

CEIST

Catholic Education
An Irish Schools Trust



CEIST Strategic Plan 2017-2020

Living out our Founding
Mission and Catholic Ethos

www.ceist.ie



CEIST STRATEGIC PLAN 2017-2020



CEIST (Catholic Education an Irish schools Trust) was established in 2007 as a Catholic education Trust to carry on the work of five religious congregations in Catholic second-level education in Ireland. The five congregations were the Sisters of Mercy, the Daughters of Charity, the Sisters of the Christian Retreat, the Presentation Sisters and the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. All CEIST Stakeholders – students, school staff and management teams, parents Boards of Management, Directors, Members, the Irish Episcopal Conference, the Conference of Religious of Ireland and the Irish State - are part of the story of the first decade of the work of the Trust.

The CEIST, or question, in the acronym underlines the necessary challenge to query accepted norms so that in the delivery of quality education, the values, vision and mission of the Trust are continuously refined and developed.

As CEIST enters its second decade of operation, the challenges and priorities are changing. The Trust itself is well established. The staffing of the Executive has been adjusted to meet the needs of the schools in ensuring school characteristic split and good governance. The relationship with Educena, as the sister property company and funder, has been developed and strengthened and will be formalised, for operational matters, in a Memorandum of Understanding during the period of this new Strategic Plan. Recommendations from the McGuinness Review of 2011 have been incorporated into practice so that duplication of services is avoided where possible and CEIST has clearly enunciated its own Trustee role in relation to its schools.

CEIST schools educate 30% of the students in the voluntary secondary sector in Ireland (more than 58,000). They educate 17% of all students at second-level, despite having only 15% of the schools (107). The numbers in our schools are growing and this is welcomed. The diversity in our schools is also growing and this is welcomed. One of the challenges for the future in CEIST schools will be to cater in a pro-active manner for this diversity of ability, of nationality, of belief and of socioeconomic status.

As Ireland becomes more multicultural and pluralist, there is a need for CEIST schools to be sure of what they stand for and what their purpose is. The CEIST vision and Mission are paramount in striving to ensure that students in our schools receive a holistic education that is characterised by excellence in all we do.

Another challenge will be to ensure that all practice in our schools is grounded in the CEIST values and in the unique founding intention of each individual school. The process initiated by the Catholic Schools' Partnership "Understanding and Living the Ethos in a Voluntary Secondary School" will be invaluable in realising this objective.

As well as the work with schools, CEIST also has a role in providing a voice for Catholic education in general in Ireland. Members of the CEIST Board and Executive are committed to engaging with our partners in education and Catholic education fora for the benefit of the sector. There is a particular challenge to establish and develop a coherent and unified voice for the Catholic education sector that is accepted by all our partners.

As a Catholic Education Trust, CEIST can never stand still. CEIST works in a sector that builds community and offers hope and a sense of belonging. CEIST cannot bury its talents until The Master returns (Matthew 25:14-30) but must use them effectively to return a greater dividend for all the students in our schools.

Dr Marie Griffin, CEO

MISSION

To provide a holistic education in the Catholic tradition.

VISION

A compassionate and just society inspired by the life and teachings of Jesus Christ.

VALUES

Promoting Spiritual and Human Development

We believe a knowledge of and a personal relationship with Jesus Christ give meaning and purpose to our lives.

Achieving Quality in Teaching and Learning

We are committed to excellence and to continually improving the quality of teaching and learning.

Creating Community

Our schools are faith communities of welcome and hospitality where Gospel values are lived and where there is special care for those most in need.

Showing Respect for Every Person

We respect the unique and intrinsic value of every person.

Being Just and Responsible

We seek to act justly and responsibly in all our relationships.

OBJECTIVE 1

CEIST will continue to articulate its distinctive charism as a Catholic Education Trust and strive to ensure that all stakeholders understand and appreciate the distinct nature of Catholic education.

OUTCOME

What we will have achieved by 2020

- Members, Directors and Executive will have engaged with the Founding Congregations to deepen their understanding of the founding intentions and explore how these find contemporary expression. CEIST will work with EDUCENA on this objective.
- CEIST will exercise the trustee role in community schools of which the founding congregations are co-trustees, where requested to do so.
- CEIST will engage with parents of students in CEIST schools as the primary educators of their children.
- CEIST schools will:
 - Continue to educate in an environment where students are inspired and enabled to direct their lives in accordance with Gospel values and to contribute to the overall good of society.
 - Continue to be supported in building a recognisable identity for themselves as part of the CEIST community.
 - Continue to be challenged to provide educational opportunities for all students, including those who are disadvantaged, marginalised or have special educational needs.
 - Continue to be provided with varied opportunities to promote their ethos.
 - Be engaged in, or have completed, the first cycle of the CSP process "Understanding and Living the Ethos in a Voluntary Catholic Secondary School.
 - Allocate the directed time and emphasis to Religious Education.

OBJECTIVE 2

CEIST will ensure that robust and respectfully operated systems of governance are in place.

OUTCOME

What we will have achieved by 2020

- A Memorandum of Understanding relating to operational matters will be agreed and put in place between CEIST and EDUCENA.
 - An agreed reporting mechanism from the Executive to the Board will be reviewed annually.
 - CEIST office operational management systems will be regularly reviewed and updated.
 - CEIST will continue to promote excellent corporate governance.
 - Strategies will be devised to support the viability of schools in financial difficulty, in areas of demographic challenge and/or economic hardship.
- CEIST will:
- Continue to foster an environment of trust and respectful communication with its schools.
 - Continue to ensure that Boards of Management understand and fulfil their responsibility and accountability to the Trust.
 - Continue to ensure that there is regular and robust reporting on finance and relevant school matters from schools to the Executive.
 - Embed the practice of formal school visits.
 - Continue to support school Boards of Management in the appointment of leaders personally committed to the Catholic ethos and characteristic spirit of CEIST schools.

OBJECTIVE 3

CEIST will be proactive in building relationships that will further the provision of Catholic Education in Ireland.

OUTCOME

What we will have achieved by 2020

- Enhanced professional relationships between CEIST and CEIST stakeholders.
- CEIST will:
- Continue to provide ethos in-service opportunities for CEIST schools.
 - As a provider of faith-based education of second-level, have clarified and established its identity as an authoritative voice for Catholic education.
 - Have a role in commenting publicly on issues that impact on CEIST schools.
 - Continue to cultivate greater cohesiveness within the wider Catholic education community.
 - Continue to approach other agencies in a spirit of trust and willingness to share information and expertise.
 - Continue to work to minimise unnecessary duplication of reporting and training through enhanced cooperation with other education agencies

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRPERSON



The establishment of CEIST in 2007 was ground-breaking. The project was undertaken following a lengthy consultative and collaborative planning process. Within a very short time frame CEIST has achieved much. The CEIST community can be justly proud. The impact of the establishment of the trust on CEIST schools has been both positive and challenging. CEIST has also impacted on the Irish Post Primary educational landscape. By promoting dialogue and cooperation with our partners we have sought to bring coherence to the voluntary sector. Together with our schools and our educational partners we are working with determination to strengthen the voluntary sector and make it robust for the future.

At all times our work is purposed by seeking to meet the needs of the students entrusted to our schools. Our utmost ambition is to maintain our schools as inclusive communities built on love – our goal is that the students in our care have this experience. The values of the CEIST Charter as a living reality in our schools is the yardstick that allows us measure our success.

The voluntary sector, within which we operate, requires an understanding and appreciation of the sector's origins and purpose. Such understanding and appreciation gives us belief and confidence to value, nurture and protect the sacred traditions we have inherited. At no point in time previously have we been compelled to substantiate and clarify our right to exist as a valid parental option in the provision of post primary education. Such understanding and appreciation will enable us to face the challenges and opportunities of a changing Ireland.

This strategic plan sets out our ambitious vision for the period 2017 to 2020. The plan has been compiled following widespread consultation. Input was sought from all the partners that interact with the trust. These pages represent a shared vision for the future with a view to strengthening CEIST schools, CEIST itself and the voluntary post primary sector during the course of the next four years.

This plan builds on the success that has been achieved since 2007. It is not a plan compiled in isolation but rather one that is compiled in the context of appreciating what has been achieved to date by CEIST. Our principal priority was to formulate a strategy that incorporates what is realistically realisable and quantifiable over the period of the plan. I wish to thank all those who responded to our call for input. I also wish to thank all those who worked on compiling this strategy. I look forward to the implementation phase in bringing about our shared vision for the future.

Bernard Keeley
Chairperson, CEIST Board of Directors
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