



# **PRESENTATION BROTHERS SCHOOLS TRUST**

## ***ANNUAL REPORT 2022 - 2023***

Presentation Brothers Schools Trust,  
10 Deerpark Court,  
Friars Walk,  
Cork T12 D8H8.



## 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 7<sup>th</sup> 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:**

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

#### **Directors:**

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









## Registered Office / Operational Office

The Registered Office of Presentation Brothers Schools Trust is 10, Deerpark Court, Friars Walk, Cork T12 D8H3. The trust currently operates out of Mardyke, House, Mardyke, Cork T12 W8RP.

## Company Secretary / Executive Officer

The Secretary of the Company and Chief Executive Officer is Michael Sexton.

## Schools

	Presentation College, Bray	Enrolment 648
	Coláiste Chríost Rí, Cork	Enrolment 503
	Coláiste Muire, Cobh	Enrolment 711 Co-educational
	Presentation College, Cork	Enrolment 710
	Coláiste an Spioraid Naoimh, Cork	Enrolment 711
	Scoil Muire na nGrás, Greenmount	Enrolment 231 Co-educational
	St. Joseph's, Mardyke, Cork	Enrolment 222
	Bunscoil Chríost Rí, Turners Cross, Cork	Enrolment 461 Co-educational

(Enrolment numbers are as of 30<sup>th</sup> September 2022)

## Independent Auditor

In accordance with a resolution passed at the company AGM held on 19<sup>th</sup> August 2022, Moore (Ireland), 83 South Mall Cork was re-appointed as Independent Auditor of the Foundation and the Company.



## Bank

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



A new current account was opened at Bank of Ireland, Wilton in September 2022.



This account was opened to mitigate the effects of negative interest rates imposed on deposits held in excess of €1m.

## Investments

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

Gresham House (formerly Appian Asset Management)

Quilter Cheviot Investment Management

Irish Life



## Solicitors

O'Flynn Exhams, 58 South Mall, Cork.



## Resignations / Appointments:

### *Board of Directors of PBST:*



The Board remains as constituted at last year's Annual General Meeting. Carmel Murphy, therefore, continues as Chairperson of the Board of Directors, with Pat Hegarty continuing to serve as Vice-Chairperson. Other directors are as stated on Page 1 of this report.

### *Members of PBST:*

Tony Bellew was appointed as a Member at the AGM held on 19<sup>th</sup> August 2022. Other Members are as stated on Page 1.

### *Chief Executive Officer of PBST:*

The position of Chief Executive Officer of the trust has been occupied since September 2016 by Michael Sexton. Having initially been seconded from his position as Principal of Coláiste an Spioraid Naoimh, Mr Sexton has, since 1<sup>st</sup> September 2021, been employed by the trust as CEO on a five year contract.



### **Meetings of Board of Directors:**

Ten meetings of the Board of Directors have been held since the Annual General Meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> August 2022. All meetings were held at Mardyke House (with some members attending remotely on two occasions owing to illness). 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 at the trust's registered office at 10 Deerpark Court. the trust's '*operational office*' continues to be located at Mardyke House. Again, the trust acknowledges the generosity of the Presentation Brothers in facilitating this move. It should be noted that the registered address of the trust is not affected by this move.



**UKRAINE  
EMERGENCY APPEAL**

#STANDWITHUKRAINE

### **Boards of Management:**

A new Board of Management was appointed in October 2022 at Coláiste Muire, Cobh under the Chairpersonship of Mr Anthony Kenneally. A new Board of Management will be appointed at Presentation Brothers College, Cork in October 2023.

## Appointments to School Leadership positions:

Mr Enda O'Regan was appointed Deputy Principal of Presentation Brothers College, Cork with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2022 following the retirement of Mr Aiden Twomey.

Mr Kieran Walsh was appointed as a second Deputy Principal at Coláiste Muire, Cobh, Co. Cork with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2022. This was a newly created position.

Ms Susan Ormond is to be appointed Deputy Principal in Coláiste Muire, Cobh, with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2023 following the retirement of Dr Maureen Kenneally.

Mr Ronan Coffey is to be appointed Deputy Principal in Presentation College, Bray, with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2023 following the resignation of Mr Ger Fleming.

The directors acknowledge the enormous contribution made to Presentation education by Mr Twomey, Ms Kenneally and Mr Fleming. We wish Mr Twomey well in his retirement and continued success to Ms Kenneally and Mr Fleming in their chosen career paths.



## 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



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letters of acknowledgement were 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 have been prepared by Moore and will be formally approved by the Board at its meeting to be held on 18<sup>th</sup> August 2023. They will be presented to the Members of the Company at the AGM to be held on 18<sup>th</sup> August 2023.

#### Schools' Accounts:



Each second-level school presented a draft budget for approval by the PBST Board of Directors for the 2023-24 school year. All schools presented Statements of Accounts which had been prepared by an external accountant (Moore Ireland) for the school year ending 31<sup>st</sup> August 2022. These were examined in detail at Board meetings in January and February and were approved by the PBST Board of Directors. An advisory letter was issued to the Board of Management of one primary school concerning a significant decline in the school's financial reserves that has taken place over a number of years. The management of this school subsequently provided assurances that this issue will be addressed. A similar issue arose in another primary school last year and was noted in last year's report. The Board of that school has very successfully addressed our concerns and has managed to more than double the school's (albeit modest) reserves without impacting on the provision of education to the children. In the case of PBC, an audit was carried out by Moore (Ireland) which was approved by PBST at its January Board meeting. Copies of all second level schools' accounts were forwarded to the Irish Episcopal Conference and to the Financial Support Services Unit of the JMB.

Members will recall that the firm of *Moore (Ireland)* was only re-appointed as the schools' accountants and as auditors for PBC and PBST following a 'blind' tendering competition last year. The Board was happy to learn from school management teams that the decision to tender for these services had been vindicated by the manner in which schools' accounts had been processed in a more timely fashion this year.

### Companies Registration Office (CRO):

Form B1 (annual return) was submitted (by Moore) to the Companies Registration Office. As there were no changes made to the composition of the Board of Directors at the AGM held on 19<sup>th</sup> August 2022, no return was required in this regard with the Companies Registration Office.



### Legal Entity Identifier (LEI) registration:

PBST holds an LEI code valid until 25<sup>th</sup> September 2023 enabling the trust to trade financial instruments (e.g. stocks, bonds, currencies, etc.) using a broker licensed by an EU state. This registration was renewed on 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2023 ensuring that the trust's LEI remains valid until 25<sup>th</sup> September 2026.

### 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. As there were no changes to the Board of Directors made at the AGM held on 19<sup>th</sup> August 2022, no changes were required to be registered with the CRA. An annual report (including audited accounts) for Presentation Brothers Schools Trust for the reporting period ending 31<sup>st</sup> January 2022 was submitted on the 24<sup>th</sup> October 2022.

In its submission registered on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2023, the trust registered under the 'Education and Research' and 'Religion' primary categories and 'Education Supports' and 'Faith-based Activities' secondary categories in accordance with the CRA's new Charity Classification requirement.

### Good Governance / Charities Governance Code:

The Board of Directors recognises the vital importance to the future of the trust of the very highest standards of good governance. In accordance with the CRA 'best practice' guidelines, the Board of Directors conducted (over two meetings) a comprehensive review of all documentation that has been drawn up by the Board in recent years to ensure the good governance of the trust.



It was decided that a review of internal board practices would be conducted (by use of an anonymous *Google Forms* questionnaire) at the December meeting and a review of the more general CRA documentation undertaken at the January meeting.

While noting the limitations of any 'self-review' questionnaire, there was little doubting the positive tone of the findings presented at the January meeting, with high levels of satisfaction expressed by directors with the way the trust is being run. Directors noted the importance of ensuring that board members who might be appointed in the future would continue to provide the balanced skill set that is required to run an education trust. Directors also suggested that the current board and future boards will need to be attentive to such things as the timing and length of meetings, interactions with the media, and relationships with our own stakeholders. It was observed that attaining a thorough knowledge of the legal framework surrounding the trust can be challenging for directors, though this challenge is mitigated to some extent by the availability of a wide range of documentation that has been produced by bodies like APTCS and the CRA in recent years. This documentation is available for reference as required. A number of directors felt that the connection with school leadership teams and with the Presentation Brothers is something we must continually work on. It was proposed that representatives of the Brothers might be invited to meet with the directors from time to time to discuss matters of ongoing mutual interest and concern.



At the January meeting, the focus was on a review of documentation. The directors reviewed the 'core standards' for the running of the trust that the Board had previously drawn up, along with key compliance documents for each of the six principles established by the Charities Regulator. Such documentation includes the *Charities Governance Code Compliance Record*, the *PBST Register of Interests*, the *Code of Conduct for Trustees*, and the *PBST Risk Register*. 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)*

*Annual budget*

## Principle 6: Being accountable



Core standards plus:

*PBST Communications Policy*

*Travel, Subsistence, Accommodation and Expenses Policy*

For each document, the Board was asked to either accept the document as updated by the secretary/CEO or to instruct him to amend the document in accordance with the Board's instructions. The Board suggested that a number of amendments be made to the *Compliance Code Record* and to the *Risk Management Policy*. The most significant of these related to the mitigation of reputational damage resulting from the possibility of future allegations of misconduct on the part of external bodies associated with the trust. Other amendments were minor in nature (relating to dates etc). All amendments were noted by the secretary.

Following this review, the Directors signed and dated each document as listed above. Each director and the CEO/Secretary also signed an individual checklist confirming that they have complied with their duties as trustees as laid down by the Charities Regulator.

The Board of Directors is confident that, in view of the comprehensive set of core standards and accompanying policies that have been put in place and of the high level of oversight exercised by successive Boards to date, PBST should continue to operate to a very high standard of practice in this area.

### Insurance:

A review of the *Custodian School Protection Policy* taken out for PBST and for all PBST schools was carried out and terms agreed with O'Leary Insurance Group prior to the renewal date of 25<sup>th</sup> March 2023. 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 provide PBST with a monthly log of all claims being processed. Inflationary pressures saw the trust and its schools face raised premiums again this year. Following reviews of their cover levels (where some schools were found to be underinsured), these schools also saw increases on foot of higher buildings valuations.





A cyber insurance policy for all eight schools and for the Trust's offices was renewed for the year as of 8<sup>th</sup> April 2023. 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 exercise proved to be even more time-consuming and challenging this year than it was last year. The increased levels of cybercrime have also, of course, resulted in more claims and a consequent impact on premiums. As a result, cyber insurance premiums almost doubled this year from €4,661 to €8,608. The premium is divided amongst the eight schools on a pro-rata basis (based on pupil numbers). Despite the increased costs, 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 2022-23 school year. The mandatory Notification Statement (Mandatory Template 4) verifying that these Child Safeguarding Statements had been reviewed by each Board of management was submitted to the trust (or to the Bishop in the case of the Primary schools) by each school.



In the course of its good governance review, the Board noted the possibility of reputational damage that might result from allegations of misconduct on the part of external bodies associated with the trust. Clearly, there has been much media focus in recent months on sexual abuse allegations that have been made against members of a number of religious congregations and, in particular, against the Spiritans and the Christian Brothers. As Members will be aware, a scoping enquiry has been established by the government in an attempt to determine the extent of historical sexual abuse allegations in schools run or formerly run by religious

congregations. The trust is, of course, co-operating fully with the enquiry and has distributed a questionnaire (provided by the enquiry team) on behalf of our founding congregation to each of our second level schools. Primary schools are not currently comprehended by the terms of reference of the enquiry. The cumulative findings of these questionnaires will, in accordance with the instructions, be passed on to the Presentation Brothers who will provide the data to the scoping enquiry team. While the deadline for the submission of data by schools is some weeks away, it would seem that the numbers of historical allegations recorded in our schools is extremely low – with some schools likely to produce ‘nil’ returns.

Leaving aside the matter of the scoping enquiry, the Board remains concerned by the potential for reputational damage that even one allegation of sexual abuse (or indeed any abuse) can cause. The Board favours a survivor-focused approach based on optimum transparency and openness in dealing with all such cases. With this in mind, the Chairperson and CEO met with the Presentation Brothers’ provincial leader (Brother Raymond) and their safeguarding office (Brother Barry) earlier in the year (prior to the establishment of the scoping enquiry) with a view to ascertaining how allegations made against Presentation Brothers have been dealt with. While PBST and the Presentation Brothers are legally distinct bodies, the Board’s view is that because the trust effectively exists in order to perpetuate the Presentation tradition, it behoves the PBST Board to be fully *au fait* with not just the positive aspects of that tradition but also with any aspects that are shameful and have the capacity to bring the trust into disrepute. The Chairperson and CEO were, then, relieved to be able to report back to the Board that the Brothers had been extremely open in explaining what appeared to be very robust procedures for dealing with historic and more recent allegations that have been made against Brothers. Documentation outlining these procedures was subsequently made available to the PBST Board. The procedures outlined in the documentation appeared to be fully compliant (in so far as directors were qualified to judge) with all legal requirements.

At the same meeting, the CEO and Chairperson informed the Brothers that it was the PBST Board’s intention to work towards providing a wording to outline the trust’s position on historical abuse in schools formerly owned by the Presentation Brothers (and now held under the trusteeship of PBST) and that this wording would, in time, appear on the PBST website. They did, however, undertake to consult with the Presentation Brothers (in the interests ensuring the accuracy of any text) prior to publication on the website.

### Admissions Policies:

In accordance with the provisions of the *Admissions to Schools Act (2018)*, admissions policies for the five second-level schools were initially approved during the 2020-21 school year by PBST as patron of these schools (primary schools' policies are submitted to the Bishop).



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'. Schools are now simply required to submit an annual Admissions Notice to the trust on an annual basis and to inform the trust (as Patron) of any proposed changes to the school's Admissions Policy as they occur. All secondary school submitted the required Admissions Notice during 2022-23 and also informed the trust of a proposed change to admissions policies to bring them into compliance with a required Section 29 (Provision in Respect of Children with Special Educational Needs) amendment. This amendment was approved for all schools.

### 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. 42 licenses were issued during 2022-23 compared to 29 the previous year and just 4 in 2020-21 (during the pandemic). Rental of school facilities provides a significant source of funding for some schools. All schools have been reminded of the importance of ensuring that all bodies using school premises are fully ensured and are compliant with child-safeguarding regulations. The trust requires that a declaration of child safeguarding compliance and proof of insurance is provided by the Board of Management prior to a licence being issued by 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 previous years' reports, 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 investment arm of AIB. In making these investments, our strategy has been to ensure diversification by placing an equal amount of money with separate firms that take somewhat different approaches. We have also taken steps to ensure that our investments are ethical and responsible.

The investments with Quilter Cheviot, Gresham House (formerly Appian) and Irish Life performed extremely well during 2021 but, in common with all stock market-based investments, had a very poor 2022 - owing primarily to the impact of the war in Ukraine and to the general lack of confidence in the markets early in 2022. This poor performance is very much reflected in the annual Financial Statements being presented at this year's AGM (for the period 1 February 2022 to 31 January 2023). While these investments did recover to some extent during the last few months of 2022, they are still a long way off the high points reached at the end of 2021.

To give the most recently available figures, the €350,000 Quilter Cheviot investment was valued at €349,028 on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 (having reached a high point of €424,113 at the end of December 2021). The €350,000 investment with Gresham House is divided evenly between two funds and had a valuation of €443,315 on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2023 (having been at €452,457 at the end of 2021). The €350,000 Irish Life investment had a value of €344,105 on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2023 (having reached a high point of €378,099 in November 2021).

As stated in the previous paragraph, the poor performance of our investments during 2022 is reflected in this year's Financial Statements (for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> January 2023). While there is no disguising our disappointment that our overall total investment of €1,050,000 had fallen back to €1,119,243 at the start of April 2023 (having reached a peak of €1,254,000 in December of 2021), we are still €69,243 (+6.6%) 'to the good' on our initial investment. Investments of this type are, of course, very much medium to long-term investments (7 to 10 years) and fluctuations are to

be expected. The directors are of the view that we should 'hold our nerve' and stick with it for the long journey as past performance suggests that stock market investments always come good over the long term.

Given the success of our previous association with *O Cualann Co-housing Alliance*, which saw us issue a €1 million loan in 2020-21 at a 4% interest rate over 18 months, it was disappointing that this not-for-profit housing alliance had no suitable similarly-sized project coming on stream last year. An approach to the trust to provide funding a Cork-based charity that



renovates properties for those who live very much on the margins of society unfortunately came to nothing - despite considerable interest on our part in what appeared to be a very worthy project. The good news is that, in the last couple of weeks (July 2023), we have negotiated terms for a new loan to *O Cualann* which will see us issue a €1.25 million at 6% over approximately 18 months. Our secured loan will fund the construction of a further ten affordable homes in Ballymum, Dublin.

In very round figures, the operating costs of the trust are typically €160,000 per annum, while income from licence fees and other activities is typically in the €100,000 range - leaving us with an operating deficit that must be funded by investment income. Unfortunately, the lack of investment income last year meant that the trust ran at a considerable loss. While we cannot predict the future with any certainty, the directors are confident that last year was something of a



'once-off', and between improved investment performance and the prospect of approximately €75,000 in income from the new *O Cualann* loan (albeit over 18 months), next year should see a return to a more normal situation.



## Property:

### Bunscoil Chríost Rí:



No major additions were made to the premises during the current year. Work is currently being carried out (summer 2023) on the replacement of boiler houses and radiators and on repairs to the roof of the Edmund Rice Hall. All such works will be DE funded. 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 but progress has been slow and the project remains at Stage 1. 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. A modular unit to accommodate a Special Class is due to be installed during Summer 2023.



### Scoil Muire na nGrás, Greenmount NS:

Planning has been granted to the Board of Management for 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. It is anticipated that construction will commence during the coming year. Further work was also completed on upgrading the school's plumbing and heating.

### 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. The Board of Management also intends to fund some additional works. Four high-quality, DE-funded modular classrooms have been installed and were opened during the year.

### Coláiste Chríost Ri:

The school architect's design team has submitted a Stage 1 proposal to the DE in relation to an 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. A modular building is to be provided to accommodate the Special Class on



a temporary basis. The Board has drawn up plans for the redesign and modernisation of the front of the school building and for some internal upgrades. These will be school funded.

### Coláiste Muire, Cobh:



Work is 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 2100m<sup>2</sup> of new buildings to replace 300m<sup>2</sup> of old prefabs. Modifications to

the entrance to the school grounds are to take place in the near future to make access safer for students and staff.

### Presentation Brothers College, Cork:



The Board of Management has proposed that the redevelopment of the school will take place on a phased basis. Phase 1 will involve a major 'reconfiguration' of the front of the school. As the school is not normally

eligible for DE funding, the Board is hopeful that an application submitted under the Special Education Needs Accommodation application process will be successful. The theatre is currently being extensively remodelled while upgrading to the changing facilities at Wilton Sports Grounds also took place during the year. The Board of Management has also become the lessee under a 999 year lease, at €1 per year, of a site at the Marina on which a boat shed will be built to house PBC Rowing Club boats. A proposal that a public pathway would be built along the western boundary of the Wilton Sports Grounds (in connection with the proposed Wilton Bus Corridor) came to nothing. The cost of an engineer's report (€3,500) on this project was shared equally between the school, the trust and the Brothers (as owners of the property).

### Presentation College, Bray:

The project to provide a new road and cycleway, turning circle and parking at the rear entrance to the school still awaits completion. This project has been dogged by continual delays and has become a source of ongoing frustration to the school management and to the Presentation Brothers (who own this parcel of land). There have



been endless issues with regard to the quality of the work carried out, and disputes have arisen over engineers' and legal costs. Once the project is finally completed, it is the Presentation 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. A separate issue relating to an infestation of Japanese knotweed (clumps of which had been disturbed by the contractor) seems to have placed on hold. Future costs (if there are any) to deal with a possible spread of the infestation into neighbouring properties are likely to be borne by the school. A small-scale landscaping project at the entrance to the school was also carried out during the year.

### **Provision of Accommodation to Refugee Family**

As reported last year and as noted in passing earlier in this year's report, the PBST Board took the decision in May 2022 to provide accommodation to a Ukrainian refugee family by making the trust's property as 10 Deerpark Court available to them. The contract with the Red Cross (and with the family) was renewed again for twelve months in May 2023. A successful application was made under the Accommodation Recognition Payment (ARP) Scheme that will see the trust receive a payment of €800 per month. As this payment will be back-dated to the introduction of the scheme (albeit at the lower initial rate of €400), the trust will have a small income stream from this arrangement for as long as it lasts. As of the time of writing, the trust has received €7,600 under the scheme. The family currently reimburses the trust each month for utility costs (electricity, gas, refuse, broadband).

### **Funding of School Projects**

In response to requests from the Board of Management, the trust made two donations totalling just short of €2,000 to one of the schools to ensure that pupils from needy families would be able to participate fully in the school's extra-curricular programme and to support a small number of pupils with severe literacy problems.

### **Chaplaincy:**



The trust continues to be extremely indebted to the Presentation Brothers leadership team for its decision to assign Simon Fernandes to a chaplaincy role in Coláiste an Spioriad Naoimh over the last two years. While no decision has yet been made by the Brothers, it is understood that Simon may take on a new role this coming school year (but one which will still involve his working in the school). The Board of Management also assigned a teacher to part-time chaplaincy within the school this 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 a number of 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 trust also facilitated a visit by Brother Raymond to each of the PBST schools in October.

A new Congregation Leadership came into office following the Chapter held in April. For the next six years, the Congregation will be led by Brother Barry Noel. Other members of the team are Brothers Joseph Musaka, Rupert O'Sullivan, Martin Kenneally and Alban Bersigrinee. The CEO wrote to Brother Francis Agoah, outgoing Congregation Leader, to thank him and his team for the support of our schools over the previous six years.



The Presentation Brothers' *Leadership, Education and Formation* Project (LEAF) continues to go from strength to strength and its director, Brother Martin, has been very active in

many of the schools. Brother Martin also contributed articles to a *Guide to Presentation Day* magazine that was funded by the trust and distributed in all of the schools. 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 SHARE Christmas collection 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. The Edmund Rice Action camp that has been an integral part of the Presentation tradition for so many years took place again this year and provided summer camp activities (at no cost) for primary pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds who would not ordinarily be able to participate in such activities.

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

As communicated in last year’s report, the Presentation Brothers have taken the decision to ‘wind up’ the *Christian Leadership in Education Office* (CLEO) which has been one of the Congregation’s flagship projects for more than two decades. During that time, CLEO provided high-quality training for literally hundreds of aspiring Catholic school leaders. As CLEO was a registered company and charity, the CLEO Board chose to transfer the company’s remaining assets (both financial and tangible) to PBST as PBST was seen as the organisation whose charitable objectives were most closely aligned with those of CLEO. Going forward, PBST has agreed to organise an annual CLEO lecture, to 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 (c. €61,000) will cover the costs associated with these projects for some time to come.



The first PBST-organised lecture took place in June 2023 and was attended by CLEO and PBST representatives, a number of ‘past-pupils/graduates’, and various members of the extended Presentation family. Dr John Smith, retired lecturer at the University of Hull and a long-time friend of CLEO, gave a lecture on ‘*Does Childhood have a future – or a past?*’

At the time of writing, the final wind-up of the Company hasn’t quite been completed but it is expected that the Company will be entirely dissolved in the coming weeks.

## Staff and Student Development Activities



The annual induction seminar for new staff members took place in January and was attended by just short of twenty new staff members. The teachers, SNAs and support staff who attended learned about the Presentation tradition of our schools, about the Charter which acts as a type of

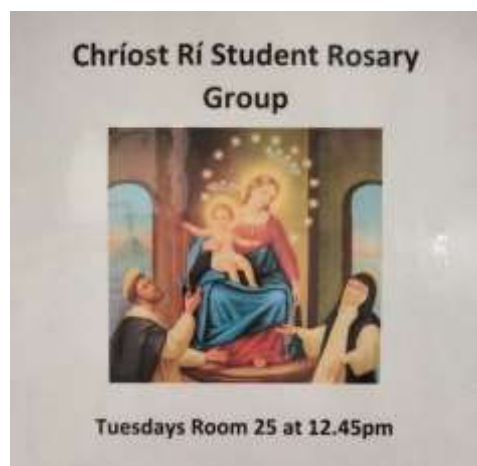
constitution to underpin all that we do in our schools, and about the various activities that take place in our schools at both primary and secondary level.

As referenced earlier, a 20-page booklet containing prayers, reflections, video links and other resources was produced by the trust in preparation for Presentation Day in November. The booklet was made available to the schools in advance of this most significant day in our calendar and was very positively received by the schools. A very large set of resources suitable for use in the classroom in support of key liturgical calendar events has also been made available on the trust's website ([www.pbst.ie](http://www.pbst.ie)). A number of other meetings for RE co-ordinators also took place throughout the year.



PBST is conscious of the need to promote faith formation among students in an active way. It was unfortunate that an effort made to reintroduce the *Alpha* programme to RE co-ordinators did not proceed due to the unavailability of the presenter on the day in question. The *Credible Catholic* programme was presented to RE teachers at a meeting in November for consideration as an option for senior cycle students who may wish to explore faith at a higher and slightly more challenging level.

One of the more notable initiatives to take place in any of the schools this year was the setting up of a Rosary group in Coláiste Chríost Rí. Contrary to the expectations of some, this weekly lunchtime prayer activity has gone from strength to strength and regularly attracts up to 30 staff and students. The rosary group is the initiative of a young member of staff in the school.



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

A key innovation of the last couple of years has been the publication of a new PBST-produced magazine, *An Nasc*, 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 and two further editions were produced in 2022-23. It is intended that this magazine will provide an ongoing means of promoting greater awareness of patronage/trusteeship among staff. Staff members have been encouraged to engage more actively with their trustees on issues pertaining to faith-based education in our secular society and to explore what it means to be a teacher in a Catholic school today. Each edition so far has carried feature pieces where school leaders and trust directors have been invited to write about their own story and to share their own personal vision of Catholic education. Articles have also appeared that set the Presentation vision of education within the national and international context. The magazine has also, of course, provided the schools with an opportunity to showcase many of the wonderful faith-promoting activities that have taken place throughout the year.



## PBST Conference:

A conference of school leaders (Principals, Deputies and Board Chairpersons) and Trust Directors took place at Springfort Hall Hotel, Mallow on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> and Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> April. The event was very well attended and provided a forum not just for professional discussion but for informal interaction after two years when we hadn't been able to meet in person owing to the pandemic.

An engaging and inspiring talk by Dr Patrica Kieran of MIC, Limerick on the topic of the *'Inclusion of Pupils of other Faiths and None in Catholic Schools'* was especially well received. A second talk on *'School / Media Interaction – with a particular emphasis on responding in times of crisis'* given by John Bohane of the *Evening Echo* also provided some very useful tips. The Conference provided an opportunity for the trust CEO, Chairperson and directors to review the implementation to date of the trust's new strategic plan and to have an open discussion of issues of concern to school leaders. The conference also provided the trust with an opportunity to request that an ethos report (focusing on the promotion of faith-based activities) be provided to the Board of Management of each school at least once per term.



### **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 2021-22 school year were examined at the September and October meetings of the PBST Board of Directors and any issues brought to the attention of PBST, or issues of concern identified by PBST, were subsequently addressed with the Boards of Management through the Board secretary (Principal).

### **Catholic Schools Week:**

As always, 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 – Walking Together in Faith*



*and Love.* The large banners that have been provided by PBST to promote Catholic Schools Week were proudly displayed on schools' external 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 as they see it as a special and very 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. We are pleased to report that further progress has been made in this area over the last year with the opening of a new Special Class in Coláiste Chríost Rí and a second one in Bunscoil Chríost Rí. A class will also open shortly in St Joseph's. Greenmount currently has three Special Classes and has committed to a fourth as part of its



future building project. It is very likely that a second class will open in Coláiste Chríost Rí in September 2024 and a first class in Coláiste an Spioraid Naoimh. As reported earlier, Presentation Brothers College (Cork) has made an application under the Special Education Accommodation scheme that would see the school open one and perhaps two new Special Classes. Presentation College, Bray, is currently considering opening a class. The Board is pleased that we have moved from a situation where, five years ago, just one of our schools provided a Special Class to one where all of our schools will provide one within the next few years. We acknowledge that, along with our own encouragement, Department of Education policy has been a major driver of progress in this area. It is unfortunate, however, that while the Department of Education and the National Council for Special Education have been very proactive in promoting Special Classes, they have sometimes been less active in the provision of the infrastructure that is required to successfully establish a new Special Class. A case in point is the experience of Coláiste Chríost Rí where the students assigned to the Special Class have had to operate for the last year out of entirely inappropriate facilities (the stage area in the old school hall) without access to dedicated toilet facilities. The trust Chairperson and CEO met with representatives of the DE and NCSE earlier in the year and it became clear that these bodies were very much 'at sixes and sevens' with regard to up-to-date data on which schools were being asked to open Special Classes in September 2023.



### **Spirit of Pres Week:**



As happens every 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. As this was the first full post-pandemic Pres Day, it was great to get the Presentation Day Primary Schools' Table Quiz up and running again and to hear of so many other activities being organised.

## Implementation of 2022-26 Strategic Plan

Members will be aware from the presentation given at last's year's AGM that, following a comprehensive, independent review of its activities conducted during 2020-21, the Board of Directors put in place a strategic plan to guide the work of the trust up until 2026. This plan focuses on four main areas for development:

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



A list of 'actions' (to be implemented over the period covered by the plan) was drawn up to ensure that development in each of these areas would be realistic and measurable. Some of these actions were implemented during 2022-23 while others will be realised this coming year and in future years. Among the significant actions completed this year were the selection of a core Charter value as the theme for the year (*Caring for Each Other*), provision of PBST-themed window signage for school entrances, production of *An Nasc*, the new trust bi-annual journal, increased numbers of visits to schools, a school leaders' conference, and a new PBST Festival of the Arts.

An overview of progress made to date on implementation of the plan was given at the school leaders' conference held in March. While the Board is satisfied with progress to date, much more remains to be done – some of which (such as the provision of resources) will require increased expenditure.

As a key area identified in the plan for future development is the need for greater awareness among staffs of what it actually means to be a teacher in a Catholic school, considerable efforts were made to engage staffs in current issues in Catholic education both here in Ireland and internationally. The main vehicle for this discussion was the new journal. It must be said, however, that while teachers were invited to send us their views on the articles featured in



the journal, very little feedback was received. Perhaps a more active 'in-person' engagement will be required going forward (to supplement the journal) if staff are to be truly engaged in a professional conversation with the trust in this very important area.

## Féile na Toirbhirte

Developing an improved sense of ‘connectivity’ and ‘common purpose’ among our small but very diverse range of schools was recognised as being a key aim of the strategic plan. With this in mind, the Board took the decision to organise an event or, more accurately, series of events that would be capable of involving all of the schools in the trust. Having considered various events, it was decided that an arts festival, to be known as *Féile na Toirbhirte*, would be most likely to attract the interest of staff and students in all of the schools.



It was envisaged that the festival might best be structured so as to allow activities to take place at school-level over a number of weeks and to culminate in a showcase event in mid-March, focusing loosely on the chosen theme of ‘caring for each other’. Arts were defined broadly so as to include music, dance, painting, craft, written word etc. Given the scale of such an undertaking, the trust advertised within the schools for a festival director who would receive a fee of €3,500 (gross) for co-ordinating activities (€1,500 of which was off-set by sponsorship). Ms Amy Kerwin, an SNA at Coláiste an Spioraid Naoimh who had considerable experience in theatre, was subsequently appointed to the position. While the festival was slow to take off, and it was clear that some schools had engaged to a greater extent than others, a momentum gathered in the weeks before the showcase event. Despite the fact that it took place on a Sunday afternoon and clashed with a rugby international, the event itself was well attended and featured a wide range of top quality art work and live musical performances. For a first-ever festival event, the Board was generally happy



with the outcomes of the festival. Some school leaders did comment that the festival was time-consuming for those teachers who involved themselves in preparing students so whether it might become an annual event or a biennial or occasional event going forward will need to be determined by the Board over the coming weeks.

*Some images from Féile na Toirbhirte held on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2023*



## Erasmus Plus

During the 2022-23 school year, PBST made an application (assisted by an agency called *Mobility Hub*) to participate in the Erasmus Plus programme. While the programme is usually utilised to facilitate



educational exchange visits between Irish teachers (and students) and their colleagues in other European states, our interest in the programme is to enable trust directors, members and school leadership teams to travel abroad (as a PBST –led consortium) to encourage a greater sense of shared purpose and collegiality among the various stakeholder in the trust. This very much fits in with one of the key pillars of our 2022-26 strategic plan. Future years of the project will see more teacher involvement and a broader remit (inclusion, partnership, and special needs - along with faith-based education). While the application process has been rather bureaucratic and time-consuming, our school leadership teams have committed to sending at least one school leader and a Board member on the programme at Easter 2024. While the details have yet to be fully worked out, the plan is to travel to (probably) Italy to engage in a programme that will explore the place of Catholic education in present-day secularised Europe. At the time of writing, PBST has



received accreditation as a consortium co-ordinator and its first tranche of EU funding. We will shortly commence working with Mobility Hub to sort out the details of the actual programme (travel, accommodation, course provision etc.)

## 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. Under Ms Humphreys's direction, the role of the Association has expanded considerably and a formal meeting with the new Secretary General of the Department of Education took place earlier in the year. The Department of Education appears to see the emergence of a representative body for the Catholic second-level education sector as a very positive development. Over the medium to long term, it is envisaged that the APTCS will also incorporate the Catholic primary sector. APTCS currently offers valuable support to patrons and trustees on a very wide variety of issues such as admissions, property, governance, statutory obligations, dealing with the DES and so on. A monthly update is provided following each Board meeting and regular 'in-service training' sessions are provided online, not just to patrons and trustees but also, to school leaders and Boards of Management.

### **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 currently serve on the Board (having taken over from CEIST and Le Cheile). Mr TJ Coakley is the nominee of PBST and attends meetings at Maynooth three or four times per year.

### **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 Archbishop Kieran O'Reilly and Monsignor (now Bishop) Paul O'Connell (representatives of the IEC) in Maynooth on 22nd May. Bishop Tom Deenihan was unable to attend. In the course of what was a very positive meeting, there was a wide-ranging discussion of issues in Catholic education generally and, more particularly, on issues affecting our schools at local level. Archbishop O'Reilly, who was, of course, himself recipient of a Presentation education, was very complimentary of the work done by PBST and the other trusts in promoting authentic Catholic schools in an increasingly secularised and multi-cultural society. The trust was happy to be able to reciprocate by thanking the Bishops for their support and, in particular, for the continuing provision of high-quality resources to our schools.

### **DES School Inspections:**

Subject inspections during the 2022-23 school year were carried out in Computer Science and Digital Subjects at Presentation College, Bray and in Physical Education at Presentation College (Cork). While a number of recommendations were made in both cases, both reports were very positive in tone. A Whole School Evaluation was carried out in February 2023 in Coláiste Chríost Rí, with the report issuing in May. This was the first WSE carried out in any of our schools since before the Covid pandemic. The Board of Management and school leadership team were delighted to receive what can only be described as a highly complimentary report. A letter acknowledging the success of the inspection was issued to the Board of Management of the school.

### **Summary**

The 2022-23 year has been a busy one with a resumption of 'normal service' following three years of Covid-related disruption. A trend that is becoming increasingly apparent with each passing year is the need to devote more and more time at Board meetings to what might best be described as *compliance* or *regulation*. A lot of time has also been spent on managing the trust's and the schools' finances and on property-related issues. Despite this, time was also found to deal with that concern for which the trust was established – the promotion of the Presentation and Catholic ethos of our schools. This is, of course, challenging work – not just because of the demands it places on the directors' time but also owing to the complex social context in which we and our



school leadership teams now work. The Board remains totally committed to facing these challenges however.

While there are no ‘departures’ of PBST Directors or Members this year, the Board is aware that it will need to prepare for the retirements of Board Chairperson, Carmel Murphy, and of directors, Colm Ó Corcora and Jennifer Buckley, as of next year’s AGM. Director Pat Hegarty will be required to step down in November 2024 (though legal advice might be sought to ascertain whether he is permitted to stay on until the 2025 AGM – which would be the six year anniversary of his formal ratification to the Board). Paula Sweeney will complete her term of office as a Member at the 2024 AGM but she will be eligible to be re-appointed for a second six year term. The Board has prepared a document entitled *PBST Induction Process for New Trustees* which will assist the directors in preparing for all these changes.

As always, we acknowledge and thank our senior school leaders for the extraordinary contribution they make to the success of our schools. The work of school Principals and Deputy Principals has become increasingly onerous yet, despite this, they manage to keep the Presentation ethos of our schools very much alive at all times. They are, of course assisted in this by our Board Chairpersons and Board members, all of whom work in an entirely voluntary capacity. The Chairpersons, particularly, increasingly find themselves in the firing line – whether that be from Department officials, disgruntled teachers, unhappy parents or even (God forbid) the trust itself! It truly is our privilege to be associated with such wonderful people.

### **We remember**



We pray for the repose of the soul of Sinéad Barrett, a teacher at Coláiste Muire; Liz Forster, Chairperson of the Pres, Bray Parents’ Association; and Brothers Donatus and De Lellis, all of whom died during the year. We pray also for the repose of the souls of the former staff members and past pupils of our school communities and the members of our own 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):

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Carmel Murphy".

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Ms Carmel Murphy (Chairperson)

18<sup>th</sup> August 2023

Date