

PRESENTATION BROTHERS SCHOOLS TRUST

ANNUAL REPORT 2021 - 2022



Presentation Brothers Schools Trust,

10 Deerpark Court,

Friars Walk,

Cork T12 D8H3.



ANNUAL REPORT

Background:

Presentation Brothers Schools Trust is a Company Limited by Guarantee and not having Share Capital. It was Incorporated under the Companies Act 1963 to 2006 on 7th January 2009 and was granted CHY (Charity) Status in accordance with the provisions of Section 207 and Section 266 of the Taxes Consolidation Act, 1977 and assigned the number CHY 18608.

Presentation Brothers Schools Trust was established also as an autonomous foundation in Canon Law (Canon 115.3). The Bishops of the Irish Episcopal Conference approved the Statutes of the Foundation in June 2009 thus giving it Public Juridical Person (Universitas Rerum) status.

The Company / Foundation was established in order to ensure and foster the advancement of education and further the aims and purposes of Catholic Education in the tradition of the Institute of the Presentation Brothers animated by the spirit of Blessed Edmund Rice in the eight schools operated until 2009 by the Presentation Brothers

The Company / Foundation is governed by the following:

Members:

Denis Bohane
TJ Coakley
Patrick Coffey
Seán Ó Caoimh
Tim O'Connell
Dáithí Ó hAodha
Jack O'Sullivan
Paula Sweeney


Directors:

Carmel Murphy, Chair
Pat Hegarty, Deputy Chair
Jennifer Buckley
Anna Herrick
Colm Ó Corcora
David O'Kelly

Registered Office

The registered Office of Presentation Brothers Schools Trust is 10, Deerpark Court, Friars Walk, Cork T12 D8H3. The Secretary of the Company and Chief Executive Officer is Michael Sexton.

Schools

	Presentation College, Bray	Enrolment 645
	Coláiste Chríost Rí, Cork	Enrolment 522
	Coláiste Muire, Cobh	Enrolment 702 Co-educational
	Presentation College, Cork	Enrolment 727
	Coláiste an Spioraid Naoimh, Cork	Enrolment 707
	Scoil Muire na nGrás, Greenmount	Enrolment 220 Co-educational
	St. Joseph's, Mardyke, Cork	Enrolment 208
	Bunscoil Chríost Rí, Turners Cross, Cork	Enrolment 430 Co-educational

(Enrolment numbers are as of 30th September 2021)

Independent Auditor

In accordance with a resolution passed at the company AGM held on 21st August 2021, Moore (Ireland), 83 South Mall Cork was re-appointed as Independent Auditor of the Foundation and the Company *'subject to a review of the current remuneration arrangements being carried out by the Board in advance of any re-appointment'*. Following a comprehensive blind tendering process (during which six established, reputable firms were invited to submit tenders), Moore (Ireland) were reappointed as auditors to the trust and as auditors/accountants to the eight PBST schools.



Bank

Current and deposit accounts for the company are held at AIB, 66 South Mall, Cork.



Investments

Investments accounts during the year covered by the report were held with:

Appian Asset Management Limited
 Quilter Cheviot Investment Management
 Irish Life



Solicitors

O'Flynn Exhams, 58 South Mall, Cork.



Resignations / Appointments:

Board of Directors of PBST:



At the AGM held on 20th August 2021, TJ Coakley and Pat Coffey stepped down from the Board of Directors having served two terms. David O'Kelly and Jennifer Buckley were appointed as Directors at the same meeting. Carmel Murphy continues as Chairperson of the Board of Directors, with Pat Hegarty continuing to serve as Vice-Chairperson. The Board remains as constituted at that meeting.

Members of PBST:

Gene Murphy and Fergal O'Gara stepped down as Members at the 2022 AGM having served two terms. TJ Coakley and Pat Coffey were appointed as Members at the same meeting. While the membership remains as constituted following that meeting, it is proposed to appoint a new Member at the forthcoming AGM.

Chief Executive Officer of PBST:

The position of Chief Executive Officer of the trust has been occupied since September 2016 by Michael Sexton. Mr Sexton had been seconded to the trust on a year-by-year basis from his position as Principal of Coláiste an Spioraid Naoimh until his period of secondment came to an end on 31st August 2021. A five year contract as CEO of the trust was offered to Mr Sexton (commencing on 1st September 2021) which he accepted. Mr Sexton thus retired from his position in CSN and become an employee of the company.



Meetings of Board of Directors:

Twelve meetings of the Board of Directors were held since the Annual General Meeting on 20th August 2021. Eight meetings were held in person (socially distanced at various school locations, at the trust offices in Deerpark Court, and at Mardyke House) with the other meetings held remotely owing to the pandemic. Attendance by the directors was extremely high with full attendance at almost every meeting.

Temporary relocation of trust offices:

To facilitate the provision of emergency accommodation to a Ukrainian refugee family, the trust's office at 10 Deerpark Court has moved to Mardyke House. The trust acknowledges the generosity of the Presentation Brothers in facilitating this move. The registered address of the trust is not affected by this move.



**UKRAINE
EMERGENCY APPEAL**

#STANDWITHUKRAINE

Boards of Management:

New Boards of Management were appointed in October 2021 at Coláiste an Spioraid Naoimh, Colaiste Chríost Rí and Presentation College, Bray. Ms Carol Mooney took over as Chairperson (from Tony Bellew) at Presentation College, Bray. Mr Seán Culhane and Ms Maria Walk remained as Chairpersons in Coláiste an Spioraid Naoimh and Coláiste Chríost Rí respectively. A new Board of Management will be appointed at Coláiste Muire in October 2022.

Appointments to School Leadership positions:

Ms Brenda Moriarty was appointed Principal of Coláiste an Spioraid Naoimh with effect from 1st September 2021 as a consequence of the decision of Mr Michael Sexton to retire as of that date. Mr Philip O'Sullivan was appointed Deputy Principal of Coláiste an Spioraid Naoimh with effect from 1st September 2021 as a consequence of Ms Moriarty's promotion from Deputy Principal to Principal.



Mr Dan O'Connell was appointed Deputy Principal at Bunscoil Chríost Rí on 7th February 2022 following the retirement of Mr Willie Fitzgerald.

Mr Enda O'Regan is to be appointed Deputy Principal of Presentation Brothers College, Cork with effect from 1st September 2022 consequent to the impending retirement of Mr Aiden Twomey.

Mr Kieran Walsh is to be appointed as a new second Deputy Principal of Coláiste Muire, Cobh, Co. Cork with effect from 1st September 2022.

Regulatory and Financial Matters

Constitution / Memorandum and Articles of Association:

No amendments were made to the Constitution / Memorandum and Articles of Association of Presentation Brothers Schools Trust during the year governed by this report.

Licence Fees:

The annual Licence Fee of €6 per student was paid by each of the four non fee-paying second-level schools and a letter of acknowledgement issued to each Board of Management in respect of same. The temporarily amended terms of the Management Licence Agreement for Presentation Brothers College (resulting in a reduced payment to the Brothers) continued with the approval of the Congregation's leadership team. Trust income is unaffected by these amended terms.



PBST Accounts: Monthly accounts were presented by the CEO at each meeting of the Board of Directors. Audited accounts are being prepared by Moore and will be formally approved by the Board at its meeting to be held on 19th August 2022. They will be presented to the Members of the Company at the AGM to be held on 19th August 2022.

Schools' Accounts:



Each second-level school presented a draft budget for approval by PBST for the 2022-23 school year. All schools presented Statements of Accounts which had been prepared by an external accountant (Moore Ireland) for the school year ending 31st August 2021. These were examined at Board meetings in January and February and, following satisfactory responses by Moore to questions in relation to a number of issues in some schools, were approved by the PBST Board of Directors. In the case of PBC, an audit was carried out by Moore which was approved by PBST. Copies of all second level schools' accounts were forwarded to the Irish Episcopal Conference and to the Financial Support Services Unit of the JMB. The trust Chairperson and CEO met with the Principal and Chairperson of one school to provide support and advice around budgeting. Trust directors are quite satisfied that

sound financial management procedures are in place all schools to ensure their long-term financial viability.

It might be recalled that as some concerns were expressed at last year's AGM about the fees charged to schools by Moore (Ireland) for the preparation of annual financial statements, the PBST Board agreed to undertake a full review of fees prior to the appointment of Moore or another firm as the trust's and the schools' accountants. As already stated, a comprehensive tendering process was initiated to ensure a 'value for money' outcome for our schools. Moore (Ireland)'s quotation was the lowest submitted under this '*blind tendering*' process. While the appointment of a different firm would have been cheaper to PBST on a stand-alone basis, the Board took the view that, looking at the quotation in its totality, value for the *schools* should be the deciding factor. As a result, the the schools (particularly hard-pressed primary schools), rather than PBST, are the beneficiaries of the decision to re-appoint Moore. Prior to the reappointment of Moore, the trust CEO spoke to the managing partner at Moore and emphasised the importance of the accounts being processed in a more timely manner. He also requested that each school's Board of Management be provided with a short written summary of the accounts in which any areas of concern identified by the accountants might be flagged.

Companies Registration Office (CRO):

Form B1 (annual return) was submitted to the Companies Registration Office. Changes to the composition of the Board of Directors made at the AGM held on 20th August 2021 were registered with the Companies Registration Office.

Legal Entity Identifier (LEI) registration:

PBST holds an LEI code valid until 25th September 2025 enabling the trust to trade financial instruments (e.g. stocks, bonds, currencies, etc.) using a broker licensed by an EU state.

Charity Regulatory Authority (CRA):

In accordance with the requirements of the CRA, Presentation Brothers Schools Trust became registered under the Charities Act 2009 and was given Charities Regulatory Authority number 20071721 and Registered Charity number 20005085. Changes to the Board of Directors made at the AGM held on 20th August 2021 were registered with the CRA on 31st August 2021. An annual report (including audited accounts) for Presentation Brothers Schools Trust for the reporting period ending 31st January 2021 was submitted on the 31st August 2021.



Good Governance / Charities Governance Code:

As all registered charities have, with effect from 2020, been obliged to complete a *Charities Governance Code Compliance Record Form* each year, the Board of Directors (during the 2020-21 year) drew up 'core standards' for the trust along with key compliance documents for each of the six principles established by the Charities Regulator. All documents drawn up to ensure the good governance of the trust (including the *Charities Governance Code Compliance Record*, the *PBST Register of Interests*, the *Code of Conduct for Trustees*, and the *PBST Risk Register*) were reviewed and updated as necessary at the Board of Directors meeting held on 13th December 2021. At the same meeting, the two new directors (David O'Kelly and Jennifer Buckley) declared that they had 'received, read and understood all documentation submitted to them on appointment to the Board'.

Led by the Chairperson, the Board conducted a self-assessment of its effectiveness as a Board at the December meeting. In response to a series of prompt questions set by the Chairperson, the directors indicated that they were satisfied with the current composition and balance of the Board and were happy that the Board was comprised of directors having the necessary skill-set to carry out the functions of the Board. The directors also stated that they were satisfied with the way meetings had been conducted during the previous year in terms of advance notice, provision of information and documentation, recording of minutes, opportunity for discussion, procedures for decision-making, follow-up to decision-making etc. As it was agreed that improvements could be made with regard to the pacing of meetings, the Chairperson undertook to do all possible to ensure that meetings would be conducted in as time-efficient manner as possible.

The following standards and policy documents are currently in place to ensure the good governance of the trust:

Principle 1: Advancing Charitable Purpose

Core standards plus:

Annual budget template

PBST Trustee Functions document

PBST Reserves Policy



Principle 2: Behaving with Integrity

Core standards plus:

Register of PBST Directors' Interests

PBST Conflict of Interest Policy

Code of Conduct for PBST Trustees

Code of Conduct for PBST Employees



Principle 3: Leading People

Core standards plus:

Role of the PBST Chairperson document

Role of the PBST Secretary document

PBST Process for Induction of new Employees

Principle 4: Exercising Control

Core standards plus:

PBST Risk Management Policy

PBST Risk Register

Principle 5: Working Effectively

Core standards plus:

PBST Induction Process for New Trustees

Declaration to be made by a proposed

PBST trustee (director)



Principle 6: Being accountable

Core standards plus:

PBST Communications Policy

The Board of Directors remains confident that, provided the Board continues to exercise a high level of oversight, the core standards and accompanying policies that have been drawn up will ensure that PBST will continue to operate to a very high standard of practice in this area.

Insurance:

A review of the Custodian School Protection Policy for PBST and for all PBST schools was carried out and terms agreed with O' Leary Insurance Group prior to the renewal date of 25th March 2022. To ensure that the Board of Directors has an ongoing awareness of the significant number of

claims that are made on school policies each year, O'Learys now provides PBST with a monthly log of all claims being processed. The two-year fixed premium agreement expired as of the renewal date. This, together with inflationary pressures, saw the trust and its schools face raised premiums this year. Some schools also saw increases on foot of higher buildings valuations. On a more positive note, no claim made by any school was rejected (with the exception of one very small claim). A number of schools also received very satisfactory settlements for Covid-related loss of income.



A cyber insurance policy for all eight schools and for the Trust's offices was renewed for the year as of 8th April 2022. This policy covers PBST and its schools against cybercrime, ransomware, data loss etc. Owing to the hugely increased incidence of cybercrime, the underwriter (CFC Underwriting) now demands considerably more information from schools on preventative



measure being taken to protect the school. This proved to be a time-consuming and challenging exercise for most schools. The increased levels of cybercrime have also, of course, resulted in more claims and a consequent impact on premiums. Despite this, it is the Board's view that no school should be without this very important insurance.

Child Safeguarding and Risk Assessment :

In accordance with the *Children First Act 2015*, *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017*, the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2017* and *Tusla Guidance on the preparation of Child Safeguarding Statements*, Child Safeguarding and Risk Assessment Statements were reviewed by each Board of Management during the 2021-22 school year. The mandatory Notification Statement (Mandatory Template 4) verifying that these Child Safeguarding Statements had been reviewed was received from all schools.



Admissions Policies:

In accordance with the provisions of the Admissions to Schools Act (2018), Admissions Policies for the five second-level schools were approved during 2020-21 by PBST as patron of these schools. All schools' policies included the standardised definition of a Catholic school as recommended by the Irish Episcopal Conference and the standardised wording on the Religious Education 'opt-out'. No amendments to any of the schools' admissions policies were submitted to PBST for patron approval during 2021-22.



As there have been issues with schools admissions in the East Cork area in recent years (insufficient places to meet demand, parents accepting offers for more than one school etc), PBST has been working with the other patrons in the area (ERST, Ceist, Le Chéile and CETB) in an attempt to streamline the process and reduce stress for parents and pupils (and, indeed, Principals). Online meetings have been taking place during 'admissions season' on a monthly basis.

As the Bishop is the patron of the three PBST Primary schools, the Boards of Management of these schools do not submit their policies for PBST approval.

Use of school premises:



All schools are required to obtain a licence from the Trust to govern the use of a school premises by outside bodies (regardless of whether or not a payment is made). An *Application Form for the Use of School Premises* on which details of all proposed hire and use arrangements are recorded was provided to each school and a new, more simplified system has been put in place for the return of the form to PBST and the issuing of a licence. Considerably more use of school premises was made by outside bodies during the year just finished than had been the case during the previous two years (when little or no hire of school premises took place as a result of the pandemic). Hire of school facilities is a major source of funding for some schools and this has been very negatively impacted by the pandemic. All schools have been reminded of the importance of ensuring that all bodies using school premises are fully insured and that proof of such insurance is provided to the Board of Management prior to an application for a licence being submitted to PBST.

Credit Cards:

As the FSSU has advised that the use of credit cards in schools is subject to trustee approval, approval has been granted to the Boards of Management of six of the schools. A record of all applications is kept on file.

Investments:

As stated in last year's report, the Board has invested a total of €1,050,000 in three separate, low to medium-risk products over a medium to long-term (5 to 10 year period). These investments are with (i) *Quilter Cheviot*, a well-established international asset management firm that specialises in charities' investments, with (ii) *Gresham House* (previously



Appian Asset Management), an investment firm which seeks out what are described as value stocks (avoiding what they believe are over-valued big-brand stocks), and with (iii) *Irish Life* – the well-known AIB-owned investment company. In making these investments, our strategy has been to ensure diversification by placing an equal amount of money with separate firms taking somewhat different approaches. We have also taken steps to ensure that our investments are ethical and responsible.

The investments with Quilter Cheviot and Gresham House did particularly well during 2021 but, in common with all stock market-based investments, they have fallen back considerably in 2022 owing to the impact of the war in Ukraine and general lack of confidence in the markets. The €350,000 Quilter Cheviot investment is currently* valued at €341,527 (having reached a high point of €424,113 at the end of December 2021). The investment with Gresham House is divided evenly between two funds and has a current* valuation of €419,783 (having been at €452,457 at the end of 2021). The Irish Life investment has a current value of €342,891 (having reached a high point of €378,099 in November 2021). While it is disappointing that our overall total investment of €1,050,000 has fallen back to €1,104,201 (having reached a peak of €1,254,000 in December of 2021), we always realised that these are long-term investments and that there are always going to be ups and downs. The fact that we had such a good start to our investment journey has at least provided us with a 'pillow' to soften the blow of the recent falls. At one stage at the end of December 2021, we were about 15% up on our initial investment. At the time of writing (5th July 2022), we are just 0.05% to the good.

*Current as of the end of Q2 (5th July 2022). Initial investment took place in late 2020 / early 2021.

Our successful association with *O Cualann Co-housing Alliance*, which saw us issue a €1 million loan to this not-for-profit housing alliance, came to a conclusion last year and, unfortunately, no suitable similarly-sized project became available. We are hopeful that a long-



delayed *O Cualann* housing scheme on the northside of Cork City may require funding in due course. We had the satisfaction of visiting the near-complete project in Ballymun which we had funded and it was gratifying to see the impact that our funding had made in what is a very socially-disadvantaged community. The lack of new opportunities of this sort has left us with a large amount of money being held in our current account which is far from ideal in a situation where banks are now charging negative interest rates. While indications are that this period of negative returns may be coming to an end, the Board has taken the decision to open a new current account with a different bank (Bank of Ireland) in an attempt to offset the costs of having a large amount on deposit. Opening this new account has become a very protracted exercise and, at the time of writing, the opening of this account remains (after three months) a work 'in progress'.

Property:

Bunscoil Chríost Rí:



Following a period during which significant building took place linking the two formerly separate school buildings and providing a new reception area, no major additions were made to the premises during the current year. While the Presentation Sisters continue to state that it is their intention to sign over full ownership of the former girls' school building to PBST, no further progress has been made in this regard since last year's report.

St Joseph's National School

A design team has been appointed for the DE-funded Additional Accommodation Scheme project that will see the construction of a four classroom extension. The design will incorporate two ground-floor SEN rooms and various ancillary rooms in a two-storey building. Both the Board of Management and the Trust are very pleased that this long-overdue upgrade of the school premises is moving towards the construction stage.



Scoil Muire na nGrás, Greenmount NS:

The Board of Management is about to go for planning on a new building which will accommodate two new classrooms and ancillary rooms for pupils with special education needs. This building, which is designed in a contemporary style, will be located on the Green Street side of the school



and will link to the existing school building. Work was carried out during Easter under the Emergency Works Scheme for the repair of concrete valleys on the roof. An upgrade to the school's heating system on the upper storeys is taking place over the summer.

Coláiste an Spioraid Naoimh:

Work is progressing on the design of a very extensive expansion of the school under the Additional School Accommodation (ASA) Scheme. This project will include provision of three mainstream classrooms, an art room, a multi-media room, a music room, a DCG Room, two science labs and two construction rooms. A two classroom SEN base will also be provided. As an interim measure, the Department has also agreed to fund the provision of four temporary modular classrooms – freeing up the school sports hall which had been used as a four-classroom space during the Covid emergency. New railings and a new gate with embossed crest were erected at the front of the school. Early in the year, PBST made a very tentative suggestion to the Board of Management that it might consider relocating the school to a new site in the vicinity of Marymount Hospice. This was premised on the belief that the restricted site on which Cork University Hospital stands might make the current school site and, indeed, the school building itself, a very attractive acquisition by the HSE. While it was felt that the prospect of a brand new school on a larger site with excellent access might have proved an attractive proposition, the Board of Management was of the view (probably well-founded) that the current site allowed the school to be centrally located within its local community and that this outweighed any advantages a new building on a new site might offer.



Coláiste Chríost Ri:

Work is progressing on the design of a large DE-funded extension that will comprise a DCG room, an art room, a music room, a construction room, project storage rooms, and a suite of SEN rooms to accommodate the new ASD Special Class on a permanent basis. This is the most significant capital investment in the school in many decades.



Coláiste Muire, Cobh:



Work is also progressing on the design of nine general classrooms (to replace the prefabs and modular rooms), a music room, a DCG room, a science lab/prep area, an Art room, a project store, a two-classroom SEN base and four SET (learning support) rooms at Coláiste Muire. This project will involve the construction of 2100m² of new buildings to replace the 300m² of old prefabs.

Presentation Brothers College, Cork:



The Board of Management has drawn up plans for the major enhancement of facilities at PBC. The main school building will be considerably expanded and modernised, while a significant new sports facility is also envisaged. As the plans will also see an augmentation of special education facilities, it is hoped that DE funding may part-fund the project. The Board is currently working towards the publication of a business plan that will outline in detail how the project will be funded.

Presentation College, Bray:

As explained in last year's report, in return for the Presentation Brothers relinquishing ownership of a section of roadway they currently own and PBST extinguishing its lease on a sliver of ground parallel to the roadway, a developer (who is to buy the land adjoining the school from the landowner) is in the process of constructing a new road and cycleway, turning circle and

parking for exclusive use by the school. This project which has been dogged by repeated delays is slowly moving towards completion. It is understood that, once the project has been completed, it is the Brothers' intention to extend the existing PBST lease on the school to also include that section of roadway (the Newcourt Road end) that is being re-developed. Separate to this project, the contractor involved in the road project agreed with the Board of Management to provide, free of charge, a drainage channel to solve a long-standing drainage issue that is believed to be the cause of water-logging in neighbours' gardens. Unfortunately, the contractor interfered with treatment of Japanese knotweed in commencing this work which has resulted in the drainage work being suspended pending the issuing of specialist reports.



General

In view of the large number of high-value building projects that are about to commence in many of our schools, the trust convened an online meeting of school Principals in November to facilitate the sharing of information and expertise. A follow-up meeting was organised in February which was also attended by Board Chairpersons, by Noel Merrick of the JMB's Buildings Support Unit, by Louise Callaghan of ERST's property unit and by Eilis Humphreys of APTCS. As Noel, in particular, has huge expertise in this area, this meeting was a very useful exercise.

There has been no further progress on the implementation of the Lower Lee Flood Relief Scheme. Some five years after its submission, the Trust still awaits a response from Cork City Council/OPW to its submission that made clear its opposition to the scheme as envisaged – a scheme that, if implemented as originally proposed, would have profound implications for PBST-owned properties at Presentation Brothers College and St Joseph's NS.

Chaplaincy:



The trust is extremely indebted to the Presentation Brothers for its decision to assign Simon Fernandes to a chaplaincy role in Coláiste an Spioriad Naoimh. Simon, who is currently in formation as a Presentation Brother, has had a very positive impact during his time in the school. A decision is awaited from the Brothers as to whether Simon will continue in this role during the upcoming school year. A part-time lay chaplain continues to be employed in Presentation Brothers College (funded by the

college). The management of Coláiste Chríost Rí has been able to provide a limited number of hours to three teachers to carry out chaplaincy duties in the school. Brother Martin Kenneally, who serves as a member of the Board of Management in Coláiste Chríost Rí, also provides ongoing support to that school and is a regular visitor to Coláiste an Spioraid Naoimh. A member of the local clergy (Fr Tom McDermott) provides highly valued support in Coláiste Muire, while a Christian Brother (Brother Ben Cusack) continues to fulfil unofficial chaplaincy roles in St Joseph's and Greenmount NS.



Links with the Congregation of Presentation Brothers and the wider Presentation Family:

PBST cherishes its origins in the Congregation of Presentation Brothers and takes very seriously the solemn assurances it gave to the Congregation that the four core elements of a Presentation education, as outlined in our Charter, will be upheld and promoted. Informal meetings between members of the Congregation's province leader, Brother Raymond Dwyer, and the trust's CEO take place very regularly – particularly so following the move of the trust's office to Mardyke House. The Presentation Brothers' *Leadership, Education and Formation Project* (LEAF) continues to go from strength to strength and Brother Martin has been very active in many of the schools. The LEAF project and PBST have entered into an informal partnership arrangement that will see the two bodies co-fund promotional projects going forward. One such project that has already taken place is the production of a video to celebrate the 2022 Blessed Edmund Rice feast day. This video was made available to all schools in the PBST and ERST (Christian Brothers) networks here in Ireland and throughout the world. PBST has contributed articles to the LEAF magazine that is published periodically and distributed widely both online and in hard copy. Activities with an ethos dimension that take place in the schools are also featured in the magazine.



Each month, school leaders also receive a copy of Dr Steele's *Lux Edmundi* essay – a reflection that never fails to offer a thought-provoking perspective on the challenges of providing an authentic Catholic education in an increasingly secularised world. The trust CEO also engaged actively with Dr Steele in his production of a document entitled *The Charism of Presentation Brothers Schools*. This challenging composition which explores the essential nature of a school in the Edmund Rice tradition will be presented to the Board of Directors in September.



The SHARE Christmas collection was up and running again this year which saw hundreds of students from PBC, other PBST schools, and indeed many other schools, raise large amounts of money to fund a wide range of services to disadvantaged elderly people in our city. Regrettably, once again this year, owing to the pandemic, it was not possible for students to involve themselves in a number of other activities (such as the Edmund Rice Action camps) that are synonymous with the Presentation tradition.

‘Winding-up’ of Christian Leadership in Education Office (CLEO)

Over the last twenty-five years, the Presentation Brothers’ *Brother’s Christian Leadership in Education Office* (CLEO) has been one of the Congregation’s flagship projects and has provided high-quality training for literally hundreds of aspiring Catholic school leaders. Under its director, Brother Matthew Feheny (and more recently, Dr Frank Steele), CLEO has been a beacon for Catholic education in an increasingly secular landscape, awarding degrees (in association with the University of Hull) at Masters and Doctoral level. In November of 2021, the CLEO Board of Directors took the decision to cease its operations and wrote to PBST to suggest the transfer of the company’s assets (both financial and tangible) to PBST as it (PBST) was seen as the organisation whose charitable objectives were most closely aligned with those of CLEO. The process of winding-up a company is quite a complex one which will involve both the Companies Registration Office and the Charities Regulator. CLEO has requested that PBST will continue to organise the annual CLEO lecture, administer a bursary to fund study in the field of Catholic education, and provide storage of the 260 dissertations that CLEO has amassed. It is anticipated that the transfer of CLEO’s financial assets will cover the costs associated with these projects for some time to come. The PBST Board has agreed to CLEO’s request. The process is currently ongoing.



Staff and student faith development activities



The annual induction seminar for new staff members took place again this year after a Covid-related absence. Some thirty newly-appointed teachers took part in what was a very important and, it should be said, well-received seminar. The teachers learned about the Presentation tradition of our schools, about the Charter which acts as a type of constitution to underpin all that we do in our schools, and about the various activities that take place in our schools at both primary and secondary level. Of the teachers who responded to the anonymous follow-up questionnaire, all bar one responded extremely positively to the message that was presented at the seminar.

A very useful seminar for RE co-ordinators in preparation for Presentation Day was organised in early December. Again, the response to this seminar was very positive. A 13 page booklet containing prayers, reflections, video links and other resources was produced in association with the Presentation Brothers' LEAF project. The booklet was made available to the schools in advance of Presentation Day in November and was very positively received by the schools. PBST 'Welcome' rulers were commissioned and distributed to all 1st Year students in PBST schools on Presentation Day to act as a tangible reminder of the day. Resources suitable for use in the classroom in support of key liturgical calendar events have also been made available on the trust's website (www.pbst.ie). A number of other online meetings for RE co-ordinators also took place throughout the year.



Staff and students from Coláiste Muire represented their school and the trust with great pride as the 'hosts' of the celebration of televised Sunday Mass on RTE 1 in May. Trust director, and Coláiste Muire teacher, Jennifer Buckley, was a member of this group.



An innovation for the trust this year was the organisation of a social justice themed nativity art competition. The competition proved to be a great success with dozens of entries from across the schools. An exhibition of the art work (which was of a very high standard) was held at Mardyke House shortly before Christmas. The competition was won by a student of

PBC taught by Ms Nora Walsh. Díreach roimh Lá Fhéile Phádraig, eagraíodh comórtas aiste Gaeilge do Sheachtain na Gaeilge a bhuadh ag mac léinn ó Choláiste Muire.

PBST is conscious of the need to promote faith formation among students in an active way. With this in mind, it is envisaged that efforts will be made this coming year to reintroduce the *Alpha* programme in schools where this is seen as viable. The *Credible Catholic* programme will also be presented to RE teachers for consideration as an option for senior cycle students who may wish to explore faith at a higher and slightly more challenging level.

PBST magazine to promote dialogue with teachers on faith-based issues

A key innovation this year was the publication of *An Nasc* - a PBST-produced magazine which will



be made available twice-yearly to the teaching and non-teaching staffs of PBST schools. The first edition was published in Spring 2022. This magazine will provide a means of promoting greater awareness of patronage/trusteeship among staff. Research conducted as part of our trust review process showed that many teachers – particularly those appointed more recently and those who may have been educated in ‘state’ schools – have little or no knowledge of what Catholic patronage and trusteeeship involves. It is envisaged that *An Nasc* will provide a vehicle for dialogue between teachers and the

trust on trusteeeship and on issues and developments in Catholic education more generally. Over time, we hope that all teachers in PBST schools will develop a greater awareness and understanding of what teaching in a Catholic school in modern Ireland really involves. The magazine will also provide the schools with an opportunity to showcase many of the wonderful faith-promoting activities that take place in our schools throughout the year.

Strategic Plan for the next four years:



Following the review of the company's affairs carried out by Dr Margaret O'Donovan, Members will recall that Dr O'Donovan presented the findings to the Members at last year's AGM. Following on from this, the CEO communicated the findings of the review to school staffs at meetings held between September and Christmas. As more than 200 staff members (about 55% of the total number) had availed of the opportunity to contribute to the review

process, the Board is confident that the strategic plan that the Board has recently produced to guide the trust between now and 2026 will meet the expectations of our school communities. In keeping with the structure of Dr O'Donovan's report, the new strategic plan presents *actions* for implementation under four headings:

- Charter
- Presentation Spirit (Ethos)
- Catholic Education
- Communications and Connectivity



A simplified version of the plan was presented to school staffs by the Chairperson and CEO at staff meetings held in the second half of the year (two schools will have their presentations in August). The plan is also to be made available to Members prior to the AGM and a short presentation on the plan will be given at the AGM itself.

Board of Management Reports:

Each Board of Management receives an *end-of-year report form* from PBST. This form requires schools to provide PBST with comprehensive up-to-date information on a wide range of issues including enrolment, policy development, curriculum, teaching and learning, SEN provision, provision for Religious Education, finance, legislative compliance, plans for infrastructural development etc. Reports submitted at the end of the 2020-21 school year were examined at the September and October meetings of the PBST Board of Directors and issues brought to the attention of PBST, or issues of concern identified by PBST, were subsequently discussed with the Boards of Management through the Board secretary (Principal).

Catholic Schools Week:



PBST took an active role in ensuring that CSW was celebrated in a meaningful and inclusive manner in all our schools. This year's theme was *Catholic Schools – Living Life to the Full*, a theme that was well chosen given the negative impact of the pandemic on the lives of those in our school communities. The large banners that have been provided for by PBST to promote Catholic Schools Week were proudly

displayed on external schools walls and railings. As always, schools had access to extensive, high-quality materials provided by the Catholic Schools Partnership.



Special Education Needs:

The Board of Directors continues to promote education for children with special needs in our schools as a distinctive part of the trust's mission. In particular, we have encouraged Boards of Management to set up Special Classes for children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) diagnoses.



Significant progress has been made in this area over the last year with new Special Classes opening or about to open in a number of schools. Other schools have committed to opening Special Classes as part of future building projects. This work is not yet complete, however, as not every school has yet committed to the provision of a Special Class. While we realise that this can be a complex area, the Board of Directors remains firmly of the view (as stated very clearly in last



year's report) that a situation where families having a child with an ASD diagnosis have sometimes had to send that child to a different school from that attended by his or her siblings constitutes something of an affront to the core values of a Presentation education.

Spirit of Pres Week:

In November, schools marked the Feast of the Presentation of Our Lady by holding various events throughout the week of the Feast to celebrate and raise awareness of the characteristic spirit of PBST schools. While this year's celebrations weren't quite back to what they would have been pre-pandemic, there was at least some sense of a return to something approaching normality.



Association of Patrons and Trustees of Catholic Schools (APTCS)

PBST continues to participate actively in the Association of Patrons and Trustees of Catholic Schools with the CEO serving as a board member and as treasurer of the association. The PBST CEO occupies one of the two places reserved on the board of directors for the mid-sized trust group - comprised of the Presentation Brothers Schools Trust, the Loreto Education Trust, the Spiritan Education Trust, the Society of Jesus, and the Religious Sisters of Charity.

The CEO is a member of all the Association's sub-committees (*Ethos, Strategic Planning, Finance, Property, Trusts' Co-ordination and Audit & Risk*) ensuring that PBST contributes very actively to the important work of the association. APTCS is constituted as a registered charity and as a Company Limited by Guarantee under the direction of the Catholic Education Services Trust and has the Catholic Education Partnership as its sole legal member. As a member of the four-person steering group for APTCS, the PBST CEO works closely with Eilis Humphreys, Paul Meany and Sheila McManamly (CEO, Chairperson and Secretary of APTCS respectively). PBST currently contributes €5,000 per annum towards the running costs of the association. These funds are used primarily to fund the employment of Ms Humphreys and to organise the various activities of the association. The Association has a wide remit and offers valuable support to patrons and trustees on issues such as admissions, property, governance, statutory obligations, dealing with the DES and so on.



Public Juridic Person (PJP)



PBST is one of a small group of trusts recognised by decree of the Irish Episcopal Conference as ecclesiastical Public Juridic Persons – defined as *'members of Christ's faithful authorised to carry out apostolic works in the name of the Catholic Church'*. Two representatives of the four PJPs are entitled to places on the Board of the Catholic Education Service Committee (CESC). CESC may be seen as the 'top level' committee in Catholic education and is superior to the Catholic Education Partnership mentioned above. Representatives of PBST and ERST have recently been appointed to the Board – taking over from CEIST and Le Cheile. Mr TJ Coakley is the nominee of PBST.

Report to Irish Episcopal Conference (IEC):

As per Clauses 30 and 31 of the Canonical Statutes of PBST, the Annual Report of the activities of the Foundation and a copy of the Annual Audited accounts were submitted to the IEC. Carmel Murphy (Chairperson) and Michael Sexton (CEO) met with Bishops Tom Deenihan and Fintan Gavin and with Fr Paul O'Connell (representatives of the IEC) in Maynooth on 9th May. Among the matters discussed were procedures for succession planning and the appointment of new trustees, delivery of RE and the faith development of students, investments, the involvement of schools in their local communities and the future of the Presentation Sisters' schools.



DES School Inspections:

The only school inspection carried out during the course of the 2021-22 school year was a *Safe Provision of Schooling* (Covid-19) inspection at Greenmount NS. As was the case with all the other schools the previous year, the school was found to be totally compliant with the regulations. A letter acknowledging the success of the inspections was issued to the Board of Management of the school.



Discussions with Presentation Sisters:

Further discussions took place between PBST and the Presentation Sisters during the year on the possible transfer of the trusteeship of up to six Presentation Sisters' primary schools to PBST. In view of the historical connections between the Presentation Brothers and the Presentation Sisters congregations (and, indeed, the successful amalgamation of the two traditions in Bunscoil Chríost Rí), the PBST board of directors was favourably disposed towards the idea. While urging caution and advising very careful consideration, the Presentation Brothers also indicated that they were supportive of the proposal. Bishop Gavin also indicated his approval. A formal meeting between representatives of PBST and the Sisters' provincial leadership team took place in October and it was agreed that PBST would carefully consider the financial and other implications of the proposal and report back to the Sisters.

Among the considerations for the Directors were the impact the inclusion of up to six new primary schools would have on the 'balance' of the trust, the likely response of the existing schools to the inclusion of new schools, the merging of two complementary yet distinct identities and, most importantly, the capacity of PBST to adequately support the new schools. As it was soon realised that the expansion of the trust from eight to fourteen schools would require the employment of a new staff member, the board decided to conduct a formal 'costing' process to determine the financial input that might be requested of the Sisters. Two separate firms were engaged by PBST with a brief to provide a fully-costed estimate for a once-off contribution from the Sisters to fund the long-term employment of a new staff member. A figure broadly commensurate with the seed capital provided by the Brothers was estimated to be required to fund the proposal for what would, in effect, be a permanent arrangement. This estimated figure was subsequently presented to the Sisters who responded by saying that it was well beyond their capacity to provide this amount of funding. With genuine regret, the PBST Board was of the view that it would not be prudent, nor in the best interest of the schools we currently serve, if we were to 'bite off more than we could chew' by taking on six new schools without the staffing capacity to properly support them. We have contacted the Sisters to ask if they might suggest another model

that might make the proposal viable but the Sisters have not, as yet, reverted to us on this. We have, however, assured the Sisters that we will provide whatever support we can on a 'no-charge' basis in terms of inviting their staff members to participate in our staff induction and leadership development programmes if they would like this to happen.

Trusteeship and patronage generally:

As stated in last year's report, we have alerted the Bishop to our willingness to take on the patronage of any future Catholic second-level schools in the Cork and Ross diocese and that, in view of our being the only trust based in Cork and our having a long-established and well respected 'brand', we should be the 'trust of first choice' in the diocese when new Catholic patronage is being considered.



We reported in last year's report that we had engaged with Department of Education officials on the patronage of a proposed Special School to be established in the Cork area. While we suspected that the Department's engagement may have been driven more by the possibility of the provision of a suitable site rather than by any particular interest in the trust's ethos, we were a little disappointed to learn through a press release on social media (rather than through any formal correspondence) of the Minister's intention to invite applications for the patronage of a special school to be established at Rochestown – with the application deadline being just a matter of weeks away. To be fair to the Department, having accepted that the manner in which the



announcement had been made had been poorly handled and having acknowledged that they (the Department) had failed to respond to our initial enquiry, the official who subsequently dealt with our enquiry proved to be very encouraging of our interest in the proposal. She informed us that the Archdiocese of Dublin had recently been appointed Patron of a Special School in Dublin and put us in contact with two nuns who had been engaged

by the Archdiocese to work on that process. The nuns informed us that the process had required their full-time involvement over an eighteen month period, as they had, effectively, acted as managers of the school pending the appointment and setting up of a board of management. Employment of a Principal and of staff had proved to be very challenging. They left us under no illusions as to the scale of the task and it became clear that it would simply not be realistic that the

trust, with its one employee, could hope to take on a project of this size without a lot of support from the local diocese. It became equally clear that our local diocese would not have the capacity to provide such support so, with some reluctance, PBST decided not to pursue our interest in the project.

Summary

Overall, the 2021-22 year proved to be a more successful one than the two previous years which had been blighted by the effects of Covid-19. As can be gleaned from the report, significantly more activities took place this year and there is a feeling of optimism that we may be returning to normality. It was, then, something of a disappointment that the Conference that was planned for May had to be postponed at very short notice.

It was also a little disappointing that our application to participate in the EU *Erasmus Plus* programme that would see representatives of the trust and of our school communities travel abroad to explore the challenges of delivering faith-based education in modern, highly secularised European society was turned down. We are currently in the process of submitting a new application which will have more teacher involvement and a broader remit (inclusion, partnership, and special needs - along with faith-based education).

While there are no 'departures' of PBST Directors or Members this year, the Directors (as mooted at last year's AGM) will be proposing the appointment of Mr Tony Bellew as a Member of the trust. While this will bring the number of Members to nine, it might be pointed out that this is allowed under article 3 of the company's Articles of Association which states, *'The number of Members with which the Company proposes to be registered is eight but the Members may from time to time register an increase of Members'*. The Board makes this proposal not only in recognition of Tony's commitment to Presentation education over so many years but also to maintain a strong 'Bray voice' following the retirement of Gene Murphy last year.



While there were many great occasions in our schools this year, two stand out as being of particular note. The first was the visits in September of An Taoiseach, Mícheál Martin, to his *almae matres*, Bunscoil Chríost Rí and Coláiste Chríost Rí. These were very special occasions, made all the more exceptional by virtue of the Taoiseach's very obvious affection for the teachers who inspired him to enter public service and also by the truly outstanding manner in which the pupils of both schools greeted their illustrious guest. The second was the celebration of the 100th anniversary of the establishment of Presentation College, Bray. The centre point of the many events organised to mark the occasion was the Celebration of Mass at Our Lady Queen of Peace Church, Bray on the 5th March 2022. We extend to all involved in the school our best wishes for the next 100 years.

Finally, as we emerge from the pandemic, we acknowledge and thank our senior school leaders for the extraordinary lengths they went to over the last three Covid-ravaged years to ensure that, despite all the challenges, the Presentation ethos of our schools was kept 'front and centre' at all times. And this is exactly how it needed to be - as never were the values of a Presentation education more in evidence than during those most challenging of times. It truly is our privilege to be associated with such wonderful people.

We remember



We pray for the repose of the soul of Brother Michael McKeon who died during the year. Brother Michael was a very talented music teacher who taught in a number of our schools during the course of a long career. We pray also for the repose of the souls of the many former staff members and past pupils of our school communities and the members of our families who died over the last twelve months. Ar dheis Dé go raibh a n-anamacha uilig.

Signed (on behalf of the Board of Directors):

Ms Carmel Murphy (Chairperson)

Date: 19th August 2022

Directors: Carmel Murphy (Chairperson), Pat Hegarty, Anna Herrick, Colm Ó Corcora, Jennifer Buckley, David O'Kelly.

Secretary: Michael Sexton

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