonging it is not enough to intellectually assent to faith. Genuine belonging must be fostered through a real and experienced sense of community.

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<sup>7</sup> Lane D., *Eucharist as Sacrament of the Eschaton: A Failure of Imagination?*, IEC2012 Theology Symposium, St. Patrick's College, Maynooth, Ireland (Mater Dei Institute of Education, Dublin City University).

Thirdly he cites the work of Archbishop Rowan Williams in his book *Lost Icons* in which he links a social crisis of mutual belonging to an erosion of spiritual imagination.

### 1.3 Background of the Researcher

As a professed member of a religious congregation, who worked for more than twenty years in Salesian schools as a teacher and senior leader and for ten years as a headteacher, in an apostolate still regarded as primary for this religious order, I bring a view that we must continually review and refine the core set of values, principles and parameters which encapsulate the Salesian charism and which enable this charism, not just to be handed on, but to be intentionally enacted in a school context. The form which these values, principles and parameters takes and whether they already reflect traditional paradigms within Salesian schools, is the subject of this investigation. In following this line of enquiry, I must remain aware of potential challenges to my capacity for objectivity after such a prolonged exposure to the Salesian charism in an educational context.

This study will therefore focus on:

- The Salesian Charism – historical and contemporary perspectives
- Researching literature
- Researching contemporary practice

## 1.4 Historical and Contemporary Perspectives

### A. The theology of Charism and spirit

Charism can be defined as a free or gracious gift. St. Paul's writings are seen as the origin for the current understanding of charism in a Christian context which is closely related to the gifts or fruits of the Holy Spirit. In 1 Corinthians 12: 8-10 Paul speaks of 'Many gifts but one Lord'. He highlights these gifts as wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, discernment, interpretation and prophecy amongst others. Later in the same chapter of Corinthians (1 Cor. 12: 28 – 30) Paul speaks about giftedness in a different way. This time he refers to the gifted more than the gifts i.e. the gifted are Apostles, Prophets, Teachers, Miracle workers, Healers, Helpers, Administrators. In the letter to the Romans 12:6-8, he further develops this theme speaking of the gifts of prophesying, serving and teaching.

For Paul everyone receives a different gift 'for the common good<sup>8</sup>' that is, to build up the church. Members make up the body of Christ. We are told there is a variety of gifts but one spirit. The purpose of the gifts is to maintain unity and diversity. To maintain the church as a living organism, all members must contribute.

In summary Charism, as a free and gracious gift, is a New Testament concept. Gifts come from the Holy Spirit and believers walk and work according to the Spirit. Charism, as a 'gift of the spirit', is for the common good and for the building up of the whole Church. In dialogue with God's Word revealed in Jesus Christ, St Paul reflects on the experience of his communities from the outset.

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<sup>8</sup> 1 Cor 4: 7 NIV Version

## B. The Salesian Charism, as revealed

The inspiration for Don Bosco's work with young people and indeed his vocation are often traced back to a dream he had at his home in the Piedmont hamlet of the Becchi at the age of nine. In the dream Don Bosco, as a boy, is confronted with young people acting like wild animals fighting, swearing and stealing. He weighs in with his fists to stop this behaviour, as the son of an upright peasant sharecropper may be inclined to do, ordering the young people to stop their activities 'or else!'. Whereupon a splendidly dressed lady (later attributed by him as Mary) appears and advises him not to use his fists but instead to win these young people over with loving kindness. At this change of approach all of the wild animals in the dream turned to sheep.

In the preface to the spiritual guidebook he prepared for young people referred to as the Companion of Youth (*Giovane Proveduto* 1847), Don Bosco wrote about his love for young people:

“My friends, I love you with all my heart, and your being young is reason enough for me to love you very much. You will certainly find books written by persons much more virtuous and much more learned than myself; but, I assure you, you would be hard put to find anyone who loves you more than I do in Jesus Christ, or who cares more about your true happiness than I do.”<sup>9</sup>

This sentiment put forward by John Bosco, of the essential importance of young people in his life, is echoed by a quote from Michael Rua, one of his closest confidantes, who went on to lead the Salesian society following the death of Bosco.

Rua, Don Bosco's successor, wrote

‘Don Bosco took no step, spoke no word, undertook no work that did not have the salvation of the young as their object. He left it to others to go after money,

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<sup>9</sup> English version of the *Giovane Proveduto: The Companion of Youth* by Saint John Bosco, edited by the Salesian Fathers (London: Burns Oates & Washbourne, 1938), pp. 3. Cf. also *EBM* III, 8.

comforts and honours. As for himself, he never had anything truly at heart, except the salvation of souls. In word and above all in deed did he live by the motto, 'Give me souls and take (away) the rest.'"<sup>10</sup>

Although Don Bosco may have taken inspiration from his dream at nine in following the vocational path he believed he had been invited to follow, it took many years of training, discernment and struggle for him to first identify and then to establish his work with the students of what he referred to as his 'oratory'. For the young people he identified as at risk, this was a combination of a playground, a school, a parish and a home. Above all it was a place of safety and security; a place of belonging. The oratory gradually expanded from day classes and catechetical and spiritual instructions, to a full-scale educational establishment, with boarding facilities, for both technical and academic students. In and through these developments and from extremely humble beginnings, John 'Don' Bosco's educational methodology was fashioned.

In Arthur Lenti's seminal work *Don Bosco Founder* he states

'It bears repeating: Don Bosco had a comprehensive concept of education. It entailed the total development of the person, bringing out to the best possible effect the person's potentialities in view of the individual's functioning as a mature Christian adult in society—a good citizen and a good Christian, as he would say.' <sup>11</sup>

All that Don Bosco did through education, training and formation was designed to meet this goal that the young people in his care could be 'good Christians and honest citizens' able to take their place in society and to 'earn their bread'.

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<sup>10</sup> Letter of August 24, 1894, in *Lettere circolari di Don Michele Rua ai Salesiani* (Torino: Tip S.A.I.D. "Buona Stampa", 1910), 109.

<sup>11</sup> Lenti, A, Ch 29. *Don Bosco Educator and Spiritual Master*

The specific nature of Don Bosco's educative approach will be explored in further detail as this thesis develops.

### C. Contemporary research on the practice of the Salesian Charism

#### Accompaniment and Companionship

The human person's quest for understanding life's mystery is an ongoing journey. Spirituality helps a person search for truth and seeks to offer insights about the transcendental and life in God. Spirituality can thus be identified with a particular anthropological approach – e.g. Don Bosco's search for God was within his own life experience – he read the 'signs of the times'.

In considering the nature of guidance and spiritual accompaniment, there is a need to consider the nature of the human person, as a spiritual being setting out to

- continue to search for an ultimate destination
- better understand life within a given context
- risk being devoid of mystery
- utilise mystery as offering hope

If mystery is completely understood, it will cease to be such.

- Mystery will always be enigmatic, but it need not be feared. A spiritual journey that seeks to eliminate all that is mysterious will never take us far away from our comfort zone for genuine transformation<sup>12</sup>.

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<sup>12</sup> Benner, D. (2002), *Sacred Companions: The Gift of Spiritual Friendship and Direction*, Downers Grove IL, InterVarsity Press

- Questions which seek to find an answer to existential uncertainties are ‘not questions with simple answers but questions that lead us deeper into the unspeakable mystery of existence’<sup>13</sup>.
- Don Bosco did not neglect what he saw as the spiritual needs of pupils.
- He did much of his spiritual direction through the sacrament of reconciliation.
- Don Bosco used every occasion and means to direct, guide and accompany young people

#### D Religious and Lay People Working in Collaboration

It could be argued that one of the significant catalysts for embarking upon this research topic revolves around the decline in the number of religious working in schools. This will be addressed in more detail in Chapter 5. Bernard Grogan (2024)<sup>14</sup>, for example, provides a snapshot of this decline in revealing that the number of Salesians reduced from 21,614 in 1967 compared with 14,486 in 2024. Such a decline is potentially challenging in terms of the extent to which it is possible to maintain the Salesian Charism in Salesian schools in a contemporary context in the UK. This is reflected in the concept of ‘plausibility structures’ articulated by Peter Berger. In essence Berger’s claim is that what we find believable is closely connected to the number of people who believe in

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<sup>13</sup> Nouwen, H, Christensen M. J., Laird R. L. (2011) *Spiritual Direction: Wisdom for the long walk of Faith* SPCK Publishing, London

<sup>14</sup> Grogan, B, (2024), *History of the Great Britain Province*, Rome, LAS



it. It is easier, therefore, to be influenced by a religious charism if one is surrounded by those who are visibly religious. 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. Religious and lay people working in collaboration is, therefore, seminally significant in this context.

### 1.5 Practitioner Research

The research element of this study will consist in personal interviews with selected individuals involved in school leadership within Salesian schools, as well as field work through a group questionnaire. Questions will be formulated to ensure consistency both in verbal and in written elucidation.

Interviews will take the form of intensive semi-structured conversations. They will aim at assisting participants to focus on those aspects of planning and behaviour which has the intention of embedding the Salesian charism within a school context. The goal of these structured conversations is to obtain data which is both accurate and contemporary. To achieve this care will be taken to ensure that these conversations take place in an environment which is supportive, and which facilitates listeners speaking freely about their experiences in order to access the richest possible data. This will involve the use of prompts, probes and questions to check whether information communicated is accurate. The intensive interview approach is intended to give individuals engaged in School leadership the opportunity to reflect on issues in

which they are often immersed but find it difficult to step back and critically evaluate in terms of their assumptions and behaviour.

The analysis of data, which follows, will enable the researcher to focus on relevant points which have emerged from the interview material. This will allow the researcher to go on to interpret empirical evidence in dialogue with concepts emerging from the critical retrieval of contemporary and historical perspectives. The dialogue may focus on, for example, whether or not individuals who are leading Salesian schools, believe that they are actively engaged in promoting the ongoing development of the Salesian charism within the school and, if so, in what ways they are supporting it. A key question will be whether, and to what extent, those involved in leadership see the Salesian charism as at the core of the school.

In the research process it will be necessary to maintain an awareness regarding the quest for a degree of objectivity. This will involve maintaining openness in terms of maintaining one's committed objectivity and in the framing and asking of questions.

Questionnaires will form part of the fieldwork element of this thesis alongside conversations with leaders, past and present, of Salesian schools. This will play an important role in corroborating the findings arising from in depth interviews. The questionnaire will be designed specifically to investigate the extent to which the Salesian charism, which will be retrieved extensively in the literature reviews, is a living reality in the network of Salesian schools committed to maintaining a distinct Salesian ethos. The questionnaire will be constructed to identify the key elements of distinctiveness constitutive of a Salesian ethos in order to examine the extent to which these elements echo with the experience of current practitioners.

## 1.6 Conclusion

This study will conclude with a review of the major research findings. It will then proceed to suggest in what ways the findings may impact upon the mission of Salesian Schools within the Catholic Church in the United Kingdom.

## CHAPTER 2

### HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE MINISTRY OF SAINT JOHN BOSCO

#### 2.1 Introduction

In the course of this chapter a number of key themes will be signposted. These will be picked out and expanded upon in later chapters. These will look at key elements of the methodology and spirituality of St John Bosco with a particular emphasis on the elements which make up his charism, something we began to discuss in an earlier chapter.

#### 2.2 Mother as catechist

The Danish writer Johannes Jorgensen begins one of the first biographies of St. John Bosco with the phrase “In the beginning was the mother”.<sup>15</sup> Don Bosco’s mother, Margaret Occhiena, is credited with playing a strongly supportive role in his ministry as his work, in establishing an oratory, began to develop. But it is in his early formative years that her influence was yet more profound. There is no doubt that she played the fundamental role in the education to the faith of the young John Bosco.

Bosco himself acknowledged this in his autobiographical *Memoirs of the Oratory of St. Francis de Sales*:

“Her greatest care was given to instructing her sons in religion, making them value obedience and keeping them busy with tasks suited to their age. “When I was still very small she herself taught me to pray. As soon as I was old enough to join my brothers, she made me kneel with them morning and evening. We would all recite our prayer together, including the rosary.”<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Jorgensen, J., (1936) *Don Bosco* London Burns Oates & Washbourne, 2nd prtg. 270p.

<sup>16</sup> Bosco, G., (1989) *Memoirs of the Oratory* New Rochelle: Don Bosco Publications

He goes on to say he remembered how well she herself had prepared him for his first confession stating “She took me to church, made her own confession first and then presented me to the confessor. Afterwards she helped me make my thanksgiving.”<sup>17</sup>

Don Bosco’s mother was illiterate. Nevertheless, she was Don Bosco’s first catechist. She used the knowledge that she had learned from her own catechesis in the parish of Capriglio. The Casati catechism, which was most likely used in her catechesis, was introduced into the diocese of Turin by Monsignor Vittoria Gaetano Maria Costa when Castelnuovo D’asti and the surrounding area, became part of his diocese in 1817. It was designed to express the Catholic faith in simple and straightforward sentences for the masses. Bosco himself, in his *Memoirs of the Oratory*, acknowledges the catechetical role fulfilled by his mother when he states

“Because we lived far from the Church, the parish priest did not know me, and my mother had to do almost all the religious instruction. She did not want me to get any older until my admission to that great act of our religion, so she took upon herself the task of preparing me as best she could. She sent me to catechism class every day of Lent. I passed my examination and the date was fixed.”<sup>18</sup>

He goes on to say

“My mother coached me for days and brought me to confession three times during that Lent. ‘My dear John’ she would say ‘God is going to give you a wonderful gift. Make sure you prepare well for it. Go to confession and don’t keep anything back. Tell all your sins to the priest, be sorry for them all, and promise God to do better in the future’. I promised all that, God alone knows whether I have been faithful to my resolution.”

Don Bosco further attests “At home she saw to it that I said my prayers and read good books; and she always came up with the advice a diligent mother knows to give her children.”

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid

<sup>18</sup> Ibid

From these testimonies we get a clear picture of the importance to Don Bosco of the spiritual guidance of his mother and of the essential role she played in his catechesis. He goes on to describe how careful his mother was to ensure that he did not indulge in any physical work, but engaged in a period of reading and reflection, effectively a retreat, before he made his first holy communion.

“On the morning of my first communion” he recounts “my mother did not permit me to speak to anyone. She accompanied me to the altar and together we made our preparation and thanksgiving. It was my mother’s wish that day, that I should refrain from manual work. Instead she kept me reading and praying.”<sup>19</sup>

Margaret, or Mama Margaret as she came to be known, was not only John Bosco’s first and principle instructor in the faith throughout his early formative period; in the absence of a father, who died when he was only two years old, she was also the inculcator of the values that would shape him. Arthur Lenti, in his work *Don Bosco Founder: A Survey of the Life and Work of Saint John Bosco from Birth to the Founding of the Salesian Society (1815-1862)* states

“What Margaret sought to give her children was moral character and inner spiritual resources for life and engagement with life. She trained them to a sense of God’s presence, trust in God’s loving providence, honesty and integrity, love of hard work and fidelity to duty, sensibility to other people’s needs expressed in concrete acts of service, Christian optimism and a lively hope for God’s ultimate reward. These were the basic values by which she lived and which she passed on to the children, to John in particular”.<sup>20</sup>

## 2.3 Vocational Discernment and Training

The catechetical instruction of the day emphasised the centrality of God as a creator present in all things. This would have been reinforced for John from his earliest years

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<sup>19</sup> Bosco, G., (1989) *Memoirs of the Oratory* New Rochelle: Don Bosco Publications

<sup>20</sup> Lenti, A *Don Bosco Founder: A Survey of the Life and Work of Saint John Bosco from Birth to the Founding of the Salesian Society (1815-1862)*

through his experience of the cycle of nature in the fields and looking after animals. The religious education provided by his mother would have reinforced in him a trust in providence and the ability to interpret daily events in the light of a God who is present in human reality. To the young John Bosco, according to the Salesian historian Fr. Pietro Stella, his mother's confidence in God "was unlimited and unquestioned because he was the good and provident father who gave people their daily bread and everything they needed".<sup>21</sup>

A vision of life centred on the continuing presence of a loving God lived in and through the natural world was, for John Bosco, the foundation for developing an attitude of contemplation. When he was twelve, due to family reasons, John Bosco had to seek employment at a farm owned by the Moglia family, some eight kilometres from his home. Don Bosco does not mention this period in his memoirs of the oratory but Giorgio Moglia, in his testimony to the process of beatification, stated that his aunt had told him that the young John Bosco was intent on prayer even when he was watching the sheep in the fields. Another testimony recalled how John Bosco would retire to the shade of the hedges and the trees to read, study and pray asking a neighbour to keep an eye on his cows so that he could remain recollected in prayer or study. According to Giuseppe Buccellato, in his *Notes for a Spiritual History of Father John Bosco*, "the adolescent Bosco was different to other farm hands of his time. His spirit of piety, the taste for reading, an openly manifest inclination towards the ecclesiastical state..."<sup>22</sup>

With regard to his development the historian Pietro Stella states

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<sup>21</sup> Stella, P Don Bosco nella storia della religiosita cattolica (volume 1)

<sup>22</sup> Buccellato, G 2008 *Appunti per una 'storia spirituale' del sacerdote Gio' Bosco* Rome, Editrici Elledici, English translation (2014) *Notes for a Spiritual History of Father John Bosco* Bengaluru, India, Kristu Jyoti Publications, 23

“This period of time then was not a useless hiatus for John. His sense of God and prayerful contemplation took deeper root as he conversed with God amid the solitude of his labours in the field. It was a period of expectant waiting, focused on God and human beings and filled with meditation and supplication. It may well have been the most contemplative period of his youthful life, opening wide his spirit to the gifts of the mystical life that flowed from an attitude of hope and prayerfulness.”<sup>23</sup>

## 2.4 The Wider context and young people at risk – Turin of the nineteenth century

Between 1814 and 1848 the population of Turin and its surrounding villages had risen from some 84, 000 to 137, 000 people. The reasons for this rapid increase in numbers were due to the end of the Napoleonic wars, when population levels rose across Europe and a migration of peasants from the land into established cities looking for employment. This migration was not simply due to opportunities being presented in the cities as a result of the industrial revolution but to the rapidly deteriorating conditions for peasant farmers as landowners started to buy up land to forge large estates. Family ownership of land was decreasing while the creation of large estates was on the increase. Conditions for farm labourers were becoming increasingly fraught with significant issues of under nourishment.

Against this background, in 1841, under the guidance of Giuseppe Cafasso, his spiritual director, John Bosco enrolled at the Convitto Ecclesiastico in Turin, a pastoral institute set up for the post ordination formation of priests, for a period of two (which became three for Bosco) years of pastoral training as a newly ordained priest. The Convitto Ecclesiastico had the parish church of St. Francis of Assisi attached to it; this is where Fr. Cafasso gave catechetical classes to artisans on Sundays. Don Bosco was to become involved in the delivery of these classes. In addition, he took up the

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<sup>23</sup> Stella, Pietro, *Don Bosco Life and Works*, 16-17



ministry, alongside Fr. Cafasso, of visiting young people in prison. This ministry involved, at times, accompanying young men to the gallows. So appalled was he at the excessive waste of humanity that he witnessed, seeing young people idle and in despair in prison, that he resolved to do all that he could to prevent them being sent there. He would dedicate his life subsequently to these young people, now referred to as 'poor and abandoned'.

The young people at risk were generally made up of two groups. One group, aged between 12 and 20 with some as old as 25 years of age, were either migrant workers or boys from the slum areas of northern Turin who were trying to eke out a living, by fair means and foul, in the marketplaces and streets of the city. At any one time more than a thousand of them could be found around market areas such as the Porta Palazzo, waiting to be employed or up to no good, some of them attached to gangs either for their own protection or because they were engaged in criminal activity. A second group were children of 10 years or younger who were working in the factory shops of Turin. In 1844 it was reckoned that some seven thousand of these children were employed. With no education available to them, never mind religious instruction, and no legislation protecting them, they were open to all kinds of exploitation, including physical and moral danger, in addition to the sixteen-hour days they habitually worked.

Don Bosco understood that many of these young people had been in prison or were in danger of going to prisons the like of which he had experienced with Cafasso. In the Turin of the time, only one out of five of young people below the age of twenty had experienced any schooling for any length of time and around 40% were completely illiterate. These were the young people titled poor and abandoned. Buccellato states

"In great part, Don Bosco fully understood and realised his vocation only when the distressful situation of so many youngsters, seen as an urgency that could

not be set aside, contributed to organise his interior universe and his human resources into a love unified by the profound need to make of life itself a gift and to give new and creative responses to the demands that, implicitly or explicitly, were coming to him from the youth of Turin”.<sup>24</sup>

In his Memoirs of the Oratory Bosco himself would write

“Hardly had I registered at the Convitto of St. Francis (in 1841), when I met at once a crowd of boys who followed me in the streets and in the squares and even into the sacristy of the church attached to the institute... It was then that I realised that if young lads just released from prison could find someone to befriend them, look after them, be with them on holidays, help them find work with good employers and visit them during the week, they would soon forget the past and become good Christians and honest citizens. This was the beginning of our Oratory. It was to be blessed by the Lord with growth beyond my imaginings at that time’.<sup>25</sup>

## 2.5 The Development of the Educational and Formative model of St. John Bosco

Don Bosco’s love for the young arose from valuing them as unique individuals who possessed the potential to influence society and their own circumstance for the better. According to Lenti, his complete dedication to them was motivated by a desire “not just to prevent social harm, not just to rehabilitate (where needed), but to educate”. By education he meant “helping the young person to develop and grow as a human being and a Christian, so that he could find his proper place in society”<sup>26</sup>. Don Bosco, when faced with the liberal revolution and the complete secularisation of the state and of its institutions in the kingdom of Piedmont, came to the conclusion that a Christian society could only be restored through religion. Accordingly, Don Bosco “saw the young, so

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<sup>24</sup> Buccellato, G 2008 *Appunti per una ‘storia spirituale’ del sacerdote Gio’ Bosco* Rome, Editrici Elledici, English translation (2014) *Notes for a Spiritual History of Father John Bosco* Bengaluru, India, Kristu Jyoti Publications

<sup>25</sup> Bosco, G. *Memoirs of the oratory of St. Francis de Sales from 1815 to 1855: The Autobiography of St. John Bosco*, New Rochelle, Salesian Publications

<sup>26</sup> Lenti, A., *Don Bosco Founder: A Survey of the Life and Work of Saint John Bosco from Birth to the Founding of the Salesian Society (1815-1862)*

educated, not only as the 'building blocks' of a renewed society in his day, but also as the vehicle for the renewal of society throughout the world at any time. Hence, each development of his work, from the original oratory to the school, to the missions, was for "education," and at each stage he applied his method and style in a manner appropriate to that development, setting up an educative environment that suited that stage." We will consider his method and style in a later section?<sup>27</sup>

## 2.6 Response of Don Bosco to addressing identified needs

During his time attending the Convitto Ecclesiastico, between 1841 and 1844, Don Bosco exercised his priestly ministry in the workplaces, on the streets and in the prisons. He continued Fr. Joseph Cafasso's work of gathering young people in a room next to the sacristy of the Church of St. Francis of Assisi which was attached to the Convitto Ecclesiastico and in other places. After a period of 'wandering' to find places where he could gather what was now an ever-growing band of boys, he rented from Mr. Francesco Pinardi a shed in a field on the Via della Giardiniera in the Valdocco district of Turin. It is here that he begins to establish his work.

As early as 1847 a hospice for boys was attached to the Oratory with the purpose of "removing them from danger, instructing them in religion and preparing them for work". This first hospice was built for artisans (the poorest of the poor). A second was added for students who initially attended public schools. In 1853 the first schools for artisans and students were begun in the house beside the Oratory (the Casa Annessa). This

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<sup>27</sup> Buccelato, G 2008 *Appunti per una 'storia spirituale' del sacerdote Gio' Bosco* Rome, Editrici Elledici, English translation (2014) *Notes for a Spiritual History of Father John Bosco* Bengaluru, India, Kristu Jyoti Publications

brief timescale demonstrates that the Oratory was very much a project in evolution, with Don Bosco continually looking for new means to find solutions to the problems he faced, according to the means at his disposal.

From the very beginning the educative project of Don Bosco was marked by a profound conviction about the primary role of religion in the work of recovery and prevention in terms of young people at risk. In his experience in visiting the prisons he had seen that some individuals could be influenced for the better and begin to change their lives even while still incarcerated. This experience strengthened his conviction, which he set out in 1854 in the *Cenni Storici intorno dall'Oratorio di S. Francesco di Sales*, that “these boys had fallen into trouble because of a lack of moral and religious instruction and that these two means of education could be efficacious in protecting those who were still good and in helping the bad to improve upon their exit from those places of punishment’.

Arthur Lenti sets out Don Bosco’s methodology and style on three levels.

I. At the level of educational philosophy he states the method “acquired its true character from an original, personal synthesis of humanism and Christian faith that Don Bosco achieved out of select educational traditions, out of his cultural experience, and out of his own personal experience with young people over many years.”<sup>28</sup>

II. At the next level this educational philosophy was based on a number of principles founded on reason, religion and loving concern / kindness (Amorevolezza). On these foundations he “set up a spiritual, educational

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<sup>28</sup> Lenti, A *Don Bosco Founder: A Survey of the Life and Work of Saint John Bosco from Birth to the Founding of the Salesian Society (1815-1862)*, 30, 640

environment characterised by familiarity, spontaneity, trust and joy”<sup>29</sup>. With regard to strategies emphasis was placed on the axis of prevention – protection and on assistance through the sustained and supporting presence of the educator. His methodology was completely against the use of corporal punishment as a means of maintaining control; he saw the active and ongoing presence of educators among their charges as a key means of preventing wrongdoing by pupils i.e. of ‘nipping any difficulty in the bud’; this was another reason for the use of the word preventive.

III. At the level of means and tools, skilful use was made of such educational underpinnings such as “work and study, religious practice, moral rigor, and a great variety of play activities (games, sports, outings, theatre, music, celebrations)”. It is important to note that for Don Bosco these underpinnings were as much formative as they were educational. Lenti continues "at the philosophical and consequent environmental levels, Don Bosco based his educational method on such an affective relationship between educator and pupil as may be found in a good family". This tersely describes Don Bosco's way with young people, no matter in what situation he found them. In effect, the key “operative” words of the method are familiarity, affection and trust.

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid

## 2.7 The Spiritual Life and Personal Discipline

It is difficult to tie down the specific elements of the interior life of John Bosco because he put so little down on paper, considering the range of his writings on pedagogy and instruction.

Pietro Stella states

“Admittedly he does not tell us his own personal experience of recollection and unitive prayer, nor does he offer us any theory about unitive prayer and contemplation. But he is quite ready to see loving colloquy and union in certain stages of the spiritual life lived by people he was personally involved with.”<sup>30</sup>

Don Bosco was noted for informing his Salesians that he could only promise work, bread and heaven. In the process of his canonisation a representative on the commission considering his cause, allegedly asked when, with all of this activity going on, did Don Bosco make time for prayer? The phrase contemplation in action has been used, in part, to describe the prayer lives of members of various religious congregations, such as Don Bosco, who have dedicated themselves to the pastoral mission.

Giuseppe Buccellato, in *Notes for a Spiritual History of St. John Bosco*, is keen to emphasise that Giuseppe Cafasso, the director of the Convitto Ecclesiastico, the college where Don Bosco trained for three years after his ordination, reserved a room for him there that he would use on a daily basis to study, to pray and to write his various publications. In addition, as part of his ongoing commitment to the Convitto, on several occasions a year, Don Bosco would walk the twenty or so kilometres from Turin to the retreat centre of San Ignazio above the village of Lanzo outside Turin, to deliver the

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<sup>30</sup> Stella, P Don Bosco Religious Outlook and Spirituality, 2<sup>nd</sup> rev. ed. Trans. John Drury (New Rochelle: Salesian Publishers, 1996), 491

spiritual exercises to students of the Convitto, to which the retreat centre was attached, and to the laity. Indeed, Don Bosco styled his early retreats, especially for those boys at the oratory he thought had the possibility of a religious vocation, on these exercises, insisting on the need for silence to aid spiritual discernment.

## 2.8 Concluding Remarks

In this chapter we have explored Don Bosco's early catechesis and how his religious experience, as part of the trinomial of reason, religion and kindness, was central to his method and his strategy for enabling individuals to contribute to society as good Christians and honest citizens.

Even though the target of Don Bosco's educational work was often seasonal migrant young men or the inhabitants of working-class neighbourhoods and of the suburbs who had often had no religious instruction, his approach still put a high premium on the importance of religious education. In a contemporary context there may be a danger that the means of delivering his educational philosophy (education, games and theatre) could be mistaken as the end rather than the means. One commentator has said that "if the preventive system is not in itself spirituality, there is a danger that it loses its authenticity, if it is not animated by a clear spiritual purpose in a collaboration involving educators and young people." In the next chapter we shall look in detail at the key elements of the Salesian charism including the methods of spiritual accompaniment used by St. John Bosco.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **THE SALESIAN CHARISM**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

In the early years of his work Don Bosco experienced many painful trials. He was steadfast in the way he met these setbacks and in many ways they helped to shape his character as well as his apostolate. Indeed, many spiritual values were forged from Don Bosco's experiences in his early years, such as patience and confidence in God and in providence, a deep sense of the reality and nearness of God, as well as a deep sense of prayer.

Don Bosco's early and formative experiences also played a part in his discernment of his vocation. He saw himself as called to serve poor and abandoned young people. His experience of losing his own father at a young age meant that he understood their need for support. He was specifically attracted to caring for them and developed a deep knowledge and understanding of their predicament. For Bosco, his response to the personal needs of the boys he had gathered was immediate and his commitment binding. Having witnessed the plight of some of these young people in the prisons of Turin, devoid of moral and spiritual guidance, he was determined to provide them with the wherewithal to conduct happy and productive lives.

#### **3.2 The Nature of Charism**

In chapter 1 charism was defined as a gracious, or free, gift which is given to all believers as a result of their baptism. It is closely related to the gifts (charismata) of the Spirit. The Oxford online dictionary relates the word charism to charisma which it



defines as a “compelling attractiveness or charm that can inspire devotion in others”. The same dictionary defines the plural Charismata as a “divinely conferred power or talent.” In short, grace is closely linked to the sharing in the divine life of all Christians, through their baptism.

John Lydon notes that Paul, in 1 Corinthians 12, asserts that gift is not synonymous with grace but is as a result of it. A charism is “the realisation in practice of grace, a gift, which enables the believer to contribute to the common good”<sup>31</sup>. Although there are a variety of gifts (Cor. 1 12:4) they must be working together for the common good (1 Cor. 12:7) i.e., for the benefit of the whole community.

Lydon goes on to assert the integral connection between charism and the role of the Spirit, which allows him to see the interconnections between charism, ministry and work. He sees service and work as part of the inclusive nature of charism together with the ability to shape actions for the good of the whole community. In recognising the interrelation of gifts and Spirit, with service and work, Paul is

“Firstly, reiterating the point since all gifts have a common origin, they should serve a common purpose. Secondly, that the common purpose is the promotion of solidarity among believers since the spirit is the principle of community... Thirdly...(he) implies the concept of power since the word ‘work’ is used in other contexts to represent an active power or principle. The purpose of such power is to coordinate the “gifts of the community for the common good.”<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Lydon, J., (2009), *Transmission of the Charism : A Major Challenge for Catholic Education* in Grace, G., (Editor), *International Studies in Catholic Education*, London, Routledge

<sup>32</sup> Op. cit.

It is a Thomistic understanding that virtues play an essential role in Christian living and that growth in virtue has the capacity to inspire others and bring people to sanctity. According to Aquinas, fellowship results from the grace of God in communication of his Son. Aquinas insists that the essence of this self-communication is charity and that religious life was instituted primarily so that Christians could strive for the 'perfection of charity'. Religious must therefore reflect in his or her person the theological virtue of charity.

By the development of this link between growth in virtue and the seeking of perfection it could be argued that the focus (of religious life) falls on personhood implying that a religious might inspire others to follow his or her way.

In the context of late modernity, references to 'charisma' are largely cited from the work of German sociologist Max Weber. The term is defined as 'a gift or power of leadership or authority' to which is added the "capacity to inspire devotion and enthusiasm".

Weber offers a number of insights about charismatic leadership:

1. It does not depend on authority for its legitimacy but rather on personal integrity.  
This is reflected in the giftedness of the leader which in turn inspires allegiance and commitment from disciples.
2. Devotion to the founder leads to self-sacrifice which flies in the face of selfishness.
3. The charisma of the leader must be experienced as a lived vitality.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Weber, M., (1991), *Essays in Sociology*, (Edited with an Introduction by H.H. Gerth & C. Wright Mills), London, Routledge: 249

Malina<sup>34</sup> takes Weber's work on further setting out characteristics of charismatic leadership stating that it:

1. Emerges in crisis situations.
2. Derives from a successful calling into question of current values.
3. Results in an unconditional following of and an emotional commitment to the inspiration, to the leaders, by disciples.
4. Insists on the community dynamic which must exist between leader and disciples.
5. Draws in new disciples / prophets

### 3.3 The Charism of Don Bosco as Founder

Don Bosco's founding experience and charism developed from a situation of crisis as a result of the *aggiornamento* which was taking place in the Piedmont of his time. Political and religious upheaval against a background of civil unrest and military conflict was common. Bosco was counter cultural in that he wished to establish a place of security and serenity for his boys where they could be educated and brought to full maturity, despite the unrest that was all around them. To establish and maintain this environment, Bosco relied on his personal giftedness to attract and retain individuals and the support of the state. He also adopted a strict community regime to enable the

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<sup>34</sup> Malina, B.J., (1996), *The Social World of Jesus and the Gospels*, London, Routledge

implementation of his educational method and to maintain the structure of his oratory for present and future students.

These encounters brought to light a number of spiritual qualities that he possessed:

a) The Gift of prophecy: Bosco had a particular sensibility and way of perceiving situations which focussed on the dangers and difficulties facing young people travelling to Turin and those abandoned in a city consumed by political, economic and religious upheaval.

b) Pastoral Charity: the gift of 'choosing' the poor and the young and indeed consecrating his life for the care of young people, to help them become 'good Christians and honest citizens' and creating a number of charitable works to respond to that growing need.

c) Witness and Teaching: Bosco lived and taught a spirit which has become known as the Salesian spirit (ethos), expressed in terms of the Salesian charism, through his pastoral action, his prayer, his words, his writings and his lifestyle.

d) Charismatic Leadership and Discernment: not only in corporate terms, in founding and directing what rapidly became a national and international movement, with a number of different branches operating across continents but also in human terms, in helping his followers identify their own Salesian vocation and uniting them in an apostolic community

e) Inspiration: to develop and put into practice a global operative plan exhibiting a number of traits such as intentionality, dynamic initiative and concrete actions.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Braido, P (1982) *Il progetto operative di Don Bosco e l'utopia della societa Cristiana*. Quaderna di Salesianum, no. 6, Roma LAS. 4

All of these gifts combined together to form the founder's charism. This is the gift of an apostolic and spiritual posterity.

### 3.4 The Salesian Charism

Don Bosco's apostolic intuition found its expression in what is termed the Salesian charism, after he took his inspiration for his method and approach from St. Francis de Sales, the Savoy bishop and saint whose pastoral approach was characterised by gentleness (often referred to as sweetness) and love. Pietro Braido states

"In the last years... loving kindness (*amorevolezza*) and understanding were formulated by Don Bosco in relation to the thought of the 'doctor of charity St. Francis de Sales'. It ends by being incorporated in the spirit of charity and sweetness of St. Francis de Sales, truly a spirit of sweetness and charity. In 1880 Don Bosco summarised the spirit of the (Salesian) congregation in this expression..."<sup>36</sup>

As well as *amorevolezza* the Salesian Charism is made up of a number of dynamics which are set out below:

The essential elements of the Founder's Charism are:

- A. Reason
- B. Religion
- C. Loving kindness / concern (*Amorevolezza* in Italian)
- D. Presence and Assistance
- E. The Preventive System
- F. Family (Collaborative) Spirit

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<sup>36</sup> Braido, P (1998) *Prevenire non Reprimere Il Sistema educativo di Don Bosco (To Prevent not to Repress, the Educational System of Don Bosco)*, LAS, Rome p300

## G. Self-Sacrifice and Temperance

## H. Holistic Formation

It is worth us briefly examining each of these in turn:

### A. Reason

The three aspects of the trinomial of reason, religion and kindness are key elements in the educational philosophy and praxis of St. John Bosco. Each of these trinomials bears consideration, for as a unity, they communicate some of the most significant aspects of Bosco's educational approach.

Arthur Lenti<sup>37</sup> describes Don Bosco's meaning, with regard to reason, from four distinct points of view: justice, reasonableness, rationality and motivation.

From the point of view of justice, he draws two important insights:

1. The educator as well as the young person is subject to the rules.
2. Rights and obligations must be consistently respected by everyone.

Reasonableness, on the other hand, asserts that whatever is asked of a young person must be possible and proportionate. This can be applied in all areas whether they be work assignments, religious practice, or matters of discipline. Another way of expressing this guideline is using the term fairness. Young people especially, are highly sensitive to what they see as unfair treatment. In addition, all educational demands and decisions should be rational. If young people can understand decisions

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<sup>37</sup> Lenti A *Don Bosco Founder: A Survey of the Life and Work of Saint John Bosco from Birth to the Founding of the Salesian Society* (1815-1862), 30

and their logic they are more likely to recognise the good in them and to collaborate in their implementation.

Finally, the importance of the educational project, and the validity of its processes, should be made clear to young people in order to secure their motivation in the learning process. In this context reason can be seen to be playing a role in motivating the young person to make an intellectual commitment.

These are important markers in the educational approach of St. John Bosco. Young people will react first and foremost against injustice, particularly if they are the victims of that injustice. They will also react if they see a double standard in operation particularly when, for example, adults in an educational context, do not follow the standard set down for pupils. Some adults do not always understand the importance of being consistent because their comfort zone lies with maintaining a superior – inferior relationship.

The application of reason for Bosco had a particular role to play in the management of behaviour. Here, two of the guidelines set out earlier, that the educator as well as the young person is subject to the rules and the rights and obligations must be consistently respected by everyone, are apposite. This link will be explored further in a later chapter.

## B. Religion

Bosco was clear about the role of Religion in his work of prevention and recovery in terms of young people at risk. This was born out of his experience of visiting the prisons of Turin where he saw nothing but spiritual and temporal degradation. To the

mind of Don Bosco, as soon as prisoners he visited heard communicated to them the principles of morality and religion, many of them found the desire to be better. In his experience, some would improve their behaviour in prison while others would change their lives when they left prison. This confirmed for Bosco that a key reason for them falling into trouble, was a lack of moral and religious instruction. He saw in these two aspects of education the means to encourage and protect those living more virtuous lives, while assisting those who had fallen by the wayside, to make desired improvements.

Bosco placed great emphasis on religious exercises, such as retreats, in drawing nearer to God through prayer and listening to the word of God. He saw these as reinforcing the educational effort. He was keen that retreats, liturgies, religious education and opportunities for catechesis, were all used to explain the efficacy of religion and its role not just in supporting individuals but in building up civil society. Nevertheless, religion as a foundation for his educational method, should be distinguished from religious 'practice'. Though he placed great importance on religious exercises he was against any idea of forcing young people to frequent sacraments. He preferred a strategy of encouragement that explained to young people what the benefits were.

The practice of Christian life, what is sometimes referred to as the life of grace, was a key objective of the educational method of Don Bosco. The focus of this practice, such as the opportunity for retreats and attendance at sacraments, had an immediate goal in the building up of virtue amongst the young people who frequented the oratory. It also had a teleological and self-help dimension in which each individual is tasked with helping oneself to prepare for the end of one's life. This may seem rather extreme in our present-day context, something which will be considered in a subsequent chapter,



but in the Turin of Don Bosco's time, child and adolescent mortality rates were very high. Don Bosco articulated his approach in the motto *Da mihi animas cetera tolle* 'Give me souls, the rest matters nothing'.

Bosco's work had a clear spiritual proposal and evangelising intention which is striking when we consider that his initial targets were the seasonal workers and young people from working class neighbourhoods of Turin, including those in danger of, or those emerging from, incarceration. Many of these individuals would have been completely lacking in religious education and catechetical instruction. Another aspect of his spiritual proposal however was the care he took in fostering the discernment of individuals whom he thought had a vocational call as priests or religious. He took care to ensure that he gave these individuals particular attention and went to significant lengths, when he introduced the practice of spiritual exercises into the oratory as a means of retreat for the boys, that individuals who were discerning their vocation were able to 'live in' so that they could receive the full benefit of their time of spiritual recollection.

Bosco's spiritual proposal, which could be termed a universal call to sanctity, is for all whether young people, lay collaborators, students considering their vocation or religious. It could be summarised as setting out a programme to attain a happy and a holy life, whatever one's state. This was not some morose pursuit but was characterised by the phrase *Servite Domino in Laetitia* 'Serve the Lord with gladness'. Bosco had to deal with the significant influence of Jansenism and moral rigorism (see chapter 5) in his time and was aware that religious practice could seem sad and devoid of all fun and pleasure, to the young people in his care. He was determined to show these young people a way of practising Christian living that would make them happy and cheerful and demonstrate to them the true entertainments and pleasures.

As discussed earlier, Bosco lived by faith and believed in a God that was ever present. He regarded the mediation of Christ and therefore the Church, as essentially necessary not only for spiritual salvation but also for the integration of the whole person and the fulfilment of each individual's duty to society. For this reason, Bosco could not separate being a good citizen from being a good Christian. His oratory programme centred on religious instruction; his educational undertaking was based on the Christian faith tradition. According to Lenti "Coupled with the sustained religious experience of prayer and the sacraments, which he provided to his youngsters, this "Christian education," developed into a "spirituality,"<sup>38</sup> He is keen to stress that it is at this point for Bosco education and the spiritual life intersected and became inseparable.

To this extent the place of religion, in Bosco's approach according to Lydon<sup>39</sup>, could be described as architectonic i.e. it is the structure or framework to which everything else is attached; frequenting the sacraments, catechetical instruction and practices of piety were not only components of the educational venture but "constituted the core purpose, giving coherence, relevance and purpose to every Salesian apostolic initiative"<sup>40</sup> This is particularly significant in the context of school ministry which will be discussed later.

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid

<sup>39</sup> Lydon, J., *The Contemporary Catholic Teacher*, Lambert Academic Publishing, Saarbrücken Germany, 2011

<sup>40</sup> Lydon, J., (2009), *Transmission of the Charism : A Major Challenge for Catholic Education* in Grace, G., (Editor), *International Studies in Catholic Education*, London, Routledge

### C. Loving concern / kindness ('Amorevolezza')

Bosco stated, on more than one occasion, that "The young should not only be loved but that they should know that they are loved". This often repeated saying describes the clear disposition of Don Bosco that young people should know that their educators had concern for them and indeed that they were loved. He advised his followers "Try to make yourself loved rather than feared."<sup>41</sup> For Bosco education was about establishing relationships that were mutual and healthy. In speaking of love he was not referring to some starry-eyed notions that were not rooted in real familial experience. According to Arthur Lenti in *Don Bosco's Charism and Spirit* this was "spiritually mature, impartial, generous, selfless, self-sacrificing love"<sup>42</sup>. According to Bosco, educators should love those in their care the same way that good Christian parents love their children. They should also make the first move.

For Lenti this means that we are not talking about incidental love but love "proven and expressed in practice"<sup>43</sup> which should be expressed as loving parents would express it with "loving concern, with caring friendliness, with tender loving care."<sup>44</sup> Bosco himself expressed precisely what he meant in a letter to the priest in charge of setting up his first missionary outreach in Patagonia "Charity, patience, sweetness, never humiliating reproaches, never punishments, doing the good which one is able to do, not doing evil".<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Bosco, D. *Confidential Advice to Directors* (1863))

<sup>42</sup> Lenti, A *Don Bosco Charism and Spirit* 30, 2008, LAS Rome

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>45</sup> Bosco, D.: *Letter to Monsignor Cagliero, 6 August 1885 E IV* 328

In 1884, concerned that the standards of the practice of some Salesians in his centres, John Bosco wrote a letter from Rome<sup>46</sup> exhorting his Salesians to hold fast to the values that had been set out when the oratory work was originally established. He mentions the Italian word *Amorevolezza*, generally translated as loving kindness, some twenty-seven times as he describes how the oratories were at their happiest when Salesians were assisting in the playground and active among the young people. In his description Don Bosco emphasises that there was no aching chasm between the young people and the Salesians, as their educators and there was no dissention or disunity when the oratories were functioning properly with Salesians actively assisting the pupils.

#### D. Presence and Assistance

The word assistance was used to describe Don Bosco's system of education before it came to be known as the preventive (as opposed to repressive) system. By assistance he meant "the total charitable activity on behalf of young people"<sup>47</sup> Indeed Lenti states that assistance and prevention share meaning at two levels; the first is that of content and aims in terms of "what is done to meet the youngster's spiritual and temporal needs"; the second is at the level of educational strategy, in that they "designate the educator's "vigilance" and "presence" to the youngster".<sup>48</sup> Bosco's experience of working with boys who had been in prison taught him the rudiments of assistance. In discussing the genesis of work for young people at risk he states

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<sup>46</sup> Bosco G, *Letter from Rome* Salesian Sources 1 Don Bosco and his Work, *Kristu Jyoti Publications* 2017 (Original publisher LAS Rome, 2014), p500

<sup>47</sup> Lenti, A *Don Bosco Charism and Spirit* 30, 2008, LAS Rome

<sup>48</sup> Ibid

“I was beginning to learn from experience that if young lads just released from their place of punishment could find someone to befriend them, to look after them, to assist them on feast days, to help them get work with good employers, to visit them occasionally during the week—these young men soon forgot the past and began to mend their ways. They became good Christians and honest citizens.”<sup>49</sup>

Don Bosco cites his identification of the needs of young people at risk and his response to those needs by removing risk and by assisting the vulnerable to lead better lives, as the beginning of his educational work in what he called his oratory; a flexible structure which combined aspects of parish, school, playground and home. Bosco also identified simple practical strategies to help to protect young people in the area where they could be most at risk of exploitation i.e. their places of work:

“On feast days, I gave all my time to assisting my youngsters. During the week I would go to visit them at their work in factories or workshops. Not only were the youngster happy to see a friend taking care of them; their employers were pleased, gladly keeping under their supervision youngsters who were assisted during the week, and even more so on feast days...”<sup>50</sup>

As Bosco implies the strategy of visiting young people in their place of work had the dual purpose of, on the one hand, reassuring the young person of the care and concern (loving kindness) of a friendly adult and on the other communicating to the employer the need to take the welfare of their employee seriously. Don Bosco, as his work developed, took the protection and welfare of his young workers extremely seriously. He built a hostel and workshops for artisans, so that they could train at the oratory, instead of workplaces in Turin where he felt they were in moral and physical danger. He subsequently drew up contracts with employers which protected the rights

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<sup>49</sup> Bosco G, *Memoirs of the Oratory*, 190, 197-198

<sup>50</sup> Ibid

of his students, including them being released on days of obligation, to fulfil their religious duties.

The role of assistance for Bosco is closely allied to his understanding of presence. By assistance he meant the presence and availability of the assistant to the young person for anything that might be needed. Lenti is keen to stress that the term assistance was used by Don Bosco's to summarise his educative approach long before the term 'preventive' came to be adopted. For Lenti Bosco's strategy was not simply preventive but "one that is rich in incentives and suggestions to help the youngster toward free decision".<sup>51</sup> Assistance and Prevention therefore are mutually interchangeable in terms of Don Bosco's overall strategy. Both are aimed at young people being free to decide the course they will take. Personal freedom is always the ultimate goal as expressed by Lenti:

"Preventive activity to be educational must include: (1) foreseeing the youngster's psychological moment; (2) allowing calculated and responsible risks; and (3) trust in youthful idealism and sense of responsibility. Practiced in this manner, with these conditions fulfilled, and in an educational environment permeated by Reason, Religion and Loving-Kindness, and by mutual trust, "preventive assistance" can be educational. While positive values need to be defended, freedom remains a general condition for education".<sup>52</sup>

In his seminal *Letter from Rome*, Don Bosco, in his instructions to Salesians, stated "The teacher who is seen only in the classroom is a teacher and nothing more;"<sup>53</sup> When he is asked in the letter how the barriers that keep educators and young people

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<sup>51</sup> Lenti, A *Don Bosco Charism and Spirit* 30, 2008, LAS Rome, p651

<sup>52</sup> Ibid

<sup>53</sup> Bosco G, *Letter from Rome* Salesian Sources 1 Don Bosco and his Work, *Kristu Jyoti Publications* 2017 (Original publisher LAS Rome, 2014), p500

apart may be broken down, the interpreter in the Letter replies: “By a friendly informal relationship with the young people, especially in recreation”.

While it is important to understand the context of the letter from Rome, which was written toward the end of Don Bosco’s life and is partly exhortatory in nature, it supports Bosco’s basic thesis that it is in meeting young people on their own territory that the educator may establish relationality and even friendship, which opens the way to trust. It is for this very reason that Don Bosco attached great importance to meeting young people in recreation and at other less formal times such as outings or trips. For Lenti assistance was expressed as a positive, constructive but also a very practical presence: “Ideally, and to a good extent actually, for Don Bosco “assisting” youngsters at risk meant meeting all their real needs: food, clothing, shelter and lodging, a job, a chance for an education, useful employment of “free time.” This approach aims at addressing all of the needs of the individual and targets complete human promotion or development. In microcosm it defines the educational program that for Don Bosco would produce mature human beings, in his language “good Christians and honest citizens.”<sup>54</sup>

The sort of model described above relied upon active presence for its success. It was not enough for Don Bosco that Salesian educators were on the periphery, but that they needed to be present with the young people in an active and engaged manner. This is not the presence of a supervisor but a ‘familial’ presence which is at one, and the same time, an animator of activities, a preventer of harm and a carer and a

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<sup>54</sup> Lenti, *A Don Bosco Charism and Spirit* 30, 2008, LAS Rome

counsellor for those who need a listening ear. The word animator has a deep significance in Salesian circles, deriving from the Latin word *anima* for soul, which is linked to the presence of the Spirit, the life force in each individual. This is evoked by the Hebrew term *Ruah*, which is used in the Old Testament to denote a spirit which roams like the wind and gives life to all things, such as in the valley of dry bones in Ezekiel (37: 1-14). Interestingly, considering what we have said about the importance of different types of relationship in animating the Salesian model of education, the word *Ruah* suggests both masculine and feminine traits of the divine. John Lydon in *The Contemporary Catholic Teacher A Reappraisal of Teaching as a Vocation in a Catholic Christian Context* states

“Salesian presence therefore should be dynamic, breathing life into situations, making things happen. The Salesian animator should be involved with young people in their activities, arousing their interest and leading them to constructive engagement”.<sup>55</sup>

Lydon goes on to stress that it is not enough for Salesian educators to have contact with young people in formal situations such as classrooms alone. They must be an abiding presence amongst young people, able to accompany them in a variety of activities, not simply in the role of teacher but as a brother or sister and a friend. For Bosco this was part of an overall educative strategy. In the letter from Rome he writes

“By being loved in the things they (young people) like, through their teachers taking part in their youthful interests, they are led to those things too which they

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<sup>55</sup> Lydon, J *The Contemporary Catholic Teacher A Reappraisal of Teaching as a Vocation in a Catholic Christian Context* Lambert, Saarbrücken 98



find less attractive, such as discipline, study and self-denial. In this way they will learn to do these things also with love”.<sup>56</sup>

In the Rule of the Salesian congregation, referred to as the Salesian ‘constitutions’, specific reference is made to the model of Christ the Good Shepherd<sup>57</sup>, in a quote from Mark’s gospel:

“he saw a great throng and had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd, and he began to teach them many things” (Mark 6: 34).

This text is apposite when discussing the nature of Salesian animation. There is an element of self-giving in animation where the needs of the animator take second place to those of the young person. This is a demanding role but is also reflects the call to Christian discipleship which appears in Mark’s gospel “if anyone would come after me, he must deny himself, take up his cross and follow me” (Mark 8: 34). This implies a degree of self-emptying for those who are animating as they take up the invitation to follow Christ. In a further text, which resonates with Don Bosco’s pastoral and educative experience, St. Paul states:

“I have made myself a slave to all, that I might win the more...” and “To the weak I became weak; I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.” (1 Corinthians 9, 19,22)

This text has echoes of the Good Shepherd “laying down his life for his sheep” (John 10: 11) and Bosco’s interpretation of Christ “making himself little with the little ones.” When applied to the task of animation this requires the animator to divest himself of any vestiges of authoritarianism which marked the traditional teacher model of Don

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<sup>56</sup> Bosco, G (1884) *Letter from Rome*

<sup>57</sup> *Constitutions of the Society of St. Francis de Sales Rome*, (1984) Esse Gi Esse , Article 26, 25

Bosco's time. This approach involves risks as the animator moves away from the authority role inherent in the traditional teacher – student relationship. Being present to young people in a familial way follows elements of the self-emptying of Christ and answers the Gospel call to take up service (*diakonia*) for the greater good.

#### E. The Preventive System

The Preventive system is the term commonly given to Don Bosco's educational method. His method emphasised preventive, rather than repressive, care but his was not simply a system of prevention, with its perhaps negative connotations. The evidence would seem to suggest that Don Bosco did not use the word preventive till 1877 and then it was to distinguish his 'preventive' method, where corporal punishment did not feature, from the 'repressive' systems, in which corporal punishment did feature. Don Bosco's work was preventive in that it:

- a) sought to protect boys from physically and morally damaging influences or
- b) sought to repair the damage of such influences by removing boys from the situation of harm.

He established workshops at his oratory to prevent his students being exposed to the dangers of training in the city of Turin.

There are two dimensions to prevention as practiced by Don Bosco. In the first or primary dimension, Don Bosco sought to provide young people with everything they needed to enable them to deal constructively with the problems and vicissitudes of life.

In the second dimension, steps were taken to either remove young people from risk, or to ensure that they did not slide further into risk.

Don Bosco preferred to operate at the primary level, so that he was equipping young people to deal proactively with the problems and difficulties that they might face, starting from a good and stable base. In reality, his oratory was always dealing with young people at risk who required a level of rehabilitation to give them the opportunity of becoming good Christians and honest citizens. This latter strategy he employed with boys who were released from prison. The former strategy he applied to boarders at the oratory, some of whom were engaged in vocational discernment.

#### F. Family (Collaborative) Spirit

For Bosco's method to work, it was essential that the educator was able to establish a personal relationship with the young person. This meant working together in a way that was collaborative and familiar, in that it evoked the spirit of living in an ordinary home. He described this as the 'family spirit'. It is the opposite of the superior – subordinate relationship and the institutional way of living. For Don Bosco without familiarity, there is no affection and if there is no affection, there is no mutual trust. Most importantly, to Don Bosco's mind, without establishing mutual trust there could be no personal contact and therefore no education. For him it was essential that those forming the educational community should therefore live together as a family. In addition, the educational community was only educative when it fostered the affective bonds and relationships that are characteristic of a biological family. Even in referring to the Oratory, Don Bosco used the term *Ospizio* (hostel) or he referred to 'our house' or the 'Oratory house'.

The 'family model' of education was typified by the 'father son' relationship which was characterised by warmth and affection but also by a certain aloofness and respect. Don Bosco, according to Lenti, wanted this augmented by the other types of relationship found in a family and says

"The educator must be motivated by a type of loving-kindness that is made evident in tender loving care. In the family this is characteristic of the mother-child relationship. He (Don Bosco) also wanted the educator to draw close to, and be with, the youngster in a spirit of equality and comradeship. In a family, this defines the relationship of brothers and sisters. The educator should be father, mother, brother and sister to the youngster"<sup>58</sup>.

As an educational approach the 'family spirit' first and foremost does away with the institutional and the superior-inferior style. It also does away with authoritarianism which Don Bosco regarded as an abuse of authority. Abuses of authority destroy the affective relationship and therefore the educational effort, by triggering aggressive reactions. He warned his Salesians about the dangers of abusing authority, often self-justified, which can lead to the humiliation of young people and from there to a loss of self-respect and the ability to make decisions in the future, leading to deep seated resentment.

#### G. Self-Sacrifice and Temperance

Bosco was convinced that a combination of work and temperance would make the Salesian congregation, and its work for young people, flourish; he was also convinced of the contrary that the seeking of an easy and a comfortable life would bring about its death. The Salesian constitutions highlight the need for commitment to work and

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<sup>58</sup> Lenti, *A Don Bosco Founder: A Survey of the Life and Work of Saint John Bosco from Birth to the Founding of the Salesian Society* (1815-1862), 30, 642

moderation “The Salesian gives himself to his mission with tireless energy, taking care to do everything with simplicity and moderation”.<sup>59</sup> He was convinced that work done well and with the right intention had value in itself and following an Aristotelian logic, led to virtue.

Nevertheless, he was mindful of the danger of fatigue brought on by overwork. He urged Salesian Sisters, in an address in 1879, to work hard but not to shorten their lives by privation or excessive toil. This echoes his advice to one of his pupils, Dominic Savio, not to seek excessive privations such as going without sleep, food and seeking extreme mortification but to concentrate on doing the ordinary things extraordinarily well. Bosco had witnessed the effects of excessive privations on his close companion Comollo who died as a young man in the seminary of Chieri. While championing Comollo’s virtues and practices of piety in an early biography, Don Bosco steered away from promoting engagement in excessive mortification.

Bosco saw temperance as an essential characteristic, for all involved in working with young people, of maintaining a healthy family atmosphere. The need to maintain an even temper and self-control, often in very trying circumstances, meant that temperance for Bosco was an essential characteristic for Salesians. It was not something which simply informed their relationships and their dedication to duty but characterised their dealings with the young and with each other.

Don Bosco relied on effective levels of presence and assistance as key strategies for maintaining an active discipline in his institutions. ‘Justice’, ‘consistency’ and ‘proportion’ were key guidelines in dealing with any disciplinary issues. Young people need to know that judgements made are proportionate to any action taken and that

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<sup>59</sup> *Constitutions of the Society of St. Francis de Sales Rome* (1984) Esse Gi Esse , Article 18, 25

their treatment by authority is fair and consistent. Nevertheless, this did not prevent Bosco from enforcing strong standards of discipline when this was required, such as in removing boys from the oratory who had committed serious offences and who were a danger to the spiritual and physical well-being of others.

#### H. Holistic Formation

The project of creating 'honest citizens and good Christians', as it appears in the constitutions of the Salesians of Don Bosco, is described as the 'Christian education of the whole person' in the constitutions of the Salesian Sisters (Article 63: The complete [*integrale*] Education of the young in the style of the preventive system). While the text of the Salesian constitutions is concrete in its implications and captures both the social and the educative aspects of the educative process, holistic education, that is educating the whole person, may suggest additional dynamics. This could include the political dynamic of creating honest citizens, but it also suggests a dynamic of psychological integration together with social interaction. The term 'holistic' has been used in recent years to include these wider aspects of education. Whether or not this accurately translates the Italian word *Integrale*, here translated above as 'complete', may be a moot point. Nevertheless, the emphasis is on the education of the 'whole person'.

For Bosco this had very practical implications. While religion, reason and kindness played a central role in the process of education, with religion for Don Bosco at the root and genesis of his work, he was careful to maintain a balance to ensure that the needs of the whole person were catered for. His focus on highlighting the essential nature of vocational training and professional formation is emphasised in a

memorandum he sent to the Italian minister of Labour in 1877. In this memorandum he cites the number of boys who, as a result of his educational methods, have learned a trade, reformed their ways, become virtuous artisans and teachers, occupy leadership roles and hold positions in the law, medicine and universities. In all of this he uses the formulas “good citizens” and “able to win their bread with honest work” to denote the progress made by these individuals, some of whom might otherwise been incarcerated at the expense of the state<sup>60</sup>.

Bosco also insisted on maintaining a balance between formal education and the need for recreation. Indeed, he saw recreation, where young people could follow their pursuits, develop friendships and engage in activities which used up their abundant energy, as an essential aspect of their education. This participation in recreational pursuits helped to create and maintain an atmosphere of joyful optimism. This was integral to maintaining the family spirit. The Salesian historian Pietro Braido comments on recreation as a “first class diagnostic and pedagogical tool for educators and for the boys a field of irradiation and goodness”.<sup>61</sup>

This was also true of the extra-curricular activities, outings, celebration of feast days, retreats and ‘holidays’ which were built into the educational programme. This was part of Bosco’s strategy to develop the whole person and in so doing empower young people to take their relevant place and to make their contribution to the building up of society. In this regard, the setting up of clubs and of small groups, often with a religious character, which he referred to as sodalities, or with the role of developing and

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<sup>60</sup> Scritti (Writings) di S. Giovanni Bosco, XX, (1964), Rome, LAS: 145-149 – translated from the Italian. For a comprehensive discussion of St John Bosco’s insistence on the importance of students “earning bread with honest work” see Braido, P., (1981), *Esperienza Di Pedagogia Christiana Nella Storia*, Rome, LAS

<sup>61</sup> Braido, P, *op. cit.* p151

maintaining virtue and good company through reading good books and good recreational pursuits, was a priority. Together with the development of leadership opportunities alongside formal education, this was integral to Bosco's vision of creating "good Christians and honest citizens".

### 3.5 The Salesian Charism: Self-Emptying Grace, Liberty and Healing - The Incarnational Dimension

By being present to young people in a familial way, as opposed to maintaining the superior-inferior style of imposition favoured by the institution, reflects for John Lydon the 'ekenosen', or self-emptying, of Christ himself. Entering into the recreation of young people is interpreted, by Don Bosco, as an act of loving condescension, "going beyond mere utilitarianism or paternalism". It involved adults stepping away from their power over or even 'power on behalf of' positions in order to engage in a genuine sharing of the bread of life.

This theme of the self-emptying or *kenosis* of God is developed further by Roger Burggraeve. Taking up a biblical theme, he speaks of the person of God not boasting of glory, majesty and aloofness but instead making himself so small as to withdraw from his omnipotence and omniscience in order to unite with the poor and the injured people including the slave (c.f. Philippians 2). This self-emptying is not seen as a masochistic self-humiliation but a descent to the level of the human person in order to lift up those who are crushed and downtrodden. For Burggraeve this is 'ethically qualified self-emptying up to the point of suffering'<sup>62</sup>. It is a suffering 'with and for the

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<sup>62</sup> Burggraeve R., (2016) *The Soul of Integral Education orientations for a contemporary interpretation of 'religione' in the Salesian Pedagogical Project* KU Leuven



other, with an eye to the liberation and healing of the other'<sup>63</sup>. In developing this theme he goes on to state that

God unites himself *incognito* with the trampled and the humiliated.. God is so modest and humble that he unites Himself imperceptibly with the poor, the widow and the orphan, the unsightly and the persecuted. His greatest infinitude is at the same time His humble smallness: binding Himself invisibly and without obtrusiveness with the other, His creation.<sup>64</sup>

For Burggraeve this gives us an insight into the paradoxical relationship between ethics and grace in the sense that our thought on grace is determined ethically and it is thanks to the 'ethics of the other' that we realise that grace is 'no mere lucky coincidence but is based on the commitment of someone who turns towards us and treats us with grace, meaning to say ethical excellence.'<sup>65</sup> Grace therefore is linked with the love of God. St. John tells us 'God is love' (1 John 4: 16) and that God precedes us with his love: 'not that we loved God but that he loved us' (1 John 4:10).

The notion that the other has loved us first speaks to us of the intergenerational relationship between parents and children. It also reminds us of Bosco's advice to his followers that Salesians should always 'make the first move' and that the young should not only be loved but that they should know that they are loved. This 'incarnation' of Christian love by the Salesian educator in an educational setting, is a theme that we will explore further.

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid

<sup>64</sup> Ibid

<sup>65</sup> Ibid

### 3.6 Concluding remarks

Don Bosco's approach was targeted at all youth, lay collaborators and religious. It was essentially formative, as well as educative, in that it set out to offer young people models of following a virtuous life. Don Bosco was continually ensuring that a steady supply of good books reached his educational charges. He himself wrote the lives of a number of individuals who had attended the oratory, one of whom, Dominic Savio, was to become a saint. This was for the edification of those who were working alongside him but he also believed in offering young people models of virtue. This 'modelling', often through the biographies he wrote of past students such as Dominic Savio, Francis Besucco and Michael Magone, was one of the strategies he used for accompanying the young.

From these biographies a number of recurrent themes emerge. These strategies were part of the religious practice of the oratory and represented for Don Bosco a way for the young to build good character and to achieve holiness. They were:

- careful choice of companions
- love of prayer (without a care for time)
- Marian and Eucharistic devotion
- active apostolate among companions

These will be examined further as we consider Don Bosco's spirituality of accompaniment, which is a contemporary perspective explicating the key characteristic of 'presence' in his educational method.

## CHAPTER 4

### A SPIRITUALITY OF ACCOMPANIMENT

#### 4.1 Background

##### 4.1.1 An integral concept of the Human with space for spiritual meaning and religion.

It is important, in any discussion of aspects of Salesian pedagogy and methodology, to place emphasis on the spiritual and religious dimensions of meaning. A holistic view of being human avoids accepting the human person as the only active creator of meaning. The Salesian pedagogical perspective transcends such a narrow anthropocentric image of the human and emphasises human openness to the transcendent. This openness allows a movement from focusing on the self towards focusing on the other. This can take the form of a 'radical otherness'<sup>66</sup>. This might be described as the capacity to transcend the physical, the empirical and even the inner worldly. This underpinning allows human beings a way of coming to terms with experiences of suffering, disaster, guilt, failure and death in the sense that these do not have the final word on the human condition.

Denying this openness for transcendence and the encompassing meaning of human existence, which it could be argued is one consequence of a dominant secular narrative, does not do full justice to the essential dimension of being human. For Roger Burggraeve, the Salesian pedagogical project in the spirit of Don Bosco, rejects such a closed image of the human. In contrast it 'honours an integral or holistic view of the

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<sup>66</sup> R. Burggraeve p1

human whereby the existentially spiritual openness to transcendent meaning is not shied away from but actually takes centre stage'<sup>67</sup>.

#### 4.1.2 Preliminary Ideas: Spirituality and Accompaniment

The human person's quest for understanding life's mystery is an ongoing journey. Spirituality, if explored with appropriate care and support, can assist in seeking further truth. It attempts to offer insights about the transcendental, life in God, life in the universe. Spirituality can therefore be identified with a particular anthropological approach. Spiritual refers to something beyond the material. Engaging in spiritual accompaniment is engaging in a desire to work towards human maturity, holiness and wholeness. This necessarily involves engaging with others and with the spirit of God. At the same time young people need to be heard first and foremost, through their own experience i.e. 'where they are'. Having said this the word 'spiritual' deals, not only with external actions, but with the inner life. It concerns matters of the heart, that is, the personal core of being from which emerges the good and the bad that people think or do. It also concerns the head which is about using reason to decide whether something is good or bad.

The Salesian pedagogical project takes seriously the dimensions of meaning, spirituality and religion as an anthropological constant. Don Bosco is concerned not only with the material, affective, intellectual, professional and social well-being of his young people but also and especially in their spiritual development. At the same time the educator strives for and develops those other dimensions, highlighted in being faithful to the Christian view of integral meaning and wholeness, through genuine pastoral care which is part of Church's mission. For Christians, Spiritual

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<sup>67</sup> R Burggraeve p 2

accompaniment is based in a Christ centred anthropology since the revelation of God reaches its fullness in Christ, the Word incarnate, who is the way to maturity and perfection. Christ is the ultimate source of spiritualisation, interiorisation and sanctification.

#### 4.1.3 Christian Maturity and Perfection

Christian Perfection consists in utilising the sanctifying grace each Christian individual has received at baptism. Sanctifying grace is the very soul of the supernatural life. When it comes to operative perfection, that is perfection that leads us to reach a particular goal, this consists in reaching perfect charity. This we know from scripture which tells us the law and the prophets depend on the love of God.

Charity has primacy since it:

- relates to God and unites us to him
- establishes the mutual love of friendship between God and ourselves
- is inseparable from grace
- constitutes the very essence of Christian perfection

For St. Francis de Sales, whom Don Bosco chose as the patron of the Salesians due in no small part to the emphasis he placed on Christian humanism and devotion, charity is the practical outworking of the grace (love) of God for each individual. The exercise of this charity in timely and appropriate actions guided by God, he described as devotion. Don Bosco's entire approach is based on the exercise of pastoral charity for the common good.

## 4.2 The Praxis of Bosco's Spiritual Accompaniment of the young

### 4.2.1 The Implementation of pastoral charity

For those involved in education it is important to note that spiritual accompaniment of the young was not seen as a forum for problem solving. Instead it was a forum for growth. Initially material needs were the focus of Don Bosco's conversations with those in need. Many young people would approach him with a problem and he would begin the dialogue with fact finding. He used the young person's practical circumstance as the starting point for accompaniment.

Spiritual nourishment was seen as the primary act of charity in the guidelines Bosco set down for his early co-workers but practical needs first had to be met, namely welcoming poor and abandoned young people, giving them a home and looking after their material needs. Educating them in the rubrics of morality and faith followed on from this.

This was Bosco's way of accompanying. To ensure first that the material needs of the young were catered for. In a context where religious education and instruction in Christian living were prevalent, Bosco never overlooked the material needs of the young. Meeting these however led to the initiation of something deeper.

It was clear to Don Bosco that young people were willing to live hard working and moral lives but they often needed temporary accommodation and the provision of food and shelter as a starting point. He provided this without question, even though it was not appreciated on more than one occasion when damage was done to his property and the meagre resources he had provided, such as blankets and straw mattresses for sleeping on, were stolen. He also accepted that many of those he helped passed

through never to be seen again. Nevertheless, Bosco saw all of this as a means to engage young people in a process of ongoing development.

#### 4.2.2 Age Range

Bosco concentrated his work on what we would now refer to as pre-adolescents and adolescents; predominantly 11 to 16 year-olds. The terminology used at the time referred to young people as giovanotti (younger pupils) or giovani (young adults - used more than 1000 times in Bosco's writings) or ragazzi (boys). The terms adoloscenti (x 5) (adolescents) and adolescencia (x1) (adolescence) were used sparingly since adolescence, as a stage of life, was not formally recognised until studies which took place post 1900 (Don Bosco died in 1888).

The two groups that Bosco focused on were what we would refer to as children and adolescents. For this age bracket it is essential to understand his spirituality of accompaniment. He considered the de facto age of reason to be 8 years, beyond which he thought boys could move out of their ego centrism and engage with others. His Oratories and schools therefore catered for pupils between the ages of 8 and 18 years. He was very clear that younger pupils, who were incapable of this level of understanding, should not be accepted into the oratory.

#### 4.2.3 Spiritual Development of the young person

The Age of Reason was an important marker for Don Bosco as he considered it the age when:

- a child is capable of employing his supernatural potentials
- the child starts to act virtuously
- the child recognises his love for God and that he/she is worthy of adoration
- he/she is capable of moral discernment
- he/she is able to abandon ego-centrism;
- he/she recognises others exist;
- he/she nourishes new behaviour manifested in their respect towards others
- he/she is capable of sensing the presence of God

All of these factors contribute to making relationship building possible and help instil a sense of obedience, acceptance and self-giving. This was key for Bosco because it made each child capable of building new relationships beyond themselves hence he chose the age of reason as the starting point for his work.

There are a number of caveats to this understanding, however. Not every child arrives at the age of reason at the same biological age. The onset of the age of reason can be delayed due sometimes to a lack of parental education, leading to a lack of respect and lingering ego centrism. On the other hand, gifted children, accompanied effectively by parents, can arrive at the age of reason earlier than the age of eight years. Individuals such as Dominic Savio and Terese of Lisieux seemed to recognise the presence of God in their lives at a very early age.



### 4.3 Characteristic Traits of the Spiritual Accompaniment of the Young

Bosco was clear that grace was a gift of God received at baptism. This grace brought theological gifts which gave each individual a framework and the facilities to become spiritual. Nevertheless, to understand his spiritual accompaniment of the young, we must bear in mind the age range of the young people with whom Don Bosco worked. For these young people Don Bosco provided instruction in the form of a guidebook dedicated to them called *Il Giovane Proveduto* translated as the *Companion of Youth*. In the *Regolamenti per gli esterni* (Regulations for external pupils) he was very specific in setting out guidelines for young people as to how they should conduct themselves. He was also extremely rigorous in enforcing the starting age for pupils making it clear the oratory did not accept younger boys who cause disturbances and become involved in childish behaviour.

Bosco taught animators (young adults involved in the education and formation of the young) in his care to move children out of ego centrism e.g. teaching them to serve others through small deeds such as sharing their bread. Through these acts young people developed new behaviours manifested in their respect towards others. This not only made young people capable of relationships but equally importantly nurtured in them a sense of obedience, acceptance and self-giving.

It is important here to acknowledge that, in terms of discerning the spiritual life in a young person, no one can actually say whether a person is in grace or not. There are traits and signs which can act as indicators of grace in the young.

To verify this one needs to look for significant signs namely the:

1. Desire for God.
2. Shunning of worldly pursuits

3. Absence of grave sin
4. Particular tenderness that is not found in others of the same age and which creates a sense of joy and peace with the young e.g. Bosco used the biographies of young saints such as Aloysius Gonzaga to give the young role models which he regarded as important.

Don Bosco noticed signs of virtue in young people at an early age. He utilised these signs in the means of accompaniment which he offered them. He did not diffuse these traits; his strategy was to enhance and use them.

#### 4.3.1 Awareness

Awareness therefore played an important role in his accompanying. He taught his co-workers to be aware of the 'silent signs' in a young person's behaviour that can reveal a deeper disposition such as a desire to serve God. This might be revealed in a young person's disposition towards prayer, attentiveness towards religious narrative, sense of altruism, inner peace. He was also aware of patterns emerging in the lives of the young such as, a moment of conversion in their lives in turning towards God, discernment of their vocation, detachment from self, helping other companions.

#### 4.3.2 Conversion

For young people a moment of conversion can indicate that the spiritual life is present. This can sometimes be verified at a very early stage of life e.g. Therese of Lisieux. For some young people conversion can come through radical transformation; for others it might appear that virtue has been present from a very early age. The biographies of

Michael Magone and Dominic Savio, written by Don Bosco, may be considered examples of the former and the latter. In fact, in accompanying Dominic Savio, Don Bosco had to step in and forcefully direct him not to engage in excessive physical mortification such as denying himself sleep and food.

#### 4.3.3 Discernment

It is clear that it is not easy to discern signs of holiness in young people. It is a very delicate task. Virtuous young people are capable of heroic acts. Some, on the other hand, affirm that heroic acts are not possible without an extraordinary divine intervention. Childhood is a privileged time and children at their own level can live in intimacy with God. Indeed, some biographies of saints affirm that between the ages of four and five there comes about in the child a change of awareness. This is acknowledged in part in a secular context since it is the age pupils start formal school, for example, in the UK. In this discussion however, it is important to note that holiness is certainly not barred by time or age. It is also important to note that guiding, directing and even mentoring can take place through accompaniment.

When considering adolescents, a different set of parameters is at work. Adolescents are considered as being already capable of attaining holiness from a Salesian perspective. It is recognised that in the adolescent, holiness is more fragile and precarious because it is constantly engaged in trying to conquer other inclinations. Perfection and charity would be more deeply rooted in an adult and enriched with more experience. Spirituality in the adolescent is still spontaneous, while in an adult, it would have reached a deeper level of asceticism. The adolescent is still an enthusiast embarking on new experiences. Dominic Savio was taken over by this enthusiasm to

become holy, something which in his case at times obfuscated his reasoning and rationality. Don Bosco, as his guide, had to step in and guide him away from excessive mortifications encouraging him to complete the ordinary tasks of each day extraordinarily well and to see this as his route to sanctity. This is where Don Bosco's ability in guiding the young, came to the fore. He helped Savio to establish a dialogue between what was really going on interiorly and to prioritise that which was edifying and showed a good example exteriorly.

#### 4.3.4 Religious formation

In childhood, formation is essentially a formation in prayer. Children perceive prayer and religious or Christian life as one and the same. Religious ideas are largely influenced and determined by the experience of the child's parents and environment,

A child's first image of God comes from those who surround him or her, especially if those who are significant offer tenderness and love. The presence of the mother in the spiritual development of the child is of the utmost importance. The mother is nearly always at the child's first recitation of prayers. The child drinks from the mother's source and the Mother gives independence to the child in the practice of piety. For Don Bosco the role of his mother in his catechesis and faith development, in the absence of a father, was crucial. His spirituality was shaped by his mother Margaret Occhiena, also known as Mama Margaret. Don Bosco's home environment was the locus spiritualis for the formation of his initial years. When he was preparing for a major step in receiving the sacraments his mother ensured that he spent the previous day abstaining from working in the fields and instead, praying and recollecting. These aspects are reflected in the environment that Don Bosco sought to create in the oratory

for his boys even to the extent of bringing his mother and his mother's sister to work at the oratory. For Don Bosco Spiritual Loci, i.e. places where young people can encounter God, were very important in the development of the spirituality of the young.

#### 4.3.5 Conditions to spiritually educate the child

In terms of spiritual education, it is essential that those directing matters seek to create a climate of interior silence and interior peace at appropriate times to aid spiritual development. A child can only discover the spiritual world if they are helped to create within themselves a sense of interior peace and tranquillity. This can be further aided by an atmosphere of peace and calm. The environment created by Don Bosco struck a balance between different times of the day e.g. he allowed certain pupils to enter the chapel in recreation to pray in the church with the condition they spent some time on the recreation yard i.e. they were not allowed simply to turn to the interior at the neglect of the exercise of exterior charity.

#### 4.3.6 Spirituality becomes stronger with guidance

The spiritual guide or chaplain needs to know how to awaken the spiritual interior of the adolescent through docility and through good and explained instruction. They should not only encourage young people to pray but pray with them. Interior prayer will be aided through the example of e.g. the chaplain. It is also aided through sharing concrete examples from daily experience with the young. Fear of God for Don Bosco was fear of offending God. While he believed implicitly in the mercy of God he did not leave out mention of God's justice. He made the boys aware of the serious nature of

sin and encouraged them not to sin. The person of Christ is the focus for Bosco as the person who brings us to the father. There is a need to assert the essential moral teaching of Christ that is to transform one's heart towards God by loving and serving Him and loving others as he loved us.

#### 4.3.7 Spirituality of Don Bosco

Don Bosco had a strong devotion to Christ crucified. In this he was influenced by the French school of spirituality which placed the emphasis on the suffering of Christ and its repercussions for original sin. The French school included authors such as Ignatius of Loyola, Alphonsus Ligouri and Francis de Sales. It also included movements such as Jansenism. The Jansenist spirituality was more focused on rejection and atonement rather than on the mercy of God. The school, established by Berule (1575-1629), had a strong influence on the practice of reconciliation and spiritual accompaniment in Piedmont, at the time of Don Bosco. The outlook of the French school was pessimistic and rigoristic in its approaches. Bosco, in contrast, was associated with the optimistic humanism of St. Frances de Sales (1567 – 1622), under the pastoral guidance of St. Joseph Cafasso. He experienced this in his post ordination pastoral studies at the Convitto Ecclesiastico in Turin. This approach, overseen by the directors of the Convitto, Fr. Luigi Guala followed by Fr. Joseph Cafasso, was more focused on the mercy and love of God and in respecting the role of conscience in the individual.

#### 4.3.8 St. Joseph Cafasso: Don Bosco's spiritual director

Joseph Cafasso was Don Bosco's spiritual director for more than thirty years. Cafasso and Bosco were both from the vicinity of the town of Castelnuovo D' Asti, now renamed Castelnuovo Don Bosco, which is situated in the countryside around Turin. Only four years Bosco's senior, Cafasso entered the seminary in Chieri before Don Bosco. Shortly after ordination, in 1833, he took up a position at the Convitto Ecclesiastico, a new institution, set up in Turin, for the training of priests in moral theology and pastoral ministry, with a particular focus on the ministry of reconciliation.

Amongst other traits, for the Salesian writer Giuseppe Bucclatto, Cafasso's preaching was characterised by:

'constant attention to (pastoral) practice, exemplary pedagogical and pastoral intent, predominant moral purpose with the obvious goal of saving souls'<sup>68</sup>.

According to Lucio Casto, in *San Giuseppe Cafasso Il direttore spirituale di Don Bosco (St. Joseph Cafasso the Spiritual Director of St. John Bosco)*, Cafasso appears initially to be a 'disenchanted observer, pessimistic about life and the stark reality of the dangers surrounding Christians in every-day living'.

A product of the Turin of his time, Cafasso's homiletical themes focused on a number of key points pertinent to the religious and moral lives of his audience; these find an echo in Don Bosco's preaching, for example: the fight against sin, frequenting the sacraments and Marian devotion.

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<sup>68</sup> Buccellato G., Casto, L., Frattallone, R., Tunnetti, G : *San Giuseppe Cafasso Il direttore spirituale di Don Bosco*, LAS Rome, 2008 p126 (Transl. by the author)

The themes that Cafasso uses are redolent of Italian spiritual writers of the seventeenth century. They are also influenced by the focus of the first week of the Ignatian spiritual exercises (focusing on sin and purgation) but more specifically by the pastoral approach of St. Alphonsus de Liguori. The topics covered in these themes range from mortal sin to meditation on death and judgement, with attentiveness to hell and eternal punishment. Casto, however, suggests that at a certain point in his ministry, Cafasso changed his emphasis and adopted an approach which focused on the mercy of God towards penitents rather than on exacting punishments;

‘At this point there is a decided change of attention with a series of meditations on the mercy of God (a theme which is never forgotten even when dealing with more stringent arguments), on the Passion of the Lord, on the Mother of God and finally on paradise’.<sup>69</sup>

This movement towards a deeper emphasis on the mercy of God is illustrated by Cafasso’s meditation on the prodigal son. He wishes his listeners to focus on the plight of the younger brother and his seeming conversion as he is allowed to take up his place again, despite his actions and without humiliation or obvious punishment. Cafasso cites the biblical text 2 Peter 3, 9 in support of this disposition:

The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.<sup>70</sup>

In an elaboration of the same meditation under the title *the confession of the prodigal son*, full emphasis is placed on the repentance and very little on accountability. Casto states that ‘here Cafasso maintains that the sincerity of repentance infuses a greater

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<sup>69</sup> Casto, L, *San Giuseppe Cafasso Il direttore spirituale di Don Bosco* p128

<sup>70</sup> Ibid



grace of perseverance in good intention'.<sup>71</sup> For Cafasso, the religious and moral education of the populace, was a priority especially for the lower classes. As well as his meditations, he set out a number of instructions on themes such as love of enemies, avoiding scandal, the duties of children towards their parents and the importance of religious and moral education. He exhorted parents to resort to prayer if a child did not cooperate with the educational commitment of their elders, which was a factor in nineteenth century Turin as new ideas in the political and religious fields took hold.

It is fair to say, from this brief expose, that the educational philosophy and spirituality of St. John Bosco, shared a number of traits with that of Joseph Cafasso, not least the influence of St. Alphonsus de Liguori on the interpretation of moral theology and on pastoral practice, particularly concerning the sacrament of reconciliation.

#### 4.3.9 The influence of Alphonsus Maria de Liguori

It is likely that Don Bosco first met the theology of Alphonsus de Liguori in the person of his first spiritual guide, Don Giovanni Calosso, when he was a boy. The *Memorie Biografiche*, the multi volume account of Don Bosco's life and work by Lemoyne, states that Don Calosso gave Don Bosco the ascetical works of Saint Alphonsus.

Nevertheless, the most profound encounter of Don Bosco with the spirituality and doctrine of Alphonsus de Liguori took place in the three years he spent as a newly ordained priest at the Convitto Ecclesiastico. This institute had been set up for the training of priests in moral theology and sacramental practice in Turin in 1817. The

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid, p126

‘Convitto’ as it was styled, was inspired by Pio Brunone Lanteri, who would go on to found the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, The original foundation of the ‘Convitto’ was under the theologian Luigi Guala, the first director; this was carried on by Joseph Cafasso who was the second director. It was an institute established, not only to contend the influence of Jansenism, but above all as a centre to study and promote the moral theology of St. Alphonsus de Liguori as a pastoral response to the needs of the time.

The Convitto Ecclesiastico helped to initiate in Turin a new school of spirituality and pastoral praxis for priests with a clear identity which distinguished them from those trained at the theology department of the university of Turin. The curriculum of the Convitto set out to counter the last remnants of Jansenism and to defend the authority of the Pope. Lanteri, one of the inspirations for its founding, had played a part in the distribution of the works of St. Alphonsus, in particular the manual for confessors. Lanteri set out to counter the widespread Jansenist and rigorist spirit of the times by spreading the doctrine of St. Alphonsus de Liguori either on his own initiative, through friends or through his apostolate to the laity and priests:

‘Stick to Liguori’ he is quoted as saying ‘If you want to do good to souls in need appeal to the doctrine of this author; it is necessary to pour over his spirit if you want to lead souls to God’. <sup>72</sup>

#### 4.3.10 Formation for Pastoral Ministry: The Sacrament of Reconciliation

The Convitto began in 1817 on the initiative of a friend and disciple of Lanteri, Luigi Guala. Joseph Cafasso was a follower of Guala, and he entered the Convitto shortly after his ordination in 1833, becoming the director in 1848, after Guala’s death.

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<sup>72</sup> Gastaldi, P., *Della vita del servo di Dio Pio Brunone Lanteri*, Torino 1870, 406

A key area of influence, in the pastoral training and education of Don Bosco in developing his spirituality of accompaniment, was the formation he received at the Convitto, as a confessor and a preacher. At this time there were two distinct approaches to the moral theology and the sacrament of reconciliation in nineteenth century Turin. These were labelled probabilism and probabiliorism.

With the probabilist approach, if a matter in confession was in doubt as to which judgement might be made about a given concern, the benefit was to be given in the direction of human freedom over and against the law.

With a probabiliorist approach, if there was any doubt as to which judgement might be made in a confessional matter, the benefit of doubt was to be given in favour of the law.

The approach of Liguori, promoted by Guala and others at the Convitto, was to adopt a middle way between these two poles, to ensure that the penitent was never discouraged while still applying the law; in cases where there was an equal probability in the event of a judgement being made, the benefit was to be given to human freedom over the law. While the probabilist approach, favoured by the Jesuits, could be seen to be lax and not strictly in line with the teaching of the church, the probabiliorist approach was seen to be rigorist. The Liguorian 'middle way', on the other hand, while it ensured that the law was applied, it also set out to encourage penitents by interpreting matters, where equal probabilities were present, in favour of human freedom.

According to Giuseppe Buccellato, the choice of a more benign approach to the practice of the sacrament of penance and to the formation of confessors realised a change in that:

'it knew how to situate pastoral care in relation to human frailty to make forgiveness depend on mercy rather than on the law. And thanks to his (Alphonsus's) pastoral commitment in the midst of those condemned; the vagabonds, the excluded, the outcasts, the poor...Alphonsus intuits the importance of confession as a privileged means of showing the benign mercy of Jesus the Redeemer and not to incite the fear of God as judge and punisher.'<sup>73</sup>

The strategy of the Convitto in training priests for the sacrament of reconciliation in particular, is important in this study as we consider the pastoral approach adopted by Don Bosco, particularly in his use of the sacrament of confession, to accompany the young people in his care and to direct them spiritually. We will now look more specifically at his accompaniment of the young.

#### 4.4 Characteristics of the Accompaniment of young people for Don Bosco.

##### 4.4.1 Addressing Sin.

Bosco was highly aware that a young person needed to be instructed well when it came to speaking about sin; he acknowledged that it was a very delicate subject. Many of his boys had been perpetrators of crime and some the victims of soliciting. They needed to understand forgiveness in order to go forward with their lives as honest citizens. He was also aware of the serious health issues facing them, due to the lack public amenities and medical intervention in the Turin of the time, which contributed to a high mortality rate amongst the young.

His technique was to slowly and patiently introduce the topic of sin in order to gradually enable the young person to make an effective examination of conscience. It

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<sup>73</sup> Buccellato G., *Alle radici della spiritualita di San Giovane Bosco* Libreria Editrice Vticana Rome 2013 p119

was important that sin was approached in the light of God's mercy and it was acknowledged that every Christian, including the young, were in need of that mercy. He used parables and other stories to help young people understand God's compassion. In doing this he helped them become aware of their own fragility and of their failures.

#### 4.4.2 Moral Education

Moral education in the oratory focused on the person of Christ as the one who shows the way to the Father. Love of God and neighbour was required for a virtuous life alongside detachment. As well as using episodes from scripture to help his pupils understand the teachings of Christ, he placed texts such as the beatitudes alongside the commandments in religious instruction, Bosco also took a very practical approach to instructing his boys in what it meant to love God and neighbour by:

- respecting other people's possessions and property.
- respecting their own person.
- choosing good over evil.
- learning to be truthful and that their words reflect honesty.
- emphasising the beauty of simplicity in his dealings and communications with them.

#### 4.4.3 Spiritual Friendship

In Bosco's methodology, a bond of spiritual friendship developed between the young and those responsible for their accompaniment. The notion of spiritual friendship for

him was that of one befriending the soul of another person. Frances de Sales, whom Don Bosco took as the patron of his first oratory and of his congregation, had some very specific and clear advice to offer regarding spiritual friendships. For de Sales there are various models of friendship in scriptures but the friendship between God and humanity was seen as the highest form of friendship. The friendship advocated by Bosco was the spiritual friendship described by Francis de Sales, mirrored in Christ's own friendships in the scriptures.

It is important to note, echoing Lenti, that this was not based on sentimentality or dependency and did not cross appropriate safeguarding boundaries. Bosco was very careful to advise his Salesians about maintaining appropriate and transparent boundaries in the care of the young. He also warned his Salesians of the lasting impact of poor or inappropriate decisions on the lives of young.

#### 4.4.4 Francis de Sales on Spiritual Friendship

In the Introduction to the Devout Life, Francis de Sales advised Philothea, who represents every Christian pilgrim, to love everyone with a deep love based on charity<sup>74</sup>. On the subject of friendship he advised her:

- form friendships only with those who share virtuous things with you, the higher the virtues, the more perfect the friendship.
- if friendship is in matters of knowledge about God it is to be welcomed.
- friendship will be more praiseworthy if both individuals have certain virtues in common namely prudence, temperance, fortitude and justice.

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<sup>74</sup> De Sales, Francis (2015) *Introduction to the Devout Life*, Catholic Way Publishing

- such friendship comes from God, that will lead individuals to him
- the emphasis lies in charity, devotion and Christian perfection.

#### 4.4.5 Don Bosco and Spiritual Friendship

Bosco looked upon friendship with the young as a means to save their souls and in so doing fulfil his life-long motto (*Da mihi animas*). His spiritual friendship with St. Dominic Savio, in which both share a number of traits, can be seen in this light; both teacher and disciple had a zeal for the salvation of souls, both had the eagerness to become holy, both believed that they were placed in a particular moment of history for a purpose.

In the case of Savio, Bosco managed to orientate his spiritual life towards perfect goodness and for that to have a ripple effect beyond Savio himself. Indeed, Bosco benefitted from this spiritual friendship with Savio in building his own sanctity. In his biography of Savio, he underlined the aspect of friendship more than he did in other biographies. In addition, he highlighted Savio's friendship with two particular friends, John Massaglia and Camillo Gavia. In using this strategy, he set out to demonstrate to young people how they could attain salvation through spiritual friendship with good companions.

#### 4.4.6 The Preventive System in a contemporary setting

Carlo Nanni in his book, *The Preventive System Today*, highlights the importance of relationships to Bosco when he states that in the Salesian tradition 'educational

relationships are marked by kindness, fatherliness, trust, affection, presence and availability'. In Nanni's view, Salesian relationship is characterised by a

'demanding love which strives to incarnate values, translating them into a sense of duty which strengthens commitment to growth and doing good to others.'<sup>75</sup>

The concern for good educational relationships represents the most important commitment of those wishing to educate according to Don Bosco's preventive system. This is summed up by Bosco's message to his co-workers that one should 'strive to make yourself loved'. In practical terms this means getting close to young people in order to gain their trust and acceptance while remaining acutely aware of differences in status, role, age and mentality. Despite the surfeit of educational materials online and indeed of social communication opportunities, from Nanni's point of view, a 'large proportion of young people are looking, for true, strong, reassuring and stimulating educational relationships'.<sup>76</sup> Accompaniment is a strategy for meeting the need of young people for strong relationships which is also open to a deeper spiritual dimension.

#### 4.4.7 Spiritual Accompaniment

Accompanying contains in itself the element of participation in another's personal life and the element of journeying. Some use the word 'guidance', others 'mentoring', others 'accompaniment' to express these elements. For Bosco accompanying the young was integral to the daily life of his students. The programme he set out was holistic in nature with the spiritual life integrated into each day. Bosco accompanied

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<sup>75</sup> C Nanni *The Preventive System Today* p31 (English Translation Edition).

<sup>76</sup> Ibid



young people in order to integrate the realm of the spiritual with actual living. He saw accompaniment as a relationship of complete spiritual and emotional assistance which helped a person grow and mature in awareness, responsibility and freedom. It also enabled the individual to discover the will of God. For Bosco the ultimate goal of pastoral care was to help people to centre their lives in the mystery we call God.

Accompanying therefore contains two critical elements;

1. the first is building relationship,
2. the second is the idea of journeying together through life.

Accompaniment therefore can be assimilated with the great biblical journeys, such as the journey of Abraham, giving it a biblical foundation. We are told in the Old Testament that all initiatives come from God and that He accompanied his own people. Biblical journeys and itineraries all have a beginning, a development stage and a completion-fulfilment stage. God asked individuals, and others, to be attentive to his Word. This same Word transforms the heart and inclines it towards God.

#### 4.4.8 Accompaniment as Christocentric

In a Christian context central to the journey undertaken in accompanying is the person of Jesus Christ i.e. it is Christocentric. It is impossible to specify a precise route that Abraham was asked to undertake, likewise it is impossible to map the route of the soul. We must however follow the person of Jesus. Likewise, in spiritual accompaniment one is accompanied by others; one does not simply follow them. To

guide the soul, to clear doubts, and to be resolute in the face of such a transformational request that Christ extends to each of us is the goal.

We might ask 'Where does the journey lead? It is not simply to heaven nor is it to an external physical place. Instead it is a journey to discover uniqueness. In a Salesian context this is generally accomplished, not individually, but in the company of others. As well as the accompaniment of God, it involves fellow pilgrims accompanying. Within this it is essential that each person undertake their own journey according to their own route. Ultimately for Bosco, the journey is the search to do God's will in Christ; the destination is the same; all must arrive at God.

#### 4.5 Don Bosco's personal Spiritual Experience

##### 4.5.1 Mamma Margaret as John Bosco's first accompanier

In any understanding of the promotion of human development, parental involvement is crucial. Mamma Margaret, mother of Don Bosco, had a profound impact on his life and spiritual bearing. Giovanni Lemoyne, Don Bosco's first biographer states that Bosco modelled himself on his mother<sup>77</sup> adopting many shared characteristics namely:

1. Faith, purity and love of prayer.
2. Patience, fearlessness and constancy.
3. Trust in God, zeal for the salvation of souls.
4. Simplicity and gentleness of manner.

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<sup>77</sup> Lemoyne, G *Biographical Memoirs of St. John Bosco*

In his Biographical Memoirs, Bosco writes of his various encounters as a young boy including those which helped mould his personality. He lived within a spiritual environment from a young age permeated by the presence of his mother, Margaret, who oversaw his development. To these humble beginnings he traced the beginning of his priestly vocation and of his call to found an oratory in Turin. Bosco knew how enabling it was to be able to rely on caring spiritual accompaniment.

#### 4.5.2 Bosco's Personal Qualities

Bosco was gifted with strong human qualities. Later in his life he became patient, gentle and meek. By nature, these traits were not his natural inclination as can be imagined from his background as a rural sharecropper, used to long hours of hard work and defending his territory. John Bosco was a very serious, reserved and distrustful child. He did not like to be caressed and did not have any truck with strangers. He spoke very little but carefully observed

His temperament got in the way of genuine holiness e.g. he had some violent encounters with his stepbrother when they did not see eye to eye about him reading and studying which ultimately required him to leave the family home in order to keep the peace. He needed personal transformation. This background however meant that he was therefore at ease with 'difficult' or marginalised pupils as a result of being able to use his own experience.

#### 4.5.3 Spiritual Sensitivity

Bosco's mother, known as Mama Margaret, imbued in John a high spiritual sensitivity. Her words were sustained by her own example e.g. she attended confession prior to her son, setting him an example, before he completed his first confession. From his initial formation at her hands he bore a significant spiritual imprint. The house he grew up in, the family environment, the pietistic devotions all played a role in forming the decisions he made later in life.

His love for souls came from his mother. From the outset she is concerned with Bosco's activities. His first spiritual school was at home as Bosco imbibed the words of his mother and absorbed her effective pedagogy. She also impressed upon him the need to be diligent in working to avoid harm to souls and to have zeal which saw no barriers to addressing the needs of young people. Nevertheless, this was the context of his own spiritual experience

The maternal assistance he experienced in childhood and adolescence amounted to spiritual accompaniment. This was closely allied to his devotion to Mary. Don Bosco himself stated 'When I was still small she (Mama Margaret) herself taught me to pray including the rosary'. The Salesian scholar Francis Desramaut stated the 'Mary was around everywhere. He first discovered her name on the lips of his mother.'

#### 4.5.4 Encounter with Fr. Calosso

After his initiation into the spiritual realm by his Mother, Fr. Calosso was Bosco's first spiritual guide. He also became a benefactor. What made the encounter with Calosso special is the way the dialogue develops. The initial questions Calosso used were

meant to discern the background of the young person. Calosso acted as a spiritual father and guide to him in discerning the way forward in his life including his vocational discernment. Trust was crucial in the building of this relationship ‘I put myself in his care and bared my soul.’<sup>78</sup> Honesty and truth were essential for Don Bosco in deepening his spiritual life. Calosso seems to have made a difference in the way a young Bosco perceived matters spiritual. Calosso specifically forbade certain practices e.g. excessive fasting. The encounter with Calosso was also pedagogical in that he introduced Don Bosco to the techniques he would need later in his life. In his programme of accompaniment he specified regular confession, daily meditation and regular spiritual reading. He also emphasised the importance of commitment. For Bosco this time was invaluable. He said, ‘I spent as much time as I could with him’.<sup>79</sup> His encounter with Don Calosso led Bosco to a more profound spiritual experience. Calosso caused adjustments in Bosco’s view of the spiritual life e.g. he subsequently forbade young people from excessive penances. Calosso’s approach developed into a genuine ‘father-son’ relationship in which the disciple opened up to a spiritual father. This resulted in elements of genuine accompaniment.

#### 4.5.5 Particular Spiritual Friendships

Later in his life, Don Bosco spoke of the importance of spiritual friendships, both in his adolescence and in the seminary. He alluded to two of these friendships in his autobiographical *Biographical Memoirs of the Oratory*.

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<sup>78</sup> Bosco, G. *Memoirs of the Oratory*

<sup>79</sup> Bosco, G. *Memoirs of the Oratory*

## A. Jonah

While he was at school in Chieri, John Bosco befriended a Jewish boy named James Levi, whom other boys in the school nicknamed Jonah. Chieri at that time had a large Jewish community who were confined to the ghetto by the laws of the day. They were tolerated but treated as second class citizens. Their laws forbade various practices on the Sabbath, including the doing of schoolwork which singled them out for jeers from other pupils, since they suffered low marks or chastisement from the school authorities. John would help them often by doing their Saturday assignments for them. He became very friendly with one of them, James Levi, in particular. They shared one thing in common having both lost their fathers earlier in life.

Of their friendship Bosco spoke in warm terms; 'I was very attached to him and he to me. We spent our time singing, playing the piano, reading and swapping stories.'<sup>80</sup>

For Bosco this friendship was based on harmony, sharing and fidelity. It was a friendship which was passionate and transparent, beneficial to them both. Despite the faith difference it could be described as a spiritual friendship since faith matters were clearly a point of discussion.

A crisis arose in Jonah's life as a result of a serious disagreement. John offered him religious instruction, giving him his catechism, which Jonah accepted. From John's description Jonah gradually learned the tenets of the Catholic faith and was very happy. Jonah's mother took a different view, however, when she found the catechism in her son's room and confronted John who tried to explain things but to no avail. Threatened by his relatives and by the rabbi, Jonah had to leave his family for a time.

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<sup>80</sup> Bosco, Teresio, Don Bosco A new biography (Transl. G. Moja SDB) 2006 Tej-Prasarini, Mumbai, India p91

Eventually matters settled down and Jonah was baptised in Chieri cathedral at the age of eighteen, with the name Aloysius.

Jonah remained Don Bosco's affectionate friend for the remainder of his life. As late as 1880 he used to visit him at the oratory in the Valdocco neighbourhood of Turin. Their friendship was a shared, reciprocal, benevolent, voluntary and joyful one which lasted over a sustained period.<sup>81</sup>

#### B. Louis Comollo

A second friendship attested to in the *Memoirs of the Oratory* and in the *Biographical Memoirs* was with Louis Comollo, a student at the seminary in Chieri. Although this had a mutual element Bosco at times seemed in awe of Comollo's spiritual achievements even stating that he looked forward to his admonitions! Bosco found spiritual accompaniment in Comollo. He uses language such as advise, correct, admonish and suggest to attest to his account of their relationship. He was keen to emphasise that admonishments were given with charity.

When Comollo met Bosco, Comollo was being bullied by a group of boys. Bosco immediately weighed in with his fists, as he was wont to do, to bring a swift end to the bullying. Comollo told Bosco he did not want this and offered his assailants forgiveness which made a deep impression on Bosco. He showed him how he could control his temperament and helped him soften his approach. He acted as a spiritual companion and organised their spiritual activities and acts of piety. Bosco became Comollo's accompanier.

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<sup>81</sup> Op. cit.

While this was a strong and valuable companionship there were significant differences. While Bosco was a social person, Comollo felt uncomfortable and was inclined to escape from social situations. Bosco's prayer was joyful but not rigorist whilst Comollo was influenced by the Benignist and rigorist approaches that were in the seminary. This was in part induced by a fear of perdition. According to Lenti, there was an imbalance in the emphasis placed on last things in the seminary education of the time. Priests were also expected to take on a tremendous moral responsibility in terms of their office due to the prevailing culture of the day.

While Bosco admired certain traits of Comollo, such as his interior dialogue with God, he did not admire his tormented search for outward discipline and regularity. He was wary of avoiding influences that were overly negative or even destructive. When he began to compose his own advice to Seminarians he saw the dangers of Comollo's approach but also of the benefits and positivity of relationships with good companions. In addition, Bosco had observed that the aloofness of superiors did not present the best form of accompaniment to young seminarians. His views on both of these approaches would influence his approach to accompanying young people.

In his oratory he established the 'Society for a Good Time'. He was very careful who he allowed into this society. The focus of the society lay in finding good recreational activities once spiritual observances had been completed. Likewise, in the oratory, he would allow certain pupils to visit the chapel at recreation time to say a short office provided they were on the yard for part of the recreation.



#### 4.6 Holistic Education

Particular friendships (sic. Louis Comollo and Jonah) and his experience of Spiritual Accompaniment both positive (Mama Margaret, Fr. Calosso, Fr. Cafasso) and negative experiences of priests of the day and within the seminary, played an important role in John Bosco setting out an educational method which had accompaniment, both in the spiritual and temporal sense, as its key.

In his friendships he loved and felt loved. He was also happy to be accompanied by those he saw as his spiritual betters. Each encounter, from his mother forward, played a significant role in him deciding on the spirituality, method and approach he would use to accompany the poor boys at risk he found in Turin. His focus and goal throughout remained the saving of souls by creating 'good Christians and honest citizens able to 'earn their bread'.

This is indicative of the fact that Bosco had adopted a holistic approach two hundred years before its emergence in contemporary education. It is another indication that religion for him was architectonic alongside educating in a professional context. This is expressed in a number of ways such as through the development of extracurricular activities and in the development of skills in related contexts e.g. mentoring of teachers and students.

From an early age Don Bosco saw the empowerment of his students, both in spiritual and in temporal terms, as key to their development as good Christians and honest citizens. With clear moral guidance through teaching, homilies and the informal quiet 'word in the ear', supported by regular attendance at sacraments and acts of piety and the provision of regular one to one direction through the sacrament of reconciliation, Bosco sought to offer genuine accompaniment and direction to those in his care. In

addition, he ensured they had proper contracts of work, guaranteeing professional standards and release from work on Sundays and Holy days. He visited them regularly in their places of work to ensure this was the case. He also ensured that time was set aside for days out and for holidays in the countryside.

For his pupils he highlighted models of good practice by offering them role models through biographies and good literature. He encouraged them to work for good by acts of practical charity and to take on leadership, on a small scale, through joining sodalities and other groups dedicated to bringing about individual and collective improvement. For his young aspirants he was not afraid to embed them as teachers of younger pupils from a relatively young age. They were expected to learn through reflection on their experience while at the same time developing their knowledge through study. He mentored and guided them and expected they in turn, once they had gained sufficient experience, to do the same for their colleagues.

#### 4.7 Critique of aspects of Don Bosco's approach from a contemporary Salesian Perspective

In his paper titled *The Soul of Education: Orientations for a contemporary interpretation of 'religion' in the Salesian Pedagogical Project*, Roger Burggraeve offers some words of warning against what could be construed as an over emphasis on individualism and a concentration on 'end things' in Bosco's approach. His contention is that the Christian religion, for Bosco, as he had received it in his youth and deepened during his theological study, was characterised by what could be called a form of supernaturalism. From this perspective the final goal of life or the eschaton i.e. the destination of the soul to heaven or hell, is placed above or beyond this world

in what may be termed the 'supernatural'. This sets out from the premise that the fullness of life is not of this world. The mediation of the supernatural is by the Church and the sacraments, with a particular focus on the Eucharist and confession, both of which were a key part of Don Bosco's methodology.

Nevertheless, this focus on the supernatural can lead to absolutising and a lack of objectivity for Burggraeve<sup>82</sup>. He characterises this tendency as *soteriologism*. In order to speak of Jesus as salvation, emphasis must be placed on the radical calamity of the human person. In building this anthropology of calamity, the attention is focused on the sinful and lost person. Supernaturalism leads to individualism because every individual is sinful, powerless, inadequate and immersed in evil. In this predicament the only thing left for the individual is to turn oneself to God and to surrender unconditionally to God's saving grace. This can lead to the conclusion that as an individual I have no role to play in my own salvation. I can only entrust myself in a humble and unconditional act of surrender to God who, through the mediation of Jesus Christ, in a completely gratuitous manner, without any merit on the individual's part, offers salvation from sin and healing from despair. Participation in the sacraments gives me access to that divine and healing grace.

The danger of this approach is that the individual person can be reduced to insignificance and lost which can lead to a cult of self-humiliation and self-chastisement; this is a point where human responsibility for self and others disappears. Burggraeve warns that if Bosco had taken this approach to an extreme, he could have fallen into what he calls an infantilising soteriologism. This may be characterised by an over focus on judgement and the end times, engendering fear which could be

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<sup>82</sup> R Burggraeve: The Soul of Integral Education *Oriensations for a contemporary interrelation of 'religioune' in the Slarisna pedagogical project*, Leuven, KU Leuven

described as analogous to a Jansenist perspective. A further aspect is that fear can be paralysing so that young people are not left free to decide their own path.

What preserved Bosco from this fate, according to Burggraeve, was his choice of the pedagogical model of the preventive (not repressive) system which placed a strong emphasis on the moral dimension of education and the taking of personal responsibility for one's own growth and for that of others. The repressive system starts from the premise that the growing child or young person is marked by sinfulness; Education in this context then acts to condemn all forms of deviation or sin. The preventive system seeks to arrive at a kinder and milder prevention of misdeeds. For Burggraeve:

Different means are employed for that purpose (prevention): sports and games, music and theatre, studies and work, just as well as religious means like prayer and devotion to Mary, Mass and communion and regular confession. All of this (is) in a context of assistance. The educators should not leave the young people alone in their fickleness. They must be with them to prevent irregularities and evil and to accompany them along the way to goodness.<sup>83</sup>

Nevertheless, Burggraeve also contends that the view of the fragility and sinfulness of the person being educated as not greatly different, in some senses, between the repressive and preventive systems. Indeed, some of Don Bosco's utterances on the consequences of sin towards students we might fear today, could result in a moral or spiritual abuse of power. The style of approach can also lead to a strong emphasis on a moral life as a way of almost deserving the life in God. Individualism can result when the category of salvation is elevated to a privileged position in understanding Christian life.

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid p9

Bosco avoided this by anchoring the whole of his thought on education on Love or Charity as the core of the Christian faith. This turned the focus from interiority and individualism to community and seeking the promotion 'the other'. In an iconic episode, a young diocesan priest who had taken vows as a Salesian but, who it seems, had little or no prior Salesian training, asked Don Bosco's advice as to how he could begin to get to know some of the young people at the oratory. Don Bosco's advice was simple and straightforward; 'Go to the pump' which referred to the drinking fountain in the yard where the pupils gathered.

In addition, the promotion of genuine spiritual friendships principally, though not exclusively, through spiritual accompaniment and the sacrament of reconciliation, is one expression of focusing on the other.

#### 4.8 Concluding Remarks

This theme of accompaniment will continue to be explored more particularly relating to lay partners, as we look more closely at the collaborative dimension of Salesian work. Nowadays this encompasses a wide range of groupings and professionals, from those who make a commitment to live a lay Salesian rule (e.g. Salesian Co-operators), those engaged in the Salesian mission because they wish to work in a Salesian way (e.g. school chaplains), to those who are engaged as professionals in the delivery of the Salesian mission (e.g. headteachers).

## CHAPTER 5

### SALESIANS AND LAY PEOPLE: AN EXERCISE IN COLLABORATIVE MINISTRY

#### 5.1 Transmission in a New Context

The new context for headteachers and those in leadership is redolent with a range of demands from recruitment and the performance management of staff to balancing the budget while delivering a broad and balanced curriculum. In and through all of this, schools are expected to progressively raise standards. In addition, headteachers and governors find themselves in the midst of a highly secularised culture. Against this background they are expected to maintain the distinctive ethos and character of a Catholic school.

The phrase *believing but not belonging*<sup>84</sup>, attributed to Grace Davie, might be thought of as typifying a certain attitude of mind whereby individuals who may in the past have been frequent church goers, no longer see the need. If challenged, they will consider themselves believers, but they will not view practice as the key to measuring their level of belief. Indeed, in a later addition to Davie's<sup>85</sup> work, she points out that the pattern of belief is more complex than simply believing but not belonging. In some countries with established Churches, elements of society now appear to look to the church to conduct religious services vicariously on their behalf. Charles Taylor<sup>86</sup>, amongst other scholars, is alarmed at the rise of individualism and what he regards as an essentially utilitarian view of human existence which looks to maximise the output from a given circumstance in order to justify the means being

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<sup>84</sup> Davie, G., (1994), *Religion in Britain Since 1945: Believing Without Belonging*, Oxford, Blackwell

<sup>85</sup> Davie, G., (2000), *Religion in Modern Europe: A Memory Mutates* Oxford; New York; Oxford University Press

<sup>86</sup> Taylor, C. (2007) *A Secular Age* Cambridge Mass. Belknap Press of Harvard University Press

employed. Commentators such as Michael Paul Gallagher<sup>87</sup> and Dermot Lane<sup>88</sup> interpret the effects of secularisation leading to a desensitisation toward religious experience and a switching off of the receptors which are alive to religious narrative. Both point to ways in which this desensitisation or switching off might be counter balanced. This is largely by an invitation to relationship, leading to the switching on of the receptors of religious experience through the establishment of a strong sense of belonging to a worshiping community. This deep sense of belonging is something which is absent for many young people. Lieven Boeve refers to the same phenomena not as individualism but as individualisation. His response, in his work with the Belgian Catholic bishops, is to ensure that Catholic schools and religious education are all inclusive and accepting of difference rather than emphasising their particularity.

Vatican documents state that Catholic schools are places where the young person “experiences their dignity as persons before they have come to understand its definition”<sup>89</sup>. They are also places which, while they pursue excellence, are equally concerned about ensuring the widest possible aspects of the education and indeed the formation of the young people in their care are catered for. This places a significant responsibility on teachers who are identified in Vatican documents as those who are **individually** and collectively responsible for the maintenance and the

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<sup>87</sup> Gallaher M, “ Charles Taylor’s Critique of ‘Secularisation’”, in *Theological Studies*, volume 97, number 388, (2008) pp. 433-444.

<sup>87</sup> LANE D, *Stepping Stones to Other Religions: A Christian Theology of Inter-Religious Dialogue*, Mary Knoll, New York, Orbis Books, 2011

<sup>88</sup> Congregation for Catholic Education, (1977), *The Catholic School*, London, CTS: 55

development of the ethos and character of Catholic schools. We will return to these themes later in this chapter.

## 5.2 The Sacramental Perspective in the Vatican Documents on Schools

Pope Paul VI, in his allocution on the formal opening of the second Vatican Council, described Church as a 'mystery, a reality imbued with the hidden presence of God'<sup>90</sup> This idea of hidden mystery ties into the traditional understanding of sacrament drawn from an Augustinian perspective, as an 'outward sign of inward grace', incorporating both the components of sacrament (sacramentum) and mystery (mysterion). The term sacramentum has come to mean the visible sign of the hidden mystery of salvation indicated by the term mysterion. In offering this perspective John Lydon quotes Avery Dulles in defining the Church as sacrament because it is a "visible, tangible shape of a present but invisible spiritual reality... namely the presence and activity of Jesus and his spirit in the hearts of people"<sup>91</sup> . For Lydon the presence of Christ as constitutive of the sacramental perspective resonates with the work of eminent theologians such as Rahner and Schillebeeckx as well as Dulles. He quotes Mc Brien as summing up the central tenet of these authors

"The great sacrament of our encounter with God, and of God's encounter with us, is Jesus Christ"<sup>92</sup>.

This ties the sacramental perspective in with the universal call to holiness. Every Christian, through their baptism, is called to the fullness of Christian life. To honour

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<sup>90</sup> Pope Paul VI, (29 September 1963) Allocution on the formal opening of the Second Vatican Council, [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va)

<sup>91</sup> Dulles, A. R., (1987) *Models of the Church* Garden City New York, Image Books

<sup>92</sup> Mc Brien, R (1994) *Catholicism* San Francisco, Harper Collins 9



this each Christian must commit themselves to answering the radical call to discipleship.

Vatican documents place the sacramental perspective as the dominant paradigm for Catholic schools. Each individual teacher is responding to their principal call to be a disciple of Jesus. For Lydon this fits in with charism, as explored in earlier chapters, being a concrete realisation of the universal gift of God. According to the Declaration on Education of the Second Vatican Council, this calling requires that all teachers witness to and model their ministry on that of Christ

“... intimately linked in charity to one another and to their students and endowed with an apostolic spirit, many teachers by their life as much as by their instruction bear witness to Christ, the unique teacher.”<sup>93</sup>

In the document *Catholic School* published some twelve years later the call to bear witness is extended to all:

“Christ is the foundation of the whole educational enterprise in a Catholic school.. The fact that in their own individual way 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.”<sup>94</sup>

This statement places Christ at the centre of the school and conveys the meaning of the sacramental perspective. It also affirms that the way in which the stakeholders in the school community share in that vision is core to the distinctive nature of a Catholic school. The ministry of teachers in Catholic schools is twofold in that they are called to educate young people in faith by articulating the Christian message and they are called to proclaim the Christian vision by the way in which they witness to the Gospel.

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<sup>93</sup> Gravissimum Educationis n. 8 [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va)

<sup>94</sup> Congregation for Catholic Education, (1977), *The Catholic School*, London, CTS: 34

In the document '*Lay Catholics in School: Witness to faith*' the emphasis that the Christian Educational vision is passed on in the very lives of the teachers is continued with a stress placed on witness drawing others forward to imitation:

“Conduct is always much more important than speech; this fact becomes especially important in the formation period of students. The more completely an educator can give an example of concrete witness to the model of the ideal person that is being presented to the students, the more this ideal will be believed and imitated. For it will then be seen as something reasonable and worthy of being lived, something concrete and realisable.”<sup>95</sup>

### 5.3 Vocation and Professionalism

The theme of partnership between religious and lay teachers in emphasising the role of teachers in modelling their ministry on Christ is taken up in the document *Consecrated Persons and their Mission in Schools*. The overall import of this document, underpinned by Pauline spirituality, is that by taking on the mind of Christ individuals, including teachers, are gradually formed into the likeness of Christ. The purpose of this is to present a witness that is counter cultural to a world dominated by the materialistic values of a consumerist society.

While the document makes clear that the focus is on the specific contribution made by consecrated persons to the educational mission of schools, clear reference is made of the need for consecrated persons to run programmes of formation in schools in which they hold trusteeship. The purpose of these programmes is to focus on the “vocational dimension of the teaching profession in order to make the teachers aware that they are participating in the educational and sanctifying mission of the church.”<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Congregation for Catholic Education, (1982), *Lay Catholics in School: Witness to faith*, London CTS: 32

<sup>96</sup> Congregation for Catholic Education (2002), *Consecrate Persons and their Mission in Schools* (CMPS), London, CTS n.4

It is clear from this document that religious and lay teachers are called to share in the educational mission of the church and hence share a vocation. In addition, there is an insistence that formation programmes focus on living the values espoused rather than just engaging people in conversation.

The theme of a shared mission is picked up further in the Congregation's 2007 document, *Educating Together in Catholic Schools: A shared Mission between Consecrated Persons and the Lay Faithful*. While continuing to emphasise the role of religious in the Church's educational mission and focusing on the value of programmes of formation, there is recognition that the responsibility for such programmes in many parts of the world has been transferred to lay teachers.

The significant and dramatic change in the demography of religious deployed in schools was highlighted in the publicising of this document with the help of comparative statistics from the USA and Australia. At the press conference to launch the document it was reported that in the USA of the 1950's 86% of teachers in Catholic schools were religious whereas there are 4.4% currently; in the Australia of the late 1960's it was reported that 69% of teachers in Catholic schools were religious in comparison with 0.9% currently. This represents a precipitant decline in the numbers of religious teaching in schools over a forty to fifty-year period. Taking one specific example, the Salesian congregation numbered 21,614 in 1967 compared with 15,893 in 2015. (Grogan, B., (2015 :2), *History of the Great Britain Province*, Rome, Salesianum). In the context of this research proposal the situation is exacerbated by the fact that, in the UK, the mean age of Salesians is now 70 with relatively few of those of working age engaged in teaching.

It is against this background that the heightened significance of the role of lay teachers is presented. 'Witness' is a key theme in the document with the emphasis on teachers

living their faith. Lay teachers should first and foremost be a witness to a 'living encounter with Christ'<sup>97</sup> in order to 'demonstrate that Christian life is bearing light and meaning for everyone.'<sup>98</sup> The starting point of this document is that Christ is the foundation of all educational enterprises in Catholic schools and that teachers modelling their lives on Christ is the most effective way of turning this vision into practice.

Returning to the theme of vocation John Sullivan is of the view that there should be no distinction between having a vocation and acting as a professional. Sullivan frames the vocation to teach in the context of discipleship which for him makes Christian education distinctive. Nevertheless, to be able to show students what discipleship looks like, it is essential that there is no distinction between having a vocation and being a professional because both are essential components of the path of discipleship.<sup>99</sup>

In utilising the concept of the living word suggested in the first line of John's gospel, *en arkhe en ho logos* ('in the beginning was the Word'), to develop an incarnational theme in his book *Living Logos*, Sullivan stresses that school leaders "embody the key meanings of the school and the significance of its work"<sup>100</sup> He also addresses the role of the teacher stating that the character, practices and disposition of the teacher are of equal value to the roles they play in the context of pupil formation. Sullivan emphasises that teaching is concerned with the formation of persons rather than the

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<sup>97</sup> Congregation for Catholic Education released in 2007, *Educating Together in Catholic Schools: A shared Mission between Consecrated Persons and the Lay Faithful*, (ECTS), London, CTS n.4

<sup>98</sup> ECTS n.15

<sup>99</sup> Sullivan J (2004) *Vocation and Profession in Teacher Education* in Elford RJ (Editor) *The Foundation of Hope* Liverpool, Liverpool Hope University

<sup>100</sup> Sullivan, J (2002) *Living Logos: A Challenge for Catholic School Leaders* published originally by St. Mary's University College

production of graded performances, but he also emphasises the personhood and character of the teacher and the prerequisite that at least a core group of teachers in any Catholic school are anchored firmly in a specific tradition. For Sullivan the integral formation of the human person and focusing on Christ as the foundation of the educational enterprise, are two fundamental points of documents emanating from the Congregation for Catholic Education. He is also insistent that developing a relationship with Christ should be real, as opposed to virtual, so that the relationship might be “embodied and witnessed to by the teacher... to ensure that children receive an appropriate formation”<sup>101</sup>

#### 5.4 Discipleship

The notion of a sacramental vision, modelling ministry on Christ, permeates this chapter. Lydon (2011:227) makes the point that, if Thomas Groome is right in maintaining that the good Catholic school is one in which “Catholic educators allow their faith commitments to shape the whole curriculum”<sup>102</sup>, then it is essential that a core group of Catholic teachers articulate their faith *and* witness to that faith. Groome goes on to define exactly what putting faith to work in practice might mean in a Catholic school. He insists that such faith is not simply the personal faith of the individual educator which, though important, must reflect the teachings of the Magisterium:

For what else is Catholic education but an education that reflects the foundational convictions of Catholicism. Following on, Catholic educators

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<sup>101</sup> Sullivan, J (2001) *Catholic Education Distinctive and Inclusive* Dordrecht, The Netherlands, Kluwer Academic Publications

<sup>102</sup> Groome, T H., (2003), *Forging In the Smithy of the Teacher's Soul* in Prendergast, N., & Monahan, L., (Editors), (2003), *Re-imagining The Catholic School*, Dublin, Veritas:41

must take these deep rivers of faith that define Catholicism and allow them to become operative commitments through their vocation – to put them to work in their teaching.<sup>103</sup>

The key idea contained within the sacramental perspective is that teachers, in common with all Christians, are called to model their ministry on that of Christ. This invites the question ‘what does it mean to model one’s ministry on Jesus?’ The characteristics below indicate, from the perspective of the ministry of teaching, the key characteristics, of Jesus’ style of ministry, articulated originally by Groome. <sup>104</sup>

#### 5.4.1 Invitation and Inclusion

In chapter 1 of Mark’s gospel we are told, following his baptism in the Jordan, as Jesus walked along the water side he met Andrew and Simon whereupon he issued his invitation to ‘Come, follow me” (Mark 1: 17). He went on further we are told and called James and his brother John, who followed him. This invitation and their response is the beginning of their path of discipleship. Jesus makes the first move in issuing his invitation to ‘follow me’. Unlike the rabbis of his time he does not wait for a following to build up around him. He goes out to people. He also emphasises the compassion of God in showing that the Father makes the first move as in the story of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15: 11-32) offering forgiveness and understanding.

The ministry of Jesus is not addressed to an elite group. In Chapter 2 of Mark’s Gospel, following the call of Matthew, Jesus emphasises that he has come “not to call the

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<sup>103</sup> Groome, op.cit:42

<sup>104</sup> Groome, T H. (1998) *Sharing Faith*, Eugene OR (USA) Wipf & Stock

virtuous but sinners". (Mk: 2:17). Matthew is of course a case in point having been an outsider and a sinner by dint of his position as a tax collector. Likewise, the story of Jesus meeting the Samaritan women at the well (John 4: 4-26) demonstrates his preparedness to reach beyond social and religious norms (Jews regarded Samaritans as not being orthodox in the practice of their faith and so they were outsiders). The parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10: 25-37) helps to reinforce the message that Jesus has come for all. Inclusion then is an essential characteristic of discipleship.

#### 5.4.2 Respecting an individual's discernment

The story of the rich young man (Mark 10:17-31) demonstrates that, despite Jesus' drive for inclusion, he is willing to leave individuals free to discern for themselves what God is calling them to. On this occasion it is the rich young man who makes the first approach in asking Jesus what he must do to inherit eternal life. When he is told the final step is 'to sell everything you have, give money to the poor and follow me' he turns away sad since he cannot, for whatever reason, take this final step. We are told that he went away sorrowful and disheartened as he had great wealth. We are also told Jesus 'looked at him with love'. At no point does Jesus condemn the rich young man or seek to make an example of him, he simply accepts the choice that he makes. Respecting discernment is a further characteristic of discipleship.

#### 5.4.3 Calling people into partnership

Jesus calls the twelve apostles (Mark 12: 16-19) 'to be with him'. This suggests that the call is one to community. This is reinforced by the fact that Jesus brings those he

has chosen up a mountain with him to emphasise their distinctive calling. This commitment goes beyond the standard rabbi and disciple relationship. A second purpose of their calling is that they might share in his mission of preaching and healing. This is demanding solidarity from the group around a common mission. In effect he is calling them into partnership.

#### 5.4.4 Challenges

In response to the call of Jesus, Mark tells us the disciples left their nets “at once”. The Greek verb *aphiemi*, which can mean going away or departing (leaving) can also mean a radical break with the past and a new beginning implying that the future could bring greater challenge. From the initial call of the disciples Jesus makes clear that their calling will not be an easy one.

The disciples are taking a leap of faith in that they are giving up a relatively secure lifestyle as fisherman to step out into the ‘unknown’. This commitment to a yet uncharted future demonstrates the commitment of these first disciples.

### 5.5 Ongoing Commitment to the Salesian Vision

#### 5.5.1 Introduction

The significant decline in the numbers of religious in the church Post Vatican II is well documented; the reasons for this decrease are many and varied. To a certain extent, this coincided with a drop in the number of religious available to work in the field of Education. Nevertheless, this change did not take place overnight following Vatican II.



It took place over a sustained period of time spanning the late nineteen-sixties to the present day. In this regard there are other factors to consider when conducting an analysis of what has led to the present situation.

Using a specific example, from the early 1970's it was said that Don Ricceri, the superior General of the Salesian congregation at that time, believed that the Salesians had not, in his view, lost so large a number of religious in the aftermath of Vatican II, that it materially affected the ability of the congregation to deliver corporal works of mercy across a range of fields of work including education. What is not so well attested to however is the departure of some religious orders, while they still had significant numbers of teachers at their disposal, from mainline apostolates, such as teaching in schools, to more liminal apostolates such as living and working with the poor, assisting those with addictions, the homeless etc.

A further factor in the UK was the changing demographic of education in the late 1960's and early 1970's which, for many schools run by religious orders, precipitated a change from small single sex Grammar type schools, where selection was the norm, to large mixed Comprehensive schools with no selection (i.e. entry was open to all abilities and every school was expected to have a mixed ability intake). This had two effects: the first was to increase the size of the schools making them to an extent less personalised environments with the intake number doubling or trebling over a relatively short period of time; the second was to further dilute the influence of the religious who were still working at the 'chalk face' so to speak as their numbers and to an extent their impact were reduced. A third factor in reducing influence was the withdrawal of religious from leadership positions within schools, particularly headteacher positions. The change from Grammar (selective) to Comprehensive (non-selective) provision also precipitated for some individual religious their move away from teaching as their

chosen profession since they had been trained to teach grammar school children and found they had had little preparation for teaching a truly comprehensive intake.

The teaching apostolate is and remains a wonderful expression of Christian charity in terms of forming the young as people of faith and in so doing helping them to 'understand their dignity as persons before they have come to know its meaning'.

### 5.5.2 Handing on the baton

Just as the number of factors, coming into play over the range of time between Vatican II and the present day, contributed to the significant decline in the numbers of religious working in education, so also the 'handing over of the baton' to predominantly lay leadership has taken place over the same timescale. It is important nonetheless to emphasise that this has been a gradual process over some fifty years.

The more pivotal role of lay people in sharing the mission is acknowledged in the latest documents from the twenty seventh General Chapter of the Salesians of Don Bosco. A previous Director General of the Salesians, Fr. Pascual Chavez, emphasised that the Salesian mission cannot be thought of without the laity, because what they bring to the mission is considered vital for the Salesian charism. Fr. Fernandes Arttime, who followed Pascual Chavez as the Director General of the Salesians of Don Bosco, re-emphasises the importance of lay involvement by stating that the shared mission between SDBs and lay people is no longer optional. The reason he gives is that the Salesian mission in the world today so clearly demands it. He states that while there are different 'speeds' for the process of lay involvement in the mission across Salesian provinces, it is clear that 'the shared mission between SDBs and laity, reflections on

this mission and the process of adaptation by SDB confreres, is something that cannot be disregarded.’<sup>105</sup>

## 5.6 The Internationalisation of Religious communities: Project Europe

Having described the importance of the witness of lay leaders and teachers in Catholic education and the impact, overall, of declining numbers of religious, it remains important to note the potential transformational effect of the presence of young religious, who come from different cultural backgrounds, in schools in England. The United Kingdom has, for many years, been home to people from across the world, who have brought many aspects of their customs and their culture to this country, thereby enriching it. Schools, in all parts of the country, are now culturally diverse institutions, in terms of the students attending them and the staff who work there. The Salesian community should, where possible, reflect this diversity in order to be able to engage fully with young people and address their cultural and spiritual needs, especially when they are adjusting to a new culture.

The Salesian congregation, in recognition of this need and the relative dearth of vocations in countries in Europe, launched an initiative referred to as ‘Project Europe’ in 2006. The former Rector Major (Director General) of the Salesian congregation, Fr. Pascual Chavez Villanueva, in the concluding address to the 26<sup>th</sup> general Chapter of the Salesian congregation, set out a case for the congregation prioritising intervention in Europe:

Today, more than ever, we become aware that our presence in Europe needs to be re-thought. This consideration... aimed at re-dimensioning our Salesian

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<sup>105</sup> ‘*Witness to the Radical Approach of the Gospel Work and Temperance*’ p129 Direzione Generale Opere Don Bosco, Rome 2014

presence for greater impact and effectiveness in this continent. That is, seeking a new form of evangelisation in order to respond to the spiritual and moral needs of these young people, who to us appear as wanderers without guides and without destination.

He continues:

It is a question therefore of rejuvenating with Salesian personnel those Provinces most in need to make the Salesian charism more significant and fruitful in today's Europe.

And he concludes:

- Among the priorities I indicate the most important:
- Creating new presences for young people,
  - Encouraging dynamic and innovative initiatives,
  - Fostering vocations<sup>106</sup>

His successor, Angel Fernandes Artime, continued to promote Project Europe as a way of internationalising Salesian communities, emphasising that every Salesian can discern a missionary vocation and that every province is capable of producing missionaries. He saw Project Europe therefore as an opportunity for young Salesians, from other parts of the world, to discern their vocation, some of them to work as missionaries in Europe, developing new initiatives and new missions. He saw this strategy as helping to internationalise Salesian provinces, rejuvenating them with missionaries from other continents while, at the same time, promoting vocational discernment amongst the young people of the receiving country, through the public celebration of the renewals of vows and ordinations.

A crucial element of this initiative, is that Salesians who apply to become missionaries, are carefully chosen and prepared for the fundamental step of leaving their home country and joining a new Salesian province, often in a different continent. It is also necessary that they are young enough to be formed and trained in the countries and

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<sup>106</sup> Villanueva, P. C. (2006) *Closing Address of the 26<sup>th</sup> General Chapter of the Salesians of Don Bosco*  
[https://www.sdb.org/en/SDB\\_Resources/General\\_Chapters/CG26\\_\(2008\)/gc\\_26\\_appendix#\\_ftn103](https://www.sdb.org/en/SDB_Resources/General_Chapters/CG26_(2008)/gc_26_appendix#_ftn103)

provinces that receive them, if the project is to be successful; another requirement is that the Salesians chosen must have the ability to enculturate quickly in a new culture; this includes having good language skills and the ability to adapt quickly.

In addition, these young Salesians, by the radical nature of their commitment through vowed life, can bring an incarnational dimension to the witness of living out the Salesian charism on a daily basis. Alongside embodying the Salesian charism through their lifelong vowed commitment, they are a daily witness, to staff and pupils, of how the Salesian charism can be put into practice, as one goes about the business of a normal school day. They also embody the importance of presence and encounter, through their energy and commitment to being present in the playground with young people and in their involvement in animating extra curricula activities.

Due to the demands of the school improvement agenda, it is essential that these young religious must have the capacity to study for and achieve, the degrees and professional qualifications required, to work in fields such as education, youth and community and social work in the UK, as well as the resilience required to comply with exacting external scrutiny alongside their lay colleagues. The introduction of this project into the British Salesian province, which began with the arrival of the first missionaries ten years ago, is already having an impact on schools, with the successful placement of young Salesians in both chaplaincy and teaching roles. Whilst this is not likely to reverse the overall decline in the numbers of religious that might be engaged in school ministry, it nevertheless brings about a potential change in the narrative of religious decline. In the course of this study, it will be interesting to gauge whether a relatively small number of well-placed and well trained religious, are capable of having a disproportionate impact on the enactment of the Salesian charism in Salesian schools in England.

### 5.6.1 Guidance for the Salesian mission: Conclusions drawn by the 27<sup>th</sup> General Chapter

In the documents of the most recent General Chapter (2015) of the Salesians of Don Bosco held in Rome, titled GC 27 '*Witness to the Radical Approach of the Gospel-Work and Temperance*', Angel Fernandes Artime clarifies what it means for Salesians to be with the young in the current context

‘It means wanting to be with and among them, meeting up with them in our daily life, getting to know their world, encouraging them to play their part, accompanying the awakening of their sense of God and encouraging them to live their lives as the Lord Jesus lived his.’<sup>107</sup>

In addition, the documents of the 27<sup>th</sup> General Chapter set out the priority areas for the Salesian mission in the 21<sup>st</sup> century context:

‘..We are evangelisers of the young and the more so if they are poor; we pay special attention to apostolic vocations; we are educators of the faith for the working classes, particularly by means of social communication; we proclaim the gospel to those who have not yet received it.’<sup>108</sup>

Fernandes Artime goes on to emphasise, in the strongest terms, the importance of the accompaniment of young people for and by Salesians. This is an essential element of the Salesian charism and its importance is emphasised repeatedly within the context of education and evangelisation. In an echo of Don Bosco’s letter from Rome, Fr. Fernandes Artime states

‘As educators we must know how to be with the young and walk side by side with them in their circumstances and in their concrete situation, in their personal

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<sup>107</sup> '*Witness to the Radical Approach of the Gospel Work and Temperance* p126 Direzione Generale Opere Don Bosco, Rome 2014

<sup>108</sup> Ibid p127

process of growing to maturity. As evangelisers our aim is to accompany the young people so that in freedom they can encounter the Lord Jesus.<sup>109</sup>

This emphasises to Salesians, and to Salesian educators, that accompanying each young person in their concrete situation ought to be a Salesian strength. In the view of Fernandes Artime, accompaniment is of vital importance as it initiates for young people the process of individual discernment about the current and future direction of their lives ‘..the ability to accompany each teenager, each young person in their personal quest, their challenges, their questions about life, their choices in life..<sup>110</sup> is a God given opportunity which must be embraced. He warns Salesians away from the assumption that this is not their work or that it can be handed over to other agencies.

## 5.7 Concluding Remarks

The dynamic of accompaniment is very much in tune with the key tenets of Salesian education explored in earlier chapters, namely presence and loving kindness. It also follows on from the understanding that Salesian education is formative as well as educative. At its root, in Don Bosco’s time and in our present age, is the conviction that young people must have the freedom to make the decisions which will ultimately decide the course of their lives. The role of adults as accompaniers and educators is to be close so that young people feel supported in taking the decisions which will have a major bearing on their future.

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid p 127

<sup>110</sup> Ibid p128

## CHAPTER 6

### COMPETING PRESSURES

#### 6.1 Contemporary Context Revisited

The rise of individualism is one facet of the prevailing culture. According to Charles Taylor<sup>111</sup> people in the past believed they were part of a hierarchy and a wider order. They were locked into structures which apparently limited their freedom but that gave them a sense of meaning. While individualism may be modernity's greatest achievement, Taylor suggests, it also comes at a cost. A direct consequence of this is that people do not have a sense of a higher order, of something worth making sacrifices for.

An additional aspect of a contemporary culture is the application of what Taylor calls instrumental reason. He describes this as finding the most economical means to a given end. Seeking maximum efficiency and the best cost output ratio are the new ideals. Taylor sees the combination of Individualism and instrumental reason as reducing the ability of individuals and groups to be receptive to the language of experience, especially religious experience.

These ideas are echoed by Gerald Grace who holds that the best hope for a renewal of ethical and moral professionalism, which in the past for Grace had its origins in the culture of the sacred, is a world culture in which 'reasoned forms of the culture and of the sacred are again influential'<sup>112</sup>. This follows on from the conviction that professions and therefore professionals have to some extent lost their moral compass.

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<sup>111</sup> Taylor C, "Three Malaises" excerpted from *The Malaise of Modernity*, CBC Massey Lecture Series, The House of Anansi Press Inc., Toronto, (2007), pp1-29.

<sup>112</sup> Grace, G. (2013) *Professions, Sacred and Profane: Reflections on the Changing Nature of Professionalism*



For Grace the original professions of priesthood, medicine and law embodied ethical values. He believes, to an extent, that these professions can act as exemplars or at least reminders of what has been lost in dismissing the influence of the sacred.

For Grace access to the sacred is still readily available for example within Catholic Christianity and its teachings and in the other great world religions. He cites the writings of Pope Benedict XVI, in his encyclical *Caritatis in Veritate*<sup>113</sup> as an exemplar. In this encyclical Pope Benedict criticises the lack of a sense of brotherhood and therefore solidarity in a world that is becoming wealthier but also more unequal. Against the background of the financial crisis he highlights the lack of an ethical foundation to financial decisions. He raises concerns at the abuse of economic processes due to the shielding of economic activity from the influences of moral character and exhorts individuals to re-establish the moral bona fides of their professions. In looking for an antidote to the loss of a sacred perspective amongst professions and what would seem to be a dominant secularism, Grace suggests that the training of professionals must play a crucial role in forming and preserving a sacred perspective.

‘Current conditions present professions and professionals with a test of occupational integrity. Either they will accept the role of simply being technical experts and efficient producers or deliverers of State specified outcomes, or they will find the moral courage to maintain a role (where necessary) of being also critics and the conscience of society.’<sup>114</sup>

Following the discussion above Grace concludes that what is at stake is the very concept of a profession itself, as understood and practiced historically. He raises the

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<sup>113</sup> Benedict XVI (2009) *Caritatis in Veritate: On Integral Human Development in Charity and Truth*

<sup>114</sup> Grace, G. (2013) *Professions, Sacred and Profane: Reflections on the Changing Nature of Professionalism* p9

question as to whether the present culture of global marketisation has the moral resources for the renewal of ethical professionalism? According to Alasdair Macintyre the failure of the Enlightenment and what it set out to achieve through science and reason has led to deeper problems with moral theory<sup>115</sup>. As a former Marxist philosopher, Macintyre is well placed to make a judgement. For Grace this analysis suggests that current secular culture does not have the moral resources for the renewal of ethical professionalism.

## 6.2 The Field of Education

In 1996 Bernstein, in *Pedagogy, Symbolic Control and Identity*, conducted an analysis of the contemporary changes in education. Bernstein's conclusion is that the very concept of education itself is at stake.<sup>116</sup>

While the concept of individualism is complex, the writer David Hargreaves, when he places it in the context of education, claims that the working vocabulary of teachers reflects a growing culture of individualism. According to Hargreaves there are a host of different concepts in education which reflect autonomy rather than concepts like collegiality or solidarity around an agreed mission. "The working vocabulary of teachers reflects the cult of individualism. When teachers talk about their aims, the rhetoric is replete with concepts such as 'individual development', 'personal growth',

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<sup>115</sup> Macintyre, A (1985) *After Virtue: a Study in Moral Theory* (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition), London, Duckworth p66

<sup>116</sup> Bernstein, B (1996) *Pedagogy, Symbolic Control and Identity*, London, Taylor and Francis p88

'independence', 'initiative'..."<sup>117</sup>. According to Hargreaves all of these can be prefaced with the word 'individual'.

In addition to these developments, the Education Reform Act of 1998 initiated what some commentators have referred to as an enveloping managerialism, unleashing market forces into education and placing a strong emphasis on accountability and inspection as a means of regulation. Gerald Grace describes the various manifestations of this managerialism as budgeting control, public relations, marketing research, performance indicators and management of personnel<sup>118</sup>.

A further development of this approach in education is the increasing emphasis placed on performance target setting against predetermined norms set by external agencies such as governments which are liable to change. The role of school leaders then is to focus on target setting as a means to delivering greater productivity. The concern is that pupils in this model are simply considered as units of production and their achievements as commodities which are used to compare the output of one institution with another. This may reflect an underlying ethic that people are not valued in themselves but in terms of measurable outcomes. In a school context this is typified by the use of 'league tables' which contain a myriad of statistical data aimed at identifying whether a school is making progress.

For Gerald Grace commodification is at the core of the concept of managerialism. He states that 'Education, regarded in the nineteenth century as a moral and spiritual enterprise... had been re-contextualised since the 1980s as a product in the

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<sup>117</sup> Hargreaves, D. H. A Sociological Critique for Individualism in Education in the British Journal of Education Studies , Vol XXVIII, June 1980: 187

<sup>118</sup> Grace G op.cit :44

marketplace.’<sup>119</sup> In addition this shift in culture has changed the role of those responsible for leadership in schools;

‘The role of the school leader has been transformed from that of potential creative innovator of educational practice to that of the executive producer of increased educational product.’<sup>120</sup>

It is important to acknowledge that this perspective offered by Grace may be open to challenge by modern scholarship. Nevertheless, it clearly signals that there has been a significant shift in the way in which school leaders and headteachers in particular are held to account for school performance.

### 6.3 Quality Assurance

The Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) was introduced, as part of the 1992 Education Act, with the purpose of holding schools to account and in so doing, raise standards. The ‘tariff’ or space of time between inspections has been altered repeatedly since that time with the current tariff, to a large extent, dictated by the outcome or ‘grading’ of the previous inspection, which is closely related to standards including progress measures. This approach can result in schools, often but not exclusively, in more challenging areas, undergoing inspection disproportionately more than schools in economically advantaged contexts, with all of the concomitant pressures which this brings to bear on the school, its staff and its governors.

In the current climate, quality between inspections is established by self-evaluation and performance management. In the Ofsted framework published in 2015<sup>121</sup> there

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<sup>119</sup> Grace, G (1995), op. cit. : 40

<sup>120</sup> Grace, G (2008) *Changes in the classification and Framing of Education in Britain 1950s to 2000s*

<sup>121</sup> Ofsted, (2015), *The Common Inspection Framework*, Ofsted, Manchester

are six mentions of the term 'quality assurance' including a specific section on the relationship between inspection and self-evaluation.

Self-evaluation provides the basis for planning, development and improvement in schools. Inspection takes full account of, and contributes to, a school's self-evaluation. Schools may present a written summary of their self-evaluation to inspectors. (p.14)

While the significance of self-evaluation is made clear, the use of the word 'may' indicates that a self-evaluation document is no longer mandatory. The importance assigned to self-evaluation by Ofsted becomes more apparent in the School Inspection Handbook in which the term is used eleven times, associated three times with the word *robust* and once with the word *rigour*. The basic message is that a school's self-evaluation must be accurate, reflecting its strengths and weaknesses. The lead inspector is advised at the outset to:

...make arrangements for a longer meeting at a convenient time with the headteacher to discuss the school's self-evaluation and other relevant matters.

The handbook makes it clear that leadership must have a clear and accurate evaluation of school performance and this is reflected in the grade descriptors related to the quality of leadership and management.

The term *robust* is also used in the context of performance management to which there are sixteen references in the Handbook, again indicative of its significance. Linking self-evaluation and performance management, inspectors are advised to consider "how effectively senior leaders use performance management and the school's self-evaluation to focus professional development activities."

In the model policy for Teacher Appraisal and Capability (May 2012)<sup>122</sup> schools are advised that on “1 September 2012 the new regulations supersede the previous performance management model policy and guidance, which had been designed to support the 2006 Regulations.” There is a perceptible change in terminology, indicative of a greater degree of formality in respect of the performance management process. Links with development planning and self-evaluation are critical together with the recently revised Teacher’s Standards. The formal nature of the new arrangement is reflected in the fact that the word ‘capability’ is used thirty four times in the model policy and twenty three times a policy adopted in a Catholic Voluntary Aided Comprehensive school. It must be emphasised however, that the words development and support are used fourteen and twenty times respectively in this document, reflecting a balance between challenge and support<sup>123</sup>.

It is interesting to note that, of the three references to challenges in relation to quality assurance in the latest Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector’s Report (HMCI), none refer to schools. (One reference to Community Learning and Skills Providers and two to Local Authorities). In a recent Ofsted School Inspection Handbook (December 2017) self-evaluation is referred to eleven times, signposting that inspectors will make judgements on “the rigour and accuracy of self-evaluation and how well it leads to planning that secures continual improvement.”. The weakness of self-evaluation was noted in the HMCI report in the context of schools judged as requiring improvement or inadequate.

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<sup>122</sup> Department of Education (DfE), (2012), *Teacher Appraisal and Capability Model Policy*, London, DfE

<sup>123</sup> Policy written for a Salesian School in the UK Network. The name of the school is omitted for ethical reasons.

In summary words such as ‘robust’, ‘rigour’ and ‘capability’ reflect Grace’s notion of an enveloping managerialist perspective which he suggests could be antithetical to the promotion of Catholic and, specifically in the context of this thesis, Salesian distinctiveness.

In his most recent publication Carlo Nanni, of the Salesian Pontifical University in Rome (UPS), echoes aspects of the concerns raised by both Taylor and Grace when he says

The acceleration of change and innovation at all levels has led to a crisis in values and traditional ethical certainties, to depersonalisation and extreme subjectivism in individual and social behaviour, to the restriction of thought to.. the present with the consequent difficulty in remembering the past and planning for the future.<sup>124</sup>

Nanni reflects in some ways what Taylor is saying about rampant individualism, which he refers to as extreme subjectivism and acknowledges Grace’s observations about a crisis in values and traditional ethical certainties. He also acknowledges concerns raised by Dermot Lane about the damage to the collective memory and the ability to remember past narratives. If you cannot remember the past you certainly cannot connect with it. Nanni puts this down to the acceleration of change and innovation at all levels. This perspective certainly echoes aspects of what Grace (1995) refers to as the commodification of education and the loss of the perspective, all be it for Grace enshrined in the nineteenth century, that education is primarily a moral and spiritual enterprise.<sup>125</sup> In a later publication, Grace (2014),<sup>126</sup> cites Robert A Nisbet who argued that the Enlightenment as a philosophical and cultural movement in

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<sup>124</sup> Nanni, C. *The Educational Preventive System of Don Bosco Today* Don Bosco Publications Bolton, England 2018, p88

<sup>125</sup> Grace, G (1995), op. cit. : 40

<sup>126</sup> Grace, G, *Professions Sacred and Profane* in Young, M. & Muller, J (Editors), (2014), *Knowledge, Expertise & The Professions*, London, Routledge

eighteenth-century Europe, with its questioning of traditional doctrines and values and its emphasis upon individualism and the free use of reason, marked the beginning of the end of the culture of the sacred as the dominant habitus in Europe. Nanni refers to a phrase, often attributed to Don Bosco, that 'education is a matter of the heart'<sup>127</sup> While this may have in fact been coined by one of Bosco's followers, the import of it is clear for the Salesian educational perspective. We will return to this theme in drawing our conclusions regarding Bosco's educational method within which a holistic perspective was seminal , encapsulated in the aphorism 'honest citizens and good Christians' referenced earlier. (p.50)

#### 6.4 Catholic Education

In Catholic schools In England and Wales there is a challenge to balance school effectiveness with Catholic distinctiveness. This includes the spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects which are judged and graded by Ofsted inspectors. Nevertheless, in the recent past the question of whether sufficient value has been added between key stages two and four, in particular, has been a controlling judgement with the achievement grading dictating the inspection outcome, despite what may be other areas of excellent practice.

The documents of the Bishops of England and Wales emphasise the importance of promoting excellence in all things as a means to ensuring the holistic development of each individual. There is a danger of a lack of balance promoting one area of achievement, such as academic achievement, to the exclusion of others. This does

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<sup>127</sup> Nanni, C. *The Educational Preventive System of Don Bosco Today* Don Bosco Publications Bolton, England 2018, p89



not necessarily lead to the development of the whole person and indeed, in its more extreme and unbalanced forms, could be regarded as exerting significant pressure on students to perform in an area limited to one aspect of the curriculum.

## 6.5 Adding Value

The extent to which an individual teacher achieves added value is a critical factor in judging performance. Government sponsored publications analyse national data sets from all state schools and produce a series of residuals for individual subjects and for the school overall, which allows the comparison of subjects and therefore teacher performance, in one subject, with that of another school. This evidence is then used in performance management reviews which can impact on pay allocation as well as in judgements about the competency of individual teachers. There is also an inherent flaw in that this data, used for national comparisons, bears no relation to context since contextual factors, such as the deprivation index and free school meals indicators, were removed from these publications by a prior Education Secretary. The strategy of comparing pupil progress under different teachers can, perhaps understandably, lead to a rise in tension over matters such as the classes and timetable allocated to a teacher, especially when it is recognised that it is easier to achieve added value with some classes more than others.

## 6.6 Justice

Self-interest among teachers is not the only consequence of the availability of copious amounts of published data comparing performance. To be seen to be successful in terms of data such as exam results, can have an impact on the number of pupils a

school is able to recruit and therefore on the school's budget. Since funding is implicitly linked to pupil numbers consistent recruitment is essential to promote and develop schools. The Bishop's Conference of England and Wales, in 1996 recognised the danger of the dominance of performance indicators in guiding parents to make choices regarding schools and stated that this could mean that:

‘those most likely to suffer from unrestricted market forces in education are the poor, vulnerable, and the defenceless. If competition sets one school off against another, if success in one institution is achieved deliberately at the cost of another, it is morally unacceptable.’<sup>128</sup>

There is the fundamental danger that the culture of a competitive market has the potential to make it more difficult to be at the service of the poor and the marginalised. Living out the pastoral mission of the church today has to be balanced against the ambition to be recognised as a good and a successful school.

A further argument put forward is that if Catholic schools are places where young people ‘experience their dignity as a person before they know its definition’<sup>129</sup> a failure to empower students to achieve their potential in terms of results, might be regarded as diminishing rather than enhancing their dignity as persons. The bishops also state that the search for excellence is ‘seen as an integral part of the spiritual quest’ and that in Catholic education ‘pupils and students are given every opportunity to develop their talents to the full.’<sup>130</sup> This places the emphasis firmly on Catholic education being a holistic experience, while at the same time, recognising the need for individuals to fulfil their potential, both academic and personal.

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<sup>128</sup> Bishops Conference of England and Wales 1996) *The Common Good in Education*, London, CTS

<sup>129</sup> Bishops Conference of England and Wales (1996) *Principals, Practices and Concerns*, London, CTS

<sup>130</sup> Bishops Conference of England and Wales (1996) op. cit.

From a Salesian perspective, the *Frame of Reference for Salesian Youth Ministry*, when referring to Salesian Schools, states that

Holistic education means rounding off school and training curricula with other complementary, freely chosen activities which support them. The Salesian school provides ample room for leisure activities (artistic, recreational, sports, cultural).

and

The Salesian school makes room for, promotes and accompanies different groups (cultural, recreational, artistic, community service, volunteer service, Christian growth, vocational guidance, Christian commitment, study-research) recognising that they are special forms of education and evangelisation.<sup>131</sup>

#### 6.6.2 Shared Vision

The principles set out above may not always be realisable in their entirety in every location; in so far as they are goals they act as guidelines in setting out how Salesian education may be delivered in a school context. Salesian schools do not work in isolation, however, but in partnership with local and national networks. At a local level the Salesian school may not simply act on its own behalf but in concert with other educating and pastoral communities that exist in the area; these will include parishes and primary schools in particular but also other educational and social institutions. It is essential that we recognise and affirm that primary schools and parishes are, in themselves, bespoke educational and pastoral communities, sharing the same overall goals as the Salesian school in terms of faith and values formation. It is also important to emphasise that the Salesian school, alongside the local religious community, may be in a position to take the lead in promoting and developing the Educating and Pastoral Community (EPC) in each Salesian centre. This has the advantage of

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<sup>131</sup> Attard, F. *Frame of Reference of Salesian Youth Ministry* Direzione Generale Opere Don Bosco. Rome 2014 p208

bringing together elements such as the celebration of feast days, catechetical formation, family support, liturgical celebrations in the course of the year such as holy days of obligation, as well as the apostolic and formative work carried out during the school year and during holiday periods. It also offers the opportunity to bring together the different aspects of the Salesian mission in the locality, involving the wider community, including parishes and primary schools, being engaged in the ongoing development of that community as an educational and pastoral setting. Sharing the vision, unity of purpose and conviction on the part of all stakeholders, makes the establishment and maintenance of the Educating and Pastoral Community, a key strategy in developing the Salesian mission, with the Salesian school at its heart.

#### 6.7 Extra-Curricular Commitment

An area which can suffer when such pressure is brought to bear on individual teachers to demonstrate the academic progress of pupils, is the commitment of teachers to engage pupils in extra-curricular activities. These are part of the wider curriculum which can have a disproportionate impact on the wellbeing of pupils and on the establishing and building up of relationships; these build trust which can sustain staff and pupils through challenging times.

The activities undertaken and the relationships developed through extra-curricular encounters are often the most memorable and formative in the educational careers of pupils. In terms of Salesian education, it is often these activities and going the 'extra mile' with and for pupils, which makes the difference. In this context one of the challenges for school leaders is to overcome the temptation to marginalise activities such as retreats, which can be seen as punitive in terms of staff and resource

allocation for fear of missing academic contact time. Adopting this perspective presents challenges to the maintenance of a distinctive Salesian ethos.

On the importance of spiritual formation, the *Frame of Reference* states:

One of the pillars of the identity of the Salesian school is a clear and comprehensive spelling out of explicitly evangelising occasions. The educational and pastoral proposal is translated into experiences and activities which are dear to the Salesian tradition *sic* over the school year both staff and students are offered formative and spiritual experiences. These are preferably linked to the important seasons of the liturgical year and become favourable opportunities for growth in faith and evaluating one's life in relation to the Christian message.<sup>132</sup>

The courageous school leader will eschew such temptations bearing in mind the centrality of spiritual formation in Catholic schools in general and Salesian schools in particular. Extra-curricular engagement is central to Salesian distinctiveness whatever structural context a Salesian school finds itself in whether it is voluntary aided or part of a multi academy trust. In the context of Salesian education, a selfless action, such as the giving of additional time to pupils through the organisation of extra-curricular activities, communicates Don Bosco's maxim that young people must 'know that they are loved' most strongly. It also plays an important role in forming the character of the 'good Christians and honest citizens' which Bosco set as his goal.

## 6.8 The Salesian Vision of Education Today

Don Bosco initiated a Salesian School and a Vocational (Professional) Training Centre in a poor area of Turin, to provide for the young people who had sought his help and protection. His goal was to meet their needs and to join with them in a unified project

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<sup>132</sup> Ibid

of education and evangelisation, especially those most in need. He was concerned with promoting the human, Christian and professional formation of the young. While he saw Vocational (Professional) training is 'an effective tool for holistic human development' and 'an effective preventive measure for youth problems, as well as promoting Christian leadership in society'. Don Bosco saw the introduction of the Salesian School as an 'essential tool for education, a meeting point between culture and faith'<sup>133</sup>

#### 6.8.1 Educating and Pastoral Community (EPC)

There are two important elements to adopting a modern understanding of the Salesian School in a contemporary milieu. The first is the shift from an institutional educational model to a community educational model; from a model where education was 'delegated to certain consecrated people (religious, teachers) to a model of active participation by everyone involved on the educational process'<sup>134</sup>. For Salesians this shift is characterised by describing the Salesian School as an Educational and Pastoral Community (EPC) with clear objectives and a clear plan of action to further the development of young people and the wider Salesian mission. Concrete and well-developed criteria and strategies are needed for pastoral planning to be effective.

The second important element is that young people (pupils), in a Salesian context, are the primary players in the formation process that is essential to Catholic and Salesian education. As they participate in a creative way, to develop and implement their membership of the school community through its various stages, they 'grow in

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<sup>133</sup> Ibid p198

<sup>134</sup> Ibid p 199

relational skills through the schooling and formation they receive. By responding to the need for young people to receive a serious cultural and vocational preparation, the Salesian educational setting urges them to think about the 'meaning of life'. It sets out the roadmap, the activities and the initiatives which effectively meet that need. This has implications for those who are involved in education. For Carlo Nanni

The outstanding need is the courage to get involved, to know how to mix with young people without making false excuses or being fearful of losing face and one's dignity. We (educators) need to take the educative risk of coming out of our enclosed institutions and move beyond established understandings, methods and academic programmes. Instead we need to revive good educational traditions of dialogue and listening to the voices of the young.<sup>135</sup>

There are a number of elements to the Educative and Pastoral project that is the Salesian school. These can be expressed as essential features of the educational and pastoral practices that make the Salesian School an important means of formation, a valuable agent in the development of people and a setting for effective evangelisation'<sup>136</sup>

A. Inspiration from Gospel values and an invitation to faith.

The *Frame of Reference* states that the 'urgency of evangelisation in our educational institutions is to be underlined. Salesian education is part of the Catholic School scene with the pedagogical legacy we have inherited from St. John Bosco..'. It is necessary for every institution offering an educational service to remain open to shared values in the contexts where it is present'.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> Nanni, C. *The Educational Preventive System of Don Bosco Today* Don Bosco Publications Bolton, England 2018, p89

<sup>136</sup> Attard, F. *Frame of Reference of Salesian Youth Ministry* Direzione Generale Opere Don Bosco. Rome 2014 p201

<sup>137</sup> Ibid p202

## B. An efficient and a quality education.

Salesian schools offer an educational and cultural proposal of quality in which:

- The dynamics of teaching and learning are based on a solid educational base;
- Continuous critical attention is given to the phenomena of culture, work and social communication;
- It offers a well ordered pedagogical and methodological approach that fosters in the young the discovery of their project of life;
- It has a developed human gospel outlook on work, which is not understood as merely something to be done as part of social organisation, but as a privileged form of communication, self-expression, self-fulfilment, of ever new inter-personal and social relationships and a personal contribution to the good of the world in which one lives and works;
- It guarantees continuous updating of the Salesian identity of all members of the Educating and Pastoral Community, involved in the school, through systematic processes of continuous professional development;
- It encourages an appropriate pedagogy and a planned educational activity by ensuring a close relationship between educational, teaching and pastoral goals.

In this context young people are able to learn the

‘rights and responsibilities of active citizenship, where they experience social behaviour inspired by co-operation, individual responsibility and solidarity; where they increase their knowledge of culture; where they



mature in their sense of identity so that they can integrate themselves into the social and civil fabric.’<sup>138</sup>

### C. Incorporating Salesian Pedagogy

The Salesian school reaches its goals through Don Bosco’s style and approach to education with a number of elements highlighting typical features:

- Animating, guiding and co-ordinating matters according to the Oratorian way of Don Bosco, aspects of which are typified by the bringing together of home, parish and playground with school to encourage a family dynamic where young people feel they belong;
- Emphasising personal relationships in education based on trust, dialogue and presence (assistance) of the educators among the young;
- Taking on board the integrity of life of the young, where educators share their interests and promote leisure activities such as theatre, sport, music and art;
- Preparing them to responsibly assume active citizenship in family life, civic society and the Church community;

### D. Social function and care for those most in need.

Salesian schools aim to contribute to building a more just society. They:

- Reject all discrimination or exclusion;
- Give priority to accompaniment for all rather than selection of the best, as a criterion, with preference given to those who are most needy;

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<sup>138</sup> Ibid p203

- Promote systematic formation of their members;
- Endorse the idea of a just inclusion of young people into the working world;
- Become centres of animation cultural and educational provision for the betterment of the environment;
- Show empathy and solidarity with their locality, making people and structures available, offering development services open to all and collaborating with other educational and social institutions;
- Encourage past pupils to have a significant presence in the world including becoming actively and purposefully involved in cultural, educational and professional dialogue locally and in the local Church.<sup>139</sup>

## 6.9 Conclusion

Reflecting on Charles Taylor's analysis of the impact of an increasingly secular society, it is essential that schools calling themselves Catholic and Salesian are not operating through a culture of individualism leading to isolationism and to the adoption of a survival of the fittest mentality. Similarly, that such schools are not simply operating through a utilitarian milieu which sees pupils and students as commodities, teachers as producers and school leaders as managers with both teachers and leaders judged on pupil outcomes against national norms. In and through all of this, the Church must be seen to stand up for the mission to the poor and the marginalised, together with working to consolidate and advance standards, in order to maintain an active and successful network of Catholic schools.

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<sup>139</sup> Ibid p205

It is important to remind oneself that it is within families and schools that values are first inculcated and nurtured. It is in these areas that we must ensure core values are not just taught but also modelled. Teachers are crucial role models in this. It is essential that schools are seen as centres of formation, including the forming of values and virtues, as well as places of education. The formation of values and virtues must go hand in hand with the education of individuals to achieve academic success.

Carlo Nanni points out that, in achieving his educational objectives, Don Bosco was a master of the spirituality of youth. His particular secret was...

not to delude the deep aspirations of the young (the need for life, for growth, for joy, for freedom, for a future) and, at the same time, to lead them gradually and realistically to experience that it is only in the life of grace, that is in the friendship of Christ, that the most authentic ideas are fully attained.<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> Nanni, C. *The Educational Preventive System of Don Bosco Today* Don Bosco Publications Bolton, England 2018, p93-4

## **CHAPTER 7**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **7.1 Introduction**

Having previously considered, in the review of the literature, issues pertaining to the nature and maintenance of the Salesian charism, this chapter sets out to lay the foundations for collecting information that can contribute to addressing the research question, that is, to what extent it is possible to maintain the Salesian charism in Salesian schools in a contemporary secular culture in England? A number of issues need to be considered in advance of carrying out this research. It is important, for example, to reflect on different methodologies that may be adopted and consider their respective merits and limitations.

The primary task was to ensure that the research proceeded in a systematic manner.

Cohen and Manion (1994: 40), quoting Mouly (1978), observed that:

Research is best conceived as the process of arriving at dependable solutions to problems through the planned and systematic collection, analysis, and interpretation of data.

Consequently, research can be regarded as a systematic application of empirical principles.

This chapter sets out to consider the nature of the research undertaken in this study describing the methodology that will be adopted. Qualitative and quantitative paradigms will be examined critically in addition to a mixed methods approach. The philosophies underpinning qualitative and quantitative research will be examined

together with the relative merits of both approaches in advance of the analysis of data. Similarly, the philosophical underpinnings of the mixed methods approach will be considered.

## 7.2 The Research Question

As indicated previously, this study set out to investigate a basic research question, namely, to what extent is it possible to maintain the Salesian charism in Salesian schools in a contemporary secular culture in England? The fact that the question has a clear focus on charism as a concept within Catholic schools requires that it be explored in respect of its historical and contemporary perspectives. When reviewing appropriate methods for research purposes, it will be desirable to justify the choice of some as opposed to others. It is also essential to be critical of views which are different to those being presented.

## 7.3 Research Paradigms

### 7.3.1 Overview

There is a lack of rigorous empirical research in this area. Consequently, this is an original study, which aims to contribute to knowledge by using a combination of quantitative and qualitative methodologies to investigate to what extent the Salesian charism in Salesian schools can be maintained in a contemporary context in England. A benefit of this research study, therefore, is that, by using a combination of quantitative and qualitative methodologies, it sets out to investigate an area where there is no previous research.

The research was defined and clarified within specific and measurable parameters with a view to collecting data from Salesian schools in England. In order to achieve this, it was intended to adopt a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methodologies.

While it may be tempting to distinguish between quantitative and qualitative approaches to research by simplistic means, e.g., quantitative researchers employ measurements and qualitative researchers do not, for many authors the differences are deeper, as indicated by Gage.

The answer to the future lies with us, with you. What you do in the years ahead will determine whether the (paradigm) wars continue, until one paradigm grinds the other into the dust. Or, on the other hand, whether pragmatic philosophical analysis shows us the foolishness of these paradigm wars and the way to an honest and productive rapprochement between the paradigms.<sup>141</sup>

Gage provided a critique of the so-called 'paradigm wars', which described the conflict between proponents of qualitative and quantitative research concerning the relative merits of these different approaches to conducting research.

Pring argues that there should be a balanced approach:

My argument is that the opposition (not the distinction) between quantitative and qualitative research is mistaken. The 'naïve realism' attributed to those who espouse the more quantitative methodology is not justified. How we conceive the world could be different and is, indeed, different from social group to social group.<sup>142</sup>

In order to consider the implications of adopting these methodologies as a basis for conducting this research, I shall briefly distinguish as follows some of the main characteristics of each research paradigm.

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<sup>141</sup> Gage N.L. (2009) 'The Paradigm Wars and Their Aftermath A historical sketch of research on teaching since 1989' *Educational Researcher*, Vol. 18, No. 7 (Oct., 1989), pp. 4-10

<sup>142</sup> Pring R. *Philosophy of Education* 2000, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. P54, Continuum London and New York

### 7.3.2 Quantitative Research

A quantitative research strategy, in epistemological terms, will adopt a natural science model which is positivist. In terms of its ontological perspective, it is objectivist and employs a deductive orientation, i.e., testing a hypothesis in relation to research. Quantitative writers have, over time, promoted ideas and concepts such as deduction and certainty as requirements for true knowledge. They have been influenced by scientific naturalism and have adopted approaches such as empiricism, rationalism, positivism, the testing of hypotheses and causal explanation. In quantitative research, four distinctive characteristics can be discerned, namely, measurement, causality, generalisation and replication. I shall briefly look at each one in turn:

- **Measurement:** is a key preoccupation for quantitative research. It brings with it issues of validity and reliability which will be addressed later in this discussion.
- **Causality:** Quantitative researchers are keen to arrive at why things are the way they are; they are not simply content to describe them.
- **Generalisation:** quantitative researchers are keen to say that the findings of their research can be generalised beyond the confines of the field of research. This is particularly true in survey research where one must take care to create a representative sample. Sampling does need to be given careful consideration with any sample being as representative as possible in order to generalise the findings.
- **Replication:** From the perspective of natural sciences, it is essential that an experimenter's findings can be reproduced as a way of validating the findings. Hence scientists are rigorous about setting out their procedures so that an experiment can be repeated. They are also rigorous about ensuring that results

are not unduly influenced by the experimenter's or researcher's biases or values. It is important therefore that researchers spell out their procedures so that they can be replicated by others, if they so wish.

There are, however, a number of criticisms of quantitative research which are set out below:

- Quantitative researchers do not distinguish between people and the natural world.
- Measurement processes can convey an artificial sense of precision and accuracy.
- A reliance on measuring instruments and procedures can inhibit the connection between the research and everyday life.
- Analysing relationships between variables, in a research project, can create a static view of social life that is independent of peoples' lives.<sup>143</sup>

### 7.3.3 Qualitative Research

In epistemological terms, a qualitative research strategy adopts an interpretivist viewpoint. In terms of its ontological perspective, it is constructionist and employs an inductive orientation, i.e., it generates theory. From a qualitative perspective, concepts such as relativism, humanism, idealism and constructivism are advocated, with a focus on understanding humanity and culture leading to particularistic knowledge.

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<sup>143</sup> Gage N.L. (2009) 'The Paradigm Wars and Their Aftermath A historical sketch of research on teaching since 1989' *Educational Researcher*, Vol. 18, No. 7 (Oct., 1989), p166



In characterising qualitative research, it would be useful to expand slightly on the points raised above:

- An inductive view of the relationship between theory and practice is one where theory is generated out of research.
- An interpretivist epistemological perspective focuses on understanding of the social world through an examination of the interpretation of that world by its participants as opposed to adopting the natural scientific model of quantitative research.
- A constructionist ontological position holds that, rather than existing phenomena, which are separate from individuals involved in their construction, social properties are the outcomes of interaction between individuals.

It is important to acknowledge that qualitative research does not simply mean a lack of numbers or that qualitative research tends to be defined in terms of what quantitative research is not.

The way in which concepts are developed by quantitative researchers differs to how they are developed in qualitative research. Quantitative researchers tend to favour definitive concepts; these can become defined and fixed by the indicators which are used to measure them. A criticism of this approach is that fine nuances or alternative ways of looking at the concept are marginalised. It can lead one to focus on what is common to the concept rather than with the variety of what differs. Blumer (1954) drew a distinction between definitive and what he called sensitising concepts stating that social researchers should recognise that the concepts they are using provide a general sense of reference and guidance in approaching empirical instances. He believed that concepts should be deployed so that they give a general sense of what to look for and

act as a means of discovering the range of forms that the phenomena they refer to can assume.

This distinction can also be criticised, however, in terms of how broad or narrow the formulation of a concept might be; a concept that is too broad may not provide a useful starting point for research because its guidelines are too general whereas a concept that is too narrow could fall foul of the comments made above regarding definitive concepts.

The distinction between one type of research and another is not hard and fast. Studies which exhibit broad characteristics of one research strategy may also have characteristics of the other. For example, it is important to note that qualitative research can be employed to test theories; it is not solely concerned with generating theories. Many writers observe that the two can be utilised within an overall research project. This is often referred to as mixed methods research.

#### 7.3.4 Mixed methods: The emergence of a third approach to data analysis

Mixed methods research (Tashakkori and Teddlie; 2010<sup>144</sup>) has relied on a dialectical approach, which, whilst acknowledging the limitations of each methodological paradigm, seeks to provide an alternative way that brings together the benefits of the different positions, because they communicate something about human concerns.

A key tenet of using the mixed methods approach to gathering data is that quantitative and qualitative research methodologies can work together to achieve complementary insights. By making use of the most valuable features of each methodology, a potentially more comprehensive account of perceptions would be provided. There is

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<sup>144</sup> Tashakkori, A. and Teddlie, C. (eds) 2010 *Mixed methods in Social and Behavioural Research*, Sage: L. A., London 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed, p89

an argument that this approach has always been present but at different times has been subsumed under a predilection for adopting either qualitative or quantitative methods, particularly when researchers were reaching out for what they saw as the more 'scientific' or objective approach offered by quantitative analysis. It also allows us to test validity through the triangulation of data from both qualitative and quantitative sources.

Tashakkori and Teddlie (ibid) track the introduction of new concepts, such as multiple operationalism (the use of more than one method of measurement) and the idea of triangulation, which will be discussed in the following section, 7.3, together with critical multiplism (the use of different methods to gain different perspectives), through the latter half of the last century, as signs of the development of mixed methods concepts and practices<sup>145</sup>. Together with the development of this third methodological paradigm, they discuss the struggle for mixed methods to develop a corresponding philosophical paradigm and offer a philosophy of pragmatism. In a previous study, they suggested different forms of pragmatism for different types of mixed methods:

- an anti-realist constructive version for qualitative dominated mixed methods
- a realist naturalist version for the quantitative dominant mixed methods, and
- an intermediate version for equal status mixed methods.

Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) set out the following pragmatic maxim:

The meaning or instrument or provisional truth of a concept, expression or practice, is determined by the experiences of consequences following from belief or use of the concept or practice.<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> Ibid p 87

<sup>146</sup> Johnson, R. B. & Onwuegbuzie, A. J. (2004) Mixed methods Research: A research paradigm whose time has come, *Educational Researcher*, 33, 14-26

From this standpoint the mixing of concepts and approaches, when it helps researchers obtain valued outcomes which might include improved understanding, explanation, practices and reduced inequalities, is positive.

Johnson and Onweguebuzie believe that a number of principles of classic pragmatism can work well as a philosophical underpinning for mixed methods:

- Rejecting either-or thinking which is dichotomous
- Accepting knowledge comes from a person-environment interaction (removing a subject-object dualism)
- Viewing knowledge as being both constructive and emanating from empirical discovery
- Adopting the ontological position of pluralism (i.e. accepting reality is complex)
- Adopting the epistemological position that there are many routes to knowledge and that researchers should make 'warranted assertions' rather than truth claims.
- Adopting an instrumental view of theories (i.e. they are not seen as simply true or false but in terms of how useful they are for predicting, influencing and explaining change).
- Ensuring values are incorporated directly into the inquiry endorsing equality, freedom and democracy<sup>147</sup>

Johnson<sup>148</sup> takes this a step further in articulating what he calls dialectical pragmatism. For him this combines a dialectical approach to mixed methods research with the philosophy of pragmatism. This approach requires active listening and the

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<sup>147</sup> Johnson, R. B. (2009) Towards a more inclusive scientific research into education, *Educational Researcher*, 38, 449-457

<sup>148</sup> Ibid

consideration of multiple viewpoints. He sees dialectical pragmatism as very much tailored towards mixed methods research. The dialectical dimension of this philosophical approach emphasises the need for researchers to listen carefully, to consider and dialogue with qualitative and quantitative perspectives, learning from the tensions between these perspectives in developing workable solutions in a mixed methods research study. For Johnson et al<sup>149</sup>, the point is to 'dialectically listen to multiple standpoints and produce an approach to research that synthesises insights from qualitative and quantitative (methods) and any other perspectives'

Tashakkori and Teddlie (ibid) believe that dialectical pragmatism can operate as a 'middle philosophy' that emphasises continual interaction with a range of philosophical standpoints. In their view:

It can free researchers to creatively construct new research approaches and designs and sets of working assumptions that can help answer many research questions. It is a dynamic standpoint with a perspectival epistemology; it rejects monisms, reductionisms and dogmatisms and suggests we search for 'workable solutions' to what we consider problematic in our world. It operates as a hermeneutical (interpretive) circle that focuses on continual improvement of the human condition.<sup>150</sup>

At the same time, they stress that if dialectical pragmatism is to work well it 'must learn from tensions and take multiple other philosophical and paradigmatic positions seriously'. They conclude that the immediate goal of a mixed methods approach is to 'make warranted assertions and to produce pragmatic / workable 'solutions' for valued ends.

As already stated, in using a mixed methods approach to research, it is possible to benefit from triangulation, which I shall discuss in the following subsection.

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<sup>149</sup> Johnson, R. B., Onwuegbuzie, A. J. & Turner L. A. (2007) Towards a definition of mixed methods research *Journal of Mixed methods Research*, 1, p 112-133

<sup>150</sup> Tashakkori, A. and Teddlie, C. (eds) 2010 Mixed methods in Social and Behavioural Research, Sage: L. A., London 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed, p89

## 7.4 Triangulation

Whilst it is acknowledged that the use of one method of data collection can provide a valuable perspective in a study, it can only give a relatively limited view. Therefore, adopting a mixed method approach to research can provide not only greater insights but also a potentially more accurate picture of the situation. According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2010: 141), triangulation may be defined as

... the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human behaviour.

This is, moreover, a generally accepted and recognised means of validation and through its implementation it is possible to explore comparisons and contrasts across the data, thus establishing greater depth of understanding. Therefore, if different methods are used, it is possible to test the validity of data and therefore be more confident of the results. A mixed approach is advocated by Morrison (cited in Briggs and Colman; 2007: 29):

Mixed methods may be used because in combination they provide the best opportunity to address the question set, or specific sub-facets of the research topic.

There are a number of advantages to using triangulation in the mixed methods approach to social research. In conducting research, the researcher has to be confident that the data generated are not a property of one particular research method. When different methods of data collection are employed, producing substantively the same results, the researcher can have greater confidence in the findings. Another feature is that the more methods diverge in their approaches, the greater is the confidence of the researcher.

The employment of different methods significantly reduces the charge that findings are attributed to using similar methods. This considerably reduces the possibility of findings becoming, what Cohen, Mannion and Morrison<sup>151</sup> refer to as 'artefacts of method'. For these authors, in mixed methods research 'triangulation may utilise either normative or interpretive techniques, or it may draw on methods from both of these approaches and use them in combination'.

## 7.5 Reliability and Validity in Conducting Research

Factors, such as the reliability and validity of the instruments of measurement and strategies for piloting and sampling, need to be considered. Procedures to check the quality of instruments and collection of data would have to be adopted to complement the design process. Indeed, by maintaining a consistent approach in the design of a study across research questions, concepts, constructs, hypothesis and instruments, the validity and reliability of the information obtained would be enhanced.

### 7.5.1 Reliability

Reliability refers to the consistency of a measure of a concept. There are three factors involved in assessing whether a measure is reliable:

1. **Stability:** this entails testing whether a measure is stable over time so that there is confidence that the responses given by a particular group do not fluctuate. The expectation is that, if the test is administered to a group and then they are re-tested, there will be little variation over time in the results obtained. It is often referred to as test-retest reliability.

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<sup>151</sup> Cohen, L, Mannion, L and Morrison, K. (8<sup>th</sup> Ed) (2018) *Research Methods in Education* Routledge, Abingdon P265

2. Internal Reliability: The issue at stake is whether the indicators that make up the scale or index are consistent, so that the scores on one indicator relate to their scores on the other indicators.
3. Inter-Rater Reliability: When a significant amount of subjective judgement is involved in the observation or translation of activities such as the recording of observations or the translation of data into categories, and where more than one rater is involved, it is possible there can be a lack of consistency in their decisions. This can occur when, for example, it is difficult to categorise certain items or when answers to open questions have to be categorised.<sup>152</sup>

### 7.5.2 Validity

Another advantage of combining various methods in a research project is that it may contribute to achieving validity.

In simple terms some expressions of validity essentially regard it as ‘a demonstration that a particular instrument in fact measures what it intends, purports or claims to measure’<sup>153</sup>. Other expressions state that validity is the ‘extent to which interpretations of data are warranted by the theories and evidence used’.

### 7.5.3 Validity in mixed methods research

#### Internal Validity

Internal validity sets out to show that the explanation of a particular set of data, concern or event can be sustained by the data and the research. Findings should accurately describe the phenomena under investigation. This requires accuracy and correctness

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<sup>152</sup> Bryman, A. *Social Research Methods* (5<sup>th</sup> Ed) (2016) Oxford University Press, Oxford, p157

<sup>153</sup> Cohen, L, Mannion, L and Morrison, K. (8<sup>th</sup> Ed) (2018) *Research Methods in Education* Routledge, Abingdon p245



which applies to both quantitative and qualitative research. Internal validity, in quantitative research, questions whether the research carried out is substantially free of errors or violations of validity; in other words, is the research secure?

In qualitative or ethnographic research; there are a number of types of internal validity starting with confidence in the data, in its authenticity, cogency, credibility, auditability, confirmability and dependability. The research, in other words, would offer a complete and balanced representation of the realities, providing a more detailed understanding of the situation under investigation; it should generate a new appreciation, give rise to specific courses of action and benefit all involved.<sup>154</sup>

### External Validity

External validity is concerned with the degree to which results can be generalised. The importance attributed to generalisability is not consistent across the range of researchers; it varies from being regarded as fundamental by some; whilst, for others, when it says little about the context, it has little to offer about human behaviour.

This is concerned with the question of how far a sample can be generalised to a population. This presents a range of challenges which are highlighted by Morrison et al (2001):

- generalising from one situation to another similar situation without taking account of the contextual and causal difficulties
- generalising from one situation to another dissimilar situation without taking account of the differences in context and causal similarities

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<sup>154</sup> Ibid 253

- the exception fallacy: deriving a generalised statement on the basis of exceptional cases
- from unstandardised, under-controlled variable treatments
- overlooking the range of outcomes of intervention

Anything which undermines external validity is likely to limit the degree to which generalisations can be made from a particular situation to a general population. There are a number of threats to external validity from failure to describe independent variables, the lack of availability of the target population, the Hawthorne effect which recognises that the research itself can impact on the behaviour of the subjects, inadequate operationalising of independent variables across settings, reaction to experimental research conditions e.g. the impact of pre-tests on subjects' sensitivity to the intervention variables, the interaction effects of extraneous factors, the unreliability of instruments, the extent to which behaviours in one context can be generalised to another and applying several treatments simultaneously so that it proves impossible to isolate the effects of a particular treatment<sup>155</sup>.

## 7.6 Dealing with bias

Definitions of bias generally focus on areas such as prejudice, unbalanced judgement and undue or unacknowledged influence. The potential influence of all of these factors must be acknowledged if they are to be mitigated against. There is always the danger of bias entering into interviews because interaction with the interviewer can have an impact on the interviewee. Where research is carried out by an individual researcher, bias can be consistent and go unnoticed. It is made all the more difficult to recognise

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<sup>155</sup> Ibid p25

because one person's judgement of what is fair and consistent may be regarded as prejudicial by another.

Multiple factors can lead to bias but research carried out by individual researchers, especially those who have strong opinions about the area they are researching, are at particular risk. Bias can be expressed in many different forms from allowing value judgements to influence the interpretation of research findings, and using language that underscores strength of feeling, to focusing unduly on those aspects uncovered by the literature review that support the point of view of the researcher.

To counteract the potential influence of bias it is important that the researcher constantly questions their practice and maintains a critical attitude towards the interpretation of data. Acknowledging the danger is important as well as being vigilant in reviewing procedures for signs of bias. Using strategies such as triangulation to check the accuracy of data and its interpretation is a further measure. These approaches can be summarised as maintaining vigilance and a critical faculty regarding interpretation of data, alongside reviewing practice regularly and triangulating data wherever possible.

## 7.7 Summary

In summary, I have discussed three key research paradigms before concluding that I shall employ a mixed methods approach to analysing data. This approach will involve utilising both qualitative and quantitative data analysis. Specifically, I decided to deploy semi-structured interviews and questionnaires to gather data. The question of ensuring the reliability and the validity of data has also been considered. I shall now move on, in the next chapters, to consider the key research instruments which will be employed to gather the data required for the purpose of analysis.

## **CHAPTER 8**

### **INSTRUMENTS OF MEASUREMENT (1) – SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS**

#### **8.1 Introduction**

Before conducting research in the field, it is important to consider the design and construction of the instruments of measurement that will be employed. Having discussed and justified the adoption of mixed methods as a strategy to gather data for this research, it was decided first to conduct a series of semi-structured interviews as an instrument of measurement with headteachers at the six Salesian schools in England, and then to distribute questionnaires to members of teaching staff in those schools. The preparation of semi-structured interviews with the headteachers would entail the design of a schedule of questions to be put to them.

This chapter, therefore, will focus attention on the design and construction of semi-structured interviews as an instrument of measurement for exploring the perceptions of headteachers towards maintaining the Salesian charism in Salesian schools in England. In order to do this, it would be necessary to adopt a systematic approach. In this way, a qualitative methodology would first be adopted as a means of gathering information, followed by a quantitative methodology, so that objectives could be accomplished in a sequential pattern of stages.

Moreover, it will be necessary in this chapter, to appreciate the importance of ethical considerations in order to ensure that the interests of participants are not compromised.

## 8.2 Planning and Conducting Semi-Structured Interviews

### Rationale for Interviews

Interviews are an adaptable way of conducting research. They can allow a skilful interviewer to 'follow up ideas, probe responses, and investigate motives and feelings.'<sup>156</sup> The way in which a response is made, such as changes in the tone of voice or facial expression and forthrightness or hesitation in answering can provide information that a written response might not reveal. The response to an interview question can be further developed and clarified when there is need, whereas a questionnaire response has to be taken at face value.

Conducting interviews nevertheless presents various challenges. They can be time consuming and highly subjective, presenting the danger of bias. Wording questions that reflect areas of interest thrown up by the literature search and analysing responses are two further areas of challenge. Despite all of this an interview can 'yield rich material and can often put flesh on the bones of questionnaire responses'<sup>157</sup>.

Preparation is key in setting up interviews; this includes selecting topics, devising questions, considering methods of analysis and scheduling. The researcher has responsibility to explain to respondents, in as complete a way as possible, 'what the research is about, why you wish to interview them, what will be involved and what you will do with the information you obtain'<sup>158</sup>. It is essential that the wording of any questions used is understandable to the respondent and that there are no leading, presumptive or offensive questions. Setting out a strategy which considers the issues

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<sup>156</sup> Bell, J and Waters, S Doing your research – a guide for first time researchers (6<sup>th</sup> Ed) (2014) p178 Open University Press, Maidenhead

<sup>157</sup> Ibid p178

<sup>158</sup> Ibid p179

one wishes to cover, together with the order one would place these issues in, can be important in setting the interviewee at ease and establishing a relationship. The way in which questions are asked is also important.

### 8.3 Types of Interviews

There are a number of different types of interview which can be utilised in conducting research, namely, unstructured, semi-structured and structured interviews. These will be considered as follows:

#### 1 Unstructured interviews:

These normally centre on a topic and can produce a wealth of valuable data but such interviews require a lot of expertise to control and can take a significant body of time to analyse. Each interview is aimed at gathering data which allows the researcher to address the research question.

It is important to note that most interviews carried out will fit into a continuum between the completely structured and completely unstructured. Allowing respondents freedom to talk about what is of essential importance and significance to them. Flexibility is also important however, in ensuring that all topics essential to the study can be covered.

#### 2. Structured and semi-structured interviews:

These rely on the preparation of a schedule, for example where the interviewer starts with a set of questions elicited from the research question and literature search; this aids the researcher in recording, summarising and analysing the information provided by the respondents. Recording the interview is an effective way of negating the need

to write furiously throughout an interview but the permission of the participants must be requested and what happens to the recordings afterwards clearly set out. Techniques such as questions and coding can be devised and tested to aid analysis. These can also be adapted as the research develops.

#### 8.4 Semi-structured Interviews

##### Factors to consider in advance of conducting interviews

Factors considered in advance of conducting interviews include justifying the adoption semi-structured interviews; dealing with the presence of the interviewer; the construction of the questions used in semi-structured interviews and the selection of participants.

The research question at the heart of this study focuses on whether it is possible to maintain the Salesian ethos in Salesian schools in an increasingly secular culture. It is assumed in the research question that headteachers in Salesian schools play a central role in influencing the ethos of the school. It is also acknowledged that headteachers today are under scrutiny as never before, in terms of accountability for performance management, and the standards agenda. It is important, therefore, that all of these factors are acknowledged in conducting research into this area. It is also important to emphasise that semi-structured interviews, which are conducted according to an agreed ethical standard, can allow headteachers the opportunity to articulate what they may feel are helps or hindrances to maintaining a Salesian ethos in a Salesian school today. The impact of these different factors will be considered in the analysis of the semi-structured interviews that follows.

It was decided, therefore, that the use of semi-structured interviews would be the most appropriate way to help provide opportunities for a qualitative and interpretative

approach, complementing quantitative measurements that would be elicited from the questionnaire that would follow. Semi-structured interviews would represent an initial opportunity to gather data within the methodological scope of the research. It was considered that, if semi-structured interviews were to be adopted as a method of eliciting information, they could provide insights and interpretations that would be of value to the research and could help to corroborate or challenge information gathered from the subsequent questionnaire.

For these purposes, a series of nine questions were derived from the literature review made in response to the research question. Following some testing and dialogue with colleagues, to ensure that these questions were accessible, they were employed in conducting in-depth semi-structured interviews. The questions were sent in advance of the interview to each participant to allow them some time to consider their answers. Interviewees were given a choice of venues for the interview, either using their own offices or bespoke accommodation set aside for the purpose.

The semi-structured interviews were conducted in exactly the same manner for each of the participants. Initially, permission was sought to record the interview as well as to take detailed notes. After an initial preamble for two to three minutes, the interview was initiated. Each of the nine questions were asked in turn, giving the participant sufficient time to formulate their answer. Where appropriate, a basic counselling technique of repeating an answer back to the participant was used to ensure clarity in what was said and to validate the information that was shared.

At the end of each interview an opportunity was given to the participant to add anything further to what they had said, in answer to the questions that had been asked. Interviews on average took up to an hour allowing for five minutes for setting up equipment and the preamble, forty-five minutes for questions and ten minutes to allow



for reinforcement of or addition to what had been communicated and to secure recording equipment and to pack it away.

Care was taken to ensure continuity, consistency and reliability between one interview and the next. This was achieved by using the same procedure to set the interview up; releasing the questions in advance, offering a choice of venue and using the same preamble at the beginning and end of the interview. Establishing this routine from the beginning ensured the repeatability of the same format in each interview. Professional relationships were established at the outset and were maintained throughout the interview process. Vigilance was also maintained to ensure that the subject of the interview remained the main focus throughout and so the bulk of the interview time was taken up by their answers to the questions asked. The technique of reflecting back was used occasionally to ensure what the participant said was recorded accurately.

There are a number of possible conceptions of interviews according Kitwood (1977):

1. The first is a potential means of pure information transfer where accurate data can be obtained if a number of conditions are met: the interviewer develops a rapport, asks questions in a way that is acceptable and the respondent is sincere and motivated to answer truthfully.
2. The second is a transaction which contains bias which must be acknowledged and controlled, beginning with the recognition that the interviewer and interviewee will define the interview in a different way. Emotions, unconscious needs and interpersonal influences must be recognised as non-rational factors which can govern human behaviour. Indeed, it is acknowledged that inherent features of interpersonal

transaction can be an obstacle to research and where possible these must be controlled or removed.

3. The third is an encounter which shares features of everyday life. What is necessary then is not a technique for dealing with bias but an approach which takes account of relevant features of interviews e.g. role playing, stereotyping, and understanding. It is important to understand that an interview is a social encounter co-constructed by the interviewer and interviewee and not simply a point of information exchange.

Engendering trust, stimulating curiosity and behaving in a natural or unobtrusive manner are all attributes of an ethnographic interviewer (Woods 1996). The relationship between the interviewer and interviewee needs to transcend the research in a joint pursuit of an identified mission, leaving aside personal egos. There needs to be a curiosity about getting to know peoples' stories and feelings, their views and perspectives. The aim of the interview is to secure the thoughts of the person being interviewed, as far as possible, unaffected by the interviewer.

In seeking to achieve this, one must acknowledge the features of an interview which can still be problematic (after Cicourel 1964):

- Mutual trust, social distance and the control of the interviewer are all features which can differ from interview to interview.
- A respondent might find ways of not answering if questions are too deep.
- There may be a level of holding back on the part of both the interviewer and interviewee.
- The meanings of what is said may be clear to one but opaque to the other even if the intention is communication.

- There has to be an acceptance that it is impossible to bring every aspect under rational control.

Accepting that the constraints of everyday life will be part of any interpersonal transaction initiated, is important for an interviewer, while setting out to be systematic and objective. The interview may be regarded as a medium for enacting peoples' knowledge of cultural forms including how people make sense of their social world and of each other.

#### Dealing with the presence of the interviewer

In considering the points above it is essential for the interviewer to begin by acknowledging the real danger of personal bias or of interviewees not being completely truthful in their answers to interview questions. One must also utilise strategies and tactics which avoid many of the pitfalls e.g. ensuring, as far as is possible, that each interview is carried out in an identical manner allowing the interviewee to have the questions in advance so as to avoid surprise, putting the interviewee at their ease so that they feel able to share their thoughts, reassuring them of the ethical code governing research including how data will be anonymised and stored, being ready with additional probes and techniques for allowing interviewees to express themselves clearly and accurately and to accept overall that not every aspect of an interview can be controlled.

Offering interviewees a choice of venues and settings for an interview is a further way of seeking to ensure there is a naturalness to the encounter that reflects everyday life. Allowing them to speak freely and without interruption, save for points of clarification, is a further way of seeking to reduce the obtrusion of the interview.

## 8.5 Construction of the questions used in semi-structured interviews

As previously discussed, the questions that were employed in the semi-structured interviews were derived from the research question.

From the responses to the questions that were posed to participants in the semi-structured interviews, it was possible to identify a number of themes that emerged. These would subsequently form the basis of the questions that would be asked in the questionnaires that was completed by staff. The questions used with headteachers in the semi-structured interviews were as follows:

1. What are your key priorities in school?
2. What challenges do you see today to maintaining a faith based ethos in a Catholic school?
3. What is the impact, if any, on school ethos and culture of the foci on a) results b) self-evaluation c) accountability?
4. What elements, if any, of the Salesian charism do you see as relevant to helping to meet the needs of staff, pupils and parents in the current context?
5. To what extent / in what ways does the implementation of elements of the Salesian charism influence the ethos and practice of the school on a day to day basis?
6. Is there any way in which you feel elements of the Salesian ethos or charism detracts in any aspect from the development of the school?
7. Which elements of the Salesian charism assist leadership in maintaining an active and meaningful Christian culture in the running of the school?

8. In which areas would you desire support or assistance in sustaining and developing the Salesian ethos of the school? How best can this assistance or support be delivered?
9. What do you see are the challenges in maintaining a school with an active Salesian ethos in the short, medium and long term?

As explained above, two different ways of analysing data have been employed. Qualitative data will be employed in analysing the replies made by headteachers in the semi-structured interviews and quantitative data will be employed in analysing the replies made by teaching staff in the follow-up questionnaires. These results will be triangulated in the sense that the analysis of data drawn from semi-structured interviews (qualitative) will be tested for consistency against the analysis of data drawn from questionnaires (quantitative).

## 8.6 The sample

There are five schools in England in which the Salesians of Don Bosco are present and one school in which the Salesian Sisters are present. This sets the criteria for the involvement of participants in semi-structured interviews to individuals who are serving headteachers of Salesian schools in England. This, of course, limits the number of headteachers whom it is possible to invite to take part in a semi-structured interview. However, as the intention is to include all of the headteachers who are currently leading Salesian schools, it would provide a complete picture of perceptions of school leaders towards the research question, i.e., to what extent is it possible to maintain the Salesian charism in Salesian schools in a contemporary secular culture in England.

Whilst the sample of headteachers to be interviewed is limited to designated Salesian schools in the England, it is clear that the type of sampling used in this study will be a priori, in the sense that the criteria for the selection of participants have been established at the beginning of the research. It is intended that the findings of one technique e.g. data from in depth interviews, will inform the formulation of the questions used in questionnaires, to be shared with a wider group of stakeholders, made up of the staff working at different levels in designated Salesian schools.

### 8.7 Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval for this research was sought and granted. Ethical considerations, such as ensuring participants are fully aware of the purpose of the research and understand their rights, were given a high priority with each participant being asked to give written notice of their consent prior to interviews. Participants in interviews were given the questions in advance so that they had time to consider their answers. They were also made aware and consented to the fact that interviews were recorded with a selected recording transcribed and that all of these responses were anonymised.

The sample of six headteachers chosen to be interviewed, arose from the fact that there are six schools of Salesian character in England.

Assurance was given concerning anonymity and the confidential nature of the data to be collected. According to Sapsford and Abbot (2007:318):

... *confidentiality* is a promise that you will not be identified or presented in an identifiable form, while *anonymity* is a promise that even the researcher will not be able to tell which responses came from which respondent.<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> Sapsford, R. and Abbot, P. (2007). Ethics, politics and research in Sapsford, R. and Jupp, V. (eds.) *Data Collection and Analysis*. London 1996, Sage. Ch. 13 quoted, in: Briggs, A. R. J. and Coleman, M. (eds.). *Research Methods in Educational Leadership and Management* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition.). Thousand Oaks CA: Sage.

Each interviewee was informed of the ethical considerations related to their participation in this research. This included their granting permission to record the data, and an explanation about how it would be anonymised and stored.

## 8.8 Summary

Having established that semi-structured interviews would be the instrument of measurement that would be employed in securing data from the headteachers of six Salesian schools in England, it was necessary to formulate appropriate questions that would elicit their views about the extent to which it is possible to maintain the Salesian charism in Salesian schools in a contemporary secular culture in England. This chapter discusses how questions, derived from the research question and refined and tested through discussions with colleagues, were constructed. A procedure was established which allowed for a consistent approach to be adopted for the interviewee, ensuring that the subject of the interview received the questions in advance and could choose the venue for the interview.

In the next chapter, I shall discuss the findings from the semi-structured interviews and how techniques such as thematic analysis will be employed to identify key themes emerging from the research.

## **CHAPTER 9**

### **FINDINGS FROM THE SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS**

#### **9.1 Introduction**

Having explained the rationale for employing semi-structured interviews as a research instrument within a mixed methods approach, I will, in this chapter, set out the strategy for analysing the results of these interviews conducted with the headteachers of six Salesian schools. This will focus on using the technique of thematic analysis to identify recurring themes that will assist, alongside the literature review, in the formulation of questions which will be employed in the questionnaire to be submitted to teaching staff who are currently working in Salesian schools.

#### **9.2 Background of Salesian Schools in England**

The schools surveyed in this study, are those situated in England which seek to implement the Salesian educational charism. Given the different challenges that they face they can be classified into four categories.

The first category is schools that serve areas of significant social and economic disadvantage. These are schools in which forty per cent or more of the pupils are receiving free school meals. There are also likely to be significant numbers of pupils in these schools who may be designated as 'looked after', that is, being fostered by another family or under local authority care provision. Additionally, a significant number may be carrying out functions in the home as young carers, though this may be true across the range of schools. Concomitant issues such as a lack of study facilities or reliable access to computers and the internet may also be of significance.



The second category is schools where the provision of free school meals is between twenty and forty percent. These are schools which serve areas of socio economic challenge where the resources available to students, such as access to computers, dedicated study space and the internet, may be limited. There may also be aspects of challenge in terms of poor motivation. Similar to category 1, a significant number of pupils may be 'looked after' and others may be performing support roles in their homes as carers.

The third category of schools have free school meal provision between five and twenty percent. In these circumstances pupils generally have good material support and have good access to learning resources, such as study space, access to computers and reliable internet provision. While material provision may not be such an issue for significant numbers of students in these schools, pressures on them due to expectations to achieve may be significant.

The fourth category of schools is those that are independent of the state sector, whose students are fee paying. While it may appear that pupils are materially relatively comfortably off, these students may face the significant pressure of expectation with regard to what they are expected to achieve in terms of success in examinations and progression to university. While they may have access to support structures such as home tutoring, they may be expected to be self-motivated and have the ability to be organised in matters of study.

While it may not be accurate to frame aspiration, and indeed achievement, using socio economic indicators such as free school meals provision or the number of pupils who may be 'looked after', factors such as resilience, personal confidence and motivation may be significantly impacted by such considerations. Whether these same factors

influence the effectiveness with which pupils may come to understand and embrace the charism / ethos of a particular school, is a question which goes beyond the remit of this particular study.

<b>Category</b>	<b>Percentage of Free School Meals</b>
1	40+
2	20 to 40
3	5 to 20
4	0 to 5

Table 1 Categories of Salesian schools according to the percentage of free school meals.

### 9.3 Thematic Analysis (TA)

According to Clark and Braun<sup>160</sup>, Thematic Analysis (TA) is ‘a method for identifying, analysing, and interpreting patterns of meaning (‘themes’) [Grace (2002: Chapter 5) talks of ‘categories of discourse’ or ‘patterns of discourse’ within the qualitative data’. They assert that Thematic Analysis can be used across a variety of theoretical frameworks and research paradigms. There are versions of Thematic Analysis developed for use in positivist frameworks and also for the interpretivist paradigm. The qualitative versions put emphasis on an organic development of themes and the researcher’s active role in the processes.

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<sup>160</sup> Clarke, V and Braun, V (2017) Thematic Analysis, *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 12:3, 297-298.

Thematic Analysis utilises a combination of codes and themes as analytical tools. If themes are larger patterns of meaning, based on a core organising concept, codes are the building blocks used to construct them. Ultimately, themes provide a 'framework for organising reporting the researcher's analytic observations.'<sup>161</sup> The aim of Thematic analysis is 'not simply to summarise the data or content, but to identify, and interpret, key, but not necessarily all, features of the data, guided by the research question.'<sup>162</sup> The focus is on producing rigorous, high quality, analysis using in built quality assurance procedures, such as a two stage review process, where the themes of one candidate can be reviewed against coded data and the existing data set. Thematic Analysis can be used to 'identify patterns within and across data in relation to participants' lived experiences, views and perspectives, and behaviour and practices; 'experimental' research which seeks to understand what participants think and feel and do.'<sup>163</sup>

Coding has historically involved the identification of noteworthy points, in reviewing a text such as an interview transcript, followed by the removal and grouping of the texts that illustrate these points. The main criticism of the coding approach is that it should not be thought of simply as a tool to facilitate the fragmentation and retrieval of data. Considering the linkages and connections within codes can create an understanding that some of them may be aspects of a wider phenomenon. A further criticism is that the social context of data can be lost by, for example, selecting parts of the text of an interview transcript. Additionally, the narrative flow of the data can be lost due to fragmentation. It is recognised that some forms of data may not be suited to coding.

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<sup>161</sup> Ibid p297

<sup>162</sup> Ibid p297

<sup>163</sup> Ibid p297

#### 9.4 Themes and Coding

The themes for the analysis carried out using the thematic analysis of in depth interviews, will be influenced by those identified in the research question. These themes also form the basis of the questions used in the questionnaire to staff. They include the challenges headteachers in Salesian schools in England face in maintaining the Salesian charism and in understanding and articulating how it may help to meet the needs of staff, pupils and parents, as well as maintaining and developing the ethos and practice of the school, on a daily basis.

There is also a question of how the focus on results, self-evaluation and accountability influences school ethos and culture, and whether the pressures on headteachers of the accountability measures set out above, including the pressure to raise attainment and outcomes, impact on their ability to maintain a Salesian ethos within their institutions. The impact of the Salesian charism in assisting leadership to maintain an active and meaningful Catholic and Christian culture within the school, is another feature to be explored. There is a focus on examining the challenge, facing headteachers in particular, of maintaining a school with an active Salesian ethos into the future, with the attendant pressures of dealing with the standards agenda but also being located within an aggressively secular society.

#### 9.5 Classification of the Findings from the Semi-structured interviews

In this chapter the sub themes, which emerge from an overall analysis of the responses made by head teachers to the nine questions which requested their views, using the medium of semi structured interviews, will be identified and analysed for their impact on maintaining the Salesian charism in Salesian schools.

### 9.5.1 Method of analysis of themes and sub themes

In setting out to explore how a number of themes have influenced the maintenance of the Salesian charism in Salesian schools in England, four key themes were identified in the literature search: charism / ethos (Charism), spiritual accompaniment (Accompaniment), collaborative ministry (Collaboration) and competing pressures (Pressures). The interview questions were constructed to address each of these four areas, as well as identifying the overall priorities of headteachers.

Initially a detailed thematic analysis of the replies given by headteachers was carried out (see appendix 1). From this analysis, a range of sub-themes emerged in the responses to each question. The number of times each sub theme was cited (citations) was recorded alongside the number of headteachers who referred to that theme or sub theme (frequency).

The number of citations and the frequency of citations, were totalled for each question. The totals for the questions relating directly to each of the four themes identified in the research have then been aggregated. These totals, or findings, have been presented in tabular form (see Tables 2 to 7). In these tables a number of recurring sub themes emerge persistently in the responses of headteachers to the questions they were asked. These responses have been aggregated over all nine of the questions in Table 2 to give the overall totals of the number of times they have been cited and the number of headteachers who have cited them. The purpose of this table is to analyse the overall weight given by headteachers to these themes and sub themes, as a measure of where they stand in overall importance. The final table (Table 7) considers the replies for question one, which asked headteachers what they saw as the overriding priorities in their respective schools. While these two analyses (Tables 2 and 7) may

demonstrate similar trends, they are not the same but help to shed light on how headteachers rank the different pressures that they face. The two analyses, together with the analyses of the four themes (Tables 2 to 5), help to triangulate the data provided by the headteachers and to validate the findings.

In analysing each of the four themes, the quotes used have been taken specifically from the analysis of the questions identified as pertinent to that theme. Hence in considering each sub theme in the data table, there may be quotes from all seven headteachers or from only one, depending on the number of headteachers who have identified a particular sub theme in answer to the questions which are related to that theme.

The findings of a thorough review of the replies provided by headteachers, reveal a clear hierarchy in terms of the number and frequency of their responses which are listed in Table 2, which follows.

## 9.6 Overall analysis of emerging Themes

### 9.6.1 Findings

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Number of Citations</b>	<b>Frequency (Out of 7)</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
1 Charism / Ethos	188	7	100
2 Culture	163	7	100
3 Standards	53	7	100
- Accountability	3	3	43
4 Recruitment: Staff & Students	19	7	83
5 Modelling Charism / Role Models / Extra Mile	34	7	100
6 Formation / Training	24	6	86
7 Faith Dimension	8	6	86
8 Encounter / Presence	20	5	71
9 Leadership	17	5	71
10 Distinctiveness / Narrative / History	10	4	57
- Connectivity / Interrelatedness	5	2	29
11 Inclusion / Service	7	3	43
- Relationships / Belonging	3	4	57

Table 2 Initial overall analysis of the total responses made in the semi structured interviews with headteachers

### 9.6.2 Analysis

#### 1 Ethos / Charism

In the total analysis (see Table 2) of the classification of the responses made by headteachers to the nine questions, arising from the research question, asked to each

of them in one to one interviews, answers relating to ethos / charism were cited most frequently. Moreover, they were quoted by each and every headteacher who was interviewed.

Headteacher 5 stated

‘If we want staff in our school to live our mission then the way that we approach teaching, the way we frame learning in our school has got to be done through the language of that mission and the language of that ethos.’

While this may come as no surprise bearing in mind the research question directly relates to maintaining charism and ethos in Salesian schools, these findings are nevertheless significant.

## 2 Culture

Similarly phrases relating to culture were the next highest to charism / ethos. These were also mentioned by all of the headteachers. It seems evident that headteachers considered maintaining the culture of a Catholic and Salesian school as closely related to maintaining the charism / ethos. This may imply a linkage, in the minds of headteachers, between what they viewed as the prevailing culture of the school and its role in helping to facilitate the maintenance of its founding charism / ethos.

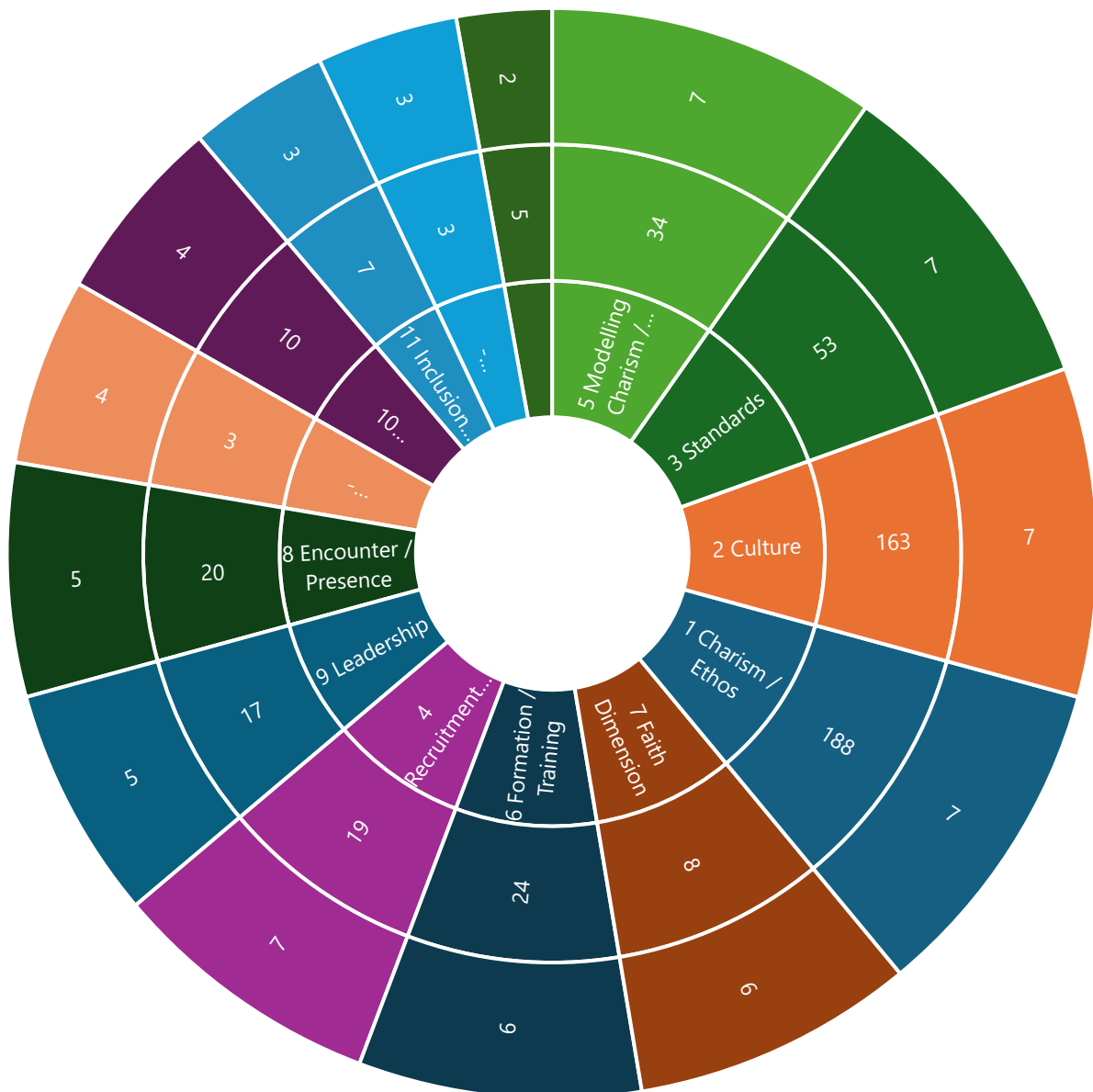
## 3 Standards

Standards were the next most frequently mentioned concern of headteachers, referenced by every headteacher. In an era of change, when the school improvement



agenda has continued to be the key feature in making judgements about the effectiveness of schools, it is perhaps unsurprising that maintaining and improving standards are a key day to day concern for headteachers.

Fig 1 Overall analysis of themes and sub themes by citations and frequency



#### 4 Recruitment

Allied to maintaining standards, all of the headteachers interviewed discussed recruitment as a major concern. This was a concern at a number of levels from the recruitment of sufficient pupils to allow the maintenance of adequate budgets, together with enough staff of the desired quality to maintain the curriculum. Recruiting a sufficient number of staff and pupils of faith in order to sustain and build upon the ethos of the school was also mentioned by every headteacher.

#### 5 Modelling / Role Models for the Salesian Charism

Finding leaders who were able to model the charism, or colleagues who could act as role models for other members of staff, were leadership approaches articulated by virtually every headteacher as ways to develop ethos and fidelity to the school's charismatic identity. A number of headteachers evidenced, as an advantage, having members of the Salesian congregation on the staff as chaplains, teachers or assistants, because of the way they demonstrated how to implement the charism in the practical dynamics of each school day. They testify to the impact this positive example can have, especially on young teachers. Other headteachers recognised the value of having a Salesian community in close proximity to the school and emphasised how important it is to maintain close links with the community.

#### 6 Formation / Training

Formation and training were named by the majority of headteachers as being of key importance. Headteachers categorised a variety of strategies employed by schools to

assist in the formation and training of staff in maintaining and developing the ethos of the school. For example, one headteacher stated:

‘You can’t expect the staff to understand your mission or your ethos if you are not giving them really good coaching that is completely immersed in that (ethos).’

Virtually all are agreed, however, that neither a one-off in-service training session, or an over-reliance on staff imbibing the ethos or learning it ‘on the job’, are adequate, if the staff are to fully embed the ethos in their teaching and learning and in their approach to the pastoral care of pupils.

## 7 Faith Dimension

Closely related to formation and training, as well as recruitment and role modelling, almost every headteacher outlines maintaining the faith dimension of the school as significant. Though the levels of practice, in terms of faith, can vary significantly amongst pupils and staff, making the task of developing the faith life of the school, in an active and a progressive manner, a significant challenge.

## 8 Encounter / Presence

A clear majority of headteachers reflected on the importance of presence and encounter in the context of a Salesian school. This is closely linked with the implementation of the preventive system of education advocated by St John Bosco. This relies on staff, in particular, being present to young people as one of the key strategies for maintaining order and safety in the school context. Staff need to understand this concept of presence as going beyond simply being present on the

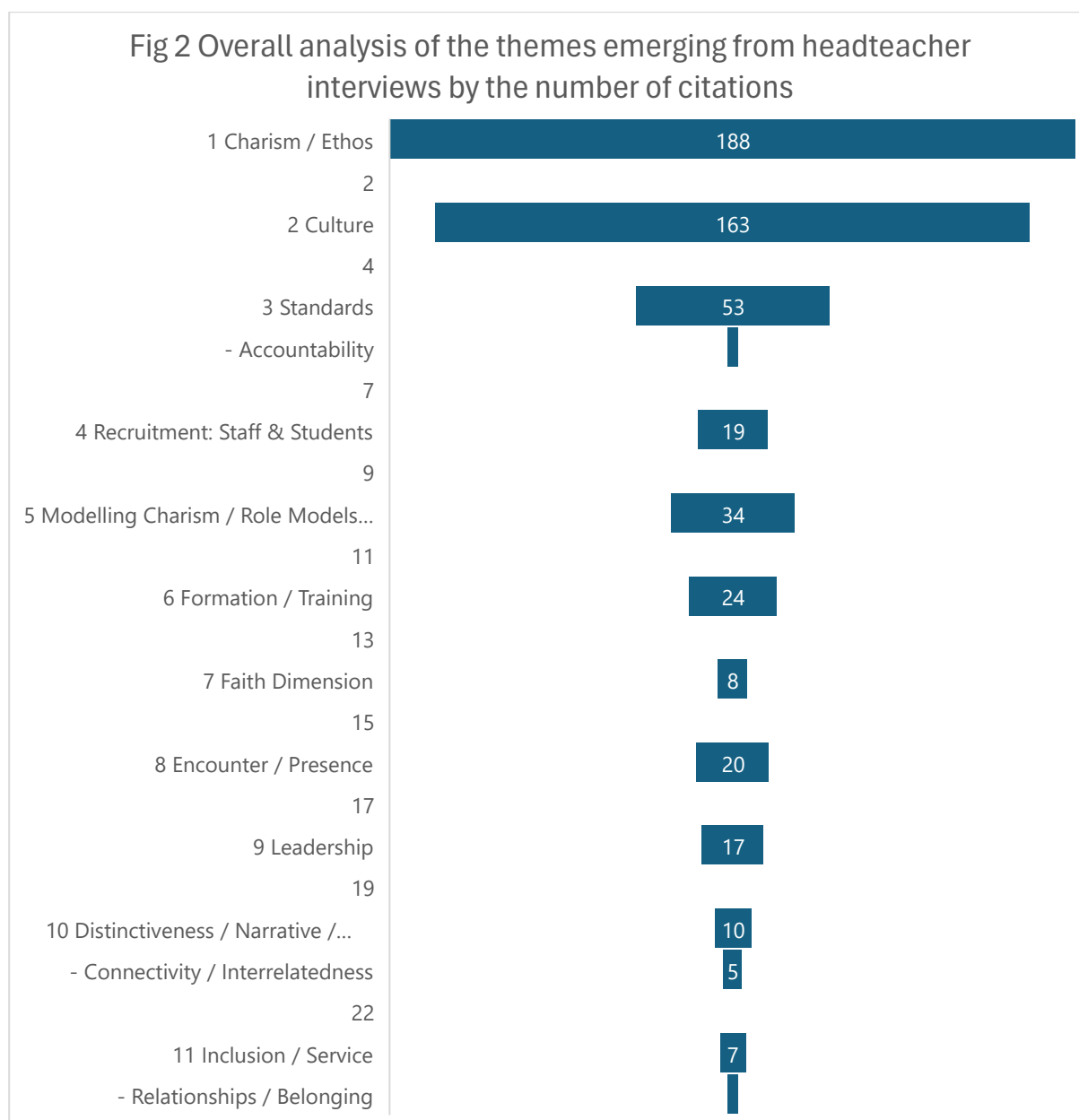
playground, or fulfilling a duty, though this is recognised as being important. The Salesian aim of being present to young people, in an active way, both in the classroom and in the playground, leads to meaningful encounter between staff and students that can be both instructive and a point of growth.

## 9 Leadership Development / Succession

Similarly considered of significance by a clear majority of headteachers is the recognition that a strategy should be in place to develop leaders in school, who already have an understanding of, and a belief in, developing and maintaining the school's ethos. The importance of succession planning, seeking to ensure that a new generation of leaders is ready to take up the mantle of leadership, is also highlighted by headteachers in this regard.

## 10 Distinctiveness / Narrative

A similar majority of headteachers were clear about the need to create and develop a distinctive narrative, for both staff and pupils, as a way of cementing the ethos of the school. Headteachers referred to key narratives, such as the struggles faced in the early life and times of the founder of the Salesian congregation, St John Bosco, as well as significant sacrifices and challenges along the path of bringing one's charism into being. These are well documented in literature and bear repetition.



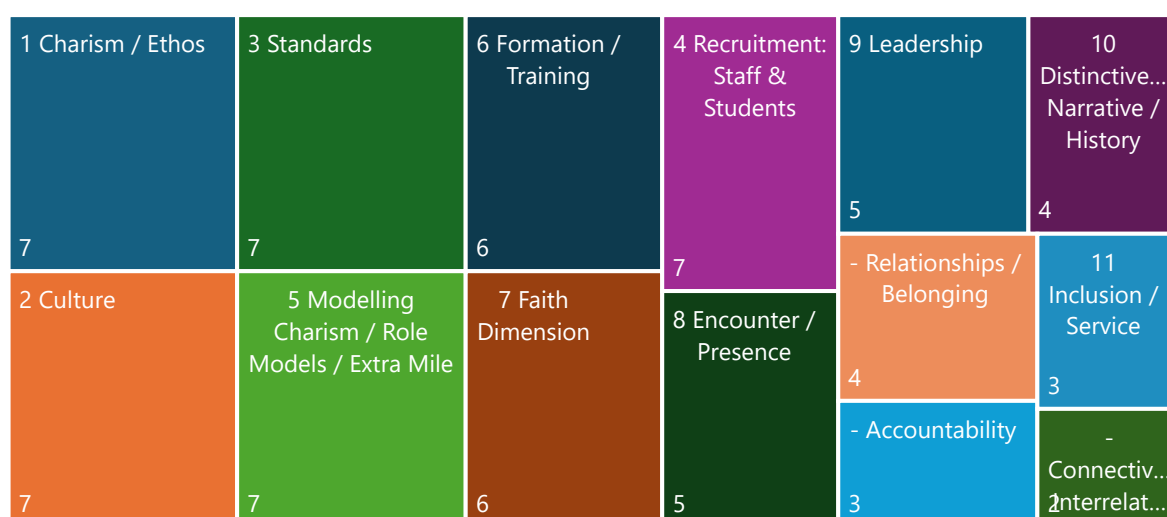
### 11 Inclusion / Service / Relationships / Belonging

Being inclusive, building good relationships and creating a real sense of belonging were recognised by the majority of headteachers as being of key importance in a Salesian school, especially those that work with pupils who are challenging and have specific needs. One headteacher observed 'Some family structures are not there, and the school needs to replicate them'. Roughly half of headteachers were of the view

that the concept of service at all levels, from leadership, as well as through the entire staff, was important if the school was to best serve those living in significant areas of need and with pupils who may be poorly motivated, when it comes to learning.

Fig 3 Overall analysis of headteacher interview themes and sub themes by requency of citation

- 1 Charism / Ethos
- 2 Culture
- 3 Standards
- - Accountability
- 4 Recruitment: Staff & Students
- 5 Modelling Charism / Role Models / Extra Mile
- 6 Formation / Training
- 7 Faith Dimension
- 8 Encounter / Presence
- 9 Leadership
- 10 Distinctiveness / Narrative / History
- - Connectivity / Interrelatedness
- 11 Inclusion / Service



### 9.6.3 Discussion

In the context of a Salesian school, it might be said that charism and ethos are one in the same, in the sense that the ethos is the charism and the charism is the ethos. This could be described as the network of values underpinning the operation of the school, which act as the framework against which its practice is judged, in terms of its fidelity to the ideals of the founder of the Salesian congregation, St. John Bosco, who initiated the Salesian charism and set out the guiding principles of how it should operate.

Similarly, culture may be understood as deed to ethos's word. The impact of the culture of a school on its operation, that is 'how we do things here' is seen as deeply significant'. For Deal and Kennedy<sup>164</sup> culture is the outcome / impact of the implementation of the charism. This can relate to the styles of behaviour which incarnate or institutionalise the ethos. It can also relate to institutionalised or operating principles. The prevailing culture of a school can have a major influence on its academic achievement. A further aspect may be that, in leading a school, a meaningful Christian culture will have a significant impact on its running as it is closely related to the values and assumptions used in deciding norms.

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<sup>164</sup> Deal T. E. and Kennedy, A. A.: *Corporate Cultures – The rites and rituals of Corporate Life*, 1982, Addison Wesley Publishing Company, Reading Mass.

## 9.7 Theme 1 Charism / Ethos (Analysis incorporating responses to Q3, 4 & 6)

### 9.7.1 Findings

	<b>Sub Themes / Nodes</b>	<b>Citations</b>	<b>Headteachers (Out of 7)</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
1	Charism / Ethos	72	7	100
2	Culture / Catholic Practice	54	7	100
3	Standards	19	6	86
4	Service to the Poor	4	4	62
5	Accountability	3	3	49
	- Leadership	2	1	14
6	RUAH	3	3	29
7	Relationships / Belonging	3	3	49
8	Presence / Encounter	3	2	49
9	Formation / Conviction	3	2	29
10	Role Models / Witness / Extra Mile	2	2	29

Table 3 Analysis of themes and sub themes from headteacher interviews relating to charism / ethos by the number and frequency of citations

### 9.7.2 Analysis

#### 1 Charism / Ethos

Headteacher 1 stated that 'Faith based education is around encounter; it is not cerebral. They further stated that 'there were less Catholics with the relevant formation' contributing to a 'lack of understanding that faith based education is foundational'. In their view it had become 'compartmentalised' citing the example of RE inspections more closely following Ofsted's approach. Headteacher 2 commented on the need to



‘treat children and staff with dignity, holding gospel values around trust and justice especially’. They also suggested that ‘Roman Catholic schools are set up to get the best out of people’. In addition, they asserted that:

‘educating the heart not just the mind, engages children and parents. Reason is a key aspect of education as is the way we treat one another... Loving kindness is always relevant’.

Headteacher 3 was clear that the ‘ethos of the school helps to deliver the results’, while the mission of the school was ‘towards the whole community’. Headteacher 4 remarked that ‘staff go the extra mile as though they are working with their own children’ and that they are there to ‘catch pupils when they fall’. The headteacher added ‘children know they are cared for and want to benefit’. There was also a clear need to ‘treat people with dignity and respect and to ensure the Salesian charism was maintained across the school’. For this headteacher it was ‘essential that Salesian values are at the core of the understanding of the ethos of the school’. They also stressed the importance of ‘listening, being there and being a shelter for all stakeholders’.

Headteacher 5 commented on the need to make the ‘culture and ethos understandable’ as being key to encouraging people to buy in stating that the Salesian ethos:

‘is an access route because the charism of Salesian education is accessible to anyone, whether Catholic or not, because it is about young people and about the development of young people... obviously the spiritual development of young people is... part of that’.

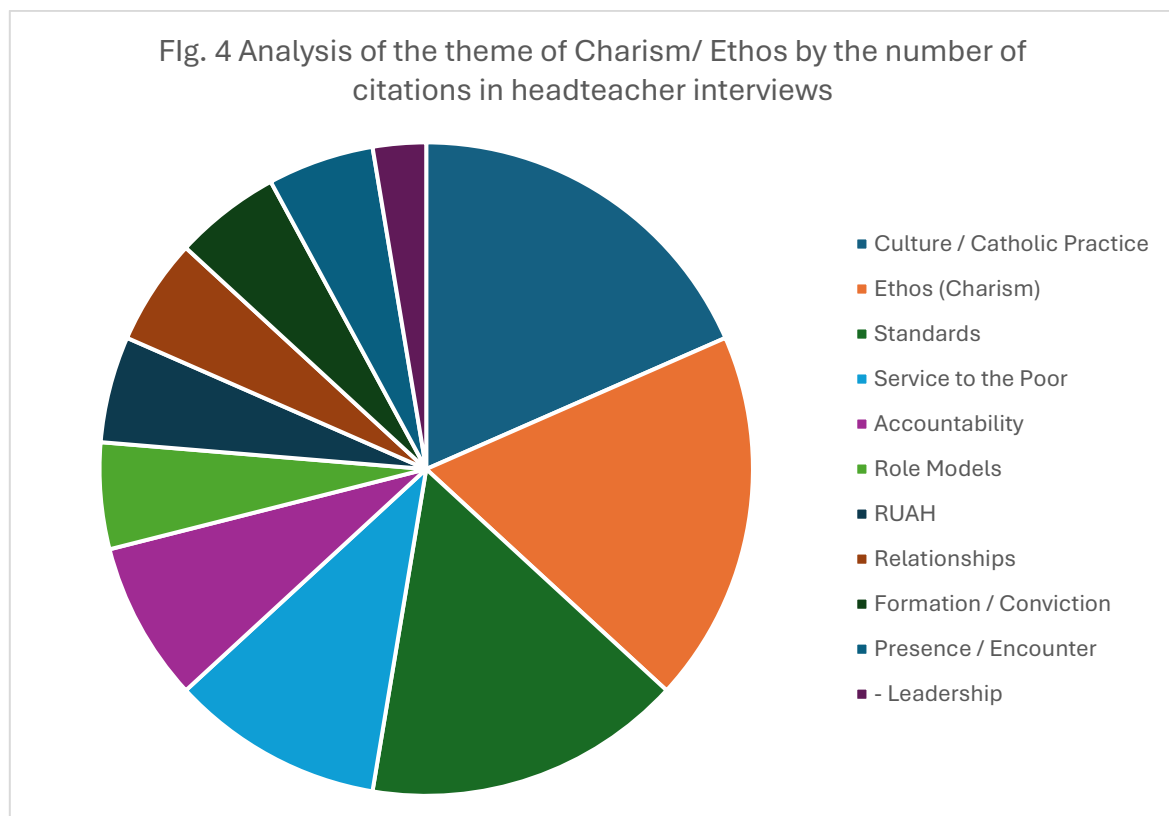
It was essential, therefore, that new teachers were 'inducted into the ethos of the school'. They also stated they 'had made ethos relevant' and they (staff) understood this'.

Headteacher 6 took this point further in stating that 'openness and honesty with staff are critical to understanding what the school is about' and emphasised 'all staff must understand they are serving the local community. The charism states you are here to serve, to listen to people, to show people respect'. Headteacher 7 believed in 'staff supporting one another and the pupils. Further, 'being joyful and celebrating achievements' was perceived as crucial.

## 2 Culture / Catholic Practice

With regard to setting the right culture, Headteacher 3 stated 'if we lose sight of the human who is in the classroom, we are setting a tone for the young people of how they should act'. They also raised the concern that 'alienation from the workplace' could be a detrimental factor in some schools. Headteacher 2 stated that 'everything the school does, if done properly, produces results. This is through 'hard work and endeavour'. For headteacher 1, Salesian education was about 'communicating character ' and encouraging 'young people to take risks'; it was simple and accessible through practical implementation. Headteacher 3 also reflected that 'the Salesian model is adaptable to different cultures and expectations including, in non-Christian environments. Non Catholic staff can 'buy in to be Salesian'. Headteacher 5 was in agreement and stated that 'Salesian education is accessible for everyone, whether they are Catholic or not... because it is about the development of young people'.

Headteacher 4 described a culture of ‘working hard for each other; working within the context’ but also related this to ‘making sure I have the best staff’. Headteacher 7 recognised the need for optimism with young people’ as well as the ‘celebration’ of their achievements’. There was also an emphasis on ‘recognising goodness’ and that ‘forgiveness is also essential’.



### 3 Standards and Attainment

With regard to the goals of the school, headteacher 7 remarked that ‘we believe we will get great results if we put the children first’ while, at the same time, acknowledging the need to ‘self-evaluate and track data in order to facilitate progress, good behaviour and the good running of the school’. The view was that the achievements of the school came about ‘because of the ethos of the school, not in spite of it. They also commented

that the 'success of each individual child is our focus'. This sentiment was echoed by headteacher 6 who stated:

'we are dedicated to improving results through the many interventions that staff provide such as after school evening classes and revision classes at weekends'.

They went on to express the view that 'Christian values are aligned to the values of the school' and that the 'specific dynamic of Salesian encouragement assists both staff and pupils in raising attainment'. Likewise they made it clear that the school 'does hold people account'. In the words of the headteacher 'we may be criticised for being too understanding, at times, but we are prepared to accept erring on that side than being too draconian'.

On a related theme, headteacher 5 asserted that 'ethos and culture drive your outcomes...drive your self-evaluation and accountability'. They also stressed it was possible to 'hold people to account for their work in a way that is supportive and not threatening' and spoke of the need for staff to feel listened to and to feel that their 'opinions are valued'. Headteacher 4 spoke about 'demonstrating to pupils why they need results' and stated that 'revision opportunities for all pupils' were provided by the school. They also spoke of the need to 'integrate ethos and evaluation' whereas headteacher 1 argued that 'schools serving poor young people are hit disproportionately when it comes to inspections'.

#### 4 Service to the disadvantaged

Headteacher 4 identified that there are situations where 'some family structures are not there, and the school needs to replicate them'. Building on this theme Headteacher

6 reflected that 'service to young people, families, the wider community is the basis of the school's approach to ethos'. They also emphasised that 'all staff must understand they are serving the local community'.

Working in support of families through the medium of education is part of the Salesian strategy of building up the educating and pastoral community in each pastoral setting. This dynamic is clearly reflected in what headteachers have stated with regard to the need they feel to support families.

A further interesting perspective on serving those who may be disadvantaged was offered by headteacher 3 who advised that working with a charism 'with an emphasis for the poor' could offer quite a challenge when working in a 'privileged setting' and commented that the

'preferential option for the poor can sometimes not sit easily with pupils and staff. This can feel as though we are sitting at odds. But the message of Catholic education is to all people for all times'.

This latter point is of particular interest because making a 'preferential option for the poor' is an important tenet of the Salesian charism, emanating from Don Bosco's choice to preferentially make poor and abandoned boys the focus for his work. Defining who are the 'poor' however is not always straightforward and can lead to contention. In his lifetime, as knowledge of his educational method grew and he was asked to establish new schools, Don Bosco was able to bring together the different educational approaches required to operate technical (vocational) schools, providing education to poor artisans, alongside providing what we would refer to as grammar schools for those who were academically more able and whose families could afford to pay something towards their education by way of fees.

## 5 Accountability

With regards to accountability, Headteacher 4 observed that 'it is fair to say for any headteacher in a faith school, the constant spectre of inspection or external advisors coming in', is always a challenge.

They observed

'Getting that balance between learning and teaching being paramount and the spiritual development of children, it is easy to tip straight into accountability and getting caught up with that. We have to have high expectations of our staff in terms of what they are delivering... That balance in terms of the wellbeing of the staff is such a tricky tight rope to walk when you are leading a school.'

With regard to balancing external accountability with maintaining ethos the same headteacher advised

'Treat people with dignity and respect. Attempt to buffer staff against the tidal wave of accountability. Ensure Salesianity is maintained across the school. Staff support is crucial so that they are supported through mistakes.'

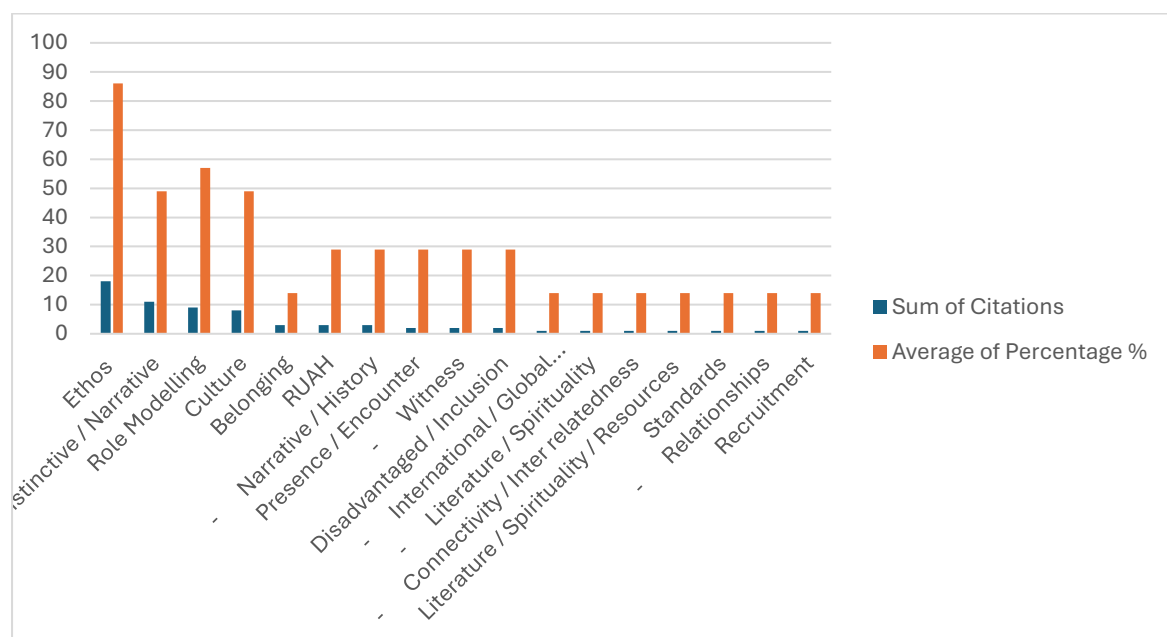


Fig. 5 Bar chart of the analysis of Themes and Sub Themes relating to Charism by the number of citations

Headteacher 5 offered a similar perspective in seeking to find a balance between accountability and maintaining ethos:

‘I think that the ethos and culture drive your outcomes; it drives your self-evaluation accountability. So we have worked very hard at creating a culture within our school of high expectations and low threat. So if you are developing a truly Salesian, Catholic culture, what you can’t do is go around chopping people off at the knees every time they make a mistake. That’s staff as well as students.’

They continued:

‘But equally high expectations and low threat does not mean that you are soft because people have to deliver. They are being paid and they have a moral responsibility, and they have to deliver. But I think we are moving in the right direction of getting that culture and that ethos.’

This headteacher believed that getting the culture and ethos right provided dividends in terms of outcomes:

‘So if you get that culture right, people will work hard. And in turn if you provide frameworks for people to work in that are very clearly articulated and very easy to understand, then in turn the learning and teaching improves which will in turn lead to better outcomes.’

For Headteacher 1 ‘self evaluation should genuinely include tough questions as to whether the religious identity of the school is being maintained i.e. not just in the CSI inspection.’ They also expressed the view that the ‘way schools are measured dictates curriculum and can influence other matters e.g. permanent exclusions of non-academic pupils to remove them from exam entry.’ For Headteacher 2 ‘Roman Catholic schools are set up to get the best out of people’ and asserted ‘we are reflective people so that this (self-evaluation) goes hand in hand.’ They also

expressed the view that 'accountability is key. If as Headteacher I get my job right then staff will feel accountable.'

Headteacher 3 shared the perspective that 'self-evaluation is another form of taking a look at yourself and setting your priorities for the future.' They further added that 'accountability is fully recognising who you are and the impact of that.' At the same time they cautioned 'accountability can become a hammer with which to hit people.'

Headteacher 6 was keen to emphasise that the school undertakes a rigorous self-evaluation programme and was clear that maintaining ethos did **not** mean neglecting to pay attention to improving standards:

'The specific dynamic of Salesian encouragement assists both staff and pupils in raising attainment. We are dedicated to improving results through the many interventions that staff provide such as after school evening classes and revision classes at weekends.'

For headteacher 7, outcomes were key in terms of delivering the mission of the school. They asserted that though the school enjoys a good reputation for handling challenging pupils 'we would still be failing them if we were not giving them the best teaching and learning.'

#### 6 RUAH (Respect, Understanding, Affection, Happiness)

In recent years the term RUAH, which is based on the name of Don Bosco's successor Fr. Michael Rua, has been introduced as a shorthand for how young people should be treated in implementing the Salesian charism; the letters stand for Respect, Understanding, Affection with the addition of Humour, so that the first letters of each word, added together, make up the Hebrew word 'ruah', meaning breath, wind, spirit



(Strong's Hebrew Lexicon); the word 'ruah' is also used in the Old Testament to mean the Spirit of God moving across the face of the earth (Gen 1:2). Headteacher 7 commented that the 'RUAH assists pupils and staff in giving them a simple expression of the spirit of what the Salesian charism is about'. 'Affection and humour are not what you always hear regarding ethos. Respect and understanding are more commonly utilised. Distinctive Salesian resilience and values are there'. They added that RUAH is a 'wonderful vehicle to express these things' and further commented

'The development of RUAH by the Salesians and the emphasis on the importance of Respect, Affection and Understanding plays its part. This assists in building understanding'.

For headteacher 5 the school 'underpinned all...behaviours and policies with RUAH' and that staff 'talk about and use that language routinely'. They were insistent that:

'It makes sense to people, when you talk about church, playground, home and school and respect, understanding, affection and humour, when you talk about children having to know that they are loved and to really feel that any good educator would want that, so it is a very good way in.'

The same headteacher added, "we have underpinned all of our behaviour policies with RUAH and we talk about and use that language routinely' and added

'I hear members of our staff who might not be Catholic, who might be Muslim using RUAH like they used any terminology. So I think that hugely supports us in a way that matters.'

Headteacher 6 alluded to an aspect of RUAH when they stated 'we may be criticised for being too understanding at times, but we are prepared to accept erring on that side' before emphasising that the school's values are aligned with Christian values.

## 7 Relationships / Belonging

Headteacher 4 spoke of the need for 'harnessing relationships; working closely with a team to ensure staff wellbeing'. This point was echoed by headteacher 7 who expressed the view that: 'it is the relationships and warmth that sustains people and helps the community maintain each other'.

One might comment that the linking of the quality of relationships to wellbeing is significant in the setting up of a Salesian school. The Salesian charism, with its focus on making the first move towards young people and building trust, is seen, by its very nature, to be relational. This point is echoed by headteacher 2 who stated that 'loving kindness is always relevant' and went on to assert that 'hard work, building relationships and educating the heart, not just the mind, engages children and parents'. They also insisted that 'reason was a key aspect of education' and that this might find expression in the 'way we treat one another, including both staff and pupils'.

## 8 Presence / Encounter

For headteacher 1 'transformational education begins with encounter'. They went on to speak of having a 'high regard for practical encounter'. In answer to whether this emphasis detracted in any way from educational goals they were unequivocal in their response stating, 'No. It is simple and practical but it is backed by being put into practice'.

They went on to add that 'simplicity and practicality' are powerful tools in assisting staff understanding adding 'being present to.. is all about personal encounter'. This statement brought home the point that being present and open to encountering young

people, was a key tenet of Salesian education. This point was further emphasised in the headteacher citing the example of St John Bosco reminding his followers about the importance of being **in the playground** with young people, 'encountering them through their recreation, not simply in the classroom'. Headteacher 3 made a further connection in linking presence to gospel values:

'Presence with pupils and staff is an enactment of what it means to be human. It is an enactment of what the gospel is about'.

They further linked this to promoting the Salesianity of the school

'Salesian is a great vehicle. It is something that can be bought into in a way that specifically Catholic may not be. The Salesian model is adaptable to different cultures and expectations including non-Christian countries'.

They went on to stress the importance that this (Salesian) understanding was open to staff of all religions and none and stated: 'non catholic staff can buy in to be Salesian'.

The emphasis on all staff members, including senior staff, being present to pupils was stressed by headteacher 7 who stated:

'The senior staff need to model this presence, walking alongside pupils is also essential for the charism to have credibility. It is a challenge to meet the challenge of being present to the children.

This final point was emphasised by St. John Bosco himself in a letter he sent to Salesians whilst on a visit to Rome. In what has come to be referred to as the 'Letter from Rome'<sup>165</sup> he raises his concern about what he perceived as a decline in the availability of his Salesians in being present to young people, due to the many tasks

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<sup>165</sup> Bosco G, *Letter from Rome* Salesian Sources 1 Don Bosco and his Work, *Kristu Jyoti Publications* 2017 (Original publisher LAS Rome, 2014), p500

they were undertaking. He raises very clear concerns about the consequences of this for maintaining good order, healthy relationships and a productive atmosphere conducive to learning.

## 9 Formation / Training

For headteacher 1 the 'practicality of the Salesian approach makes it 'valued and appreciated'. They believed that 'adult formation of teachers as Salesian educators' is a next step alongside the 'practical witness of SDBs which is invaluable' in developing ethos. In addition, headteacher 4 remarked that it was 'essential that Salesian values are at the core of the understanding of the ethos of the school' and that 'ensuring the induction of new teachers with the Salesian ethos' is key in implementing this. They also spoke of employing the strategy of 'starting teachers before the end of the term to ensure they are inducted in the ethos of the school'. The conviction surrounding the need to develop strategies which allow the Salesian ethos and values of the school to be communicated adequately to staff, especially to new staff entering the school, is supported by further statements regarding the provision of training opportunities.

Headteacher 6 supported the need for prioritising this area in asserting 'we incorporate training in Salesian ethos and understanding into staff training.' Offering a practical example headteacher 2 spoke about having run (training) sessions on ethos in the school chapel, sending 'staff out to have a go at it', then asking 'them to reflect on the experience'. Headteacher 1 emphasised the importance of the 'provision, quality and training of chaplains.' These are both significant statements with regard to the deployment of chaplains in Salesian schools, particularly in the context of providing formation for staff in matters of ethos and Salesianity.

## 10 Role Models

In answer to the question 'what are the pillars of the Salesian ethos' headteacher 7 quoted the 'ability to have role models within the Salesian experience e.g. Don Bosco, Sean Devereux, particularly.' In developing this point, they further stated

'Salesian ethos is a shared experience both nationally and internationally. Role models are important in terms of identifying who I am and whom I can be in terms of communicating the eternal truths.' They concluded 'there is something profoundly easy about Salesian role models.'

In relation to how role models might work in a school, headteacher 7 went on to articulate that the

'sense of being present and walking alongside is essential. We have this modelled by religious in school. They model the charism really well'.

This observation was reinforced by headteacher 1 who stated that 'providing role models is essentially important' in the context of developing Salesian education and remarked that the 'practical witness of Salesians of Don Bosco around (the school) is invaluable'.

### 9.7.3 Discussion

The headteachers discussed a number of issues relating to charism and ethos including the reality of service, particularly aimed towards those who are most vulnerable, as a specific element of the Salesian mission. The notions of conviction, witness and role modelling, cited by the majority of headteachers, highlighted the

need for the daily active modelling of how the charism might be implemented by persons who demonstrate a fundamental commitment to it.

The fact that the unique history and narrative that encapsulates the Salesian charism also featured strongly, may be a recognition, by headteachers, that they are seeking to implement a way of working that has longstanding roots and a methodology that has remained respected and effective over a significant period of time and in a wide variety of different national and international settings.

With regard to a fuller discussion of the school improvement agenda, with specific reference to standards and accountability, it is worth recalling that, in Chapter 2 of this thesis, reference was made to the introduction of the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) as part of the 1992 Education Act, with the purpose of holding schools to account and in so doing raise standards. In *Beyond Ofsted: An Inquiry into the Future of School Inspection*<sup>166</sup>, Jane Perryman et al quote the Ofsted Inspection Framework (2022):

Inspection provides independent, external evaluation and identifies what needs to improve in order for provision to be good or better. It is based on gathering a range of evidence that is evaluated against an inspection framework and takes full account of our policies and relevant legislation in areas such as safeguarding, equality and diversity.

The authors go on to cite Chris Husbands (2014:1)<sup>167</sup> who described Ofsted as:

the most comprehensive and thorough evidence base on what happens in classrooms anywhere in the world. It is what makes Ofsted important and relevant, however uncomfortable its findings may sometimes be to read. The independence and integrity of the evidence base are of critical importance. It has been, and remains, a precious commodity in English education.

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<sup>166</sup> Perryman J, et al, (2023), *Beyond Ofsted Inquiry* (2023), Final Report of the Inquiry. London, NEU

<sup>167</sup> Husbands C (2014). In *Defence of Ofsted*, London, IOE

Perryman et al, in this report commissioned by the National Education Union (NEU), go on to present a case for change, notwithstanding the degree of positivity cited above. While a critique of this presentation is beyond the scope of this thesis, that accountability is a perennial reality for schools in general and Headteachers in particular is incontrovertible. Catholic schools have a dual accountability to the Bishop of the Diocese in which they are situated, mediated primarily through the Catholic School Inspection framework. In addition, schools with a Religious Order foundation are accountable to the Provincial (or Superior) of that order in the context of sustaining and nurturing its distinctive religious charism

## 9.8 Theme 2 Accompaniment (Q5 & Q8)

### 9.8.1 Analysis

	<b>Sub Themes / Nodes</b>	<b>Citations</b>	<b>Headteachers (Out of 7)</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
1	Role Modelling / Extra Mile	16	6	85
2	Presence / Encounter	15	5	71
3	Formation / Training	12	5	71
	- Resources / Literature	1	1	14
4	Standards	7	5	71
5	Leadership / Succession	5	4	56
6	Recruitment	3	3	43
7	RUAH	2	2	29
8	Relationships	2	2	29

Table 4 Analysis of themes and sub themes from headteacher interviews relating to Accompaniment by the number and frequency of citations

### 9.8.2 Findings

Interviews with headteachers revealed a number of key sub themes in this area which are analysed according to the frequency of them being cited in interviews.

#### 1 Role Modelling / Going the Extra Mile

Having an example of being with young people to follow is essential, for headteacher 7, who stated 'we have this modelled by religious in school'. Expanding on this headteacher 6 asserted that 'maintaining Salesians on the staff and links to the



Salesian community is crucial to maintaining the identity. Salesians embody the very charism we profess'. Headteacher 5 added further that 'having Salesians as chaplains and governors helps to name what Salesian is'. During a time when Salesians are not as prominent 'the relevance of the charism could be questioned'.

With regard to understanding the charism, headteacher 3 referred to the importance of the 'knowledge of what Salesian means' and 'what it means to work in a Salesian school'. This point was developed by headteacher 2 who remarked that while the 'stories of Don Bosco go a long way... some other aspects need to be translated'. The suggested solution is to 'use Salesians or find the equivalent people i.e. those who engage with teachers', to deliver training that will be relevant and appropriate for staff. Headteacher 1 reflected that Salesian involvement should never be taken for granted and pointed to 'staff realising the importance of this example...' as a way of reinforcing the point.

## 2 Presence / Encounter

Headteacher 2 referred to 'presence as an idea of duty... applying the preventive system' in practical situations. The judgement of successful application is 'based on what you see them (teachers) do'. Headteacher 6 remarked further that 'Salesians who are present represent continuity in the community'. In developing this point headteacher 7 remarked 'the proximity of the Salesian community is an essential element at all levels including priests, brothers, governors. The sense of being present, and walking with, is essential'. They went on to assert:

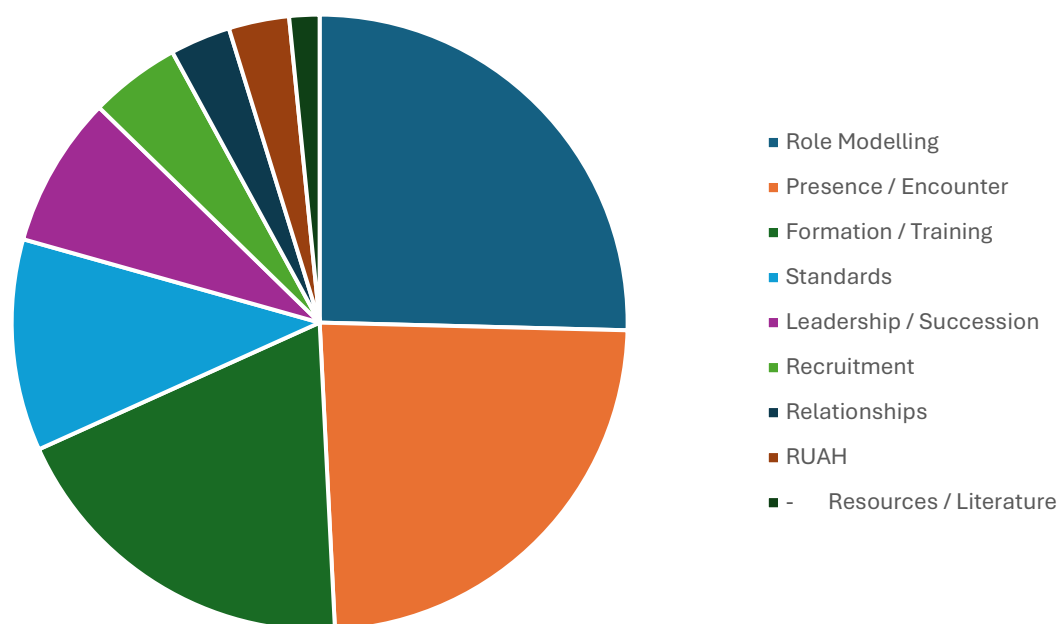
‘the presence of religious exemplifies giving glory to God in, and through, the presence with the young. Religious being that example in and through their presence and work even though this goes through many different personalities’.

They continued:

‘Young Salesians, by their example and tradition, clearly demonstrate we are here for the young people’.

The presence in school of a ‘chaplain and those formed in a Salesian mindset on a day to day basis’, was emphasised by headteacher 1 alongside not taking Salesian involvement or encounter for granted. Headteacher 3 stated additionally that ‘basic politeness has a very high cache.. e.g. holding doors open’. There is a fundamental importance in ‘being nice to one another’. There is also the recognition that ‘we can break bread together with other staff and pupils’ including on school journeys to centres of pilgrimage such as Turin and Lourdes.

Fig. 6 Analysis of the themes and sub themes of Accompaniment by the number of citations



### 3 Formation / Training

Headteacher 4 stated 'It is essential that Salesian values are at the core of the understanding of the ethos of the school' and spoke of the importance of 'ensuring the induction of new teachers in the Salesian ethos'. The need for 'resources from

Salesian publications to enable staff to sit up and reflect' was also highlighted. In relation to training headteacher 5 added that:

'Salesian INSETs have been introduced recently', but 'one day of induction is not sufficient. It (the Salesian charism) must be taught specifically to people. School needs to take the key messages and discuss them in quality time'.

In answer to the question, how should support be offered, Headteacher 3 stated that staff need 'the knowledge of what Salesian means' alongside resources that explain

‘what it means to work in a Salesian school’. In reference to the impact of Salesian schools conferences or training events, they placed the emphasis on the ‘need for input to make them (staff) better Salesian teachers’. In developing this theme, headteacher 2 emphasised the most important aspect is making available ‘opportunities to experience Salesian ethos beyond the school’ through activities such as ‘pupil involvement in the relics (of Don Bosco) pilgrimage’ and ‘staff involvement in the Turin (pilgrimage) trips’. Conferences aimed at certain staff groups have also been beneficial but presenters need to have the ability to ‘enthuse and to a point entertain staff’

Headteacher 1 remarked on the need for ‘quality formation for lay staff delivered by suitable Salesians or qualified lay staff’ while headteacher 7 asserted that ‘we are fortunate in having the resource of a (Salesian) community. Having members available to advise and support around ethos is invaluable. We need dynamic relationships such as this to reflect and talk things through’. On the wider question of resourcing headteacher 4 remarked that resourcing from Salesian publications ‘enable staff to sit and reflect’. Moreover ‘current material is approachable. It is an easy read and not too long. Literature gives an opportunity to dip in and to absorb’.

#### 4 Standards

With regard to standards headteacher 2 was clear in emphasising ‘children only get one chance’ while headteacher 4 stressed the commitment of staff to ‘working for the future success of the school’ and that ‘outstanding lessons’ are a part of delivering the mission.

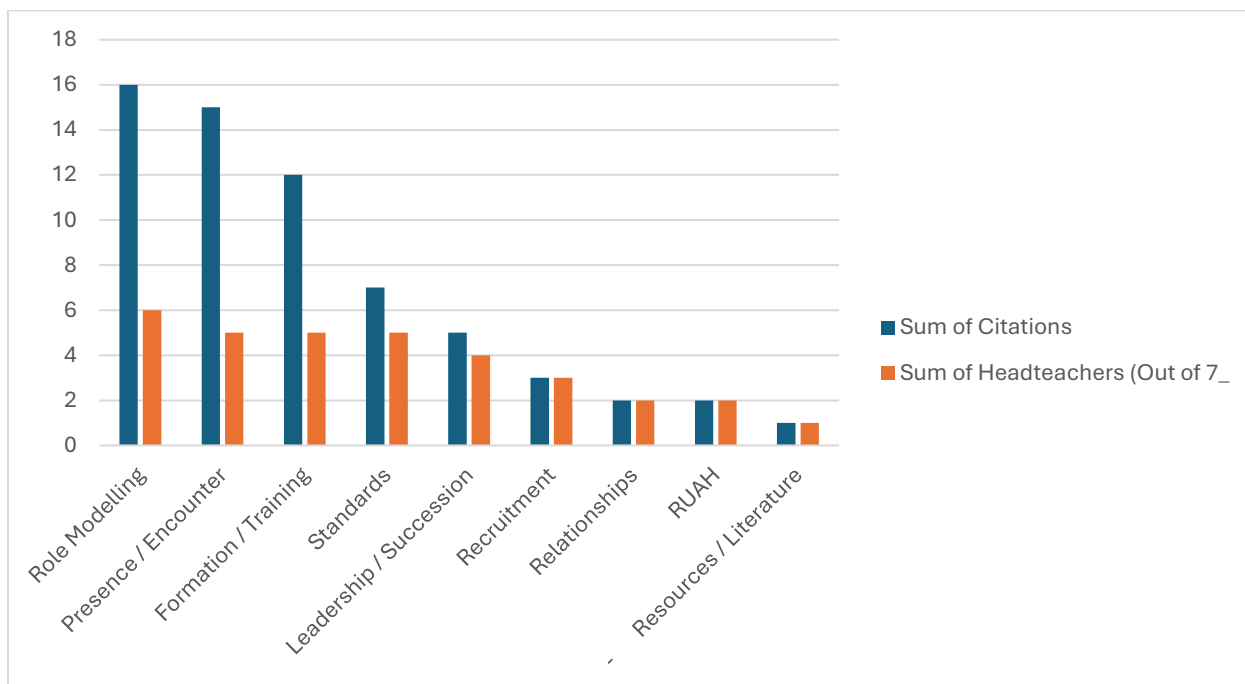


Fig 7 Thematic bar chart analysis of Accompaniment by citations and frequency

Headteacher 7 was clear in stressing:

‘Our aim is to give the children the best possible start to ensure their progress. We need to support children with resilience. We would still be failing them if we were not giving them the best teaching and learning.’

On the other hand headteacher 3 cautioned

‘there is always the danger of things becoming too comforting or even cosy as opposed to being cynical. It is very difficult to measure qualities such as engagement’.

They went on to add::

‘We as a church have not been challenging enough to those who, have challenged us’.

They also spoke about the importance of the

‘management response to people needing support’.

Relating maintaining ethos and standards headteacher 5 was keen to emphasise that making the implementation of RUAH a performance management objective for all staff, was an important strategy in demonstrating the commitment of the school in developing this area.

## 5 Leadership

For headteacher 1 adopting a 'humane model of leadership which is Christocentric (but not a soft option), gives people, staff and students, permission to behave the same.' This sentiment finds an echo in the comment made by headteacher 7 that 'servant leadership is important'. This concept of leadership as Christocentric is closely related to the role of the headteacher, set out in Vatican documents on Catholic schools, in which they are seen as following the example of Christ, encapsulating gospel values, in the way that they lead the school. Servant leadership is viewed as one such value.

This perspective is closely related to maintaining the charismatic identity of a school since inculcating gospel values is a key dynamic in this pursuit. In this regard headteacher 7 goes on to make the point that 'senior staff need to model this (Salesian) presence' and emphasises that 'walking alongside pupils is also essential, for the charism to have credibility'. This approach can be viewed as a way of implementing servant leadership with the headteacher being available to both staff and students in the day to day running of the school.

Applying a different emphasis, headteacher 2 stressed the need for 'people in positions of leadership to take the lead'. They also emphasised the importance of

‘having the right people to do it’. Looking to the future, headteacher 4 raised the question ‘what can we do to maintain and develop a model for Salesian leadership at a time when Salesians might not be visible?’ and emphasised that ‘succession planning also needs to be looked at in terms of leadership’.

## 6 Recruitment of staff

Headteacher 7 stressed the importance of appointing ‘staff who are child centred and who look to be present, to the children’, while headteacher 4 asserted that processes should be aimed at ‘ensuring dedicated staff, who share the journey with young people’, are recruited. The idea of journeying with or accompanying young people is set out clearly in the Vatican document *Christus Vivit*<sup>168</sup>

‘The Church’s educational institutions are undoubtedly a communal setting for accompaniment; they can offer guidance to many young people, especially when they “seek to welcome all young people, regardless of their religious choices, cultural origins and personal, family or social situations’. (247)

The document however also acknowledges the shortage of qualified people devoted to accompaniment which, of course, applies beyond the realm of formal education. Nevertheless, headteachers maintain the aspiration of recruiting individuals who have the desired skills and commitment to fulfil this role, alongside their teaching commitments. Headteacher 1 expressed the view that authenticity is key in recruiting quality teachers who have the ability to integrate ‘all aspects of the curriculum’

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<sup>168</sup> Pope Francis Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation to Young people and the entire People of God, 2019 *Christus Vivit*

alongside 'personal witness'. 'The appointment of top quality teachers is essential to allow these dynamics to flourish'.

## 7 RUAH (Respect, Understanding, Affection and Humour)

Headteacher 5 suggested that respect and understanding 'underpins systems and processes' such as the 'behaviour policy and academic reporting to parents'. Indeed 'RUAH is used in reporting to parents'.

They go on to stress

'The fact this is central is indicative to staff. It also demonstrates that these aspects are not just fluffy window dressing, for the RE department or an optional extra. This is our core identity'.

They went on to emphasise how the acronym of RUAH can be of use to staff of other faiths in understanding key aspects of the ethos of the school:

'I hear members of our staff who might not be Catholic, who might be Muslim using RUAH like they used any terminology. So I think that hugely supports and is a way in that matters'.

This point is reinforced by headteacher 7 who stated:

'The development of RUAH by the Salesians and emphasis on the importance of Respect, Affection and Understanding plays its part. This assists in building understanding'.

They further emphasised: 'the development of RUAH assists pupils and staff in giving them a simple expression' of the spirit of what the Salesian ethos is about.



## 8 Relationships

Headteacher 7 stressed 'It is the relationships and warmth that sustains people and helps the community maintain each other'. On a related theme headteacher 3 observed 'Salesian has a vague feeling for a number of people of feeling they are at home! It feels comforting' also 'That, it is explicit e.g. Using love in a school environment'.

For headteacher 4 having time to build relationships was equally important:

'Having that time that dedicated time right throughout the school year. People can spend more time developing those relationships, not just with each other but also with key staff across the school'.

They felt the provision of activities such as liturgical celebrations, retreats and mission weeks were all part of 'enabling pupils to establish relationships across the school' as was 'ensuring chaplaincy provision is in place and children have access to it'. For headteacher 7 having people available to communicate with is very important: relationships with individuals we can talk to from the community is invaluable'.

This last comment perhaps points to something that is important to headteachers and can often be missed; that they feel supported in building relationships and that they have a range of relationships that they are able to maintain at appropriate levels to enable this support. It is interesting to note too, the importance headteachers place on building relationships across the school and the role that events such as liturgies, retreats and mission weeks can play in this, alongside providing dedicated chaplaincy provision which can offer a safe space for young people for encounter. An overall theme running through these responses is the dedication of time and resources, two aspects which are often at a premium in schools, towards relationship building.

### 9.8.3 Discussion

In examining the responses of headteachers to questions on the theme of accompaniment, a number of sub themes have emerged which bear further examination. For example, the number of headteachers who mentioned the need for effective role models of Salesian practice is striking. What was also striking was their appreciation of the importance of having Salesians actively present 'on the ground' as it were, working in schools as chaplains or teachers or present as governors. The importance some attached to maintaining links with the local Salesian community was also noteworthy, as was the favourable comment by headteachers of staff preparedness to 'go the extra mile' in providing after school and weekend revision sessions.

In addition, it is clear that headteachers remain concerned about the school improvement agenda, namely, how best to maintain or improve standards while, at the same time, being true to the ethos of the school. Developing leadership is a further concern, particularly with regard to succession planning. Alongside this there is recognition of the importance of recruiting high quality staff who are child focussed and with high professional integrity. These must be able to offer personal witness while effectively managing teaching demands, together with any management responsibilities they might have.

Finally, building and maintaining relationships across the school is a clear priority, with a number headteachers referencing the need to dedicate time and resources towards this goal. Some viewed this as important in helping to sustain staff and to maintain their health and wellbeing. The Salesian dimension was mentioned in the context of

providing a sense of belonging and also experiencing the support of a wider community, both in the vicinity of the school and on a wider scale.

## 9.9 Theme 3 Collaboration (Q7)

### 9.9.1 Findings

As per the analysis below, a number of sub themes emerged from the responses of headteachers to the question of collaboration. We have already discussed the importance of charism / ethos and culture in analysing the responses made under the themes of Charism and Accompaniment, earlier in this chapter, so we will not consider these as we analyse the theme collaboration. In this analysis we will focus on the eight other themes and sub themes which are listed below.

### 9.9.2 Analysis

#### 1 Distinctiveness / Narrative

In considering distinctiveness headteacher 3 expressed the view that:

‘Salesian education gives you the experience and unpacks the experience to discern its meaning’. ‘Faith in practise’ is key as is ‘education being a matter of the heart’.

They went on to state there is a practicality in ‘defining the culture as Salesian’ since ‘Salesian talks about a way of being that is inherently inculcating the good in life’.

Offering a similar perspective, headteacher 2 suggested that connectivity and accessibility were strengths of the Salesian charism; ‘There is a lot of connectivity. We hang so much on Don Bosco - we are so lucky’. Further reflecting on distinctiveness headteacher 5 expressed the view that ‘the charism’s focus on the disadvantaged

helps staff to understand it' and also highlighted the importance of accessing good reading material:

'Promoting Salesian reading has also been important with the leadership and wider staff to encourage them to understand why they are doing what they do.'

	<b>Sub Themes / Nodes</b>	<b>Citations</b>	<b>Headteachers (Out of 7)</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
1	Distinctive	13	6	86
	- Narrative / History	3	2	29
2	Role Modelling	9	4	57
3	RUAH	3	2	29
4	Belonging	3	2	29
	- Relationships	1	1	14
	- Connectivity / Inter relatedness	2	1	14
	- International / Global dimension	1	1	14
5	Presence / Encounter	2	2	29
6	Disadvantaged / Inclusion	2	2	29
	- Witness	2	1	29
	- Literature / Spirituality	1	1	14
7	Recruitment	1	1	14
8	Standards	1	1	14

Table 5 Analysis of themes and sub themes from headteacher interviews relating to Collaboration by the number and frequency of citations

The importance of reading material on the theme of the distinctiveness of the charism was also emphasised by headteacher 7:

'This year we have sought more directly to bring staff into the understanding of being part of a much wider organisation throughout the world. We share with staff literature but also the word about other works in the world.'

Headteacher 6, exploring the theme of maintaining distinctiveness stated, it is essential that the story of the school is told to new managers who may join and that this link continues going forward.'

Headteacher 2 offered an additional perspective on distinctiveness in stating

'Other colleagues wish to use the Salesian ethos in their schools. Other leaders can see the hook to make Catholic ethos practical.'

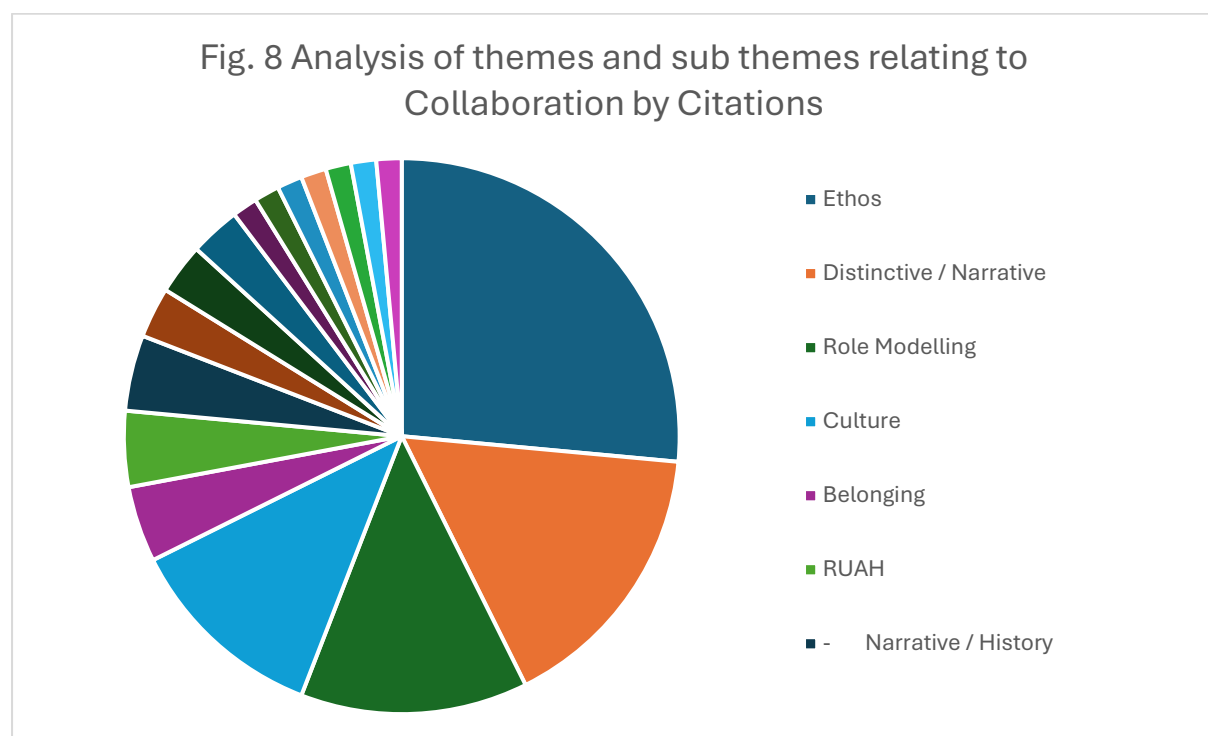
In exploring a related theme, headteacher 3 recognised there is a powerful narrative which is experienced in 'visiting Turin and the places where the (Salesian) work started'. They viewed the school as part of a 'bigger entity, the (Salesian) province, which is national'. For headteacher 6, new staff and leadership coming in, must be 'made aware of the ethos of the school and must be prepared to invest in it'. 'It is essential that the story of the school is told to new managers who may join and that this link continues going forward'.

The history and tradition of the Salesian charism were both important to headteacher 2, as is the 'power of narrative'. The same headteacher also acknowledged the 'connectivity' that comes with being a Salesian school which is part of an international network of schools, parishes and universities'. Headteacher 1 identified a 'spiritual franchise which has cache and needs to be shared' and goes on to remark that 'young people identify with the narrative that is running through the school'.

## 2 Role Models

In articulating a challenge that they faced, headteacher 1 asked 'how do you build a narrative into an ethos if you do not have the personnel?'. For this headteacher 'providing role models was essentially important.' In responding to the question: 'what

are the key pillars of Salesian Ethos' headteacher 3 set out the 'ability to have role models within the Salesian experience' as a crucial aspect and commented that 'there is something profoundly easy about Salesian role models'. The headteacher continued to assert that 'role models are important in terms of identifying who I am and whom I can be in terms of communicating the eternal truths'. 'Salesian ethos as a shared experience both nationally and internationally' for example, sixth form students in the UK raising funds in order to facilitate and participate in the delivery of a porridge club in Zambia'.



With regard to role models, headteacher 7 explained that:

'we cannot simply assume staff get it (the charism). We need to be modelling it every day. We need to be educating them about the role of St. John Bosco also'.

To this they added 'Salesians are living embodiments of what this school represents.' For headteacher 6 it was important to 'maintain Salesians on the staff and never to 'lose the link with the community'. Maintain this - this is the best way to maintain this identity' On a similar theme headteacher 5 asserted that 'having Salesians on the staff makes a big difference to the school. 'The presence of Salesians assists people in understanding the wider mission'.

### 3 RUAH (Respect, Understanding, Affection, Humour)

In describing the distinctive nature of the Salesian charism headteacher 7 stated that 'the development of RUAH by the Salesians and emphasis on the importance of Respect, Affection and Understanding plays its part.'

They further added:

'the development of RUAH assists pupils and staff in giving them a simple expression of the spirit of what the Salesian ethos is about. This assists in building understanding'.

In elaborating on this point they added 'while accepting that 'affection and humour are not what you always hear', reference to 'respect and understanding is more common'. They continued that this results in a 'distinctive Salesian resilience and values. It 'reinforces the charism and ethics of the school'.

This reference to the contribution of RUAH in building resilience in a Salesian school stands out. This is especially true, perhaps, in schools where social deprivation and a sense of exclusion may be more prevalent. Headteacher 4 remarked that 'all elements (of the Salesian charism) promote the development of ethos' as the school

seeks to live out its mission statement developing the 'home, church, playground' aspects of the Salesian vision of education for every Salesian school.

#### 4 Belonging

Headteacher 7 believed that 'getting into the Salesian house regularly and joining other Salesian schools produces a sense of belonging'. An example of facilitating this might be the Salesian Sports day which is a province wide competition for all of the Salesian schools; a further example is the joint training of prefects by Salesian schools in the south of the country. This sense of belonging was 'essential for staff as well as pupils'... 'Staff need to take the lead with challenging pupils every day. Without a sense of belonging, it is really tough for staff to face this each day.' In addition, staff must buy into the faith, values and ethos of the school irrespective of personal faith'. Headteacher 1 spoke of the impact of treating pupils with dignity and commented that the 'depth that adults are showing them this (dignity) has a direct impact on their 'wish to remain beyond the bell'. He attributes this to a 'feeling of belonging'.

Don Bosco regularly communicated to his followers the importance of treating pupils with loving kindness, liking what they liked and making the first move in terms of building relationships. These were all strategies aimed at giving young people a genuine sense that they belonged and that they were safe and secure. In modern terms, a Salesian school is seen as exercising four functions: home, school, playground and church. It is no accident that the first of these is home; for Don Bosco creating the sense of belonging and of providing a home for the young people he found on the streets of Turin was essential to their hopes of rehabilitation, education and development as citizens.



#### 4a Relationships (see also Accompaniment)

Headteacher 7 commented that it was the 'relationships and warmth that sustain people and help the community sustain each other'. They also added that 'relationships with individuals we can talk to in the community are invaluable'.

Headteacher 5 commented that 'people can spend more time developing those relationships, not just with each other but also with key staff.' In addition they spoke of the importance of 'enabling pupils to establish relationships across the school.'

Headteacher 2 referred to the importance of relationships in the context of 'educating the heart, not just the mind' but also stressed paying attention to 'the way we treat one another, staff and pupils,' is key ending with the observation that 'reason is a key aspect of education.' Headteacher 4 spoke of the need for 'harnessing relationships. Working closely with a team to ensure staff wellbeing...'. They also emphasised the importance of 'working for each other' within the context of the school.

#### 4b National / International dimension

Headteacher 3 observed that 'Salesian ethos is a shared experience both nationally and internationally'. The national and international dimensions of the Salesian charism were affirmed by headteacher 1 who stated the national-international dimension was important for 'moving pupils out of parochialism that is, being locked into a locality and a mentality'. This was recognised by headteacher 2 who remarked that the school was 'part of a bigger entity' known as the British province, which, was a national body, affiliated to a much larger international religious congregation'.

## 5 Presence / Encounter

In commenting on its importance, headteacher 3 stressed that 'presence with pupils and staff is an enactment of what it means to be human. It is an enactment of what the gospel is about.' With regard to what is necessary for Salesian role models, the same headteacher asserted that 'the human understanding of these traits; such as 'being present to people, is a skill,' adding 'A key aspect of emotional intelligence is being aware of people and being able to relate to them'.

Headteacher 1's considered encounter was about 'adults providing leadership' in a Salesian school but it was also about the provision of high-quality resources such as retreats'. Headteacher 2 was keen to emphasise the importance of 'presence linked to a sense of duty, of not simply being the Police person.' They were focused on 'applying the preventive system' in practical situations

For Headteacher 7, 'the sense of being present and walking with and alongside is essential'. While recognising 'it is a challenge to meet the requirement of being present to the children,' they are also very clear that the 'senior staff need to model this presence, walking alongside pupils, which is also essential for the charism to have credibility.' The same headteacher emphasised:

'The presence of religious exemplifies giving glory to God in and through the presence with the young. Religious being that example in and through their presence and work even though this goes through many different personalities. Young Salesians, by their example and tradition clearly demonstrate we are here for the young people.'

Headteacher 5 reflects some of this sentiment in asserting that ‘the presence of Salesians assists people in understanding the wider mission.’

## 6 Disadvantaged / Inclusion

Headteacher 1 asked if the ‘option for the poor’ is still a key strand of the Salesian charism. Headteacher 3 was of the view that the option for the poor did not always sit comfortably with the message that Catholic education is ‘to all people for all time’.

Looking at this from the perspective of inclusion headteacher 5 remarked

‘we have made ethos relevant and they (staff) understand this. Inclusion is the driver. There is a place for everyone at this table if you are participating’.

They went on to add:

‘The focus of the charism on the disadvantaged helps staff to understand it’.

These last two points are interesting in a formative sense. While headteacher 1 asks in what sense the option of the poor is still relevant when implementing the Salesian charism and headteacher 3 questions if it can be applied proportionately in all settings; headteacher 5 is making a case for its inclusion from the standpoint that, focusing on the disadvantaged, actually helps staff to better understand the charism.

A further point of note in this section is the claim made by headteacher 5, that inclusion is the driver of any concept of service in the sense that everyone has a place ‘at the table’ and are included. These two aspects perhaps can assist us in considering what could be a source of tension within a school or indeed an organisation in seeking to be faithful to making an option for those who are socially disadvantaged, while at the

same time ensuring inclusion for all. This can rise to the fore when, despite the best efforts of the school and its support staff, a pupil is not participating and indeed may be blocking the participation of other pupils in the learning process, due to incidents of disruptive or threatening behaviour. In situations where there are repeated incidents of this kind of behaviour, a school may be left with a limited number of choices including the possibility of removing the pupil. These are not easy decisions and can cause headteachers, in particular, a degree of anxiety over making the best decision for the school and the young person concerned.

This can be where having a charism that underpins the ethos is important. Charism contains guiding values and principles but it is also underpinned by a spirituality that can aid in the process of discerning the right way forward. Recognising this headteacher 5 stressed that 'promoting Salesian reading has also been important with the leadership and wider staff to encourage them to understand why they are doing what they are doing'.

## 7 Recruitment

For headteacher 3 'ensuring the recruitment of students year on year' and the 'recruitment and retention of staff' are high priorities. They also referred to recruitment as a 'pressure'. Headteacher 6 reflected on the need to recruit 'good teachers'. Headteacher 7 expressed their belief in appointing staff 'who are child-centred and who look to be present to the children' This is echoed in a comment by headteacher 4 who stated 'ensuring dedicated staff who share the journey with young people' are appointed and retained is key.

Headteacher 1 emphasised the importance of the 'recruitment of students' and the 'recruitment and formation of staff' as priorities alongside the need for adults in the school environment who 'have permission to be authentic with pupils' so that they can act as teachers 'integrating all aspects of the curriculum and personal witness'. They conclude that 'the appointment of top quality teachers is essential to allow these dynamics to flourish'.

## 8 Standards

In a general comment about the implementation of the school improvement agenda, headteacher 3 shared that an important aspect of emotional intelligence is 'being aware of people and being able to relate to them'. They expressed a worry that the 'system is pressurising these things out in struggling schools because they are subject to the exactitude of inspection'.

In considering whether standards might be a threat to ethos headteacher 1 stated:

'All of this comes down to leadership in the end. Most people have the right mindset within them. Nevertheless leadership dictates the tone e.g. if the model is ruthless people will follow it'.

They go on to state:

'This is not a soft option, however. Warnings sometimes have to be issued such as in circumstances where complacency is leading to stagnation'.

The driving up of standards while, at the same time, seeking to maintain and build on the charisma and ethos of the school are challenges that headteachers face. The emphasis placed here on displaying intelligent and proportionate leadership and

using emotional intelligence, are perhaps indicative of how a balance can be maintained. For headteachers dealing with the pressure of inspection while having to address standards with teachers and departments within the school, is a daily occurrence.

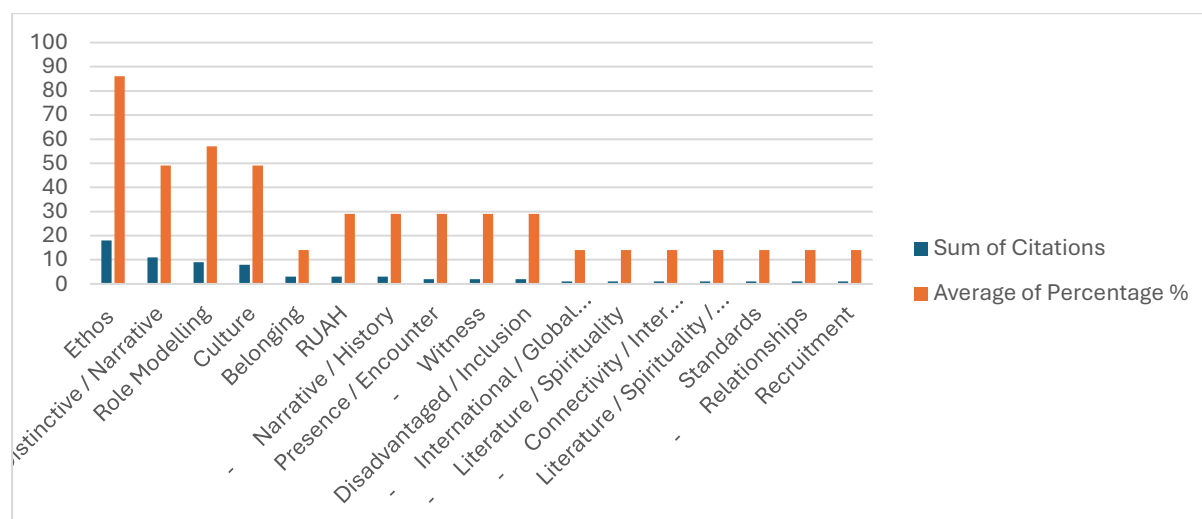


Fig. 9 Analysis of the themes and sub themes related to collaboration by citations and percentage coverage.

### 9.9.3 Discussion

The need to promote the active involvement of lay people, working in collaboration alongside Religious, in delivering the Salesian mission has been well understood over a number of decades, following on from the second Vatican Council. This has become more urgent as the numbers of religious available in the UK to take on leading roles in schools, for example, has declined. While this does not rule out the possibility of religious taking leadership roles in centres of education in the future, it recognises the reality that many schools, of which religious are trustees, do not presently have a surfeit of religious with the requisite experience, to take up such a role. Nevertheless, headteachers are virtually unanimous in recognising the value of religious who are present day to day in school since they encapsulate the implementation of the

Salesian charism. This is especially true in an environment where it may be difficult to recruit high quality staff who have a committed faith perspective.

## 9.10 Theme 4 Pressures (Q2 & 9)

### 9.10.1 Findings

As per the analysis above a number of themes emerge from the response made by headteachers to the question of competing pressures and their impact on maintaining the charism of the school.

	<b>Sub Themes / Nodes</b>	<b>Citations</b>	<b>Headteachers (Out of 7)</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
1	Recruitment of Staff	10	6	86
2	Faith Background (pupils & teachers)	8	5	71
3	Leadership / Personnel	7	4	57
	- Isolation / Individualism	1	1	14
4	Standards & Inspections	7	4	57
5	Role Models / Modelling	3	3	43
6	Formation / Training	7	2	29
7	Service / Disadvantaged	2	1	14
8	Connectivity / Partnership	2	1	14
	- International / Global	1	1	14

Table 6 Analysis of themes and sub themes from headteacher interviews relating to competing pressures by the number and frequency of citations

### 9.10.2 Analysis

#### 1 Recruitment of Staff

With regard to the recruitment of staff, headteacher 2 expressed the view that they were 'looking for staff who are committed and fluent in their expression of faith'...,

‘people who genuinely understand and can communicate the ethos’. In contrast, on staff retention. Headteacher 3 remarked on the difficulty of ‘maintaining a core of Catholic staff’ and also mentioned the ‘pressure of recruitment when there is competition’.

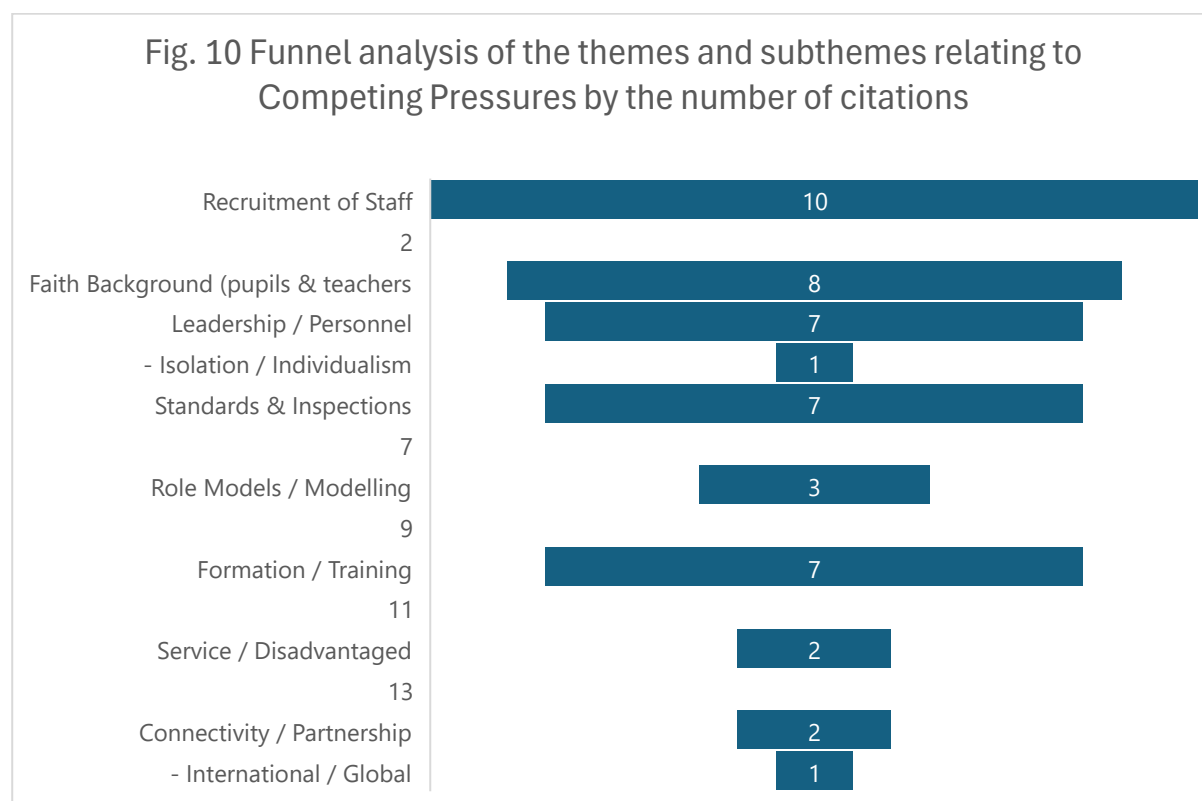
Headteacher 5 echoed this sentiment in highlighting the challenge around maintaining the ‘percentage of practising Catholics that are within our school both on the staff and on the student body.’ The need to avoid a drift towards secularisation was identified by headteacher 7 who stated ‘we do not want Don Bosco’s words to become meaningless words’.

## 2 Faith Expression / Dimension

Headteacher 1 lamented a ‘lack of cultural Catholicism among students and staff compared with previous generations’ citing the 1950s as an example of a period with a strong sub-socio-cultural Catholicism within England and Wales. They also highlighted the ‘fragmentation of the Catholic sector’ which they described as ‘schools going it alone’. For this headteacher there is a ‘lack of understanding that faith based education is foundational and has become compartmentalised’ They cited Catholic school inspections moving closer to the ‘Ofsted approach’ as evidence of this. Headteacher 2 highlighted the ‘variation in practice amongst families’ and stated, ‘school is much more on its own in terms of inculcating faith’. Headteacher 3 stated that the ‘community of faith, out with the school, is different to that within’. This theme was further developed by headteacher 6 who stated that ‘pupils are often ignorant of their faith and do not attend church. They experience church through their experience of school’. Headteacher 7 observed ‘there are a sizeable number of children from other



faiths' and continued 'it is less about the language of faith more about the lack of practice'. 'The lack or practice can undermine everything. Helping children understand the practice of faith and its rituals is more difficult.'



They went on to state 'the prevailing secularisation narrative of society means religion is more marginalised. Young people are sourcing their information from many sources'.

'We are about providing an alternative narrative to secularisation'. Setting an alternative narrative is crucial for the school. They are also keen to assert that 'the school has a daily routine which includes daily prayer and an act of worship'.

Perhaps as a way of addressing this headteacher 4 stated

'Making sure that the church is relevant to young people today. And it might be you need to bring the church to young people today as opposed to them going to the Church, because not every young person goes to church. It is making

sure that all students do RE in a Catholic school; I think that is only right and proper. ‘

They went on to add

‘Ensuring regular school mass whether that is the year 7 welcome mass, the sixth form masses, the regular masses throughout the liturgical calendar. Collective worship every day and making sure that is happening. Making sure that every child has got the opportunity to reflect and perhaps even to share some of their experiences with their peers’.

### 3 Leadership / Personnel

With reference to personnel, headteacher 2 stressed the importance of (recruiting) ‘people who genuinely understand and can communicate the ethos’ Headteacher 1 highlighted that ‘leadership teams must be involved in intelligent and intense Salesian formation’. They acknowledged ‘the ‘loneliness of the headteacher role’ and expressed the view that ‘less people were interested in being headteachers’.

Headteacher 4, on the other hand, asserted that ‘the school would not be the same without its faith dimension’ and that they were ‘delighted to be the headteacher of a Salesian Catholic school’. Headteacher 7 placed a stress on ‘ensuring the school climate secures opportunities for young people in the practice of faith’ and further stated ‘we have to ensure we are not simply trotting out the same thing each year’ acknowledging that ‘looking to find time for senior leadership is also important...’ . They commented that helping leaders to ‘understand what this means to the person’ i.e. finding time, ‘is key’.

This last point may hint at a much forgotten facet of leadership; that of senior leaders finding time’. According to headteacher 7 this might assist them in understanding why

this (finding time) is so important for staff in general. This is a point that we will look to explore when we consider the responses of staff to the online questionnaire.

#### 4 Standards / Inspection / Accountability

Headteacher 5 asserted 'it is fair to say for any headteacher in a faith school, the constant spectre of inspection or external advisors coming in, that is always a challenge'. They continued 'getting that balance between learning and teaching... and the spiritual development of children, it is easy to tip straight into accountability and getting caught up with that'. Nevertheless, this headteacher was keen to emphasise:

'we have to have high expectations of our staff in terms of what they are delivering' and then ask them to go the extra mile and spend time with children' when they have other demands on them such as marking books'.

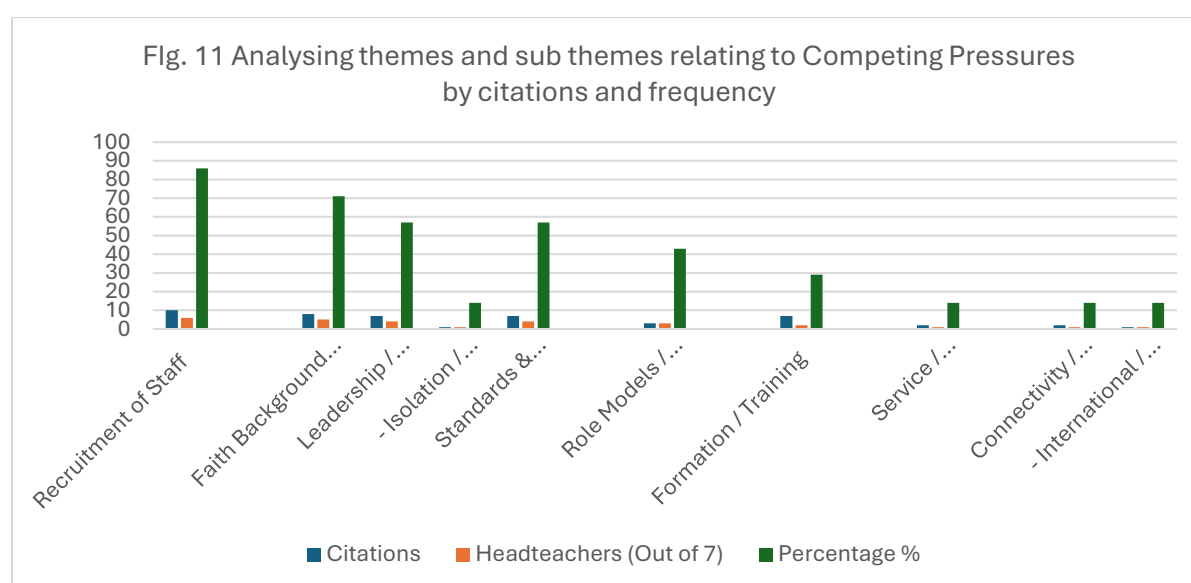
Headteacher 1 argued that it was not sufficient for staff to be nice and warm but 'not au fait with accountability' at the same time stating that 'dioceses identify success along Ofsted criteria' and that the 'dominant meta narrative is valuing what can be assessed'. Headteacher 5 emphasised 'we have high expectations of our staff'. There was the recognition that 'staff needed to put in 110% to find success'. Headteacher 2 reinforced the need for 'dedication to the pupils we have in front of us'.

#### 5 Role Models

Headteacher 7 remarked that 'having members of a religious congregation in the school, absolutely assists this (ensuring the school climate secures opportunities for

young people in the practice of faith). They go further in emphasising ‘without this (presence of religious) it would be a greater challenge’.

There is recognition, from a number of headteachers, of how difficult managing this connectedness and role modelling can be in regard to the stability of the local Salesian community. They are conscious that Salesians, with whom they have built a strong working relationship, can move on to other community locations or retire.



## 6 Formation / Training

In referencing the importance of specifically Salesian formation, headteacher 1 stated that ‘it should focus on the short term at the top but needs to go beyond the headteacher’. Leadership teams must be involved in delivering ‘intelligent and intense Salesian formation’. They continued to add that the goal is to form ‘intelligent Catholic teachers who have a shared Salesian mindset’.

Headteacher 4 stated that ‘Salesian induction is key,’ alongside regular in-service training. The challenge for headteacher 5 lies in ‘maintaining our focus on ethos in the short term’. Headteacher 6 observed that ‘we cannot assume new staff understand

the ethos of the school. We incorporate training in Salesian ethos and understanding into staff training' emphasising 'this needs to be taught to new staff members'. The same headteacher, having stated that pupils had a deficit in regard to their understanding of their faith and do not attend Mass, made the interesting observation that 'they experience church through their experience of school'.

## 7 Serving the disadvantaged

Headteacher 1 was keen to establish whether the option for the poor' was expected to be 'a key strand' of the Salesian charism within the school. They also suggested a closer monitoring of vulnerable groups such as poor youth and asylum seekers asking 'What are the obstacles to young people in these contexts? What is the mismatch between faith and culture?'

With regard to service and disadvantage headteacher 4 stressed that:

'The charism states you are here to serve, to listen to people, to show people respect'.

They further asserted:

'service to young people, families, the wider community is the basis of the school's approach to ethos'.

This can bring into focus an area where staff are asked to demonstrate great sensitivity between recognising and supporting those who are in need, in the first instance, while showing everyone the respect which is their due. Linking this closely with the ethos of the school is a powerful statement of intent.

## 8 Connectivity

As well as the desire for making formation available to staff, Headteacher 2 identified a need for connection stating that 'anything that helps people stay connected' is important as staff need to feel part of a bigger thing'. Headteacher 6 stated 'I am confident about the identity of the school being maintained going forward. There are key people who belong to the community who work in the school and know the locality, including Salesians. According to the headteacher a 'disconnect will not happen' if this linkage is maintained.

### 9.10.3 Discussion

Despite headteachers focusing on the need to recruit the best teachers and leaders to maintain the Salesian charism, it is clear that the majority are still preoccupied by the school improvement agenda with the concomitant threat of imminent inspection.

The debate around the impact of competing pressures on the ability of Catholic headteachers to effectively manage schools, has been ongoing. The school improvement agenda has been a prominent feature of the concerns raised by a number of bodies nationally in the UK with regard to how it impacts the ability of headteachers to effectively manage the day to day stresses of their role.

Nevertheless, despite the emphasis placed on the impact of monitoring standards and dealing with inspections, this only featured joint third in the concerns raised by headteachers, after recruitment and the faith background of teachers and pupils. Nevertheless, this does not mean that this issue does not feature prominently among the concerns raised by headteachers, having been cited by more than half of them. We will address this in due course. Staff recruitment, prevailing faith background and

leadership challenges, some of which may relate to recruitment, were cited more often by headteachers as competing pressures. The issue of staff recruitment is clearly multi-faceted.

### 9.11 Priorities identified by Headteachers

In the final section of this chapter, headteacher responses to the first question of the interview, *What are your priorities in school?*, will be analysed. Since this question was not assigned to any of the four themes arising from the research question, it is worth spending some time considering what the headteachers identified as their current priorities.

At the beginning of this chapter, the totalled responses of the headteachers to each question, in relation to identified themes and sub themes, was analysed. This subsequent analysis of priorities (see table 7) allows for the further distillation of the areas identified by headteachers in answer to question 1. It will come as no surprise to find a significant number of overlapping themes and sub themes when comparing this analysis with that carried out at the beginning of the chapter. Where this is the case, it is a useful triangulation of what headteachers have said in answering questions 2 to 9 in their interviews.

#### 9.11.1 Findings (Q1)

	<b>Sub Themes / Nodes</b>	<b>Citations</b>	<b>Headteachers (Out of 7)</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
1	Charism / Ethos	20	6	86
2	Standards	12	6	86

3	Culture / Catholic Practice	12	6	86
4	Recruitment (Staff)	6	4	57
5	Recruitment (Pupils)	3	3	43
6	Formation / Training	3	3	43
7	Role Models / Witness	3	1	14

Table 7 Analysis of themes and sub themes relating to priorities identified by headteachers by citations and frequency

## 9.12 Analysis

### 1 Charism / Ethos

In speaking of charism headteacher 1 stated 'As a school we would share standard priorities with other schools' for example 'recruitment of students and driving standards up'. They asserted the importance of keeping individual uniqueness 'upfront, that is, not losing the individual'. They also cited the importance of 'Interrupting school operations to let the light in i.e. the transcendent', for example, 'writing a behaviour policy allowing both parties to retain their dignity'. In addition they stressed that 'evangelising is a role for Roman Catholic schools to carry out - staff to witness'.

Headteacher 2 stressed the importance of 'buy in to the Salesian way' and emphasised the need for consistency, especially regarding leadership. 'Get them to understand our way of doing things. Making sure there is consistency in their experience'. They also commented on the 'happy lives to be led afterwards'.

Headteacher 3 focused on the need for vigilance to

'ensure the ethos and academic achievement are preserved and monitored. A small caring and loving school is our selling point. Parents have bought into the ethos but also into academic achievement'.



They also spoke of management responsibility as 'being there for the good of the staff since they affect this on the children'. In response to the rhetorical question how this can be accomplished, they emphasised the following:

'Listening to them. Leading them in prayer. Staff meetings set the tone of expectation. Walk, eat, go on trips with staff. Be there to laugh and to cry with them'.

Headteacher 4 stressed the importance of

'ensuring the Catholic ethos remains strong. We have lots of strategies, including school interventions and all that but if you have not got the ethos right...Somebody said ethos eats strategy for breakfast. I totally agree with that. Get that (ethos) in place and other things will fall into place'.

They went on to emphasise

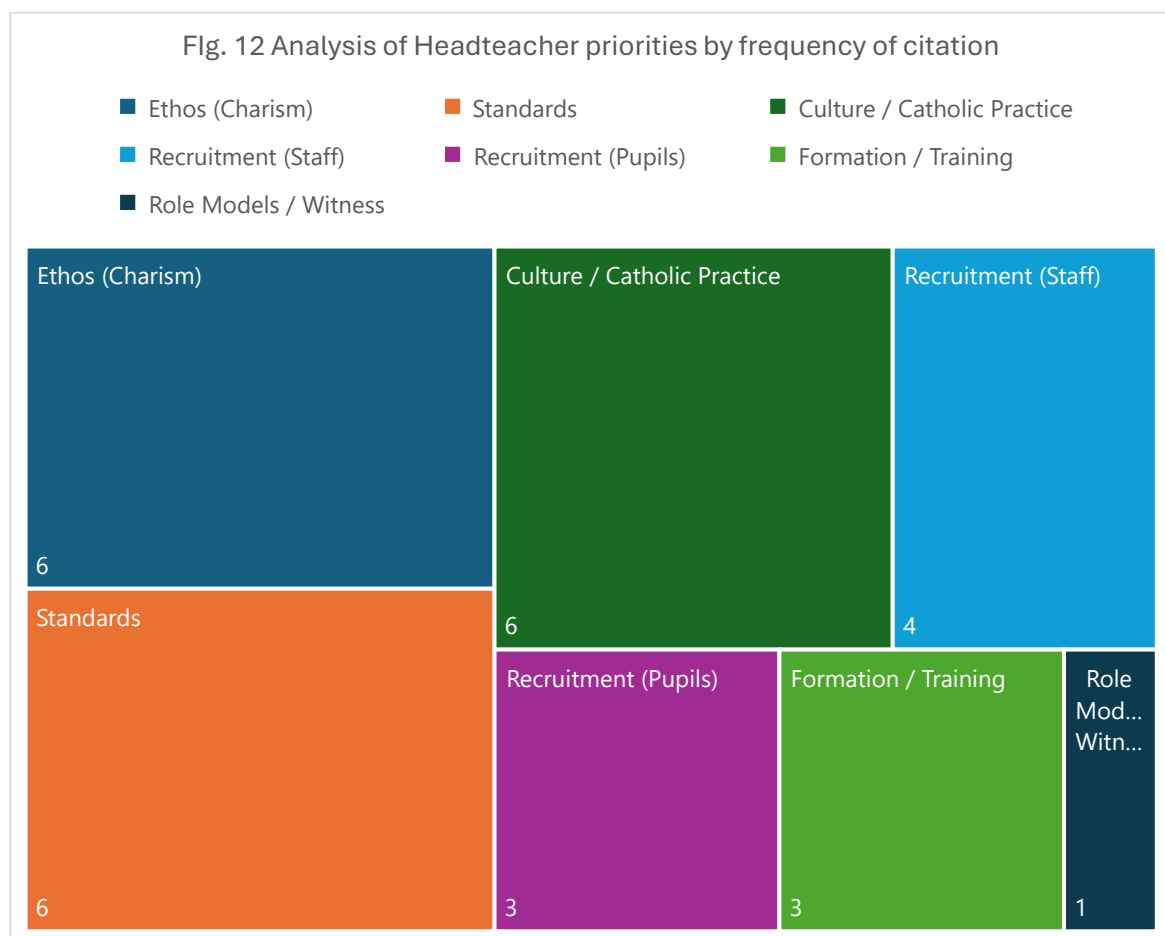
'Just making sure young people have those keys for success, that passport to success. And in some areas, less affluent areas potentially, that is more and more important. Even more important that we are supporting young people to the next stages in their educational careers'.

In seeking to achieve this they stated, 'we try to ensure that the preventive system is in place, its alive and kicking so that we are ahead of the game so to speak.'

This is clear and unequivocal confirmation, from this headteacher, of the essential role the charism and ethos of the school plays in motivating pupils to achieve while, at the same time, seeking to ensure their personal wellbeing. This understanding follows the extensive discussion of the Preventive System of Education, inspired by St. John Bosco, in the literature review which emphasises the central place it holds in implementing the Salesian charism of education. Headteacher 5 stated the 'key priorities are firstly our mission and ethos, which need to drive everything that we do. And obviously learning and teaching; that is our core business'.

They went on to add:

‘Qualifications will not lead to any deep and meaningful success in life unless they have developed their character and their spirituality because they are not a set of exam results and they are not a job but are human beings and so our responsibility to develop them as human beings has got to sit with equal weighting to getting a maths and English GCSE.’



Headteacher 6 expressed the view that ‘we cannot assume new staff understand the ethos of the school. This needs to be taught to new staff members. They continued ‘we incorporate training on Salesian ethos and understanding into staff training. This cannot be left simply to the Salesian brothers or priests who are present.’

Headteacher 7 focused on the 'safety and wellbeing of children'. They were keen to stress that:

'We seek to provide pupils with the best possible opportunities e.g., visiting other schools..., giving them theatre visits and trips. The overwhelming message is one of buying into the ethos.'

They further emphasised that 'ethos is putting the kids first'. This statement further stresses the linkage between the charism / ethos of the Salesian school and successful attainment alongside maintaining personal well-being. Successive headteacher comments have emphasised that, while there may be a possible tension, at times, in holding these two aspects together, that is, expectation of achievement and personal wellbeing, this can be regarded as a creative tension.

## 2 Standards

Headteacher 5 asserted that 'our overall responsibility is to make sure that young people leave our school, at either 16 or 18, with the qualifications that they need to be successful'. And added 'learning and teaching. That is our core business.'

Headteacher 1 emphasise the importance of 'establishing a lifelong passion for learning'. This perspective is broadly supported by headteacher 4 who stated

'I suppose with all schools making sure that the outcomes are strong is important as well. Just making sure young people have those keys for success that passport to success.'

They continued that it is

'even more important that we are supporting young people to the next stages in their educational careers. Making sure that we are stretching them and challenging them as much as we possibly can'.

Headteacher 2 emphasised the importance of ‘making sure there is a consistency in their (pupils’) experience.’ They were of the view that ‘certain things need to be happening day to day, including the best quality teaching’. This was part of ensuring ‘that everything is rigorous’. They emphasised the importance of ‘rigour and consistency’ and ‘expertise in what you do or the ability to develop it’. They were very clear that the ‘children’s deal is the priority’.

This sentiment was echoed by headteacher 7 who emphasised that

‘our aim is to give the children the best possible start to ensure their progress. We need to support children with resilience. There are great challenges financially, social media and casual violence. The school has a great reputation for dealing with challenging children. We would still be failing them if we were not giving them the best teaching and learning’; the ‘best possible deal’.

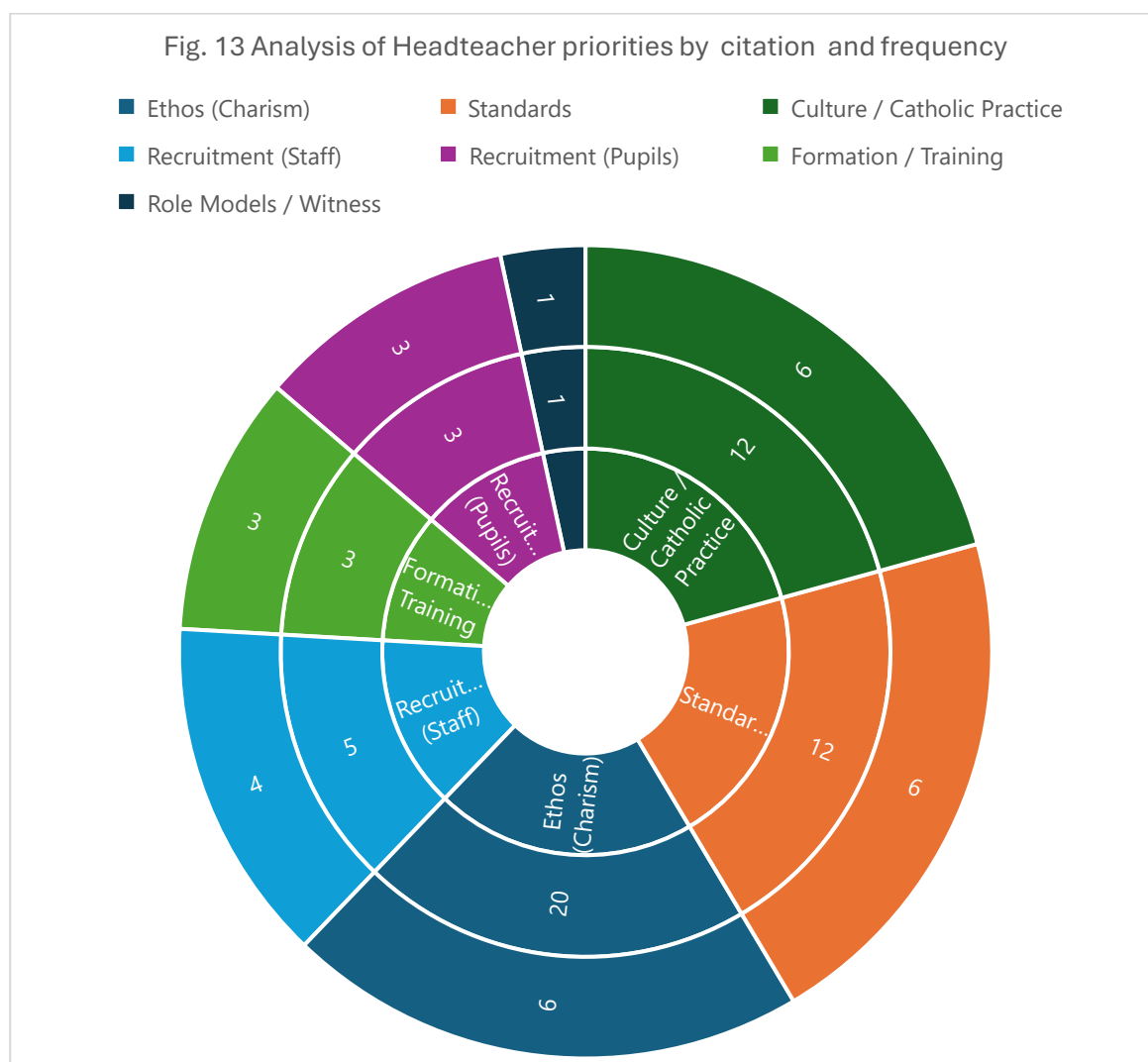
### 3 Culture / Catholic Practice

Headteacher 2 reflected that ‘the bottom line is happy children. This leads on to long-term happiness. Making sure there is consistency in their experience’, with staff who are ‘prepared to work their socks off for the kids’. This finds an echo in headteacher 5 who states:

‘equally if we want staff in our school to live our mission then the way that we approach teaching, the way we frame learning in our school has got to be done through the language of that mission and the language of that ethos’

For headteacher 3 ‘staff meetings set the tone of expectation’. They go on to state the headteacher’s ‘priority is to be teacher of the staffroom’, by ‘listening to them’, and being there to ‘laugh and cry with them’. Headteacher 4 identified a different priority in commenting

‘we need to ensure all of our young people are safe. It is important that we do everything in our power to ensure that this happens. Its making sure we are there to catch them when they fall and helping them.’



For Headteacher 7, safety was also important but they wanted to assert that ‘the overwhelming message is one of buying into the ethos. The ethos is putting the kids first’ and added ‘the school has a great reputation for dealing with challenging children.’

With regard to Catholic practice, Headteacher 1 emphasised that ‘faith based ethos is around encounter; it is not cerebral’ and lamented ‘there are less Catholics with the

relevant formation'. Headteacher 2 picked up on this stating that the 'main thing is societal change; and there is a 'lack of community and order compared with the 50s' when, they pointed out, 'religious affiliation was the norm in terms of participation' and the school was '99% Catholic, as in (pupils) baptised'. They contrasted this with the present recognising 'there is variation of (religious) practice among families'. They continued this theme in stating:

'People confuse Roman Catholic education as the place where teachers are nice and get results. School is much more on its own in terms of inculcating faith. This is the biggest challenge.'

This theme is also developed by headteacher 3, who reflected on their own experience of coming from a Catholic community and being educated in a Catholic school. 'There were norms of expectation in the family and in the school. Masses, prayers etc. were expected'. In contrast they recognised today that the faith community, outside of the school environment, is very different to that found within the school. Nevertheless they see an upside to this.

'Those who have chosen this school have accepted that there is a (Religious) ethos. Most staff or parents do not see this as an issue.'

They went on to state 'maintaining a rooted spirituality when some see it as a distraction to learning' may be more of a challenge.

Headteacher 4 referenced a particular way of approaching this and stated

'One thing we need to ensure is that the home, school, church relationship is really important. Also having the playground within that. And also making sure there is time and opportunity for the children to let their hair down.'

#### 4 Recruitment (Staff)

Headteacher 1 suggested the 'recruitment and formation of staff' was a priority'. This was echoed by headteacher 3 who emphasised that 'retaining quality staff' is key, a sentiment repeated by headteacher 6. This perspective is broadly supported by headteacher 2 who was of the opinion, 'get the right people here. Get them to understand our way of doing things'. They also set a standard in looking to recruit staff who are 'energetic and enthusiastic', who 'genuinely love children'. Headteacher 3 spoke specifically about the 'recruitment and retention of staff and students'. They also referred to the 'pressure of recruitment when there is competition' stressing 'retaining quality staff is a key'. On the level of recruiting leaders, headteacher 1 observed that there were 'Less people interested in being heads' leading potentially to a 'leadership crisis in certain areas.'

#### 5 Recruitment (Pupils)

With regard to the recruitment of pupils headteacher 5 referenced a multitude of challenges.

'This first of those is around the percentage of practicing Catholics that are within our school both on the staff and the student body. If we want people to buy into our faith based (ethos), that is completely alien to them, then we can't make assumptions and I think we have to build ethos in.'

Headteacher 3 emphasised the importance of 'ensuring recruitment of students year on year' a sentiment echoed by headteacher 4 who spoke of 'making sure attendance is as full as it can be', and headteacher 6 who emphasised the importance of 'maintaining pupil numbers'.

## 6 Formation / Training

Headteacher 1 highlighted the importance for the 'recruitment and formation of staff'. They also highlighted 'provision, quality and training of chaplains' as being of a high priority. Headteacher 5 spoke of the importance of 'ensuring both of those priorities (Ethos and Teaching and Learning) driven through really robust staff development'. They express the view that 'you can't expect the staff to understand your mission or your ethos, if you are not giving them really good coaching that is completely immersed in that (ethos)'. On a different note headteacher 4 was keen to stress that 'it's making sure we are there to catch them (staff) when they fall and helping them.'

## 7 Role Models

In setting priorities and standards, headteacher 1 was of the view that 'providing role models is essentially important' as well as 'seeking courage' when one is under 'constant pressures'. Headteacher 7 stated 'the overwhelming message is one of buying into the ethos'. Headteacher 2 saw this form of buying into 'the Salesian way' as essential in guaranteeing consistency of delivery. As well as bringing the right staff in, they emphasised the need to 'get them to understand our way of doing things, making sure there is consistency in their experience'.

These final two points are of significant importance because they touch on the need for consistency in recruitment and in the application of the ethos of the school. This has a bearing on the leadership of the school being consistent in their approach and 'walking the walk' as it were. Role models may be of significant value in demonstrating



how the charism can be implemented on a day to day basis. This however needs to be supported by consistent support for and the application of the principles set out in the ethos, by the leadership of the school.

### 9.13 Discussion

In table 6 it can be seen that virtually every headteacher identified maintaining the charism / ethos, culture and Catholic practice of the school as their highest priorities. Alongside these priorities, others such as maintaining standards and recruitment of both pupils and staff featured next highest. These were closely followed by the need for staff formation in the Salesian charism and the provision or development of role models.

In many ways these priorities are related (indeed some headteachers saw a direct correlation between them) since they are required both for maintaining standards and reinforcing values across the school. Headteacher 7 expressed this in identifying a number of standards that were core to the successful operation of the school alongside maintaining its ethos:

‘Ensuring attendance is at its maximum. Ensuring safety. Ensuring the Roman Catholic ethos remains strong. Making sure outcomes are strong. Ensuring young people have the passports for success. Ensuring the preventive system is in place.’

The fact that recruitment of pupils and staff featured prominently for the majority of headteachers interviewed, is significant. This would appear to be tacit recognition of the need to maintain the funding of the school at an acceptable level, alongside seeking to recruit and retain quality staff who will imbibe and model the ethos. At the

same time teachers are expected to deliver effective teaching and learning that allows pupils to make desired progress. As described formation and training and the need for effective role models are also identified as priorities for headteachers .

All of these have already been identified as playing an important role in addressing the four themes highlighted in the research question which are concerned with maintaining the charism / ethos, providing Salesian accompaniment, promoting collaboration and addressing competing pressures.

#### 9.14 Conclusion

It is clear that, in identifying the priorities facing their schools, headteachers view maintaining standards as well as ensuring pupil numbers are maintained, alongside recruiting and retaining the best staff, as key to maintaining a successful school. They are strong in asserting that children deserve the best possible deal and are very aware that they are entrusted with providing young people with the tools for developing their future careers and lives. They see this happening through setting high standards, through being rigorous and consistent in terms of setting expectations and by providing the best possible teaching and learning.

Recruiting and retaining the best staff is seen as important for being able to set and maintain consistent standards, especially in the field of teaching and learning but also in establishing and maintaining a school culture which sets expectations in terms of performance but also in terms of the development and maintenance of the ethos of the school.

For this to happen, headteachers are clear about the importance of systematic formation for staff, especially in understanding the ethos and how it is implemented, together with being able to promote good role models. The strategy of promoting respect, understanding, affection and humour (RUAH), as a Salesian shorthand, can assist in forming staff in the Salesian style of education. Promoting a deeper understanding of the preventive system, a term which has come to encapsulate the principles St. John Bosco set out, is seen as important in understanding what a school has in place to promote this model of education. Staff recruitment, alongside inculcating faith, were viewed as the greatest challenges they face.

The references above to the need for formation / training, alongside the importance of modelling and a sense of connectedness, resonates with the understanding that Salesian schools are part of an educational network that spans the world providing education from primary, through secondary and up to tertiary levels, from street children to university graduates. Some of the Salesian schools in the UK maintain active links with Salesian schools in different continents, through fundraising to provide educational support, which is then delivered, in some instances, by the students from school to school; some of these students go on to become international volunteers in Salesian projects in destinations such as India and Africa.

These statements and observations highlight some of the competing pressures that headteachers in Salesian and Catholic schools have to address. From one point of view they are tasked with implementing and maintaining the charism of the school, which is rooted in the values of the gospel, while they are also required to maintain academic standards for pupils which are largely measured by the algorithms assessing progress.

There is no doubt that managing the balance between the distinctive demands of the school improvement agenda, alongside maintaining the values inherent in seeking to maintain the charism of the school, requires great skill and no little dedication. Having said this there are headteachers who relish such a challenge.

Headteacher 4 started that 'I am delighted to be the headteacher of a Salesian Catholic school. Love the job!' This statement suggests that, despite the considerable pressures of the role, headteachers are prepared to step up and embrace the challenge. This sentiment will be further explored in the analysis of the teacher questionnaires which follows. In this regard, the themes identified in the analysis of the findings of the semi-structured interviews, will inform the construction of the questionnaires which will be discussed in the chapter that follows.

## **Chapter 10**

### **INSTRUMENTS of MEASUREMENT (2) – TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRES**

#### **10.1 Introduction**

Having, through thematic analysis (TA), classified the data provided by semi-structured interviews conducted with headteachers, the next step was to follow up this analysis with the construction of a questionnaire targeted at teachers currently working in Salesian schools. This was aimed at further exploring themes which were a focus of the research question as well as those which arose from the responses provided by headteachers in the semi-structured interviews.

##### **10.1.1 Instrument of Measurement - Questionnaires**

The questions used in the questionnaire to staff were drawn from the analysis of the in depth semi-structured interviews with headteachers. They featured statements closely related to those which were asked of headteachers, such as their understanding of the Salesian charism and its implementation in the school they work in, but also included operational statements regarding their role and its significance in influencing or developing the ethos of the school.

The outcomes of the thematic analysis of in-depth interviews were also used to inform the statements used in the questionnaire for example, if a particular theme, assertion or desire was expressed by the headteacher regarding the implementation of the Salesian charism in the school, an attempt was made to test this in the questionnaire. This was also part of the triangulation process, discussed earlier, whereby assertions

made by headteachers in interviews could, to some extent, be checked with well thought-out statements, located in the survey.

Statements were considered at length and discussed with a critical friend in order to ascertain which of them might elicit the sort of information required to inform this study. In seeking to ensure consistency, the same statements, once they were agreed, were used in the questionnaires distributed to each school. This meant that all semi structured interviews took place before a questionnaire was derived and distributed.

#### 10.1.2 Construction of the questionnaire

Questionnaires were constructed online using services with appropriate security and ethical codes. Staff members were able to remain anonymous as they completed the questionnaire. Each question invited participants to answer on a Likert style scale with four answers: strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree, available to participants. The reason a fifth answer such as neutral or undecided was not added was the concern that this might become a default answer for staff completing the survey under a time pressure.

The questionnaire was made up of Likert-style questions because they allowed participants to choose one out of four answers to each question. The questions arose from the research question and from specific topics which were identified in the thematic analysis of data from the semi-structured interviews. For example, the sentiments expressed by headteachers, in their semi-structured interviews, were probed further in the Likert style questionnaire to staff. This offered an opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge, commitment and awareness of the significance of their

role in implementing the Salesian charismatic identity of the school and developing its Christian, Catholic and Salesian charism.

Each survey, when completed, was ascribed a reference number and analysed. Each of the Likert style questions was reviewed to compute the percentage of replies which combined the 'strongly agree' and 'agree' answers with the 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree' answers, using a quantitative approach. The questionnaire statements, divided into five sections, are detailed below

### 10.1.3 The Teacher Questionnaire

The statements in the questionnaire were arranged in four groups in order to explore the four themes which emerged from the literature search namely: Charism, Accompaniment, Collaboration and Pressures. Just as each of these areas were relevant to the role of a headteacher in seeking to lead a school according to the Salesian charism of St. John Bosco, they were also relevant to the staff who were effectively in the vanguard of implementing charism and ethos while, concurrently, being held accountable for the quality of teaching and learning, pupil progress, pupil welfare and maintaining discipline.

There were five statements covering each of the four areas outlined previously to which teachers were able to reply using a range of answers. While these statements were not necessarily sub themes, they were seeking to explore perspectives on the area of implementing and nurturing the Salesian charism.

#### 10.1.4 The Questionnaire Statements

##### A. Charism (Salesian Charism and Ethos)

1. I understand Don Bosco's message that the young must know that they are loved is practised on a daily basis in this school.
2. Young people in need are a focus for this school.
3. The school invests resources in ensuring young people feel supported in their work.
- 4 In this school staff often 'go the extra mile' in terms of engaging students and keeping them on board.
5. In this school it would be easy for students to name a teacher they admire.

##### B. Accompaniment (Spirituality of Accompaniment)

- 1 As a staff member I fully realise the importance of the Salesian style of accompanying young people.
2. I understand the key components of Salesian education (school, playground, home and church) and how they work together.
- 3 Students in this school know that they receive respect, understanding and acceptance from staff on a daily basis.
- 4 Collective worship (Mass, Sacrament of Reconciliation, Assemblies) features prominently in the life of the school.
5. Spiritual development is a key concern of the leadership of the school.

##### C. Collaboration (Collaborative Ministry)

1. I am aware of the presence of Salesian priests, Brothers or Sisters around the school.
2. Formation in Salesian values forms a part of the school's continuing professional development programme.
3. The leadership team model what it means to be a Salesian educator.
4. Staff feel part of a Salesian community marked by inclusion.
5. Maintaining the Salesian education vision is a key priority for the school.



#### D. Pressures (Competing Pressures)

- 1 In this school students are encouraged to participate in extra curricular activity.
- 2 Academic excellence is the number one priority at this school.
- 3 Concerns around external inspection are at the forefront in the lives of teachers and students.
- 4 Extra-curricular activities at this school help students to grow as persons.
- 5 Performance management for teachers focuses predominantly on academic outcomes.

#### 10.1.5 Analysis

In analysing the outcomes, the overall results for the 237 respondents across the six different Salesian schools in England, will be considered initially. Following this, the results for each of the schools individually, across the 20 statements in the questionnaire, will be discussed. Finally, how the responses of each school, across the four themes (Charism, Accompaniment, Collaboration and Pressures), have reflected the views of the respondents, that is the teachers including senior teachers, and how these views may influence how effectively the implementation of the charism impacts the mission of the school, will be considered.

## 10.2 Teacher Questionnaire Analysis

### 10.2.1 Analysis of the responses from All schools

An initial analysis of the total number of questionnaire responses from teachers in all Salesian schools is considered below. After setting out the response to each question, some possible points of note were identified which, for example, may relate to themes which emerged in the analysis of headteacher interviews. These will be discussed in depth in Chapter 11, which will focus on the interpretation of results.

In conducting this analysis the totals listed were considered in the table 1 for agree and strongly agree responses, before considering the breakdown of the responses to each question. Following this, possible trends that emerged were focused on.

Table 1 summarises the responses for the four themes identified in the literature search: Charism, Accompaniment, Collaboration and Pressures. After presenting table 1 we will consider the data for each of the four areas in turn using tables 2 to 5.

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Agree/ Strongly Agree
<b>A Charism / Ethos</b>	%	%	%	%	%
1. I understand Don Bosco's message that the young must know that they are loved is practised on a daily basis in this school	0	1	22	77	99
2. Young people in need are a focus for this school	1	1	33	65	98
3. The school invests resources in ensuring young people feel supported in their work	0	4	43	53	96
4 In this school staff often go 'the extra mile' in terms of engaging students and keeping them on board	0	1	15	84	99
5 In this school it would be easy for students to name a teacher they admire	0	1	23	76	99

<b>B Accompaniment</b>					
6. As a staff member I fully realise the importance of the Salesian style of accompanying young people	0	1	20	79	99
7. I understand the key components of Salesian education (school, playground, home and church) and how they work together	0	1	28	71	99
8. Students in this school know that they receive respect, understanding and acceptance from staff on a daily basis	0	1	36	63	99
9 Collective worship (Mass, Sacrament of Reconciliation, Assemblies) features prominently in the life of the school.	0	4	28	68	96
10. Spiritual development is a key concern of the leadership of the school	0	8	46	46	92
<b>C Collaboration</b>					
11. I am aware of the presence of Salesian priests, Brothers or Sisters around the school	0	1	20	79	99
12. Formation in Salesian values forms a part of the school's continuing professional development programme	1	7	46	46	92
13. The leadership team model what it means to be a Salesian educator	0	8	45	47	92
14. Staff feel part of a Salesian community marked by inclusion	0	8	41	51	92
15. Maintaining the Salesian education vision is a key priority for the school	0	1	36	63	99
<b>D Competing Pressures</b>					
16. In this school students are encouraged to participate in extra curricular activity	1	3	33	64	97
17. Academic excellence is the number one priority at this school	1	23	43	33	76
18. Concerns around external inspection are at the forefront in the lives of teachers and students	4	39	34	23	57
19. Extra-curricular activities at this school help students to grow as persons	0	3	33	64	97
20. Performance management for teachers focuses predominantly on academic outcomes.	4	27	45	24	69

Table 1 The results of the questionnaire to teachers summated for all schools (Source JISC Survey of the responses of all teachers)

## A. Charism

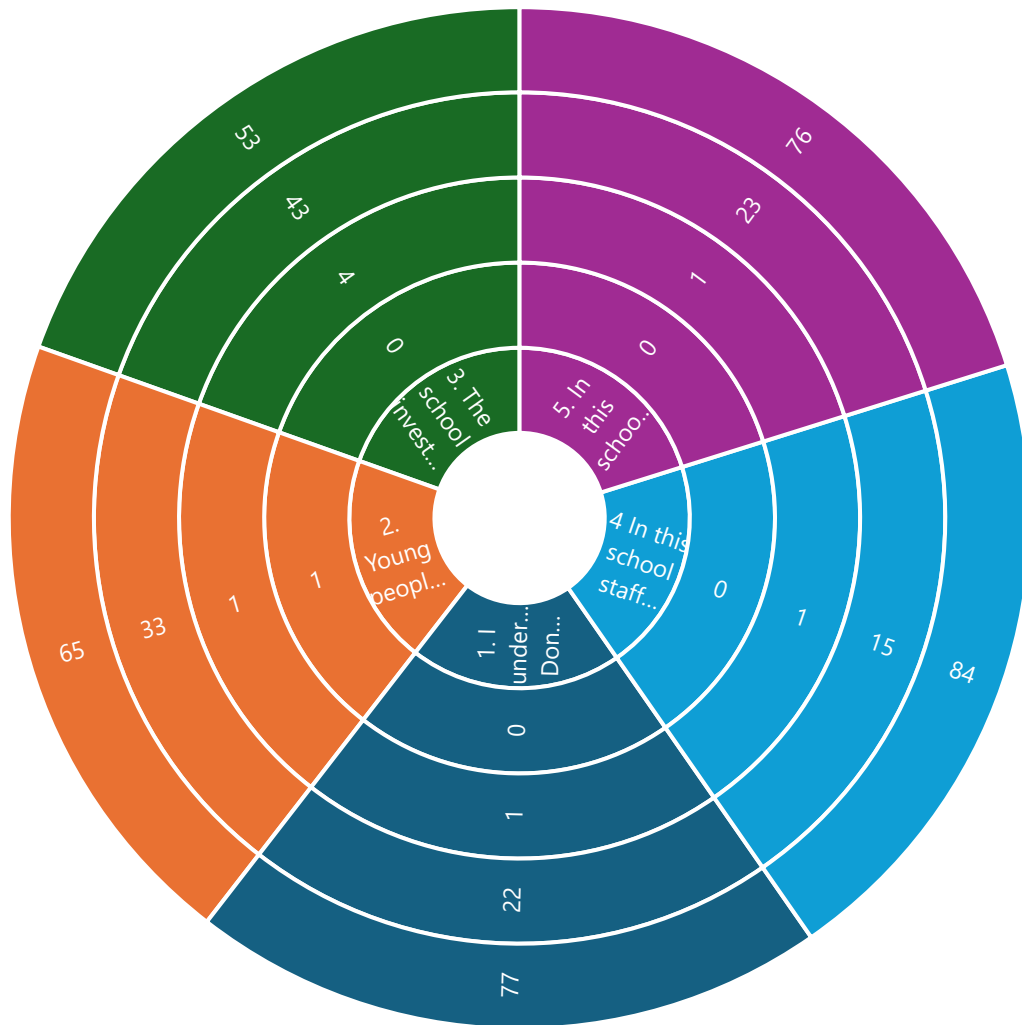
Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Agree & Strongly Agree
	%	%	%	%	%
1. I understand Don Bosco's message that the young must know that they are loved is practised on a daily basis in this school	0	1	22	77	99
2. Young people in need are a focus for this school	1	1	33	65	98
3. The school invests resources in ensuring young people feel supported in their work	0	4	43	53	96
4 In this school staff often 'go the extra mile' in terms of engaging students and keeping them on board	0	1	15	84	99
5. In this school it would be easy for students to name a teacher they admire	0	1	23	76	99

Table 2 Analysis of teacher responses from all schools regarding statements related to Charism

## Analysis

The first point to note is that between 90% and 100% of respondents across all schools with a Salesian charism in England, agreed and strongly agreed to statements 1 to 5, in the section of the questionnaire addressing the Salesian charism. For statement 1, *understanding Don Bosco's message that the young must know that they are loved*, almost eight out of ten (77%) of respondents strongly agreed with a further 22% agreed. Only 1% expressed disagreement leaving the overall agreement across all schools with a Salesian character as virtually unanimous.

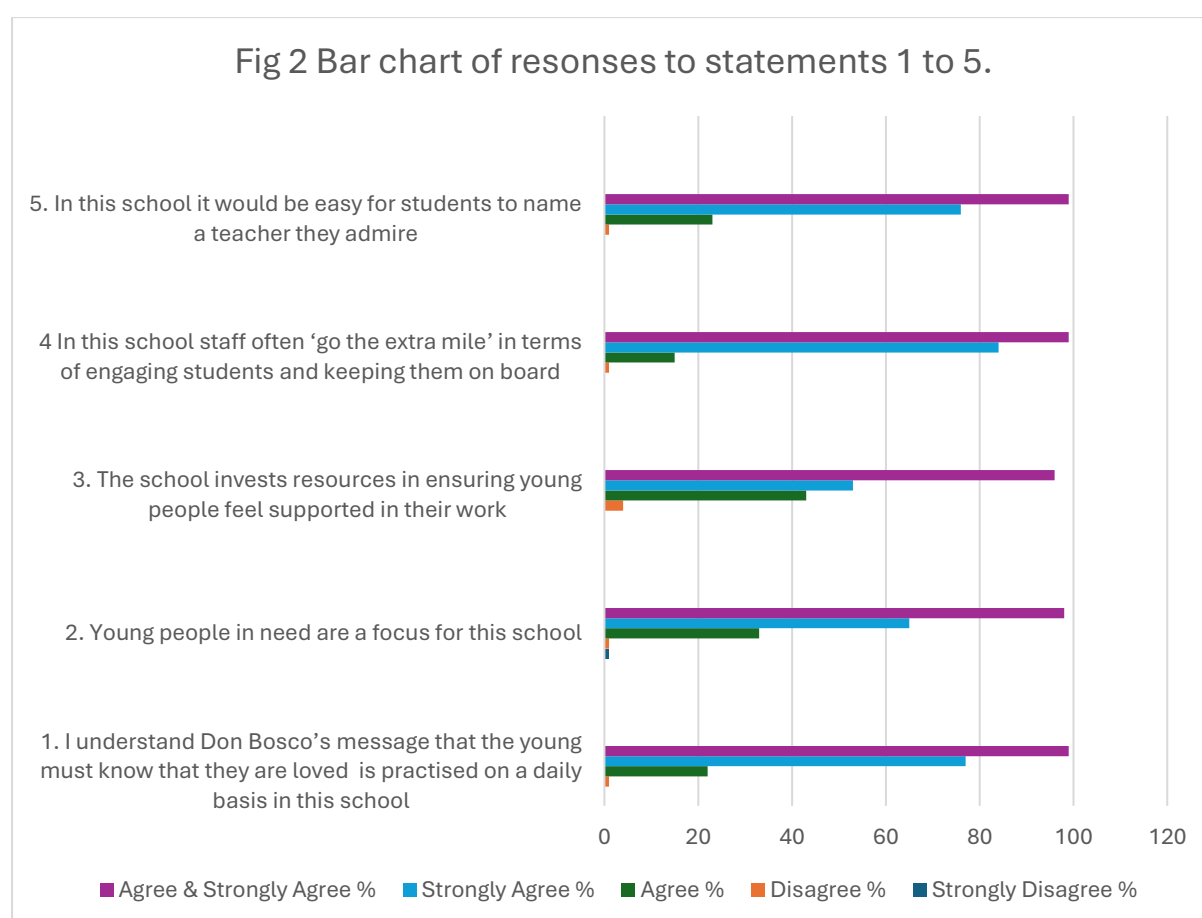
Fig. 1 Pie chart of responses to statements 1 to 5 ranging from strongly disagree (innermost circle) to strongly agree (outermost circle).



There was a slightly lower level of strong support for statements 2, *young people in need are a focus for the school* and 3, *the school invests resources in ensuring young people feel supported*; for statement 2 65%% of respondents strongly agreed with 33% agreed (which aggregates to 98% overall agreement) while for statement 3 53% strongly agreed with 43% agreeing (96% agreeing overall). More than eight out of ten (84%) respondents strongly agreed with statement 4, that *staff go the extra mile* for pupils. With a further 15% agreed, this made overall agreement virtually

unanimous at 99%. Likewise, support for statement 5, *it would be easy for young people to name a teacher they admire*, although it was slightly lower with three quarters (76%) of respondents strongly agreed with a further 24% agreed, overall aggregated support was virtually unanimous.

The fact that strong agreement with statements 2, *young people in need are a focus for this school* and statement 3, *the school invests resources in ensuring young people feel supported in their work*, is between ten and twenty percent lower than the average for the other three statements relating to charisma, may be significant in terms of how teachers viewed the school's priorities and how it allocated its resources.



## Discussion

Statements 1 and 2, relating to understanding Don Bosco's message that the *young must know that they are loved* and the concomitant statement, that *young people in need are a focus for this school*, set the tone for a discussion of the understanding of how the Salesian charism is implemented. Statements 3 and 4, that *the school invests resources in supporting young people* with staff prepared to *go the 'extra mile'*, may provide testimony to the quality of the delivery of the charism. The final statement, relating to students naming a teacher they admire, was more closely linked to the outcomes of implementing the Salesian charism, such as the effectiveness of building relationships.

Nevertheless, strong agreement from eight out of ten respondents (84%) that school *staff often go the extra mile* (statement 4) indicates that teachers see themselves as being prepared to demonstrate more than average commitment to ensuring students can achieve their goals. A similar percentage of respondents (76%) strongly agreed that it would be *easy for students to name a teacher they admire*. This again suggests that teachers see themselves as responding to the needs of students. Both of these statements register very little disagreement resulting in virtually unanimous overall support.

A key indication of the commitment of a school to the implementation of its charism, may, to an extent, be determined by how it deploys its resources and the role staff play in the quality of their engagement with students.

## B. Accompaniment

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Agree/ Strongly Agree
	%	%	%	%	%
6. As a staff member I fully realise the importance of the Salesian style of accompanying young people	0	1	20	79	99
7. I understand the key components of Salesian education (school, playground, home and church) and how they work together	0	1	28	71	99
8. Students in this school know that they receive respect, understanding and acceptance from staff on a daily basis	0	1	36	63	99
9. Collective worship (Mass, Sacrament of Reconciliation, Assemblies) features prominently in the life of the school	0	4	28	68	96
10. Spiritual development is a key concern of the leadership of the school	0	8	46	46	92

Table 3 Analysis of teacher responses from all schools for statements relating to Accompaniment

### Analysis

The responses to statements 6 to 10 which relate to understanding Salesian Accompaniment demonstrated considerably more variation than statements 1 to 5, which may be indicative. Almost eight out of ten respondents strongly supported statement 6 that *staff fully realise the importance of the Salesian style of accompanying young people*. Only 1% disagreed with this statement, resulting in 99% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed. This is important in the context of a school claiming to implement a Salesian ethos because the statement speaks, to a



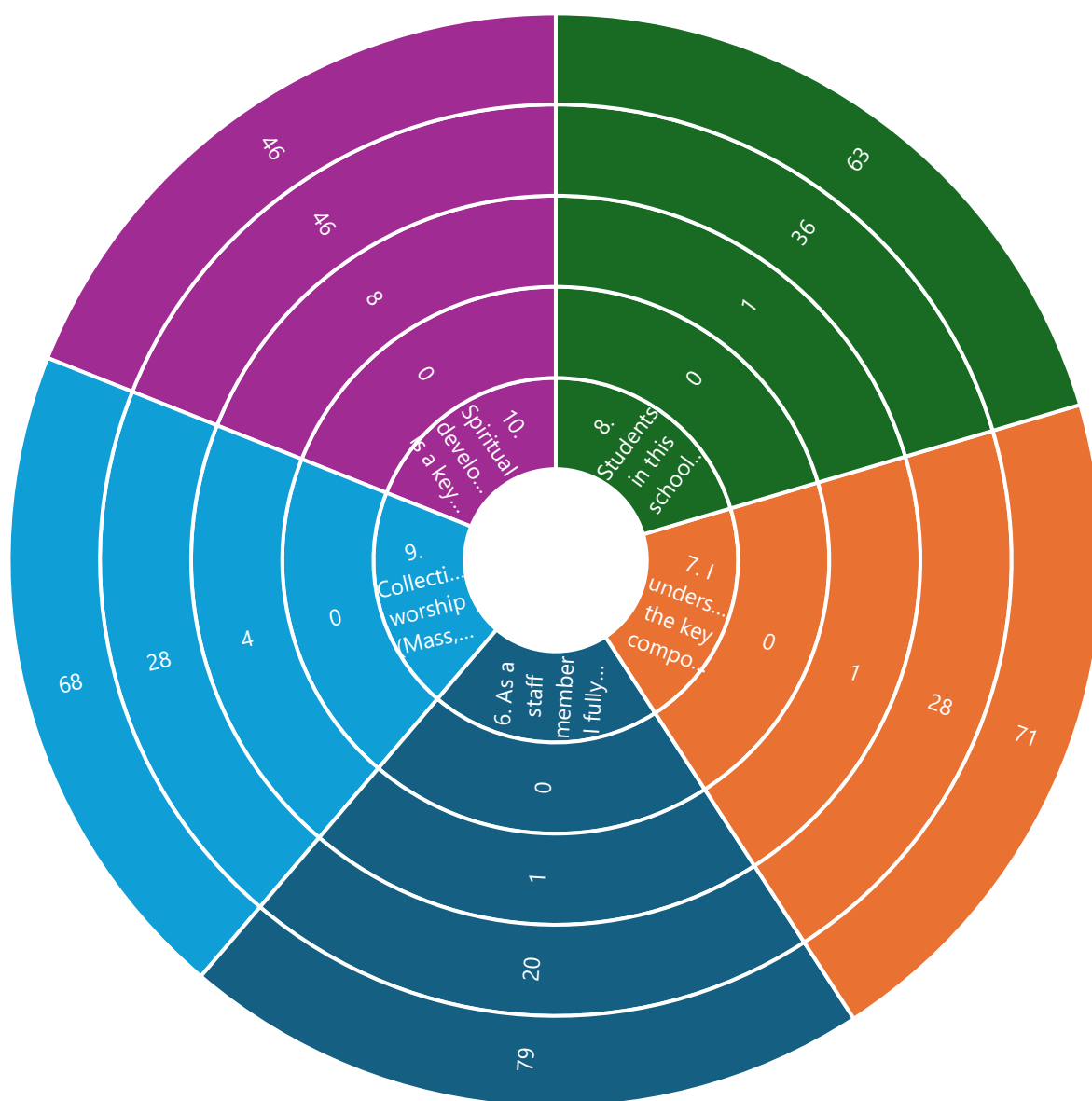
degree, of the clarity with which the staff understand how the charism can be implemented.

Around seven out of ten respondents strongly supported statement 7, *understanding key components of the Salesian charism* and statement 9, *collective worship features prominently in the life of the school*. Despite some low level disagreement with these statements (1% and 4% respectively) between 96% and 99% of respondents were in agreement when agreed and strongly agreed responses were summated.

This pattern is broadly reflective of the responses to statement 8, *students in the school know they receive respect, understanding and acceptance from staff on a daily basis*. Just over six out ten (63%) respondents strongly agreed with a further 34% agreed, meaning overall agreement is virtually unanimous at 99%.

There is a marked difference in the analysis of statement 10, *spiritual development is a key component of the leadership of the school*. Only 46% strongly agreed with this statement while 8% disagreed. While overall support remained above 90%, the level of disagreement, which was approaching one in ten respondents, may be regarded as significant.

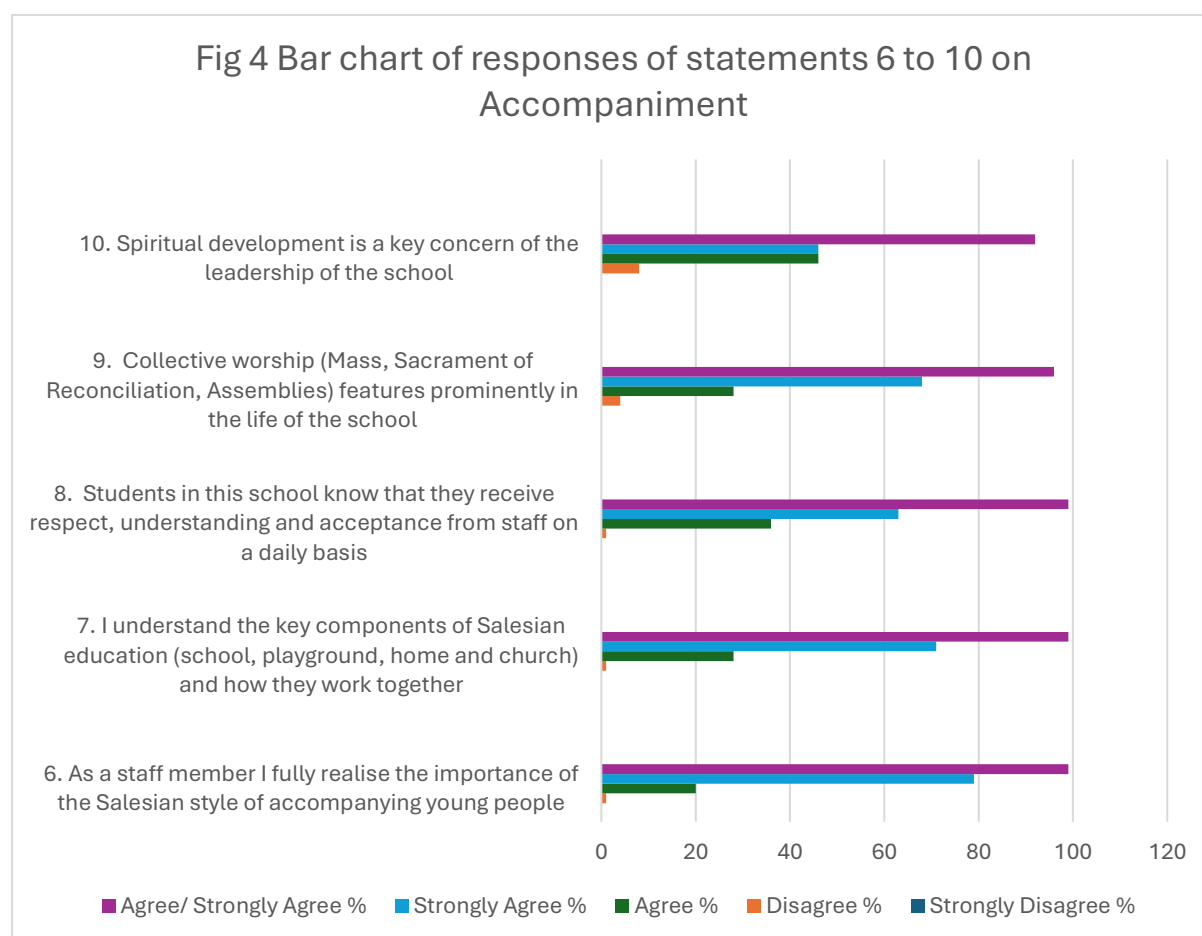
Fig 3 Pie chart of responses to statements 6 to 10 from strongly disagreed (inner most circle) to stronglay agreed (outerrmost circle).



## Discussion

The results set out above, ostensibly, were strongly supportive of the statements made regarding Accompaniment in Salesian schools, with the exception of statement 10, *spiritual development is a key component of the leadership of the school*. This recorded a significantly lower level of strong agreement (46%) and a significantly

higher level of disagreement (8%). It is worth noting that disagreement with the other statements is negligible, with the exception of *collective worship features prominently in the life of the school*; this registers 4% disagreement which approximately equates to 10 out of the 237 staff respondents who completed the questionnaire).



While acknowledging the strong overall support for statements 6 and 7, it is important to note the greater divergence of opinion in terms of strong agreement and disagreement with statements 8, 9 and 10. Strong support for statement 8 is lower while there is a level of disagreement with statements 9 and 10. This may suggest that both promoting collective worship and furthering spiritual development, were areas in which not all staff may be in agreement and where teachers may not always be in tune

with the leadership or vice versa. It could also point to these areas being challenging, for both leaders and staff, in terms of their implementation.

### C. Collaboration

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Agree/ Strongly Agree
	%	%	%	%	%
11. I am aware of the presence of Salesian priests, Brothers or Sisters around the school	0	1	20	79	99
12. Formation in Salesian values forms a part of the school's continuing professional development programme	1	7	46	46	92
13. The leadership team model what it means to be a Salesian educator	0	8	45	47	92
14. Staff feel part of a Salesian community marked by inclusion	0	8	41	51	92
15. Maintaining the Salesian education vision is a key priority for the school	0	1	36	63	99

Table 4 Analysis of teacher responses from all schools for statements related to Collaboration

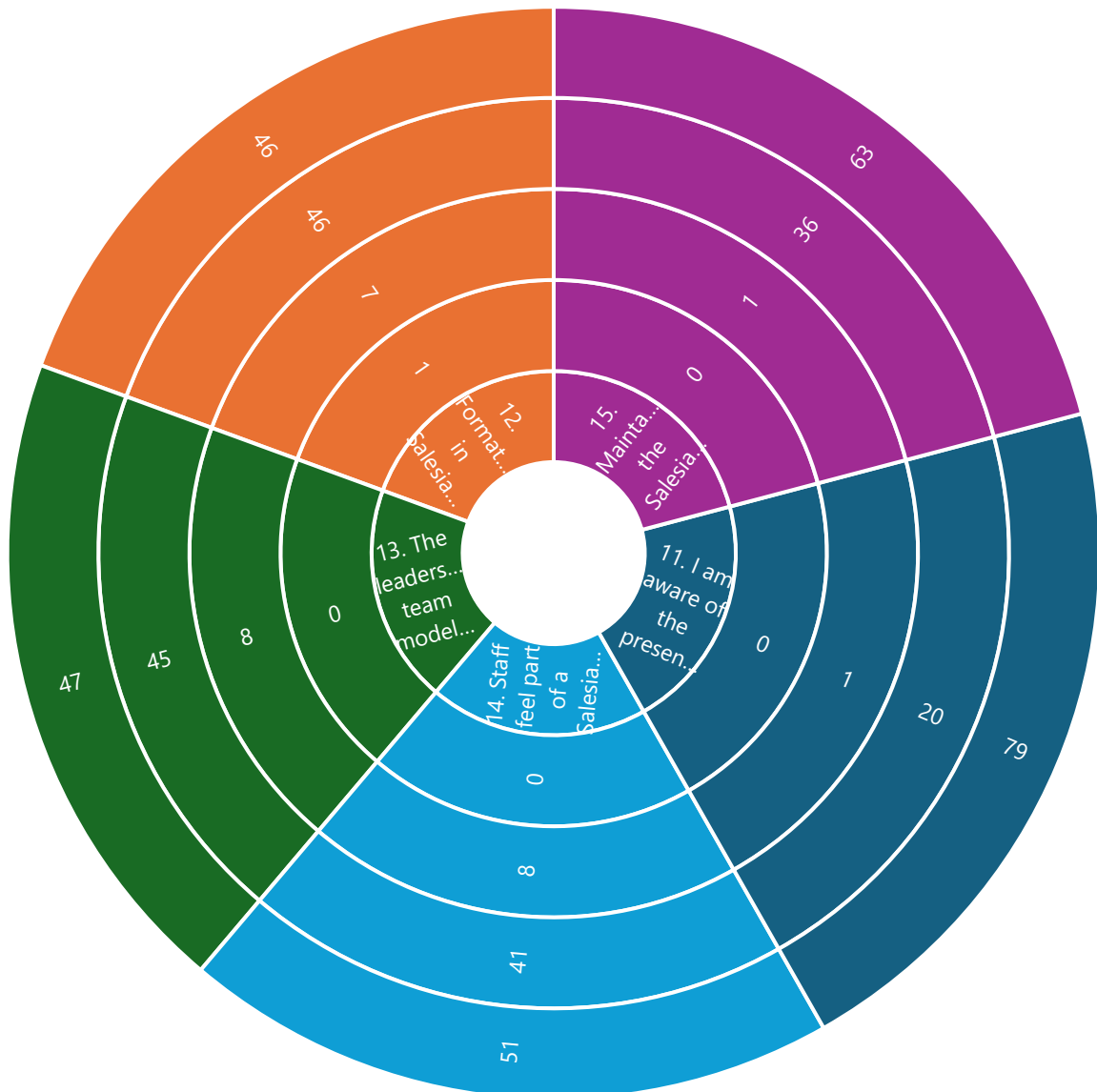
### Analysis

There was further variation in the levels of strong support and disagreement with statements 11 to 15 which relate to Collaboration. Eight out of ten (79%) respondents strongly agreed that they *are aware of the presence of Salesian brothers, priests and sisters around the school* while a further 20% agreed giving a total in agreement of 99%.

There was a marked difference in the response to statement 12, *formation in Salesian values forms a part of the school's Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programme*, with the level of strong support reducing to less than 1 in 2 (46%) of respondents with 8% either disagreed or strongly disagreed. Despite the summated scores for agreed and strongly agreed responses still exceeding 90%, the lower level of strong support can be seen as significant. The overall response to statement 13, *the leadership team model what it is to be a Salesian educator*, is almost identical to the previous statement, with 46% of respondents strongly agreed and 8% disagreed; again overall agreement stands at 92%. This pattern of response is not dissimilar to that for statement 14, *staff feel part of a Salesian community marked by inclusion*, with 51% of respondents strongly agreed and 8% disagreed; once more the overall percentage of agreement is recorded above 90%.

Strong support for statement 15 is higher, with six out of ten (61%) of staff respondents strongly agreed that *maintaining the Salesian education vision is a key priority for the school*. A further 36% are agreed resulting in overall agreement of 99% with this statement

Fig 5 Pie chart of responses to statements 11 to 16 from strongly agree (innermost circle) to strongly disagree (outermost circle).



## Discussion

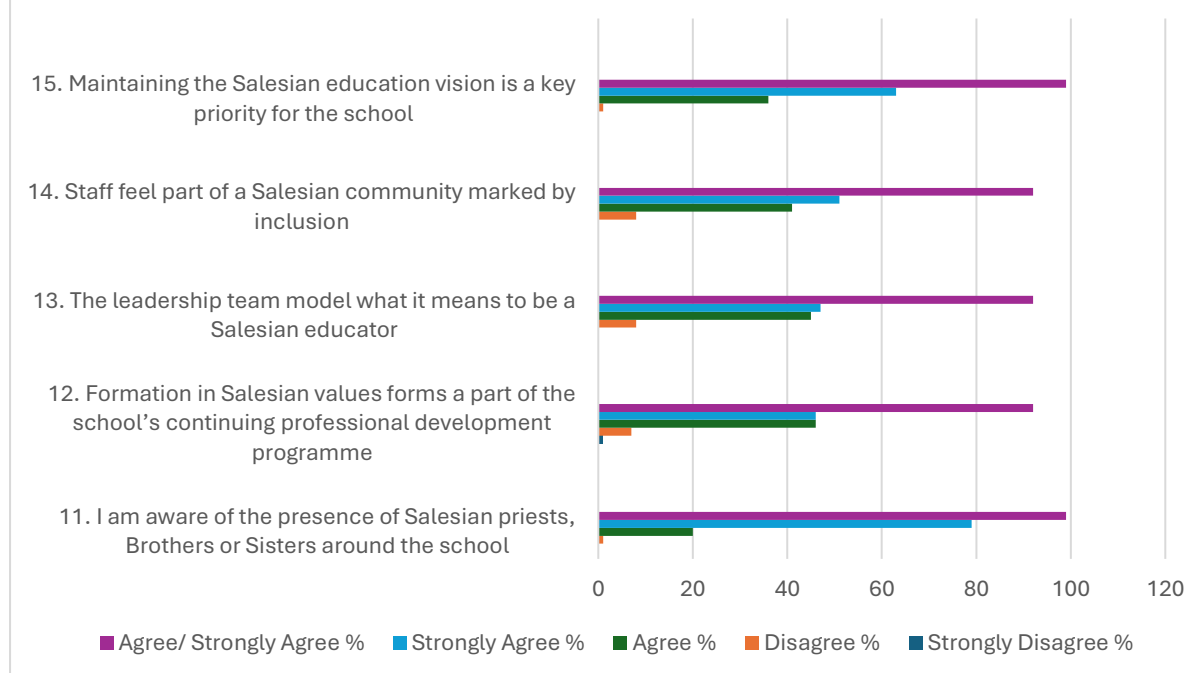
The fact that there is strong agreement, from eight out of ten respondents with a further 20% in agreement, that staff in schools are aware of the presence of Salesian priests, Brothers or Sisters in the school is significant, considering this survey was carried out across all Salesian schools in England. The respondents are virtually unanimous in agreeing that Salesian priests, brothers or sisters are a feature in their school. This

has added significance when we examine the importance of the whole concept of modelling the Salesian charism, as well as recognising the importance of having role models present, in school, every day.

A closer look at the pattern of responses to statements 12 to 14, raises significant questions regarding staff conviction about the quality of formation in Salesian values they receive and their perception of leadership modelling the Salesian charism. The lower level (51%) of strong support for statement 14, raises questions as to whether staff respondents are fully convinced that they feel they are members of a community marked by inclusion. Each of these areas are significant in terms of implementing the Salesian charism in a school context.

Formation in Salesian values is key if a school wishes to preserve and develop its unique charism. Ensuring this is a permanent part of the programme of continuous professional development (CPD) is a way of demonstrating to staff the importance with which it is viewed. Alluding to the importance of modelling the charism set out in the discussion of statement 11 above, reinforces the need for the leadership of a school to be able to model what it means to be a Salesian educator. A further essential element is that teaching staff feel that they are an important part of the school community and that this community is marked by inclusion. St. John Bosco wished this for the boys he brought in off the streets because he recognised that having a home and feeling they belonged and were included, would help them to grow. This is equally the case for the teaching staff; if they genuinely feel welcomed and appreciated, they are more likely model the preventive system to pupils.

Fig 6 Bar chart of responses to statements 11 to 16



## D Competing Pressures

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Agree/ Strongly Agree
	%	%	%	%	%
16. In this school students are encouraged to participate in extra curricular activity	1	3	33	64	97
17. Academic excellence is the number one priority at this school	1	23	43	33	76
18. Concerns around external inspection are at the forefront in the lives of teachers and students	4	39	34	23	57
19. Extra-curricular activities at this school help students to grow as persons	0	3	33	64	97
20. Performance management for teachers focuses predominantly on academic outcomes.	4	27	45	24	69

Table 5 Analysis of teacher responses from all schools for statements related to Competing Pressures

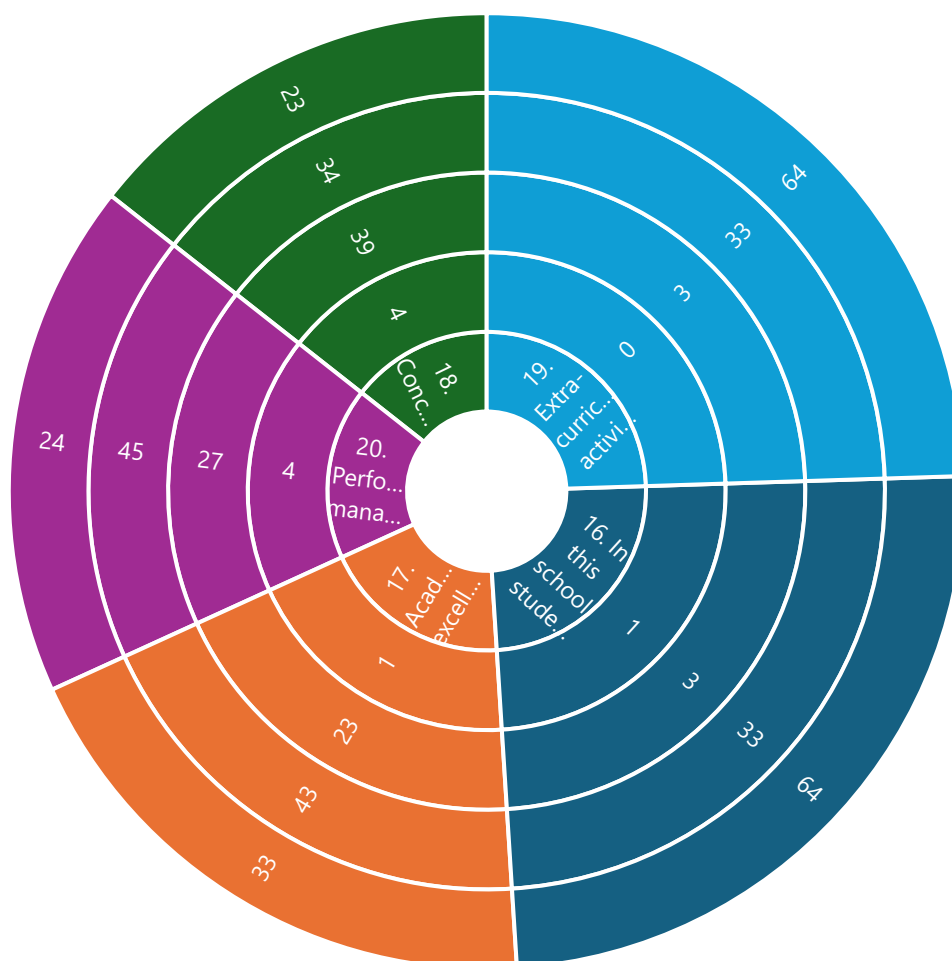


## Analysis

Statements 16 and 19 both relate to extra-curricular activities. They elicited very similar levels of agreement, with more than six out of ten respondents strongly agreed that *students are encouraged to participate in extra-curricular activities* (statement 16) and that *extracurricular activities help students to grow* (statement 19). With an additional 30% or more agreed with both statements, the summated scores for agreement were 97%. A relatively small number (3%) of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with these statements.

Only one in three respondents (33%) strongly agreed that *academic excellence is the number one priority* at their school (statement 17). Similarly, just over one in five respondents (23%) disagreed with this statement with a further 1% strongly disagreed. Nevertheless, when the percentage agreed (43%) is added to the those who strongly agreed (23%), this equated to approximately seven out of ten respondents believing that academic excellence is the number one priority of the school.

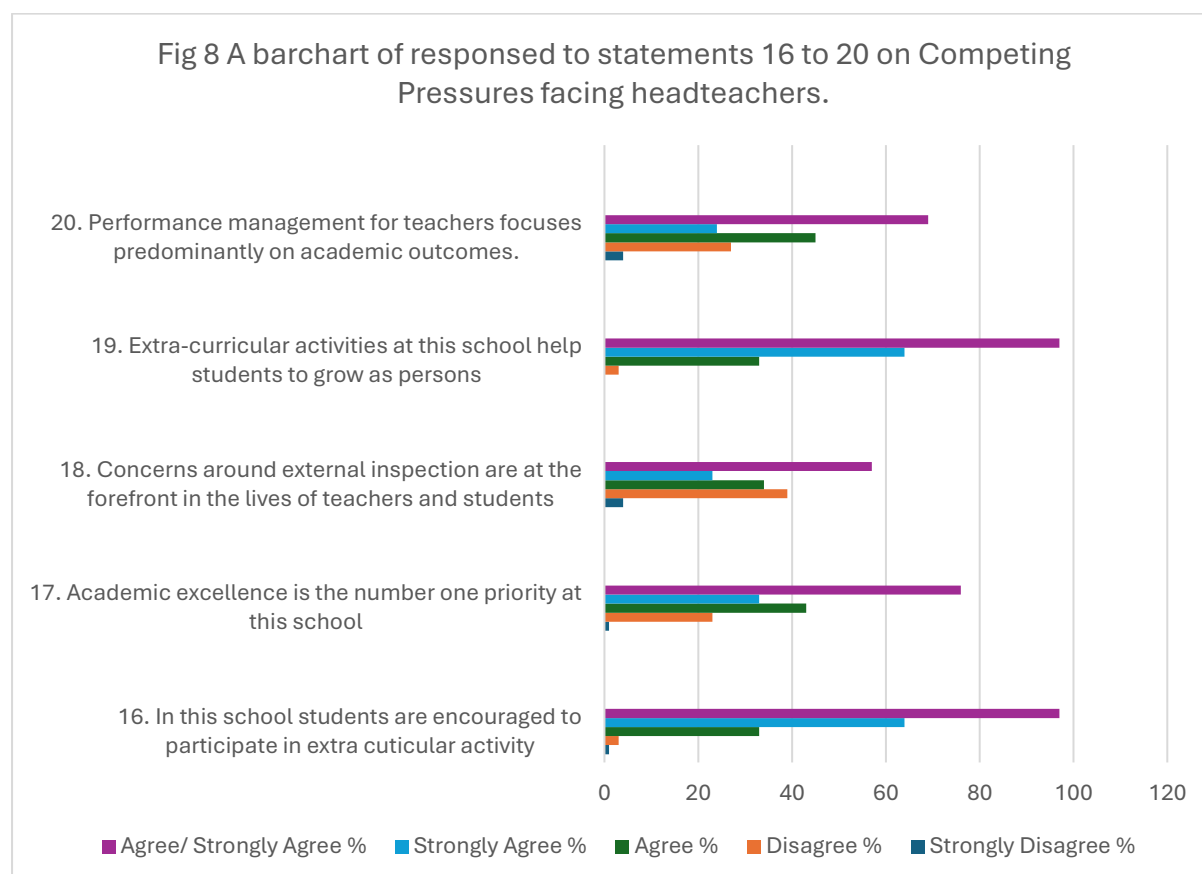
Fig 7 Pie chart of responses to statements 16 to 20 from strongly disagreeing (inner most circle) to strongly agreeing (outer most circle).



Less than one in four (23%) of respondents strongly agreed that *concerns around internal inspection are at the forefront of the lives of teachers and students* (statement 18). A further 34% agreed; when these two figures were summated overall agreement was at 57%. In addition 44% of respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement which communicated something of the perspective of staff.

A similar pattern of responses was evident for statement 20, *performance management for teachers focuses predominantly on academic outcomes*, with 1 in 4

respondents (24%) strongly agreed and further 45% agreed giving a summated percentage of overall agreement at 69%. Taken together 31% of respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement which is significant.



## Discussion

The fact that 1 in 4 (24%) respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed with *academic excellence being the first priority* of the school, is perhaps significant when one considers that just over three quarters (76%) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. This may suggest a certain unease on the part of staff with this statement, or it may imply that some staff feel somewhat conflicted over fully agreeing with such a strong and unequivocal statement; and yet the overall response for agreed and strongly agreed, taken together, stands at 76%, which is three quarters of respondents. This perspective may find support in the very similar pattern of

response for statement 20, that *performance management is focused predominantly on academic outcomes*. While strong agreement is 9% lower at 24%, disagreement is 7% higher at 31%.

The statement addressing concerns around external inspection receives almost identical strong support at 24% but with a higher level of disagreement (43%).

With regards to statements 16, in this school students are encouraged to participate in extra curricular activity and 19, *extracurricular activities helping students to grow*, there is a consistent level of support for teaching staff recognising the importance of promoting extra-curricular activities, which is an essential dimension of the Salesian charism.

Students being able to participate in extracurricular activities is seen as a key aspect of Salesian education. There is recognition, however, that organising such activities requires a significant investments in both staff time and school resources. Nevertheless, such opportunities are regarded as vital to Salesian schools as they are seen to contribute, in significant ways, to students growing in independence, confidence and resilience.

### 10.3 Conclusions drawn from the analysis of Teacher questionnaires

While analysis of questionnaire responses appear to show that staff working in Salesian schools, are in agreement or strong agreement with the majority of the statements regarding the Salesian charism and its operation, there were a significant minority of statements where strong support fell to below 70% and, in some cases, below 50%.

While the broad support for the aggregated agreed and strongly agreed responses remained between 90% and 100% for 17 out of the 20 statements, the marked variation in strong support, in some cases, may have indicated some aspects of disagreement as to whether what is set out in the statement is fully operational in every school.

#### A. Charism

The agreed/strongly agreed aggregated totals for statements 1 to 5, would seem to suggest strong overall agreement that each statement was understood and was largely in place across Salesian schools. An analysis of the variation in the numbers that strongly agreed with the statement demonstrates that only 53% of the 237 teacher respondents currently working in Salesian schools, strongly agreed that the school in which they work invests resources in *ensuring young people feel supported*. Only 1% disagreed, however, resulting in 99% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed.

The pattern of the responses of teachers to statement 2, that *young people in need are a focus for this school*, shows some similarities as the percentage strongly agreed is slightly higher at 65% with another 34% agreed, giving an overall percentage for agreement of 98%.

Strong support for statements 1,4 and 5 is consistently higher at between 70% and 80%. None of these statements has any significant disagreement so that overall agreement is virtually unanimous (99%) for all three statements.

## B. Accompaniment

The pattern of responses to the five statements about accompaniment is at variance, to a degree, with the response to statements 1 to 5. Statements 6, 7 and 8 record levels of strong agreement at between 63% and 79%. There is virtually no opposition to these statements so overall agreement (strongly agreed plus agreed responses) totals 99%.

Almost seven out of ten respondents agree with statement 8, *collective worship (Mass, Sacrament of Reconciliation, Assemblies) features prominently in the life of the school*. Nevertheless, 4% of respondents disagreed with this statement. Strong support is further reduced for statement 10, *spiritual development is a key concern of the leadership of the school*, where less than one out of two respondents is strongly agreed. In addition, it should be noted that the number of respondents strongly disagreed with this statement is double that of statement 14 and is stood at 8%. The rise of the level of disagreement for statements 9 and 10 should be noted as significant.

## C. Collaboration

Responses from the five statements on Collaboration, presented a similarly mixed pattern to those related to Accompaniment. Almost eight out ten (79%) of respondents strongly agree that they are *aware of the presence of Salesian priests, brother or Sisters around the school*, with a further 20% agreed producing almost unanimous agreement. There is a significant level of disagreement with statements 12, *formation in Salesian values forms a part of the school's continuing professional development*

*programme* and 13, the *leadership team model what it means to be a Salesian educator*. For both of these statements less than one out of 2 (46% and 47% respectively) respondents were in strong agreement. This, alongside the small but significant level of disagreement, raises significant questions regarding the embedding of formation in Salesian values and the leadership modelling what it means to be a Salesian educator, even allowing for the fact that the combined scores for strong agreement and agreement register above 90%.

There is a similar pattern with statement 14, *staff feel part of a Salesian community marked by inclusion*, which has just over one in two (51%) of respondents in strong agreement with a further 41% agreed, giving a summated score of 92%. What is noteworthy and of concern, is that, while only one out of 2 staff respondents strongly agreed with this statement, 8% disagreed. When we consider that the idea of including everyone was central to Don Bosco's charism and pedagogy, it is concerning that, even a relatively small number of staff respondents do not feel a sense of inclusion in a Salesian school. On the other hand, six out of ten respondents (63%) strongly support statement 15, *maintaining the Salesian education vision is a key priority for the school*, with a further 36% in agreement. There is no disagreement with this statement so that overall support for agreement is 99%.

The fact that the level of strong agreement that *formation in Salesian values forms part of the school's CPD programme* (statement 12) and *maintaining the Salesian educational vision is a priority for the school* (statement 13), reduces to below 50% is pronounced as is the 24% and 43% respectively of respondents who disagreed or strongly disagreed with these statements. While overall agreement, combining respondents who agreed and disagreed still stands at around 70%, this is some way

below the 97% and 99% of support for the *leadership team modelling what it is to be a Salesian educator* (statement 13) and *staff feeling part of a Salesian community marked by inclusion* (statement 14). Similarly, 92% agreed they were *aware of Salesian Brothers, Priests and Sisters*, with strong support for this statement just above 50%.

This pattern of responses does not necessarily raise concerns regarding collaboration when some statements are supported by seven out of ten respondents, while the overall figure for agreement with others is almost unanimous. What the variation in support may raise however, is whether staff are clear regarding the strategies the school may be putting in place, for example the Salesian emphasis placed on the CPD or performance management programmes and whether the strategies are being implemented consistently.

#### D Pressures

Of the five statements exploring the impact of competing pressures, statements 16 and 19, which both involve the promotion and use of extra-curricular activities in the school context, received the strong support of six out of ten (64%) respondents, with little or no disagreement so that overall support is virtually unanimous.

For statements 17, 18 and 20, on the other hand, the percentage of those who are strongly agreed ranges between 24% and 33%. The levels of disagreement (disagreed plus strongly disagreed) are recorded at 24%, 43% and 31%, respectively. Despite this overall agreement (agreed plus strongly agreed) for statements 17, regarding *academic excellence being the number one priority* and 20, *Performance*



*Management focuses on academic outcomes*, stood at around 70%. Overall support for statement 18 which addressed concerns around internal inspection, on the other hand, is significantly lower at 57%, which is worthy of note.

It is good to note also that the role extra-curricular activity plays in assisting young people in their development, is still being recognised by staff in Salesian schools. It is also appropriate that academic outcomes, while essentially important, are not seen as the only point of reference in judging the achievement of both students and staff.

While these findings could be regarded as supporting concerns that the school improvement agenda is an issue in the minds of staff, whether due to external inspection or performance management focusing on academic outcomes, the fact that teaching staff still see a value in extracurricular activity, is laudable. The reality is that as many respondents disagreed with performance management being focused on academic outcome, as strongly agreed. This demonstrates that, while some contention around this issue was evident amongst school respondents, seven out of ten (69%) staff still agreed or strongly agreed with the statement.

#### **10.4 Analysis of questionnaire responses by each School**

Having analysed the overall responses of teachers from all of the schools taken together, the responses made by teachers of each individual school compared to the summated responses of the other schools surveyed (henceforth these will be referred to as the 'other schools' in the discussion of results), will now be considered.

### 10.4.1 School 1 Analysis

Number of School 1 respondents: 28

Total respondents: 237

#### A. Charism

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree/Agree
1 I understand Don Bosco's message that the young must know that they are loved is practised on a daily basis in this school	86	14	0	0	100
2 Young people in need are a focus for this school	53	43	0	4	96
3 The school invests resources in ensuring young people feel supported in their work	68	28	0	4	96
4 In this school staff often 'go the extra mile' in terms of engaging students and keeping them on board	89	11	0	0	100
5 In this school it would be easy for students to name a teacher they admire	86	14	0	0	100

Table 6 Analysis of respondents to statements 1 to 5 on Charism for School 1

The responses to statements 1, *I understand Don Bosco's message that the young must know that they are loved is practised on a daily basis* and statement 4, *In this school staff often go the extra mile in terms of engaging students and keeping them on board* together with statement 5, *in this school it would be easy for students to name a teacher they admire*, are almost identical with up to nine out of ten respondents strongly agreed with these statements and no respondents disagreed. Strong support for statement 3, *the school invests resources in ensuring young people feel supported in their work*, was lower at seven out of ten respondents (68%), while 4% of respondents strongly disagree, which equates to one out of twenty eight respondents disagreed from school 1. Apart from this, all other respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.

Only one out of two of respondent however strongly agreed with statement 2 that *young people in need are a focus for this school*, with 4% strongly disagreed with this statement. This result is significant because taking the option of working for those who are most in need is a key tenet of the Salesian educational charism.

## B. Accompaniment

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree/Agree
6 As a staff member I fully realise the importance of the Salesian style of accompanying young people	82	18	0	0	100
7 I understand the key components of Salesian education (school, playground, home and church) and how they work together	86	14	0	0	100
8 Students in this school know that they receive respect, understanding and acceptance from staff on a daily basis	71	29	0	0	100
9 Collective worship (Mass, Sacrament of Reconciliation, Assemblies) features prominently in the life of the school	75	21	0	4	96
10 Spiritual development is a key concern of the leadership of the school	61	29	3	7	90

Table 7 Analysis of respondents to statements 6 to 10 on Accompaniment for School 1

Support for statement 6, *as a staff member I fully realise the importance of the Salesian style of accompanying young people* and statement 7, *I understand the key components of Salesian education (school, playground, home and church) and how they work together*, are very similar, with up to eight out of ten (82% and 86% respectively) respondents strongly agreed with these statements and no respondents

disagreed. For statement 8, *students in this school know that they receive respect, understanding and acceptance from staff on a daily basis*, seven out ten responders strongly agreed while overall agreement, combining agreed and strongly agreed scores, stands at 100%. Similarly, seven out of ten respondents strongly agreed with statement 9, *collective worship (Mass, Sacrament of Reconciliation, Assemblies) features prominently in the life of the school*. With only 4% disagreed, this statement receives virtually unanimous overall support for agreed and strong agreed responses.

Strong support, in contrast, for statement 10, *spiritual development is a key concern of the leadership of the school*, was lower at six out of ten (61%) respondents, with one in ten either disagreed or strongly disagreed. This is worthy of note as this is closely related to the first part of the trinomial of reason, religion and loving kindness on which St. John Bosco based his charismatic approach to young people. Spiritual development is a key aspect of the religious dimension of Salesian education, which one would expect to be developed progressively throughout a student's time in a Salesian school. It is clearly important therefore that the leadership of any Salesian school is concerned with spiritual development. One in ten of the respondents from school 1 disagreed with this statement, which is noteworthy, since it may indicate that a small but significant number of respondents did not consider that spiritual development is a priority for the leadership of the school.

## C. Collaboration

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree/Agree
11. I am aware of the presence of Salesian priests, Brothers or Sisters around the school	85	15	0	0	100
12. Formation in Salesian values forms a part of the school's continuing professional development programme	64	28	4	4	92
13. The leadership team model what it means to be a Salesian educator	57	36	7	0	93
14. Staff feel part of a Salesian community marked by inclusion	63	26	11	0	89
15. Maintaining the Salesian education vision is a key priority for the school	78	18	4	0	96

Table 8 Analysis of respondents to statements 11 to 16 on Collaboration for School 1

Between eight and nine out of ten (85%) staff strongly agreed that they are *aware of the presence of Salesian priests, brothers or sisters* around the school. There was no disagreement with this statement which had the unanimous aggregated support (agreed plus strongly agreed) of respondents at 100%. A similar level of strong support (78%) was seen for statement 15, *maintaining the Salesian education vision is a key priority for the school*. Similarly overall support for this statement was virtually unanimous with only 4% of respondents disagreed.

Support for statement 12, *formation in Salesian values forms a part of the school's continuing professional development programme* and statement 14, *staff feel part of a Salesian community marked by inclusion* were very similar, in that approximately six out of ten respondents strongly support the statements (64% and 63% respectively), with 8% and 11% disagreed or strongly disagreed. The lower level of strong support was noteworthy as was the higher level of disagreement (approximately one out of ten

respondents). Whilst there could be a question as to how aware staff might be about the priorities of the CPD programme operating in school, the idea of inclusion for all is central to the Salesian charism. St. John Bosco emphasised the essential importance of providing a safe place and a home for the neediest of those he worked for and of inculcating a genuine sense of belonging. He saw these elements as essential if he was to be able to encourage the development of the young people in his care.

For statement 13, *the leadership team model what it means to be a Salesian educator* the response is not dissimilar to those described previously, with 57% strongly supportive of this statement and 7% disagreed. In promoting what he called his preventive (rather than repressive) system of education, in which he effectively ruled out the use of regular and systematic corporal punishment, a radical decision for his day, St. John Bosco emphasised the need for educators to remain close to the young people, not only in the classroom but also in the playground, so that they could show, by their example, what they expected in terms of behaviour. In seeking to implement this system, it is therefore essential that the leadership team of a school, which aspires to implement the Salesian charism, actually models this approach. The importance of having role models around the school modelling this behaviour, was emphasised repeatedly by headteachers in their interview responses which were considered in the previous chapter.

## D. Pressures

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree/Agree
16. In this school students are encouraged to participate in extra curricular activity	71	29	0	0	100
17. Academic excellence is the number one priority at this school	18	39	39	4	57
18. Concerns around external inspection are at the forefront in the lives of teachers and students	26	33	41	0	59
19. Extra-curricular activities at this school help students to grow as persons	82	14	4	0	96
20. Performance management for teachers focuses predominantly on academic outcomes	18	46	32	4	54

Table 9 Analysis of respondents to statements 16 to 20 on Pressures for School 1

Statements 16 and 19, relating to extracurricular activity, demonstrate high levels of strong support. While seven out of ten (71%) respondents strongly agreed that *in this school students are encouraged to participate in extra curricular activity*, with none disagreed, eight out of ten (82%) respondents strongly agree that *extra-curricular activities at this school help students to grow as persons*. There was virtually unanimous agreement with both of these statements when the agreed and strongly agreed responses were aggregated.

Nonetheless, only one in four of respondents (26%) strongly agreed that *concerns about external inspection are at the forefront of the lives of teachers and students* (statement 18), while a further 33% agreed with this statement, resulting in six out of ten respondents overall agreed. Four out of ten respondents however, disagreed with this statement, which is significant. There was a very similar pattern of response to statement 17, *academic excellence is the number one priority at this school* and for

statement 20, *performance management for teachers focuses predominantly on academic outcomes*. In both of these cases, overall aggregated agreement (agreed plus strongly agreed) stands at between five and six out of ten (57% and 54% respectively) with up to four out of ten disagreed or strongly disagreed.

#### 10.4.2 Discussion

The responses of school 1 were marked by strong support for statements 1, 4 and 5, with strong agreement from around nine out of ten respondents. Each of these three statements, which address important dimensions of the Salesian charism and its implementation in schools, receives unanimous support with no disagreement from respondents. With statement 2, *young people in need are a focus for this school* and statement 3, *the school invests resources in ensuring young people feel supported in their work*, strong support reduced to five out of ten (53%) and six out of ten (68%) respondents respectively. For both of these statements whilst overall support, aggregating agreed and strongly agreed responses together, is very strong at 96%, 4% of respondents strongly disagreed with each of them, which represents approximately one out of twenty five respondents.

This pattern is echoed, to an extent, with the responses to statements 6 to 10, which address Accompaniment. Statements 6, 7, and 8 elicit unanimous overall (agreed plus strongly agreed) support, with no respondents disagreed. These statements all address key aspects of how the Salesian charism is put into practise, through respecting and accompanying young people on a daily basis while, at the same time, being present to them through the key dynamics of classroom. playground, church, and home. There was a slightly different pattern of response to statements 9 and 10



which elicit 4% and 11% disagreement. These two statements focus on the school's implementation of *collective worship* and *viewing spiritual development as a key concern of the leadership*.

These statements might be said to correspond with some of the more challenging aspects of implementing charismatic identity. Headteachers highlighted that in many of their schools, there is an increasing number of non-Catholic pupils and members of staff. While it may have been taken for granted, in past years, that the school population was largely Catholic, activities, such as organising whole school liturgical celebrations, may have been regarded as relatively straightforward; these might be regarded as more of a challenge today.

While there is virtually unanimous agreement regarding maintaining the Salesian vision of education and awareness of Salesian priests, brothers or sisters in school 1, there was not the same level of agreement that the *leadership team model what it means to be a Salesian educator* according to school 1 respondents. Similarly there was a lower level of support for staff feeling included and formation in Salesian values being part of CPD. These findings might indicate that staff in school 1 were more confident about the status afforded to matters such as educational vision and awareness of Salesian religious, than more nuanced matters such as inclusion and CPD. As well as a lower level of strong agreement (57%), there is a small but significant level of disagreement (7%) with statement 13, *leadership modelling Salesian education*; both results are worthy of note.

With regard to competing pressures, the three statements, 17, 18 and 20, all relate to the school improvement agenda, especially the focus on academic excellence in terms of school outcomes, alongside performance management, with up to 40% of

respondents disagreed with these statements. This contrasted sharply with the level of strong agreement for statements 16 and 19 (71% and 82% respectively), which addressed promoting the benefits of extra curricula activity to facilitate the personal growth of students. This observation may be significant as it highlighted the possibility of staff feeling conflicted between these two parameters, which may be used to judge the efficacy or otherwise of the charismatic dimension of a Salesian school.

### 10.5 School 2 Analysis

Number of School 2 respondents: 48

Total respondents: 237

#### A. Charism

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree/Agree</b>
1. I understand Don Bosco's message that the young must know that they are loved is practised on a daily basis in this school	90	10	0	0	100
2. Young people in need are a focus for this school	77	21	0	2	98
3. The school invests resources in ensuring young people feel supported in their work	63	37	0	0	100
4 In this school staff often 'go the extra mile' in terms of engaging students and keeping them on board	85	15	0	0	100
5. In this school it would be easy for students to name a teacher they admire	81	19	0	0	100

Table 10 Analysis of respondents to statements 1 to 5 on Charism for School 2

The responses of the 48 respondents from school 2 compared with the other Salesian schools, on the five questions relating to charism would suggest a number of differences. For statement 1, regarding *understanding Don Bosco's message that the young must know that they are loved*, 13% more of school 2 respondents strongly agree compared with other schools (90% against 77%). Taking agreed and strongly agreed responses together, the overall response is 100% agreement with statement 1. No respondents have disagreed with this statement.

A similar pattern can be seen with regard to statement 2. A significantly higher percentage of the respondents from school 2 strongly agreed that *young people in need are a focus for this school* compared with other Salesian schools (77% against 65%). There was minimal disagreement with this statement, resulting in 98% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed. Six out of ten (63%) respondents strongly agreed that *the school invests resources in ensuring young people feel supported in their work* (statement 3); while five out ten (53%) respondents from other schools strongly agreed. There was no disagreement with this statement from school 2 respondents, whereas other schools recorded between 4 and 5% disagreement.

In contrast with statement 3, eight out of ten (85%) respondents strongly agreed that *in this school staff often go the extra mile in terms of engaging students and keeping them on board* (statement 4). There was no disagreement on this statement on the part of school 2 respondents and levels of support from other schools were similar. In addition, eight out of ten respondents strongly agreed that *it would be easy for students to name a teacher they admire* (statement 5), which was slightly ahead of the response for other schools (81% compared with 75%). There is no disagreement with this statement.

In summary, the majority of the responses of school 2 respondents to the five statements concerning the Salesian charism, demonstrated a higher percentage of strongly agreed responses, than the responses provided by the other schools. It is noteworthy, however, that 85% of respondents strongly agreed that *teachers go the extra mile in terms of engaging pupils* (statement 4) which is within 1% of the response from other schools. Overall between 98% and 100% of respondents agreed and strongly agreed with the five statements concerning the Salesian charism resulting in little or no disagreement being expressed.

## B. Accompaniment

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree/Agree
6 As a staff member I fully realise the importance of the Salesian style of accompanying young people	81	19	0	0	100
7. I understand the key components of Salesian education (school, playground, home and church) and how they work together	65	35	0	0	100
8. Students in this school know that they receive respect, understanding and acceptance from staff on a daily basis	75	25	0	0	100
9. Collective worship (Mass, Sacrament of Reconciliation, Assemblies) features prominently in the life of the school	63	29	8	0	92
10. Spiritual development is a key concern of the leadership of the school	46	50	4	0	96

Table 11 Analysis of respondents to statements 6 to 10 on Accompaniment for School 2

There was strong support for statement 6, *as a staff member I fully realise the importance of the Salesian style of accompanying young people*, with eight out of ten

respondents strongly agreed with this statement, which was broadly comparable with the responses of other schools (81% compared with 79%). There was no disagreement with this statement. In contrast, just over six out of ten (65%) of respondents strongly agree that they *understand the key components of Salesian education (school, playground, home and church) and how they work together* (statement 7). This was comparable with the strong agreement (71%) for this statement registered by the other schools. There was no disagreement with this statement amongst school 2 respondents. Three quarters (75%) of the respondents in school 2 accepted that *students in this school know that they receive respect, understanding and acceptance from staff on a daily basis* (statement 8) which was 13% ahead of the responses from other schools. As with the previous two statements discussed, there is virtually no disagreement.

Similar to statement 7, just over six out of ten respondents strongly agreed with statement 9 that *collective worship features prominently in the life of the school*. This was slightly lower than the responses from other schools (63% compared with 67%). In addition, almost one in ten of school 2 respondents (8%), disagreed with this statement which is approximately double the level of disagreement for other schools (8% compared with 4%). Further to this, less than one in two (46%) of school 2 respondents strongly agreed that *Spiritual development is a key concern of the leadership of the school* (statement 10). This was almost identical to the responses from other schools (46%). Disagreement with this statement remained at 4% of school 2 respondents compared to double this figure for other schools (8%).

While strong support for statements 6 and 8 was between seven and eight out of ten respondents, which suggested staff had an understanding of some of the key principles in terms of implementing the Salesian charism, it may be of concern that

only six out of ten appear to understand the key components of the charism (playground, school, church and home). It must be taken into consideration however, that the aggregated strongly agreed and agreed summated support for these three statements (6, 7 and 8) stands at 100%. There is a similar level of response to statement 9, *collective worship features prominently in the life of the school*, with six out of ten (63%) school 2 responders strongly agreed, while a significant percentage ( 8%) disagreed.

In marked contrast, less than one out of every two (46%) respondents strongly agreed that *spiritual development is a key concern of the leadership of the school* (statement 10), while 4% of responders disagreed. The drop in strong support for both of these statements is of concern because they relate directly to the spiritual and liturgical life of the school. For Don Bosco, it was essential that these aspects needed to be vibrant, if his educational approach was to produce 'good Christians and honest citizens'. The leadership team of any Catholic school have a central role in witnessing to, as well developing, the school's spiritually.

## C. Collaboration

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree/Agree
11. I am aware of the presence of Salesian priests, Brothers or Sisters around the school	85	15	0	0	100
12. Formation in Salesian values forms a part of the school's continuing professional development programme	40	54	6	0	94
13. The leadership team model what it means to be a Salesian educator	53	47	0	0	100
14. Staff feel part of a Salesian community marked by inclusion	54	46	0	0	100
15. Maintaining the Salesian education vision is a key priority for the school	65	35	0	0	100

Table 12 Analysis of respondents to statements 11 to 15 on Collaboration for School 2

Eight out of ten (85%) of respondents strongly agreed that they were *aware of the presence of Salesian priests, Brothers or Sisters around the school*; there was no disagreement with this statement. These figures are broadly reflective of those for other schools (85% compared with 79%). Only four out of ten respondents (40%) from school 2, strongly agreed that *Formation in Salesian values forms a part of the school's continuing professional development programme* (statement 12) while 6% of respondents disagreed. The figures for other Salesian schools were very similar (47% and 7%).

Only one out of two of respondents (53%) strongly agreed that the *leadership team model what it means to be a Salesian educator* (statement 13); whilst there was no disagreement from responders in school 2, resulting in an aggregated score for strongly agreed and agreed responses of 100%. It is interesting to note that the level

of disagreement for other schools was as high as 8%, while strong support was at 47%. This pattern was reflected again in the responses to statement 14, *staff feel part of a Salesian community marked by inclusion* with 54% of those responding strongly agreed, compared with 51% from other schools. As with the previous statement there was no disagreement from school 2 respondents resulting in the aggregated score for agree and strongly agree responses standing at 100%. This was at variance with respondents from other schools, 8% of whom disagreed.

Six out of ten (65%) respondents strongly agreed that *maintaining the Salesian education vision is a key priority for the school* (statement 15) There was no disagreement with this statement so the aggregated score for strongly agreed and agreed is 100%. These figures are broadly reflective of the responses from other schools.

Whilst it could be argued that staff may not always be aware of the structure of the school's CPD programme, it is concerning that support for the leadership team modelling what it means to be a Salesian educator and staff feeling part of a community marked by inclusion, have receded to 50% or lower in terms of strongly agreed responses. Whilst the overall agreement, summing strongly agreed and agreed responses, is 100% overall, these figures raise a concern that not all staff in school 2 felt strongly that they are included or that the leadership team modelled what it is to be a Salesian educator. This pattern of response is reflective of that for other schools.



## D. Pressures

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree/Agree
16. In this school students are encouraged to participate in extra cuticular activity	79	21	0	0	100
17. Academic excellence is the number one priority at this school	40	44	16	0	84
18. Concerns around external inspection are at the forefront in the lives of teachers and students	15	31	48	6	46
19. Extra-curricular activities at this school help students to grow as persons	70	28	2	0	98
20. Performance management for teachers focuses predominantly on academic outcomes	27	46	23	4	73

Table 13 Analysis of respondents to statements 16 to 20 on Pressures for School 2

Eight out of ten (79%) staff in school 2 strongly agreed *that in this school students are encouraged to participate in extra cuticular activity* (Statement 16) compared with 6 out of 10 respondents for other schools (79% compared with 64%). No respondents disagreed with the statement, whereas 2% of the respondents from other schools disagreed. Seven out of ten (70%) respondents agreed that *extra-curricular activities at this school help students to grow as persons* (statement 19) which was not dissimilar to other schools (64%). Only 2% of respondents disagree with this statement, similar to other schools, so that overall summated agreement was 98%.

In contrast, only four out ten (40%) of respondents strongly agreed that *academic excellence is the number one priority at this school* (statement 17) which was a little ahead of the one in three respondents strongly agreed from other schools (33%). There was a similar difference with 16% of school 2 respondents disagreed with

statement 17, while 23% of respondents from other schools disagreed. Despite this level of disagreement, more than eight out of ten respondents agreed or strongly agreed that *academic excellence is the number one priority* in school 2.

Less than one in two (46%) respondents agreed and strongly agreed with statement 18, *concerns around external inspection are at the forefront in the lives of teachers and students*; (15% strongly agreed plus 31% agreed). This is in stark contrast to the figure for aggregated agreed and strongly agreed support from other schools, where almost seven out of ten (67%) respondents agreed overall.

#### 10.5.1 Discussion

The 95% to 100% agreed or strongly agreed responses to statements one to five, regarding charism and ethos, from school 2 respondents, is broadly comparable with the responses from other schools.

Consideration of the section of the questionnaire on accompaniment presents a more varied picture, however, with regard to overall agreement. The level of strong agreement for school 2 respondents in terms of staff fully realising the importance of the Salesian style of accompaniment, is broadly similar to other schools (81% compared with 79%). In contrast the levels of strong support for statement 10, *spiritual development is a key concern of leadership*, are considerably lower, with less than half of respondents strongly agreed and 4% of respondents disagreed. For statements 6, 7 and 8, overall agreement, aggregating the agreed and strongly agreed responses, is at 100%, with no disagreement registered.

With regard to collaboration, more than eight out of ten respondents strongly agreed with statement 11, that *they understood the presence of Salesians, Sisters and brothers in the school*. The next highest level of strong support for school 2 respondents, in the collaboration section of the questionnaire, was for statement 15, *maintaining the Salesian education vision is a key priority for the school*, which stood at 65% with no disagreement. The expressions of strong support for statement 12, *formation in Salesian values*, statement 13, *leadership modelling Salesian education* and statement 14, *staff feel part of a Salesian community marked by inclusion*, registered at approximately 50% of respondents, are something of a concern since these statements address aspects which are crucial to the implementation of the Salesian charism within a Salesian school. Nevertheless, overall support, summing agreed and strongly agreed responses, remains high at between 80% and 100%.

In the area of competing pressures there was a difference of between 7% and 15% between the levels of strong support for extra curricular activities, compared with other schools, which may be significant. The level of strong agreement with other statements in this section were generally lower than 50%, with the exceptions of statements 16 and 19, addressing the importance of extra-curricular activities, when 79% and 70% respectively of respondents strongly agreed. In contrast, only 15% of respondents strongly agreed that concerns regarding *external inspection* were at the forefront of the minds of teachers and pupils (statement 18), with a further 31% agreed, giving an overall percentage for agreed and strongly agreed responses of 46%. In contrast the level of disagreement with this statement rose to 46%, with a further 6% of respondents strongly disagreed, which is noteworthy.

This last point may illustrate an important difference, in terms staff perception of external inspection and its focus on academic outcomes, between school 2 and other

schools, with the exception of school 5, where the combined levels of agreement and strong agreement for this statement, were broadly similar to school 2 and stood at 46%. It is important to note, however, that concerns around inspection could be influenced by a number of factors, including where an individual school sits within the cycle of inspection and when it anticipates its next inspection will take place.

Just over one out of four (27%) respondents strongly agreed that *performance management for teachers focuses predominantly on academic outcomes* (statement 20), which was slightly higher than for other schools (27% compared with 23%). A similar cohort (23%) disagreed with this statement which was comparable to the response from other schools (23% compared with 27%). On the other hand overall support for the statement was strong, but not unanimous, with seven out of ten (73%) respondents agreed or strongly agreed, with similar support from other schools. While the level of disagreement may demonstrate that this is a sensitive issue for staff, it may also be a positive point in the sense that all staff do not feel that performance management is exclusively about academic outcomes. This is important, in a Salesian context, as it may be seen as desirable to include an objective relating to the implementation of the key tenets of the Salesian charism, in an assessment of teacher performance in a Salesian school.

## 10.6 School 3 Analysis

Number of School 3 respondents: 15

Total respondents: 237

### 10.6.1 Analysis

#### A. Charism

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree/Agree
1. I understand Don Bosco's message that the young must know that they are loved is practised on a daily basis in this school	67	27	6	0	94
2. Young people in need are a focus for this school	60	33	7	0	93
3. The school invests resources in ensuring young people feel supported in their work	33	60	7	0	93
4 In this school staff often 'go the extra mile' in terms of engaging students and keeping them on board	73	20	7	0	93
5. In this school it would be easy for students to name a teacher they admire	60	40	0	0	100

Table 14 Analysis of respondents to statements1 to 5 on Charism for School 3

In school 3 strong agreement with statement 1, *I understand Don Bosco's message that the young must know that they are loved*, is eleven per cent lower than for other schools (67% against 78%). The percentage of school 3 responses which disagreed was 6% which is higher than for other schools (0%). Taking these statistics into consideration it would seem that support from school 3 for this statement is more tepid than it is for other schools. A similar pattern can be seen in the responses to statement 2, *young people in need are a focus for this school*. While 60% of responders strongly agreed, this is 5% behind the respondents from other schools. There was a similar level of disagreement to statement 2, at 7%, which was higher than for other schools

(1%). Only 1 in 3 respondents strongly agreed that *the school invests resources in ensuring young people feel supported in their work* (statement 3). This was considerably lower than strong agreement for this statement expressed by other schools (33% compared with 53%). As with statements 1 and 2, the level of disagreement was higher than for other schools (7% as opposed to 4%).

In contrast, seven out of ten respondents agreed with statement 4 that *in this school staff often 'go the extra mile' in terms of engaging students and keeping them on board*. While this is eleven percentage points behind other schools (73% compared with 84%) it was the statement with the highest level of strong agreement of statements 1 to 5 for school 3 respondents. Six out of 10 responders agreed that *it would be easy for students to name a teacher they admire* (statement 5). The percentage of school 3 respondents who strongly agreed with this statement, is 15% lower than that for other schools (60% compared with 75%).

While the fact that only 1 in 3 of school 3 respondents strongly agreed that the school invests resources in ensuring young people feel supported is worthy of note, it is important also to note that the aggregated response (agreed and strongly agreed added together), still stands at 93%, which is 2% behind the figure for other schools.

## B. Accompaniment

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree/Agree
6 As a staff member I fully realise the importance of the Salesian style of accompanying young people	73	27	0	0	100
7. I understand the key components of Salesian education (school, playground, home and church) and how they work together	60	40	0	0	100
8. Students in this school know that they receive respect, understanding and acceptance from staff on a daily basis	53	47	0	0	100
9. Collective worship (Mass, Sacrament of Reconciliation, Assemblies) features prominently in the life of the school	53	40	7	0	93
10. Spiritual development is a key concern of the leadership of the school	40	47	13	0	87

Table 15 Analysis of respondents to statements 6 to 10 on Charism for School 3

Seven out of ten respondents strongly agreed that *staff fully realise the importance of the Salesian style of accompanying*, (statement 6), which is lower than the responses for other schools (73% against 79%). It is worth noting that school 3 also has the second lowest level of strong agreement, compared with all of the other schools surveyed, for this statement (see Appendix 3). Nevertheless, there were no respondents who disagreed with this statement, resulting in summated agreement (agreed plus strongly agreed responses) of 100%. This is in line with the responses from other schools. A similar pattern of responses can be witnessed with statement 7, *I understand the components of Salesian education* with six out of ten respondents strongly agreed, which is 10% lower than the response from other schools (60% compared with 71%). As with statement 6, there was no disagreement.

Only one out of two (53%) of school 3 respondents strongly agreed with statement 8, that *students in this school know they receive respect, understanding and acceptance from staff on a daily basis*. It is worthy of note that strongly agreed support for this statement is 10% lower than that for other schools (63% compared with 73%). Again, there was no disagreement. The responses to statement 9, that there are *opportunities for collective worship* is 16% lower than that for other schools (53% compared with 69%); alongside this the percentage of respondents who disagreed with this statement was double that for other schools (7% compared with 3%). This pattern was repeated in the responses to statement 10, *spiritual development is a key concern of the leadership*, with only four out of ten respondents strongly agreeing; this is 6% less than that for other schools (40% against 46%). The percentage who disagreed was almost double that for other schools (13% compared with 7%).

It is noteworthy that, with the exception of statements 6 and 7, the remaining statements on accompaniment (8 to 10) receive 50% or less in terms of strong agreement from school 3 members, with only the responses to statement 10 being similar to other schools. This may be of concern, when we consider these statements address key areas of the implementation of the Salesian charism, such as young people being treated with respect and understanding and collective worship featuring prominently in the life of the school. The indication, this may give, that spiritual development may not always be the highest priority for leadership, is also of concern



### C. Collaboration

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree/Agree
11. I am aware of the presence of Salesian priests, Brothers or Sisters around the school	80	20	0	0	100
12. Formation in Salesian values forms a part of the school's continuing professional development programme	36	50	14	0	86
13. The leadership team model what it means to be a Salesian educator	53	40	7	0	93
14. Staff feel part of a Salesian community marked by inclusion	50	43	7	0	93
15. Maintaining the Salesian education vision is a key priority for the school	67	33	0	0	100

Table 16 Analysis of respondents to statements 11 to 15 on Charism for School 3

Eight out of ten respondents from school 3 strongly agreed with statement 11, that they are *aware of the presence of Salesian priests, Brothers or Sisters around the school* with no disagreement. Other schools have a similar pattern of strong agreement with this statement.

In contrast, only just over a third (36%) of respondents strongly agree that *formation in Salesian values forms a part of the school's continuing professional development programme* statement 12); this is 10% lower than the level of strong agreement for other schools. The level of disagreement (14%), on the other hand, is double that of other schools. For statement 13, *leadership model what it means to be a Salesian educator*, one out of two respondents are in strong agreement, which is higher than for other schools (53% against 46%). The percentage disagreeing is broadly similar to other schools. Additionally, the percentages of agreed or strongly agreed responses are broadly similar. There is a similar pattern for statement 14 when one out of two

responders strongly agreed that *staff feel part of a Salesian community marked by inclusion*; this figure is broadly comparable with other schools (50% compared with 52%). Up to 7% of respondents disagreed with this statement which is again broadly reflective of other schools (7% against 8%),

There was a more positive response on the part of school 3 responders to statement 15, *maintaining the Salesian education vision is a key priority*, with 2 out of 3 responders strongly agreed, which is a similar percentage to other schools (67% compared with 62%). There was no disagreement so the aggregated score for those agreeing and strongly agreeing is 100%.

#### D. Pressures

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree/Agree
16. In this school students are encouraged to participate in extra curricular activity	53	47	0	0	100
17. Academic excellence is the number one priority at this school	27	40	33	0	67
18. Concerns around external inspection are at the forefront in the lives of teachers and students	33	47	20	0	80
19. Extra-curricular activities at this school help students to grow as persons	53	40	7	0	93
20. Performance management for teachers focuses predominantly on academic outcomes.	27	47	26	0	74

Table 17 Analysis of respondents to statements 16 to 20 on Charism for School 3

The response of school 3 teachers to statement 16, *in this school students are encouraged to participate in extracurricular activity*, is that roughly one out of every

two respondents strongly agreed. No respondent disagreed. As a result of this the summated score for agreed and strongly agreed responses is 100%.

In contrast only one in four (27%) of respondents strongly agreed with statement 17, *academic excellence is the number one priority*. From a different perspective, one in three (33%) disagreed with this statement. These outcomes were broadly comparable with the responses from other schools. For statement 18, again one in three (33%) respondents agreed that *concerns around external inspection were at the forefront in the lives of teachers and students*. One in five (20%) respondents, however, disagreed with this statement. It is worth noting that the level of disagreement expressed by other schools was double this figure, at 40%, with a further 4% strongly disagreed .

Just over one in every two respondents in school 3 strongly agreed with statement 19, that *extra-curricular activities help students to grow as persons*, which is 10% lower than for other schools (53% as opposed to 64%). A small but significant percentage of respondents in school 3 recorded their disagreement with this statement, which was higher than for other schools (7% against 3%). Apart from the small number disagreeing, these outcomes were very similar to those for statement 16 which addressed extra-curricular activity from a different perspective. The response to statement 20, *performance management for teachers focuses predominantly on academic outcomes*, bears strong similarities to statements 17 and 18, which are concerned with the place of academic excellence and external inspection. Just over one out of four of the respondents (27%) strongly agreed with statement 20. This was similar to the response for other schools (26%) with the caveat that 4% of the respondents for other schools strongly disagreed that performance management focuses predominantly on academic outcomes.

### 10.6.1 Discussion

The variation in the responses of school 3 staff to the statements set out above might point to some interesting dilemmas. While the strong agreement responses to statements 1 to 5 are lower, on average by as much as 10%, than for other schools, the aggregated percentages for agreed and strongly agreed responses were almost identical. Nevertheless, with one exception (statement 5) the aggregated agreed and strongly agreed percentages were below 100%. Since only one in three respondents strongly agreed that *the school invests resources in ensuring young people feel supported in their work*, perhaps this may be a concern, but the aggregated score for this statement was still above 90%.

The responses in the area of Salesian accompaniment were similarly varied but there was 100% agreement with each of the first three statements when the agreed and strongly agreed responses were summated. It may be of note that one of the statements related to accompaniment, elicited less than 40% of respondents who strongly agreed; this statement relates to spiritual development being a *key concern of the leadership of the school*.

This pattern is seen again in the responses relating to collaboration in which just over a third of respondents (36%) strongly agreed that *formation in Salesian values forms a part of the school's continuing professional development programme*. There is a caveat, in that not all staff may be fully aware of the objectives that may be included in the school's continuous professional development (CPD) programme. Nevertheless, with only around one in two of respondents from school 3 strongly agreed that the *leadership team model what it means to be a Salesian educator* and that *staff feel part of a Salesian community marked by inclusion*, staff respondents do

not seem entirely convinced that what may be regarded as key aspects of the Salesian charism, namely modelling and inclusion, are not being fully implemented.

With regard to competing pressures, it is worth noting that statements 17, 18 and 20 might produce more contention in terms of respondents, because the focus on academic excellence, external inspection and performance management, could well be a contentious issue between staff and leadership.

### 10.7 School 4 Analysis

Number of School 4 respondents: 44

Total respondents: 237

#### A. Charism

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree/Agree
1. I understand Don Bosco's message that the young must know that they are loved is practised on a daily basis in this school	75	25	0	0	100
2. Young people in need are a focus for this school	68	30	0	2	98
3. The school invests resources in ensuring young people feel supported in their work	51	44	5	0	95
4 In this school staff often 'go the extra mile' in terms of engaging students and keeping them on board	93	7	0	0	100
5. In this school it would be easy for students to name a teacher they admire	66	34	0	0	100

Table 18 Analysis of respondents to statements 1 to 5 on Charism for School 4

For school 4 the percentage of respondents strongly agreeing with statement 1, *that the young must know that they are loved*, is broadly in accordance with that for other Salesian schools (75% compared with 77%). There was little or no disagreement with this statement resulting in an aggregate score, combining agreed and strongly agreed responses, at 100%. With regard to statement 2, *young people in need are a focus for this school*, almost seven out of ten responders strongly agreed, which places the school 4 response to this statement marginally ahead of other schools (68% compared with 65%). There was minimal disagreement (2% strongly disagreed) with this statement resulting in an aggregated score for agreed and strongly agreed of 98%.

In contrast, only one in two respondents agreed that *the school invests resources in ensuring young people feel supported in their work* (statement 3), which is broadly comparable with other schools (51% against 54%). One in twenty (5%) of respondents disagreed with this statement which, again, is comparable with other schools. The aggregated score for agreed and strongly agreed responses to statement 3 is still high, however, at 95%.

The highest level of strong agreement, in this set of five statements, for school 4 respondents was for statement 4, *in this school staff often go the extra mile in terms of engaging students and keeping them on board*. Nine out of ten (93%) respondents strongly agreed with a further 7% agreed; adding these scores together produces a unanimous overall agreement. Strong agreement was 10% higher than the figure for other schools (93% compared with 82%). No respondents disagreed with the statement. In contrast with this, two thirds (66%) of respondents strongly agreed with statement 5, that *it would be easy for pupils to name a teacher they admire*. This is roughly 10% below the level of support for this statement from other schools (66%

compared with 75%). Again, there was little in the way of disagreement, so the aggregate of the agree and strongly agree responses was unanimous (100%).

In considering these responses, it is interesting to note that, while there was reasonably strong support for people understanding Don Bosco's fundamental message that *young must know that they are loved* and that *young people in need are a focus for the school*, there was considerably less support for the school investing its resources in ensuring young people feel supported in their work. There was, however, a higher level of strong agreement that *teachers go the extra mile to assist pupils*. Taken together these responses might imply that the teachers felt they were taking the responsibility to support pupils but the school perhaps could do more. At the same time, there was no marked disagreement overall with any of these statements with the overall aggregate scores between 95% and 100%.

## B. Accompaniment

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree/Agree
6 As a staff member I fully realise the importance of the Salesian style of accompanying young people	86	14	0	0	100
7. I understand the key components of Salesian education (school, playground, home and church) and how they work together	64	34	2	0	98
8. Students in this school know that they receive respect, understanding and acceptance from staff on a daily basis	59	41	0	0	100
9. Collective worship (Mass, Sacrament of Reconciliation, Assemblies) features prominently in the life of the school	70	25	5	0	86
10. Spiritual development is a key concern of the leadership of the school	47	44	9	0	91

Table 19 Analysis of respondents to statements 1 to 5 on Charism for School 4

Almost nine out of ten of respondents strongly agreed that *staff fully realise the importance of the Salesian style of accompanying young people* (statement 6). This was 8% higher than the response from other schools (86% compared with 78%). There was no disagreement resulting in an aggregate score for agreed and strongly agreed responses at 100%. Six out of ten respondents agreed that they *understand the key components of Salesian education (school, playground, home and church) and how they work together* (statement 7) which was lower than for other schools (64% compared with 70%). The level of disagreement was relatively insignificant and similar to other schools (2% compared with 1%). This means overall support was still very strong at 98% of respondents.



There was a similar pattern of responses for statement 8, with six out of ten school 4 responders strongly agreed that *students in this school know that they receive respect, understanding and acceptance from staff on a daily basis*. This was similar to the figure for other schools (59% compared with 63%). There was effectively no disagreement resulting in the aggregated score of 100% agreement with this statement. Seven out of ten respondents strongly agreed with statement 9, that *there are opportunities for collective worship*, which is slightly ahead of strong support from other schools (70% compared with 67%). The percentage who disagreed with this statement was similar for school 4 and other schools (5% compared with 4%).

Less than 50% of respondents, however, strongly agreed that *spiritual development is a key concern of the leadership* (statement 10) of the school, which was at a similar level to other schools (47%). In addition, almost one out of ten of respondents disagreed with this statement, which was slightly ahead of the response for other schools (9% compared with 7%). It is also important to note however, that when agreed and strongly agreed scores were added together, the totals for school 4 and for other schools exceeded 90%.

In view of the fact that there was some level of disagreement with statements 9 (*opportunities for collective worship are available*) and 10 (*spiritual development is a key concern of leadership*), this might imply that a minority of staff in school 4 had questions regarding these two areas. The responses to statements 7 (*I understand the key components of Salesian education*) and 8 (*young people in this school receive respect and understanding from staff on a daily basis*), while they were not the lowest of the schools surveyed, clearly did not receive the highest level of strong support from school 4 respondents. This is perhaps more concerning for statement 8 which addresses the need for a climate of mutual respect between staff and pupils. Whilst

there was no disagreement with this statement, only six out of ten school 4 respondents strongly agreed with it. And yet strong agreement for fully realising the importance of the *Salesian style of accompanying young people* (statement 6) was at the highest level (86%) of all the schools surveyed. These results perhaps highlight inconsistencies in staff awareness of some of the key tenets of Salesian education.

### C. Collaboration

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree/Agree
11. I am aware of the presence of Salesian priests, Brothers or Sisters around the school	82	16	0	2	98
12. Formation in Salesian values forms a part of the school's continuing professional development programme	39	48	13	0	87
13. The leadership team model what it means to be a Salesian educator	37	54	9	0	91
14. Staff feel part of a Salesian community marked by inclusion	37	52	11	0	89
15. Maintaining the Salesian education vision is a key priority for the school	52	46	2	0	98

Table 20 Analysis of respondents to statements 11 to 16 on Collaboration for School 4

The responses to statement 11, which focuses on *awareness of Salesian priests, Brothers or Sisters* in school, were almost at parity in terms of strong agreement from the respondents from school 4 compared with those from other schools (81% against 78%). Disagreement was also at a similar level (2%). It may also be worth noting the numbers strongly agreeing that they were aware of priests, brothers and sisters in school, were significantly higher than for the responses for statements 12 to 15.

For statement 12, the percentage who strongly agreed *that Salesian values form part of the school CPD programme* declined significantly to below 40%, which was 9% lower than for other schools (39% against 48%). When aggregated, the agreed and strongly agreed total still exceeded 85%. The percentage disagreeing with this statement in school 4 were approximately double that of other schools (14% compared with 5%) which may be significant.

The responses for statement 13, the *leadership team models what it means to be a Salesian educator*, followed a very similar pattern to the response to statement 12. The percentage of those strongly agreed was twelve percentage points lower, compared with the other schools (37% against 49%). As previously, the aggregated scores for agreed and strongly agreed were still reaching 90% or above. The percentages disagreeing with this statement, at roughly one in ten of respondents, was comparable with other schools (9% against 8%).

For statement 14, *staff feel part of a Salesian community marked by inclusion*, only around one in three of school 4 respondents were in strong agreement as opposed to one in two of other school respondents (37% compared with 52%). In addition, more than one in ten respondents disagreed with this statement compared with approximately half that number from other schools (11% compared with 7%). While it is important to emphasise that the percentage of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing was 89%, the level of strong agreement was the lowest of all the schools surveyed.

Maintaining the Salesian education vision, statement 15, received strong support from one out of every two staff, which is again significantly lower than the support from other schools (53% against 65%). Despite this there was a very low percentage disagreeing

(2%) meaning that the strongly agreed and agreed responses were in the mid to high nineties.

The results from statement 14, considered alongside other statements, may be an indication, due to the lower level of strong agreement and the higher level of disagreement, that staff in school 4 may have some concerns in the area of feeling included and with regard to the overall commitment to *maintaining the Salesian educational vision*.

The fact that strong agreement for statement 13, the *leadership team modelling what it means to be a Salesian educator* was at the same lower level (less than one in two respondents), with similar levels of disagreement, might imply that there was a perception of leadership not always modelling the implementation of the Salesian charism.

#### D. Pressures

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree/Agree
16. In this school students are encouraged to participate in extra curricular activity	46	49	5	0	95
17. Academic excellence is the number one priority at this school	41	50	9	0	91
18. Concerns around external inspection are at the forefront in the lives of teachers and students	25	43	30	2	68
19. Extra-curricular activities at this school help students to grow as persons	50	43	7	0	93
20. Performance management for teachers focuses predominantly on academic outcomes.	40	44	16	0	100

Table 21 Analysis of respondents to statements 16 to 20 on Pressure for School 4

Less than half of the respondents support statement 16 that *students are encouraged to participate in extra-curricular activity*; this was almost 20% lower than the percentage for other schools (47% against 64%) which may be significant. Again the percentage who disagreed was higher than for other schools (5% compared with 2%). As above the combined agreed and strongly agreed responses were still exceeding 90%.

In contrast, strong agreement for statement 17, *academic excellence is the number one priority at this school*, was significantly higher for school 4 than for other schools (41% against 31%) while the percentage disagreeing is one third that of other schools (9% against 27%), which may be significant. Agreed and strongly agreed responses taken together still equated to 90%, which must be taken into consideration.

Strong agreement for statement 18, that *concerns around external inspection are at the forefront in the lives of teachers and students* is considerably lower at 25% but still marginally higher than for other schools (22%). The percentage disagreeing with this statement was higher but still considerably below the level for other schools (30% compared with 40%).

In response to statement 19, approximately one in two of the respondents strongly agreed that extra-curricular activities help students to grow as persons which was 17% lower than the support from other schools (50% compared with 67%). Disagreement with this statement from school 4 responders was marginally higher than for other schools (7% against 2%) with the result that more than 90% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement.

Statement 20, *performance management focuses predominantly on academic outcomes* received a lower level of strong agreement but higher than for other schools (39% compared with 21%). The level of disagreement was lower than for other schools (16% against 29%). Nevertheless, the aggregate score for school 4 respondents was somewhat higher than for similar schools (84% against 65%) which may imply that school 4 respondents feel more strongly that academic attainment is a priority for the school.

#### 10.7.1 Discussion

The pattern of responses to statements 1 to 5 for school 4 was not dissimilar to that of other schools with the exception of the level of strong support for statement 3, which was concerned with the school investing resources to help young people, which received around 50% strong support, with 5% who disagreed. All of statements 1 to 5 nevertheless resulted in between 90% and 100% agreement when the agreed and strongly agreed responses were aggregated together.

It was also noteworthy that while six out of ten respondents strongly agreed with statement 7, *understanding home, playground, schools and church as key components of the Salesian charism* and statement 8, *students in this school know that they receive respect, understanding and acceptance from staff on a daily basis*, seven out of ten respondents agreed strongly that *opportunities for collective worship* (statement 9) are made available in school.

The lower level of support for statement 14, that *staff feel part of a Salesian community marked by inclusion* stands out. For school 4, respondents to this statement received

the lowest level of strong support (see Appendix 3), with less than four out of ten respondents strongly agreed, which was worthy of note.

As strong agreement for statement 13, *the leadership team modelling what it means to be a Salesian educator* was at the same lower level (less than four out of ten respondents) is also noteworthy. When considered alongside less than one in two respondents, who strongly agreed that spiritual development was a concern of leadership (statement 10), this might suggest that leadership was not perceived to be strong in this area. Nevertheless, the aggregate of strong agreement and agreement with these statements was still at 90% or above, which is also worthy of note.

These results, taken together, may give an indication, due to the lower level of strong agreement and the higher level of disagreement, that staff in school 4 have concerns with regard to the implementation of key aspects for the Salesian charism such as the overall commitment to maintaining the Salesian educational vision and ensuring that all staff feel that they are included as key stakeholders in the mission.

## 10.8 School 5 Analysis

Number of School 5 respondents: 38

Total respondents: 237

### A. Charism

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree/Agree
1. I understand Don Bosco's message that the young must know that they are loved is practised on a daily basis in this school	82	18	0	0	100
2. Young people in need are a focus for this school	74	26	0	0	100
3. The school invests resources in ensuring young people feel supported in their work (19)	52	30	8	0	92
4 In this school staff often 'go the extra mile' in terms of engaging students and keeping them on board	74	26	0	0	100
5. In this school it would be easy for students to name a teacher they admire	70	25	5	0	95

Table 22 Analysis of respondents to statements 1 to 5 on Charism for School 5

For school 5 the percentage of responses strongly agreed that they understood the message that the *young must know that they are loved* stands at 82%, which was significantly higher when compared with other schools (76%). In addition, no respondents disagreed with this statement which resulted in an aggregate score of 100% for those agreed and strongly agreed. The responses for statement 2, *young people in need are a focus for this school*, the strongly agreed responses were almost 10% higher than those for other schools (74% compared with 64%). There was little or no disagreement with this statement resulting in an aggregated response in support totalling 100%.



There was a significant difference when considering the strongly agreed responses to statement 3, *the school invests resources in ensuring young people feel supported in their work*, when only one in two respondents strongly agreed (52%). This was similar to the figure for other schools. The percentage of school 5 respondents who disagreed with this statement, however, was twice that for other schools (8% compared with 4%) which is noteworthy. In contrast, approaching three quarters of respondents in school 5 agreed that staff often *go the extra mile* (Statement 4) which was 10% lower than for other schools (74% against 84%). There was no disagreement from respondents to this statement so that the aggregate figure, combining agreed and strongly agreed responses, was 100%.

Similarly, seven out of ten respondents from school 5 strongly agreed *that in this school it would be easy for students to name a teacher they admire* which again is less than for other schools (70% compared with 75%). In addition, 5% of school 5 respondents disagreed with this statement. Nevertheless, as with each of the responses one to five considered above, the overall aggregated total for agreed and strongly agreed responses, stands at 95% or above, in all cases.

The consistency in strongly agreed support, from seven out of ten responders for four out of the five statements, as well as the aggregated scores for all 5 statements which totalled 90% or above, indicated strong support, in general in the area of charisma / ethos from school 5 respondents. It is important to note however, strong support for statement 3, reduced to one in two respondents and to register the small, but significant, level of disagreement with statements 3 and 5.

## B. Accompaniment

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree/Agree
6 As a staff member I fully realise the importance of the Salesian style of accompanying young people	67	30	3	0	97
7. I understand the key components of Salesian education (school, playground, home and church) and how they work together	74	24	2	0	98
8. Students in this school know that they receive respect, understanding and acceptance from staff on a daily basis	69	26	5	0	95
9. Collective worship (Mass, Sacrament of Reconciliation, Assemblies) features prominently in the life of the school	71	26	3	0	97
10. Spiritual development is a key concern of the leadership of the school	47	45	8	0	92

Table 23 Analysis of respondents to statements 6 to 10 on Accompaniment for School 5

Approximately seven out of ten respondents from school 5 strongly agreed that *as a staff member I fully realise the importance of the Salesian style of accompanying young people* (statement 6) which was more than 10% below that for other schools (67% compared with 79%); only 3% of school 5 respondents disagreed with this statement, which was higher than for other schools (3% as against 0%).

The pattern of responses for statement 8, *students in this school know that they receive respect, understanding and acceptance from staff on a daily basis*, almost matches that of statement 6, with approximately seven out of ten (69%) respondents strongly agreed and 5% disagreed with the statement. The anomaly is that the level of strongly agreed support is 6% stronger than for other schools (69% against 63%) while the level of disagreement was higher compared with other schools (5% against

2%). This pattern was repeated in responses to statement 7, where marginally more respondents from school 5 strongly agreed that they *understand key components of Salesian education* compared with other schools (74% against 71%). The level of disagreement is relatively insignificant (3% compared with 1% for other schools) so the aggregated scores for agreement totalled 97%. The percentage responses for school 5 to statement 9, regarding *opportunities for collective worship* also displayed similarities. Seven out of ten respondents (71%) strongly agreed with the statement as opposed to 79% for other schools. The percentage disagreeing from school 5 respondents was appropriately the same as the percentage who disagreed in other schools (3% compared with 4%). The aggregate percentage of those agreed or strongly agreed still stands well above 90%.

There was a considerable reduction in strongly agreed responses, to below 50%, in support of statement 10, *spiritual development is a key concern of leadership* (47% as opposed to 46% in other schools). The figures for disagreement were broadly similar too, at around 8%. Again, if the agreed and strongly agreed scores are aggregated they exceed 90%. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that each of the five statements on Accompaniment elicits some level of disagreement. Although this is in single digits varying between 2% and 8%, it does represent a consistent, all be it small, level of disagreement.

### C. Collaboration

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree/Agree
11. I am aware of the presence of Salesian priests, Brothers or Sisters around the school	84	16	0	0	100
12. Formation in Salesian values forms a part of the school's continuing professional development programme	55	45	0	0	100
13. The leadership team model what it means to be a Salesian educator	61	34	5	0	95
14. Staff feel part of a Salesian community marked by inclusion	68	24	8	0	92
15. Maintaining the Salesian education vision is a key priority for the school	76	24	0	8	100

Table 24 Analysis of respondents to statements 11 to 15 on Collaboration for School 5

There was strong support for awareness of *the presence of Salesian priests, Brothers and Sisters* (statement 11) in school 5 with eight out of ten respondents strongly agreed, which was 5% above agreement from other schools (84% compared with 79%). There was no disagreement on this statement from school 5 respondents. The aggregate of agreed and strongly agreed responses was therefore 100%, demonstrating a significant level of awareness of the presence of Salesian priests, brothers or sisters in school 5.

There was a similar pattern of responses to statement 15, with three quarters (76%) of respondents strongly agreed that *maintaining the Salesian educational vision is a key priority of the school*. This was 14% higher than for other schools (76% compared with 62%). Similarly as above, no responders disagreed with this statement resulting in an overall aggregated response for agreeing or strongly agreeing at 100%.

Just over one in two of respondents strongly agreed with statement 12, *formation in Salesian values forms part of the school's continuing CPD*, which was significantly higher than for other schools (55% compared with 46%). In contrast, none of the school 5 respondents disagreed with this statement compared with 8% of respondents from other schools who disagreed. This resulted in overall agreement with the statement for school 5 being 100%, while the same figure for other schools was 91%.

Six out of ten (61%) respondents strongly agreed that *the leadership team models what it means to be a Salesian educator* (statement 13). There was 14% more support for this in school 5 than there was from the other schools (61% against 47%). At the same time 5% of school 5 respondents disagreed with this statement, whereas 8% of those responding from other schools disagreed. The overall percentages of agreed and strongly agreed was still in excess of 90%, however.

For school 5, almost seven out of ten (68%) respondents strongly agreed that *staff feel part of a Salesian community marked by inclusion* (statement 14). This was a significantly greater level of strong agreement when compared with other schools (68% compared with 51%). It is also worthy of note that this was the highest level of strong agreement for statement 14, that staff feel part of a Salesian community marked by inclusion, out of all of the other schools surveyed. Nevertheless, it is important to note that 8% of respondents disagreed with this statement. While this was broadly similar in comparison with other schools, it still equates to almost one in ten of the respondents to this statement, in school 5 and across the other schools surveyed, not agreeing that they felt part of a Salesian community marked by inclusion. This is significant due to its potential for undermining the sense of belonging for pupils and staff which Don Bosco viewed as critical for the young people in his care to flourish. To facilitate pupil belonging, staff must also feel that they belong; there may be an

inclination to underestimate the need for staff to feel included in order for them to fully engage with implementing the Salesian charism, which is inclusive by its nature.

#### D. Pressures

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree/Agree
16. In this school students are encouraged to participate in extra curricular activity	76	21	0	3	97
17. Academic excellence is the number one priority at this school	19	42	36	3	61
18. Concerns around external inspection are at the forefront in the lives of teachers and students	16	24	52	8	40
19. Extra-curricular activities at this school help students to grow as persons	74	26	0	0	100
20. Performance management for teachers focuses predominantly on academic outcomes.	16	47	34	3	63

Table 25 Analysis of respondents to statements 16 to 20 on Pressures for School 5

The level of strongly agreed support that *students are encouraged to participate in extracurricular activity* (statement 16) stood at 76% which was 12% higher than for other schools (76% as opposed to 64%). A very small percentage of respondents disagreed with this statement resulting in 97% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed. This pattern was reflected in the responses to statement 19, *extra-curricular activities at this school help students to grow as persons*, where there was virtually the same level of strong agreement at 74%, with no disagreement. It was worth noting that this level of strong agreement for this statement was 10% higher than for other schools.

The pattern of responses to statements 17, 18 and 20 exhibit a different profile. Less than one in five respondents (19%) strongly supported statement 17 that *academic excellence is the number one priority*; this was significantly lower than the figure for other schools (19% against 33%). More than one in three (36%) of respondents disagreed with this statement, with 3% expressing strong disagreement. This was a considerably higher level of disagreement than for other schools (36% compared with 23%).

The pattern of response for statement 18, *concerns about external inspection are at the forefront of the minds of staff and pupils* and statement 20, *performance management focuses predominantly on academic outcomes*, was very similar with less than one in five of respondents strongly agreed and between a half and a third of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed. These figures were significantly higher than for other schools. It is also worthy of note that the aggregated totals (agreed plus strongly agreed) for statements 17,18 and 20 were much lower, than for all other statements, at 61%, 40% and 63%, respectively.

#### 10.8.1 Discussion

As for previous schools there was strong support for the five statements related to Charism and Ethos, with strong agreement at 70% or above for statements 1 to 5, with the exception of statement 3, relating to the school investing resources to make sure *pupils were supported in their work* when strong agreement decreased to just over 50%, with 8% of respondents disagreeing.

There was a similar picture with statements 6 to 10 on Accompaniment with around seven out of ten respondents in strong agreement with statements 6 to 9. Statement 10, *spiritual development was a key concern of leadership of the school*, was the exception, with the level of strong agreement below one out of two respondents, at 47% and with 8% of respondents who disagreed. These figures were comparable with other schools, perhaps suggesting that respondents do not have the same level of conviction that *spiritual development of the school is a key concern for leadership*.

With statement 12, *formation in Salesian values forms a part of the school's CPD programme*, school 5 was approximately 8% ahead of other schools, with more respondents strongly agreed (55% against 47%) compared with other schools. In contrast, while 7% of other schools disagreed with this statement, none of the respondents from school 5 disagreed. Similarly, the response to statement 13 also displayed a significantly higher percentage strongly agreed, that *the leadership model what it means to be a Salesian educator*, by 14 percentage points compared with other schools surveyed (61% compared with 47%). This pattern was repeated, to the same degree, in the strong support of school 5 respondents for statements 9, *opportunities for collective worship* and statement 11, *awareness of Salesian priests, brothers and sisters*, which were up to 5% greater than for other schools

The fact that there was a high level of strong agreement, as expressed by respondents to statement 11, *I am aware of the presence of Salesian priests, Brothers or Sisters around the school* and statement 14, *staff feel part of a Salesian community marked by inclusion*, were consistently at 70% or above, and also in the top two highest levels of strong support for these statements across all schools, which may be seen as significant. This suggests greater clarity from the respondents of school 5 in terms of understanding how, having a sense of belonging and having role models in the school,



can facilitate collaboration in a Salesian context. The pattern of the respondents of school 5 to statements 19, *extra-curricular activities help students to grow* and statement 2, *young people in need are a focus for this school* were very similar with upwards of 75% of respondents strongly agreed.

As above, these were two of the highest rates of respondents expressing strong agreement across all schools. This again suggests a clarity amongst the respondents of school 5 to the very practical expressions of operating within a Salesian charism, against a background of competing pressures as a result of the school improvement agenda.

## 10.9 School 6 Analysis

Number of School 6 respondents: 64

Total respondents: 237

### A. Charism

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree/Agree
1. I understand Don Bosco's message that the young must know that they are loved is practised on a daily basis in this school	66	34	0	0	100
2. Young people in need are a focus for this school	53	44	3	0	97
3. The school invests resources in ensuring young people feel supported in their work	47	47	6	0	94
4 In this school staff often 'go the extra mile' in terms of engaging students and keeping them on board	84	16	0	0	100
5. In this school it would be easy for students to name a teacher they admire	89	19	2	0	98

Table 26 Analysis of respondents to statements1 to 5 on Charism for School 6

The percentage of responses strongly agreed that *Don Bosco's message that the young must know that they are loved* (statement 1) is practised on a daily basis, for school 6, was 14% lower than the level of strong agreement from other schools (66% compared with the 82%). It is of note that this was the lowest percentage of support for strong agreement across all of the schools surveyed on this statement. Although no respondents from school 6 disagreed and the aggregate score for agreed and strongly agreed responses was 100%, the scale of the difference in strong support compared with the other schools surveyed, was noteworthy.

Only one in two of respondents strongly agreed that *young people in need are a focus for this school* (statement 2). There was a relatively small level of disagreement at 3%,

resulting in an overall aggregate score for agreement which was 97%. This pattern was reflected in the responses to statement 3, *the school invests resources in ensuring young people feel supported in their work* with less than one in two (47%) of respondents agreed but with a slightly higher level of disagreement at 6%. The aggregated score for agreement together with strong agreement still registered above 90%. The lower level of strong agreement for statements 2 and 3 does stand out and is worthy of note.

More than eight out of ten (84%) respondents agreed that *In this school staff often 'go the extra mile' in terms of engaging students and keeping them on board* (statement 4) which was equal to the response from other schools. With a further 14% in agreement and no disagreement expressed by school 6 respondents, the aggregated support (agreed plus strongly agreed responses) was 100%. Almost 9 out 10 (89%) of school 6 respondents strongly agreed that *in this school it would be easy for students to name a teacher they admired* (statement 5) which was significantly higher than for other schools (74%). Only 2% of respondents disagreed with this statement, which was similar to the level of disagreement for other schools, giving an overall aggregated level of agreement at 98%

While it was interesting to observe the wide variations in strong support for statements 1 to 5 from school 6, compared with the responses of other schools, when the levels of strongly agreed support fell, at times to one out of every two staff (50%), this could be viewed as significant, even though the percentage of overall support (agreed plus strongly agreed) for the 5 statements was virtually 100%. Whether a result of this nature may be due to the perception of staff with regard to question 1 to 5, or a certain lack of clarity with the particular area, will be a point for discussion later in this chapter.

## B. Accompaniment

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree/Agree
6 As a staff member I fully realise the importance of the Salesian style of accompanying young people	80	20	0	0	100
7. I understand the key components of Salesian education (school, playground, home and church) and how they work together	75	24	1	0	99
8. Students in this school know that they receive respect, understanding and acceptance from staff on a daily basis	52	47	1	0	99
9. Collective worship (Mass, Sacrament of Reconciliation, Assemblies) features prominently in the life of the school	67	31	3	0	98
10. Spiritual development is a key concern of the leadership of the school	39	52	9	0	91

Table 27 Analysis of respondents to statements 6 to 10 on Accompaniment for School 6

Intriguingly almost 80% of staff in school 6 strongly agreed that they fully realised the importance of the *Salesian style of accompanying young people* (Statement 6) which was almost identical to the percentage for other schools (80% against 79%). There was no disagreement so that the aggregated scores for agreed and strongly agreed totalled 100%.

For statement 7, three quarters of staff in school 6 strongly agreed that *they understand the key components of Salesian education*, which was slightly higher than for other schools (75% against 69%). There was some low level disagreement with this statement resulting in almost 100% of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with the statement.

There was a very similar pattern of responses to statement 8, *students in this school know they receive respect, understanding and acceptance from staff on a daily basis*. Just over half (52%) of respondents strongly agreed with this statement as compared with two thirds (67%) of respondents from other schools. Similarly, this was the lowest level of strong support from all of the schools surveyed on this statement. As with statement 6, there was little disagreement, so the aggregated percentage of strongly agreed and agreed responses was again close to 100%.

Respondents to statement 9, there are *opportunities for collective worship*, were approximately in accordance, in terms of strong agreement, with other schools (67% compared with 68%). The percentages for those who disagreed were slightly at variance (2% compared with 5%). Despite this, the combined total, aggregating agreed and strongly agreed responses, for school 6 and the other schools were still in the mid to high nineties, percentage wise.

A different viewpoint emerges with regard to statement 10, *spiritual development is a key concern of the leadership*. For school 6 respondents, the percentage who strongly agreed with this statement was some way below 50% at 39%. Other schools were closer to the halfway mark registering 48% strongly agreed. The percentages disagreeing with this statement were similar for school 6 (10%) as compared with other schools (8%). Despite this, the aggregated percentage of agreed and strongly agreed responses exceeded 90% for this school and for other schools.

## C. Collaboration

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree/Agree
11. I am aware of the presence of Salesian priests, Brothers or Sisters around the school	66	30	4	0	96
12. Formation in Salesian values forms a part of the school's continuing professional development programme	47	45	6	2	92
13. The leadership team model what it means to be a Salesian educator	34	50	16	0	84
14. Staff feel part of a Salesian community marked by inclusion	45	45	10	0	90
15. Maintaining the Salesian education vision is a key priority for the school	51	47	2	4	98

Table 28 Analysis of respondents to statements 11 to 16 on Collaboration for School 6

Strong support for the statement 11, *I am aware of the presence of Salesian priests, brothers or sisters*, revealed a marked difference between school 6 (66%) and other schools (78%). The percentage in disagreement for school 6 stood at 4% as opposed to 1% for other schools. This suggests that in school 6 there was not the same awareness of the presence of Salesian religious in the school.

The percentages strongly agreeing with statement 12, *formation in Salesian values is part of the school CPD programme*, in school 6, was the same as for other schools at 47%; there was a similar level of disagreement also at 8%. The percentage agreeing or strongly agreeing still reached above 90% however, though there seems less conviction overall about strong agreement with this statement.

Analysis of statement 13, *the leadership team model what it means to be a Salesian educator*, highlighted a significant difference between the percentage of school 6 respondents who agreed strongly, which is down to one third (34%), against strong agreement for this statement amongst other schools (51%). The percentage disagreeing was much higher for school 6 (16%) when compared with the other schools (5%). These two figures combined to suggest there was less conviction in support of this statement in school 6, than in other schools even though the combined agreed and strongly agreed responses was above 80% for both school 6 respondents and those from other schools.

The level of strong support for statement 14, *staff feel part of a Salesian community marked by inclusion*, fell below 50% and is 6% lower than the response from other schools (45% against 51%). Of additional significance is the 9% of responses disagreeing with statement 11. While this was broadly comparable with other schools (8% disagreeing) it represented almost one out of ten respondents.

A similar profile of responses was seen to statement 15, *maintaining the Salesian education vision is a key priority for the school*, where 52% of school 6 respondents strongly agreed compared with 62% from other schools, which is a difference of ten percentage points. Conversely, the percentage of responses in disagreement was as low as 2%. This was similar to other schools, leaving the overall support for agreed or strongly agreed at 98%.

## D. Pressures

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree/Agree
16. In this school students are encouraged to participate in extra curricular activity	56	39	5	0	95
17. Academic excellence is the number one priority at this school	37	41	22	0	78
18. Concerns around external inspection are at the forefront in the lives of teachers and students	28	34	34	4	62
19. Extra-curricular activities at this school help students to grow as persons	58	40	2	0	98
20. Performance management for teachers focuses predominantly on academic outcomes.	20	42	27	1	62

Table 29 Analysis of respondents to statements 16 to 20 on Pressures for School 6

Regarding *encouraging students to participate in extra-curricular activity*, (statement 16), just over half of respondents in school 6 strongly agreed which was 9% less than other schools (56% compared with 64%). In addition, 5% of respondents disagreed with this statement, but this still left 95% agreed or strongly agreed that students are encouraged to participate in extra-curricular activity. This was almost exactly replicated in the levels of agreement expressed by school 6 respondents to statement 19, *extra-curricular activities at this school help students to grow as persons* with almost 6 of 10 (58%) of respondents strongly agreed and a further 40% agreed. Only 2% of respondents disagreed resulting in an aggregate score of overall support at 98%. The responses from other schools to this statement were at similar levels to statement 16.

In response to statement 17, *academic excellence is the number one priority at this school*, 37% of responses are in agreement compared with 33% for other schools. Of



equal significance was that 1 in 5 respondents disagreed with this statement which was comparable with other schools (22% against 23%).

Responses to statement 18, that *concerns around external inspection* were at the forefront of the lives of teachers and students showed some similarities to responses to statement 17, regarding *academic excellence being a priority*. For statement 18, less than 30% of staff strongly agreed that concerns around inspection were at the forefront, which was higher though comparable, for other schools (28% compared with 23%). In contrast, more than 30% of school 6 respondents disagreed with this statement which again broadly compared with other schools (34% against 39%).

The level of strong support for statement 20, *performance management for teachers focuses predominantly in academic outcomes*, was lower than for other schools (20% against 25%) while the level of respondent disagreement was higher (30% against 27%). This may also be of significance.

#### 10.9.1 Discussion

The high levels of agreement for statement 4, *in this school staff often 'go the extra mile' in terms of engaging students and keeping them on board*, and statement 5, *in this school it would be easy for students to name a teacher they admire*, with eight out of ten responders strongly agreeing, contrasted with statement 2, *young people in need are a focus for this school* and statement 3, *the school invests resources in ensuring young people feel supported in their work* when the strongly agreed responses were at or below 50%. Even the two thirds (66%) of respondents strongly agreed with *young people understanding that they were loved* (statement 1) was

significantly behind the percentage for other schools. At the same time, it is important to note that the aggregated result of strongly agree and agree totals for each of these five statements related to charism, remained above 90%, indicating strong support overall.

In reinforcement of this, with regard to statements 11 to 15 on collaboration, only 1 in 2 respondents strongly agreed with statement 15, that *maintaining the Salesian educational vision is a key priority for the school* in contrast with roughly two thirds of respondents from other schools (52% compared with 67%). With less than 2% disagreeing overall, support was still approaching 100%. Similarly, less than one in two responders offered strong support for statement 14, that *staff feel part of a Salesian community marked by inclusion* which was again low compared with other schools (45% compared 54%). In addition, almost one in ten of responders disagreed with this statement, which was higher than for other schools (10% compared with 7%). While it has been noted that the aggregate of agreed and strongly agreed support for statement 14 still exceeded 90%.

In the area of competing pressures (statement 16 to 20) there were similar patterns of response. For example, with statement 16, *students are encouraged to participate in extra-curricular activity*, 11% fewer respondents from school 6 strongly supported this statement than for other schools (56% against 67%). This same pattern was reflected in the responses to statement 19 *extra-curricular activities at this school help students to grow as persons*. With relatively little disagreement in both cases the overall aggregate of strongly agreed and agreed responses was in the mid to high nineties in terms of percentages. It is worth noting however that statements 16 and 19, although ostensibly about topics related to extra-curricular activity, did not

generally generate such high levels of agreement for school 6 as they had with schools 1, 2 and 5.

The reduced levels of strong agreement outlined above can be identified with even lower levels of strong support for statement 10, *spiritual development is a key concern of the leadership of this school* and statement 13, *the leadership model what it is to be a Salesian educator*. For both of these statements, a similar pattern was visible with the level of strong agreement for school 6 responders 10% to 15% lower than for other schools. Taken together, the comparatively low level of strong support for the statements cited above by school 6 respondents, compared with other schools, may indicate a higher level of uncertainty amongst staff in relation to these statements. This may be significant when compared with the perceptions of headteachers.

The pattern of responses for statements, 17, 18 and 20, contrasts with the responses of respondents to statements 16 and 19, with significantly lower levels of strong agreement (below 40%) and significantly higher levels of disagreement (as high as 34%). While accepting the importance of striving for academic excellence and being cognisant of the need for external inspection, respondents from school 6 appeared to be inclined towards the need to demonstrate that these aspects were not dominant in the minds of all teachers.

## 10.10 Conclusion

Having analysed the responses of each individual school, in the questionnaires completed by teachers, and compared these results across all of the schools surveyed, these responses will now be compared and contrasted with those of

headteachers. This will involve considering areas of resonance and dissonance between the sentiments expressed by the headteachers and those expressed by the teaching staff.

## **CHAPTER 11**

### **INTERPRETATION OF FIELDWORK RESEARCH IN THE LIGHT OF THE LITERATURE REVIEWED**

#### **11.1 Introduction**

In Chapter 2 a detailed analysis of the Salesian charism was engaged in, encompassing key aspects such as St John Bosco's educational vision and the centrality of a 'family spirit', underpinned by a self-sacrificing style of teaching and leadership, reflecting Sullivan's notion of a substantial, as opposed to superficial, level of commitment. The concept of a holistic formation permeates the narrative encapsulated in Bosco's iconic aphorism, 'honest citizens and good Christians'

In this chapter key points from the analysis of headteacher interviews, which were classified in Chapter 9, will be drawn out through an exploration of the main themes identified by the headteachers as priorities facing them. The content of this analysis will then be compared with the responses of teachers in the questionnaires they completed which were considered in chapter 10. The four themes identified in the literature search namely charism, accompaniment, collaboration and pressures, will feature prominently in this analysis. Points of resonance will be identified, alongside points of dissonance. This will lead, in the final chapter, to the drawing of conclusions in answer to the research question posed at the outset of this study, which considered the extent to which it is possible to maintain the Salesian Charism in Salesian schools in a contemporary secular context in England. Finally, the thesis will be brought to a close with a set of recommendations as to how the Salesian charism might be better maintained in Salesian schools in England into the future.

## 11.2 Headteacher Interviews – Summary Points

### Charism

The Salesian charism, as set out by Don Bosco in the initial founding of his work in Turin, is rooted in educating young people through the use of reason and loving kindness. It is centred on treating each young person with the respect and understanding which is their due. It is also relational in that it encourages those implementing it not to hold to a superior to inferior, or authoritarian, model of education but a relational model that sets out to accompany young people in making the best choices for their present and future development. Religion is the third part of the trinomial, set out by Don Bosco, alongside reason and loving kindness. While the Salesian charism is able to thrive in a variety of environments, due to its focus on inculcating a culture of respect and understanding, religion, for Don Bosco, still played a crucial role in providing young people with a moral framework for making life decisions.

For the accompaniment of young people, which is at the heart of the Salesian charism, to be effective, 'young people must not only be loved but know that they are loved' in the words of Don Bosco. This is not an indulgent option but it can be achieved by teachers being actively present to young people, not only in the classroom but also in their recreation and by going the extra mile in accompanying them in extra-curricular activities. This must be achieved by respecting the unique identity and freedom of each young person and by safeguarding their welfare at all times.

Understanding a Salesian school as having elements that are familial (home), educational (school), recreational (playground) and liturgical / spiritual (parish), is also important in appreciating that the development of young people in a school context should contain elements of home and parish, while facilitating the recreational and spiritual needs of the young. It is essential that this development is modelled by teachers and leaders who understand the key dynamics of the charism and are knowledgeable in modelling it to other staff and to students. This begins with the witness of the headteacher of the school. The focus of this development is that young people will themselves become protagonists in taking up opportunities for leadership, initially in secure spaces, where they can be an example to others in becoming role models of 'good Christians and honest citizens'.

### Modelling the Charism

When interviewed several headteachers highlighted the need for teachers and leaders, in particular, to model the charism, reflecting a recent statement by Pope Francis which emphasised its significance in contrast to simply articulating the nature of the charism:

Dear friends, in these years of my Pontificate I have sought to privilege the gesture of foot washing, following the example of Jesus who at the Last Supper took off his cloak and washed his disciples' feet one by one. The washing of feet is undoubtedly an eloquent symbol of the Beatitudes proclaimed by the Lord in the Sermon on the Mount and of their concrete expression in works of mercy. With this gesture, the Lord wanted to leave us "an example so that you may do as I have done" (*Jn 13:15*). Indeed, as Aquinas teaches, with such an extraordinary action, Christ "showed all the works of mercy" (*Commentary on John 13*). Jesus knew that when it comes to inspiring human action, examples are more important than a flood of words.

Pope Francis' reference to examples being more important than a flood of words, represents a perennial theme across the interviews with headteachers.

With regard to the importance of modelling one headteacher stated:

Salesian ethos is a shared experience both nationally and internationally.

Role models are important in terms of identifying who I am and whom I can be in terms of communicating the eternal truths.

They went on to elaborate

we cannot simply assume staff get it (the charism). We need to be modelling it every day. We need to be educating them about the role of St. John Bosco also.

They went on to explain that having a model, or a way of being with young people to follow, is essential and added 'we have this modelled by Religious in school. They model the charism really well.' One headteacher commented on Religious 'being that example in and through their presence and work, even though this goes through many different personalities' and continued 'young Salesians, by their example and tradition, clearly demonstrate we are here for young people.'

It is not only religious who can model the Salesian charism, however. Lay staff, with the correct formation and training, are capable of carrying the implementation of the Salesian charism forward and further developing it to meet the needs of the times. Nevertheless, this requires individuals who not only demonstrate a high level of understanding and personal commitment but people of integrity who are able to put into practice the approach that they advocate, with both students and staff. One headteacher recognised the importance of recruitment, in this regard, in terms of getting 'the right people here'.

The need for conviction, as well as personal integrity, with regard to modelling the implementation of the Salesian charism, becomes even more important when considering those who exercise leadership. The need to be able to authentically model



the charism is essential, if staff are to take exhortations regarding the importance of implementing the Salesian charism seriously. This highlights the need to identify candidates for leadership, who are not only able to articulate the charism's key elements but who have the commitment and the knowledge to implement it. A headteacher commented that adopting a 'humane model of leadership which is Christocentric (but not a soft option), gives people, staff and students, permission to behave the same.' Emphasising the key dimension of the role of leadership, a further headteacher emphasised that 'servant leadership is important.'

This perspective is reinforced by the message Don Bosco, sent to his students and priests in 1884, near to the end of his life, referenced earlier. Don Bosco, who was in Rome at the time, wrote a letter to his Salesians who were working mainly in and around Turin. Written in the form of a dialogue with past students of the oratory, (which incorporated elements of school, parish, playground and home), the letter described to the Salesians how things were in the early days, with Salesians present to young people not only the classroom but in the playground, participating with them in their recreational activities. This helped to encourage an open atmosphere in building a relationship of respect and trust between the young people and those responsible for their education and care. For Don Bosco, this kind of informal relationship was based on love. He stated:

'You cannot have love without this familiarity, and where this is not evident there can be no confidence. If you want to be loved, you must make it clear that you love. Jesus Christ made himself little with the little ones and bore our weaknesses. He is our master in the matter of the friendly approach'.

As stated previously he went on to add:

‘The teacher who is seen only in the classroom is a teacher and nothing more; but if he joins in the pupils' recreation he becomes their brother’<sup>169</sup>.

Each headteacher interviewed emphasised the importance of having effective role models in school, persons capable of demonstrating to staff how the Salesian charism might be implemented on a daily basis. For some this focused on recruiting the best leaders. For others it focused on having Salesians in school, modelling the charism and maintaining close and active links with the local community. They saw this ultimately benefitting the school through the additional support it offered. This focus on the need for modelling the charism by people of conviction, is reflected in the words of Pope St Paul VI (1975:41) in *Evangelii Nuntiandi* where he stated:

‘modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses’.

## Formation

Just as Pope St Paul VI emphasises the importance of witnessing in the present context, he also stresses the importance of the use of verbal and written communication stating:

‘The word remains ever relevant, especially when it is the bearer of the power of God. [70] This is why St. Paul's axiom, "Faith comes from what is heard," also retains its relevance: it is the Word that is heard which leads to belief’.

(Pope Paul VI 1975:42)

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<sup>169</sup> Bosco G, *Letter from Rome* Salesian Sources 1 Don Bosco and his Work, *Kristu Jyoti Publications* 2017 (Original publisher LAS Rome, 2014), p506

Alongside modelling therefore, the formation and training of staff was identified as a priority. One headteacher set out their belief that 'adult formation of teachers as Salesian educators' is a necessary step alongside the 'practical witness of Salesians of Don Bosco which is invaluable' in developing ethos. Refining this point, another headteacher emphasised that it was 'essential that Salesian values are at the core of the understanding of the ethos of the school' and that 'ensuring the induction of new teachers with the Salesian ethos' is a key step in implementing this. Some headteachers spoke about the strategies they had set out, such as seeking to incorporate training into the school's continuous professional development programme commenting that:

Salesian INSETs have been introduced recently', but 'one day of induction is not sufficient. It (the Salesian charism) must be taught specifically to people. School needs to take the key messages and discuss them in quality time.

A further headteacher pointed to the need for training stating 'we cannot assume new staff understand the ethos of the school. We incorporate training in Salesian ethos and understanding into staff training' emphasising 'this needs to be taught to new staff members'. Headteachers further identified that staff need 'the knowledge of what Salesian means' together with resources that explain 'what it means to work in a Salesian school'. They were appreciative of the written resources provided by *Don Bosco Publications* in this regard. While there were no explicit references to embedding values in modelling, one headteacher commented on the linking of the principles of RUAH with the performance management of teachers.

## RUAH

In relation to promoting understanding of the Salesian charism and relating this to staff formation, headteachers were appreciative of the initiative promoting RUAH (Respect, Understanding, Affection and Humour), referenced in the literature review, as a way of helping staff to understand key principles involved in the implementation of the charism. Headteachers felt that staff could easily identify with treating young people with respect and understanding and that this was not dependent on their religious background. They also commented that this is a vehicle which can be used to promote deeper Salesian values and the resilience which young people need, in order to make the best use of their educational opportunities. Promoting respect and understanding is crucial in the development of the preventive system, as it is a two way process; staff treat students with respect and understanding, students reciprocate with respect towards staff. It is important, in this context, that staff understand it is they who take the initiative in putting this understanding into practice.

A further extension of this is the need for managers at all levels to treat staff with respect and understanding, at all times and vice versa. This applies to teaching as well as administrative and ancillary staff. If respect and understanding are to function as core values of a Salesian school, it is essential that this is modelled in the way that adults working on the school campus are treated and treat one another. This will be reflected in the evident quality of relationships.

## Relationships

While RUAH is referenced by many headteachers and teachers, there may be some concern that the focus on RUAH may have obscured other aspects of Salesian practice such as staff making the first move and 'going the extra mile'. Nevertheless, the implementation of the values and ideals expressed in RUAH, is essential in building the relationships that are necessary for the education of young people to flourish. Ensuring students and staff are treated with respect and understanding, creates an environment of mutual trust and acceptance, where both are able to give of their best and to build resilience in the present and for the future. Don Bosco's guideline that the young 'must not only be loved but must know that they are loved' is important in this regard. This is not a sentimental option but a fundamental commitment to work for the advancement of young people in order that they have the strength of character and the conviction to make their way in the world as 'good Christians and honest citizens', making a positive contribution in influencing society for the better. From his own experience of losing his father at two years of age and having to earn a living as a sharecropper working on the land, with no serious prospects of ever being able to afford to be educated, Don Bosco understood the importance of the relationships he had been able to build with people of different generations, who had assisted him in a variety of ways, to complete his schooling and then to undertake theological studies in the seminary to become a priest and a teacher.

Building character, therefore, is an essential element of a Salesian education that is holistic. The development of young people takes place through practical engagement, not simply in academic education, but through activities and challenges that test and stretch them physically, emotionally and spiritually, taking them beyond their current capacities, encouraging them to realise their latent potential. Networking and

confidence building, through engaging in new challenges in a supportive environment, are essential if young people are to grow and to develop.

Building character, as well as assisting in developing resilience, also promotes a healthy relational atmosphere in a school context. One headteacher spoke of harnessing relationships and working closely with a team to 'ensure staff wellbeing'. Another commented that it is the 'relationships and warmth that sustains people and helps the community maintain each other.' This sentiment was echoed by another who stated that 'hard work, building relationships and educating the heart, not just the mind, engages children and parents.' A further headteacher perceptively linked educating the heart to classical Salesian contexts such as the relevance of loving kindness and engaging with children and parents, 'making the first move' thereby indicating a holistic approach.

#### Presence / Encounter

Other headteachers were supportive of the view that transformational education begins with encounter. They went on to add that 'being present to.. is all about encounter.' The ability to be present to staff and pupils was cited as an embodiment of what it is to be human and an enactment of the gospel. A further opinion was that the example of 'being present' needed to begin at the top of the school to maintain credibility.

The senior staff need to model this presence, walking alongside pupils is also essential for the charism to have credibility. It is a challenge to meet the challenge of being present to the children.

For Don Bosco, the active presence of educators with young people was essential for the building of trusting relationships and promoting the smooth running of the institution. It was also essential for the maintenance of good order and the promotion of safe practices through the implementation of the preventive system of education. One headteacher referred to 'five pillars of ethos' they sought to develop, one of which was initiative. This is very much in line with the Salesian charism. Don Bosco saw it as essential that educators are prepared to make the 'first move' in being present and initiating encounter, dispensing with a superior-inferior relationship, in order to build trust. This happens through organising and participating in activities beyond the classroom, as well as through high quality teaching and learning. Involvement in extra curricula activities has the effect of building trust, resilience and the sense of belonging to a community.

#### Service / Disadvantaged

In respect of serving those who were least advantaged, some headteachers were acutely aware that when some family structures were not in place, the school needed to play a role in replicating them. Another expressed that service to young people, families and the wider community, was the foundation of a school's approach to ethos and that staff needed to understand they were 'serving the local community.' To implement this perspective can be extremely demanding for staff and yet, support for families is at the heart of the Salesian charism.

The Salesian constitutions, and indeed the act of commitment Salesians make every day, describes following Don Bosco in making an 'option for the poor.' This can seem attainable as an ideal but it becomes all too real when schools are faced with decisions

about the allocation of resources and of staff time. Headteachers were happy to acknowledge this with one stating that the 'preferential option for the poor can sometimes not sit easily with pupils and staff.' They were also keen to stress that Catholic education is open to all people of all backgrounds.

Rather than getting into a discussion of what does and does not constitute poverty or disadvantage, the Salesian approach focuses on the building up of what is referred to as the local educational and pastoral community (EPC). This involves stakeholders buying in, as it were, to being part of a community that educates and safeguards all participants, managing the constituent parts into a coherent whole. As one headteacher put it 'There is a place for everyone at this table if you are participating'.

The strategy of animating what is referred to as the educational and pastoral community (EPC) in the locality, is a logical extension of identifying the elements of home, school, playground and church within the Salesian educational institution. The development of the educational and pastoral community, which will incorporate institutions such as primary and secondary schools, alongside parishes, can be nurtured together with the promotion and development of institutions such as secondary schools. This offers a wider vision of the secondary school playing its part, in conjunction with other structures such as parishes and parish schools, in building up the local faith community.

### Inclusion / Belonging

As participants, all stakeholders have a sense of belonging to the community and contribute to building it up. They are also beneficiaries, in that creating opportunities



for learning and personal development are a priority. In the case of a secondary school, this applies as much to senior leadership as to teaching staff, also to the clerical and the maintenance staff. On this matter, one headteacher commented 'We have made ethos relevant and they (staff) understand this. Inclusion is the driver.' Another spoke of the necessity of treating pupils with dignity and commented that the 'depth that adults are showing them this (i.e. dignity) has a direct impact on their 'wish to remain beyond the bell.' He attributed this to a 'feeling of belonging.'

At the entrance to the oratory, Don Bosco had the sign 'Questa e la mia casa' (This is my home), installed. What he established in Turin, after many years of moving around the city with groups of needy and sometimes feral boys, looking for somewhere to rest, was a home and a dwelling place, fundamentally a place of belonging for all who resided in or worked there. The term inclusion, the act of including or the state of being included (Collins online dictionary), is multifaceted. It tends to be focused on more technical matters such as whether the intake of each school is inclusive, in the sense that it is representative of society and of the local area. Staff, on the other hand, also need to feel included in a Salesian School and have a sense that they belong, if they are to give of their best. This point will be revisited in interpreting the teacher questionnaires.

### Narrative Distinctiveness

One headteacher was clear about the need to create and develop a distinctive narrative, for both teachers and students as a way of affirming the charism and ethos. Another made the perceptive comment that Salesian education is experiential, offering points of encounter, which allow staff to unpack the experience in order 'to discern its meaning.' A further headteacher emphasised that 'faith in practise; is key since

‘education is a matter of the heart’ and stated there is a practicality in ‘defining the culture as Salesian’ since ‘Salesian talks about a way of being that is inherently inculcating the good in life.’ Another took the view that the charism being focused toward those who were disadvantaged was a help to staff in understanding it.

The reality of narrative distinctiveness was reinforced by headteachers describing how they had experienced other colleagues wishing to use the Salesian ethos in their schools. They were of the view that this helped colleagues to give the Catholic ethos of their schools a more practical interpretation. For this reason, current headteachers of Salesian schools in England were clear that, to maintain distinctiveness, ‘it is essential that the story of the school is told to new leaders who may join and that this link continues going forward.’ Another headteacher contributed the view that new staff and leadership coming in must be ‘made aware of the ethos of the school and must be prepared to invest in it’.

This latter point is important when considering maintaining Salesian distinctiveness. Providing resources, in the form of literature and training, contributes, to an extent, to the promotion of Salesian distinctiveness. Staff investment however, in going the extra mile on behalf of students or putting in the time walking corridors during class to maintain a hospitable space for learning, as well as giving up recreation time to be on the yard with pupils in order to build and maintain relationships, all plays a significant part in building up and maintaining the distinctiveness of the school.

### Connectivity / Interrelatedness

One headteacher, commenting on the need for a sense of connection, stated that ‘anything that helps people stay connected’ is important as staff need to feel part of a

bigger picture.’ Many headteachers, as they responded to questions, were keen to highlight that connectivity and accessibility were strengths of the Salesian charism, aspects of which also crossover into the area of distinctiveness.

Another headteacher commented:

There is a lot of connectivity. We hang so much on Don Bosco - we are so lucky. How else do you make the ethos stick? The extra sense of responsibility is that I am carrying the baton of the school. Also if I don't work hard at it we could end up simply being a Catholic and not a Salesian school.

There was further recognition that the connectivity and interrelatedness of the charism were experienced firsthand in the pilgrimages, made mainly by senior leaders, to Turin, to visit the places where Don Bosco began his work for young people in need. They acknowledged that this gave senior leaders a wider appreciation of the international dimension of the Salesian charism. The sense of national connectedness arose from events such as the annual Salesian sports day, the Salesian schools' conferences and the shared training for prefects, school captains and mentors.

### Leadership / Succession

In terms of providing leadership, headteachers have emphasised the importance of 'having the right people to do it.' They also stressed the importance of people in positions of leadership 'taking the lead.' One headteacher asked 'what can we do to maintain and develop a model for Salesian leadership at a time when Salesians might not be visible'? They also raised the need for succession planning with regard to leadership.

In terms of styles of leadership, headteachers have spoken about seeking to adopt a Christocentric model, which is not seen as a soft option, alongside seeking to implement servant leadership. These are worthy ideals which are supported by Vatican documents on schools, which envisage Catholic schools encapsulating Gospel values, following in the footsteps of Christ. These values find resonance with the Salesian charism of the school, as the values that drive the implementation of the charism are one and the same.

It is important that headteachers also take the lead in this regard. One commented on the need for senior staff to be able to model Salesian presence. In an echo of the Emmaus model of accompaniment, they also viewed 'walking alongside pupils' as being 'essential, for the charism to have credibility'. Another highlighted that 'leadership teams must be involved in intelligent and intense Salesian formation'. A further headteacher commented on the need for finding time for staff, including the senior leadership of the school.

Another comment, made by a headteacher, spoke of the dangers of individualism and becoming isolated in the role; one commented on the loneliness of the headteacher role. While these may be manifestations of the current climate in education of ever-increasing accountability, they cannot be ignored. Schools are not only seen as having to address, day to day, challenges such as keeping pupils safe, raising attendance and maintaining standards, they are also seen as the agents of change in addressing wider issues in society, such as extremism. Headteachers have spoken of the need to maintain staff wellbeing in the midst of these competing pressures. In acknowledging this we must also acknowledge the need to maintain the wellbeing of headteachers against a background of ever increasing demands. Bringing headteachers together in an environment that offers support and a forum for discussing what is of concern, in

the absence of all of the additional pressures, is important in this regard as is the provision for reflective pilgrimage and retreat experiences. Being part of a wider national and international network, allows headteachers of Salesian schools the possibility of meeting with each other in a forum free from concerns about comparison and competition.

### Accountability

It is fair to say that headteachers are acutely aware of the school improvement agenda and its impact on leadership. As one observed 'it is fair to say for any headteacher in a faith school, the constant spectre of inspection or external advisors coming in,' is always a challenge. They spoke about the need to balance ensuring the quality of teaching and learning, alongside the spiritual development of the children. They also discussed the delicate balance between holding staff to account and maintaining staff wellbeing. In terms of maintaining the charismatic identity of the school against this backdrop of accountability, headteachers were both creative and innovative, as one commented:

Treat people with dignity and respect. Attempt to buffer staff against the tidal wave of accountability. Ensure Salesianity is maintained across the school. Staff support is crucial so that they are supported through mistakes.

Headteachers were also aware of their accountability for maintaining the ethos and religious identity of the school. One commented that 'self evaluation should genuinely include tough questions as to whether the religious identity of the school is being maintained'. Another embraced this in asserting that Catholic schools were set up to get the best out people; they were of the view that self-evaluation goes hand in

hand with being reflective people. Another expressed this in a different way stressing that 'self-evaluation is another form of taking a look at yourself and setting your priorities for the future.'

In terms of relating this to attainment a further headteacher's comment on raising standards may be apposite:

The specific dynamic of Salesian encouragement assists both staff and pupils in raising attainment. We are dedicated to improving results through the many interventions that staff provide such as after school evening classes and revision classes at weekends.

This observation not only acknowledges that there is no conflict between maintaining a Salesian charismatic identity, staff wellbeing and being accountable for standards. As one headteacher put it 'we would still be failing them (pupils) if we were not giving them the best teaching and learning.'

Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge the pressures that headteachers are under in meeting the demands of accountability for standards and performance while, at the same time, maintaining and developing the charismatic and religious identity of the school. While a number have expressed very eloquently that they see no dichotomy between these twin objectives, others have acknowledged the stresses this can bring to the role of headteacher:

It is easy to tip straight into accountability and getting caught up with that. We have to have high expectations of our staff in terms of what they are delivering... That balance in terms of the wellbeing of the staff is such a tricky tight rope to walk when you are leading a school.

## Standards

The school improvement agenda ensures that standards are never far from the minds of headteachers. It is a topic that comes near the top of the list of the competing pressures that headteachers are aware they must address. It is closely related to the cycle of inspection. The two are twin concerns because headteachers are acutely aware that the outcomes of inspection are closely related to the attainment of the school and how this relates to the progress made by students since their Key Stage 2 assessments.

From the perspective of standards, headteachers have to hold staff to account for performance while, at the same time, seeking to ensure their wellbeing is maintained. One pointed out it was not sufficient for staff to be nice and warm but 'not au fait with accountability' while expressing the view that 'dioceses identify success along Ofsted criteria.' Of a wider concern, expressed by one headteacher, was that the 'dominant meta narrative is valuing what can be assessed.' This did not cause headteachers to shy away from accountability for standards, however, as they spoke of staff needing to 'go the extra mile' with pupils in order to find success while, at the same time, reinforcing the dedication of staff to the pupils they have in front of them.

Headteachers are well aware of the need to monitor standards with one emphasising the importance of 'making sure there is a consistency in their (pupils') experience.' asserting that 'certain things need to be happening day to day, including the best quality teaching.' For this headteacher, this was part of ensuring 'that everything is rigorous' and that students get the best deal, which was their overarching priority:

Our aim is to give the children the best possible start to ensure their progress. We need to support children with resilience. There are great challenges financially, social media and casual violence. The school has a great reputation

for dealing with challenging children. We would still be failing them if we were not giving them the best teaching and learning, the best possible deal.

The sense of equipping students for the future also plays a role with headteachers acknowledging that their overall responsibility is to 'make sure that young people leave our school, at either sixteen or eighteen, with the qualifications that they need to be successful'. To this end they acknowledge that teaching and learning is their core business. Another spoke of the importance of establishing a lifelong passion for learning but also placed in context how educational success opened up opportunities for young people to progress in their lives:

I suppose with all schools making sure that the outcomes are strong is important as well. Just making sure young people have those keys for success that passport to success. And in some areas, less affluent areas potentially, that is more and more important.

This perspective fits very closely with Don Bosco's vision of forming 'honest citizens and good Christians'; able to earn their bread and to be a positive influence for good in society. In writing to a government minister of the time about the impact of his Salesian model of education, Don Bosco sets out the numbers of his students who have become doctors, lawyers, medics, teachers and includes those who have joined the military as well as those who earn an honest living as artisans. In setting out his record of success, Don Bosco is above all asserting that all of these young people are making a meaningful contribution to society in financial terms, earning their bread but he is also emphasising their moral and civic contribution through working hard and paying their taxes, stating clearly that, as a result of a successful education, they are no longer a burden to society or languishing in prisons.



## Recruitment

A substantial proportion of the headteachers surveyed, commented on the difficulty of recruiting sufficient staff, with the required level of conviction and commitment, to act as models or examples of how the charism can be implemented, in the practical and demanding environment of a school. One headteacher emphasised the need for authenticity, stating that it was key in recruiting teachers of quality who have the ability to integrate 'all aspects of the curriculum' alongside 'personal witness.' In their view the appointment of top quality teachers was 'essential to allow these dynamics to flourish.' Another headteacher expressed the need to recruit the right people and to 'get them to understand our way of doing things.' They also asserted the need to recruit staff who are 'energetic and enthusiastic,' who 'genuinely love children.' This latter point can be overlooked in the process of recruiting staff since it is a quality that is not easy to assess or measure. Alluding to the difficulties involved in recruitment, a further headteacher highlighted the 'pressures of recruitment when there is competition' and stressed that 'retaining key quality staff is key.'

### 11.3 Teacher Questionnaires – Resonances and Dissonances

Having summarised the points arising from headteacher interviews, the resonances and dissonances with the responses made in teacher questionnaires will now be considered, with a view to drawing conclusions. These will be framed against the four themes identified from the literature search of Charism, Accompaniment, Collaboration and Pressures. The initial analysis will be based on the responses of all of the two hundred and thirty-seven teachers working in Salesian schools who responded to the questionnaire. The particular resonances or dissonances in the responses of staff in individual schools, will also be considered.

Before reviewing the points of resonance and dissonance, it is important to acknowledge that overall support for fifteen out of the twenty teacher questionnaire statements, stands between 60% and 100% of respondents when agreed and strongly agreed responses are considered together, demonstrating clear overall support for implementing many of the key aspects of the Salesian charism. Where dissonance is noted, is in the variation in the level of strong support for individual statements. This can be as high 90% to 100% for some statements and as low as 40% to 50% for others. The variation in strong support, alongside the levels of disagreement, indicates the level of confidence responders have in expressing whether they strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with a given statement.

### 11.3.1 Resonances

#### A. Charism (Questionnaire statements 1, 4 & 5)

Eight out of ten of respondents overall expressed strong agreement with three out of the five statements addressing the theme of charism in teacher questionnaires (see chapter 10, Table 2). There was strong support for statement 1, *understanding young people know that they are loved*, statement 4, *staff going the extra mile in engaging students* and statement 5, *it would be easy for students to name a teacher they admire*. With little or no disagreement with these statements, the totalled support for agreed and strongly agreed responses, was virtually unanimous. There was a lower level of strong support for statement 2, *young people in need are a focus for the school*, with between six and seven out ten (65%) respondents strongly agreed. With little or no disagreement with this statement the overall support, as described above, was unanimous.

While there are similarities in the responses across schools with regards to statements 1 to 5, there are also some significant differences. Strong support for statement 1 registers as high as 80% to 90% for three of the schools out of the six schools surveyed (1, 2 and 5 – see Appendix 3); this strong support reduces to between 66% and 75% in the other three schools (3, 4 and 6) surveyed. There is a similar pattern for responses to statement 5, *young people are able to name a teacher they admire*, with the response of three schools (1, 2 and 5) registering strong agreement of between 80% and 90% of respondents while, for the remaining schools, strong agreement is recorded at between 60% and 70%. In both cases there is little or no disagreement. For statement 2, *young people in need are a focus for the school*, strong support ranges from 53% to 77%. In two of the schools surveyed (1 and 6), only 50% of

respondents strongly agreed whereas, in schools 2 and 5, 70% of responders strongly agreed that *young people in need are a focus for their school*. Strong agreement for the remaining two schools ranks at between 60% and 70%. Strong agreement with statement 4, *staff going the extra mile in engaging students*, is consistently at 70% or above across all of the schools surveyed.

The detail of this analysis not only indicates how much variation there is between schools, in terms of knowledge and understanding of elements of the Salesian charism but also of the perception of staff with regard to the implementation of specific aspects of the charism. The views expressed in the questionnaire by teachers can be at variance with the assertions made by headteachers, which is particularly relevant for this study into the extent to which it is possible to maintain the Salesian charism in Salesian schools in England.

#### B. Accompaniment (Questionnaire statements 6, 7 and 9)

In the area of accompaniment, two statements receive the strong support overall of seven out of ten teachers. Strong support for statement 6, concerned with *understanding the Salesian style of accompaniment*, is at almost 80% with little or no disagreement. Support for statement 7, which is concerned with *understanding the key components of Salesian education (Home, School, Parish, Playground)*, is slightly lower at just above 70% but still significant with no disagreement. Whilst overall support for statement 9, *collective worship features prominently*, is of a similar level to

that for statement 7 (68% compared with 71%) there is a small but noteworthy level of disagreement with this statement at 4%.

With regard to statement 6, *understanding the Salesian style of accompaniment*, schools 1, 2, 4 and 6, out of the six surveyed, offered strong support with above 80% of respondents in these four schools strongly agreed, with very little disagreement. For the remaining two schools, strong support is registered at between 67% and 73%. In the case of school 5 the lower level of strong support, at 67%, is accompanied by 3% disagreement with the statement. For statement 7, *I understand the key components of Salesian education (school, playground, home and church) and how they work together*, the profile of strong support across all six schools is more varied. Three schools (1, 5 and 6) record strong support at between 70% and 80%, with virtually no disagreement. For the other three schools strong support lies between 60% and 65%. Again there is little or no disagreement. Similarly for statement 9, *collective worship (Mass, Sacrament of Reconciliation, Assemblies) features prominently in the life of the school*, three schools (1, 4 and 5) register strong support at 70% and above. Interestingly, each of these schools records disagreement with this statement of between 3% and 4%. In the remaining three schools, strong support varies between 53% and 63%, with disagreement running at between 3% and 8%.

#### C. Collaboration (Questionnaire statements 11 and 15)

Approximately eight out of ten of the teachers overall are *aware of the presence of Salesian brothers, priests and sisters in school* (statement 11). There is little or no disagreement with this statement. The percentage of strong support for statement 15, *maintaining the Salesian education vision is a key priority for the school*, is

considerably lower than that for statement 11 with only 63% of responders in strong agreement, though there is little in the way of disagreement. This gives an overall aggregated score for agreed and strongly agreed of 99%.

In five out of the six schools (1, 2, 3, 4 and 5) surveyed, between 80% and 85% of respondents strongly agreed that they are *aware of the presence of Salesian brothers, priests or sisters in school*. In school 6 however, the level of strong support was reduced to 66% with 4% disagreeing. This might suggest that in school 6 there is less awareness of the presence of Salesian brothers, priests and sisters than in other schools characterised by the Salesian charism. There is considerable variation with regard to strong support for statement 15, *maintaining the Salesian education vision is a key priority for the school*, among the six schools surveyed. In two schools (1 and 5) the level of strong support is above 70%, with no disagreement. In a further two schools (2 and 3) strong support registers at between 65% and 67%, with no disagreement. Strong support in the final two schools (4 and 6) is between 51% and 52%. Only 2% of the respondents in these schools disagreed.

This latter analysis gives an indication that, even when the overall average response indicates significant levels of strong agreement with a particular statement, this agreement might not be consistent across all of the schools surveyed. This is worthy of note in the context of conclusions emanating from the analysis of these findings.

#### D. Pressures (Statements 16 and 19)

Statements 16 and 19, which both relate to extra-curricular activity, receive very similar levels of support in the overall responses. More than six out of ten responders are

strongly agreed that *students are encouraged to participate in extra-curricular activities* (Statement 16). A similar proportion of more than six out of ten responders are strongly agreed that *extra-curricular activities help students to grow as persons* statement 19).. For both of these statements there is 3% disagreement.

With individual schools there is a considerable level of variation in the strong support for statement 16. Three schools (1, 2 and 5) register strong agreement at 70% and over with little or no disagreement. For the other three schools (3, 4 and 6) strong agreement varies between 46% and 56%. In two of these three schools the level of disagreement quoted is 5% of respondents, which is approximately one in twenty of those who responded.

The patterns for statement 19, *extra-curricular activities help students to grow as persons*, is almost identical with strong agreement above 70% for schools 1, 2 and 5 and between 50% and 58% for schools 3, 4 and 6. In five out of the six school responses there is disagreement which ranges from 2% to 7%.

These variations notwithstanding, the aggregated percentage for agreed and strongly agreed responses for statements 16 and 19 ranges between 93% and 100%, indicating high levels of overall support for the promotion of extra-curricular activities in schools of a Salesian character.

### 11.3.2 Dissonances

#### A. Charism (Questionnaire statement 3)

Whilst, in schools 1 and 2, between six and seven out of ten respondents (68% and 63% respectively) strongly agreed with statement 3, the *school uses resources to support young people in their learning*, strong support from responders in the other four schools reduces to between 33% and 53%. In addition, disagreement with this statement varies between 4% and 8%.

These findings seem to imply a level of doubt, among some respondents, as to whether resources are indeed being used to support young people in their learning. This raises questions around the types of resources that might be used to assist students and whether these have been deployed. The fact that there is a consistent level of disagreement across five of the six schools surveyed, might imply that a significant minority of teachers do not view the school as entirely focused on ensuring young people have the resources they need for learning.

We must caveat these observations regarding statement 3 with the fact that overall agreement with this statement, when the agreed and strongly agreed responses are aggregated, registers between 90% and 100%, suggesting that overall agreement with the statements is strong.

#### B. Accompaniment (Questionnaire statements 8 and 10)

The level of strong support for statement 8, that *students receive respect, understanding and acceptance daily*, registers 63% when the response of all teachers are taken together, with little in the way of disagreement.



For the individual schools, three (1 , 2 and 5) register strong support for statement 8 of between 69% and 75%. Strong agreement in schools 3, 4, and 6 is lower, however, at between 52% and 59%. Interestingly there is no disagreement with this statement amongst these schools.

It is clear then that there is quite a varied picture when considering the statement that *students receive respect, understanding and acceptance on a daily basis*. While strong support from seven out of ten respondents is recorded in three schools (1, 2 and 5), it reduces to one in two respondents in the other three schools (3, 4 and 6) surveyed. Overall there is a much lower level of strong support for statement 10 with only 46% of respondents overall in strong agreement that *spiritual development is a key priority of leadership*. Approaching one in ten (8%) of respondents overall disagree with this statement.

In terms of the individual schools surveyed, 61% of school 1 respondents strongly agreed with statement 10, *spiritual development is a key priority of leadership*, whilst one in ten (10%) of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement. This pattern of disagreement is repeated across responses from schools 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6, which ranges between 4% and 14%. Strong agreement in these five schools varies between 39% and 46%, which is considerably lower than for school 1.

The lower level of strong support combined with the levels of disagreement suggests that not all staff are fully convinced that *spiritual development is a key priority of leadership*. The responses to both of these statement are of significance for what are important elements of the modelling and implementing of the Salesian charism.

### C. Collaboration (Questionnaire statements 12, 13 and 14)

Less than 50% of respondents overall were in strong agreement with statement 12, *formation in Salesian values forms part of the school CPD programme* and statement 13, *the leadership team model what it is to be a Salesian educator*. Strong support for statement 14, *staff feel part of a Salesian community marked by inclusion*, is only slightly higher at 51%. In all three cases approaching one in 10 (8%) respondents disagreed with each of these statements. The fact that these three statements relate to key aspects of the implementation of the Salesian charism (formation, modelling and inclusion) renders these results significant.

When the responses of individual schools are considered, the pattern is very similar. With regard to statement 12, *formation in Salesian values forms part of the school CPD programme*, the level of strong support varies between 18% and 55%; the level of disagreement ranges from 0 to 18%. The responses are similar for statement 13, *the leadership team model what it is to be a Salesian educator*, albeit the range is not quite as wide. Strong support for statement 13 ranges from 37% to 61%. Schools 1 and 3 also register a level of disagreement at 7%. The pattern of responses for statement 14, *staff feel part of a Salesian community marked by inclusion*, is similar again, in that the level of strong support varies from 37% to 68%. Only school 3 registers 7% disagreement with this statement which means for the other five schools, overall aggregated support (agreed plus strongly agreed responses) is recorded at 100%.

As stated above, the results for statements 12 and 13, are significant due to the fact that these statements relate to areas which are critical to the successful implementation of the Salesian charism. The reduction in strong support suggests that

there is a level of doubt among staff as to how committed the school and the leadership in particular, is to their implementation. Numbers of staff disagreeing with these statements is a further indication that their implementation may not be wholly secure. Levels of disagreement approaching one in ten of respondents, indicates that a small but significant number of them are of the view that implementation is less secure. This might mean that these are areas which might require reinforcing or strengthening.

#### D. Pressures (Questionnaire statements 17,18 & 20)

The levels of strong overall support for statements 17, *academic excellence is the number one priority*, statement 18, *concerns around external inspection are at the forefront of the minds of pupils and staff* and statement 20, *performance management focuses on academic outcomes*, are considerably lower than for any other set of statements in the questionnaire, with strong agreement at 33%, 24% and 24%, respectively. The levels of disagreement with each of these statements, aggregating both disagreed and strongly disagreed responses, is also unmatched for this survey at 24%, 43% and 31%, respectively. These results are significant.

Across individual schools the percentage of strong support for statement 17, *academic excellence is the number one priority*, ranges between 18% and 41% with the level of disagreement registering between 9% and 43%. The pattern with statement 18, *concerns around external inspection are at the forefront of the minds of pupils and staff*, is very similar with strong support ranging from 16% to 33% and disagreement varying between 20% and 60%. Statement 20, *performance management focuses on academic outcomes*, elicits a very similar response with strong support ranging from 16% to 40% and disagreement between 16% and 37%.

These three statements address areas concerned with aspects of external accountability for teachers. Teacher reaction to these statements is markedly different to their reaction to the previous 17 statements and possibly reflects Grace's observation that, market influences and accountability pressures, challenge the mission of contemporary Catholic schools. In discussing publicly funded schools in England, Grace (2002:51) concluded:

the danger is that contemporary Catholic schools may find a greater sense of confidence, achievement and public recognition by concentrating their energies in the market curriculum rather than in the relatively invisible outcomes of their spiritual and moral curriculum"<sup>170</sup>

Nevertheless, these responses should not simply be seen as negative but purely as informative, in terms of how teachers view these external competing pressures. The fact that there are significant levels of disagreement that *academic excellence is the number one priority of the school*, or that *performance management focuses on academic outcomes*, may be interpreted in a positive light, in the sense that staff do not all see these measures as defining the school, or its identity. Nevertheless, a clear majority of respondents overall either agreed or strongly agreed with each of these statements, demonstrating that the school improvement agenda remains prominent in the minds of teachers.

### 11.3 Headteacher priorities and teacher questionnaire responses

In answer to the first question of the structured interview, which asked headteachers to identify their priorities, headteachers listed the following: charism / ethos, standards,

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<sup>170</sup> Grace, G., (2002), *Catholic School: Mission, Markets and Morality*, London, Routledge

culture, recruitment (both staff and pupils), modelling and formation. These are listed (see table 7) in order of which received the highest number of citations in the course of the interviews.

This list reflected the responses made by headteachers across the additional eight questions in the semi structured interviews, which were ranked (see Chapter 9). The same six areas received the highest number of citations by headteachers in their answers to questions 2 to 9, albeit in a slightly different order. This offers a point of triangulation, in that the top six priorities identified by headteachers in their response to question 1, are mirrored in the analyses of the replies of the same headteachers to questions 2 to 9 namely: maintaining the Salesian charism and the distinctive ethos; maintaining the Catholic and Salesian culture of the school; maintaining standards; recruiting high quality staff and pupils; the formation and training of staff, modelling the charism and promoting role models.

It is important to highlight that modelling the charism and promoting role models, is mentioned by every headteacher in their responses to the nine questions used in the semi-structured interviews. While this topic does not feature high in the ranking of sub themes for each of the four identified areas: charism, accompaniment, collaboration and pressures due, in part, to the way the responses to questions 2 to 8 of the questionnaire, were assigned to the four key themes listed above, it still draws significant support. A more accurate picture of the importance of modelling the charism and promoting role models, is found in table 2 (chapter 9) which lists the responses of all headteachers taken together. In this analysis the only topics ranked higher than modelling / role models are charism, culture, standards and recruitment. It is clear, from the content of the research questions, that one might expect charism and culture to be cited most often, alongside the two pressures that headteachers perhaps feel

most keenly, standards and recruitment. Modelling the charism and promoting role models received the most citations and the highest frequency of citation, compared with any other sub theme cited. This demonstrates their critical importance, in the view of the headteachers, to successfully implementing the Salesian charism.

#### 11.4 Teacher Questionnaire responses

The questionnaires, made available electronically to every teacher in each school with a Salesian character in England, set out to explore the four themes identified in the literature search namely: charism, accompaniment, collaboration and pressures. Previous analysis alluded to earlier in this chapter, highlighted key areas of resonance as well as dissonance in the reaction of the teacher responders to the twenty statements (see chapter 10) in the questionnaire. These points of resonance and dissonance were discussed earlier.

While it is important that points of resonance are highlighted, while the views expressed by teacher responders seem to be largely in agreement with those expressed by their peers and by the headteachers of the schools, it is also important to note the points of dissonance. This is registered when the views expressed by teachers appear to be at variance with, or call into question, the views expressed by the headteachers.

A number of these areas have been highlighted, in the analysis set out earlier in the chapter. This analysis constitutes the basis from which to draw conclusions as to which areas require significant attention to bring about desired improvements in the delivery of strategies which are closely related to sustaining the Salesian charism, within

schools of a Salesian character in England. Some strategies related to the implementation of the Salesian charism can seem to be straightforward and almost mundane e.g. ensuring that every child in need is a focus for the school, but staff may not be wholly of the opinion that this dynamic is being consistently applied, either by leadership or by the staff themselves. This same rationale can apply to a dynamic such as promoting the involvement of students in extra-curricular activity, as a way of assisting their growth. There are further examples such as the leadership demonstrating that spiritual development is a key concern, in conjunction with modelling Salesian education and maintaining the Salesian Educational vision.

## **CHAPTER 12**

### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **12.1 Introduction**

A number of conclusions can be drawn from the analyses, initially set out in chapters 9 and 10, and summarised in chapter 11. These conclusions will be framed around the four themes identified from the literature search. Key drivers in maintaining the Salesian charism will be considered, before drawing up recommendations as to how maintaining the Salesian charism in Salesian schools in a contemporary secular culture can be improved.

#### **A. Charism**

From the evidence considered it is clear that there is a need for authentic modelling of how to implement the Salesian charism, at all levels in schools on a daily basis. In addition to this, a Salesian school needs to be rooted in its local community, serving the needs of that community, especially its weakest members, with a particular concern for young people who are disadvantaged.

In considering the role of leadership in securing the charism in Salesian schools, a number of conclusions can be drawn from the evidence presented. It is clear that the leadership of the school needs to retain a clear focus on maintaining the Salesian educational vision. There is also the need to actively ensure that spiritual development of staff and young people is a key priority of the school. Finally, leadership, starting with the headteacher, needs to consistently model what it means to be a Salesian educator.



## B. Accompaniment

Related to the importance of modelling, there is a need to develop and maintain effective role models / witnesses, including the presence of religious, in Salesian schools. This has been acknowledged by each headteacher and by teacher responses to the questionnaire.

Opportunities for collective worship, including appropriate liturgical celebrations such as celebrating Salesian feast days, should be utilised to reinforce the unique charismatic identity of the school. Alongside this, the Catholic and the Salesian character of the school must be promoted and celebrated at appropriate times, including during key moments in the church's liturgical year, with opportunities for the celebration of the sacraments and the provision of retreats for students and staff.

## C. Collaboration

It is necessary that the Gospel and Salesian values of the school are embedded through continuous professional development (CPD) and performance management processes, alongside the provision of literature, retreats and pilgrimages for staff. It is essential to ensure staff, as well as students, feel included in the school and its mission in the way that they are welcomed, involved and appreciated.

Training is required, beginning with induction processes for new staff, in key dynamics of the Salesian charism such as the importance of treating young people with respect and understanding (RUAH), of being present to young people and imbibing the key components of a Salesian institution as school, parish, home and playground.

There is a need for each school to be vigilant in forming new leaders who understand and embrace the Catholic and Salesian nature of Salesian schools in planning for succession. Alongside this leaders, including headteachers, must be supported in developing a clear understanding of the Salesian educational charism, in order to promote it in their schools,

### C. Pressures

Staff must be encouraged to be present to young people and to be prepared to 'go the extra mile' in terms of promoting opportunities for growth through extra-curricular activities, including school journeys, retreats, pilgrimages and other organised activities.

While being supportive in setting and maintaining standards, a Salesian school must promote the holistic development of young people through active programmes which encourage student involvement in leadership, working for justice and peace, catechetical support in preparation for receiving sacraments and being part of local, diocesan and national events such as diocesan pilgrimages, national Catholic youth programmes and national and international volunteering.

There is a need to ensure that strategies that reinforce Salesian identity such as the implementation of RUAH, understanding the key dynamics of Salesian education (playground, school, parish and home) and Salesian accompaniment, involvement in extra-curricular activity alongside leadership development, are incorporated into performance management objectives.

It is necessary to ensure that the Salesian ethos of the school is developed, promoted and highlighted, including through the processes of preparation for inspection, particularly with regard to the new CSI inspection framework, which offers an opportunity to highlight the unique charism of the school and how this animates its mission and informs its unique identity.

## **12.2 Key Drivers in maintaining Salesian Education in a secular environment**

From the conclusions drawn in this study, the importance of modelling the Salesian charism in a school context cannot be underestimated. Identifying models, including where possible members of the Salesian congregation, who demonstrate how the Salesian charism can be implemented day to day, is crucial for the maintenance of the charismatic identity of Salesian schools.

Forming staff, in terms of their attitudes and disposition, by embedding Salesian values in training and in performance management objectives, as well as offering them formative experiences such as retreats and pilgrimages, is crucial to helping them embrace and put into practice the Salesian charism.

Training in understanding and implementing key dimensions of the Salesian charism, such as using RUAH, understanding home, school, parish and playground and making the first move alongside going the extra mile, are all essential in deepening one's understanding of implementing the charism and upholding the ethos,

In this regard, it is essential that healthy relationships are developed and maintained across the entire community, with the ancillary staff, as well as the teaching staff and leadership, so that all feel they are a part of the school and its mission. This assists

with the promotion of a strong sense of inclusion, for staff and students and helps to reinforce the distinctive narrative of Salesian education, with its emphasis on implementing the preventive system, avoiding defaulting to superior-inferior relationships and excessive or collective punishments.

It also encourages young people to engage as protagonists, equipped with the confidence and skills to play an active role in the life of the school, in becoming 'good Christians and honest citizens', as a precursor to making their adult contribution to building a more just society, that offers opportunity and hope for all.

Ensuring leadership is effective is key to implementing the core principles of the Salesian educational vision of education, founded on reason, religion and kindness, through offering respect and understanding to all, alongside Salesian accompaniment and grasping the key components of each Salesian institution as home, parish, playground and school.

### 12.3 Recommendations

1 To promote the incorporation of robust and meaningful induction programmes addressing the key tenets of the Salesian charism for new staff entering schools with a Salesian character.

2 To ensure Salesian methodology and pedagogy are incorporated into school Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programmes, including training in areas such as the practise of the preventive system, implementing RUAH, understanding the key elements of a Salesian school (home, parish, school and playground) and how these work together.

3 To embed Salesian values and the importance of modelling into the formation of middle and senior leaders in Salesian schools.

4 To make specific training in Salesian accompaniment available to teachers and leaders, as appropriate, in Salesian schools.

5 To promote programmes, including liturgical programmes, for collective worship in each new academic year, which reflect the liturgical year of the Catholic church, including the celebration of Salesian feast days.

6 To ensure opportunities for personal and spiritual development are available to leadership e.g. pilgrimages to the origin of Salesian work in Turin, the provision of literature on Salesian spirituality, regular support meetings, school conferences, and retreat opportunities. (This anticipates the allocation of significant resources on the part of the Salesian trustees and each Salesian school, to facilitate such projects. This collaboration contributes to the build-up of the 'educational and pastoral community' in the school and the locality).

7 To establish a process of identifying and developing Salesian leaders of the future as a priority, supported by the work of the Salesian Schools' Team in delivering bespoke training and development opportunities. The establishment of such a team has significant resource implications for the congregation and for each school.

8 To continue to deepen the collective understanding of Salesian education, through offering training at different levels, for those being initially inducted into Salesian schools, those assuming pastoral or curriculum responsibilities, specific training in Salesian spirituality and pedagogy for those aspiring to leadership and training in

Salesian accompaniment for those who are tasked with leading, training and developing the new generation of Salesian teachers.

9 To continue to make available contemporary Salesian literature as well as assistance with the implementation of training programmes for new staff and new leaders and governors, which set out Salesian principles such as the preventive system, RUAH, making the first move, going the extra mile, being present to young people in and out of the classroom and promoting extra-curricular initiatives.

10 To further develop support for governors, headteachers and senior leaders of Salesian schools, through the activities of the Salesian Schools Team, in organising conferences, disseminating literature, organising pilgrimages to Salesian places and sharing best practice.

11 To establish a Salesian curriculum, with training available at different levels, which can be delivered in person, via literature or made available online, to complement school induction processes.

#### 12.4 Concluding reflections

The research question, articulated at the outset of this study, addressed the extent to which it is possible to maintain the Salesian charism in a secular environment in Salesian schools in England. From the research conducted, it is abundantly clear that it is indeed possible to maintain the Salesian charism in schools in England. The evidence provided by this study has demonstrated that the Salesian charism is being maintained in schools in the north and the south of England, in both the state and the private sectors.

Headteachers are committed to maintaining and developing the Salesian charism in their schools and are clear about some of the strategies they need to implement to achieve this. Staff are generally open to implementing the key principles of the Salesian charism, including the preventive system of education and have a developed sense of the essential dynamics required to implement this charism. This, however, requires reinforcement through regular training, including in service and continuous professional development (CPD).

Both headteachers and staff work to set expectations around the implementation of the Salesian charism, against a background of exacting accountability for school improvement, through the tracking of pupil progress, preparation for external inspection and through the performance management of leaders and teachers. Rather than these being seen as in tension with the maintenance of the Salesian charism, headteachers have made it clear that these processes can be developmental through embedding the core values of the school, in terms of inclusion and reaching out to those who are most disadvantaged, alongside maintaining standards.

This is facilitated by delivering an effective education, grounded in Gospel values, that builds resilience and enables young people to mature emotionally and spiritually. This holistic vision of education does not negate the need for schools to offer students the very best experience they can, in terms of the best teaching and learning; in fact it reinforces it. It also offers students the opportunity of becoming active agents in their own development and protagonists in influencing the community around them for good, contributing to the moral and spiritual development of the wider society.

The recommendations, cited in this study, have been drawn from the views of headteachers of Salesian schools in England, who took part in semi structured

interviews and from the responses of teachers in these schools, who expressed whether they agreed or disagreed with twenty statements relating to Salesian education, in the form of a questionnaire.

A number of points stand out from the accounts given by teachers and headteachers:

- The first is the professionalism of both headteachers and teachers in their dedication to ensuring young people achieve what they are capable of.
- The second is their commitment to providing a holistic education that includes everyone, by seeking to respect and develop staff and young people, recognising them as sensible and cognisant human beings who need to feel a sense of belonging, through building authentic relationships and living out the core values of the Gospel.
- The third is their dedication to implementing the Salesian approach to education through serving those who are least advantaged, accompanying those who are vulnerable, being present to young people on a daily basis happy to 'go the extra mile' in assisting them and becoming involved in extra-curricular activities.

All of this relies on headteachers and teachers being supported in maintaining their own health and wellbeing, in what can be a highly stressful environment, if they are to be able to reach out to young people in need, on a daily basis. It is important, therefore, that governors and trustees recognise the stresses experienced by those engaged in leadership, in particular and seek to offer them support as well as guidance.

The Salesian charism remains in active use in Salesian schools in England. It is essential that stakeholders, such as governors and trustees, do not take this for granted but maintain an active vigilance in continuing to offer support to those tasked with implementing the charism, alongside holding them to account.



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# Appendices

## **Appendix I Transcript of a Semi Structured interview with a Headteacher**

**Research Question: the extent to which it is possible to maintain the Salesian charism in a secular society in Salesian schools in England.**

### **Interview Questions:**

#### **1. What are your key priorities in school?**

The safety and well-being of children.

The school is in a period of uncertainty due to many factors e.g., COVID and Brexit.

Our aim is to give the children the best possible start to ensure their progress.

We need to support children with resilience.

There are great challenges financially such as social media and casual violence.

The school has a great reputation for dealing with challenging children.

We would still be failing them if we were not giving them the best teaching and learning.

We seek to provide pupils with the best possible opportunities e.g., visiting other schools such as XXXX, giving them theatre visits and trips.

There are many new staff.

The overwhelming message is one of buying into the ethos.

The ethos is putting the kids first.

Safety is a priority alongside offering the young people the best possible deal.

#### **2. What challenges do you see today to maintaining a faith-based ethos in a Catholic school.**

There are many challenges.

Maintaining a faith based ethos is interesting.

There are a sizeable number of children from other faiths, in the school, including 15% Muslim children.

It is less about the language of faith and more about the lack of practice.

Helping children understand the practice of faith and its rituals is more difficult.

Simple challenges such as knowing hymns and even Christmas carols.

The lack of practice can undermine everything.

The prevailing secularisation narrative of society means religion is more marginalised.

We are about providing an alternative narrative to secularization.

Young people are sourcing their information from many sources.

Setting an alternative narrative is crucial for the school.

The school has a daily routine which includes daily prayer and an act of worship.

The school has public prayer at the beginning of every day, every exam, every liturgy.

The school has scheduled in mass practice e.g., for year 7 as a precursor to collective worship.

The school has many opportunities for class masses and year masses, as well as services such as remembrance.

This then becomes part of what the young people are used to and they have the tools to continue this as they wish e.g., Italian children gathering for Eucharist, prayer and a social gathering.

There is a real opportunity for the involvement of children in liturgy.

We (the school) have designed liturgies for different groups of children from Ukraine, Spain, Italy etc.

Families come to these liturgies with the students.

**3.What is the impact, if any, on school ethos and culture of the foci on a) results b) self-evaluation c) accountability?**

It depends where you are coming from.

Our achievements come about because of the ethos, not in spite of it.

The success of each individual child, made in the image and likeness of God, is our focus. This is motivation.

We have had five to six years of good results so we are not under pressure.

We believe we will achieve great results If we put the children first.

The best Teaching and learning is what we offer to enable children's achievement.

Self-evaluation does not have to get in the way but can assist because we are doing things for the right reasons.

We self-evaluate and track data in order to facilitate progress and good behavior and the good running of the school.

We have shifted this over five years to ensure we use this to get better as a school.

We had all kinds of pressures five years ago due to being over scrutinised and so recognise this can be a problem.

We had financial as well as achievement data for a number of years but we have come through this.

**4. What elements, if any, of the Salesian charism do you see as relevant to helping to meet the needs of staff, pupils and parents in the current context?**

**A. Optimism with young people**

The one I would pick out is to serve the Lord with holy cheerfulness.

New staff have pointed out the celebration of the achievement of the young people is crucial to the ethos.

The staff supporting one another and the pupils.

Servant leadership is important.

Being joyful and celebrating achievements is crucial.

We have a Salesian moment every week to celebrate a staff member going the extra mile.

**B Behaviour**

As in any inner city school behaviours can be challenging.

Recognising goodness and forgiveness is also essential.

Firmness of expectation is also essential in establishing boundaries.

Tough love is also important.

**C. Cheerfulness.**

Seeing the good.

Needing staff and pupils to know they are loved.

**D. Ethos**

My sense is that all comes sense this atmosphere.

It has to be worked at constantly and can be extremely challenging.

**5. To what extent / in what ways does the implementation of elements of the Salesian charism influence the ethos and practice of the school on a day to day basis?**

The proximity of the Salesian community is an essential element at all levels including priests, brothers, governors.

The example of being with young people is essential.

The sense of being present and walking with and alongside is essential.

We have this modelled by Religious in school.

They (Religious) model the Charism really well.

The presence of religious exemplifies giving glory to god in and through their presence with the young.

Religious being that example in and through their presence and work even though this goes through many different personalities,

Young Religious, by their example and tradition, clearly demonstrate we are here for the young people.

This cannot always be taken for granted.

They (Religious) are with and for the kids in their own ways e.g., basketball and football coaching.

The senior staff need to model this presence and walking alongside pupils is also essential for the charism to have credibility.

It is a challenge to meet the challenge of being present to the children.

We seek to appoint staff who are child centered and who look to be present to the children.

This has to be remembered when children misbehave and parents are screaming at you or the LA are demanding a pound of flesh.

Getting the children involved in leading liturgy and acts of worship.

Involving young people in celebration of liturgy is another example of a charism in action.

#### Relationships

It is the relationships and warmth that sustains people and helps the community maintain each other.

### **6. Is there any way in which you feel elements of the Salesian ethos or charism detracts in any aspect from the development of the school?**

No.

Fundamentally I would not say it is any element of the ethos that detracts.

If we become too self-satisfied with our ethos and the softer elements, we could run into trouble.

If we do not keep a sharp focus in teaching and learning and discipline we will be failing the young people.

This could happen and we need to be vigilant in monitoring all aspects of what we need to offer.

We have a great reputation for dealing with young people but we cannot rest on this or become complacent.

### **7. Which elements of the Salesian ethos or charism assist leadership in maintaining an active and meaningful Christian culture in the running of the school?**

Optimism and cheerfulness is very important.

The development of RUAH n by the Salesians and emphasis on the importance of Respect, Affection and Understanding plays its part.

This assists in building community.

Optimism and faith will see us through.

This is what the charism teaches us.

The model of Don Bosco's life and his faithfulness.

The development of RUAH assists pupils and staff in giving them a simple expression of the spirit of what the Salesian ethos is about.

The affection and humour (aspects of RUAH) are not what you always hear regarding ethos.

Respect and understanding is more common.

Distinctive Salesian resilience and values are there.

We have a wonderful vehicle in RUAH to express these things.

This reinforces the charism and ethics of the school.

We can assume that staff have got this without giving them the tools.

This year we have sought more directly to bring staff into the understanding of being part of a much wider organisation throughout the world.

We share with staff literature but also information about other (Salesian) works in the world.

We call staff well-being Salesian spirit.

Other governors and staff are in (the school) regularly to reinforce Salesian ethos e.g., XXX and XXX.

Getting in to the Salesian house regularly and joining other Salesian schools produces a sense of belonging.

We cannot simply assume that they (staff) get it.

We need to be modelling it every day.

We need to be educating them about the role of Don Bosco also.

The sense of belonging is as essential for staff as well as pupils.

Staff need to take the lead with challenging pupils every day. Without a sense of belonging it is really tough for staff to face this every day.

With almost 1000 pupils every member of staff must buy into the faith and values and ethos of the school irrespective of personal faith.

**8. In which areas would you desire support or assistance in sustaining and developing the Salesian ethos of the school? How best can this assistance or support be delivered?**

We are fortunate in having the resource of a community (of Religious).

Having members (of the Religious community) available to advise and support around ethos is invaluable.

We need a dynamic relationship such as this to reflect on and talk things through. Relationships with individuals we can talk to, from the community, is invaluable.

Inset and literature is there .

What matters is the communication with religious members of the community.

They allows us to construct the ethos together.

Our ability to express the charism and discuss it is key.

A dynamic relationship with the community is wonderful.

Further engaging the young brothers (Religious) in the community is a challenge for us going forward.

**9. What do you see are the challenges in maintaining a school with an active Salesian ethos in the short, medium and long term?**

A. Ensuring the school climate secures opportunities for young people in the practice of faith.

Having religious in the school absolutely assists in this. Without this it would be a greater challenge.

We have to ensure we are not simply trotting out the same thing each year.

Looking to find time for senior leadership is also important and we could find more of this also for the staff in general.

To aid them in understanding what this means to the person is key,

This also helps to avoid secular drift.

We do not want Don Bosco's words to become meaningless words.

The challenges remain and are significant in terms of maintaining stability and building resilience.

B. The school has a great opportunity, because of the diversity of the intake. This is a wonderful challenge but also an opportunity.

We have sought to promote ourselves as a place of welcome for all young people from diverse backgrounds.

Fr. XXX has assisted this is producing liturgies for different communities, also using elements of different languages (in the liturgy) as above.

Fundamentally young people feel welcome and secure.

The groups within the school can have a positive influence on each other in terms of motivation and work.

It can however be difficult if they clan together to create a block.

The challenge of learning of English remains supreme in terms of young people moving forward.

We have tried to address this by, for example, appointing a Spanish speaking pastoral leader to communicate with parents from, for example, Spanish and Portuguese communities.

C. This also applies to the children who are autistic and have social needs. This is a real positive for the whole school.

D. The present circumstance around academisation creates an element of uncertainty due to looking ahead into the future.

I do not wish this to be something that impacts on our independence and uniqueness of our role.

This could be a question for the future.



## Appendix II Ethical Approval Letter



St Mary's  
University  
Twickenham  
London

1 August 2017

Unique Ref: SMEC\_2016-17\_037

**James Briody (ETL):** 'To examine the extent to which it is possible to maintain the Salesian Charism in Salesian schools in a contemporary post-modern culture in the UK'.

Dear Gerry

### University Ethics Sub-Committee

Thank you for submitting your ethics application for the above research.

I can confirm that your application has been considered by the Ethics Sub-Committee and that ethical approval is granted.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Conor Gissane'.

Prof Conor Gissane  
Chair, Ethics Sub-Committee

Cc Dr John Lydon, Dr David Fincham

### Appendix III Ethical Research Participation Form



**St Mary's  
University  
Twickenham  
London**

Name of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of the project: **To examine the extent to which it is possible to maintain the Salesian Charism in Salesian schools in a contemporary post-modern culture in the UK?**

Main investigator and contact details: Gerry Briody, Thornleigh House, Sharples Park, Bolton, Lancs. BL16PQ.  
Tel: 01204600720 Email: briodygerry@hotmail.com

1. I agree to take part in the above research. I have read the Participant Information Sheet which is attached to this form. I understand what my role will be in this research, and all my questions have been answered to my satisfaction.
2. I understand that I am free to withdraw from the research at any time, for any reason and without prejudice.
3. I have been informed that the confidentiality of the information I provide will be safeguarded.
4. I am free to ask any questions at any time before and during the study.
5. I have been provided with a copy of this form and the Participant Information Sheet.

Data Protection: I agree to the University processing personal data which I have supplied. I agree to the processing of such data for any purposes connected with the Research Project as outlined to me.

Name of participant (print).....

Signed.....

Date.....

-----  
If you wish to withdraw from the research, please complete the form below and return to the main investigator named above.

Title of Project: \_\_\_\_\_

**I WISH TO WITHDRAW FROM THIS STUDY**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix IV Participant Information Sheet



St Mary's  
University  
Twickenham  
London



### Participant Information Sheet

#### Section A: The Research Project

1. Title of project:

**To examine the extent to which it is possible to maintain the Salesian Charism in Salesian schools in a contemporary post-modern culture in the UK?**

2. Purpose and value of study:

In setting out to examine the extent to which it is possible to maintain the Salesian Charism in Salesian schools in a contemporary post-modern culture in the UK this study aims to examine five key elements:

6. The distinctive nature of the Salesian charism.
7. The decline in the numbers of religious currently working within the context of education and the new reality, recognised by Vatican documents, of the changing demographic of the deployment of religious into less mainstream and more liminal apostolates.
8. The development of collaborative ministry involving Salesians and lay people.
9. The competing pressures under which headteachers are working within the post-modern (secular age) context of education (in particular performance management and self-evaluation assuring quality between inspections).
10. Fieldwork research exploring the extent to which it is possible to maintain the Salesian Charism in Salesian schools in a contemporary post-modern culture in the UK.

3. Invitation to participate:

Headteachers are invited to give their perspective on the sustainability of the Salesian charism in a contemporary post-modern culture through in depth interviews. Teachers are invited to give their perspective on the sustainability of the Salesian charism through completing an online questionnaire.

4. Responsibility for the research:

This research project is being organised by Fr. Gerry Briody as part of a doctoral programme at St. Mary's University, Twickenham on the transmission of ethos and charism within Salesian schools.

5. What will happen to the results of the study?

Once concluded the study will be made available to Salesian schools and to a wider audience through publication of conclusions, presentations and written articles.

6. Source of funding for the research:

There are no external sources of funding for the research. It is entirely self-financing.

7. Contact for further information:

Fr. Gerry Briody, Thornleigh House, Sharples Park, Bolton, Lancs. BL16PQ. Tel: 01204600720

Dr. John Lydon, Tutor, St. Mary's University, Waldegrave Road, Twickenham TW1 4SX Tel: 02082404000

Dr. David Fincham, Tutor, St. Mary's University, Waldegrave Road, Twickenham TW1 4SX Tel: 02082404000

## **Section B: Your Participation in the Research Project**

**1. Why you have been invited to take part:**

You have been invited to take part as a headteacher or teacher currently working in a school designated as a Salesian school for the purposes of this research.

**2. Whether you can refuse to take part:**

Each individual is free to take part or not to take part.

**3. Whether you can withdraw from the project at any time, and how:**

You can withdraw from the project at any time by making a formal request to Fr. Gerry Briody either in person or in writing by letter or email.

**4. What will happen if you agree to take part (brief description of procedures/tests):**

As a headteacher you will be asked to be available for an in depth one to one interview with a number of set questions the data from which will be anonymised.

As a teacher you will be asked to complete anonymously an online questionnaire.

**5. Whether there are any risks involved (e.g. side effects) and if so, what will be done to ensure your wellbeing/safety:**

There are no inherent risks or safety considerations in this research save the procedures set out above.

**6. Whether there are any special precautions you must take before, during or after taking part in the study:**

There are no specific precautions which need to be taken before, during or after taking part in the study

**7. What will happen to any information/data/samples that are collected from you?**

These will be stored anonymously using serial numbers. Any electronic data will be stored anonymously on St. Mary's servers. Respondents will not be identifiable in any outputs from this research i.e. any views expressed will be anonymised.

**8. Whether there are any benefits from taking part?**

There are no material benefits to taking part. The conclusions of the research will be shared with colleagues in due course.

**9. How much time you will need to give up to take part in the project?**

Headteacher interviews will generally be expected to take between 45 and 60 minutes.

Teacher questionnaires are expected to take 30 to 40 minutes.

**10. How your participation in the project will be kept confidential?**

All data provided in the study will be anonymised using serial numbers.

All electronic data will be anonymised and stored securely on St. Mary's servers.

Please Note:

YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS FORM TO KEEP TOGETHER WITH A COPY OF YOUR CONSENT FORM

## Appendix V Completed Research Participation Form



# St Mary's University Twickenham London

Name

of

Participant:

MS. ALBERT O'CALLAGHAN

Title of the project: To examine the extent to which it is possible to maintain the Salesian Charism in Salesian schools in a contemporary post-modern culture in the UK?

Main investigator and contact details: Gerry Briody, Thornleigh House, Sharples Park, Bolton, Lancs. BL16PQ. Tel: 01204600720 Email: briodygerry@hotmail.com

1. I agree to take part in the above research. I have read the Participant Information Sheet which is attached to this form. I understand what my role will be in this research, and all my questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

2. I understand that I am free to withdraw from the research at any time, for any reason and without prejudice.

3. I have been informed that the confidentiality of the information I provide will be safeguarded.

4. I am free to ask any questions at any time before and during the study.

5. I have been provided with a copy of this form and the Participant Information Sheet.

Data Protection: I agree to the University processing personal data which I have supplied. I agree to the processing of such data for any purposes connected with the Research Project as outlined to me.

Name of participant (print).....

Signature

Date.....

Signe

If you wish to withdraw from the research, please complete the form below and return to the main investigator named above.

Title of Project: \_\_\_\_\_

WISH TO WITHDRAW FROM THIS STUDY

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix VI Interview Questions for Headteachers**

### **Research Questions on the Implementation of Salesian Ethos/Culture/Charism in Schools**

1. What are your key priorities in school?
2. What challenges do you see today to maintaining a faith based ethos in a Catholic school?
3. What is the impact, if any, on school ethos and culture of the foci on a) results b) self-evaluation c) accountability?
4. What elements, if any, of the Salesian charism do you see as relevant to helping to meet the needs of staff, pupils and parents in the current context?
5. To what extent / in what ways does the implementation of elements of the Salesian charism influence the ethos and practice of the school on a day to day basis?
6. Is there any way in which you feel elements of the Salesian ethos or charism detracts in any aspect from the development of the school?
7. Which elements of the Salesian ethos or charism assist leadership in maintaining an active and meaningful Christian culture in the running of the school?
8. In which areas would you desire support or assistance in sustaining and developing the Salesian ethos of the school? How best can this assistance or support be delivered?
9. What do you see are the challenges in maintaining a school with an active Salesian ethos in the short, medium and long term?

## **Appendix VII Teacher Questionnaire Statements**

### **The Salesian Charism**

1. I understand Don Bosco's message that the young must know that they are loved is practised on a daily basis in this school
2. Young people in need are a focus for this school
3. The school invests resources in ensuring young people feel supported in their work
4. In this school staff often 'go the extra mile' in terms of engaging students and keeping them on board
5. In this school it would be easy for students to name a teacher they admire

### **A Spirituality of Accompaniment**

1. As a staff member I fully realise the importance of the Salesian style of accompanying young people
2. I understand the key components of Salesian education (school, playground, home and church) and how they work together
3. Students in this school know that they receive respect, understanding and acceptance from staff on a daily basis
4. Collective worship (Mass, Sacrament of Reconciliation, Assemblies) features prominently in the life of the school
5. Spiritual development is a key concern of the leadership of the school

### **Collaborative Ministry**

6. I am aware of the presence of Salesian priests, Brothers or Sisters around the school
7. Formation in Salesian values forms a part of the school's continuing professional development programme
8. The leadership team model what it means to be a Salesian educator
9. Staff feel part of a Salesian community marked by inclusion
10. Maintaining the Salesian education vision is a key priority for the school

### **Competing Pressures**

1. In this school students are encouraged to participate in extra curricular activity
2. Academic excellence is the number one priority at this school
3. Concerns around external inspection are at the forefront in the lives of teachers and students
4. Extra-curricular activities at this school help students to grow as persons
5. Performance management for teachers focuses predominantly on academic outcomes.

## Appendix VIII: Headteacher Interviews -

### Coded Analysis of Answers to 9 questions

Questions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Themes (Citations / Frequency)
<b>1</b>  <b>What are your PRIORITIES in School?</b>	<p>As a school we would share standard priorities with other schools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Recruitment of students.</b></li> <li>• Standards driving them up.</li> <li>• Individual uniqueness keeping upfront i.e. not LOSING the INDIVIDUAL</li> <li>• Interrupting school operations to let the light in i.e. the transcendent.. For example, writing a Behaviour policy allowing both parties to retain their dignity</li> </ul>	<p>The bottom line is <b>HAPPY children.</b></p> <p><b>This leads onto long-term happiness</b></p> <p><b>Certain things need to be happening day to day, including the best quality teaching.</b></p> <p>Key strategies:</p> <p><b>Get the right people here.</b></p> <p>Get them to understand <b>OUR WAY of doing things.</b></p> <p><b>Making sure there is</b></p>	<p>High line is to ensure <b>the ethos</b> and <b>academic achievement</b> are preserved and monitored.</p> <p>Parents have <b>bought into the ethos</b> but also into <b>academic achievement.</b></p> <p><b>Ensuring recruitment of students year on year.</b></p> <p><b>Recruitment and retention of staff and students.</b></p>	<p>Making sure <b>attendance is as full as it can be.</b></p> <p>We need to ensure all of our <b>young people are safe.</b> It is important that we do everything in our power to ensure that this happens.</p> <p>Ensuring the <b>Catholic ethos remains strong.</b></p> <p>We have lots of strategies including school interventions and all that but if you</p>	<p>I would say that our key priorities are firstly our <b>Mission and ethos which need to drive everything that we do.</b></p> <p>And obviously <b>learning and teaching; that is our core business</b></p> <p>Ensuring both of those priorities are <b>driven through really robust and thought through staff development.</b></p> <p>You can't expect the staff to understand your mission or your ethos if you are not <b>giving them really good coaching that is completely</b></p>	<p>1 Academisation as of January 1. The priority is a smooth transition.</p> <p>Collaboration is already happening with the MAT. Good relationship building.</p> <p>Aiming at a seamless transition.</p> <p>2 Ofsted final report arrived recently. Some changes were made to the report. Matters such as SEN, challenge to most able.</p>	<p><b>Safety and well-being of children.</b></p> <p>The school is in a period of uncertainty due to many factors e.g. COVID and Brexit.</p> <p>Our aim is to <b>give the children the best possible start to ensure their progress.</b></p> <p>We need to support children with resilience.</p> <p>There are great challenges financially,</p>	<p><b>Charism/Ethos 20/6</b></p> <p><b>Standards 12/6</b></p> <p><b>Culture 12/6</b></p> <p><b>Recruitment (Staff) 6/4</b></p> <p><b>Recruitment (Pupil) 3/3</b></p> <p><b>Formation/Training 3/3</b></p> <p><b>Witness/Role Models 3/1</b></p>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establishing a lifelong passion for learning.</li> <li>Providing <b>ROLE MODELS</b> is essentially important.</li> <li>Recruitment and <b>formation of staff</b> hence.</li> <li>Subverting educational policy.</li> <li>Evangelising is a role for RC schools to carry out staff to witness.</li> </ul> <p>Seeking courage - under constant pressures.</p>	<p><b>CONSISTENCY in their experience.</b></p> <p>Ensure that everything is rigorous.</p> <p>Rigour and consistency.</p> <p>Staff requirements:</p> <p>Energetic and enthusiastic</p> <p>Genuinely LOVE children</p> <p>Expertise in what you do or the ability to develop it.</p> <p>Prepared to WORK your socks off for the kids.</p> <p>BUY IN to the SALESIAN way.</p>	<p>Pressure of recruitment when there is competition e.g. From the State sector.</p> <p>A small caring loving school is our selling point.</p> <p>Retaining key quality staff is a key.</p> <p>Management responsibility is to be there for the good of the staff since they affect this on the children.</p> <p>HT priority is to be the <b>teacher of the staff room.</b></p> <p>How do you accomplish this?</p> <p>Listening to them.</p> <p>Leading them in prayer.</p>	<p>have not got the ethos right ...</p> <p>Somebody said ethos eats strategy for breakfast. I totally agree with that.</p> <p>Get that (ethos) in place and other things will fall into place.</p> <p>I suppose with all schools making sure that the outcomes are strong is important as well.</p> <p>Just making sure young people have those keys for success that passport to success</p> <p>And in some areas, less affluent areas potentially, that is more and more important.</p>	<p><b>immersed in that (ethos).</b></p> <p>Equally if we want staff in our school to live our mission then the way that we approach teaching, the way we frame learning in our school has got to be done through the language of that mission and the language of that ethos.</p> <p>We have worked very hard through some very challenging circumstances in the pandemic over the last few years.</p> <p>It is about normalising language that is about the mission of our school, normalising language that is around the ethos so that these two things permeate everything that we do and we can't lose sight of that core business.</p>	<p>Personal development was judged good.</p> <p>3 Recruitment and retention of staff. Good teachers recruited and still needed.</p> <p>Maintaining pupil numbers. A large year 7 class arrived as well as now 70 EAL students.</p>	<p>social media, casual violence.</p> <p>The school has a great reputation for dealing with challenging children.</p> <p>We would still be failing them if we were not giving them the best teaching and learning</p> <p>We seek to provide pupils with the best possible opportunities e.g. visiting other schools such as Aston, giving them theatre visits and trips.</p> <p>Many new staff.</p> <p>The overwhelming message is one of buying into the ethos.</p> <p>The ethos is putting the kids first.</p> <p>Safety.</p>	
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		<p>CONSISTENCY in applying these leadership.</p> <p>Children's deal is the priority.</p> <p>Happy lives to be led afterwards.</p>	<p>Staff meetings sent the tone of expectation.</p> <p>Walk, eat, go on trips with staff.</p> <p>Be there to laugh and to cry with them.</p>	<p>Even more important that we Are supporting young people to the next stages in their educational careers.</p> <p>Making sure that we are stretching them and challenging them as much as we possibly Can</p> <p>We try to ensure that the preventive system is in place, it's alive and kicking so that we are ahead of the game so to speak.</p> <p>It's making sure we are there to catch them when they fall and helping them.</p>	<p>Our overall responsibility is to make sure that young people leave our school at either 16 or 18 with the qualifications that they need to be successful.</p> <p>But those qualifications will not lead to any deep and meaningful success in life unless they have developed their character and their spirituality because they are not a set of exam results and they are not a job but are human beings and so our responsibility to develop them as human beings has got to sit with equal weighting to getting a maths and English GCSE, I think.</p>		Best possible deal.	
<p><b>2</b></p> <p><b>Challenges</b></p>	<p>Dioceses identify success along Ofsted criteria.</p>	<p>Main thing is societal change.</p>	<p>Attended RC education in Liverpool.</p>	<p>One thing we need to ensure is that home, school, and church relationships are really important.</p>	<p>There are a Multitude of challenges.</p>	<p>We cannot assume new staff understand the ethos of the school.</p>	<p>Many challenges.</p> <p>Faith based ethos is interesting.</p>	<p>Ethos 20/7</p> <p>Culture 14/7</p>

<p>More middle-class RC schools have adopted bourgeoisie approach.</p> <p>RC schools falling into line with Ofsted and current standards criteria</p> <p><b>Lack of cultural Catholicism among students and staff (compared with the 1950s).</b></p> <p>FAITH based ethos is around ENCOUNTER - it is not cerebral.</p> <p>There are LESS Catholics with the relevant FORMATION.</p> <p>Lack of understanding that FAITH based education is foundational and has become compartmentalised e.g. Section 48 inspections now aping Ofsted approach.</p>	<p>Lack of community and order compared with 50s.</p> <p>Religious affiliation was the norm in terms of participation.</p> <p>School is 99 Per cent Catholic as in (pupils) baptised.</p> <p>There is variation of practice among families.</p> <p>People confuse Roman Catholic education as the place where teachers are nice and get results</p> <p>School is much more on its own in terms of inculcating FAITH.</p> <p>This is the biggest CHALLENGE.</p> <p>Looking for STAFF who are confident and</p>	<p>Came from RC community into an RC school.</p> <p>There were norms of expectation in the family and in the school.</p> <p>Masses, prayers etc. were expected.</p> <p>The COMMUNITY of FAITH out with the school is different to that within.</p> <p>The liberation of it can also be important e.g. Those who have chosen this school have accepted that there is a (Religious) ethos.</p> <p>Maintaining a rooted spirituality when some see it as a distraction to learning. Most staff or parents do not see this as an issue.</p> <p>Some ways this manifests itself e.g. In the attitude to the</p>	<p>Also having the playground within that.</p> <p>And also making sure there is time and opportunity for the children to let their hair down.</p> <p>Making sure that the church is relevant to young people today.</p> <p>And it might be you need to bring the church to young people today as opposed to them going to the Church because not every young person goes to church.</p> <p>It is making sure that all students do RE in a Catholic school. I think that is only right and proper.</p> <p>Ensuring regular school mass whether that is the year 7 welcome mass the sixth form</p>	<p>This first of those is around the percentage of practising Catholics that are within our school both on the staff and the student body.</p> <p>If we want people to buy into our faith based, that is completely alien to them, then we can't make assumptions and I think we have to build ethos in.</p> <p>This is an easy hurdle to fall over in that you assume that people understand what a faith based ethos is because it is so integral to you as an individual, it is absolutely paramount to you, that you almost find it difficult to articulate it as it is just core, it is just central.</p> <p>But we can't make those assumptions.</p> <p>So few of our children, even pre pandemic,</p>	<p>We incorporate training in Salesian ethos and understanding into staff training.</p> <p>This needs to be taught to new staff members.</p> <p>This cannot be left simply to the Salesian brothers or priests who are present. By way of example.</p> <p>Pupils are often ignorant of their faith and do not attend church.</p> <p>They experience church through their experience of school.</p> <p>All visitors to the school express their view that there is a lovely atmosphere in the school.</p>	<p>There are a sizeable number of children from other faiths including 15% Muslim.</p> <p>It is less about the language of faith and more about the lack of practice.</p> <p>Helping children understand the practice of faith and its rituals is more difficult.</p> <p>Simple challenges such as knowing hymns and even Christmas carols.</p> <p>The lack of practice can undermine everything.</p> <p>The prevailing secularisation narrative of society means religion is more marginalised.</p> <p>We are about providing an alternative narrative to secularization.</p>	<p><b>Recruitment – Staff 5/4</b></p> <p><b>Faith Background 8/5</b></p> <p><b>Formation/Training 2/2</b></p> <p>Standards 3/2</p> <p>Leadership 2/2</p> <p>Relationships 2/1</p>
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<p>Less people interested in being heads - Leadership crisis in certain areas.</p> <p>Dominant meta narrative is valuing what can be ASSESSED.</p> <p>Becoming more establishment with the perception that RC schools are 'nice' schools.</p> <p>Provision, quality and TRAINING of CHAPLAINS.</p> <p>Academisation is stepping back in terms of ensuring identity.</p> <p>Fragmentation of the Catholic sector - schools 'going it alone'.</p> <p>MAT not a solution in this person's view but also an aspect to the detriment of collective identity.</p>	<p>fluent in their expression of FAITH.</p> <p>The hard core of the leadership team has the CONVICTION of leading this aspect.</p>	<p>Church's teaching on sexual ethics. Sometimes this leads to a silence and ambiguity on these matters.</p> <p>New exhortations such as Amoris LAETITIA do get some mention.</p> <p>Initiatives such as the 10 10 company presenting on difficult and emotive issues.</p>	<p>masses, the regular masses throughout the liturgical calendar.</p> <p>Collective worship every day and making sure that is happening.</p> <p>Making sure that every child has got the opportunity to reflect and perhaps even to share some of their experiences with their peers.</p> <p>I suppose evangelisation within school as well and making sure that is ongoing for example, we had mission week last week and we had BBC radio Merseyside in and we're talking about Shelter, about refugees what it is like and the arduous journey refugees go on.</p>	<p>were engaged with their parishes and so they don't understand mass, they don't know what that looks like, they don't experience the sacraments and so that has to be very carefully taught, actually.</p> <p>I think also and linked with that whether we like it or not, we have to acknowledge there is often a very poor perception of the Catholic Church, because of a multitude of things that have been in the media and so on the staff body people might have some apprehensions about that. They might even have resistance to that and not buying into that model.</p> <p>But I think our job is to sort move away from the universality to what does it mean for us in this context and how to live that faith based ethos within our context.</p>	<p>The welcoming aspect of the school and the way people are treated essentially communicates the ethos of the school.</p> <p>Each day is a day when we communicate our ethos.</p>	<p>Young people are sourcing their information from many sources.</p> <p>Setting an alternative narrative is crucial for the school.</p> <p>The school has a daily routine which includes daily prayer and an act of worship</p> <p>The school has public prayer at the beginning of every day every exam, every liturgy.</p> <p>The school has scheduled in mass practice E.g. for year 7 as a precursor to collective worship.</p> <p>The school has many opportunities for class masses and year masses as well as</p>	
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			<p>Making that relevant to young people changing mindsets, tackling stereotypes.</p> <p>Allowing young people to see that all is not quite as it seems sometimes and they have those open minds, developing those mindsets.</p> <p>Retreats for all students. Having that time that dedicated time right throughout the school year.</p> <p>People can spend more time developing those relationships not just with each other but also with key staff across the school.</p> <p>Regular school masses.</p> <p>Ensuring all pupils study.</p>	<p>It is fair to say for any headteacher in a faith school, the constant spectre of inspection or external advisors coming in, that is always a challenge.</p> <p>Getting that balance between learning and teaching being paramount and the spiritual development of children, it is easy to tip straight into accountability and getting caught up with that.</p> <p>We have to have high expectations of our staff in terms of what they are delivering then to ask them to go the extra mile and spend time with children when they have marking to do.</p> <p>That balance in terms of the wellbeing of the staff is such a tricky tight rope to tread when you are leading a school.</p>	<p>services such as remembrance.</p> <p>This then becomes part of what the young people are used to and they have the tools to continue this as they wish. e.g. Italian children taking time for Eucharist, prayer and social gathering.</p> <p>There is a real opportunity for the involvement of children in liturgy.</p> <p>We have made liturgies so that Ukrainian, Spanish, etc.</p> <p>Families can participate.</p>	
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				<p>Ensuring <b>collective worship is in place</b> &amp;</p> <p>Evangelisation e.g. <b>Having mission weeks, changing mindsets.</b></p> <p><b>Retreats for all students.</b></p> <p><b>Enabling pupils to establish relationships across the school.</b></p> <p>Ensuring <b>chaplaincy is in place</b> and children have <b>access to it.</b></p> <p>Taking risks and making sure that they happen.</p> <p>Ensure children see other faiths including atheism e.g. Chinese exchange groups.</p>	<p>There has tended to be an understanding as to how this can be achieved and trying to better understand this.</p> <p>We must be careful that we are <b>not alienating them</b> from <b>no faith background.</b></p> <p>7:07.73</p> <p>So <b>creating an accessible culture</b> that people can hook into, and then say well actually this <b>makes sense to me</b> because this is about humanity, this is about developing human beings, this is about <b>creating a better experience</b> for these children.</p> <p>Finding that <b>language, finding that framework</b> so that <b>people can 'hook' in and buy in</b> and then stay well. Actually I can respect this, I might not share it but I can respect it and there are huge</p>			
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					<p>elements of it that I can really uphold.</p> <p>I think that's... however.. there is a risk when you are treading that tight rope that you are not explicit about your Catholicity and we have to be.</p> <p>We are a Catholic SALESIAN school.</p> <p>We have to be explicit.</p> <p>We have to pray with our staff.</p> <p>We have to pray with our children.</p> <p>We have to have that front and centre, making reference to gospel values, making reference to Christian principles and Christian teaching and Catholic teaching particularly and not shying away from that because you think people might not get it.</p>			
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					<p>What we have to do is find a way to get them to get it.</p> <p>It's hard. It's really hard.</p>			
<p><b>3</b></p> <p><b>Impact of Ethos &amp; Culture of</b></p> <p><b>Focus on:</b></p> <p><b>A. Results</b></p> <p><b>B. Self Evaluation</b></p> <p><b>C. Accountability</b></p>	<p>A. Results</p> <p>Way schools are measured dictates curriculum and can influence other matters e.g. Permanent exclusions of non-academic pupils to remove them from exam entry.</p> <p>Inspection model has become more big brother i.e. An increasingly centralised model.</p> <p>B. Self evaluation</p> <p>Should genuinely include tough questions as to whether the RE identity of the school is being</p>	<p>Results go hand in hand Everything the school does, if done properly gains results.</p> <p>Treating children and staff with DIGNITY</p> <p>Holding GOSPEL VALUES around trust and justice especially.</p> <p>Roman Catholic schools are set up to get the BEST out of people</p> <p>The Multi Academy Trust should be striving for EXCELLENCE not a</p>	<p>a) Results:</p> <p>Grammar intake so that results are almost a given. This is liberating.</p> <p>The ethos of the school helps to deliver the results.</p> <p>The nature of RC schools is over performance is almost taken for granted.</p> <p>Self-evaluation is another form of taking a look at yourself and</p>	<p>a) Results:</p> <p>Ethos eats the strategy for breakfast.</p> <p>Staff go the extra mile as though they are working with their own children e.g. Lessons first thing in the morning.</p> <p>Children know they are cared for and want to benefit.</p> <p>Staff are there to catch pupils when they fall.</p> <p>Demonstrating why they need results.</p>	<p>I think, until I really started to think about this and to think about this as a headteacher, I think that the ethos and culture drive your outcomes; it drives your self-evaluation accountability.</p> <p>So we have worked very hard at creating a culture within our school of high expectations and low threat.</p> <p>So if you are developing a truly Salesian, Catholic culture, what you can't do is go around chopping people off at the knees every time they make a mistake.</p>	<p>A. The school is often in lower quartile for results.</p> <p>Despite this there is a great sense of collegiality within the school.</p> <p>There is recognition that the school should become a high performing school but also to remain a caring school.</p> <p>The specific dynamic of Salesian encouragement assists both staff</p>	<p>It depends on where you are coming from.</p> <p>Our achievements come about because of the ethos not in spite of it.</p> <p>The success of each individual child is our focus in the image and likeness of God. This is the motivation.</p> <p>We have had five to six years of good results so we are not under pressure.</p>	<p>Ethos 29/7</p> <p>Culture 23/7</p> <p>Standards 19/6</p> <p>Leadership 1/1</p> <p>Accountability 3/4</p> <p>Service/Poor/Extra mile 2/2</p>



<p><b>maintained</b> i.e. Not just in the section 48 inspection.</p> <p><b>5 Pillars of ethos initiative.</b></p> <p>Aiming to <b>communicate character</b> (see John Finnis work): life <b>what does life mean</b>, fellowship - friendship and sociability, religion, practical reason - how young people are caught in POST modernity.</p> <p><b>C. Accountability see above</b></p> <p><b>School serving poor young people are hit disproportionately by inspections.</b></p> <p>Governing bodies are in retreat. (How? / Why?</p> <p>Core mission of the school is suffering see above.</p> <p><b>HTs running for cover</b> and not prepared to take risk of leading challenging schools.</p>	<p><b>cosy Roman Catholic club.</b></p> <p><b>Self-evaluation</b> - we are <b>REFLECTIVE people</b> so this goes hand in hand.</p> <p><b>ACCOUNTABILITY is key.</b></p> <p><b>If as Headteacher I get my job right then staff will feel accountable.</b></p>	<p><b>setting your priorities for the future.</b></p> <p>b) Accountability:</p> <p>Accountability can become a <b>hammer with which to hit people.</b></p> <p><b>Accountability is fully recognising who you are and the impact of that.</b></p> <p>On a level it is more a question of <b>being known</b> in the sense that you <b>are one of us.</b></p> <p>Knowing staff and how they can be fitted in.</p> <p>How do you see the <b>balance of care to staff and pupils</b> - children are only here once?</p> <p>The <b>mission</b> is to the <b>whole community</b></p> <p>If we <b>lose sight of the human who is in the</b></p>	<p><b>Revision opportunities for all pupils.</b></p> <p>b) Self Evaluation:</p> <p>Important at all levels.</p> <p><b>Integrate ethos and evaluation.</b></p> <p>Pastoral support meetings.</p> <p>Safeguarding meetings.</p> <p>All meetings are designed to <b>improve provision.</b></p> <p>Ensure safety.</p> <p>C)Accountability:</p> <p><b>Treat people with dignity and respect.</b></p> <p>Attempt to <b>buffer staff against the tidal</b></p>	<p>That's staff as well as students.</p> <p>But equally high expectations and low threat does not mean that <b>you are soft because people have to deliver.</b></p> <p>They are being paid and they have a <b>moral responsibility, and they have to deliver.</b></p> <p>But I think we are moving in the right direction of <b>getting that culture and that ethos.</b></p> <p>10:04.61</p> <p>The feedback from staff is telling us that.</p> <p><b>staff feel listened to,</b></p> <p>they feel that their <b>opinions are valued,</b></p> <p>they feel they can <b>share their stresses and worries,</b> their <b>concerns</b> and</p> <p>they feel they <b>are well supported at times</b></p>	<p><b>and pupils in raising attainment.</b></p> <p>We are <b>dedicated to improving results</b> through the many <b>interventions that staff provide, such as after school evening classes and revision classes at weekends.</b></p> <p>B. The school undertakes a <b>rigorous self-evaluation in preparation for every inspector and inspection.</b></p> <p><b>Openness and honesty</b> characterise the school and this is recognised by Ofsted.</p> <p>Inspectors have agreed with the school's self-evaluation, which is <b>honest and transparent.</b></p>	<p><b>We believe we will great results If we put the children first</b></p> <p>.</p> <p>The <b>best Teaching and learning is what we offer to enable children's achievement.</b></p> <p><b>B. Self-evaluation does not have to get in the way</b> but can assist because we are doing things for <b>the right reasons.</b></p> <p>We <b>self-evaluate and track data in order to facilitate progress and good behavior</b> and the <b>good running of the school.</b></p> <p>We have shifted this over five years to ensure we <b>use this to get better as a school.</b></p> <p>We had all kinds of pressures five years ago due to <b>being over scrutinised and so</b></p>	
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			<p>classroom we are setting a tone for the young people of how they should act.</p> <p>Teachers need a professional conversation about their teaching if it is required.</p> <p>One thing that attracted me to this school was that I could know them all i.e. All the pupils.</p> <p>Alienation from the workplace can be a big factor in a lot of SCHOOLS.</p>	<p>wave of accountability.</p> <p>Ensure Salesianity is maintained across the school.</p> <p>Staff support is crucial so that they are supported through mistakes.</p> <p>Staff improvement supports the life chances of the students.</p> <p>Some family structures are not there, and the school needs to replicate them.</p> <p>Affirmation.</p>	<p>when life presents challenges for them.</p> <p>It's a big organization; there are 180 adults here and 1600 children so that's a lot of lives that have a lot of complexity.</p> <p>So if you get that culture right, people will work hard.</p> <p>And in turn if you provide frameworks for people to work in that are very clearly articulated and very easy to understand, then in turn the learning and teaching improves which will in turn lead to better outcomes.</p> <p>11:20</p> <p>When we are self-evaluating in school that is done in a very honest and non-threatening way.</p> <p>So it is Ok in our school to make a mistake. It is ok to say</p>	<p>C. The school does hold people to account.</p> <p>We may be criticised for being too understanding at times, but we are prepared to accept erring on that side rather than being too draconian.</p> <p>The school is getting better at being held to account.</p> <p>There is some concern at what academisation will bring in this regard but there is also the belief that this will be done in the correct way according to Christian values and aligned to the values of the school.</p>	<p>recognise this can be a problem.</p> <p>We had financial as well as achievement data (challenges) for a number of years but we have come through this.</p>	
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					<p>I tried this; it didn't work as well as I thought it was going to as long as you've got another plan. As long as you've got something then to do instead.</p> <p>That comes from that culture of respect, understanding, affection and humour.</p> <p>That's not a tag line. That can't be a tag line, it can't just be something that trips of your tongue and you say, Oh yes, we are Salesians, so we have RUA.</p> <p>What does that mean when...</p> <p>You're talking to someone</p> <p>Someone emails you on a Sunday night to say their dad has had a heart attack and you know they've got year 11 in the morning</p>			
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					<p>What does that mean?</p> <p>That actually means well you stay with your Dad tomorrow morning, I will cover your year 11, or I will make sure that's done and, in my experience, people don't take advantage of that.</p> <p>You get more back, I think, so I think it is possible to hold people to account for their work in a way that is supportive and non-threatening.</p> <p>And if you are running a school where your ethos and culture are Catholic and Salesian you can't not do that.</p> <p>You can't not do that and you can't have two faces.</p> <p>That has got to be your one face, hasn't it?</p> <p>13:04</p>			
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					<p>By putting mission and ethos at the top of our agenda, that's what we start with but it's not what we finish with.</p> <p>That's what we start with and what drives everything.</p> <p>And I will be honest, I think that the pandemic has provided us with opportunities that at the start we didn't ever anticipate we would get because what its told us that our ETHOS and our CULTURE is THE MOST IMPORTANT thing.</p>			
4	Being 'PRESENT' to - it is all about personal ENCOUNTER.	LOVING KINDNESS is always relevant.	SALESIAN charism is new to me.	<p>Listening.</p> <p>Being there and being a shelter for all stakeholders</p>	I think I spoke earlier about making the culture and ethos understandable is key and giving people the	All staff must understand they are SERVING the local community.	<p>A. Optimism with young people</p> <p>The one I would pick out is to serve the</p>	<p>Ethos 32/7</p> <p>Culture 18/7</p> <p>Formation 2/2</p> <p>Recruitment 1/1</p>

<p><b>Charism meeting Needs of</b></p> <p><b>-Staff</b></p> <p><b>- Pupils</b></p> <p><b>- Parents</b></p>	<p>i.e. Don Bosco in the playground.</p> <p><b>TRANSFORMATIONAL EDUCATION</b> begins with <b>ENCOUNTER.</b></p> <p>Particularly on the</p> <p><b>INTEGRATION</b> - THERE IS A wonderful sense of but also <b>front &amp; centre as an SDB standard</b> (see O'Collins summary of Amoris - <b>Accompany, Discern</b> / INTEGRATE)</p> <p>Predicated on the <b>PORTAL of LOVE</b> allowing <b>young people to TAKE RISKS.</b></p> <p><b>DIGNITY</b> - depth that <b>adults</b> are showing them so that they <b>wish to remain beyond the bell</b> (feeling of <b>belonging?</b>)</p> <p><b>PRACTICALITY</b> - of the <b>SDB approach</b> makes it <b>valued and appreciated.</b></p>	<p>Hard WORK.</p> <p><b>RELATIONSHIPS</b> – <b>educating the heart</b> not just the mind.</p> <p>Engages children and parents.</p> <p>Parent feedback is usually when they see the school going too far.</p> <p>Way we <b>TREAT ONE ANOTHER</b> including staff and pupils.</p> <p><b>REASON</b> as a key <b>aspect of education.</b></p>	<p>Yet it feels like <b>COMING HOME</b> as a practical expression of what the school should be.</p> <p><b>Playground, home, chapel and school</b> rings <b>true to me</b></p> <p><b>PRESENCE</b> with <b>pupils and staff</b> is an enactment of what it means to be human.</p> <p>It is an enactment of what the gospel is about.</p> <p><b>SALESIAN</b> is a <b>great vehicle</b>. It is something that can <b>be bought into</b> in a way that specifically Catholic may not be.</p> <p>The <b>Salesian model</b> is <b>adaptable</b> to different cultures and expectations including non-Christian countries.</p>	<p>.</p> <p>Look for opportunities to <b>bring staff and pupils together</b> e.g. <b>Salesian fun day.</b></p> <p>Events to support the <b>most vulnerable families</b></p> <p>.</p> <p><b>Harnessing relationships.</b></p> <p><b>Working closely with a team</b> to ensure staff wellbeing is a <b>focus for staff wellbeing.</b></p> <p>Run in its four elements.</p> <p><b>Working hard for each other.</b></p> <p><b>Working within the context.</b></p> <p><b>Making sure I have the best staff.</b></p>	<p>hook to buy into and to connect with.</p> <p>The <b>Salesian ethos</b> truly allows that. It is an <b>access route</b> because the <b>charism</b> of Salesian education is <b>accessible for anyone, whether Catholic or not</b>, because it is about young people and about the <b>development of young people</b> and obviously <b>the spiritual development of young people</b> and is 100% part of that.</p> <p>It allows our <b>staff</b> to <b>connect with our ethos</b> in a way that if they are resistant to the Catholic element of this ethos <b>there is still a way in.</b></p> <p><b>So, I think it makes sense to people; when you talk about church, playground, home and school and respect, understanding, affection and humour</b></p>	<p><b>The charism states you are here to SERVE to LISTEN to people, to show people RESPECT.</b></p> <p><b>SERVICE to young people, families, and the wider community is the basis of the school's approach to ethos.</b></p>	<p><b>Lord with holy cheerfulness.</b></p> <p>New staff have pointed out <b>the celebration of the achievement of the young people</b> is crucial to ethos.</p> <p>The <b>staff supporting one another and the pupils.</b></p> <p><b>Servant leadership is important.</b></p> <p>Being <b>joyful and celebrating the achievements</b> is crucial.</p> <p>We have a Salesian moment every week to <b>celebrate a staff member going the extra mile.</b></p> <p>B Behaviour</p>	<p><b>Relationships/ Belonging 3/3</b></p> <p><b>Leadership 1/1</b></p> <p><b>Standards 1/1</b></p> <p><b>Presence/Encounter 2/1</b></p> <p><b>Role Models/Witness/Extra Mile 2/2</b></p> <p><b>RUAH 3/2</b></p> <p><b>Service/Poor/Family 1/1</b></p>
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	<p><u>WITNESS - practical witness of SDBs around is invaluable.</u></p> <p><b>Adult FORMATION of teachers as Salesian educators is next step.</b></p>		<p>Non catholic staff can buy in to be Salesian.</p> <p>There is a great deal of baggage to RC but there is NOT attached to being SALESIAN.</p> <p>It is easier to recognise Salesianity is for all</p> <p>HT speaking to pupils stating the school starts from being that your child is uniquely created by God.</p> <p>This is a school which educates in a Catholic way. It does not set out principally to educate Catholics.</p> <p>Obsession of church has been on counting Catholics rather than <b>educating them in catholic and Christian education.</b></p>		<p>when you talk about children having to know that they are loved and to really feel that, any good educator would want that so it is a very good way in, I think.</p> <p>We talk a lot about young people being taught about honesty and integrity, everybody wants that, so I think that that Salesian framework in our school really does support the students and parents in accessing the ethos.</p> <p>24:11</p> <p>And so we have underpinned all of our behaviour policies with RUAH and we talk about and use that language routinely. It is normalized.</p> <p>So I hear members of our staff who might not be Catholic, who might be Muslim using RUAH like they used any terminology. So I think</p>		<p>As in a pan inner city school behaviours can be challenging.</p> <p>Recognising goodness and forgiveness is also essential.</p> <p>Firmness of expectation is also essential in establishing boundaries.</p> <p>Tough love is also important.</p> <p>Cheerfulness.</p> <p>Seeing the good.</p> <p>Needing to know staff and pupils are loved.</p> <p>My sense is that all comers sense this atmosphere.</p>	
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			<p>We still need a core of Catholic staff have the conviction of FAITH</p> <p>SLT is 50 per cent RC and 50 high Anglican.</p> <p>Why is this important?</p> <p>Because staff have to bear witness to THE GOSPEL.</p> <p>Leading staff in prayer it is noticeable that some are atheist but still believe in the ethos of the school, others will say the our father but not the Hail Mary... yet others are totally on board.</p>		that hugely supports in a way in that matters		It has to be worked at constantly and can be extremely challenging.	
<p><b>5</b></p> <p><b>Charism influencing</b></p> <p><b>Ethos &amp; Practice</b></p>	<p>PRESENCE of (and so ENCOUNTER with) chaplain and those formed in a Salesian mindset on day to day basis</p>	<p>Largely down to the way we TREAT ONE ANOTHER.</p> <p>We return to the basics with staff and</p>	<p>Politeness has a very high cache in the college e.g. Holding doors open.</p>	<p>Collective worship mass.</p> <p>Outstanding lessons.</p>	<p>Underpins systems and processes, behaviour policy, academic reporting to parents.</p>	<p>I do not think so.</p> <p>We are a Salesian school, and we value that.</p>	<p>A. The proximity of the Salesian community is an essential element at all levels including priests, brothers, governors.</p>	<p><b>Ethos 22/7</b></p> <p><b>Culture 19/7</b></p> <p><b>Presence/Encounter 14/5</b></p> <p><b>Modelling / Extra Mile 4/3</b></p>



<p>Modelled on the <b>absolute DIGNITY</b> afforded to pupils.</p> <p>Providing pupils with a <b>SPACE</b>.</p> <p>Sense of daily ENCOUNTER.</p> <p><b>LITURGICAL</b> celebrations.</p> <p>Range of <b>RETREATS</b> in venues outside of a London -taking Don Bosco 'on tour' so that kids know <b>that being free / being Salesian is not just about school</b>.</p> <p><u>Going the EXTRA MILE</u> - <u>providing additional support beyond the statutory</u> e.g. Story of boy who was taken into foster care with family in a bad way asked to be taken out to a restaurant for a meal as he had never done this. Senior staff took him out.</p>	<p>talk about what is important.</p> <p>We start, with <b>DON BOSCO: REASON, RELIGION, LOVING KINDNESS</b>.</p> <p><b>CHILDREN</b> only get, one chance.</p> <p><b>SALESIAN</b> ten</p> <p>- i.e. Ten things we need to do in every lesson e.g. Use their name, know something about them etc.</p> <p>Insist that <b>ALL STAFF</b> take the opportunity of <u>getting involved in EXTRACURRICULAR activities</u>.</p> <p><b>PRESENCE</b> as an idea of <b>DUTY</b> ot simply being the Police person.</p> <p>Applying the <b>PREVENTIVE</b></p>	<p><b>Being nice to one another</b></p> <p>.</p> <p><b>Being supportive</b> of others have a high expectation.</p> <p>For example <b>staff</b> here <b>cover for each other</b>, there is a preparedness by staff to cover for each other.</p> <p><b>Bullying is virtually non-existent</b>.</p> <p>As an all-boys school I would have expected more rough and tumble. Here the rugby player and the chess player can sit by side.</p> <p>Why is this? Because <b>God is Here!</b> Says David of Plymouth diocese).</p>	<p><b>Ensuring dedicated staff who share the journey with young people.</b></p> <p><b>Young people</b> wishing to celebrate <b>their success</b>.</p> <p>Working with the community.</p> <p><b>Ensuring support for Salesian events</b> locally and <b>nationally</b>.</p> <p>Working for the <b>future success of the College</b>.</p> <p>Providing wrap around cadre.</p>	<p>Character, classroom and RUAH is used also in reporting to parents.</p> <p>The fact this is central is indicative to staff.</p> <p>It also demonstrates that these aspects are not just fluffy window dressing, for the RE department or an optional extra.</p> <p>This is our core identity.</p> <p>Just because you have said it once or one hundred times does not mean they get it</p> <p>One day of <b>induction</b> is not sufficient. It must be <b>taught specifically to people</b>.</p> <p>This is why it is a performance objective (for all staff).</p>	<p>The <b>Salesians</b> who are present represent continuity in the community.</p> <p>The older parts of the local community have demonstrated their loyal support for the school in many different ways such as <b>helping to maintain pupil numbers</b>, which has been crucial.</p> <p>I remind the pupils, when they are leaving, that they leave as a <b>Salesian</b> and are <b>Salesians for life</b>.</p> <p>Parent returnees often mention this and that they are <b>proud to have been part of the school</b>.</p>	<p><u>The example of being with young people is essential</u>.</p> <p>The sense of being presence and walking with and alongside is essential.</p> <p>We have this <u>modelled by religious in school</u>.</p> <p><u>They models the CHARISM really sly well</u>.</p> <p>D <u>The presence of religious exemplifies giving glory to God in and through the presence with the young</u>.</p> <p>Religious being that example in and through their presence and work even though this goes through many different personalities,</p> <p>Young Salesians, by their example and tradition, clearly</p>	<p><b>Recruitment 3/3</b></p> <p><b>Relationships 1/1</b></p> <p><b>Formation/Training 2/2</b></p> <p><b>Standards 6/4</b></p> <p><b>RUAH 2/1</b></p> <p><b>Leadership 2/2</b></p>
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<p>Default is what we can do to SUPPORT young people.</p> <p>Possibility of LOVE - staff feel supported and mandated to support pupils (see JK).</p> <p>Humane model of leadership which is CHRISTOCENTRIC (but not a soft option) gives people, staff and students, permission to behave the same</p> <p>WITNESS (see Paul VI) - leading to ENCOUNTER</p> <p>How do we FACILITATE THESE TRAITS:</p> <p>High quality written resources. EFFECTIVE.</p> <p>SALESIAN chaplains and heads meetings - exchange of ideas, mutual support, being</p>	<p>SYSTEM in the practicality.</p> <p>Run sessions on ETHOS in the chapel stating the WAY we go about things. Then send the staff out to have a go at it. Ask them to REFLECT.</p> <p>What is the hardest part to grasp? Not WARMING to children is the hardest part.</p> <p>If God has not given you this grace (to be moved) I cannot develop it.</p> <p>WORK ETHIC can you instil this, if it is not there.</p> <p>JUDGEMENT is based in what you see them DO.</p>	<p>May be more than the Salesian influence but it is part of it.</p> <p>Global interconnectedness is also a key dynamic of connecting to a wider world.</p> <p>The fact that we are millions of people involved in a worldwide educational mission.</p> <p>We can break bread with other staff and pupils in Barcelona, New York, Turin.</p> <p>My previous school had a tradition of bringing the Y7 pupils to share the treasures if the company. What they saw as the precious things were material.</p> <p>A SALESIAN treasure is ephemeral and something of the heart</p>				<p>demonstrate we are here for the young people.</p> <p>This cannot always be taken for granted.</p> <p>With and for the kids in their own way e.g. basketball and football coaching.</p> <p>B. The senior staff need to model this presence and walking alongside pupils is also essential for the charism to have credibility.</p> <p>It is a challenge to Meet the challenge of being present to the children.</p> <p>We seek to appoint staff who are child centered and who look to be present , the children.</p> <p>This has to be remembered when</p>	
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	<p>part of the SDB ECO System.</p> <p><b>AUTHENTICITY</b> - adults have permission to be <b>authentic with pupils</b> so they bring their story.</p> <p>Notes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Compartmentalisation of the curriculum can lead to a LACK of authenticity.</li> <li>2. <b>Teachers</b> integrating all <b>aspects of curriculum and personal WITNESS</b> is key.</li> </ol> <p><b>Appointment of top quality teachers is essential to allow these dynamics to flourish.</b></p>		<p>e.g. Parent applauding carols who do not understand the occasion. It can be 'All show and no substance'.</p> <p>Ethos can be a matter of plate spinning. Trying to keep everything in the air.</p> <p>If you repeat the ethos and <b>the experience can maintain the ethos.</b></p> <p>However you cannot simply assume that the repetition of action can keep delivering.</p> <p><b>Still staff need moments to stop and stare.</b> How?</p> <p><b>Introduced practical ways in which we can enshrine matters of ethos e.g. Staff committee, student committee etc.</b></p>				<p>children misbehave and parents are screaming at you or the LA are demanding a pound of flesh.</p> <p>C. <b>Getting the children involved in leading liturgy and acts of worship.</b></p> <p><b>Involving young people in celebration of liturgy</b> is another example of a charism in action.</p> <p><b>It is the relationships and warmth that sustains people and helps the community maintain each other.</b></p>	

<p><b>6</b></p> <p><b>Ethos &amp; Charism</b></p> <p><b>DETRACTING</b></p>	<p>No.</p> <p>Everything is hugely positive.</p> <p>High regard for practical encounter.</p> <p>Anything surprising about the model?</p> <p>No</p> <p>It is Simple and practical but it is BACKED by being put into PRACTICE i.e. the importance of learning by EXAMPLE.</p> <p>It's SIMPLICITY AND PRACTICALITY are powerful.</p> <p>Robustly yes in that it fits in with RC education and the option.</p>	<p>When people get SALESIANITY confused with COSINESS</p> <p>Difficult to set the record straight when I arrived in the situation.</p> <p>Hard WORK and endeavour are key to backing the ETHOS up</p> <p>Now such an emphasis on LOVING KINDNESS e.g. show them the Salesian love.</p> <p>Wariness must be not being TOO SOFT with the children. See reports reference.</p> <p>Reporting system tends to rate pupils at 2 (GOOD) to emphasise the good in them</p>	<p>Slight discomfort with an order with an emphasis for the poor in a privileged setting.</p> <p>This squares up with schools who are</p> <p>Salesian across the world.</p> <p>Preferential option for the poor can sometimes not sit easily with pupils and staff.</p> <p>This can feel as though we are sitting at odds.</p> <p>But the message of Catholic education is to all people for all times.</p> <p>Independent:</p>	<p>Not at all.</p> <p>These (Ethos related) elements are at the core of everything.</p> <p>It is essential that Salesian values are at the core of the understanding of the ethos of the school.</p> <p>Ensuring the induction of new teachers with the Salesian ethos.</p> <p>Starting teachers before the end of the term to ensure they are inducted in the ethos of the school.</p> <p>Collegiality and ensuring working support.</p>	<p>Fundamentally no.</p> <p>The constant plate spinning is a challenge for management in particular.</p> <p>The outcomes plate must be kept spinning due to external accountability.</p> <p>At present, post pandemic, we have ensured ethos is front and centre</p> <p>At the same time management of senior staff is key to apportioning responsibility.</p> <p>Openness and honesty with staff are critical to understanding what the school is about.</p>	<p>All of the above.</p> <p>If we understand our history and that we are standing on the shoulders of those who have gone before it will stand us in good stead.</p> <p>This is not just paying lip service.</p> <p>It is real.</p>	<p>No.</p> <p>Fundamentally I would not say it is any element of the ethos.</p> <p>If we become too self-satisfied with our ethos and the softer elements we could run into trouble.</p> <p>If we do not keep a sharp focus in teaching and learning and discipline we will be failing the young people.</p> <p>This could happen and we need to be vigilant in monitoring all aspects of what we need to offer.</p> <p>We have a great reputation for dealing with ng people but we cannot rest on this or become complacent.</p>	<p>Ethos 11/6</p> <p>Culture 13/7</p> <p>Presence/Encounter 1/1</p> <p>Standard / Identity 6/3</p> <p>Formation/Training 1/1</p> <p>Service/Poor/Family/Community 1/1</p>
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		<p>Tough LOVE is needed also for staff and for pupils.</p>	<p>Economists debate whether we can actually end poverty.</p> <p>It is all about saving the souls of individuals.</p> <p>I do not believe there is a fundamental congruence in MISSION.</p> <p>How does this square with other colleagues?</p> <p>Some are more holy than others in the independent sector.</p> <p>In some ways you can be more deliberately catholic or even holy.</p> <p>In the independent sector there is a common valuing of my son or daughter in this school.</p> <p>I maintain connectedness across the independent and the state sector.</p>		<p>If staff feel they are at odds with the ethos, then challenging conversations are needed.</p> <p>This can be a challenge but generally there is very good buy in from the staff in school.</p> <p>We have made ethos relevant and they understand this.</p>			
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			<p>State:</p> <p>In the state sector you can only follow the governments agenda.</p> <p>Catholic state heads start their meeting with a prayer.</p> <p>After the prayer there will be an Ofsted discussion.</p> <p>Following that a theologian will give a discourse in the meaning of Catholic education.</p> <p>I feel fortunate to have spent time outside the RC sector to know what I was missing and that there are many good people working in education.</p>					
7	ENCOUNTER - adults providing leadership	ALL of it is, (if) you implement it correctly.			They absolutely do.	The new staff and leadership coming in must be made		<p>Ethos 18/6</p> <p>Culture 8/3</p>

<p><b>Impact of Charism on MAINTAINING Meaningful Christian culture</b></p>	<p>RESOURCES</p> <p>-high quality</p> <p>RETREATS</p> <p><b>NATIONAL EVENTS</b> e.g. The youth gather.</p> <p><b>INTERNATIONAL Dimension</b></p> <p><b>CENTRAL FOCUS</b> i.e. Don Bosco gives you something to joust with and to hang things on.</p> <p>LINKAGE e.g. to the Salesian community locally, nationally and internationally affirms the DIGNITY of pupils i.e. Greeting guests, showing them around etc.</p> <p>There is a spiritual franchise which has</p>	<p>It offers another FRAMEWORK for making JUDGEMENTS.</p> <p>TRADITION</p> <p>has a part to play e.g. some schools can lack ETHOS even if they are Roman Catholic.</p> <p>What is the difference?</p> <p><b>HISTORY of the school.</b></p> <p>Part of a BIGGER ENTITY, the Province, which is national</p> <p>DON BOSCO.</p> <p><b>The power of NARRATIVE.</b></p> <p><b>Visiting TURIN and the places where the work started.</b></p>	<p><b>Practical in defining culture as Salesian rather than RC.</b></p> <p>SALESIAN talks about a way of being which is inherently in life</p> <p>RC formation tends to put the cart before the horse i.e. baptism first then everything follows.</p> <p><b>SALESIAN education gives you experience and then unpacks the experience to discern its meaning</b> for you e.g. Going to a Lourdes starts with helping pupils to access experience then move to interpret.</p> <p><b>SALESIAN is PRACTICALLY based in practical principles.</b></p> <p>Previous RC school was called HOLY Family and was family.</p>	<p>All elements support the development of ethos.</p> <p>Looking to live out our mission statement.</p> <p>Developing home, church, playground etc.</p> <p>Education is an ongoing process for all including parents, pupils and staff.</p>	<p><b>INCLUSION is the driver. There is a place for everyone at this table if you are participating.</b></p> <p>The focus of the charism on the disadvantaged helps staff to understand it.</p> <p>Having Salesians in the staff makes a big difference to the school.</p> <p>The presence of SDB assists people in understanding the wider mission.</p> <p>Staff appointments are also key holding onto the staff who promote key elements.</p> <p>Promoting Salesian reading has also been important with the</p>	<p>aware of the ethos of the school and must be prepared to invest in it otherwise it could disappear.</p> <p>This cannot be allowed to happen.</p> <p>There are no elements of the charism which block the Christian culture of the school.</p> <p>It is essential that the story of the school is told to new managers who may join and that this link continues going forward.</p> <p>Keep the links.</p> <p>Tell the story of the school, including its history.</p> <p>Maintain Salesians on the staff.</p>	<p>Optimism and cheerfulness is very important.</p> <p>The development of RUAH n by the Salesians and emphasis on the importance of Respect, Affection and Understanding plays its part.</p> <p>This assists in building understanding.</p> <p>Optimism and faith will see us through.</p> <p>This is what the charism teaches us.</p> <p>The model of Don Bosco's life and his faithfulness.</p> <p>The development of RUAH assists pupils and staff in giving them a simple expression of the spirit</p>	<p><b>Recruitment 1/1</b></p> <p><b>Distinctive/Narrative 10/5</b></p> <p><b>Connectivity /Interrelatedness</b></p> <p><b>National/International 3/2</b></p> <p><b>Presence / Encounter 2/2</b></p> <p><b>Narrative / History 3/2</b></p> <p><b>Modelling / Role Models/ 9/4</b></p> <p><b>Literature / Spirituality 1/1</b></p> <p><b>Standards 2/2</b></p> <p><b>RUAH 2/1</b></p> <p><b>Service/Poor/Inclusion 2/1</b></p> <p><b>Relationships 1/1</b></p> <p><b>Belonging 3/2</b></p>
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<p>cache and needs to be shared.</p> <p>Young people identify with the narrative that is running through the school.</p> <p>Moving pupils out of parochialism i.e. Being locked into a locality and mentality e.g. pupils who would fly back to Colombia but who did not know beyond their street.</p> <p>How do you build a narrative into an ethos if you do not have this personnel?</p> <p>Minor transformations are possible even in the cases of e.g. permanent exclusion.</p> <p>Is there a threat to ethos from different sources?</p> <p>All of this comes down to leadership in the end.</p>	<p>There is a lot of <b>CONNECTIVITY</b>.</p> <p>We hang so much on DON BOSCO - we are so lucky.</p> <p>How else do you make the ETHOS stick?</p> <p>Extra sense of responsibility is that I am carrying the baton of the school.</p> <p>Also if I don't WORK hard at it we could end up simply being a Catholic and not a Salesian school.</p> <p>Other colleagues wish to use the Salesian ETHOS in their schools.</p> <p>Other leaders can see the HOOK to make Catholic ETHOS practical.</p>	<p>It was not an ethos from a congregation but had a core of staff who were the FAITH community.</p> <p>They prayed together, retreated together, went out together. This core animated the ethos of the school e.g. praying for the dead in the previous but one school.</p> <p>In the next school there was no language to express the deaths of five staff in rapid succession.</p> <p>Some aspects were allowable e.g. Praying at assemblies.</p> <p>How did this make you feel?</p> <p>The fact that I was moving to a school where FAITH was intentional was important at that time.</p>	<p>leadership and wider staff to encourage them to understand WHY they are doing what they do, not just what.</p> <p>Creating the opportunity to ask the WHY about what we are doing is crucial.</p> <p>Ensuring the leadership of the school has a clear understanding of what SALESIAN is crucial and increases the depth of that.</p>	<p><a href="#">Never lose the link to the community.</a></p> <p><a href="#">Salesians are living embodiments of what this school represents.</a></p> <p>Maintain this.</p> <p>This is the best way to maintain this identity.</p>	<p>of what the Salesian ethos is about.</p> <p>The affection and humour are not what you always hear re ethos.</p> <p>Respect and understanding is more common.</p> <p>Distinctive Salesian resilience and values is there.</p> <p>We have a wonderful vehicle in RUAH to express these things.</p> <p>This reinforces the charism and ethics of the school.</p> <p>We can assume that staff have got this without giving them all the tools.</p>
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	<p>Most people have <b>the right mindset within them.</b></p> <p>Nevertheless leadership dictates the tone e.g. if the model is ruthless people will follow it.</p> <p>This is <b>Not a soft option, however.</b></p> <p><b>Warnings sometimes have to be issued such as in circumstances where complacency is leading to stagnation.</b></p>	<p><b>ETHOS is</b> a way of <b>translating Roman Catholic SOCIAL TEACHING into practices.</b></p> <p>Some other approaches are too intellectual.</p> <p>Lady in the canteen needs to understand it.</p> <p>Jesuit charism is not approachable.</p> <p><b>Accessibility (of the Salesian charism).</b></p>	<p>There was some practical acknowledgement e.g. Benches in the yard but no religious expression.</p> <p><b>FAITH in practice</b> is key.</p> <p><b>Education being a matter of the heart is key.</b></p> <p>The nebulous stuff is accepted and recognised.</p> <p>RC education needs to be more robust.</p> <p>What are the key pillars of Salesian Ethos:</p> <p>Ability to <b>have role models</b> within the Salesian experience e.g. Don Bosco, Sean Devereux particularly.</p>				<p>This year we have sought more directly to bring staff into the understanding of being part of a <b>much wider organisation throughout the world.</b></p> <p>We share with staff literature but also the word about other works in the world.</p> <p>We <b>call staff well-being Salesian spirit.</b></p> <p>Other governors and staff are in regularly to reinforce Salesian ethos, including SDBs both formally and informally subject to appropriate DBS clearance.</p> <p>Getting in to the <b>Salesian house regularly</b> and joining other Salesian schools produces a <b>sense of BELONGING.</b></p> <p>We cannot simply assume staff get it.</p>	
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			<p><b>SALESIAN ethos as a shared experience</b></p> <p>both nationally and internationally e.g. Farnborough, Barcelona going to Zambia.</p> <p><u>Role models</u> are important in terms of identifying <b>who I am and whom I can be</b> in terms of communicating the eternal truths.</p> <p>There is something profoundly easy about <u>Salesian role models</u>.</p> <p>The setting out on this gives us a comeback in terms of this is what we are doing e.g. mentoring.</p> <p>The human understanding of these traits as being <b>PRESENCE to people is a skill</b>.</p>				<p>We need to be <u>modelling it every day</u>.</p> <p>We need to be educating them about the role of Don Bosco also.</p> <p><b>The sense of BELONGING is as essential for staff as well as pupils</b></p> <p>Staff need to <b>take the lead with challenging pupils every day</b>. <b>Without a sense of belonging it is really tough</b> for staff to face this every day.</p> <p>With almost 1000 pupils every member <b>of staff must buy into the faith and values and ethos of the school irrespective of personal faith</b>.</p>	
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			<p>A key aspect of emotional intelligence is being aware of people and being able to relate to them.</p> <p>PE, drama, music all contribute to the same areas in terms of developing emotional intelligence and personal awareness also in terms of creativity being switched on.</p> <p>Worry is that the madness of our system is pressurising these things out in struggling schools because they are subject to the exactitude of inspection.</p>					
<p><b>8</b></p> <p><b>Support &amp; Assistance</b></p>	<p><u>SDB Involvement</u> / encounter. Never take this for granted.</p>	<p>Opportunities to EXPERIENCE Salesian ETHOS beyond the school.</p>	<p>How best can this assistance or support be delivered?</p>	<p>Ensuring that we walk the walk and not just talk the talk.</p>	<p><u>Having SDB as chaplains and governors helps to name what is Salesian.</u></p>	<p><u>Maintaining Salesians on the staff and links to the Salesian community</u> is</p>	<p>We are fortunate in having the <u>resource of a community.</u></p>	<p>Ethos 9/4</p> <p>Culture 18/6</p> <p>FORMATION/ TRAINING 10/4</p>

	<p>Staff realising the importance of this <u>example</u> around the College.</p> <p>Quality <b>FORMATION</b> for lay staff delivered by suitable SDBs / qualified lay staff.</p> <p>Delivering more quality <b>FORMATION</b> to lay staff e.g.</p> <p>Investing in quality personnel.</p> <p>Heads conference.</p> <p>Targeting DHT and SLT level training.</p> <p>SDBs sponsoring MSC in RC leadership e.g. For 2 teachers per school.</p> <p>Exchange programme for teachers to different SDB schools e.g. weeklong visits.</p>	<p><b>Visiting SALESIANS are valuable.</b></p> <p>Other schools including Slovakia are showing interest.</p> <p>Pupil involvement in the relics pilgrimage.</p> <p>Staff involved in the Turin trips.</p> <p>Getting people <b>COMMITTING to doing it</b> is still the challenge.</p> <p>How do you get buy in?</p> <p>Having <b>champions to set PROJECTS up:</b></p> <p>e.g. duke of Edinburgh</p> <p><b>Having the RIGHT people to do it</b> - ability to <b>appeal to a wider audience.</b></p>	<p>How should support be offered?</p> <p>The <b>knowledge of what Salesian means</b></p> <p>.</p> <p>Resources re what it means to <b>work in an SDB school.</b></p> <p><b>What is the Salesian history?</b></p> <p>Salesian staff who can offer inset.</p> <p>Why Salesian is different and how it is different?</p> <p>Networks of chaplaincy e.g. In the north.</p> <p>New models e.g. MATs. Does it mean Salesianity.</p>	<p>How people are treated and that they are valued.</p> <p><b>Resources from Salesian publications to enable staff to sit and to reflect.</b></p> <p>Allowing the staff to trade in as much as they can.</p> <p>The current material is approachable.</p> <p><u>It is an easy read. It is not too long.</u></p> <p><u>Literature gives an opportunity to dip in and to absorb.</u></p> <p><b>School needs to take the key messages and discuss them in quality time.</b></p>	<p>This is lived and experienced by people in real terms.</p> <p>How do we <b>develop and model</b> this to lay people <b>improving their understanding</b> of this is a challenge?</p> <p><b>What can we do to maintain and develop a model for Salesian leadership at a time when SDB might not be visible?</b></p> <p>How do we keep this going as an <b>active ethos</b> which can be sustained?</p> <p>I have always felt the connection to the SDB community but this has not always been evident.</p> <p>At present we are in a good place (with the <b>SDB evident in main</b></p>	<p>crucial to maintaining identity.</p> <p><b>Salesians embody the very CHARISM we profess.</b></p> <p>The new school must have a <b>chapel at its heart.</b></p> <p>This dimension must not be lost in the new school.</p> <p>The artefacts from the community must also be placed in the new school.</p>	<p><b>Having members availability to advise and support around ethos is invaluable.</b></p> <p>We need a <b>dynamic relationship such as this to reflect on, talk things through.</b></p> <p><b>Relationships with individuals we can talk to from the community is invaluable.</b></p> <p>Inset and literature is there .</p> <p>What matters is the communication with the <b>religious members of the community.</b></p> <p>They allow us to <b>construct the ethos TOGETHER.</b></p>	<p><b>Literature/Resources 1/1</b></p> <p><b>Role Models/SDB 12/6</b></p> <p><b>Presence / Encounter 1.1</b></p> <p><b>Leadership/ Succession 3/2</b></p> <p><b>Standards 1/1</b></p> <p><b>Relationship 1//1</b></p>
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	<p>Resource question:</p> <p>Direction of travel is towards social media as a communication tool.</p> <p>Need to be moving to online methods of communication.</p> <p>Encapsulating a particular insight into a 4 minute flash video that schools can utilise.</p> <p>Social media e.g. Facebook, twitter etc.</p> <p>Q. Are there any users currently of text for the day?</p> <p>LY people are infantilised still.</p>	<p><b>Need people in positions of leadership, to take the LEAD.</b></p> <p><b>Support delivered:</b></p> <p>Marrying what we are trying TO DO and meeting this e.g. <b>Conferences for certain staff.</b></p> <p>How can we <b>approach something in order to get BUY IN?</b></p> <p><b>How can we MARRY OBJECTIVES to meet both ends?</b></p> <p><b>SALESIAN Conferences</b> How were they?</p> <p>Staff were <b>ENTHUSED</b> about the weekend.</p>	<p>What resources?</p> <p>Need to be <b>practical, simple and human in terms of delivering the message.</b></p> <p>Teachers notice the explicit nature of its intentional implementation.</p> <p><b>There is always the danger of things becoming too comforting or even cosy</b> as opposed to being cynical.</p> <p><b>It is very difficult to measure qualities such as engagement.</b></p> <p><b>We as a church have not been challenging enough to those who, have challenged us.</b></p>	<p><b>Salesian insets</b> have been introduced recently.</p>	<p><u>school and 6th form chaplaincy).</u></p> <p><b>Trust and honesty are also important in these conversations and this is key.</b></p> <p><u>In the period when SDB were not around the relevance of the charism could be questioned!</u></p> <p><b>Experienced staff grew as teachers through exposure to the ethos but this was not passed on.</b></p> <p>Once these staff moved on there was <b>nothing to infill it.</b></p> <p>Allied to <u>SDB not present in the institution</u> this led to a <b>questioning of ethos.</b></p>	<p><b>Our ability to express the charism and discuss it is key.</b></p> <p><b>A DYNAMIC relationship with the community is wonderful</b></p> <p>Further engaging the <u>young brother</u> in the community is a challenge for us going forward.</p>	
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		<p>Inputs were VARIABLE.</p> <p>Quality: we need input to make them better SALESIAN teachers.</p> <p>For some it ranges from the basis to the sophisticates</p> <p>Good speakers who can use humour but who can also GET THROUGH to them.</p> <p>Marrying up the ability to COMMUNICATE effectively with PROPER content.</p> <p>Ability to ENTHUSE and to a point ENTERTAIN staff.</p>	<p>The management response to people needing support</p> <p>Educating has been repeatedly devalued in term somewhat we offer.</p> <p>Some speakers are good at speaking: skilled, engaging and drawing people in.</p> <p>Similar with writers.</p> <p>There is the danger of going over the top but this can be ameliorated in terms of presentation.</p> <p>What style of message?</p> <p>SALESIAN has a vague feeling for a number of people of feeling they are at home!</p>		<p>This has led us to question what we are about in building ethos.</p> <p>Q. In terms of staff stability is this a factor in basing ethos?</p> <p>The school is fortunate to have a number of past pupils within the staff, which helps.</p> <p>Stability (of staff) is not what it was because staff move perhaps more often.</p> <p>Succession planning also needs to be looked at in terms of leadership.</p> <p>We perhaps relied too much on Salesianity being caught not taught.</p> <p>Also there is Not being able to be sure</p>			
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		<p>Two to three key areas identifying:</p> <p>Draw out two to three key PRIORITIES.</p> <p>Talk to the HEADS as to whether this is relevant?</p> <p>ORIGINALITY is important.</p> <p>Vatican documents and schools' publication by J Gallagher. Personal and committed but a different audience may not read it e.g. Too intellectual for teachers.</p> <p>FACILITATING get together of staff:</p> <p>Is their ONE MESSAGE?</p> <p>Is there more than one message to be distributed?</p>	<p>It feels comforting.</p> <p>That, it is explicit e.g. Using love in a school environment.</p>		<p>about the depth of their understanding.</p> <p>It needs to be taught and tested (so that knowledge is not just assumed).</p>			
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		<p>What DISCUSSION needs to take place?</p> <p>There is a huge market <b>for Roman Catholic Inset.</b></p> <p>Is there a place for <b>DEVELOPING your own EDUCATORS</b> to deliver these sorts of messages in schools?</p> <p><b>STORIES</b> of Don Bosco go a long way in communicating.</p> <p>Some other aspects need to be <b>TRANSLATED.</b></p> <p>Staff are not signing up,</p> <p><u>Use SDBs or find the equivalent people</u> i.e. Those who really <b>ENGAGE with teachers.</b></p>						
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<p><b>9</b></p> <p><b>Challenges in maintaining Ethos</b></p>	<p><u>Long term availability of SDBs to provide personal ENCOUNTER.</u></p> <p>Can lay staff provide this? Only with a great deal of <b>Salesian FORMATION</b>.</p> <p>Catholic capital is a minority in terms of <b>FAITH</b> commitment, seeing the <b>bigger picture as to how this works can create buy in</b>.</p> <p>How should <b>FORMATION</b> happen?</p> <p>It should focus on the <b>short term at the top but needs to go beyond the HT</b>.</p> <p><b>Leadership teams</b> must be involved.</p>	<p><b>Personnel</b> - people who genuinely <b>UNDERSTAND</b> and can <b>COMMUNICATE</b> the <b>ETHOS</b>.</p> <p>Concern - that in ten years' time the <b>ETHOS</b> may not be sustained.</p> <p><b>CONNECTIVITY</b></p> <p><b>Conferences</b></p> <p>Having a GET TOGETHER once per year.</p> <p>Opportunity to get <b>small groups of people TOGETHER</b>.</p> <p>Captive audience - give them <b>INPUTS</b>.</p> <p><b>PRIORITIES</b> -these are our and we want to see them</p>	<p><b>Maintaining a core of Catholic staff</b></p> <p><b>Balance</b> needs to be maintained in terms of the richness of the school.</p> <p>Some posts cannot be specifically Catholic e.g. Physics position.</p> <p><u>Changing Salesian community link. More retired. How do we adapt to it?</u></p> <p><b>Fear and retrenchment</b> can become apparent from Salesians of Don Bosco.</p> <p>Battersea is an example of a <b>new confidence</b>.</p>	<p><b>Salesian Induction is key.</b></p> <p><b>Regular inset is key.</b></p> <p>Difficulty <b>encouraging the local clergy to engage</b>. Some do and some do not.</p> <p>The school needs to work at this.</p> <p><b>Supporting young people through pilgrimages also and finding time to promote these e.g. Lourdes, Rome.</b></p> <p>Encouraging young people to develop their <b>sense of vocation in life</b>.</p>	<p>Challenges:</p> <p>Short term</p> <p>Since our return we are rapidly moving back <b>towards an exams focus</b>.</p> <p>The challenge is <b>maintaining our focus on ethos in the short term</b>.</p> <p>Medium term</p> <p>Not having SDBs who are visible in school.</p> <p>Long term.</p> <p><b>Not having embedded a detailed programme of staff training in ethos going forward.</b></p>	<p>I am <b>confident about the identity</b> of the school being maintained going forward.</p> <p>Many of the new people involved in leading the Pope Francis MAT <b>understand it and get it</b>.</p> <p>There are <b>key people who belong to the community</b> who work in the school and know the locality, including <b>Salesians</b>.</p> <p><b>The disconnect will not happen if this is the methodology going forward.</b></p> <p>The academy will operate out of Savio Salesian, a college</p>	<p>A. Ensuring the school climate secures <b>opportunities for young people in the practice of faith</b>.</p> <p><u>Having religious in school absolutely assists this. Without this it would be a greater challenge.</u></p> <p>We have to ensure we are not simply trotting out the same thing each year.</p> <p><b>Looking to find time for senior leadership</b> is also important and we could find more of this also for the staff in general.</p> <p>To aid them in understanding what this means to the person is key.</p>	<p><b>Ethos 27/7</b></p> <p><b>Culture 28/7</b></p> <p><u>Role Models / Extra Mile 4/4</u></p> <p><b>FORMATION / TRAINING 4/1</b></p> <p><b>Leadership 7/4</b></p> <p><b>CONNECTIVITY / Belonging 2/1</b></p> <p><b>Standards 4/3</b></p> <p><b>Recruitment 1/1</b></p> <p><b>Service/Poor 2/1</b></p> <p><b>International / Global 1/1</b></p>

<p>Intelligent and intense SDB formation.</p> <p>How can this be approached?</p> <p>A. Through the <b>heads' forum.</b></p> <p><b>Fund it well and resource it properly.</b></p> <p>B. <b>Quality input</b> e.g. not just the stories of Don Bosco.</p> <p>Note well:</p> <p>The WHOLE theme is about <b>allowing Don Bosco into the charism of the whole entity.</b></p> <p>Get HTs and SLT to send in <b>case studies</b> of what they have done as examples of focusing on a particular theme</p>	<p>happening in your school.</p> <p><b>ACTIVITES</b></p> <p><b>Between the schools: better to operate on a north - south basis.</b></p> <p>Making use of Battersea facilities.</p> <p>Communication by drip feed:</p> <p>TEXT a day.</p> <p>ASSEMBLY material.</p> <p><b>A reflective BLOG</b> once per week on the GOSPEL / DON BOSCO.</p> <p>Anything that helps people stay <b>CONNECTED</b></p> <p><b>Staff need to feel they are PART of a BIGGER thing.</b></p> <p>Blog gets written and then subscribe.</p>	<p>Sometimes appears that we have prayed for vocations and then despaired when we have not had them.</p> <p>Perhaps we need to see this in a wider context in terms of who we are generating as young volunteers , chaplains etc.</p> <p><b>Church mission to education was primar</b>, orders gave their lives tom development.</p> <p>There is a fertile land <b>to evangelise wider</b>. Does this mean to leave the schools to themselves.</p> <p><b>Both MISSIONS inside schools and wider in terms of a Salesian approach</b> to life are also present.</p>	<p>Ensuring books are balanced and employment is secure.</p> <p>Budget issues are kept to the forefront.</p> <p>I wish to look for opportunities to <b>add to the sense of the ethos of the school.</b></p> <p><b>Visitors sense the ethos</b> of the school and are blown away by the school.</p> <p>Being <b>part of the school is special</b> and I want to maintain that.</p> <p>We need to <b>remember why we're here.</b></p> <p>Dealing with the nitty</p>	<p>We are blessed with the contact we have <b>with local clergy:</b></p> <p>We have examples of Local parish priests who come in to work with pupils:</p> <p>Fr. XXXX supports the vulnerable.</p> <p>Fr. Chris assists the language department in aspects.</p> <p>Fr. Saju (chaplain) is encouraging links to, the local clergy and deanery.</p> <p>We have the <b>Salesian access route</b> which helps as a way into all of this.</p> <p>The <b>preventive and oratory systems</b> are <b>understood by teachers as a successful strategy.</b></p>	<p>which means the academy leaders can have access to the school chapel, school masses etc. This is very important for them to understand ethos.</p>	<p>This also helps to <b>avoid secular drift.</b></p> <p>We do <b>not want Don Bosco's words to become meaningless words.</b></p> <p>The challenges remain and are significant in terms of stability <b>and building resilience.</b></p> <p>B. The school has a great opportunity, because of the <b>diversity of the intake</b>, is a wonderful <b>challenge but also an opportunity.</b></p> <p>We have sought to promote ourselves as <b>a place of welcome</b> for all young people from diverse backgrounds.</p> <p><b>Fr. Saju</b> has assisted this is <b>producing liturgies</b> for different communities so also using elements of</p>	
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<p>e.g. <b>Poor youth / asylum seekers?</b></p> <p>What are <b>the obstacles to young people</b> in these contexts.</p> <p><b>What is the mismatch between FAITH and culture?</b></p> <p>Encourage teachers to look at taking back the mindset.</p> <p><b>Forming intelligent catholic teachers who have a <b>Salesian mindset</b>. shared mindset.</b></p> <p>Danger of school becoming <b>nice places because they are over-subscribed.</b></p> <p>Checking the hubris of self-justification.</p> <p><b>Checking the option for the poor</b> - is this still a key strand?</p>	<p>Concerns:</p> <p>Were schools still a high PRIORITY?</p> <p>Need <b>DEDICATION to the pupils we have in front of, us.</b></p> <p>Need PRIORITIES for the present.</p>	<p>Is there a freedom for SDBs from the schools to express themselves in wider.</p> <p>What may be the reference points into the <b>future of Salesian PRESENCE</b> in its widest sense?</p> <p>Is it important to have a <b>Salesian priest as a chaplain?</b></p> <p><b>Yes, it is important in terms of how it is done.</b></p> <p>He is not a teacher e.g. But is a <b>PRESENCE</b></p> <p>Everything is for the greater glory of God.</p> <p><b>SALESIAN life is more vital.</b></p> <p>The wider world links are important.</p>	<p>Not like any other school.</p> <p>Other schools have an ethos including a faith-based ethos.</p> <p><b>People here walk the walk.</b></p> <p><b>Collective worship</b></p> <p><b>Celebrations</b></p> <p><b>Communicating their faith</b></p> <p><u>What motivates staff to go, the extra mile:</u></p> <p><b>Staff want pupils to succeed.</b></p> <p><b>Staff need to put in 110% To find success.</b></p> <p>Staff stay in the school for longer</p>	<p>The Catholic element of the school does not just sit with the RE department as it appears to in some Catholic schools.</p>	<p>different language as above.</p> <p>Fundamentally <b>young people feel welcome and secure.</b></p> <p>The <b>groups</b> within the school can have a <b>positive influence on each other in terms of motivation and work.</b></p> <p>It can however be difficult if they clan together to create a block.</p> <p>The challenge of learning an English rema8ns supreme in term of young people moving forward.</p> <p>We have tried to interpret this by, for example, appointing a Spanish speaking pastoral leader to communicate with parents from these communities e,</p>
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	<p>How should we <b>validate these qualities?</b></p> <p>Make a key component of the HTs meeting e.g. <b>HT produce a validation document</b> on Salesianity including some questions that get under the skin of people in part.</p> <p>Last meeting reflection - brief resume from 6 schools where <b>each HT speaks about 5 or 6 key themes.</b></p> <p>Make this an intrinsic part of the meeting and a <b>process of enrichment for the group.</b></p> <p>People can then use this to feed into, their section 48.</p> <p>REFLEXIVE document - we evaluated this, here is our response.</p>		<p>The fact that <b>Salesians priests</b> also means they <b>are not divorced from the world.</b></p> <p>Priests' orders have had parishes as well as centres of education.</p> <p><b>SALESIANs build community</b> in terms of being part COMMUNITY.</p> <p>EDUCAREM FORMATION of Leaders Programme:</p> <p>Headteacher's Reflections on the EducareM Course on Catholic leadership.</p> <p>Educational Formation</p> <p>Educate Catholic Formation course</p>	<p>because they are <b>one with the school.</b></p> <p>Sometimes it can be <b>difficult to communicate ethos</b> if they do not have examples of active faith.</p> <p><b>Salesian sister's presence</b> What does it give?</p> <p><b>Sisters are living out their mission.</b></p> <p>Sisters add another element to the pastoral side of the school.</p> <p><b>Offering emotional support to students</b> is crucial.</p> <p>It is an undefinable question.</p>		<p>.gg. Spaniards and Portuguese.</p> <p>C. this also applies to children who are <b>autistic and have social needs. This is a real positive</b> for the whole.</p> <p>Finally...</p> <p>The present circumstance around academisation creates an element of uncertainty due to looking ahead into the future.</p> <p>I do not wish this to be something that impacts on our independence and uniqueness of our role.</p> <p>This could be a role for the future.</p>	
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	<p><b>PERSONAL REFLECTIONS</b> on experience:</p> <p>Positives:</p> <p>Supportive - lots of SDB support</p> <p>Hardest professional challenge - took it up as morally the right thing.</p> <p>Situation of the school encapsulates a lot of what I have shared.</p> <p>Negatives:</p> <p>Dealing with so many bosses LA, dioceses, SDB</p> <p>Financial pressures.</p> <p>Dealing with young people with compounded issues.</p>		<p>How to implement Catholic social teaching.</p> <p>How it is being implemented in the country at present e.g. Find a Catholic inspired social project such asylum link, peace work, social work</p> <p>The international dimension each member going out to gain an international perspective e.g. Visiting a Benedictine community in the Philippines.</p>	<p>Ethos is also an undefinable quality.</p> <p>It can be sensed as soon as you walk into the school.</p> <p>Camaraderie and ethos go hand in hand.</p> <p>School would not be the same without its faith dimension.</p> <p>I am delighted to be the Headteacher of a Salesian catholic school.</p> <p>Love the job.</p>				
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	<p>Proud of: the Amalgamation</p> <p>The Ethos and their conviction we are here to serve.</p> <p>Did not encounter this initially.</p> <p>College staff nice and warm but not au fait with accountability.</p> <p>JP II staff caught in the headlights of accountability.</p> <p>Engendered and built an authentic RC school here in this place.</p> <p>Getting the staff situation sorted.</p> <p>Anything that could have been done better?</p> <p>Loneliness of the HT role makes this a difficult question.</p>							
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	<p>Ontological aspect to me being a head.</p> <p>Never felt I could not approach an SDB (for solace?).</p>							
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### Appendix IX Comparison of results from the analysis of the Teacher Questionnaire returns for Schools 1 to 6

S t r u c t u r e	School 1					School 2					School 3					School 4					School 5					School 6				
	SA	A	D	SD	S+A	SA	A	D	S	S+A	SA	A	D	SD	S+A	SA	A	D	SD	S+A	SA	A	D	SD	S+A	SA	A	D	SD	S+A
CHARISM / ETHOS																														
1	86	14	0	0	100	90	10	0	0	100	67	27	6	0	94	75	25	0	0	100	82	18	0	0	100	66	34	0	0	100
2	53	43	0	4	96	77	21	0	2	98	60	33	7	0	93	68	30	0	2	98	74	26	0	0	100	53	44	3	0	97
3	68	28	0	4	96	63	37	0	0	100	33	60	7	0	93	51	44	5	0	96	52	40	8	0	97	47	47	6	0	94
4	89	11	0	0	100	85	15	0	0	100	73	20	7	0	93	93	7	0	0	100	74	26	0	0	100	84	16	0	0	99
5	86	14	0	0	100	81	19	0	0	100	60	40	0	0	100	66	34	0	0	100	70	25	5	0	95	89	19	2	0	98



[illegible]



[illegible]

### Legend

Statements	Statements
<b>Charism</b>	<b>Collaboration</b>
1 Young know they are loved 2 Young people in need 3 Resources to support young people 4 Staff going the extra mile for students	11 Presence of Salesians 12 Formation in Salesian values ion CPD 13 Leadership model Salesian education 14 Inclusion

5 Name admired teacher	15 Salesian educational vision
<b>Accompaniment</b>	<b>Pressures</b>
6 Salesian style of accompanying 7 Understanding home, playground, school and church as key elements 8 RUAH 9 Collective worship opportunities 10 Spiritual development a key concern of leadership	16 Extra-curricular encouragement 17 Priority of Academic Excellence 18 External inspection concerns 19 Growth thru extra-curricular 20 Performance management and academic.