

SCHOOL BOOKS IN IRELAND: Cost to Parents

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This Report is an abridged version of a Report which was submitted by Cooney Carey to the Department of Education in May 1993.

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The opinions expressed in this Report do not necessarily coincide with those of the Department of Education.

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1. Overview

The debate over the costs of school books reached new levels in 1989 when the Junior Certificate curriculum was introduced. Parents discovered that they could no longer rely on the recycled Market to reduce their annual book bill and pressure increased on the Department, publishers, schools, and teachers alike to do something about the cost of books.

This survey was commissioned to evaluate the factors which contribute to the cost of schoolbooks, the trends in the marketplace, and any solutions which might be immediately provided. In an attempt to quantify the size of the problem, questionnaires were sent out to 1123 primary and 793 post-primary schools. We sought to establish how much was spent on books by parents, who decided to change books within schools, and the prevalence and efficiency of book rental schemes.

The response rate to the questionnaire, 54.5% at primary and 64% at post-primary level, and the level of interest shown in the topic by all sectors indicates that the cost of schoolbooks has a high priority among parents, teachers, educationalists and the book trade alike.

2. Books in Schools

In most markets, the end user pays for his own products. Text-books for Irish schools are chosen by the teachers, but are paid for by the parents of the students. This paradox is central to the debate about books in Irish schools. Two recent surveys, one by the INTO and the other by one of the leading publishers, found that cost ranked seventh and eight respectively in the factors which help teachers decide which books to use.

In addition to this, the text-book plays an important part in the Irish classroom. According to the OECD, the emphasis on text-books is unhealthy. Irish teachers traditionally depend heavily on schoolbooks. It was how they were taught themselves. Under the old 19th century National School system the graded texts imposed a uniform standard in schools. For its time, this was innovative, and Irish school texts were exported all over the English speaking world. Since then, several attempts to change the undue emphasis on texts have been unsuccessful. An attempt was made to move away from set-texts for the Intermediate and Leaving Certificate examinations in 1925 but, against the advice of teachers, set texts were re-imposed on almost all subjects in 1938.

The primary curriculum change of 1971 was designed to give more freedom to teachers to use other resources, but teachers immediately turned to texts for help and soon workbooks became a new item on the parents' book bill.

Escaping from a text-based approach in the school was part of the thinking behind the 1989 introduction of the Junior Certificate curriculum. But instead of changing the emphasis on texts, the new system simply replaced existing text-books with even more expensive new ones, even in theoretically open-ended subjects like English.

Independent publishers took over from the old printers of board-commissioned texts in 1922. Most texts at post-primary level were imported until the introduction of free education in 1967 gave Irish publishers an opportunity to move in on the new mass-market subjects such as English and Mathematics.

The advent of free post-primary education in 1967, the 1971 primary and 1989 Junior Certificate curriculum changes, and the increase in sales of study aids and examination papers in the 1980s all helped new publishers enter the market. As the forces behind curriculum changes are likely to grow stronger over the coming decade, it is important to prevent this force of change increasing the parents' book bill to unreasonable levels.

When some publishers began to produce more glossy text-books in the 1970s their sales increased at the expense of cheaper competing books. The trend since then has been for publishers to compete on production values rather than price. Teachers preferred more colourful books, even if they cost more. Teachers argue that more colourful texts are necessary in our multi-media society, to give younger children a love of books, and to keep the interest of older children in their subjects.

The freedom of publishers to publish for the education market and teachers to choose what books they like is closely guarded, with a degree of regulation at primary level. We found that the freedom of publishers to compete in the market helped regulate the price of books and safeguarded against monopolies. Publishers review the cost of competing books when setting a price. On the other hand, the freedom of choice for teachers presented a compelling reason to change the system where parents pay for the books to one where parents rent books from the school.

3. Why books are changed

Any decision to change the text in use in the classroom puts considerable pressure on parents. The fact that the text-books of the early part of the century served students for generations, in some cases up to the 1960s, means that parents sometimes make unreasonable demands on the non-changing of books. But problems have been found with regard to the changing of books in recent years:-

- Texts that some teachers selected after a major curriculum change have been abandoned before the end of the year or examination cycle. In one case, as a Geography text at Junior Certificate level proved to be totally unsuitable for the style of teaching of that subject, plans to publish part two of the series were shelved.
- Irish language texts have been found to be unworkable and teachers and a bookseller both instanced cases where Irish language texts were abandoned by teachers who reverted to the English language versions. The particular problem with Irish texts for students studying through Irish is that the Irish version is often too difficult for pupils. Original texts are the preferred options.
- Primary schools have changed reading schemes before all stages of the scheme were available, then changed again before the scheme completed its cycle.

In theory, teachers decide what texts to use. In practice they are subject to a variety of parental, school and marketing pressures which are all designed to influence them in different directions.

Curriculum change will be the driving force behind a wholesale change of texts in use in schools over the coming years. Although the NCCA claims that it was not necessary to change texts for the new Junior Certificate course, all but a handful of schools did. Publishers requested and were given 18 months to prepare new texts for use in schools. This timescale, publishers now maintain, was too short. Some mistakes were made in preparing texts which were not suitable or successful in the market.

Changing sequential texts such as reading schemes has provided an even greater problem at primary level.

4. State Funded System

In countries where the state provides text books, the books remain the property of the schools and must be returned to schools at the end of the year. Despite this, in the UK where core books are state funded, a growing percentage of books in use in the schools are provided by

parents. If the Irish Department of Education was to spend the equivalent figure as their UK counterparts on new school books, the figures would be IR£5.3m at primary level and IR£5.6m at post-primary level, a total of IR£10.9m. This is just over half the size of the annual Irish education market as estimated by the publishers' body, Cle.

In addition, extra start-ups costs of anything from IR£4.00 to IR£7.00 per student at primary level and IR£10.00 per student at post-primary level over a three year period would have to be considered to cover the cost of building up a stock of books. (Source: UK Book Trust Report 1992). That would amount to a total of IR£2.2m to IR£3.7m per year at primary level and IR£3.6m per year at post-primary level.

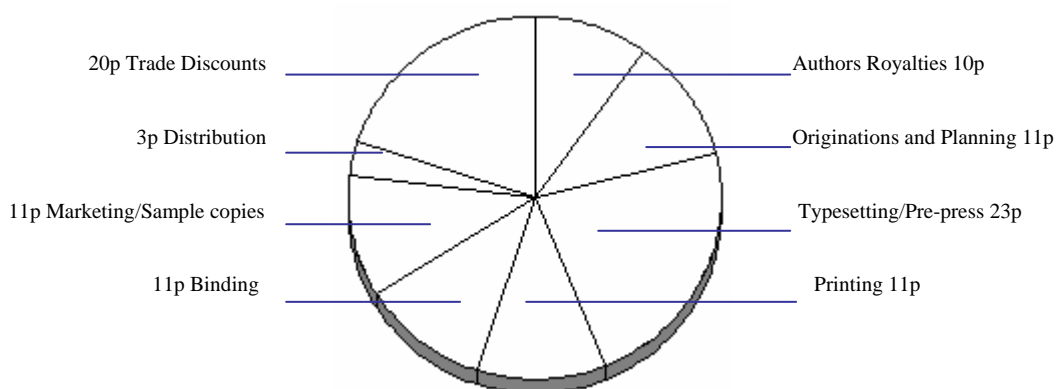
The total is made up as follows:-

	Primary IR £M	Post-Primary IR £M	Total IR £M
Annual costs	5.3	5.6	30.9
Start-up costs	2.9	3.6	6.5
	-----	-----	-----
Total P.A., first 3 years	8.2	9.2	17.4
	-----	-----	-----
Total P.A., thereafter	5.3	5.6	10.9

For an expenditure of a minimum of IR£17.4 million per year for three years, and IR£10.9 million thereafter, the State would fund the core text books in Irish schools in line with the UK educational system. This compares with the current grant-aided allocation of IR£4.4 million for needy pupils, IR£1.6 million at primary and IR£2.8 million at post-primary level.

5. School Books Costs

The cost of a school book is determined by the number of copies printed, use of colour, binding, whether it is being reprinted, and the price of competing books. The following chart indicates the allocation of the average pound spent by Irish parents on school books.



In general, publishers do not provide for profit until the second, and in some cases the third, print run.

Material costs of production amount to 45% of the cost of a book. Retail prices have increased by 10% over the past five years notwithstanding the fact that production costs have behaved as follows:-

- Paper costs have fallen by 53%

- Raw materials for PRINTING PLATES have fallen by 10%
- Computer technology can almost eliminate TYPSETTING COSTS in total

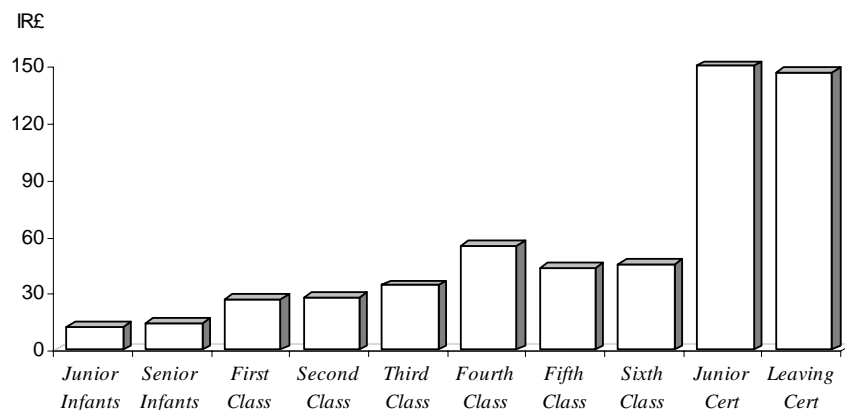
These reductions have been counterbalanced by labour cost increases. We have witnessed no levelling out of book prices.

Single volume texts are cheaper to produce than two or three books to cover the same curriculum. Publishers and teachers both prefer single-volume texts. Teachers' preference is for texts which cover the entire curriculum. We found that several volumes are necessary to cover most post-primary courses. Attempts to fit most of the curriculum into too few texts results in lower book bills, but also heavier school-bags. Guidelines on economic book size and weight would help publishers reach a compromise between the conflicting requirements in this area.

6. How the market works

According to a survey conducted on behalf of Cle, the Irish publishers group, IR£19.6 million worth of new school-books were sold in Ireland in 1991. IR£7.6 at primary and IR£12.0 at post-primary level. The new school-book market is served by ten educational publishers, four first-tier publishers handling between 75% and 80% of new sales and six second-tier publishers accounting for the balance. But the total school-book market is much larger than the new school-book market. Between 50% and 80% of books sold in certain subjects may be recycled. The volume of recycled books in circulation makes the cost of the annual book bill to parents difficult to estimate. When second hand books are included the potential size of the market, should new books be purchased in all cases, would be IR£66million, IR£14.9m at primary and IR£51.1m at post-primary level.

According to evidence from questionnaires and book lists returned, the median bills faced by parents for new books are:-



In general, books are priced to ensure that no under-cutting of the retail price takes place. Discounts are uniformly applied by all publishers; 20% to retailers and 10% to 12.5% on direct sales to schools. This compares with 33% to 50% in the general book market. Individual retailers have given higher discounts to schools for bulk purchases but have found such levels difficult to sustain. In only one case in recent years did a publisher reduce the retail price of a text-book to increase sales.

Reducing a book's price would not necessarily have any effect on sales.

Retailers also face a strict return policy, rigidly applied by all publishers, under which they may return only 5% of their order which must be sent back within a specified period. The combination of a strict return policy and tight margins has forced five retailers out of business in recent years.

Over the past decade there has been a major change in sales practices. Where 80% of sales once went directly to schools, now 80% of sales pass through retailers. Publishers find this improves credit control. Schools can be slow payers.

Bulk purchasing by schools is opposed by both schools and publishers: by schools because it ties them into strict credit terms and may reduce their freedom to choose texts from a number of publishers, and by publishers because schools are slow payers and less likely to adhere to their returns policy.

Although, in theory, demand for school books is affected by the number of students taking a subject and the number of texts available for that subject, some low-demand subjects are serviced by up to four texts while other gaps in the market still exist or are filled by imported texts. New publishers can enter the market by identifying unsatisfied demands.

There is no assessment service for teachers which will compare and evaluate books from a range of publishers, rendering teachers especially vulnerable to pressure from marketing personnel. In the UK this gap is filled by published reviews.

Since the 1980s there has been a boom in the discretionary purchase of peripheral material such as past-papers, workbooks, study notes and revision aids. Demand for these has increased in recent years as a result of the emphasis on examinations in the educational system, and it has encouraged more than one new educational publisher to enter the market. An alarming trend has been the pressure on students to purchase these supposedly discretionary materials, and some schools include these materials in their book-lists. In one surveyed school the book-bill for Junior Certificate Geography was IR£18.60 while the bill for study notes and materials was an additional IR£17.25.

7. Competition

Publishers tend to compete strongest on production values, bringing out glossier and more colourful texts. Publishers are differentiating their product less through content and more through design. Price and service to schools are also factors in competition, but rank behind production quality. Price is not pitched as high as it might be due to the strong competition that exists in the open market. But the cost of producing full colour texts and marketing them aggressively is reflected in the price paid by parents.

No evidence of anti-competitive practices was found, although strong competition leads to aggressive marketing tactics, sometimes including the rubbishing of opposition publications in the staffroom. General publishers are not interested in entering the market because of the specialised marketing requirements and strong competition from existing publishers. Where smaller publishers have produced books in low-demand subjects, existing publishers have moved quickly to compete with them and to retain their market share.

In some countries publishers are invited to tender for a text-book which would service all the schools in a given area. This would be impractical in the Irish situation, as it would effectively end competition in subject areas with unpredictable consequences for price and teachers' individual choice. In subjects where monopolies exist, such as religion at primary level, or Irish language texts, prices tend to be higher than for subjects where competition exists.

8. The Recycled or Second Hand market

Retailers confirmed that they came under pressure to provide parents with the opportunity to buy recycled books. Guesstimates of the size of the recycled market are best served by examples such as the Rainbow reading scheme which enjoyed near-saturation sales at primary level in the mid-1980s, and Soundings and Exploring English at post-primary level, which were prescribed for second-level English examinations. In these cases, new book sales fell to as little as 7% of their potential market because of the numbers of recycled books available.

Factors affecting the recycled market include:-

- Durability of the books with regard to binding and covering.
- School-going age of the child, older children are more likely to look after and to recycle books.
- Access to retail outlets which purchase and stock recycled books.
- Schools which organise the sales of recycled books within schools.
- Availability of book rental scheme.
- The age of the publications, more recycled copies of books are available for books which are no longer in print.
- Availability and standard of other texts in the subject area.
- Adaptability of a particular text to curriculum change. A good example of this is the Exploring English Series which is still in use in some schools for the new Junior Certificate.

Durability, which was found to be a concern in schools is mainly determined by the type of binding and covers used. Of the two types of binding in general use, saddle-stitch was found to be longer lasting as the techniques used in perfect binding sometimes resulted in glue being applied at the wrong temperature in larger print runs.

9. Book Rental Schemes: The Main Recommendation of this Report

9.1 General:

It is the conclusion of this Report that book rental schemes offer the most practical method of curtailing the cost of school books to parents in Ireland.

Book rental schemes are not a new concept. Some long-established post-primary boarding schools have operated successful schemes for decades. Dozens of schools throughout the country are operating schemes which have succeeded in slashing the cost of books to the parent from over IR£100 to as little as IR£15 per annum. Although rental schemes are usually found in post-primary schools, a growing number of primary schools are also using schemes.

Our primary recommendations in this regard are:-

- Rental schemes should be introduced in schools where they do not already exist to reduce the cost of book bills to parents.

- Parents and teachers should apply pressure on school boards of management to introduce rental schemes by:-
 - adopting codes of practice from existing schemes,
 - volunteering assistance, and
 - demanding action on rental schemes from school principals and management boards.
- Rental schemes and the personnel who administer them should be supported and given full co-operation by parents, teachers and school boards of management.
- Parent organisations should market and provide guidelines for rental schemes in schools which are unfamiliar with the concept.
- Rental schemes should be actively marketed by the Department of Education by issuing promotional literature and assistance.
- The Department of Education should make support available for book rental schemes in terms of structure, inservice, flexibility with grants and funds, and monitoring of rental schemes.

9.2 How they work:-

Rental schemes work on the following basis:-

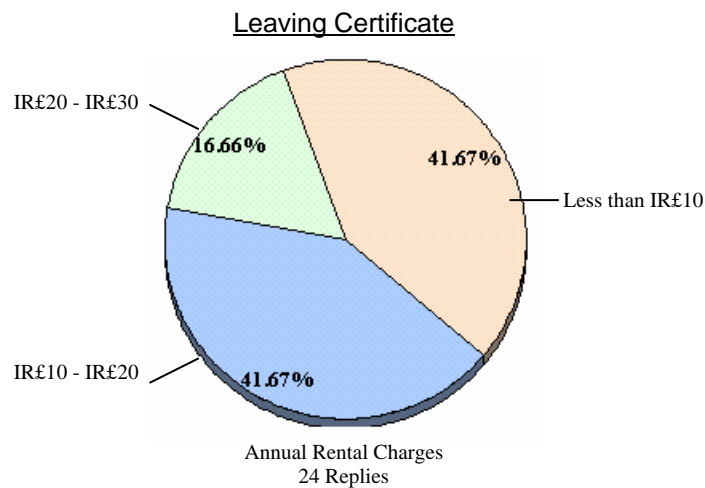
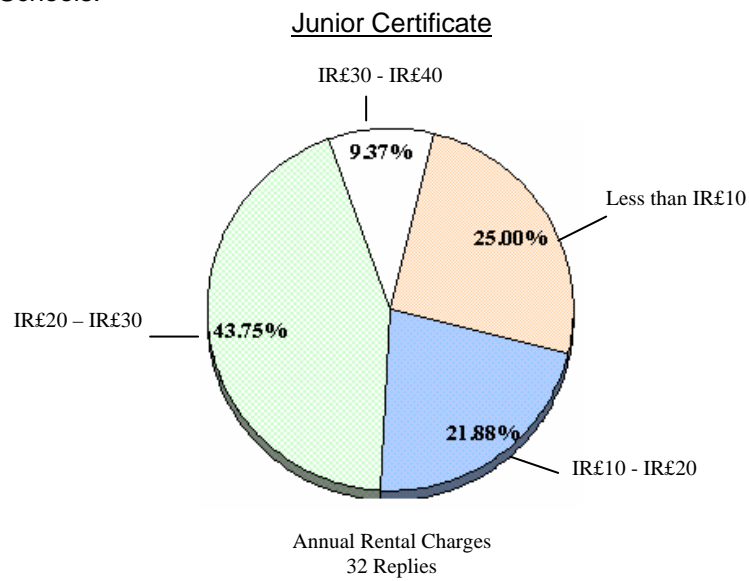
- Books are owned by the school
- Students hold books for one year or for an examination cycle
- Students are required to keep the book in good condition
- At year's end books are surrendered back to the school for recycling
- Books are replaced and decisions to change books are co-ordinated by the rental scheme manager
- A mixture of second hand and new books is used
- Payments of the rental can be at one stage or in two or more phased payments.

9.3 What it costs:-

Among the 118 primary schools which indicated they had rental schemes in operation in response to the questionnaire for this report, the rental charge ranged from IR£1 to IR£25, excluding workbooks. Of the 31 replies which indicated the rental charge which was in operation, 39% or 12 replies indicated a charge of between IR£5.01 and IR£10.00. The cost of purchasing new books at primary level ranged from IR£11.19 at junior infants to IR£38.32 at sixth class.

At post-primary level, 61 post-primary schools indicated that they use a rental scheme. The actual replies received which provided details of rental charges are summarised on the chart on the next page. For the purpose of clarity the rental charges given are on an annual basis.

Post Primary Schools:-



The mean rental works out at IR£10.31 per annum at Junior Certificate level and IR£18.13 per annum at Leaving Certificate level.

This compares with average bills for new book purchases at Junior and Leaving Certificate of IR£148.00 and IR£147.00 respectively.

The rental charge is determined by:-

- Age of a scheme. The newer the scheme the higher the charge
- Number of subjects covered
- Intelligent purchasing of new books to prevent frequent change
- Use of recycled books within the scheme

- Number of subjects affected by any curriculum change. A considerable change could render a book scheme unworkable.

9.4 Proven advantages of Book Rental Schemes

(i) Advantages to Parents:-

- The book bill can be reduced on an ongoing basis.
- Book payments can be phased so they do not coincide with other back to school expense.
- Book bills can be spread at post-primary level, regardless of whether the student is at the beginning of the examination cycle.
- The book queue can be avoided.
- Parents are less affected when books are changed as they do not to purchase the book.

(ii) Advantages to Teachers:-

- All students have books at the start of the year.
- Choice of books can be wider in a properly run scheme.
- New books can be introduced on a systematic basis.
- It removes the pressure on teachers to emphasise the use of text-books at the expense of other resources because parents have paid for them.
- Open learning is more feasible because students do not have to purchase texts.
- A range of texts can be swapped around among students.
- Greater communication with parents on book matters and course content.

(iii) Advantages to Students:-

- Flexibility to change subjects or move to a higher level without placing a burden on parents.
- A wider range of texts can be used.
- Greater opportunities of exposure to books for students whose parents are not accustomed to the use of books in the home.

9.5 Common myths about rental schemes

- The care of books in a well-managed rental scheme was not found to be a problem. Students were found to treat books with vastly different degrees of care within areas, schools, and classes, whether they owned the books or rented them.

- Sales of new books can be boosted, rather than reduced, as a result of well-managed rental schemes. Three schools surveyed confirmed that their freedom to purchase new books was increased when they introduced book rental schemes. Two local booksellers reported that they sold more new books to a school with a book scheme than one without, because schools with effective rental schemes are in a better position to replenish stocks with new books and to phase in changes of texts.
- Schools of all social classes have operated rental schemes, and the prototype was developed by private secondary schools. In one town where a secondary and VEC school amalgamated, book rental and privately owned systems co-existed for two years but parents were quickly won over to the book rental scheme.

9.6 The funding of Book Rental Schemes:-

In drawing up this Report, we have come across five types of rental schemes in operation:-

(i) Operated by school, funded by parents

The most popular type of rental scheme was funded by parents, and operated by school personnel. A post-holder, a teacher or ancillary staff took care of the administration and parents provided the seed capital and rental funds.

(ii) Operated by retailer, funded by parents

In a few cases, local retailers collected the money from parents, and collected and ordered new books to the specification of the school.

(iii) Operated and funded by parents

In cases where school personnel were reluctant to get involved, parental committees organised the collection, storage, repair and distribution of books, and ordered books to the specification of the teachers.

(iv) Operated and funded by schools from capitation

Some schools applied capitation funds to start up rental schemes, where such facility was open to them.

(v) Operated and funded by schools from grant

Most rental schemes involved a use of the grant for needy pupils. The justification provided was that the rental for needy students could be waived or subsidised and that reducing the book bill benefited needy pupils in particular. This is against the letter of Departmental regulations, but the advantages to needy pupils of using the grant in this way convinced us that some flexibility is justified in this area.

9.7 Problems associated with Rental Schemes:-

The two major problems with rental schemes are seed capital and administration. Less serious problems that arise are storage, insurance and disparity in class size. Schools have overcome these problems by using a variety of means:-

(i) Seed Capital:-

- Starting the scheme with second hand books donated by school-leavers.
- Phasing in the rental scheme with a small number of subjects or classes.

- Organised book sales.
- Fund-raising.
- Interest free loans from parents, school management boards or sponsors.
- Applying the grant for needy students.

Codes of good practice, common for all intended users of the book rental method, could help overcome some of these pitfalls.

The Appendix hereto provides a set of guidelines which should be considered prior to the establishment of a School Rental Scheme.

(ii) Administration:-

- Concentrating the workload over the summer months, when ancillary staff have more time available.
- Giving responsibility for book scheme to post-holders.
- Involvement of student volunteers.
- Involvement of parent volunteers.

(iii) Storage/Insurance:-

- Use of classrooms during summer months.
- Distribution of schoolbooks for following year prior to summer holiday.
- Use of classrooms made available through reduction of pupil numbers in more schools.

(iv) Disparity in Class sizes, leading to sudden increases/decreases in the number of books required from year to year:-

- Sourcing of alternative resource material.
- Co-operation with other schools in the locality in exchanging books as required.

9.8 Failures:-

Book rental schemes have failed in a number of schools in the past. The failure can be attributed to some common factors:-

- Inability to meet interest commitment on seed capital, where borrowed from a financial institution.
- Failure to spread the workload.
- Poorly defined school policy with regard to change of texts.
- Mistakes, purchasing unsuitable books.

- Inability to cope with large scale curriculum change.
- Absence of advice and support from outside agencies.

10. Summary of Other Recommendations.

10.1 Parents:-

- Parents should consult and liaise with teachers and school boards of management in the co-ordination of school book policies and rental schemes.

10.2 Schools:-

- Schools should adopt a firm policy on changing texts to ensure that books are changed only when required. In schools which adopt the book rental scheme this is imperative.
- A single member of staff should be nominated to co-ordinate book purchases and liaise with publishers to prevent superfluous change of books.
- Staff-room access to publishers representatives should be restricted to reduce the temptation to make unnecessary change.
- Lockers should be provided to hold books on school premises as a measure to improve the durability of books and reduce the weight of school-bags.
- Teachers and parents should co-operate in the enhancement of the durability of books through the use of laminated or plastic covers, carpet backing and other means

10.3 Publishers:-

- The existing structure of the IEPA should be encouraged to develop beyond its existing limited structure towards greater co-operation and consultation with both the Department of Education and the NCCA, co-ordination to ensure that gaps in the marketplace are serviced and to see that over-supply to other areas might be avoided. This development would be along the lines of their European counterparts.
- A more structured approach to marketing should be introduced by publishers to effect cost-savings and consequently to reduce the price of books to parents. The system of free samples for teachers should be replaced with an approval inspection system, reducing costs and increasing reliance on independent assessment.
- Publishers should make more contact with curriculum development units and teacher resource centres with a view to using material developed by teachers.

10.4 The NCCA:-

- The practice of syllabus committee members acting as authors should be discouraged as it can place undue pressure on teachers.
- Bibliographies of material other than core texts should be produced.
- Access to curriculum guidelines should be granted to subject associations, curriculum development units and teachers' resource centres at the same time as to publishers.

- Discussions should be held with the IEPA on the adequacy of notice of curriculum changes.
- The impact on the cost of text-books should be considered when the phasing in of curriculum changes in subjects is planned.

10.5 Teachers & Teachers Unions:-

- Professional assessment of texts by teachers' centres, teachers' journals and subject association should be supported.
- Homework should be co-ordinated to allay the weight issue, cutting down on the number of books to be carried in the bag.
- Teachers' freedom of choice should be safe-guarded.
- Students should be educated on the use of library facilities.
- The trend towards project work on the part of teachers should be supported as it reduces the emphasis on core texts
- Greater liaison within schools would assist in ensuring that the most effective selection procedures are put in place

10.6 The Department of Education:-

- Monitoring of texts at primary level should be continued on the basis that it guarantees their quality and adherence to the curriculum.
- Curriculum development work by teachers should be supported and encouraged through increased in-service and the provision of resources.
- The needy grants scheme should be examined to enable a proportion of needy grant money to be allocated to the cost of rental schemes.
- The feasibility of a once off payment to disadvantaged schools who commit themselves to book rental schemes should be considered to help overcome problems of seed capital.
- Guidelines on external selection (i.e., non core texts/reference books) should be drawn up in conjunction with teachers centres and subject associations.
- Deviation from text-based approach should be encouraged by the Inspectorate.
- Discussion and professional assessment of texts by subject associations, teachers' centres or teachers' journals should be encouraged.
- The optimum weight and economic book size should be researched and guidelines issued.
- Readability tests should be considered for post-primary texts.
- A licensing arrangement should be concluded with the Irish Copyright Licensing Agency and music rights agency on behalf of schools, on the basis that all Irish publications are included.
- Special structures for the origination and publication of Irish language texts should be drawn up.

- A detailed policy should be drawn up for An Gúm which would enable them to co-ordinate the production of Irish language texts which correspond to demand.
- The Local Education Authorities to be introduced in line with the Programme for Government should support curriculum development work and rental schemes. The publication of resource material and the origination of specialised material should be undertaken by these bodies.

10.7 Teachers Resource Centres & Subject Associations:-

- Professional assessment should be provided to curtail the impact of marketing pressures and help teachers in the selection of texts.
- Supplementary material should be provided for use in the classroom.
- Commercial partners to develop resources should be actively sought.

10.8 Curriculum Development Unit:-

- Commercial interests should be sought for the sale of curriculum development research results.
- Educational publishers and other partners should be encouraged to co-produce resource material.

Appendix - Codes of Good Practice

The following should be used as a draft for the purpose of establishing codes of good practice to the operation of successful Books Rental Schemes:-

- An operating committee involving principal, teachers and parents.
- An agreement over whether the needy books scheme money can be used for general funding of the rental scheme.
- A bank account in the name of the book scheme, with name and signatories; the principal and the book co-ordinator.
- Agreement with the school management on storage and insurance.
- A policy by which books are not included i.e., table books, workbooks, handwriting books, dictionaries, atlases and books at pre-reading level.
- A buy-back arrangement with the departing senior classes.
- An agreement on whether a membership fee should be paid by pupils joining for the first time.
- A well-marketed proposal that will win parents and teachers over.
- Consent from the parents by means of circular.
- A time for book collection agreed between principal, teachers and parents, three days or so before the holidays.
- A collection method where books are collected in bundles from departing students, and on the day of the examination from examination students.
- A policy on reduced rental charges for families with more than one student involved in the scheme.
- An agreement with parents and children that books be taken care of and given reinforced covers where necessary.
- A formal inspection of books on their collection, with parents and children's assistance in repairing damaged books.
- Agreement with parents over the replacement of books misplaced or seriously damaged by spillage or other mishap.
- An arrangement whereby pupils are allotted a mixture of new and second-hand books.
- A phased collection of the rental charge if required by parents.
- A good working relationship with a local retailer, in some cases extending to the purchase of recycled books and patrolling the sale of rental stock as recycled books by students.

- An arrangement where books are allocated and recorded by co-ordinator, with help from parents and students.
- A policy whereby timetables and class rotas are made available to teachers in time to enable them to quantify their book requirements for the following year.