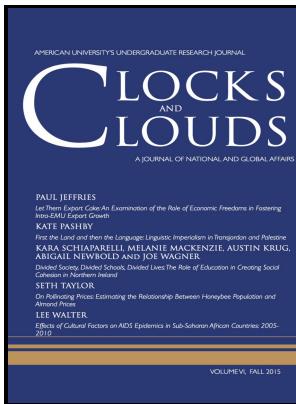


# Education and religion in Northern Ireland

**Centre for the Study of Conflict, University of Ulster - Education in Northern Ireland**



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## Religion, education and the law in Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland remains a divided society in many ways, but it is now also increasingly diverse.

### Religious Education

It is a compulsory subject in both primary and post-primary schools and since the early 1990s schools have been obliged by law to follow the Core Syllabus for Religious Education which was devised by representatives of the four largest Christian denominations in Northern Ireland Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, Anglican and Methodist.

### CAIN: Majority Minority Review No.1: Education and Religion in Northern Ireland, Section 1

An opt-out clause was the only legal way to keep the current system working, but it is difficult to get information about it. The landscape of education is set up for division and in much need of an overhaul.

### Religious Education

In the Northern Ireland Curriculum primary schools must now teach Personal Development and Mutual Understanding PDMU , and post-primary schools must teach Local and Global Citizenship, both of which include themes such as cultural and religious diversity, interdependence, relationships and conflict resolution, with reference to local and international contexts. Schools are permitted to teach material that is not included in the Core Syllabus though evidence suggests that many teachers do not venture beyond what is legally expected of them. CCEA offers GCSEs in French, German, Irish and Spanish, but GCSEs in Italian, Modern Greek, Polish and Portuguese are offered by other examination boards.

### Religion and its grip on Northern Ireland's education system

The CCMS represents trustees, schools and governors on issues such as raising and maintaining standards, the school estate and teacher employment. The central feature of the 1947 Act was to provide secondary education for all pupils with the age of transfer from primary to secondary set at eleven years Wilson, 1987. Until 1988 the predominant types of examinations taken were GCE O Level and CSE; in addition, a minority of pupils, particularly in secondary schools, sat a variety of vocational examinations such as RSA, City and Guilds and Pitmans see, for

example, Gallagher, 1988.

### **Religion and its grip on Northern Ireland's education system**

The Syllabus which can be viewed online — see below restricts itself to a list of content appropriate to each age group. While some teachers of Religious Education have been very committed to these areas, others have avoided what they perceive as the difficult and contentious issues that might arise in classrooms.

#### **Religious Education**

It is important to note that the Catholic school system is not viewed, by Catholics, as inferior.

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## Related Books

- [Where the new world begins](#)
- [Portugal-Brasil - uma visão interdisciplinar do século XX: actas](#)
- [Democracy, ethnic diversity, and security in post-communist Europe](#)
- [Religiöse Weltbild des Mönchs von Salzburg in den geistlichen Liedern G 33, G 34, G 37 und G 46](#)
- [Lectures on the following subjects - viz. I. Introductory lecture, ... By the late Mr. Peter Annet.](#)