

Analyse the role and the influence of the catholic church in the irish education ...

[Education](#)



In the following essay I will discuss how significant and evident the role the Catholic Church has played in our education system to date. I will analyse the role and influence of the Catholic Church from the earliest known catholic schools to the catholic schools of the present day. The Catholic Church can be granted the pride of setting up our education system which allows us to compete academically with all the countries of the world today in industry and all other areas of work. The Catholic Church founded the world class education system we have in place today.

The earliest schools the Catholic Church set up set up were in the 6th century. These schools were set up to train boys for church. The entire teaching was religiously related if it did not have some relevance to religion it was not taught. The teachers of these schools were monks. There was little or no writing before Christianity. In the monastic schools boys were taught philosophy, logic and theology. Clonmacnoise, one of the most remarkable of the ancient schools of Erin was founded by St. Ciaran surnamed Mac an Tsair, or " Son of the Carpenter".

He chose this rather uninviting region because he thought it a more suitable dwelling place for disciples of the Cross than the luxuriant plains not far away. On 23 January, 544, Ciaran laid the foundation of his monastic school of Clonmacnoise, and on 9 May following he witnessed its completion. The remains of this school can still be seen today. The monastery then began to involve itself a bit more with the local community. The school taught some of the local boys who would have been from families who were financially struggling.

The local boys were given an education in exchange for some labour work done around the monastery for the monks. Schools like this were common around the country. There was one set up by St. Finnian in Clonard, co. Meath. It was from here that many other well known saints travelled to Britain and Europe thus forging links between these far flung places and Clonard. It was also well known as one of the distinguished seats of learning in Ireland. Students from all over Ireland, the British Isles, France and Germany came to this school which at one time numbered 3000.

A civilisation sprang up here, which developed and spread throughout the country. Thus, showing how the Catholic Church played the primary role in influencing and directing the education system. The determination and never give up attitude of the Catholic Church can be very evidentially seen as when Ireland was held under penal law in the 18th century. The British were trying to take over our country anglicise it and prostylise it. These penal laws instructed that the Irish were banned from receiving an education home or abroad. This made having an education illegal, in your own country?

Priests were banned from saying mass and all were banned from practicing the catholic faith. The church and the education system were in the same position; both were trying to be banished from Ireland. The British did not want the Irish to be educated as this would make them independent. The British wanted to get rid of the Irish Catholics and make Ireland a protestant only country. Priests had to be sent abroad to be educated and then come back to help educate the Catholics and keep the Irish education system and the catholic church alive and active.

The Priests set up schools which were hidden away from the 'red coats' as my interviewee had described them (British soldiers). These schools were set up in muddy ditches and old barns or ruined buildings. My interviewee stated that these schools were known as hedge schools, and that there were people dotted around the hedge schools at a distance on watch for the 'red coats'. If it was found out that a priest was teaching or saying mass this priest was hunted down and killed by the British soldiers. The Catholic Church was very brave, courageous and determined.

If it was not for them we may not have the successful catholic ethos education that we have today. Over 400, 000 pupils attended hedge schools in Ireland. This is a huge number considering the dreadful conditions that the schools had to operate in. The parents of the pupils obviously had huge trust in the Catholic Church as this was actually considered as an illegal operation under the penal law. The educational system in Ireland was pre-dominantly run by the Protestants prior to 1769 as the British were trying to take over our country as they have succeeded in other countries.

However the Catholic Church would not let our country become walked on. The Catholic Church struggled and battled for an educational reform and a catholic emancipation. The Catholic Church feared that as the protestant education system was trying to proselytise the country and lead the people away from Catholicism. The reason in the first place that the Protestants had such a grip on the education of the Catholics was because the Catholics were not able to come up with sufficient funds for their own educational system.

Furthermore, the system made explicit provision for denominational religious instruction, with the state bearing most of the expense. Previously the <https://assignbuster.com/analyse-the-role-and-the-influence-of-the-catholic-church-in-the-irish-education-system-to-date/>

national board of education had intended to provide a non-denominational system and to foster co-operation between the denominations, specifically through the promotion of joint denominational applications, this policy rarely worked. The Royal Hibernian Military School (1769 - 1924), Phoenix Park, Dublin, was originally the Hibernian Asylum created by the Hibernian Society, a philanthropic organization founded in Dublin in 1769 following the Seven Years War.

The Society petitioned the King for a charter, which was granted. The Society's aim was to help the orphaned children of soldiers who fell during the war, its services later being extended to the destitute families of soldiers leaving Ireland for overseas service. The instruction of this school was initially entirely on protestant principles. The Hibernian military school aimed at what the Protestants were well known for. They tried to use the Irish tried to proselytise our country and have us all doing it their way. This greedy and sneaky attitude of theirs can be seen all around the world where they have sometimes exceeded.

In 1806 the Hibernian Military School felt the need to alter the principles and ethos of their school slightly to try keeping some of the Catholics support. Catholic children were able to attend this school but did not have to attend any lessons on the protestant religion. Catholic children studied the catholic bible when the religion period was taking place in the school. The school wanted more support from the Catholics so they brought catholic teachers into the school, and used them to try getting more catholic children into the school.

When they got a sufficient amount of Catholics into the school they then made the Catholic teachers redundant. This created uproar in the Catholic Church and the Catholic children were then removed from the school. In 1824 there were 6,344 out of 15,922 pupils who were Catholic in these schools. The Catholic Church could no longer trust this system of education and so set up their own education system which would provide an education to the children of Ireland with an entirely Catholic ethos. Before 1782 principles of Catholic schools were not allowed open a school without getting access to a licence from a Protestant bishop in that area.

This was obviously providing a difficulty to the setting up of Catholic schools. The Catholic Church fought against this and in 1792 an act was passed that forced bishops to give these licences to the Catholics and as a result many Catholic schools were established around this time from the pressure the Catholic Church put on the Protestants. The Catholic Church demanded respect and would not let us be walked on that even in a Protestant run state that half the members of the board of education were occupied by Catholic clergy. The force of the Catholic Church and their determination for a Catholic ethos education is again seen.

The rise in culturalism and nationalism in the early 20th century drove the church on even more. They were getting more and more encouragement from the people, people did not need to rely on the support of a Protestant education anymore as Catholic schools were being set up. Such schools as the Christian Brothers, Patrician Brothers, De La Salle, Mercy Sisters, Presentation and Dominican were established. The aim of these schools was

to give the catholic children of Ireland an academic educational system with a highly Catholic ethos.

My interviewee was able to confirm these findings for me as he had a particularly personal relationship between the school and the Catholic Church. I selected my interviewee for the reason that he was my Irish and history teacher in secondary school and he was born in 1951, therefore he had went through the educational system that I am studying and he is still teaching today which would bring me up to date with the necessary information for the essay. I knew that he trained as a clerical student to be a priest for two and a half years got his degree and then left to become a teacher.

The interviewee described to me that in his secondary school his father was the principal and they had a very strong relationship and contact with the parish priest. He described to me how the parish priest would regularly visit his home in relation to school business. He described the priest as the ' local curate' and the manager of the school. This was supposed to be the general setup around the country. The information found here has proved how strong of an influence and role the Catholic Church had on the education system at the time.

The convent schools taught the girls life skills and how to lead a catholic life, which they obviously were not receiving in a protestant school. The Catholic Church had an influence on the education system which was not so much there before girls now had the right to an education. Convent schools emphasised the importance of morality, obedience and piety, as well as subjects traditionally prescribed for girls. According to my interviewee the <https://assignbuster.com/analyse-the-role-and-the-influence-of-the-catholic-church-in-the-irish-education-system-to-date/>

Catholic Church believed that the correct way to teach was boys and girls separately. The Catholic Church believed that the teaching of boys and girls together would develop their sexual awareness.

The church did not want this to happen until they are older. The church believed that boys and girls in the same learning environment would only distract each other and have a negative effect on their learning experience. This influence of the Catholic Church can still be seen today as there are still boys only and girl's only schools in operation. My interviewee stated that the role the churches had on his father's school and all schools at the time was phenomenal. The board of management essentially controls a school. Three quarters of the members of the board of management were made up of the clergy.

Before the department of education was set up it was the priests and the members of the church that hired teachers. They decided if the teacher was suitable to teach a catholic ethos academic education in their school. My interviewee told me about a famous court case in co. Kerry. In this case a female teacher from a convent was living with a man from the area. The couple were not married. This was not accepted by the nuns who ran the convent or by the Catholic Church. They did not see this arrangement acceptable from a person who was meant to be setting an example to hundreds of pupils from the area.

The church fought the case and this teacher lost her job. This is another example of how the church has influenced the education system. In my experience the church had a major influence on me throughout my education, for some reason particularly because I went to a country primary
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school. Every morning before school we would say prayers. Before and after lunch we would say prayers and we would have a religion lesson at twelve o'clock every day. Before we finished school we would say a prayer. Every Friday morning we would attend the local church for mass. It was in school I learned the Ten Commandments.

School teaches us our religion in detail where it is not as easy to learn in mass. There were meetings set up in the school by the priests in co-operation with the school and the parents to get parents to encourage their pupils to pray outside school also. An interesting point that my interviewee made when he seen the title of the essay was that almost wherever you see a school there is a church right beside it, the school in the church go hand in hand they both struggled together and grew stronger together so of course the catholic church has had and does have a phenomenal influence on the running of the school and the education system.